

the magazine of zine culture and the independent arts

brokenpencil

www.brokenpencil.com

Almost Famous

Selling out
or buying in?

Fame sucks...

Peaches, Dälek,
Trail of Dead,
Chicks on Speed
and Vice Magazine

also:

A History of Selling Out
The Authenticity of Hip-hop
Grrrlfitti: Powder Room Power
Martha Stewart: D.I.Y. Revolutionary
and a gazillion reviews



How to effectively use dialogue

"Dialogue?" she asked with a slightly quizzical note in her voice. "Do you mean I can actually have my characters talk to each other in a way that seems real? I've never done that before!"

"That's right," he replied with a wink. "That's exactly what it says in the George Brown College Continuing Education calendar I just got. It says you can learn all kinds of writing techniques like dialogue. There are literally dozens of creative writing classes that can teach you how to write for magazines or write novels, poetry, screenplays, kids books, short stories and plays. You can also learn how to get published or sell your work. Here have a look!"

"Wow, you weren't kidding! These courses could really help me get to the next level with my writing. But hold on for a minute, I hated my English classes in high school. And that first year university survey course was even worse – now I only keep the Norton anthology in case I need to hit a pest over the head. How do I know these classes won't be boring?"

"Well," he said, his voice dropping a note or two. "I've heard that George Brown hires real writers to teach these classes, and because the students are all adults interested in writing the atmosphere is completely different."

"That sounds great," she said, sounding relieved. "But these courses sound expensive. How can I afford it? And where is George Brown College anyway?"

"Relax, the classes are government subsidized so they're quite reasonably priced. And George Brown is right downtown near the subway so you can go after work. You can get your own copy of their calendar by calling 416-415-2000 or check it out on the web at georgebrown.ca./coned But let's stop talking about classes. I came over with something else in mind. Why don't we just get comfortable?"

"Just a sec!" she said cheerily, and then muttered to herself, "Now where did I put that Norton Anthology?"

Editor's Note

Okay, I've never done this before so bear with me. Like so many of us who have interviewed ourselves in the bathtub, written our own suicide notes while driving home from the now-ex's, or planned out what we would say on that concert bandshell stage... it's as though I used up all the poetics before the moment arrived. This is my first editor's note.

Oh, the pressure! I'm excited to be on board and to follow in the footsteps of Hal Niedzviecki who has entrusted me with all of this. All this Broken Pencil magic and mayhem. Late nights I've spent sorting through your emails, wondering, am I worthy? Having already reached the conclusion that I'm not, I'll try to refrain from "messing it up," so to speak.

I have lots of new ideas for the magazine, and you'll surely see some changes over the next few issues, but for the most part I want to try to maintain that Broken Pencil attitude we all know and love. The one thing I need to say in my own defense is that I won't show favouritism towards the Emilys. No, an Emily shall not be treated any different than a Sarah or Alexis, a Marc or a Brian or a Gabe. It's true, there are four Emilys represented in this issue so please

don't be confused. There's me (the new chick around here), Emily Pohl-Weary (the longtime indie publishing junkie), Emily Holton (an excerpted word artist), and Emily Shoichet (one of the bentcomics crew). However, I just want you to know that this invasion of Emily is a temporary condition. Please try to keep us all fixed separately in your mind, as we have not formed an army and this is not a conspiracy. I can verify that it is not a conspiracy by pointing out that there are excellent features this issue by several non-Emilys, namely: a Heidi Chapson, a Kate Zieman, and that longtime non-Emily... Terence Dick.

If you are still worried about the invasion of the Emilys, look for the spring/summer issue where I can assure you you will see a whole slew of work by folks who could not possibly be named Emily. For e.g.: indie boys, anarchist punk boys, and several intellectual grrrlz with names ending in "ette," "ella," and "anne." If you still aren't satisfied by the breadth of representation, then drop Broken Pencil a line as I'm paying keen attention to your helpful comments.

(Emily Schultz)

Where Are You on the Sell-Out Scale?

1. You receive a large sum of money. You:
 - a) move your magazine to New York City and hook up with the latest cutting-edge media upstart.
 - b) spend it all on overpriced urban fashion "hoodies."
 - c) move to Tuva and lose your toes to frostbite while recording Indigenous throat-singing.
 - d) hire a lifestyle management firm to come in and rearrange your personal life. Subscribe to Wallpaper. Congratulations, you now live in your office!
2. You get a plum job as a feature writer for a general interest magazine. For your first article, you pitch one of the following ideas:
 - a) "Gailliano vs. Versace: Will the Fashion World Survive this War?"
 - b) "A Manger Fit for this Queen: How Celine Dion Redesigned her Country Estate"
 - c) "Struggling in Tuva: a Documentary Filmmaker Faces Frostbite While Recording Indigenous Throat-singing"
 - d) a quiz titled, "Where Are You on the Sell-Out Scale?"
3. Your first album stiffed. Your "management" wants you to explore a new direction. You choose to explore:
 - a) non-obtrusive ethno techno — perfect for a candle-lit condo fuckfest.
 - b) your ghetto roots though you were born and

- raised in Victoria.
- c) an entire album of tape hiss.
- d) new "management."

4. You've completed your first film script. In an effort to get it made, you:

- a) change your delicate character drama about a Tuvan throat-singer into a cop-buddy picture.
- b) up your Canadian content by writing a love scene involving John Diefenbaker.
- c) approach your pot-dealer for financing, agreeing to put in more Cheech & Chong style humour.
- d) buy Army Surplus film stock and shoot the whole thing in your 1-bedroom apartment.

5. The political organization you work for is finally in the media spotlight. With the newfound attention you:

- a) show up for your meeting with the Prime Minister... naked.
- b) embezzle donations to feed your addiction to aromatherapy sessions ("it's been 30 days since I last sniffed eucalyptus. Each day is a triumph").
- c) expand your focus to include several other causes, thereby increasing your popularity, and ultimately, your chances of getting elected (or laid).
- d) hang out with Bono.

Give Yourself Points...

- Question 1: a=2, b=3, c=1, d=4
Question 2: a=3, b=4, c=1, d=2

- Question 3: a=4, b=3, c=1, d=2
Question 4: a=3, b=4, c=2, d=1
Question 5: a=1, b=2, c=3, d=4

Rank 1-5

Congratulations, you're an outsider! You'll always alienate everyone as you forge ahead without compromise. You'll never have a real job. You'll always be of punk rock/poet ilk. Your few friends will be true, though you might increase your number of friends by bathing more. You are both noble and bothersome.

Rank 6-10

Congratulations, you're ordinary! You'll probably do just fine out there in the big scary world. Your witty conversation doesn't produce awkward moments of silence. Your sense of style is your own, but you'll change your clothes when you have to. You're welcome at our dinner table any time. You are rational, delightfully sarcastic and enterprising.

Rank 11-15

Congratulations, you're in the danger zone! You once had ideals but now you find yourself driving past IKEA late at night. Wishing. Wanting. For you, there is still time and, indeed, hope that you won't end up like your parents. Read the following pages well. Though well-meaning, you are insincere and vain.

Rank 16-20

Congratulations, you're completely evil! But not even interestingly so, as you have none of your own opinions! You'll buy into anything that will make you money. One day you'll start screaming and won't be able to stop. There is no advice that will help you. We fear that you are even too far-gone to benefit by a subscription to Broken Pencil. You are ambitious but completely devoid of taste.

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cover photo model: Satan graciously cleared his schedule.

Writing for Broken Pencil: Broken Pencil encourages submissions of original fiction accompanied by a self addressed stamped envelope and/or email address. Please include a disc in PC format (when possible) and a bio. We also encourage submissions of original essays, columns, rants, interviews and features - anything related to the subject of independent culture in Canada. But before you write your opus, please send a proposal for your article (2-3 paragraphs), along with samples of your work and a self addressed stamped envelope. We are also interested in working with new photographers and illustrators. Send us samples (not originals) along with a self addressed stamped envelope.

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Using Broken Pencil

Organization:

Broken Pencil reviews independent publications published in Canada and the world, including ezines and recordings. All the listings in Broken Pencil are organized by province/region. International and US listings are after the Canadian publications. There is an index in the back that lists every publication and recording reviewed in Broken Pencil in alphabetical order.

Structure of listings:

Title — the name of the publication

Definition — the arbitrary classification we attribute to a publication

Name(s) of creators - the creators of the publication, the people who write and publish it.

\$ — the price that the publication is sold for individually and, if available, by subscription. These prices do not include postage, which is extra (see "how to order zines")

Address — every effort will be made to have the correct addresses for all publications, however errors do occur and address changes/typos/mysterious disappearances are always a hazard.

Review — the review of a publication represents the subjective opinion of the reviewer. Personal taste cannot be edited out of a review. Broken Pencil welcomes dissenting opinions while making every effort to offer a fair and true judgement.

What Is A Zine?

A zine is an independently published, not-for-profit publication. Although it usually represents the personal vision of a single creator, it can have many contributors. Although most zines are photocopied and hand stapled, some zines are professionally printed. What makes a zine a zine is its dedication to the independent transference of thought on a non-commercial basis. Variations on the zine include the comic zine (indie comics), the litzine (literary - poems, fiction, essays), the perzine (personal, autobiographical), and the ezine (zines published only on the internet). In addition to zines, we also review independent/alternative newspapers, journals, magazines, books and chapbooks, and recordings in LP, cassette and CD format.

How to Order Zines

Please Send Cash! If you are ordering anything under six bucks you should send well concealed money. Many zine publishers don't have a separate bank account for their zine and cannot use checks made out to their zine or to their pen name. In fact, many zine publishers do not have a bank account at all. So the best thing to do is to staple cash to a letter (or tape coins to a piece of paper and staple that to a letter), though for anything over the six dollar mark, you should probably send a check. We list a name in our ordering information, and you should make the check out to that name or the name of a publishing house if that information is available. The second big thing to remember is that you are also paying for postage. Figure on including a dollar extra for postage on a standard zine (within Canada). If you are ordering Canadian zines from the U.S., pay in U.S. dollars and that should cover the postage. Ordering Canadian zines from overseas you should pay in U.S. and throw in a dollar extra, two if you want air mail. If you are ordering U.S. or overseas zines from Canada, you'll need to send U.S. dollars and a dollar or two extra for postage. Don't send Canadian dollars or checks to anyone overseas or in the U.S. as they won't know what to do with it most of the time. Some zines include postage in their price, most do not. If a zine indicates their price includes postage, we will note that in the ordering info, otherwise, figure that the price listed is the cost of the zine only, not the cost of getting it to you. If a zine is free, always include a dollar or two for postage. Keep in mind that ordering zines takes time as zine publishers are busy. You should plan on waiting several months before deciding that a zine isn't coming. Should that occur, send a postcard asking what happened. If you don't get a prompt reply, drop us a note and we can try to contact the publisher for you, and/or warn others not to waste their money. But be patient, because most of the time you'll get what you ordered, though it might take a while. And hey, zine publishers like to know how you heard of their zine so be sure and tell them we sent yeah.

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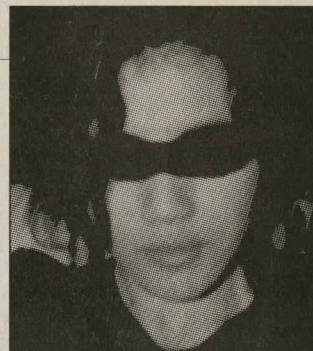
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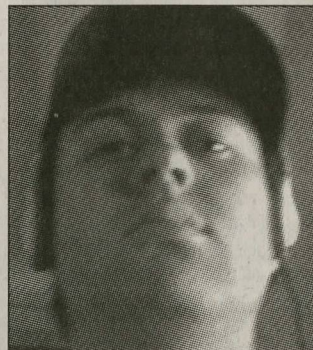
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Heidi Chapson (a.k.a. Hide, Heidi-ho, and the Silent Ninja) is one part former art student who was once told she was "talented, but maybe not determined enough" / one part music enthusiast who has done research and writing for various media.



Kate Zieman is a Toronto grad student, co-editor of the upcoming Ain't Yer Sister Project, and the proud mama of hip static zine. She treads softly but carries a big black Sharpe.



Ryan Kennedy has written for magazines such as Adbusters, Alternative Press and I.D. His current obsessions include gambling, pirates, and "Guns of Brixton" by The Clash.

Letters

Dear Hal,
Okay, I know you have me in print promising to send in for a subscription to Broken Pencil, but corporate comics only pay so much, and I have been buying every issue faithfully — including issues 19 & 20. Stand-out articles: The "Criminal Cinema" one, and not just because I was one of the people grossed out by the Fox Theatre; "Heavy Metal Thunder" and not just because of the picture of Ani in that leather outfit I like so much; and "From Saugus to Small Press," and not just because I hate Brad Yung. Anyways... Continued Good Work, James / Other Stuff for the Mature (Vancouver, BC)

From: honeybeezine@earthling.net
Subject: alo!

Hey there BP, I love yaz!
I'm Kat and I live in Sydney, Australia. In Sydney zines are really an undiscovered form, there is basically one stall once a month at the markets and that's pretty much it besides online distros. So that is why I'm organizing an event called "honeybee zine extravaganza" in Feb of next year. It will have around 30 + zines/comics/patch artists selling/swap-ping, and a gallery event with original art two weeks later. As part of the event there

will be a collaborative thing called "mish-mash" where zinesters are given a theme at the beginning of the day, and create two to three pages to become part of a book. Would BP like to have anything to do with this? I thought it might be cool to have some of the work and pictures of the show published — just to put Sydney/AUS on the zine scene! I actually moved here from Toronto 2 years ago. I missed Canzine so much that I said "fuck it I'll make one here!!" There has already been heaps of support from people — (that is besides sponsors). Sydney has so much potential, and gorgeous zines/comics! There will also be a mini-comic jam too... sorry about the long email! Let me know what yaz think! ...xo kat
PS: We want to start an Australian version of BP! Whatcha think?

Dear Hal & Emily,
Thank you for putting out such a fine magazine. Here's to continued success in 2003! Dave (Hamilton, ON)

From: cliffburns@yahoo.ca
Dear Hal & BP Gang:
Received my "Special 20th Issue Anniversary Edition" of Broken Pencil in

the mail yesterday and have been paging through it with delight and fascinated revulsion. First of all, congrats for surviving 20 issues in the first place. You've managed to publish regularly and maintain good production values...and you've provided an excellent platform for whackos like li'l ol' me to spout our gibberish and hawk our wares. Many thanks.

Had a brief listen to the spoken word compilation you've put together and think it just fine. Gonna pass it along to my wife who will be teaching English next semester at the local high school. We've both been fans of Sheri D Wilson's for quite awhile but some of the new names also impress. Some good material for classroom discussions, methinks.

Devoting space in this Anniversary issue to the "Elders of the Margins" was a stroke of genius. Lovely idea to pay tribute to the guys and gals who set the standards for aberrant art and warped self-expression in this country when most of us were still watching "Space: 1999" and accidentally getting stoked on the airplane glue we used on our plastic models. Regret that space constraints meant that no mention was made of indie writer and pioneer in every sense of the word, Crad Kilodney. Crad has been scribbling his mad work

since Jesus was a lad, pausing every now and then to go after the floating rib of the establishment. Remember, it was Crad who entered stories by Kafka and Hemingway and other greats in the CBC/ Saturday Night Magazine Literary Competition... and then gleefully called a news conference when the stories failed to make the final cut. He made asses out of the judges and rightfully ridiculed the whole notion of measuring works of literary merit against each other like fucking race horses. All in a day's work to Crad.

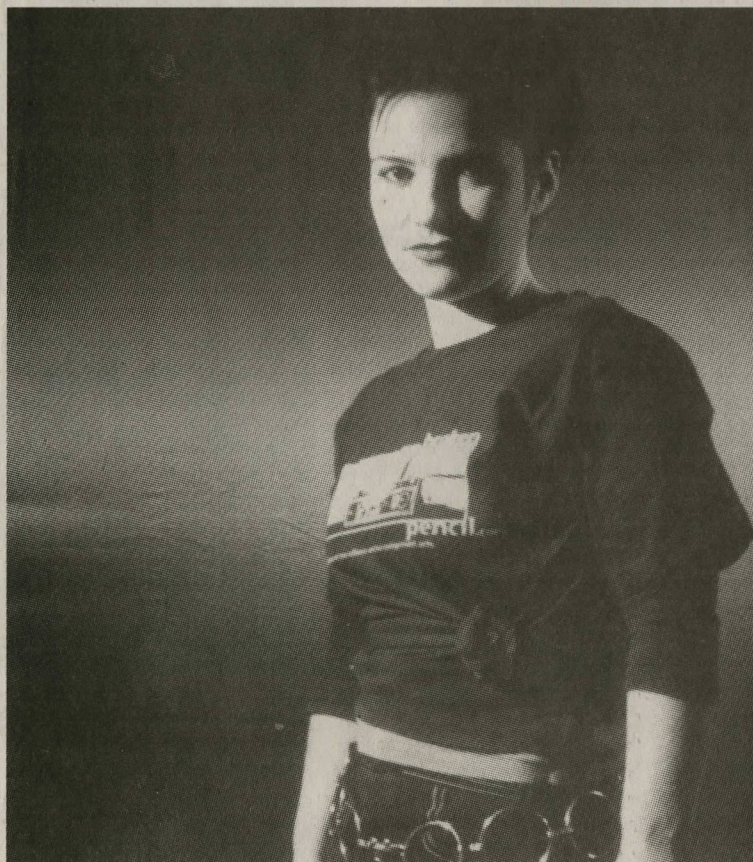
By reputation irascible, Crad Kilodney exists in a universe of one. Check out his website if you'd like to take a peek into that chaotic cosmos. He's sold his stuff on street corners, alienated himself from the mainstream literary establishment and now finds himself where he properly belongs. On the margins. Pushing the envelope.

It was because of Crad that I took up self-publishing. A friend brought me back some of his chapbooks from Toronto and as I turned them over in my hands, I was thinking, "Hey, I could do this..." Crad, you asshole, thanks to that accidental crossing of destinies, I'm in debt to the tune of \$6000 on my publishing ventures. Christ, come to think of it, you've ruined

Model: Sarah
Sign: Sagittarius
Likes: Books, clothing, men and women willing to struggle day to day in the relentless fight against mono-culture.
Hair: Nicole
T-Shirt: Broken Pencil

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my life... Well, never mind. Live and let live, eh? Etc. Best to ya, Hal, and everyone else there at the mag. Regards, Cliff Burns (North Battlefield, SK)

Dear Broken Pencil,

We have met with some scepticism calling this a "zine". "Essay" has been suggested, but we'd rather go with "chapbook." To tell you the truth, I've never really been clear on what a chapbook was — why the "chap"? — but no mind, it shall suffice. Anyway, this chapbook is entitled "Night In Practice," and should probably be spelled using capital letters (as above), rather than the lower case tomfoolery of the chapbook's cummerbund. It always pains me to read lowercase titles in print. The creators of this chapbook are Scott Howard and Joel Herman — writer and illustrator, respectively. Unfortunately, some copies, which were labelled at 3:00 a.m. in a mad dash before flying to New York a few hours later, credit the illustrations to "Joel Howard," effectively making us brothers, or perhaps father and son. In fact, we are the same age, with Joel clocking in at 2 months, 3 days older than Scott. Joel and Scott published this project themselves, and have no need to conjure up a vanity press to disguise their employment of an ordinary photocopier in this undertaking. If we did feel such a need, or were to give in to the temptation of making up a press out of the blue, it would be the Kerass Press, which is the imaginary press of one Michael Chang, a friend of ours from Kelowna, BC, from whence we, too, originally hail; but as we have no such inclination, this information need not be included. The creators of this work may be reached at 3-1216 Richardson Street, Victoria, BC, Canada, V8V 3E1, or by electronic mail at showard@uvic.ca, or jherman@uvic.ca. While it would have been preferable to keep secret our lowly undergraduate status, we expect the truth would eventually have come out in some way or another, so we might as well be betrayed by our email addresses. Actually, we doubt anyone would have found out — this is just a rationalization. Oh, yes — the price of this chapbook is \$4.00 plus postage, not that it is likely anyone will write to us, and trust us with their hard-earned, Canadian money. I know I wouldn't, unless an extra-glorious review was to compel me to do otherwise.

One final note: the reason this thing was made was to mark the occasion of NOCTURNES, a collaborative art show taking place at the Brown House in Victoria earlier this month. As should be evident from its name, this show was themed after

all things night-related, and was apparently a lot of fun and well-attended, although I myself had fled the country by that point. I would particularly have enjoyed hearing Greg's astronomy lecture in the backyard. The Brown House, for its part, is a brown house in a residential neighbourhood that hosts art shows of this sort on a monthly-or-so basis. I may take it upon myself to submit a piece about this phenomenon to BP in the near future, on the condition that I not write about it in the same annoying tone I have affected herein. Your patience is applauded. Scott (Victoria, BC)

Note from the BP editors: The above-mentioned chapbook may or may not be reviewed in this issue, but either way, the letter that accompanied it was entertaining.

From: streaker@vcn.bc.ca

Subject: Re: Purple

Hi Hal;

I'm heading back to Powell River today and thought I'd send you a brief message. I noticed "Purple" got a little better review than, "Blood Sky" except my address in Powell River where your readers can buy this fine book of poetry was not listed. The price of \$7.00 which includes postage was also not mentioned and I am left wondering if you want my books to be available to your readers. Perhaps because my view of life is not that of the mainstream. Anyway, Merry Christmas. Yours truly; Daniel Rajala

From: catmannado_2000@yahoo.ca

Subject: ooh that was fun!

hello again...just a quick note to say thanks for getting the word out and for letting me get some words out too!!!! It was a tremendous day filled with ideas and was smoothly run. Hope to see you again at the next zine fest! peace up! and, of course, cead mille falte! robert thomas payne (saint elsewhere)

From: krotchbat@yahoo.com

Subject: Canzine 2002

Hello. First time caller/long time listener. This mail is regarding the recent Canzine. If this was sent to the wrong "department" of Broken Pencil, I apologize. Anyways, I attended the recently passed Canzine held at the Reverb. I've attended the event with my zine and booked a table for the past 5 years. Each year I notice a more than slight decline in the quality of the once exciting event. My intentions are not to just submit a literary "bitch-fest" but offer some suggestions. Suggestions based off

Letter of the Issue

From: monstress@bust.com

Dear Broken Pencileers,

Imagine my surprise when I read a review of my zine, Monstress, in Broken Pencil. I thought my scheme of deliberately not sending you my zine to avoid having it reviewed was foolproof. Silly me.

But I'm not in the least annoyed. I know it's not personal — after all I talked to 3 other people whose zines were reviewed without them sending in a copy. In fact, I sleep more soundly at night knowing that agents of Broken Pencil are out scouring the country for bad zines to review. Even now, I suspect a reviewer is squatting behind my sofa waiting for me to go to bed just to catch a sneak peek of Monstress 3. I swear I saw three rifling through the trash in the alley beside Bathurst station.

I've heard that engineers at Broken Pencil continue to work on machines that will one day make skulking reviewers obsolete. And who knows what wonders biotechnology will bestow on the world of zine reviewing? Do we dare hope for a future where tanks of precognitive reviewers sense the arising of a rant about a high school teacher, an incomprehensible band review or a skritch, unslack comic? I salute you for your commitment to preventing bad zines before they happen. God bless and speed you, Broken Pencil! Cordial regards, Una Crow

various conversations and thoughts of zinesters present at this year's event. The topics consist of:

Tables and space: Give more specific info regarding tables and area which can be booked for your zine display. For example, shelling out 7 dollars to book a table is no problem. BUT, shelling out 7 dollars for what was said is a table, and turns out to be 7 inches of a table is. Maybe make it clear that what you are obtaining is not an entire table persay but only a very very small space that is nowhere near the size of even a TV tray. Sometimes there might be a gaggle of zinesters for whatever reason who might want to have their "table" next to another zinester's. May it be for sharing of resources, specific items, or just for a social aspect. This should be understood and expected. And if such event should take place, attitude and negativity should not be at the top of the expectation list. If for whatever LEGITIMATE reason this "relocation" cannot happen, that should be understood by the zinester and then go from there. I had witnessed a zinester asking one of the co-ordinators (red hair, pseudo goth, plaid skirt) if she could relocate with a legitimate reason (sharing of resources with others). Said co-ordinator rejected the zinester's wishes stating "it's too early, I'm very tired and I've already moved 3 tables as it is, no!" A simple "sorry" or explanation for the rejection would have been more deserving/professional. I noticed that said zinester approached another female co-ordinator, who at the time was working the door and handled the request in a more positive/professional/progressive matter. The zinester was then able to

relocate and I assume everything was okay from there. Even though this situation did not happen to me, I still felt sorry for the young girl who caught the bitchy attitude of an over-authoritative ballbuster who felt the aftermath of staying out too late at the previous fetish ball and decided to take it out on some young unsuspecting girl.

PETS: No pets. I understand that pets might want to read a zine or two but to have to worry about some stranger's dog who urinated on the floor by your table, trying to dig thru your lunchbag is something I'd rather not have to do. The aisles are tight enough of as it is.

OPEN MIC: Bring back the "OPEN MIC" event. Rather than have Chuck and Buck twang away on their acoustic guitars ALL DAY LONG, set up a time when they can do so. I was aware of 7 separate individuals who planned to attend just so they could perform in one way or another. Some were even coming from out of Canada.

There is a plethora of other minor details, but the big picture is what should be looked at first. I am happy to say that the quality of organization had improved from the latter years. I came in, gave the polite female working the door my name and zine name, and bammm! right away she found it, gave me my "table" number, answered a question with no negative attitude whatsoever. Unfortunately I did not catch her name as I would have loved to compliment her for bringing some positive change to Canzine. I apologize for the length and I hope this gives some insight as for what to look at for the next year's event. d.j. krotchbat

Revolution of the Moment

A bunch of feminists duking it out for fashion in various states of undress... The notion of the "clothing swap" may be old-fashioned, but there's no reason that those who participate in the process have to be. To liven up what might otherwise seem like something your mom would do, adopt The Challenge. Here's how it works.

Club clothes, jeans, hoodies, Ts, dresses, etc. are divided into various piles. You can browse and try things on as if you were thrift-shopping, except here, you are among friends. Whip off your clothes in front of everyone. That's right, no one will care. Parade around if it suits you. Huddle in a corner attempting to cover your ass with your elbow if it doesn't. After making selections, everyone regroups and a clothing showdown begins.

Your friend has got something you want. "I challenge," you announce. You flip a coin, pick a number between one and ten, or have a fitting faceoff to see which person looks best in the outfit. In a large group, there will be a surprising range of body types, and it's not always the thinnest, tallest, or most traditionally "beautiful" girl who's going to look the best in the item. No, when you're in a room packed with girls size 2 to 22, you learn pretty quickly it ain't what you got, but how you wear it.

The "Gurlie Clothing Swap" pictured here is organized by Sarah Couture McPhail and Jaclyn Ray in Toronto. McPhail attended others, years ago, as a student in Montreal. She says, "I couldn't afford clothes and it was one way to not feel bad about it—knowing another clothing swap was coming up." Those pot-luck fashion parties were organized by her aunt in the '90s, and when McPhail attended them she was the youngest of the group. "Now I'm one of the old ladies," she laughs, though of course she hasn't even hit her 30s yet. McPhail teamed up with her good friend Ray after going to see *LeTigre*. The two were "pumped" on *LeTigre*'s Tae-Bo-style feminism and McPhail says that it inspired them "to do the shit we had been talking about."

According to McPhail, Ray is "a born organizer," and the clothing swaps went



A bunch of feminists duking it out for fashion in various states of undress...

from 0 to 20 immediately and have continued to grow. Ray gathered girls from her university women's studies program and McPhail e-mailed friends. The two organizers have been doing swaps regularly for a year now in Toronto, and usually have 18-22 industrial-sized bags of clothes left at the end. They pay to cab the leftover clothes to Sistering (or sometimes to a youth shelter). If everyone who attends puts in \$1 for the clothing they take away, the cabs are paid for, and other women can benefit from the swap as well. Who says you can't style and still

be an activist?

Raucous, racy, and whatever else you want it to be, the beauty of the clothing swap is that anyone can do it, anywhere, anytime.

What you need: four gals or more who each bring a bag full of old clothes, someone's apartment, \$1 each to cab leftover clothes to charity. Cheap-ass eats and drinks. (Note that there are many variations on this recipe. If trading clothes doesn't appeal, try having a book or CD swap.)

(Emily Schultz)

Zines of the Month

October

Last Cigarette of the Century

zine, 48 pgs, Luke Warm, \$?, BOX 54007, 674 Granville St., Vancouver BC, V6C 1Z6

The first image I see is some savagely robotic machine aiming one big fucking laser device over some poor sap's head, like some modern mechanized Atlas with a grudge against its creators. Then I look again and see a man standing under a large telescope. But maybe I was right the first time, I don't know. Luke Warm creates a zine where quantum mechanics and the nature of reality take the forefront, but unlike any physics or math textbook. The zine takes on the task of weaving art, science and reality into an interesting manifesto which offers up some answers, but tosses up even more questions as blinders. This is how I've read it. And like so many of his observations and quotes, so much relies on how we interpret this "quantum soup" into reality itself. Much of the zine splices quotes on technology with random superimposed images of religion, industry, media and science. This all works remarkably well with the articles/essays on quantum physics, semiotics and AI, and a Niagara College student's experience as an exotic dancer. A comic featuring cycloptic armed robbers, priests and a mysterious thing named Stealth also appears. And yet in this chaos, everything in this zine seems to collide in some bizarrely appropriate way. Only one word of warning: while this isn't some second year physics' textbook, some might be put off by the essays as they tend to get rather heavy in parts. So to those with an aversion to anything related to physics and the nature of reality I wouldn't say stay away, but be warned. Of course, according to Luke Warm, I'm acting as a measuring device to this zine. Like the quantum objects he describes I am quickly destroying the infinite wave of potential that the zine embodies by imposing my interpretation upon it. But this is my task in one of reality's many puzzles. Unfortunately, without writing an eighteen page essay on the fabric of reality I'm not addressing much of the content of his zine. To discuss it that much, I'd pretty much have to know everything — which I don't. I do know that I enjoyed reading it and that's what matters. As Luke Warm reminds us, when we know everything, this is the end, but for now we're just barely kicking up dust ahead of the monkeys. (James King)

November

Misfit Toy

perzine, #1, 24 pgs, Vix Spooky, \$2, 125 Earl Place #234, Toronto ON, M4Y 1M4, spook@bust.com

The first thing that caught my eye as I flipped through Misfit Toy was a picture of the most frightening bear Disney has ever spawned. That's right kids: Teddy Ruxpin, the freaky, creepy mechanical jaw moving,

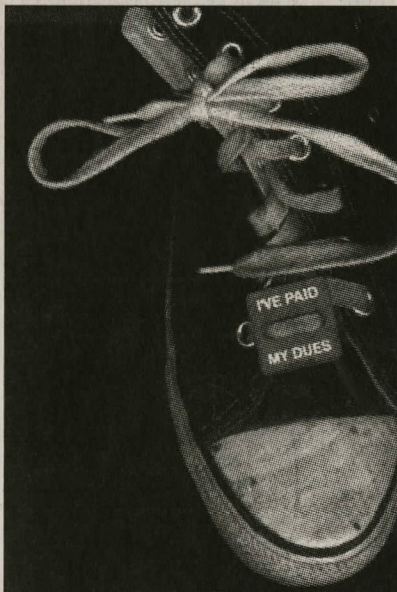
Continued on page 8

Product of the Issue: Put Your Best Foot Forward

Shoe tag, Jon Sasaki, \$5, available from Art Metropole, Toronto, 788 King Street West

These nifty little shoe tags say a lot with so few words. "I've Paid My Dues," they read. Approximately 1 inch by 1 inch, the plastic tag fits onto your shoelace and graces the lonely segment of your foot that lies at the bottom of the laces between the lowest set of eyes. The forehead of the foot so to speak. With this cheeky message written on your pied-tête, you can find out if you are truly judged by your footwear. It's a gutsy subliminal message to give an employer.

Unlike the shoe tag you would receive if you paid for membership at a sports club, these particular tags can be worn by anyone. They'll go great with a pair of retro '80s sneakers (real retro sneakers—not \$100 reissued). Don't worry though, these tags are not about to become the new black. Nor will you open the pages of any other magazine to find it listed as the new "must-have" accessory!



No. Accessories are, by definition, additional, unnecessary, excessive (if you'll pardon the pun), but it's nice to know that you have fashion options, even if you're anti-fashion. These come in four colours: not-dirty-yet white, always-cool black, anti-grass-stain green, and goes-with-your-jeans blue. For five bucks, you can afford to give one to a friend and make them the new "friendship pins" of 2003. Yes, we are bonded by cynicism! This is what brings us together!

Please note: if you are still wearing Velcro shoes, you may not qualify for "I've Paid My Dues" membership. Apologies to go-go boot girls and Japanime babes.

(Emily Schultz)



Continued from page 7

speaking toy animal of our childhood. Seeing the picture immediately brought knots to my stomach as I remembered how the bear, a Christmas present given to me by my aunt, sat on my dresser and stared down at me with beady scary eyes as I lay terrified under my Strawberry Shortcake sheets. In my opinion I had some pretty warranted reasons to fear this demonic bear, as the commercials were quick to convince us that Teddy Ruxpin was really alive and could even talk to us. I liked my toys dead and still thank you very much. I mean had anyone seen Chucky... Dear God! What were the adults thinking leaving me with this Ruxpin character? Reading Misfit Toy will for sure bring back some anxiety, whether your childhood was speckled with fears of clowns, porcelain dolls, satanic furbies, or that scary mechanical cymbal holding monkey. This zine is all about the toys that brought us more fear than fun and left us seriously wondering whether our parents got a kick out of terrifying us or just didn't understand that anything with a clown face was bound to spark some serious anxiety problems. There are all sorts of great things in this zine, each page cut and pasted to bring a new surprise. Although I enjoyed reading the "Toy Trauma" section of the zine, my favourite piece was one called "Raised by Muppets" in which Spooky lets us in on his Muppet inspired philosophy: "I wanted to live in Fraggle Rock where everything had more value when it was shared. I secretly hoped that the people I met along the way would join me and would all look for the Rainbow Connection together, and I never stopped believing that life should be fun." I strongly recommend this zine to all you crazy kids out there. A fun yet disturbing read. (Audrey Gagnon)

December

Dead Celebrity: Three Stories by Colin Drew

litzine, #1, 43 pgs, Colin Drew, \$2, **Dead Celebrity Books c/o Ductape, PO BOX 741, 1057 Steeles Ave. W, Toronto, ON, M2R 3X1, colin_jerkass@yahoo.ca**

Anyone familiar with Colin Drew's serialized novel *Let's All Die* will know that he is great at telling the stories of the all-around loser guy who always finds himself ditched by bitchy girlfriends, trapped in by shitty jobs and bully bosses; the self-medicated boozier who struggles just to get out of bed in the morning, calls in sick to work every other day even though he's broke. With *Let's All Die* Drew is successful in getting us to care about this guy, perhaps because he manages to flesh out his characters into believable sensitive creatures we come to recognize as people we have known; or if we're honest with our

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Column

Goldstein's Return

by Heather O'Neill

At the Chicago day camp all the kids call Arizona white girl. Goldstein wonders if this will do her damage, and I assure him that "White Girl" sounds like the name of an action hero. Everyday for lunch the camp feeds the kids strips of baloney and chocolate milk. Arizona's best friend is a homeless kid named Sunday. She has three boyfriends. One boy was suspended for biting his arm when she wouldn't kiss him.

At the end of the summer we move back to Montreal, right back into the building where I grew up. My dad lives two floors down. We scream at each other up and down the stairwell all Brooklyn style. The building is right beside the train tracks and Goldstein calls it the building at the end of the world. Nobody in my building works. They write suicide notes all day long.

Goldstein has always been older than me. I met him on a bench when I was nineteen, breastfeeding and dressed to the teeth. Back then Goldstein wrote poems in ten minutes in the smallest notebooks that he could find. He'd tear them out and fold them into sweaty squares that he'd put in his pocket. His poems were about wanting to feed my dog nothing but yellow flowers.

Back in Montreal, we try to act more civilized. We have a tape of the New York City Ballet. We practice ballet stretches in the morning. We're always knocking over lamps. On the metro we read *The Little Prince* to each other in British accents. Over by the turnstiles there's a man with a microphone who compliments women for money. There is a feeling in Montreal that every day is Valentine's Day.

"You will have to make enough money to support us both," Goldstein says.

When Goldstein is depressed, he lies on the couch all afternoon calling me a genius. In the evening he walks around in a child's winter toque claiming he has a fever and that he doesn't have any ideas. He always thinks that he has lost something.

"There are never any phone messages. Why did I leave Chicago?" he moans. "I pulled a real David Caruso. I'm finished."

Goldstein went to Chicago for two years. The thing about having an odd life is that it's important not to leave it or when you come back, it's particularly jarring. You have to

remind people that you've been away. Time is always slower for people who haven't been away. Your friends always forget that you're different now. Your friends never seem to realize that you're different now. Goldstein says that he has to stop making friends so that he can stop making enemies. Goldstein stopped making friends a while ago.

Arizona goes to a fine arts school. It's dark when we go to bring her to the bus stop. If you stand on the bench and look for the school bus, you can see the sunrise. Her bus takes her all the way downtown. She goes back to sleep as soon as she's on board. Goldstein has nothing better to do so he talks the school bus driver into letting him get on so he can go visit his aunt at the old age home downtown.

For Christmas, I promise to get Arizona a little white mouse. Goldstein says he refuses to live with vermin, but then he relents.

We decide to name the mouse after a famous person, but we're not sure who. It lends the apartment a touch of class when you can walk around saying, "Chopin! Arthur Miller! Ira Gershwin!" We decide to call the mouse Paris. Now we are looking for new pets to name. The other day I brought home a giant moth in a Kleenex box. The moth's name is Guy LaLiberte. Guy LaLiberte laid little green eggs all over the house. Now we have a moth situation.

Just before New Year's, at eleven in the morning, there is a message. It's from Punky Rooster, a zine in Iowa saying they want to publish Goldstein's poem about being buried alive in his parents' backyard. He takes a bath singing. He says he feels very important and successful and every time I try to get in a word, he shushes me to be more quiet so that he can make sure to remember each detail of the morning. He says he'll need all the good memories he can get to carry him through darker days.

Heather lives in Montreal and is the author of the poetry collection *Two Eyes Are You Sleeping*.

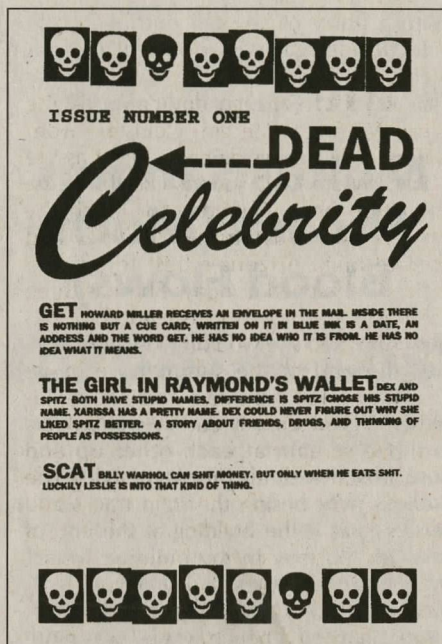
Zine Profile: Dead Celebrity

When and for what purpose did you start Dead Celebrity?

Colin Drew: Dead Celebrity is the name for the pseudo-publishing company that I have been using to put out my zines for the past few years. My first on-going series on Dead Celebrity was called Let's All Die (so far there are five parts with a sixth and final installment on the way soon). Because Let's All Die was a serialized story I ran into a lot of different problems... For starters people would get the first issue and never be able to get their hands on the second. I wanted to avoid this problem with my next project, so I created Dead Celebrity (the zine) which has only short self-contained stories in each issue.

When did you get interested in zines and what aspects of zine culture influenced the creation of Dead Celebrity?

Colin Drew: I got interested in zines, like, five years ago when I was in a band called Marilyn's Vitamins. At first I just read them but eventually I wanted to put out my own, partly to fill up the band's merch table but mostly because I had been scribbling things down for years and wanted to see what people thought. The aspect of zine culture that has influenced me most is the DIY aspect, because I love being in control. I have been involved in a lot of projects that require I work with others — this is often a good experience but sometimes bad — zining is the exact opposite. I am in complete control. I do not have to check anything with anyone. The content is my decision. The release date is my decision. The font is my decision. Me me me me me. That's how I like it.



Name a zine that currently impresses you.

Colin Drew: My fav zine of all time is One Way Glass by Ryan James...it was a comic about Scott Kenney, an average guy enduring high school.... Fucking brilliant.

What are your future plans for Dead celebrity?

Colin Drew: The first few issues of Dead Celebrity are all going to be written by me. Each issue will contain a few short stories, and by the fifth or sixth issue I hope to include works from other writers.

(Audrey Gagnon)

Continued from page 8

selves we see little parts of him in our own sometimes pathetic selves. With Dead Celebrity Drew doesn't ditch his loser heroes; rather he manages to throw them into some truly surreal adventures which step away from the tour diary prose style of Let's All Die and venture into the type of writing that knows very few boundaries and zero censorship. The result is stories that swell with raw honesty and twist themselves into some surprisingly bizarre plots, dragging us from 'shroom induced road trips to shit-eating mishaps. Dead Celebrity borders science fiction, playing host to stories that successfully distort our sense of what is real and what is possible. In "scat" for example Drew writes about Billy, a guy who discovers his ability to shit fifty dollar bills in the aftermath of a drunken dare which consists of him eating his friend's bodily waste. Although he's disgusted with the idea of eating shit for a living, Billy concludes that it has to be better than breaking his back stocking shelves for minimum wage at the local grocery store. While witnessing Billy's slow mental and physical breakdown I can't help but feel a sense of familiarity with what is happening to him. No, I've never eaten other people's shit out of McDonald's bathroom stalls, but I have had shitty low pay jobs with asshole bosses, and although serving lattes to stuck-up yuppies is not the same as feeding on shit everyday, I think there's a pretty strong parallel. I recommend these stories and hope for more of them in the future. (Audrey Gagnon)

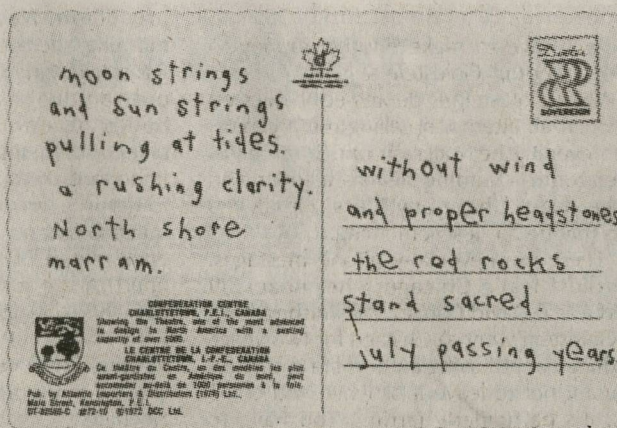
January

EAST

lit/perzine, \$2, Jaime Maddalena, 167 North Valley Drive, Welland ON, L3C 7B6, waterhola@hotmail.com

At the end of the street I grew up on, there was an old hardware store that had probably been around under one name or another since the 1930s. A gruff but lovable old man named Norman ran it with his son-in-law, up until a few years ago when the building abruptly metamorphosed into a Pizza Pizza. The neighbourhood was gob smacked. I remember that, for a few weeks after the business closed its doors, I was fascinated by the piles of garbage left by the curb ... 70 years worth of junk and dead stock, jettisoned to make room for shiny new pizza ovens. It was in one of these piles that I found a 30-year-old collection of airport-themed postcards. The inscriptions were mostly to the effect of: "Oslo's International Airport, a miracle of modern engineering." Not too creative, but enticing enough to make you want to flip the card over and check out the cool vintage photo. In EAST, Jaime Maddalena has documented a journey through Atlantic Canada in poems written on the backs of maritime postcards. Like most postcards, these are printed with descriptions like "Just one of the many scenes along the CABOT TRAIL on Cape Breton, N.S." words that share the 4" x 6" rectangle comfortably with the author's spare verse. Instinctively

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from EAST
by Jaime Maddalena

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I flip the page to see the Cabot Trail photo, but the card fronts are not reprinted. Instead Maddalena relies on her deft word handling to craft evocative Maritime images that are more than adequate substitutes. At times I could almost hear the seagulls overhead and smell the potpourri from tacky ocean-side gift shops. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. In this case, a handful of Maddalena's words are worth a picture. (Jon Sasaki)

February

The Fence: A New Place of Power for Bisexual Women

zine, Vol. #1, Fall 2002, \$?, Cheryl Dobinson, Toronto, cjdobins@yorku.ca

Queer media, mainstream or underground, is not a friendly place for bisexuals. Men or women. So, it is nice to happen upon a zine that speaks directly to those who are bi, in this case specifically women. The Fence titillates from the cover right on through, and not for the obvious reasons. While the cover does feature Mia Jennings' tremendous artwork, it is the title The Fence that should really get any bi-person going. At some point, all bi-people are referred to as fence-sitters; people who can't make up their minds, trying to get the best of both worlds. It is an unfair label and kudos to Cheryl Dobinson for reclaiming it. This is one of those zines that has all that a zine should have: political aggression, subversive content, thoughtful confession and inyerface factor. Of course, the issue at hand is dispelling the common biphobia that exists in both hetero and homo culture. I don't want to minimize that this is a zine for bisexual women, but I do want to mention that bisexual men could easily relate to the message. But, this zine is for bi-women, and it certainly serves them well. Dobinson combines some fantastic fiction, poetry, and amazing non-fiction. "He Said/She Said" is the bisexual anthem. The parallel voices in the poem truly evoke an experience many bis have had. Meanwhile, Dana Shaw's telling of her attempts to find a female lover to go along with her male partner in "Lightening [sic] Does Strike Twice" is another well-travelled bisexual path. These are stories that desperately need to be presented in media in order to squash the rampant biphobia. See? The Fence is not a collection of this and that, mildly strung together. It is a very strong circular argument. Poetry, fiction, non-fiction, confession all working toward the goal of squashing biphobia. And just to make the point, as any zine should, the strong artistic element makes people open their eyes to actually notice the words on the page. Not only the tremendous work by Mia Jennings, but also the collages by Anj Ryan and photos by Rainbow pull The Fence together and make it a complete package. One of the strongest zines I've seen; I just wish there was a bisexual male companion. (Jon Pressick)

Montreal Round-Up: Events Galore

With a flurry of late fall entries into the eclectic intergalactic Montreal indie art scene, I travelled into the not-too-distant Plateau for a frenzied altitude of activity...

Multus Sanguis Fluvius (Much Blood Flows)

Thursday, October 17, 2002. The Plateau. La Sala Rosa. 4292 St. Laurent.

Alexis O'Hara is running the asylum, which in this case means pretty nurses and bad nose jobs, free candy pills at the bar and an endless river of blood. The nurse station was as good as the bar itself, providing consolation and free medical advice throughout the evening of Alexis' contagious hysteria. Her asylum performance included a head swathed in Band-Aids, screaming "Jimmy will you be my boyfriend," philosophizing with cats, and performance sets with musical accompaniment. Alexis was on bass (she played with the rock band Holy Moly). "They're young but have been playing together every day for close to 10 years so they are tight!"

The launch was an evening of indoor fireworks that was memorable, fun and by no means serious at all, which is a good thing. I asked Miss O'Hara about her desire to be a weirdo. Her response was, "I don't think the issue is that I want to be a weirdo, but rather that I'm no longer trying to suppress the weirdo in me. I just try to put on shows that I would enjoy. I like a show. A spectacle." And she certainly is succeeding.

There was a nice piece about a banana transplant by Dr. Avocado, a very delicate procedure. One almost forgot it was a launch for the CD, which has a very nice photo of a nurse on it. And about those hot nurses... "The nurses told me that folks were coming up and talking about illness, their disillusionment with the medical institution, their health fears and the like. Some were joking around with it all, but others were earnest. I used to read a lot of self-help books, partly with an ironic eye but partly out of a genuine interest in fixing myself. And I would infuse my performances with bons mots from Julia Cameron, Deepak Chopra and Frank Pounders."

Released by Grenadiere records, In Abulia explores O'Hara's rather odd exis-

tence as an artist who has decided to share the frightening and internal landmine garage sale dementia teetering landscape of her mind with the innocent citizens of earth. There was also a musical set with members of her old band. "We used to have a band called Jimmy Brain that was 100% improv madness. Becky Foon is a good friend and a brilliant cellist, she plays in Silver Mt. Zion and Set Fire to Flames, and Lisa Gamble, drummer, is a multi-instrumentalist force of nature." Find Alexis O'Hara stuff at: <http://www.grenadinerecords.com/alexis.html>



ExpoZine!

Saturday, October 19, 2002. The Plateau. La Sala Rosa. 4292 St. Laurent.

Well it's happened. Montreal loses the Expos but gains a press fair. Now if you're a sports fan, never you mind. Let me clear something up about these so-called underground events in Montreal. Despite the rain and the occasional bouts of human respiratory congestion, the turn-outs are always impressive. I heard a woman speaking to Ian Ferrier of this venue as an intimate gathering, which it was, considering the rain outside and the heat inside...

With zines representing both linguistic pursuits here in Quebec (comics, silk screens, Blood Sisters, Kobold Press, New Pompeii, Billy Mavreas, some academia lit-journals and even some cookbook-type publishing outfits) the gulf between genres was wide enough for even the most critical of inky pulp explorers. I ventured into the heart of the matter, doing some random polls along the way.

Jay the Blind J-walker is doing fine, (there was a giant cardboard cut out of the famous visually impaired icon.) A few zine-people were nice enough to anonymously scribble down their thoughts on this, the first annual fair of small press comics and zines in Montreal... "Fun, nice crowd, although I prefer a fair more saturated by zines than small press publishers' displays (don't get me wrong, small press rocks) only for the specific atmosphere that an all-zine event provides (i.e. trading)." Another zinester without a name said: "Small press and organizers don't have many venues for exposure — this is a great opportunity for both public awareness-raising and networking among zinesters, etc. which creates a sense of community and support."

The fair was conceptualized by Fish Piss editor and BP contributor Louis Rastelli. Tables and chairs were arranged early on by the ever-enthusiastic Andy Brown, king of Conundrum Press. Sherwin Tjia was there with his eclectic circus of concrete poetry, in zine and paperback form, as well as his infamous Pedigree Girls (for which a sequel is scheduled for April 2003, Insomniac Press). With a successful turnout in a great building, the friendly David Widginton of Cumulus Press, lots of enthusiasm and promotional wizardry, ExpoZine II should be a successful sequel. Find out more at: <http://www.expozine.ca/>

Swiftly Lazarus & Short Fuse

Saturday, October 19, 2002. The Plateau. La Sala Rosa. 4292 St. Laurent.

The third and final main event here at La Sala Rosa took place moments after the excess paper was swept and tables folded up from Expozine. After a successful

show in New York, the spoken word clique returned to Montreal for the launch of *The Envelope Please* (Tom Walsh, Todd Swift) which also saw the launch and reading from *Short Fuse*, an international poetry CD/book anthology. The two spectrums of poetry, or branches if you will, were heavily discussed by the stand-up routine-cum-interview by Walsh and Swift. As the giant book was continually plugged, it seemed the artists themselves would prevail. While the book is impressive (and the reason for the assembly, as Cory Frost pointed out), it's expensive, but if you do buy it, it would be the only poetry book you would need for the next 25 years. Frost offered prose

as an acceptable antidote and went into a piece from his highly anticipated first book of stories *My Own Devices* which at one point described a fight between the narrator and a pig on the corner of a city street. This was a nice break in the vast tramway of spoken word and helped derail the similitude of the event. Ink poetess Stephanie Bolster was on hand as well as Impure co-author Vince Tinguely, Catherine Kidd who did her slyly erotic science lesson *Sea Peach*, and the always charming Victoria Stanton, as well as Tug Dumbly and Phil Norton, who assisted in this apoplectic night of verbose word slingshots.

(Nathaniel G. Moore)

Toronto: Lost and Found

Found Magazine Tour, November, Cameron House

"Sometimes the authors of the notes don't always paint themselves in the best light," jokes Davy Rothbart. On stage, the lanky redhead pulls another crumbled sheet of paper out of a considerable stack. He reads a rant that ends, "Why would I take your stuff, when I can get my own?...Love, Mom." He selects a communiqué from a jilted lover concluding, "Mario I hate you You're a fucking liar ps page me later?" Then Rothbart selects one boy's earnest description of the band he loves more than anything: "Marilyn Manson stands for your good side and your bad side Like Marilyn Monroe and Charles Manson."

Rothbart is the 27-year-old indie impresario behind Found Magazine, Foundmagazine.com, and a fall tour that encompassed a stunning 46 destinations including Toronto and Montreal. With the timing of a comedian, Rothbart has us hanging on every word, waiting for the

fateful twist that will turn the mundane into the surreally hilarious. But Rothbart isn't a comedian and he doesn't write his own gags. People send him this stuff from all over the world. They find notes plastered to the sidewalk, stuck under their car windows, "Stop putting crab on my car. Just. Stop. It!" and in some cases they even risk life and limb to dash across a highway in search of a letter bobbing aimlessly down a median. In the world of found notes, Rothbart is the king of fools, urging his court jesters down dirty alleys in search of yet another serendipitous peek into the mind of an anonymous, and usually hapless, scribbler. He's a smart-ass hipster whose zine mixes irreverent, street-cred ebionics with a smarmy appreciation for the stranger moments in life. "I'm lucky to have experienced the people that I encounter through the notes," explains Rothbart before resuming his big city tour. "They stick with me. All those people are part of me now."

(Hal Niedzviecki)

www.brokenpencil.com

The newly revamped and better than ever Broken Pencil website has finally arrived. Featuring:

- Post Your Own Reviews of Zines, Books, CDs, Videos or whatever! Go to the Sharpener section and click on Reader Reviews. The best reviews will be run in upcoming issues of Broken Pencil. Indie culture only please!
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- Search by Resource: Go to Resources, Click on Topics and choose from Zines and indie media, Indie publishing, Indie film, Indie music, Women and grrrls, Queer culture, and Bad ass social commentary.

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Call For Submissions

URBAN GRAFFITI X: URBAN NOIR Ever wonder what happens after the 9 to 5ers go home, and the preinvented workaday world turns in for the night? **URBAN GRAFFITI X: URBAN NOIR** wants to find out. We welcome work which delves into the so-called dark side of city life in all of its myriad manifestations—violence, sexuality, addiction, criminality, music—work which dares to peel back the scab where the urban fabric isn't just fraying, but splitting wide apart—work which transgresses the boundaries and limits of what it is civilized, then giving voice to what's there. Uncompromising. Explicit. Authentic. Unsensational. Gritty. Gutsy. Erotic. Sarcastic. Hardboiled. Nihilistic. We welcome work Canada Customs agents would turn back at the border. **URBAN GRAFFITI** is a litzone of transgressive, discursive, post-realist writing concerned with the struggles of hard-edged urban living, alternative lifestyles, deviant culture, presented in their most raw and unpretentious form. Submissions of fiction (to a maximum of 5000 words), poetry and prose poetry, comics, B&W artwork, photography, collage, etc. are invited and must be accompanied by a brief writer's bio, and SASE with sufficient Canadian postage for a reply or valid email address for a reply. **Urban Graffiti** pays in copies and retains the right to reprint accepted submissions in anthology form. Hard and fast deadline: June 2003. Send to: **URBAN GRAFFITI**, Mark McCawley, Editor Post Office Box 41164, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6J 6M7, cogwheels@worldgate.com

OPEN SPACE is an anthology of all-new fantastic fiction by Canadian writers, edited by Claude Lalumière. The goal of the book is diversity. **OPEN SPACE** will showcase the diversity of fantastic fiction, from SF to fantasy to surrealism to horror — especially the spaces between those genres. **OPEN SPACE** will represent the diversity of Canadians — whether geographically and culturally or by age and gender, etc. **OPEN SPACE** will be published by Bakka Books/Red Deer Press. **OPEN SPACE** is set to launch at the 2003 Worldcon in Toronto, along with its companion volume, **ISLAND DREAMS: MONTREAL WRITERS OF THE FANTASTIC**. Full guidelines are at: <http://lostpages.net/openspace.html>

Music — **Wampus Multimedia** is seeking submissions from new artists in all genres. **Wampus** is an indie label run by artists, for artists. In a marketplace driven increasingly by the lowest common denominator, **Wampus** develops artists who put originality and dedication to their craft above all. It creates an environment where those artists can promote their work as more than just a fringe presence in the music industry. Most talented artists are "on the outside looking in," writing and

performing in a commercial vacuum. All the great songs and choice bookings in the world will not necessarily bring them to the attention of a broader audience. Beyond chops and material, successful artists need access to promotion and marketing. Otherwise, their music, no matter how appealing, will languish in obscurity. Through its relationships with the best publicists in indie music, and its recent <./localmusicstore.html> purchase of LocalMusicStore.com, **Wampus** reaches the indie media and fans who matter most to emerging artists. Making a record is an artistic endeavor, but releasing it is a commercial one. Don't be fooled by the predatory hype and glitz around conventional record deals. **Wampus** artists maintain creative control of their work and play an active role in how it is presented to the public. They work not for the label, but with it. **Wampus** approaches its artist agreements in the only way that makes sense — as partnerships. Interested? Visit us at: <http://wampus.com/programs.html>

The Halifax-based Drawing Club is preparing for a guerilla mail art project to bring drawing to the masses. We need Canadian postage stamps! Donations of any denomination would be greatly appreciated, up to 48-cent stamps. Got extras? Stick 'em in (not on) an envelope and mail them ASAP to: Drawing Club Stamp Fund, R. Roberts, Treasurer, 1333 Dresden Row, Halifax, NS, B3J 2J9 Remember the Drawing Club motto: "Can't is not a word!"

Greetings zine people! I thought you might be interested in this mail-art project I'm doing. I'm collecting handmade, one-of-a-kind, postcards from around the world, for a future exhibition. Please take part! If you need to do is make a cool, original postcard, with any theme, out of any materials, and mail it off to the address below. When I get enough, I'll compile them into an art show. I'm also (slowly) building a website, to showcase the incoming cards as well. <http://thepostcardproject.cjb.net>. The Postcard Project c/o Christopher Thinn, PO BOX 73599, 509 St Clair Ave W, Toronto, ON, M6C 1C0, Canada

It's never too early! The Zine Yearbook Volume 7 will include excerpts from zines published in 2002. You tell us what should be included. Zines must have been printed in 2002 and have circulations of less than 5,000 copies per issue. All you need to do is photocopy the article or artwork that you want nominate, and include the zine's name and address with your entry. Please send your nominations to: The Zine Yearbook, PO Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402. All entries must be received

by February 28, 2003. For more information, email: zineyearbook@yahoo.com. You can also send nominations from your own zine! Please, paper zines only — the Zine Yearbook does not consider e-zines at this time. Look for The Zine Yearbook Vol 7 during summer 2003 from Soft Skull Press.

echolocation is a new journal run by Graduate English students at the University of Toronto currently seeking submissions for its next issue. We're looking for poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction. Submission Guidelines: poetry — maximum 5 poems; fiction and creative non-fiction — maximum 5000 words. Please send your work, along with a cover letter and SASE, to: **echolocation**, Triny Finlay, Editor, 7 King's College Circle, Department of English, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, M5S 3K1

GET REAL! This Magazine's Creative Non-Fiction contest is back. Enter to win a fabulous cash prize, plus publication in Canada's leading alternative magazine. We're looking for real-life stories, eloquently told with a literary approach, a strong voice, attention to narrative and compelling subject matter. Send us your work, and join This Magazine's long tradition of publishing outstanding literary and creative non-fiction. **WHO QUALIFIES?** Your first publishing credit (outside of a school or university publication) must have been within the last 10 years. Of course, unpublished writers are welcome too. **SEND ENTRIES TO:** This Magazine Prize for Creative Non-Fiction, 401 Richmond St. W., Suite 396, Toronto ON M5V 3A8. **FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Subscribe to our free contest newsletter (just send an email to greatcanadian-literaryhunt-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or email us at info@thismagazine.ca **RULES & REGULATIONS** 1. Entries must be postmarked by March 1, 2003. 2. There is no entry fee. 3. You may send in multiple entries. 4. Entries must be submitted by post or messenger. Fax and email submissions will be discarded unread. 5. All entries must be original and unpublished. 6. Entries must be no longer than 3,000 words. 7. Entrant's first professional publishing credit (outside student media) must have been within the last 10 years. 8. The prize is \$250, plus publication in the May/June 2003 issue of This Magazine. 9. Judging will be blind. Entrant's name MUST NOT appear on the manuscript itself. Include your full name, address, telephone number and email address on a separate sheet. 10. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope for notification of results. 11. Manuscripts will not be returned. **DO NOT SEND ORIGINALS. ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY MARCH 1, 2003.** Winners will be contacted by phone. Entrants who provide a SASE will receive contest results by mail.

Support the OCAP
June 15th defendants.

visit **www.ocap.ca**
to show your solidarity.

The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

The trial of Stefan Pilipa, Gaetan Heroux and John Clarke is now underway. Stefan and Gaetan are charged with "participating in a riot" and face two years in jail. John has been accused of counseling to participate in a riot and counseling to assault police. He could go to jail for up to five years. These charges are drawn from the most reactionary and antiquated sections of the Canadian Criminal Code that date back to 18th Century Britain. They are not normal criminal charges but tools of political repression designed to crush opposition at times when the elites felt the lower orders had to be put back in their place with a sharp lesson. That they are being used in Tory governed Ontario in 2003 speaks volumes about the political climate in which OCAP is operating.

KEEP IT FAKE

by Terence Dick

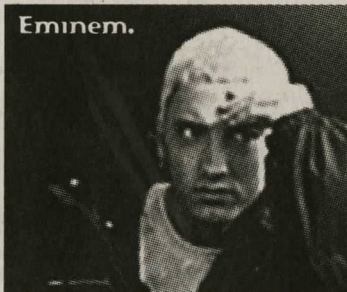
In a recent New York Times column Kélefa Sanneh takes a retrospective look at the year in music and remarks on a current divide in the world of hip hop. He points out two — not necessarily opposing but definitely divergent — tendencies in the form, both identified as reactions to questions of authenticity (by him and the musicians themselves). On one side, Sanneh points to Missy Elliott and the Roots, artists who stray from a focus on rapping in their music, yet maintain their hip hop credentials through an understanding of hip hop as a culture. He writes, “hip-hop is a sensibility, not a sound — it’s who they are, so it can’t be taken away.” On the other side, with Eminem as a key figure, hip hop is identified with craft wherein rap is a practice to be mastered. Eminem’s much lauded skills qualify him as true hip hop and gain him entry and acceptance in that world. His movie, *8 Mile*, dramatizes the struggle. The freestyle competitions that provide the dramatic core to the movie represent the apotheosis of this way of thinking.

This division between craft and culture splits the music in a number of different ways. Whereas the crafty rapper is in solitary pursuit of his crown, the cultured hip-hoppers identify with the social whole; they collaborate instead of compete. The former is exclusive; one has to prove oneself in order to qualify. The latter, inclusive. Rappers can sing, singers can drop hip hop beats, drummers can be as important as MCs and (in a curious corollary to Eminem’s situation) foreign white boys, such as Britain’s the Streets, can rap and, in a wholly unexpected way, participate in hip hop culture.

Both appeals, to craft or to culture, are means to defend the authority of hip-hoppers and, by extension, hip hop itself. Whereas one is dogmatic and conservative in its representation of the music, the other is fluid, acknowledging the power of the form but refusing to locate it in one act (rapping) and one location (American ghettos), allowing it to change and adapt as it intersects with different cultures.

However, the utopian sentiments of the latter perspective remain grounded in the strictures of hip hop’s core practice, rapping (DJing, breaking and bombing no longer hold equal importance). Without the essentialists, those microphone warriors who battle for the title King of Rap, hip hop is in danger of floating away like a superficial style. The essentialists have a vested interest in the value of the music, that is what they defend when they exercise their skills. The cosmonauts of hip hop culture (those that explore the outer reaches) retain a sense of its value, but are less protectionist, more confident of their mutual possession (they have hip hop and hip hop has them) and thus confident in sharing and stretching and blending. It is not coincidental that musicians like Missy Elliott and the Roots are black

Eminem.



and have an undeniable socio-cultural connection to the history of hip hop, whereas Eminem is white and must continually defend his place in the culture.

A recent interview in a Toronto newsweekly with Canada’s Swollen Members included the inevitable questions about “realness” and authenticity. Being Canadian and partly white, the Swollen Members are, for many, on the outskirts of hip hop. Like Eminem, they look inward, toward the centre, and aspire to belong and emphasize their identity, their realness. On the other hand, Missy and the Roots could be described as insiders heading out. Without ignoring the many black American rappers like Nas or Jay-Z who both have an unquestionable hip hop lineage and still conduct themselves defensively and skillfully, constantly sermonizing on their right to rap, the importance of realness to outsiders (for example, white

and/or Canadian musicians) demonstrates not so much that outsiders want in, but rather, how to get in and stay there.

The craft merchants identify what is essential, what has utmost value, and they bestow value in their continued adherence. The culturalists recognize the same value and yet are willing to part with it (in part). These different takes on what is essentially the same belief (parsed as “keeping it real”) boil down to two different psychologies of possession and identity. For Missy and the Roots, you are what you are and that can’t be taken away. For Eminem et al, you are what you are but you can lose that.

There is no greater fear than the loss of identity. To become what you are not is akin to death; the loss of soul threatened by the soulless. This fear is socially manifest in the growth of any sub-culture or independent community. Once a community expands beyond its original constituency — and in the cultural realm where communication and the generation of shared meaning is tantamount, that expansion is almost immediate — challenges to identity are forthcoming. In music, this expansion is synonymous with popularity. In defence of the realm, discursive strategies like “keeping it real” arise.

There was a time when accusations of “selling out” arose wherever indie rock was heard. Nowadays, while “keeping it real” punctuates every rapper’s pontification; pronouncements that someone has “sold out” or is a “poser” are hardly heard amongst the corduroy clad brethren of the electric guitar.

In preparation for this article, I sent out a survey to the constituent email list of Toronto zine, website (www.wavelengthtoronto.com) and weekly concert series Wavelength. This bastion of indie rock in all its ever-splintering subclasses (space rock, improv noise, theory punk, fake rap, orch prog, avant folk, math funk, kraut dub, afrobilly, etc.) unites an ever-growing community of independent musicians and music fans. The survey posed a couple questions about selling out, street credibility and popularity vs quality. Guestrimating that Wavelength

Dear Peaches,

There were only ten months left in the millennium when I first saw you. My friends and I had wandered into the El Mocambo to see Bobby Conn. You were opening. My friends were from Montreal and they were really bored with Toronto.

We walked in halfway through your set and we were changed forever.

You weren't parading the corpse of grunge. You weren't wearing a crushed velvet dress and doing Celtic love songs. It was you, with your unshaped long-short hair and Scummy tube top—commanding an entire room of affectations hipsters with little more than a beatbox and your voice.

Who were you my francophone friends asked? I shamefully had never heard of you so we went backstage to meet you. I was such a corn dog and asked you where you were from. You said Toronto and I said that's amazing because you don't suck. I think you smiled.
~~You met some~~



has at least 100 subscribers (the number is probably much higher than that), I found it telling that only three people responded. Sure I sent it out a week before Christmas and I imagine most people, like myself, ignore mass emails that offer nothing in return, but if this were a different time, I would have expected a chorus of voices and rants and arguments all concerned with the sanctity of "the scene." Instead, dada white-soul bluesman Alex Lukashevsky of Deep Dark United wrote, "selling out is impossible to define or defy in this day and age." Electronic artist Beef Terminal replied with a full paragraph each on street cred and selling out, but was excessively liberal in his judgement of others:

"...I don't believe any bands or individuals in the Canadian music scene have 'sold out.' If you look at those most often accused of such a thing, it's usually people or groups who have signed to a major or something...but you can't really accuse the Avril Lavignes and the Sum 41s of the world of selling out because they only fulfill their own place, meaning they would not be who they are without being on a major label. 'Independent' bands such as Do Make Say Think, Godspeed, Mean Red Spiders, etc. have stayed independent, and that is why they are who they are."

This disinterest in drawing lines and acceptance of different economies has something to do with the inclusive notion of culture upheld by the likes of Missy Elliot and the Roots. However, while hip hop seems to be experiencing growing pains, wrestling with an ever-expanding audience, fighting to keep its history remembered, indie rock doesn't have such problems. Most indie kids carry themselves proudly with an air of indifference and I attribute this absence of agitation in the indie nation to Nirvana and all that they wrought.

Nirvana's appearance on the MTV Video Awards in the early '90s turned the world upside down. Their entrance (and Guns 'n' Roses' exit) marked a sea change in what was possible for a band. It was radical and beautiful to see a once dirty punk, van driving, basement gigging band become the biggest rock band in the world. It was also torturous for those invested in the rock underground. Kurt Cobain was one of those tortured souls. His recently published journals attest to his struggle with success and selling out. His suicide presaged the end of what was optimistically called "alternative" rock. An era of surprise ended and was replaced by the period of stability in which we now find ourselves. No one cocks an eye when the White Stripes win MTV awards and the charts are stocked with loogans

**No one cocks an
eye when the
White Stripes
win MTV awards
and the charts
are stocked with
loogans singing
neo-grunge**

singing neo-grunge. Punk rock appears at every level of the economic spectrum and independent bands are not shut out from the media but can have as high a profile as any manufactured and bankrolled pop star. Which means there is no inside anymore and no outside wanting in.

This flattening also means that "modern" rock (that is, contemporary, not classic) is not on top. Rock has had its day. It will continue to inspire and entertain millions around the world, but it is no longer in ascendance. It is just there. There is nothing progressive about it, only variations on what we have. Hip hop, on the other hand, is nothing but new and fresh, new sounds, new producers, new raps, new voices. It's a shock to see a veteran rapper. It's commonplace to hype radical producers such as the Neptunes and Timbaland. Rap, especially mainstream rap, is a field ripe with experimentation and innovation.

What does this mean for music culture? Lukashevsky makes another interesting point when he writes, "authenticity is a non-value, only the newness of something has meaning these days." While many may disagree, a lot buy into this sentiment. So tied up in novelty and being current, electroclash experienced backlash before anyone got to buy any records. For some, like electroclash mastermind Larry Tee, that was the point. Selling out is authentic. Fake is the new real. And you can keep it or leave it.

But apart from crass New York (self) promoters and the art students who have invites to the party, music is still based in culture and craft. Aside from the worry of getting paid or not getting paid (and according to two of my three survey respondents, indie rockers don't get paid and don't expect to), that which sustains us as individuals and a community, is shared and practiced. Success is a threat only when it distracts us. Other than that, bring on the benjamins!

You met some connected people from Berlin and they really dug what you were doing. You moved to Berlin and got really popular with the cognoscenti. That's cool, you deserve it.

You were never treated well by the Toronto press. When you opened for Elastica *Now Magazine* called you "Primal Scream therapy," as if Rock n Roll should be anything but. I guess they were upset that you had the temerity to be successful without playing fake country for the Queen St. West polyester cowboy set. I guess I'm writing this letter to say thank you.

Thank you Peaches, for killing the nineties and all that horrible decade stood for.

Love Always,
A Fan

P.S. Oh, and please don't hate Toronto. It's just too busy thinking it's New York to realize it's actually Albany.

ALMOST

FAMOUS

S O B I
E U U N
L T Y ?
L I I
I O N
N R G
G

by Heidi Chapson

My first brush with a major celebrity came rather late in life. It was back in April 1997 at The Loft, in Montreal's red light district. By then, I was all grown up and no longer quite the giddy teenager I once was over sexy Australian singer Michael Hutchence. He and fellow INXS band mate Tim Farriss were in town as part of their album promo tour, doing meet 'n' greet session for *Elegantly Wasted* (their last studio album before Hutchence was found hanging in a hotel room in Sydney). At the time, I was working for a music store and we had been invited to the record launch, so naturally I had to go for old times' sake. What is it that Dr. Phil says? An individual has five defining moments in their life? Or is it seven? Anyway, that night in April was one of mine.

I will be the first to admit to having been star-struck at times, and I still admire the occasional celebrity. I realize these people are living, breathing human beings who have simply chosen career paths that have brought them into the spotlight. Some have had the opportunity to see these people progress with their careers and witnessed the trials and tribulations that they have undergone in order to achieve the status that is now viewed by the general public. Although two of my friends are familiar voices on the radio to thousands of people across the island of Montreal, to me they are still hard-working individuals who bleed and hurt like the rest of us. To others they are voices emanating from speakers—mysterious beings about whom presumptions are made based on their voices, the content, and the delivery. Essentially, what the public sees (or hears) is only the final product. The accomplishments of celebrities are what make these people somehow superhuman. However, the important factor is how individuals gain notoriety, and through what means they manage to gain it.

Various independent artists have come into the spotlight, but was it through their hard work and perseverance or through clever marketing strategies? What happens when an artist becomes successful? At times, fame and the rise to stardom hold a negative connotation. People equate fame with mainstream or commercial, which in turn carries the stigma of "selling out" especially when it comes to the underground followers who have supported certain artists since the beginning of their careers. What exactly constitutes fame? Does it entail household names and mass appeal or

could it simply refer to recognition within a given community?

One of the artists that I contacted on my quest for the meaning of fame was ...And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead. Conrad Keely, a member of this Austin-based indie-rock group (who eventually signed to a major label), once thought that it would be anyone's ultimate goal to be famous. He soon changed his opinion however, when a grade 9 personality test showed that he was the only one in the class who had any desire to be famous. His take on fame these days is that "fame is the extreme of recognition. Whereas those that are recognized are usually simply respected for their accomplishments, famous people are idolized and admired (or detested) for things that aren't necessarily accomplishments — their natural beauty or what they represent symbolically to people, a cause or an ideal." If that success "was achieved by a compromise of one's values or convictions" then the artist would be "selling out." "I am more likely to call someone a sell-out who has changed themselves entirely in order to be accepted or perceived differently, at the expense of those who knew them before."

Canadian experimental poet Christian Bök has sold more than 11,000 copies of his book *Eunoia*. That number



Peaches.

is astounding. Most poets are fortunate if they sell between 500-1000 copies of a book. Along with winning the prestigious Griffin prize, Bök was featured as a "rock star" of Canadian poetry" ranking him number 4 in *Shift Magazine's* "Top 75 People Places Things That Will Make You Happy," and the *Globe and Mail* style section even went out shopping with him to see where some of his favourite spots are. Why are we so curious to delve into the personal lives of people who have achieved great success? Is it our innate curiosity peeking through wondering how they got to that point, or something more primitive that stems to the beginning of

time with our worship of heroes, gods and demi-gods?

Conrad Keely suggests that "even our current celebrities have a tendency to be ascribed a prime attribute, much like a god — that of beauty, strength, wisdom, intelligence, agility, cleverness, charisma, limitless mirth, etc. And their anti-celebrity counterparts, our modern 'villains,' are given the negative attributes of greed, cruelty, bloodlust, stupidity, etc. So in order for society to supply this demand for celebrities, we need people who are willing to be celebrities, people who want to be famous."

A Concise Time Line of Selling Out

by Brian Joseph Davis

Christianity becomes the craze in Rome, till even Emperor Constantine converts.

Goethe writes *Faust Part I*: the first story detailing the relationship between manager and artist.

The Vichy Government of France signs the Armistice Convention, effectively leasing their country to the Nazis.

The Situationist International is founded by Parisian intellectuals Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem. They claim that their "ideas are in everyone's head" and that the dominant culture thrives on recuperating rebellion into the spectacle. To ensure they're never recuperated they descend into alcoholism and suicide. The closest France ever came to having Rock 'n' Roll.

A punk named Jesus wears tattered rags and has unkempt hair. He tells people to ignore churches, that salvation is found within and life can be based on something other than competition. His early followers sport tattoos and are beaten up by the jock-like Romans.

Galileo recants his astronomical theories before the Inquisition.

Lenin thinks the ideas of Marx could change the lives of Russians and possibly the world. But Russia's a tough and large terrain and Marxism turns into a more refined method of exploitation than Capitalism. Trotsky, trying to keep it real, is not happy. Then Lenin dies. Stalin steps in and eventually murders millions of "ideologically corrupt" people.

Elvis Presley attends his physical for induction into the army.

30 AD

306 AD

1633

1808

1905-1924

1940

1958

1962



"Our current celebrities have a tendency to be ascribed a prime attribute, much like a god — that of beauty, strength, wisdom, intelligence, agility, cleverness, charisma, limitless, mirth, etc."

Conrad Keely, Trail of Dead



Artists who straddle that fine line between indie-culture and the mainstream must strive to obtain a certain amount of recognition for their art, while attempting to remain truthful to themselves. Ex-Torontonian garage-punk electronic queen, Peaches, went from opening for Corpuse to having her music used for Europe's fashion industry catwalks in a matter of three years. She feels that "fame sucks, recognition is cool." At this point in her career Peaches isn't looking for anymore butchy grlz or girly boys crashing the stage to worship her, lapping up anything she deigns to give them. In response to some questions I had for her, she commented, "In my case it's already a big mindfuck about the amount of people who know about me so I don't feel the need to attract so many more." As for marketing oneself, she admits that it is relatively important as long as she approves of how it is being done. "It's funny to think of the audience growing and wondering what really made it grow. Was it the marketing, the hype, or really the music? I'm not trying to put the music down, I'm just wondering how an audience really grows." At what point would Peaches feel like she's "selling out"? "Well to be completely honest I feel that making another record is selling out but I'm doing it." In keeping with Trail of Dead's definition of fame, Peaches is not one of those who covets fame, but one of

The home computer industry is founded by hippies in their garages who want to change the world. Soon preferring hot tubs to bulgar and brown rice, the Silicon Millionaires do indeed change the world by giving us a new white collar underclass and smart bombs (though the Internet is admittedly really cool).

Bob Dylan converts to Christianity.

The perfume company Jovan presents...The Rolling Stones world tour.

Buick moves to acquire the rights to use The Doors' "Light My Fire" in a commercial. Jim Morrison personally phones Buick to inform them that if the deal goes through he will torch a Buick on stage. The deal is not pursued.

Former Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver converts to Christianity.

Germaine Greer, author of *The Female Eunich* poses in *Penthouse* holding a banana. The death or future of feminism?

Andy Warhol starts doing portraits of oil barons and de-commissioned royalty as his main source of income.

Selling out is taken to whole new levels of Post Modernity! Malcolm McLaren, former manager of the Sex Pistols releases the *The Great Rock n' Roll Swindle*, a brilliant album of disco, lounge and orchestral versions of Pistols songs. This posits pop culture as an end game where all product is essentially just that: product.

1968

1970

1971

1975

1976

1978

1979

1981



Charged live performances have brought recognition to New Jersey's noise-making hip hop trio Dälek, who recently completed a tour in North America and Europe. Having done their time as an opening act, 2002 found Dälek achieving headliner status. According to Dälek, "I think the important thing is to play. Play anywhere and everywhere you can. That's how you let the people know you are there. I think it's an honest feeling as an artist to want to be recognized for the art one creates. However, wanting masses of people to be chanting your name and fainting at your very sight is a far cry off from recognition. That is wanting fame. It's enough to be able to make the music you want to make without compromising it, and be able to make a comfortable living from it. When you are changing and compromising your art, just to keep or attract an audience (is when you are 'selling out')."

production company. They have been accused of "selling out." The boys are now based in New York City, able to market the age-old concept of shock value content and sell it to corporate America. They claim that the problem with Canadian magazines is a lack of entrepreneurship. "So the problem is not just content in Canadian mags, but that Canadians have an inherent fear of capitalism. They're scared to make a buck. And they love mediocrity. They love it when you're just doing okay, but as soon as you start doing well they freak out. Canadians don't want to do well. We've been hearing of Vice selling out since we first started getting coloured pages. I think it goes back to what I was saying about this Canadian love of mediocrity and not progressing."

tro-'80s-new-wave-revival roller coaster. "We just can't get enough recognition" is what they admit during one of their less facetious responses to my questions on the whole concept of fame. For Chicks on Speed the importance lies in capturing as many listeners as possible because music is a social thing.

						Selling out is cold. Selling In is HOT! The trend towards having severely limited ties with media conglomerates grows. Artists as diverse as Aimee Mann, Einstürzende Neubauten, Jim Munroe, Wire, Sloan, Public Enemy and Dave Eggers have ripped up their Faustian contracts and started their own companies
			The very weird '90s begin with Sonic Youth recommending Nirvana to their label DGC. See 30 AD-306 AD.		Kurt Cobain, concerned about being a rock star, ends up dying like one.	
	Tom Waits successfully sues Frito-Lay for using a Waits impersonator to perform a jingle based on his song "Step Right Up."			Selling out reaches a new low of Post-Modernity! Mark Kostabi (Jeff Koons minus the talent) pretends to be clever by having his terrible paintings mass produced by underpaid studio assistants. He ends up becoming the world's wealthiest living artist and a major asshole.	Audio Daily Double. WE'VE APPEARED IN ADS FOR NIKE. McDONALD'S, STARBUCKS, VOLKSWAGEN et al. Who are The Boredoms, The Shins, Superchunk, The Orb, Stereolab, Busta Rhymes, The Butthole Surfers, Yo La Tengo and Henry Rollins?	
A broke David Bowie releases an album of lame synth funk and remains in a cocaine stupor on stage for two years. Bowie is culturally irrelevant for over a decade.		Performance artist and Bongwater chanteuse Ann Magnuson stars on the ABC sitcom Anything But Love.				
1983	1988	1989	1990	1993	1994	1995-2002
						FUTURE TRENDS

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

by Kate Ziegan

"I ate today."
"Me too. Keep Fighting."

Ironie smackdown or expression of solidarity? Ever since my friend Sandy tipped me off to this exchange on the bathroom wall of a midtown bar, I've been intrigued. Maybe both writers are joking. Maybe the second is making a joke at the first's expense. Maybe nobody's joking at all. The only certainty is that three months after reading this I'm still puzzling over it, and while that may be indicative of crippling nerdiness on my part I prefer to think that it has more to do with the power of the medium in question.

I am an incurable bathroom-graffiti devotee. I'll read anything: lovelorn missives, misspelled rants, Oprah-style self-help maxims, you name it. Recently I've been photographing it too, leading to many an awkward encounter with my washroom-mates as I emerge from the stall with camera in hand. As they edge warily towards the door I try to reassure them that "it's for the graffiti!" but they rarely seem to understand. I can't deny that a lot of what appears on the stall wall is breathtakingly stupid, but the medium still deserves some respect. Where else can the boundaries between reader/writer and public/private be so easily collapsed? The zine is often lauded as the supreme exemplar of alternative media, but even though washroom graffiti functions in similar ways it is rarely recognized as an equally valid forum. Usually characterized by a provocation-and-response structure that lends itself especially well to feminist discourse, women's washroom graffiti can be a powerful mode of communication. It remains an intellectual cipher lurking Quasimodo-style in the shadows while its political potential goes unexamined.

Because zines exist outside of the capitalist sphere and their concerns do not necessarily support any clearly defined national interest, they are often hailed as the poster children of alternative media. In his book *Notes from the Underground*, academic hipster Stephen Duncombe writes, "zinesters consider what they do as an alternative to and strike against commercial culture and consumer capitalism." Nevertheless, zine culture can be exclusionary, access to the supplies and machinery needed for production is not available to all, and fairs are usually restricted to urban centres. In addition, Canada Post's slow-ass ways undermine the immediate engagement/response that would ideally occur within a radical, popular alternative medium.

Similar to zine culture, women's washroom graffiti offers some definite advantages: involvement and access. Content and form can't be entirely separated here, but women's washroom graffiti addresses issues

that are generally ignored elsewhere. In an article published in 1975, Curtis Ingham found that the most popular subjects addressed on the stall wall were: sex, love, marriage, sexuality, abortion, politics, and strong feminist messages. These have remained remarkably consistent over the past few decades, with the notable exception of marriage. A brief perusal of any major newspaper will reveal that women's feelings towards these issues do not generally constitute front-page news. In response to a sticker reading, "Did you eat someone today? Go Vegetarian," one on-campus graffitist responded "YES—AND SHE TASTED FABULOUS!" Naturally I look forward to the day that this sentiment appears in the op-ed section of the *Toronto Star*, but I'm not going to hold my breath. A statement like, "70% of pro-lifers are men/100% of them will never get pregnant" isn't quite so far outside the realm of mainstream journalistic suitability, but it seems unlikely such a blunt assertion would be acceptable in the discourse around abortion issues. In terms of actual content, most of the graffiti I've come across tends to be superficially polemical. The messages are pro-life or pro-choice, vegetarian or not, gay or straight, etc. It's unusual to find debates that stray from these set positions, but on occasion such discussions about feminism occur [see photo].

In her study of women's washroom graffiti at the Université de Montréal, Jeanne Demers describes the act of writing graffiti as a "scandalous gesture of self-affirmation" that imposes the writer's opinion on captive readers. For Demers, anything written in latrina becomes performative and automatically assumes a revolutionary value. I would add the caveat that the text must be provocative in order to transform subsequent readers into writers. Something like "when in doubt, throw the bozo out" isn't going to get much attention, whereas "Be Pro-Woman! Be Pro-Choice!" will likely garner some kind of feedback. That said, "provocative" need not always mean overtly political: sometimes a mundane inquiry piques a reader's interest more than a brash ideological declaration or nasty joke. For example, I recently read (and responded to) one woman's desperate plea for a good bra store. In all my years of graffiti study I had never been moved to cross the reader/writer divide, but this time I was compelled by the accompanying drawing of an anguished-looking stick person with huge boobs. I went back to check it recently, and somebody had added another suggestion and changed the stick person's grimace to a smile. In another on-campus washroom I witnessed an interesting phenomenon. Fearing both failure and success, the original writer lamented her impending graduation and all that awaited her outside the relative safety of the University of Toronto. Over the

next two weeks several respondents offered advice, and one person actually left her e-mail address and an invitation for the original writer to contact her.

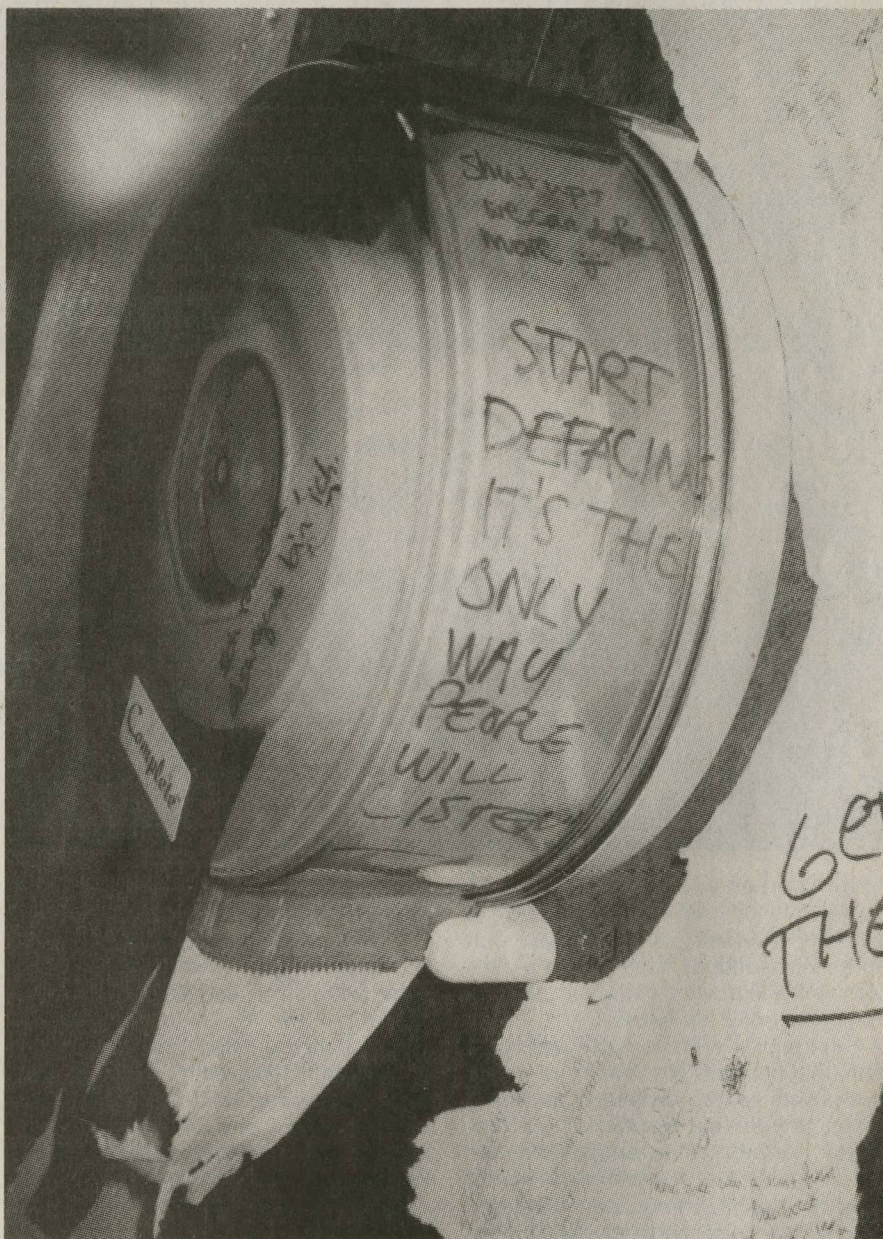
These question-and-answer examples are the most interesting to me because they indicate a willingness to engage with other participants. I'm sure someone has tried to make a gendered argument for the prevalence of this type of graffiti in women's washrooms (chicks being so inherently nurturing and all), but that is bullshit on too many levels to count. It should go without saying that the world of women's washroom graffiti is not a fluffy palace of female bonding and support that some people want to believe; sometimes respondents are just mean.

As popular as the personal question/answer format is, the most common type of graffiti that I've encountered is of the anti-corporate variety. The unflagging vehemence directed towards ads in the john is a phenomenon worthy of its own article. Of course this variety (like all graffiti) depends on the venue; bars, schools and other places attended by students and younger or less affluent people tend to show more resistance to corporate presence than do upscale restaurants or clubs. Usually this graffiti is restricted to one message scrawled across the offending poster, but occasionally a debate is generated that recalls the provocation/response style:

1. "We need to be free when we pee: NO ADS IN THE CRAPPER!"
2. "Tiles sure beat ads"
3. "ads are penetrating our private space and time (ie. going pee) and in so doing they are invading our mental environment. I would much rather sit on the toilet and contemplate my day than be fed lies like tampax's campaign"
4. "get a life! Don't you have midterms to worry about?"
5. "Don't you have English to learn?"
6. "I would rather read ads than your graffiti!"
7. "I don't know about the rest of you, but I resent these things" (ARROW TO AD)

The anti-corporate strain of washroom graffiti points to a major difference between mainstream and alternative media. While the Globe and Mail must rely on advertisers for revenue, washroom graffiti does not and is therefore in a position to critique it. In this respect it is quite similar to a zine; even if the content is

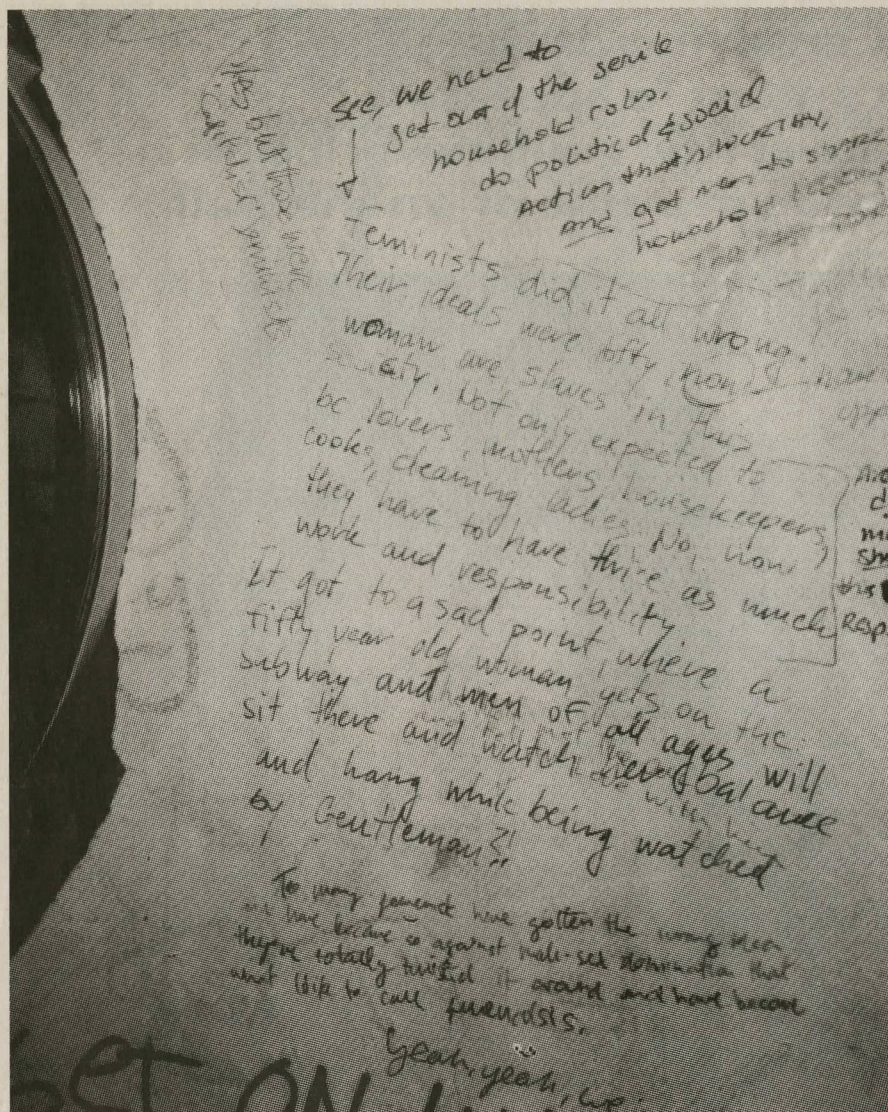
Censoring or massaging content to appease advertisers will never be an issue in a zine or on the wall.



not explicitly anti-corporate, it is still defined by its existence outside of the capitalist sphere. Censoring or massaging content to appease advertisers will never be an issue in a zine or on the wall.

Washroom graffiti also echoes the zine in its meta-textual consciousness. The writers are aware that their medium is constructed because they are the ones who are in the process of constructing it.

My favourite example of this was scrawled in red marker on a toilet paper dispenser: "START DEFACING, IT'S THE ONLY WAY PEOPLE WILL LISTEN." Instead of a mainstream-media-style supposition of "naturalness" (that the forum somehow exists apart from those who create it) washroom graffiti is always conscious that their medium begins and ends with them. This gets a bit weird



when someone uses the medium to express their hatred for it: "I like clean walls/unperturbable stone that says shut up for once/nobody cares what the fuck you think about when you poo." Cheaply ironic, but ironic nonetheless.

In a similar vein, women's washroom graffiti complicates our notions of public and private space. Feminist critic Nancy Fraser argues that instead of the old-school notion of one bourgeois public sphere there are in fact many smaller competing publics, frequently comprised of subaltern groups (working class publics, popular peasant publics, etc.). Along these lines, the washrooms I haunt can be seen as a space where several smaller publics circulate: feminist women, non-feminist women, students, women of colour, queer women, etc. However, the publicness of the space is complicated by the private nature of the single-person units within it. When one is writing in latrine, are their actions public or private? The reified division between the two is

collapsed within the confines of the women's washroom.

This public/private hybrid provides fertile ground for revolutionary activity since writers can access large groups of people without risk of censure. In Toronto, the tag "Mad at Misogynist Ads" is frequently deployed by a group bearing the same name to draw attention to material they find offensive. MAMA appears to be a loose marker-whuppin' collective that has grown to several honorary members who are takin' care of business on washroom walls, bus shelters, and billboards all over Toronto.

Despite examples like MAMA, the anonymity of the medium can undermine it in some people's eyes. It has been suggested that washroom graffiti's power is paradoxical, because while every act of writing on the wall signifies some variation of "I am" for the female writer, the "I" almost always remains anonymous. The implicit assumption here is that the woman who recently wrote, "collateral

damage is American propaganda" is only expressing this idea within the solitary confines of a washroom stall. While this may be the case, I prefer to think that her words are not that ephemeral; this could be one mode of expression among many. Even if she did restrict herself to this venue, she is nevertheless addressing an audience who will read what she has written and potentially engage with her. Her chances for reception and response may even be better here than if she were to write a letter to her local newspaper; at least there are no editors lurking in the latrine.

Outside the loo, the power of graffiti is interpreted as a threat to the status quo. In the summer of 2000 the Toronto police force established the Graffiti Eradication program, described as a "Service-wide initiative focusing on 'the reduction of crime, fear and disorder as it relates to graffiti'." Call me a libertine, but I think writing on a bathroom wall ranks somewhere below whistling on my list of public safety threats. The police press release actually identifies "political activism" ahead of hate crimes on the list of targeted types of graffiti, which may seem odd until you learn that the "vision" of the program is "urban beautification, graffiti sub-culture erosion, stakeholder collaboration, reduction in crime, fear and disorder, increased property values, employment opportunities and tourism."

The equation is simple: political dissent=threat to all that is good and holy. Perhaps in the Starbucksian utopia of the future our delicate sensibilities won't be offended by pesky subcultures like feminists and queers, because we will all have been "eroded" along with our unsightly graffiti (and don't forget the bonus prize of increased property values and tourism)! The position of the police is not surprising, because (as any first-year cultural studies student can tell you) power is generally maintained through the suppression of dissent. What is disturbing is that the police are so blatant about their mission and that so few people have noticed or cared.

Between the cops' public safety rhetoric and the janitor's scrub brush, women's washroom graffiti is an alternative medium under constant threat. Nevertheless, feminist debate and advocacy continue to flourish on the stall walls in ways that transcend the divisions between reader/writer and public/private that mark most other forms of written communication (including zines). Fundamentally, it exists to be read and answered; the personal is polemical as well as political, and anyone with a marker and an opinion can participate.



Punk & Politics in Lebanon

An Interview with Radwan Mounneh

by Ryan Kennedy

It's a Saturday night in the Toronto suburbs, and throngs of punks have converged on an affluent house where Montreal hardcore outfit Ire are setting up. Amidst the wall-to-wall carpeting and hockey trophies, the band erects stacks of amplifiers that come within a foot of the ceiling, a daunting reminder of the volume to come.

As the first crushing chords reverberate around the room, singer Radwan Mounneh prepares to unleash his trademark howl, a banshee-like combination of passion and anguish. Surrounded by friends and fans, Mounneh is in his element, but just a few years later, he will find himself back in the country of his birth, Lebanon, where there are no basement shows, no hardcore punk, no "punk" period.

After living in Canada for 11 years, Mounneh moved back to Lebanon last year for family reasons. Although he had visited Lebanon many times in the past, he could always come back to Montreal and rejoin his bands, or buy new records.

But now that he lives in the Middle East — just outside of Beirut — Mounneh is quickly realizing how entirely different cultures can be.

"My moving here was a complete change of life and lifestyle," says Mounneh. "It's been very hard since I do very little of what I used to do. The environment I live in here is not too open to things like punk or punk culture. My only escape is being in my apartment and listening to my records real loud."

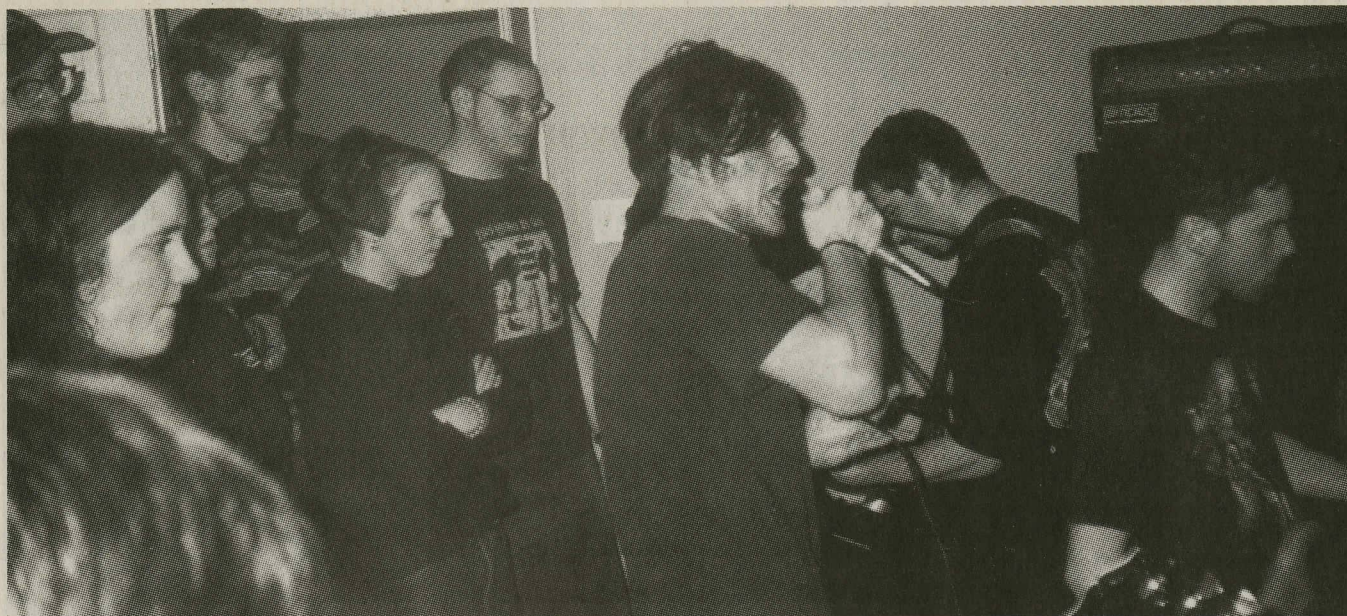
Indeed, along with singing in seminal Montreal hardcore band Ire, and later The Black Hand, Mounneh also worked at Underworld, one of Montreal's best record stores. As for starting a new project in Lebanon, Mounneh isn't getting his hopes up that a punk scene will spring up anytime soon. "As for anything punk, I am at a complete dead end here," he says. Not that Mounneh has completely given up on music. "I just started practising with a local musician who is very active in experimental music... I hope that I will not be one of those guys who

used to be into punk and is now playing lame 'mature' music cause he 'got over it.' Fuck, that would be disappointing."

Despite the underground nature of the genre, hardcore punk scenes have sprung up across the globe, from Argentina to Malaysia. India, Africa, and The Middle East — with the exception of Israel — are the few places in the world that don't have some sort of active hardcore scene. Although one can only speculate why that is, it is important to remember that hardcore punk was born out of American and British influences, two nations that don't exactly have the best relations with the Arab world historically.

Of course, being punk also means being political, and whatever Lebanon may lack in grindcore bands and studded belts, it makes up for in spades when it comes to politics. Historically, Lebanon has always been very involved in the Middle East's political dynamics, especially concerning its southern neighbour, Israel.

Along with numerous civil wars



between various religious factions, Lebanon also fought a war against Israel in 1982, when Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in order to expel the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Led by Defence Minister (and current Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon, the Israelis pushed forward past the south, and marched right into Beirut, expelling 14,000 PLO soldiers, who would then set up camp in Tunisia. A Christian Phalangist government was installed in Lebanon, and under Sharon's watch, an estimated 800 Palestinian civilians were massacred by militias at the refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila. Despite the signing of an agreement that terminated the war in 1983, Israeli troops remained in Lebanon until 1985, and even then maintained a presence along the border. Relations to this day are chilly at best.

"There are rising tensions with Israel yet again," notes Moumneh. "There is a river that stems from Lebanon and pours into Israel, and both countries use the river as a water source. According to international law, Lebanon is entitled to 35 million cubic metres of water from the river. At the present time, we use roughly 3 million, and a pipe project is in the works to up it to 9 million." Recently, Sharon has balked at the project, going as far as saying that the conflict could be grounds for war. Currently, a team of US observers are looking into the situation, and American officials have cautioned Sharon on his hawkish comments.

Moumneh has also found that media coverage in the Middle East differs greatly from that of the West, where power lies in the religious sector, rather than within the corporate world of North America and Europe. "We have a very awkward free-

dom of the press situation here," notes Moumneh, adding that "there are a lot of newspapers and television stations owned by key political and religious people — including the US arch-nemesis Hezbollah — who heavily criticize the US and its policies." Moumneh believes that this difference in ownership contributes to the public's consciousness more than the media in the West does. "People here are a lot more informed and politically opinionated..." Moumneh recognizes that the Arab media have as many flaws as their Western counterparts, however. "Getting an unbiased opinion here is just as difficult as it is in the West," he notes. This may be due in part to the fact that news hits a lot closer to home in the Middle East than it does in North America. When tensions between the US or Israel and the Arab world spill over, the violence almost always takes place within the confines of the Middle East, meaning those living in the area have much more at stake when it comes to political decisions.

"All of the plight in the Middle East is directly related to US policy, and no one can deny it," says Moumneh. "The US has a lot at stake here, and need to have a strong foot in the region, which is why the Gulf War happened in the first place, and which is why Israel has such a loose leash around its neck. It's all a matter of policy."

The move has also given Moumneh an interesting perspective on the US's influence in the Middle East, and how it affects a nation often at odds with the superpower. "Like most countries, Lebanon has very bipolar ties with America," he says. Lebanon has embraced Western pop culture even more so than most Arab nations, with

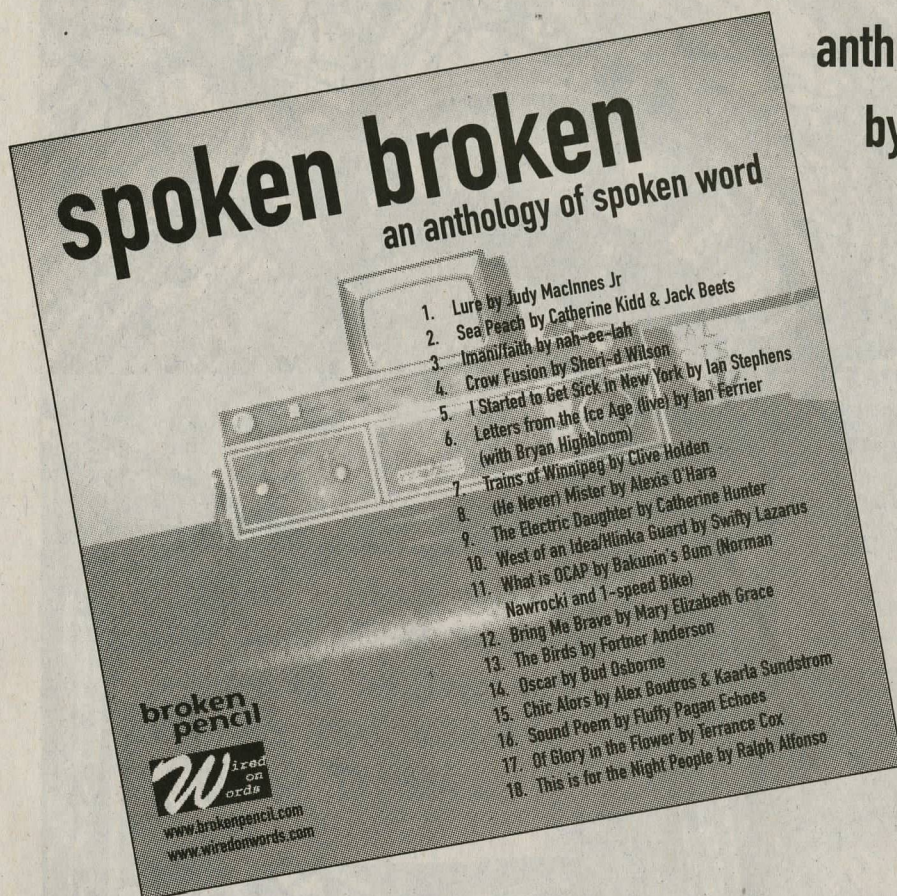
UNESCO (United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organization) reporting that more than half of television programming in the country is imported. Travellers can also find Virgin megastores for music and Fila outlets for sports gear in Lebanon's bigger cities. Many Arab pundits are quick to dismiss this influence as superficial, and Moumneh points out that there is still rabid anti-American sentiment amongst the masses. "There is a very strong negative image of the USA embedded in our subculture, as with most Arabs and Muslims," he notes, once again citing US foreign policy as a flash-point for unrest.

The situation in Iraq is another concern for Moumneh. After his family left Lebanon in 1975, they moved to Oman, where they were forced to uproot once again when the Gulf War broke out. Moumneh has his doubts about America's intentions for Iraq, pointing out that the very pro-energy Bush government may simply be looking for control of the oil market. "Since when did the Americans care about anyone else's security?" he asks.

In the meantime, Moumneh spends his days working on a solo project that involves "big expensive loud amps, which I have to rent," he laments. Moumneh hopes to visit Canada again soon, where he can share his project with his old hardcore friends, and he certainly has the time to perfect it. Although Moumneh has many strong opinions on political issues, he's at a loss when it comes to describing what Canadians should know about Lebanon. "I can't think of anything in particular. I don't know, maybe that there are way too many men with mustaches here."

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CIVILIZATION IS A CRIME SCENE

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BY ASMATA 2002
Ikoqoi's Native Territory

TAKE 2

THE POISONOUS BITE OF IMPERIAL MADNESS
BLIND TO THE MEMORY OF INVASION +
PREFERS THE MYTH AS A
GLORIOUS TAKE-OVER OF EDEN

THE COLD CALCULATION OF A
RUTHLESS + WHITE BURIAL
DISGUISED THE RESIDUE
OF FATHER. SON. HOLY GHOST
(THE ANCIENT INCEST.)
IT MUTATES...

GOD
BLESS
AMERICA

CRISS-CROSSING HORIZONS OF ENCLOSING SPACE
A SPACE HELD HOSTAGE BY A HISTORY OF TIDAL WAVES
WASHED-UP 'DISCOVERING' WHAT WAS NEVER LOST

WAR

GODS ON SIDE

OIL

BIG MONEY

MENTEURS

WHO'S SIDE
ARE YOU ON?

VOLEURS

STILL NATIVE LAND

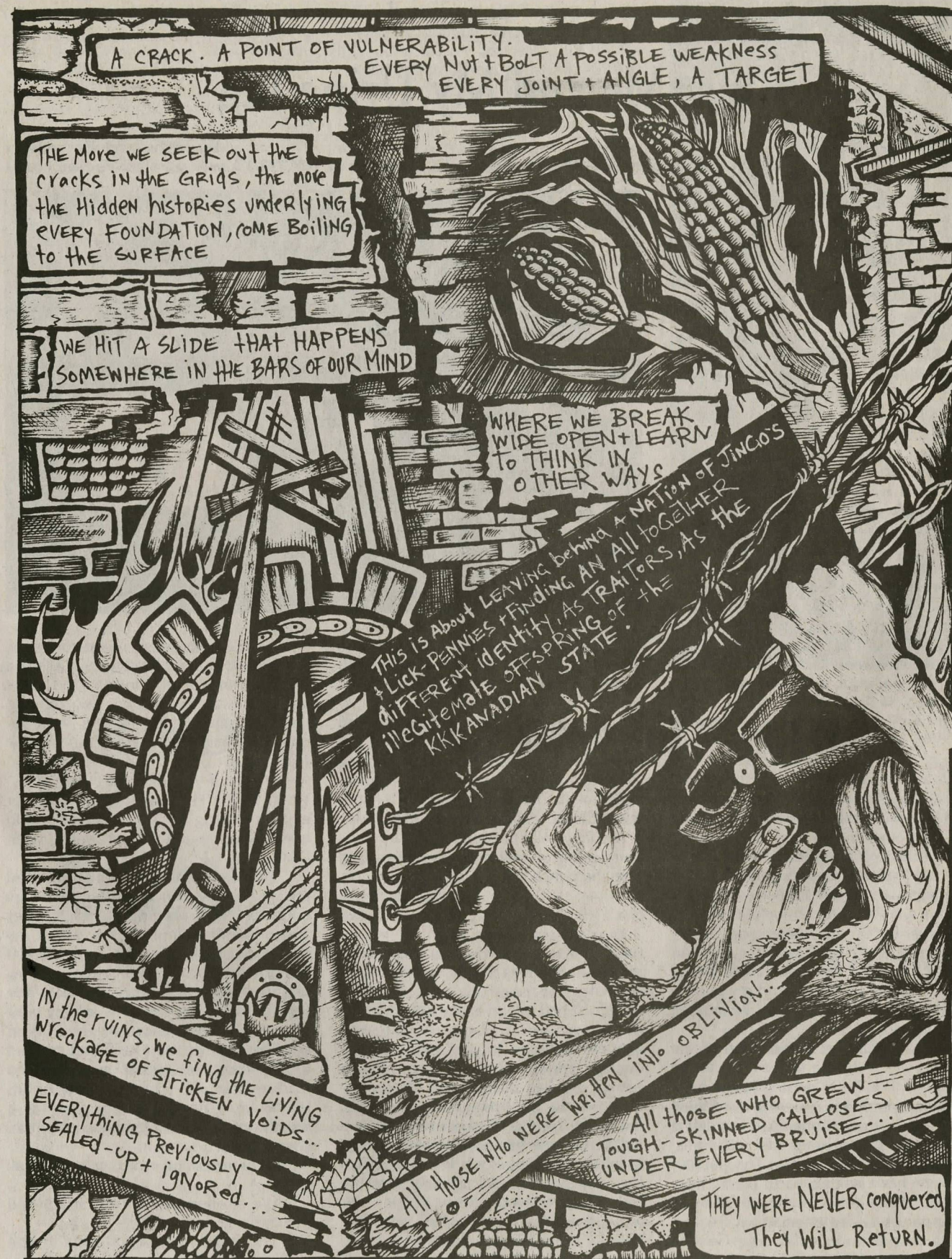
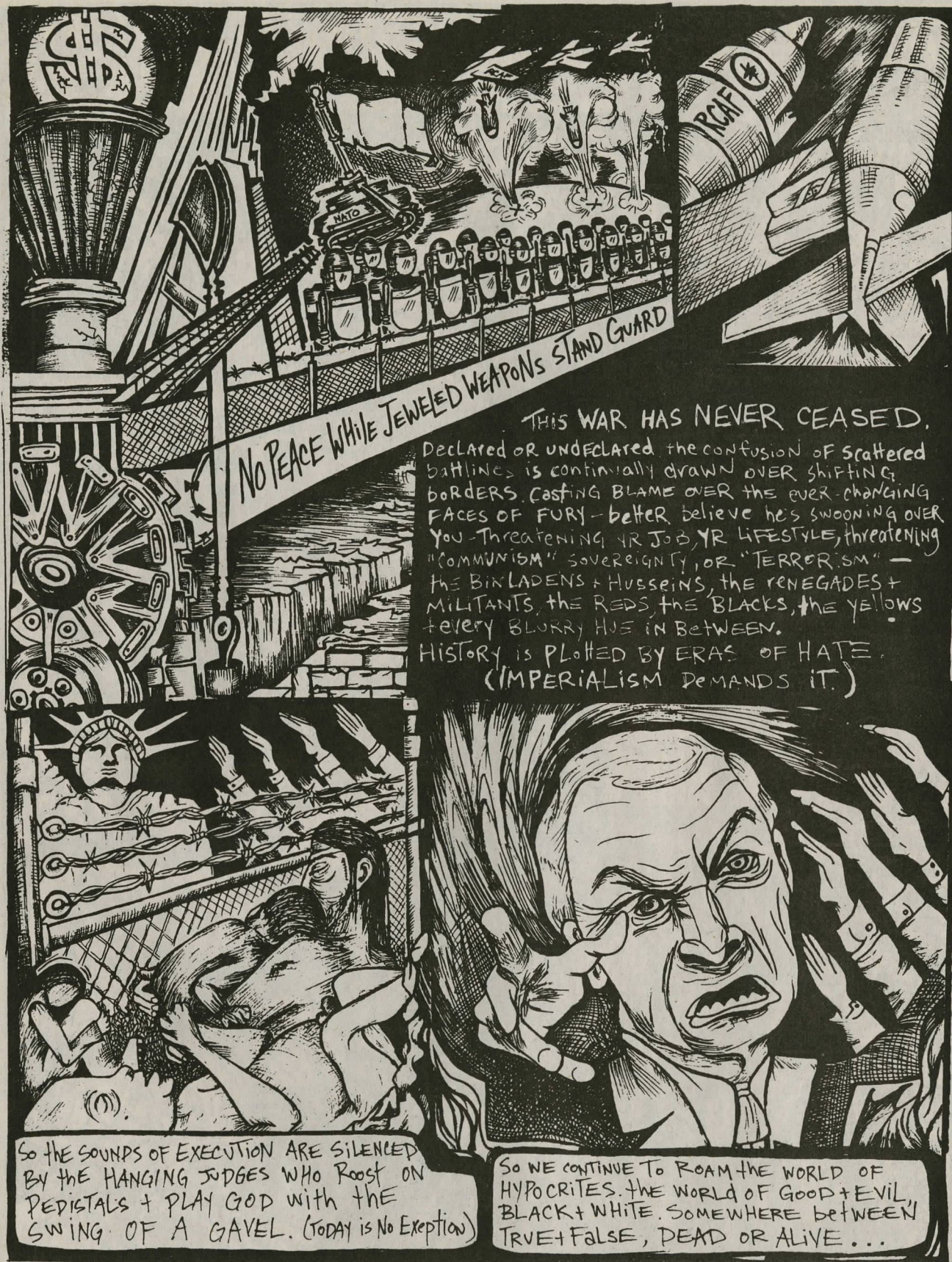
YOUR PROUD HERITAGE AS
THE RISE OF A DEPARTMENT
STORE? HUDSON'S BAY CO.
AFTER OIL, SHOPPING IS
GOOD. GOD. GOD
(CAPITALISM LOVES IT.)

So the
ARCHITECTURES
OF INDUSTRIAL
CLUTTER ARE
SQUARED TO
THE HIGHEST
POWER +
MULTIPLIED

THE FEAR OF JUSTICE
STILL BITES WITH
WHITE, CLICKING
JAWS + A
SMIRK.

THE YEARS
PASS
REPLICATING
GENERATIONS

MORE MAULING SLASH. SLAUGHTER + SPRAWL ...



Just Me and My Urine Jug

By Joshua M. Bernstein

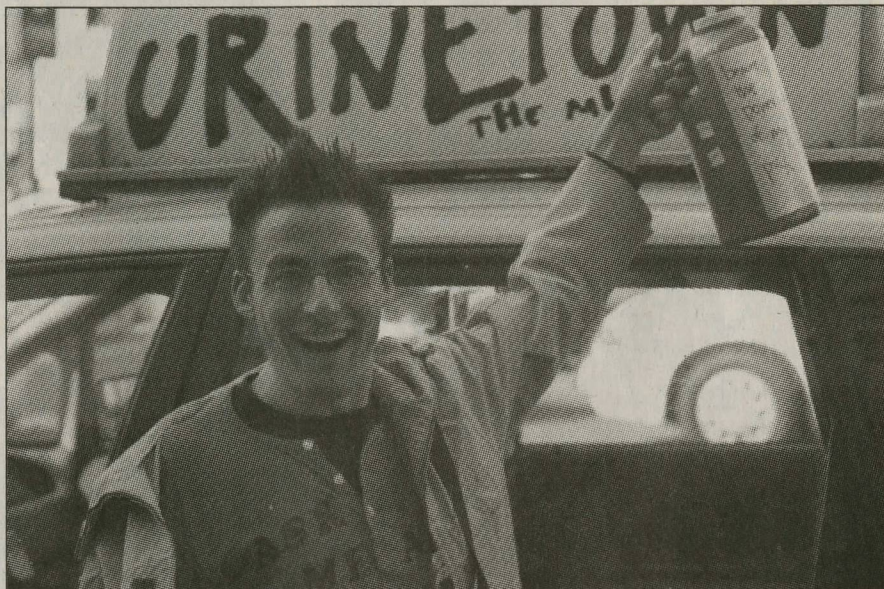
from *Rated Rookie* (28-07 38th St., Suite 4L, Astoria, NY 11103, www.rated-rookie.com)

One chilly morning in early March, I carried a urine-filled jug around New York City. You see, for 24 hours a medical researcher was paying me a tidy sum to collect my urine. But sitting in a cramped apartment and peeing in a brown jug was woefully boring. To liven things, my friend Virgil and I crafted T-shirts (mine: Ask Me About My Urine; his: Official Urine Photographer) and attacked NYC with Kodak verve. We photographed my jug at Times Square. My piss wore headphones at Virgin Records. The urine jug shopped at Macy's. Hell, my piss even rode the subway. Twice! In all, Virgil, my jug, and I wandered New York for four hours, only once piquing a burly teamster-type's curiosity. But after explaining my urine was for "science," he understood. What did this social experiment teach me? Nothing much, really, except in mass quantities my urine smells like a double cappuccino, and I'll subject myself to nearly any humiliation to avoid gainful employment.

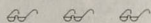
"Do you drink a lot of water?" Rosie the researcher had asked. "Some people need two jugs." I assured her I required just one. As for my urine's role, Rosie was vague. "We just test it for stress, and that's all you need to know." Fine by me. The researchers were getting what they wanted, and I was too—a story. Selling my urine seemed an easy out, a funny way to make rent. And help my writing.

The market is littered with J.T. Leroy's and Nanny Diaries and other enterprising authors who've turned traumatic and trying experiences into burgeoning literary careers. I went to a public suburban school. I worked fast food. I had sexual experiences in minivans. And my parents didn't beat me, either; what's an average shmoe to do?

Find a loophole. If life didn't roll me snake eyes, I'd create my own snake eyes. I worked as a pornographer for a third-rate publisher. I deserted a failing road trip in rural Montana. I fondled a young man on an Israeli kibbutz. I misspelled shame, opportunity. This particular niche has a name: "participatory journalism." It's a fancy name for whoring someone else's experiences or creating some where none exist. See George Plimpton. See Hunter S. Thompson. See Josh Bernstein.



While drinking heavily, I devised the following plan: My jug and I, along with Virgil—a friend and photographer—would traverse New York's cityscape, taking pictures and talking to people and doing, well, whatever—the sky was the limit! We'd be trailblazers, reinventing the way people thought about medical experiments. To the jug I'd fasten a hand-lettered sign reading "Beware the Power of My Piss." All I needed for the story was an opening, several mini-adventures, and one fine punch line.



On the scheduled morning, Virgil and I convened in Times Square with caffeinated smiles and handmade shirts. My urine collection had begun at 3 p.m. the previous afternoon. Except for the odd Snapple bottle on lengthy road trips and doctors' appointments, I'd kept my urinating to toilets, bushes, and subway stations. So the jug was initially novel, but the luster quickly dulled. If I stopped aiming for but one second the stream would spray the container's lip. It was humiliating, and I had this irrational fear the researchers somehow knew I hadn't collected the full amount. "Joshua, you have failed," I envisioned them saying as I sheepishly handed them the partially filled pitcher.

Scarcely knowing where to begin, Virgil decided to set the scene and take a picture of me standing in the 42nd Street and Broadway intersection. I walked into the street and held the jug aloft like a trophy, but a commuter-packed bus sent me scurrying for curb. "That would've been so pathetic if you died like that, man," Virgil said. "How would the coroner explain the jug to your parents?" I told him to shut up and walked over to NASDAQ.

Through two-way panes I spotted milling businessmen discussing monetary exchange with swooping arm gestures and brilliant smiles. How about my monetary exchange: urine for money! I smooshed my chest against the window and rubbed the jug across my face. The jug was warm. I felt dirty. A balding businessman turned around. He looked bewildered. I stepped back and pointed to my chest. He slipped on glasses and read my shirt. After a few seconds of furrowed brow he looked up, gave me a thumbs up, and swiveled back into monetary debate.

"You're leaving crotch prints," Virgil said.

We strolled down 44th Street and saw our next mission: Toys 'R' Us.

This was no normal cog in the chain; the Times Square Toys 'R' Us featured four floors of unfettered com-

merce. A two-story Barbie Dollhouse. An animatronic Tyrannosaurus Rex. A candy store. And even a 60-foot Ferris wheel. We headed for the wheel. My jug was going where no jug had gone before.

Each car was themed with different toys and characters. Monopoly. Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head. Tonka Truck. We got the taters. When Virgil and I stepped into the cab we asked the young African-American ticket-taker to snap our picture. "We're in love," I said as I scooted close to Virgil, the jug between us. She took the photo. I thanked her.

"What's in there?" she asked, pointing to the container.

Certain times are ripe for white lies, like lying to your mom about drugs or telling your doctor that you only have five or six drinks a week. This wasn't such a situation.

"My urine," I said, shaking the container so the liquid sloshed.

I started laughing.

She didn't.

As we wandered mid-Manhattan I felt blessed to be in the metropolis. In most towns this self-aggrandizing stunt would've merited police intervention, even in the post-Jackass culture. Urine is a dangerous substance, you know. But amid New York City's millions anonymity prevails. This is equal part blessing and curse. Drag queens carry sombrero-clad

Chihuahuas unnoticed. Nervous breakdowns are dutifully ignored. The penniless' pleas fall on deaf ears. But on the corner of 35th Street and Sixth Avenue we lost our anonymity. Next to a two-story inflatable rat decrying Union-busters, a burly teamster-type whose eyes looked like they could eat me, spied my shirt and said, "So tell me about your urine."

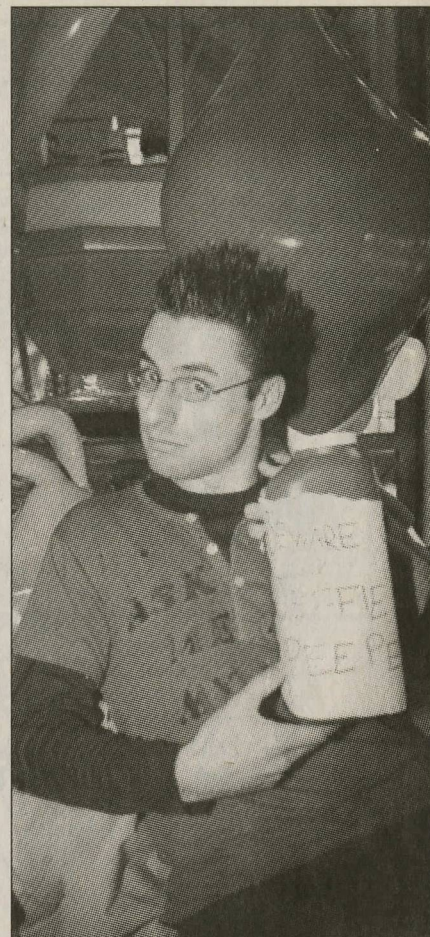
I explained there was nothing wrong with my urine, that I was doing a medical experiment. "I get paid to pee in this jug," I said, swirling my urine for emphasis. "At night, I don't need to go to the bathroom; I just reach for my jug and let 'er fly."

"Dontcha pee on yer hands?" he asked, inching forward. I stepped back, almost running into the inflatable rat.

"No, I have a very good aim," I said.

"Bullshit," he said. "Everyone pees on their hands sometimes. You ain't special just because you're pissing in a jug; you're just some schmuck who's trying to make a few extra bucks."

And as I stood on the sidewalk next to a giant rat, holding a jug of tepid urine, I thought, Yeah, he was right. I was nothing special. Just some kid spicing his white-bread life with a funny story. But he was something special. An English teacher would call him the denouement. A fiction writer would call him clichéd. I called him the perfect ending.



Bob Dylan Land: A series of vignettes

By Sarah Amador from Bob Dylan Land
(Stevenson #222, 101 McLaughlin Drive, Santa Cruz, CA 95064)

Blanca: My Love, My Sweet

We ran down the street, Blanca throwing garbage at us from her building's stoop. Wind whistled and ran along with me; from the corner of my eye, I saw you running a bit farther behind me, ridiculously holding up the back of your falling pants.

We sang, "Iiiiidiot Wind! It's a wonder that you still know how to breeeeeeaaathe! We're iiiidiots, babe!" all the way to the Salvation Army on N. Vermont. We bought you a belt—one with a big tacky buckle with a cow on it—and then went home and dyed my hair blue.

When we were younger, Blanca filled our baby bottles with warm milk and snuck us shots of Cuban coffee. We would be wired for hours, watching the

late-night variety shows and Dragnet. Now she smacks at our asses with a dirty dishtowel and yells when we steal food from the cooking pots in her kitchen and we don't hang around at night anymore.

She's stopped filling our bottles; we're old enough to fill them ourselves. Shots of rum snuck from Uncle José's bar in the den, shots of the hard fire liquor sent to my parents from family in Galicia, distilled in their barn. We roll joints on the garage's roof and throw cigarette butts down from three stories up, out the window in the stairwell.

Blanca caught us tearing through old pages in her ancient almanac from 1941 the Sunday that the drugstore was closed and we needed rolling papers. That's when she swore that she had given up on us, yelling curses and prayers as she tore after us down the stairwell in her cracked leather heels and Sunday skirt and blouse.

She threw garbage and cried. We ran down Virgil Ave. and almost got hit by three cars because you kept tripping over your pants.

There Are No Cubans in Bob Dylan Land

"Cuban, she's not Cuban!" my Yaya laughs and grabs me around the waist as I walk by. I back up next to her chair with a bowl of black beans and rice in my hand. "Oye, ¿pero tú sabes que esta niña nunca tenía una época de fea?" She continues to laugh, her arm wrapped around my waist. She emphasizes the laughter with occasional slaps on my hip and comments on how I've been putting on weight. I jokingly look down at my hips,



swivelling around for a look from a back angle. I turn to her crinkling face and wispy white hair, smiling and draping my free arm around her neck. "Your cheeks are filling in. It's good, you gaining weight."

I slip out of her affectionate grip and continue to the kitchen with my bowl of frijoles. There is no Bob Dylan Land to be found in this house, unless maybe if I look in the cupboards, tear up the carpet corners in the living room behind the stereo. Maybe Bob Dylan Land is hiding behind the ponchos hanging like tapestries in the hallway or in the unused ashtrays sitting on the steps leading down to the pool in the backyard.

The fried bananas are burning on the stovetop. They have caught fire and my grandmother and twelve great aunts are running from counter to counter in the kitchen with wet dishtowels and pan lids.

My grandfather sits in his seat in the living room, imperially, with a beer in hand. He turns his head towards the kitchen and yells, "Oye, meng. Somebody's burning the bananas." Somehow the phrase is lost in translation. Meng. Man. Same and one in

"Cuban," ¿no?

There is a high-pitched squawking of Spanish as Yaya marches in and regulates. I put the bowl of frijoles in the refrigerator. Yaya slips me a fried banana from an earlier batch. "Para tí, mi amor."

"Go to Bob Dylan Land!" "No, You Go to Bob Dylan Land!"

I flick a raisin at her from across the table and then dive face first into my bowl of cottage cheese.

I say, "Breakfast sucks, meng," as I promptly remove my face from the bowl.

"Yeah, I know. This is disgusting. This is making me fat."

I pick up a napkin and wipe the cottage cheese residue off my nose and chin. It's true. Breakfast sucks. I don't even bother eating it anymore. We sit and are silent. We sit and are silent and do not

eat and she begins humming the bridge to "Just Like a Woman."

"So, do you think that Bob Dylan Land has different regions where they all speak in different Bob Dylan dialects?"

"Like the 'Rainy Day Women' region? And the 'Lay, Lady, Lay' region and 'One More Cup of Coffee' region?"

"Yeah, yeah—just like that. And everyone just talks that way—the way he sings those songs." And we're laughing outrageously. We're being stared at, but we don't see. Bob Dylan Land calls.

We wheeze and make Bob Dylan reminiscent noises. She sighs and blinks the tears from her eyes, murmuring, "Oh man..."

She stares ahead and thinks and says, "And what about 'Blowin' in the Wind'?"

"Hmmm?"

"Oh my god, all the questions in that song probably originate in Bob Dylan Land."

"And the wind blows from and to there. Shit, all the answers are in Bob Dylan Land too."

We are solemnly quiet.

"I wonder if Bob Dylan Land could be heaven."

"I wouldn't be surprised."

NO RELATION

BY EMILY SHOICHET • 2002 •
www.bentcomics.com
• (An Actual Conversation)

HEY, DO YOU THINK
THAT PAMELA ANDERSON
AND LONI ANDERSON
ARE RELATED?



WHY? 'CAUSE
THEIR NAMES
ARE THE SAME?



NO, BECAUSE THEY
LOOK SO SIMILAR.



YOU DO
REALIZE THAT NEITHER
OF THOSE WOMEN ACTUALLY
LOOK LIKE THAT, RIGHT?



WHAT DO YOU
MEAN?



WELL, THEY'VE
BOTH HAD A LOT OF
PLASTIC SURGERY



YEAH BUT THEY HAVE
THE SAME FACIAL FEATURES
AND BODY TYPES.



... BUT THEY PAID
FOR THEM. THEY AREN'T
REAL. THOSE AREN'T THEIR
GENETIC TRAITS, NOT
EVEN THEIR HAIR
COLOUR!



I DUNNO,
THEY LOOK
RELATED



OF COURSE THEY DO!
THEY HAVE COOKIE-CUTTER
FEATURES THAT WERE BOUGHT
AND PAID FOR! DON'T YOU GET
IT? SAYING THEY LOOK RELATED
IS LIKE SAYING BATMAN AND
SUPERMAN ARE RELATED
BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE
SAME LAST NAME!!



I THINK
THEY'RE COUSINS



THE SUMMER OF 2002 WAS HUGE IN MY FORMAL EDUCATION OF ROCK



I'M A BIG MUSIC FAN, BUT I USUALLY TEND TO GRAVITATE TOWARD SINGER/SONGWRITER, INDIE POWER-POP OR VARIOUS OTHER "NERD" MUSIC SCENES



BUT THE DAM STARTED TO BREAK IN MID 2001 WHEN TAVIS AND NICK TURNED ME ON TO THE GENIUS OF ANDREW WK'S AWKGOJ EP.



THE PRIMAL LYRICS, THE RAW UNABASHED SIMPLICITY AND PURITY OF EMOTION. THE INEXPLICABLE URGE TO PUMP MY FIST. A COMPLETE VOID OF IRONY. BY ALL ACCOUNTS I SHOULD NOT LIKE THIS MUSIC.



FLASH FORWARD TO JUNE 2002: RICHARD'S ON RICHARDS, VANCOUVER - MY FIRST MOSH PIT IS AT AN ANDREW WK SHOW



MERE WEEKS LATER, WE CATCH CANADIAN ROCK GOD THOR'S ACT. HE BENDS STEEL, EXPLODES HOT WATER BOTTLES WITH HIS LUNGS, WEARS ARMOUR, BRANDISHES A BATTLE AXE AND SINGS ABOUT VALHALLA!



AND SOON... YOU'VE GOT TO CHECK OUT THIS MAN-O-WAR CD!



YOU'VE GOT TO CHECK OUT THIS JIM STEINMAN CD



NOW I ROCK HARDER THAN EVER BEFORE AND YET...



My Demands

by Emily Holton
from My Demands
(emilinaholton@hotmail.com)

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A ~~small~~ *small* *and cello bow*
to make music alone
in a small and dim apartment
at night.

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A *72 olive green Impala*
in the desert.
red lipstick on a mean mouth.

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A *month in the life of*
Denise Huxtable.

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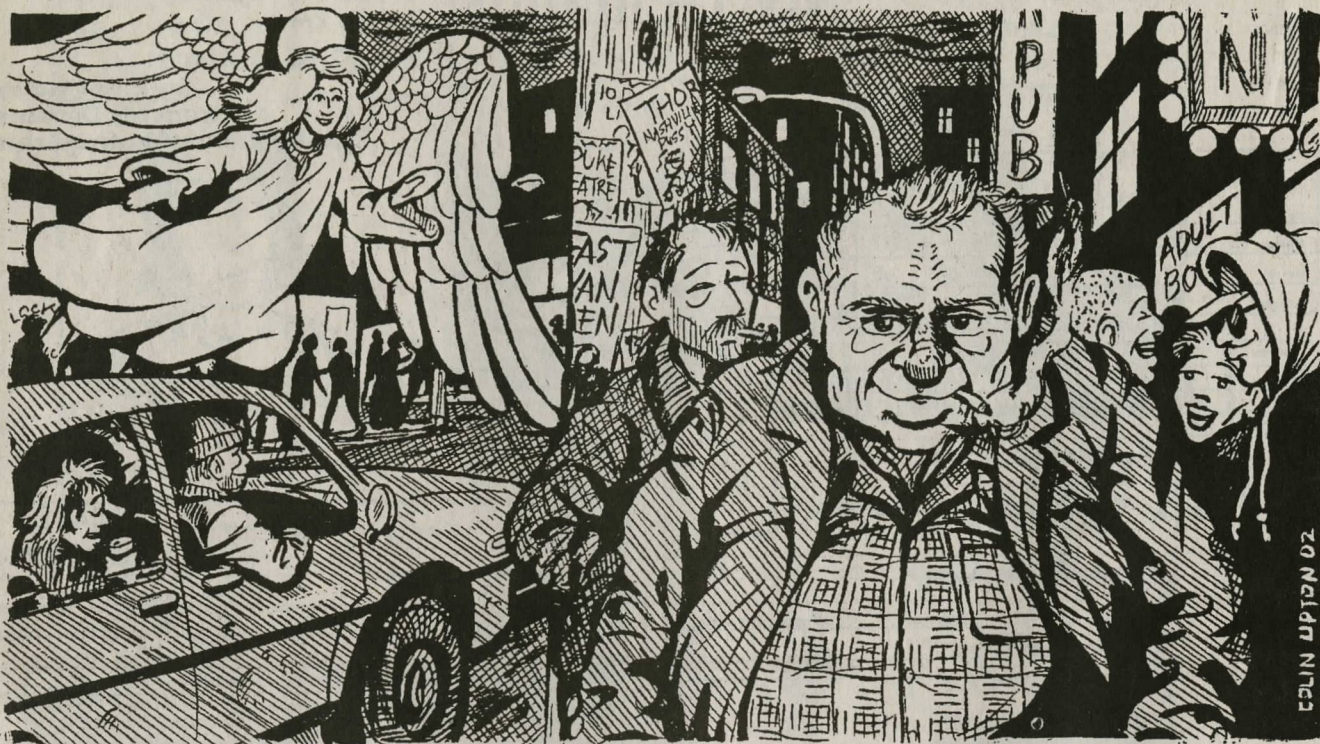
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A *licence*
for good natured
good humour
and consequence free
arson.

DATE REQUIRED	VIA	PLEASE SEND	COPY(ES) OF YOUR INVOICE
TERMS		PURCHASING AGENT	

BlueLine DC62



from Sockamagee!

Vancouver

People's Voice

Newspaper, Vol. 10, #20, 16-21/yr @ \$25/yr, Kimball Cariou, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver BC, V5L 3J1, pvoice@telus.net

While being an official organ of the Communist Party of Canada, this is also as close as there probably is to a national left newspaper in Canada. Yes there are articles on strikes and peace marches but you'll also find an ad for tours of Cuba and an announcement for a fundraising turkey dinner. There is an optimistic feel to this paper — as if the next lecture or protest could be the one to end war and hunger around the world. There are notices of protests and art shows and book reviews to help round out the paper. As a person who grew up with the echoes of McCarthyism still being heard, it is odd to see how mainstream the values of those that produce this paper actually are. (Brian Burch)

Sockamagee

zine, #14, 31 pages, \$2.50cdn/\$2usa, Steve Richards, 2037 Stainsbury Avenue, Vancouver BC, V5N 2M9

This zine is not bad: well written, entertaining, I even learned a few things. My favourite piece "Who Is the Mystery Girl? Debra Paget" was surprisingly well researched and read smoothly, something that is hard to come by in most zines. I found it interesting how the author was inspired to write the story after purchasing a vintage Debra Paget poster at a local flea market. At first the author is intrigued by the old time Xena-like

warrior woman on the poster, but soon enough his curiosity morphs into near obsession, going as far as purchasing a DVD player so he can play two rare Paget flicks he orders at nothing less than fifty bucks a pop: "No turning back now, Steve. You go to sleep every night with that poster staring right at you, man. GO FOR IT!" It was refreshing to see someone get so intrigued by a subject; it reflected a level of excitement that seeped into more than the Paget article, but that was evident throughout the entire publication. This zine was a great read and I can't really pinpoint anything I didn't like about it. Looks good too. (Audrey Gagnon)

British Columbia

Any Time Now

newsletter, #15, 6 pages, \$1, Dick Martin, Affinity Place, Argenta BC, V0G 1B0, dickm11@excite.com, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/freezeinlatn>

I liked this newsletter. I was challenged to think again about some of my assumptions. Kevin Carson's "Liberalism and Social Control," for example, is a well crafted piece. I'm not likely to embrace an anarchist communitarian view of the world, being too much of an egoist to fit comfortably into their ideal. But I think I'd enjoy talking with these people about how to change the world. There are a few reviews of hard to find publications in each issue which can help the process of finding new sources of ideas and inspiration in these trying times. (Brian Burch)

Afield

zine, \$10, Florentine Perro, Site 19 C-21 Quadrant, Mayne Island BC, V0N 2J0, f_perro@hotmail.com

Produced with cardstock and colour copying, the strength of this zine is in its craftsmanship. It tells an abstract story, the plot of which "could be summarized as the search (eventually successful) for someone who is having trouble making a fluid appear." This piece of text is juxtaposed with a statement regarding the orgasms of molluscs; that, and a recurring theme of ducks, makes one think that this is an exploration of the emotional life of beings, beyond the usual mammalian limits we put on our ideas. If it walks and talks like a duck, chances are it's a duck the old saying goes. Combined with Descartes' "I think therefore I am," this booklet would suggest that ducks are ducks because they are. (Timothy Comeau)

Liberty

poetry, 30 pages, \$?, Mike Woods, 214 11 Ave S, Cranbrook BC, V1C 2P5, godofants@yahoo.ca

If you're talking about liberty from punctuation indentation or any other constraints on written language then this zine is as free as can be and there are some great enviable images that quietly show themselves if you can manage to read more than two pages in one sitting it's hard when you're faced with a huge block of words with no relief no break for the eyes or the mind nowhere to rest so it's hard to say exactly what I thought of this one except that in order to read it you have to pick it up and put it down and pick it up and put it down over and over

and you keep forgetting where you left off so really the trick is to read it moment to moment taking each word and image for what it is without relating it to what's around it and maybe that's what Woods means by liberty interesting but it made me dizzy (Heather Ball)

Unbalancing Act

zine, \$10, Jo Cook, Site 19 C-21 Quadrant, Mayne Island BC, VON 2J0

This is an elegant little book, printed on heavy paper in colour, with a nice juxtaposition of printed text (computer) and handwriting (human touch). I appreciate the fact that the narrative is oblique as much as I appreciate its physicality. The title could refer to a psychological condition, the unbalancing that occurs through trauma. The narrative and loose drawing only hint at this however, and wide latitude is given to the viewer to imagine their own interpretations. (Timothy Comeau)

Praries

Backyard Ashes

litzine, \$2, Brecken Hancock and Adrienne Gruber, 34 Mackenzie Crescent, Saskatoon SK, S7J 2R5, backyard_ashes@hotmail.com

Backyard Ashes is an earnest poetry and art magazine that isn't at all as bad as one would suspect from its title. I mean the title of the issue (Breaking the Surface) and the magazine is pretty cliché; but the writing in here is decent. For example, "Kafka" by Katharine Wrobel: "And Kafka warned me that I would be lonely, gaze empty at strangers wondering if I should look for company, tell someone that we are all of the same sort — of a sperm and a maggot and the unsaid in-between." There is art too, and for the most part isn't compromised by Xerox's guillotine. I liked the progression in Nahanni Young's poem "genesis." Overall it's an uncompromising litmag of eclectic style and form, a well-rounded production. (Nathaniel G. Moore)

The Cyclops Review

journal, #2, 176 pages, \$14, Jon Fiorentino, Cyclops Press, PO Box 2775, Winnipeg MB, R3C 4B4

An admirable collection mostly comprised of fairly accomplished though lesser known writers, with a few new kids on the block thrown in for good measure. We move from Michelle Sterling's Tokyo "how you have hurt me with your automated urinals," to Stephanie Bolster's Valentine's Day junior high dance, to Julia Tausch's stream-of-consciousness Europe. "In Paris she sees Diane Arbus photos for the first time...and she writes it all down, what a stupid fool writing down pictures." We even visit Korea, courtesy my own offering to what is meant to be an annual anthology. The writing is sharp, the design is clean and crisp emphasizing reading, and the just-bigger-than-a-hand size of this book feels right. The Cyclops Review has everything going for it, and if you are looking for an excellent cross section of contemporary Canadian writing with an emphasis on poetry and writers from Montreal and Winnipeg, this is the hot new journal you need to read. (Hal Niedzviecki)



from Chewing Teeth

Toronto

Portable Altamont

chapbook, 24 pages, \$4, Misprints Press, 46 Noble St. #103, Toronto ON, M6K 2C9, pocket-canon@yahoo.ca

The second in a series of funny chapbooks that all appear under the condition of anonymity. "Based on the premise that there's too much being published yet somehow not enough" this series, called The Pocket Cannon, explores writing that lays in that fertile field separating true from false, fact from fiction. This particular book consists of short epigraphic commentary on various writers, actors, musicians and other public culture producing figures. Mick Jagger, Margaret Atwood, Bjork "Is soooo boring" are selected for treatment, though the funniest of these entries is the one dedicated to Toronto novelist and newspaper columnist Russell Smith. "One side of Russell Smith's head is tingling. The other is not. That's the Pert difference he's feeling." This book works, though it's not entirely clear how or why. (Hal Niedzviecki)

Chewing Teeth

litzine, 28 pages, \$2.50, Colin Ridiculouspunk pseudonym, colin_jerkass@yahoo.ca

Poor Colin. His girlfriend of ten years broke up with him and the pain is obviously expressed in his hostile, sombre, cynical and morbid venting. Poor Colin, I truly empathize. I wonder how he felt before, if he was more positive and interested in his future and the world around him. I really enjoyed Chewing Teeth. His sardonic explorations of politics, society, religion, the media and himself are raw; tainted with sarcasm, but real nonetheless. I especially liked the entries concerning two people's relationship with god. One breaks up with god by saying

"I'm just not in love with you, ya know," while the other one cheats on god with another deity. Well Mr. Ridiculouspunkpseudonym, you have a fan in me, just remember to relax, like you said "it's just like kissing — except with blood." (Lara Rock)

Square

comic, #4, 36 pages, \$3, Ian McMurray, The Beguiling, 601 Markham St., Toronto ON, M6G 2L7, ianmcmurray@hotmail.com

The 4th issue of Square is a collection of author Ian McMurray's unprinted strips from the past few years. My interest seemed to wander from a skimming indifference to a damn good read when going over this zine. McMurray's illustrations capture that concerned-relaxed look of the everyday twenty-something city dweller, especially with his reoccurring characters Max Gladstone and Rick Ranger. Max plays the gossiping, womanizing friend of Ranger — who is the introverted DJ that doesn't need women, only his music. The characters discuss video games, music, politics and art in that dry way only a city dweller could. This was the reason for my wandering interest — because while the strips were funny, creative and interesting, the bland moments of being a Toronto 20-something inhabitant seemed to infect too much of it. It was dry and dragged on in parts. Of course, like the author says, these are only unfinished strips from the past few years — so they sit as a take-them-as-they-are type of thing. Apart from these moments, I enjoyed much of the zine. The most interesting work of it comes from "Therapy," where another 20-something deals with the monotony of city-life, but with cleverly contrasted internal-monologue-type glimpses into her thoughts. Thankfully, the zine isn't wholly comprised of city-related story-lines, and that's where the great Beta-Class Monkey comes in — a great capper comic for the zine. (James King)

She's Got Labe

zine, #5, 29 pages, \$2+postage, Heze & the Flaming Gent, PO BOX 201, 358 Danforth Avenue, Toronto ON, M4K 3Z2, shegotlab@hotmail.com

With a spirit that is open, fun and sexy, it seems there is no topic Labe won't tackle. Leave your inhibitions behind when you open it, just as the creators have done (if they indeed have any). It is so great to come across something that is so accessible to any or all genders, free of bias and yet does not make a huge issue out of it. There isn't anything confrontational here, just people having a good time—something we could all stand to do once in awhile. In Labe's world, those with vaginas pee standing up, argyle knee-socks are sexy, and the haiku is approached in a completely different way. With a nice balance of pictures and text, there's never a chance to get bored and who knows, it might inspire you to get some "labe" of your own. Definitely check it out. (Heather Ball)

Interlude

poetry, \$3, Brian Burch, St. Brigit's Press, 20 Spruce St., Toronto ON, M5A 2H7, burch@web.ca

"Photo Essay" is a nice piece in the middle. The middle stanza is the best. Read that. This is a poetry collection that sounds a lot like journalism broken up into stanzas. "Down the hall trials without media occur/12 political trespassers rate TV attention/2 police officers accused of rape barely rate the back pages of the papers." We are supposed to feel something, but what exactly? It's self-

evident, and Burch should be commended for being an emotionalist — sensitive and in touch with reality. But the poetry itself is harnessed on the objective relationship, or lack of relationship he has with these events. However, the events aren't drawn out enough, nor are we given any construction that tears away from the established medium known as journalism and not known as poetry. I was confused; I mean "Los Alamos" is a nice short poem that ends with "splinters of icons await melting." That's a good one. But is it always cold in the shadows of concrete even if the air is oven warm? I think Burch has some great ideas, but too often they are politically internal, a diet subjectivity that can't get past initial concepts. (Nathaniel G. Moore)

True Confessions of a Big GEEK

geek confession zine, 12 pages, \$?, Sarah, 57 Aziel St., Toronto ON, M6P 2N8, gaygeek-srock@sympatico.ca

Being a big geek myself I can truly connect with these geek confessions. For years I've tried to run away from my geek status without much success I must admit. Sure I no longer sport tapered jeans, Thriller T-shirts with peach suspenders, the mullet's gone too and so has the cauliflower-type hairspray hardened bangs; but still at the core of it all I can't deny that I'm one big geek. I'm through with running though. No more. Instead I'm going to celebrate my geekish ways. That's what this zine is all about, it's a celebration of all that is geeky; it is a place where the uncool get to confess their geek secrets and realize that it's ok, that being a geek is great in so

many ways. True Confession is very therapeutic as you're bound to recognize yourself in its pages. I especially enjoyed Jonathan Culp's "A Special Geek Flash" and I could definitely relate with Siue's "Social Clutz": "One of the reasons I am a geek is because I seem to lack basic/proper social skills. Here I am, trying to change the world, and I can not have a conversation with a stranger or acquaintance without feeling like I'm on a stage at Stratford or something." Yep, I know how you feel... thank god for writing, or else I would never say anything ever. True Confessions is a fun publication, enjoyable for all the geeks and recovering geeks out there. (Audrey Gagnon)

Trade Queer Things

zine, 32 pages, \$4, Jon Pressick, 1547-B Dundas Street W., Toronto ON, M6K 1T6, jon@tradequeerthings.com

I was riding the subway home from work when I picked up Trade Queer Things. As soon as I opened the zine, I saw in the top right-hand corner a photo of two guys and a girl going to town. I immediately checked the table of contents and flipped to page nine to examine more racy photos. After reading Coman Poon's article on "Bisexual Male Pornography on the Internet" and reviewing every steamy detail of the stimulating photos, I looked up for my husband and remembered I was on the subway — damn! I moved on to other fascinating articles on up-and-coming music, like Black Licorice Theory and Dani Harris, an interview with Carole Pope, one with the author Michael V. Smith, an exposition on the art of Suzy Malik and some book reviews. The only downfall of this otherwise intriguing zine was the lack of editing. The

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thinking

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number of extra spaces, floating commas, typos, and even an author's misspelled name was horrendous. All this made the zine a chore to digest. However, the Back Page Baby on "Foursomes" was certainly worth waiting for. (Lara Rock)

Through the Rubble I Keep on Trucking: A Life Story

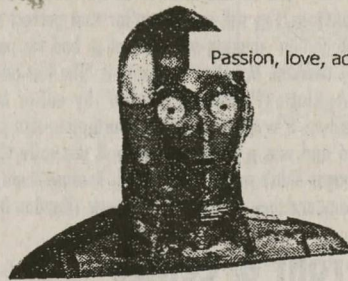
perzine, 11 pages, \$2, Fernanda Pilasti, Toronto, sarah.dermer@senecac.ca

This zine is a sad, touching account of survival. Not of a big, epiphany-giving tragedy, but rather of a sequence of disappointments, failures and hard times that we call life. The zine takes us through Pilasti's early life in Italy, her journey to Canada with the bulk of the story focusing on her struggle to provide for herself and her children. Work, love, literacy and peace and quiet are all things that we often forget don't come easy to many people. The creator is newly literate, having only learned to read and write a year and a half ago. The stark, terse language combined with the strict chronological narration gives her story a powerful impact. Although the difficult relationships, factory work and poverty are accepted with a fatalistic attitude, there is hope in this story because she never even considers giving up. It's a good read and a testament to the powers of perseverance. (Heather Ball)

Voices under the Guise of Darkness

Poetry, #3, \$5, Monica S. Kuebler, c/o Burning Effigy Press, 408-117 Gerrard St. East, Toronto ON, M5B 2L4

VUTGD is a spiral bound poetry chapbook that could never be mistaken for a cookbook. There is some dirty stuff in here, I enjoyed the editor's notes, they were quite good. Something about Darwin, but a lot of this writing is self-referring and about the act of writing. Nik Beat writes "sometimes my poetry is a bunch of nothing all painted with anger; at other times it's heavy and dense like poured concrete weighed down by its own portentous..." I began to ask myself why? Because the way the words were arranged commissions this notion? Beat's other piece was a nice list of pills, most of which I am familiar with from the mid-90s. A common complaint I have with certain poetry is there is a tendency to incorporate the success of one medium to try to save another. Pop music, no matter how successful, will never make poetry matter. We have to do this on our own. And this happens in a piece by Phil Arima called "Shift and Return": "march. Vinyl foundation perfects my face/Acid rain pits aluminum siding/The creatures with property dig themselves in/all the virtues and a few select vices/I lie in a puddle." I also recommend Arima's "Deionizing Thought," it's pretty fucking good. VUTGD also includes a pomo piece by Violet Fodor, which is about sex or lack of sex or sex with inexperienced people and buying batteries. I won't spoil the climax because you should definitely read it. Sometimes my reviews are a bunch of nothing all painted with anger. But this thing is pretty damn solid. (Nathaniel G. Moore)



Passion, love, adventure, they've got it all.



from True Confessions of a Big GEEK

Kiss Machine

Lit/artzine, #5, 87 pages, \$5, Emily Pohl-Weary and Paola Poletto, 18 Virtue St., Toronto ON, M6R 1C2, info@kissmachine.org, www.kissmachine.org

Coming from a town where coffee shop parking lots act as hallowed ground for the worshipped muscle-power of Mustangs and Firebirds, I didn't find it hard to enjoy Kiss Machine 5: Cars and Religion. Kiss Machine is the spawn of Emily Pohl-Weary and Paola Poletto, who focus the current issue on cars and religion. These two themes march side-by-side through the issue; covering poetry, prose, articles, art and photography on the way. The shining point is definitely the prose and art/photography. "Plot" by Tim Conley particularly stands out, where a simple story about a person in a room turns into a fictional article about the different paths the story could take, and which would be the most popular. Another piece by Jay Dolmage begins with the simple outline of the history of the car, and seamlessly grows into a story about the great battles between animal and machine. At 87 pages, Kiss Machine is filled with great pieces of art and fiction. I liked the constant play between cars and religion with the pieces, and especially how we're guided along each page with quotes like "What is your simple religion?" followed on the next page by "Electronic Climate Control." Pohl-Weary and Poletto construct a great zine made up of various artistic and written pieces grouped by the divinity of the internal combustion engine. (James King)

Suspension of Disbelief

comic, #1, 33 pgs, \$5 + \$1.25 shipping, Paul Quinn, Lightningstrike Publishing, 358 Danforth Ave. Box 65174, Toronto ON, M4K 1N0, lightning31@hotmail.com

Hey, what do we have here? It's an indie comic, awesome! What a charming low-budget design. Independent art is so important, you know, especially in under-appreciated mediums like "comix." This sure is a witty comic I'm holding here, bursting as it is with insightful commentary on relationships in these turbulent times. But that's not all. See, the comic's protagonist is himself a comic artist, so there's all this mind-blowing self-referentiality. And the drawings are — woah man, check out the hooters on that chick the protagonist is trying to bone! How do they even go like that? And cool, now she's getting undressed for no apparent narrative or the-

matic reason... Now she's wearing this impossible tank top. Shit, this comic art stuff is hot! And what's this now — she's drunk and taking off her top and passing out into his lap?! Damn. It's like an Archie comic but way better dude, because it's indie. (Brian Nugent)

Fun Incorporated

zine/story, 16 pages, \$3, Kevin Barry, 179 Wychwood Ave Apt #2, Toronto ON, M6C 2T4

If you're at all interested in issues that are Orwellian or Huxleyesque in nature, you'll be into this story. Told from the first person, it's the story of a rebellion at the Fun Inc. factory, where Fun literally is something to be had, as their job is to manufacture it in pill form. It leaves you thinking about your own idea of the basic form of fun (I'll be keeping that to myself, thank you) all the while telling a good story. It could possibly be seen as a straight-edge allegory, but there's absolutely no indication that it's intended that way. Barry is very clever with his concise use of language, and the result is often hilarious, such as when the narrator (who does not take Fun but gives free pills to his friends) says, "My friends tell me I should try having Fun with them once and awhile. It makes me feel uneasy when they are all having Fun at my expense." The way he translates everyday experience into his imaginary world words extremely well. If you read this, I guarantee some fun. (Heather Ball)

Book of Shadows

zine, 52 pages, free, Autumn Bronte, Toronto, autumnbronte@wildmail.com

Book of Shadows is a lengthy compilation of spells found on the web. The spells cover an impressive amount of subjects, and each entry is accompanied by a corresponding URL and detailed instructions in how one should go about performing the spell. I've never really been into anything witch-related since I always found witches (well the Hollywood type anyways) really scary. I think that Bronte is a nice witch though as she warns in her introduction: "Never use a spell to hurt someone or manipulate them! Always try to focus on the positive. Sometimes people are horrible to each other because they are miserable inside. Send them healing energy and hope they change for the better and make life around them more tolerable." That's not scary at all, actually this witch sounds nicer than most non-witch people I know. I thought this zine was an interesting read, if not for

simple entertainment value. If you are a witch though I think you'll also find this publication useful and an essential addition to your library. (Audrey Gagnon)

PBI: Canada News

Newsletter, Vol. 12, #2, 12 pages, 6/yr @ \$35/yr (suggested donation), 427 Bloor St. West Suite 202, Toronto ON, M5S 1X7, pbican@web.ca, www.web.net/~pbican6/yr
Peace Brigades International is an amazing organisation. Its volunteers go to places like Colombia to work alongside human rights activists to, in essence, be a non-violent presence in the midst of violence. This newsletter deals with efforts of PBI volunteers in Columbia, Mexico, Indonesia and Guatemala. There is information on upcoming training efforts in practical non-violence and other efforts to ensure that peace making skills can be shared and utilised even by those of us who aren't perfect. (Brian Burch)

Ottawa

Modomnoc

zine, #2, 16 pages, \$2+SASE, Matthew Holmes, 18 Adelaide St., Ottawa ON, K1S 3S1, modomnoc@toast.com

Slightly off-the-wall poetry and artwork are the focus of this zine and with about 12 contributors, it's a nice mix. Not every piece appealed to me, but those that did were all the more enjoyable to read because they provided me with some "aha" moments that are rare. Most notable

are "Mental Floss" by Dorothy Rogers in which she writes, "and in this disinfected world/of crowns and grindings/I'm still searching/for that perfect smile of recognition" making me not feel so bad for neglecting my checkup. My other favourite is "The last gardens of E.A. Klatt: (i) clearing ground" by editor Matthew Holmes. It is written with a sophistication that surprised me and was a great way to end the collection. The images didn't speak to me at all, because there weren't many and they were a little too stark. (Heather Ball)

Front & Centre

magazine, #4, 44 pgs, \$5 Jason Copple and Matthew Firth, 573 Gainsborough Ave., Ottawa ON, K2A2Y6

This magazine contains eight new works of short fiction, an interview with writer Alexandra Leggat, and book reviews. The reviews, the interview, and the editorial reveal a group of thoughtful literature enthusiasts who earnestly care about what they're doing. The interview for example is more of a dialogue between the two authors about their craft, not unlike what you might overhear at a grad student café. The stories, which make up the bulk of the publication, also seem influenced by what I imagine to be a grad school sensibility. They engage with relevant "issues" and themes from a youthful perspective, while also playing with style and structure. There are the odd instances of overly enthusiastic "literary" intrusions (whether, repeated phrases, awkward similes) that seem show-offy and distracting, but these can be forgiven because the writing is honest. The stories mostly feature twenty- or thirty-something protagonists dealing with some problem or bad

situation, alone in an ugly world and unable to connect. "This is My Life" follows the thoughts of a bored office worker as she waits for the bus. The protagonist of "Minimum Wage," the best story here, is a convenience store clerk whose mundane job poisons him. It reminded me of all the good parts of *Clerks*. Another particularly good one, "Kissing Lindsay," is about the joy and pain of the often transient and fluid nature of non-traditional romance. It is told with urgency, and like all of the stories in *Front & Centre*, it doesn't settle for easy answers. (Brian Nugent)

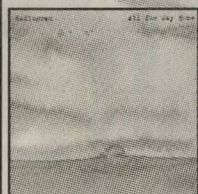
Hail

poetry, Seymour Mayne, Sandaflon & Metatron, 390 Rideau Street unit 20360, Ottawa ON, K1N 1A3

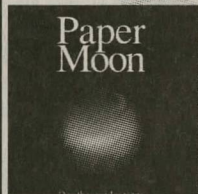
Ottawa has a lot of poets. I've decided to let you all know this. While *Hail* might be in the tradition of the great chapbook, its pithy layout — and dare I say environmental eyesore, or eyesore to the environmentalist — is highly contagious. There isn't a poem in here more than sixteen words in length, which translates into about six or seven one or two word stanzas. I won't dare emulate the layout in this review, but simply quote one that was of sufficient poetic merit, if only a short breath. From "Crows": "The crows of Sandy Hill are much too big/sleek with wide bristling wings." That's nice but perhaps there should be a sequel. Where are these crows now? And what murder of crows is complete without this epiphany on the facing page, just moments previous called "Stone": "You have come and gone and none know your voice or name but stone." Nicely produced, but something's missing. (Nathaniel G. Moore)



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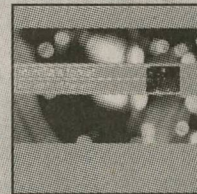
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Captain Groovy and other Punk Rock Love Poems

poetry, \$?, Zachary Houle, Invisible Ink Publishing, 503-266 Bronson Ave., Ottawa ON, KQR 6H8, zhoule@magma.ca

Coffee and corpses and the ABCs of dating and labelling your girlfriends according to Zachary: "I'll keep her forever — just you wait and see/she's my one and only/a girl just for me." Okay so it rhymes. Can I continue? "The DVD Director's commentary of how we met" includes subtly hypnotic supervision of mass culture's annoying dominance over our physical reality, as follows "The way you wore your pantyhose, like a secret." I'd like these snazzy lounge act poems if they weren't being sold to me on an infomercial in the middle of the night. (Nathaniel G. Moore)

Ontario

The Sun Shines on it Twice

perzine, \$0.50 or trade, free to prisoners and family, Clare Heslop, #2, Apt. B-18, 939 Western Road, London ON, N6G 1G3, shinesontwice@hotmail.com

Rarely, very rarely is a zine fawning worthy. I don't want to rave, I don't want to rant, I want to fawn. As I got into *The Sun Shines on it Twice*, I really got into it. Although it is not the type of fare I'd usually get into, Heslop's words and images started to hypnotize me. It takes a lot for me to get past cut and paste scribble, but there is honesty, despair, elation, surprise and a whole load of complexity packed — and I do mean packed — into TSSoIT. Heslop has lain herself out, put it all right out there for us to read. And you just don't see enough nature images in zines these days. Heslop takes us on a ride of her travels west with both fiction and non fiction. Switching from journal entries to poetry to commentary to everything in between, TSSoIT engages and holds the reader. Heslop has the writing in her, pulling out lines such as "You are the finest linen. I am the oldest notebook of my grandmother's handwriting." With each page I grew more and more eager to see what weaves Heslop would create next. Her words entranced me, and I really hope I can get my hands on further issues. I also hope she is getting her writing out to other publications. (Jon Pressick)

Confessions of a Harry Potter Fanatic or Why I Should Not Be Allowed to Read

per/popculturezine, 12 pages, \$?, Ontario, lla-maunderground@hotmail.com

This short zine outlines the dreams and desires of a seventeen-year-old girl who relates her encounter with the Harry Potter series and how she instantly and obses-

sively fell for the young lad. Then, she rants on about Alan Rickman, from the movie adaptation, who may be a more suitable candidate for her to pine after, as Harry is too young for her. Although the zine is short, it's cute and complete with plenty of Web sites to check out. She also includes information and reviews concerning the purchase of the Nimbus 2000 by Mattel. For those of you who aren't in the Potter inner circle, the Nimbus 2000 is the broom that Harry Potter flies around on at the Hogwarts School for magic. The young fanatic expresses exuberant child-like desires to attend the fabled school. I might be inclined to feel the same, if I were in my early teens. (Lara Rock)

Gettin' Hammered! A Captain Collision Odyssey

comic, #1, 24 pages, \$?, Ed Morton & Reg Stacey, 31 North Trent St., PO BOX 511, Frankford ON, KOK 2C0, regstacey@yahoo.ca

If any of the following appeals to you, you are the perfect reader for this comic: aliens, blood and gore, hammers endowed with super powers, a scruffy hero and a homicidal maniac wearing what appears to be a Maple Leafs sweater. It's a messy-mish-mash-squirt-bash kind of thing; dark and at times quite funny (in an ironic way). Does it get any better than this? (Heather Ball)

Natural Life

Magazine, January/February issue, 46 pages, 6/yr @ \$25.68/yr, Wendy Priesnitz, PO BOX 340, St. George ON, N0E 1N0, natural@life.ca, www.naturallifemagazine.com

This periodical has evolved in design from its early days of black-and-white photos and inexpensive newsprint. But its practical idealism continues. This particular issue has features that look at topics from recycling computers to use of limited planting space. Simple straight forward advices on living more in harmony with nature, such as David Suzuki's "Ten Steps to A Healthier Planet," are a key focus. Reviews of relevant resources, ads for products one doesn't find at Wal-Mart, and news briefs round out each issue. (Brian Burch)

Jawbreakin' Julie

comic, #3, 31 pages, \$?, Reg Stacey, 31 N Trent Street, Frankford ON, PO BOX 511, KOK 2C0, regstacey@yahoo.ca

When we're first introduced to Julie she's waking up to the "blazing inferno of light." The accompanying drawing shows her body silhouetted against the dawn of a new day — on her hands and knees, grasping the earth in front of her with her perky butt raised in the air and large breasts dangling beneath her. She can't recall if she's ever been beaten up this badly before. If you've never read this zine, *Jawbreakin' Julie*, is a buff, big-boobed, bombshell who may be her family and friends' last hope if they are to survive the "horrendously zoomorphic" creatures that are wreaking havoc on their world. Her uniform consists of cut off jean shorts, and a tight, cleavage and belly revealing tank top that reads, "fully armed" across the chest. "No, I'm not crazy about

the uniform, and I know feminists would freak out with respect to its 'exploitiveness'" says the muscular yet voluptuous Julie. "However, [my boss], beneath his gruff exterior, is very considerate and rather protective of his employees, so I don't have to put up with any shit." How sweet. *Jawdroppin' Julie* might be a better name for this zine, as my mouth remained opened in shock the entire time I was reading it. It's an action-packed story matched with detailed pencil drawings. If you like combat, violence, and scantily clad, big breasted women who have been "chosen" to save the world, then this zine's for you. (Dale Duncan)

No Assembly Required #3 (Fall 2002)

zine, #3, \$2, Suite #248 16-1375 Southdown Road, Mississauga ON, L5J 2Z1, www.angelfire.com/theforce/nar

After a lengthy absence, NAR has returned. When I found out it had been on a hiatus, I first thought, "Good, this thing looks like shit." And the first couple of pages did nothing to change my mind, with stupid letters to the editor and some weird contest with readers' pictures. But when I got further into NAR, I started to enjoy it more and more. The main strength of NAR is in its ability to take known pop culture and subvert it into something damn funny, and just a touch biting at the same time. "When Corporations go Wrong," "Stories you May have Missed," "Dear Disney" and "The Mr. Men Books — The Long Lost Series" are all must reads. Personally, I've never read the version of *The Cat in the Hat* that has the cat tripping out and mooching booze, smokes, dope and eventually cash from the kids. Fucking funny stuff. But the other great aspect of this zine is that there is a bit of seriousness to it, and some strong writing. Despite the proviso at the beginning of the piece, the interview with ChacHi On Acid is actually quite good, a nice balance of actual serious questions and ridiculous ones that seem to have kept the subject on his toes, but didn't let him get carried away with silliness. A strong piece on the history of tattooing also compliments the humour and goofy pieces. I kinda wonder if NAR was this good before it went on a hiatus — or if maybe the creators should only put it out every couple of years. It would certainly be worth it if they decided to wait. (Jon Pressick)

The Pine River Current

newspaper, Vol. 7 #3, 15 pages, \$1, Stephen Huebl, RR#3 Site 16 Box 1, Everett ON, LMO 1J0, Stephen.huebl@sympatico.ca, www.thecurrent.com

Published in the small town of Everett Ontario, *The Pine River Current* is in my opinion the town's best source of community news. It is by far way better than the many other news rags out in that area. Most of the other papers are run by a bunch of right wing yahoos whose opinions are for the most part primitive and downright ignorant. Just look at the published letters to the editor on any given week and you'll see what I mean. Huebl's publication offers something different to the Everett and surrounding area readership. Sure, *Pine River* still covers the regular stories found in small towns, in this issue for example we are told all about how the ATRA (Adjala-Tosoronto Residents' Association) presented the town-

ship with a plastic park bench and how the Alliston town hall historic bell is back and ringing once more. Not too mind-blowing I know, but it is a small town and nothing too exciting ever happens, that's a fact and it's to be expected. What's great about Pine River is that in between the small town tid bits of news, Huebl writes about people who are active in making the community better. In this issue Pine River features the introduction of a pilot project meant to increase the amount of things that people can recycle and thus decrease the garbage volume in the community. They plan on distributing lidded black boxes which residents can use to recycle organic products and thus reduce household waste to one bag of garbage a week. Each issue of Pine River also features active individuals in the community in the "Focus" section. Great paper, perhaps a little irrelevant for the non-Everett residents, but still a nice way to peek into the going-ons of a small town. Next issue will be the last print version of the paper, after seven years Huebl is taking Pine River online. Best of luck! (Audrey Gagnon)

Wicked Twist

poetry, 20 pages, \$1.50, Andrea O'Callaghan & Phill Feltham, Metro Divisions Media, 23 Resnik Drive, Newcastle ON, L1B 1K5, angeebabee9@hotmail.com, Phill_Feltham@yahoo.ca

The poetry from this zine is constructed as a "wine list." While some of the poems are bitter yet rich with piercing truths from a depressed soul; others are love poems full of devotion and understanding, compassion and attentiveness. The strange thing is that stereotypically it would be easy to assume that Phill would be writing those poems of distress and embittered sadness while Andrea

would be the love junky. However, upon second glance, the wicked twist arises and the reader realizes that that it is quite the opposite. The poems are really dark and some distressing; a menagerie in one varied menu. It's quite interesting, the different views of both poets and how each displays their work side by side to show a contrast in perspective, and yet one has to assume that they could be writing about one another and the possible relationship they shared or do share. (Lara Rock)

A Practical Anarchism

political rant, \$1, Alfredo Forte, 3329 High Springs Crescent, Mississauga ON, L5B 4G8

Rather than spending a dollar on this rant, give your money away to the first panhandler you see today. It will at least make a difference in someone's life. Among the publications where one would get a better picture of practical anarchism from different traditions are: Anarchist Studies; Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed; Bayou La Rose; The Catholic Worker; The Communitarian Anarchist; Direct Action; Fifth Estate; Freedom; Green Anarchy; Kick It Over; The Match; Onward; The Raven; The Thought; Thought Bombs; and Total Liberty. I found arguments in favour of capital punishment, compulsory monogamy, relocation of urban populations, the use of the army to keep order, a book of rules for everyone to follow and so forth to be, at best, a distortion of many of the libertarian, mutualism, syndicalism or anarchist theories I've been exposed to over the years. At its worst, it contributes to the clear cutting of the Algoma Highlands for paper without any redeeming qualities. It is badly written, poorly argued and totally inadequately researched. (Brian Burch)

Human Lizard Saves the Day

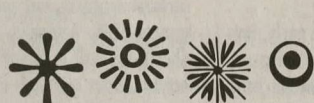
comic, 12 pages, \$2, Jason Loo, 5288 Guildwood Way, Mississauga ON, L5R 3J5, dspublications@sympatico.ca

It is obvious by just glancing through Human Lizard that Loo is a very talented artist. The drawings, which are done with different graytone markers, are very cool — just realistic enough to capture details in the facial expressions, but just comic-like enough that it doesn't ruin the surreal feeling. I did have one big problem, however, and that is that I couldn't figure out any kind of narrative thread or plot. I'm pretty sure there's one there, but it just wasn't put forward explicitly enough and it seems as though a lot of time was spent on the graphic elements (the cover is in colour) while the rest was neglected. That was really frustrating to me because with a cool storyline (or even a slightly lame one), Human Lizard would kick serious ass. I actually have a feeling that he will, someday. (Heather Ball)

The Sadness of Morris Johns

comic, #2, 12 pages, 75 cents, Matt Collins, 106 Huron Street, Guelph ON, N1E 5L6, HipHopJorge@Zombieworld.com

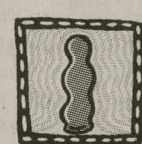



Morris Johns is really sad. Even rock music makes him cry. I almost got sad reading about him, but the drawings are really cute, especially the mischievous aliens



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who seem to take pleasure in Morris Johns' sadness. He reminds me of this guy I used to know in university who'd do things like stand speechless in the middle of the living room, staring at the blank screen of the television set with a vacant look on his face when his housemates were listening to music or reading. He'd also eat peanut butter straight out of the jar with a spoon and sulk because he spent all his OSAP money on a new snowboard, which he almost never used. He liked to blame people for things. Probably thought aliens were after him too, just like Morris Johns. Poor guy. This humorous (yet sad) little zine is worth a look-see if you ever come across it. (Dale Duncan)

Nekusis

art & lit journal, #1, 37 pages, \$2.65, F.C. Estrella, Mason Rd, Scarborough ON, M1M 3P9

"I'm tired of people saying, 'Wait till you get to the real world.' I'm there can't you see???" says Trolle in the pages of this new zine. Nekusis is a compilation of poetry, prose, art, and rants written by teenagers, and for teenagers who feel that their ideas, feelings, and opinions aren't always represented in the world around them. The work covers a variety of topics such as love, anarchy, parents, being young, being outcast, desire, and change. In her self-described rant, Emily Armstrong declares "We know you think we're 'god-less heathens' (actual quote) who worship Satan, but I gotta tell ya, it's sure as fuck better than your religion which praises money or 'Gawd', which usually means money." Despite the fact that it's been a while since I was a teenager myself, I found that I could identify with some of this writing, and anyone else who still feels misrepresented and misunderstood from time to time will too. The content in this zine ranged from angry, to humorous — Ravager provides some witty advice on how to stay healthy, which includes eating, not dying, and not becoming a character in a horror movie — and from depressing, to optimistic — Emily Borkowski writes "we are the people, the power and the change/ we are the hope for a better day." (Dale Duncan)

Crooked Teeth, Ed Morton

zine, Vol. 1, #3, \$2, 3552 Bramble Road, Peterborough ON, K9H 1S8, theed3270@yahoo.com

I am really big on zines attempting strong design and print quality. Crooked Teeth is a very nice looking package; clear and clean illustrations and printing, a simple yet effective cover, very readable. But somehow, the package is just not strong in content. Writer/Illustrator Ed Morton has some good ideas and obvious drawing skills, but I found the text very lacking. The illustrations are actually quite good and the text quite bad. I present an idea to Morton: consider what Crooked Teeth would have been had it just featured the compelling "The Lesson of Icarus." The poem by Mike Porter with Morton's illustrations evokes the myth and breathes it to life. It is not only a standout; it actually puts the rest of the content to shame. Crooked Teeth is a good try, but Morton needs to work on his writing before he dazzles us with his illustration. (Jon Pressick)

Montreal & Quebec

The Iron Fist Behind the Invisible Hand

political pamphlet, \$2, Kevin A. Carson, Red Lion Press, Box 174 Succ. D, Montreal QC, H3K 3B9, redlionpress@hotmail.com

Political pamphlets/chapbooks are effective ways of getting ideas out in an effective and inexpensive way. At their best, they are comprised of one or two well crafted essays that explore an idea and link it both to historical expressions and practical applications. Carson's work is one of the better anarchist pamphlets I've come across from a North American writer. He doesn't come across as either dogmatic or opportunistic. He is very much aware of the work of other theorists and efforts to test these theories in practical expressions. I am not convinced by his arguments, particularly his opposition to patents, but would have to work hard to rebut them. I did enjoy his comparisons between contemporary corporate types and traditional courtiers in a brief section dealing with the current role of the state in subsidising the risks of corporations involved with such harmful technology as nuclear power plants. (Brian Burch)

Little Words

feminist zine, 109 pages, \$3+postage, GOG Productions, 5311 Avenue du Parc 300, Montreal QC, H2V 4G9, smitty_90@hotmail.com

While the words on the pages are physically little, the title cannot reduce the great girl-focused reading in this cool zine. It really is one of the best-written feminist/activist zine I've come across in a long time. It's got some stories, talks about how the whole project came about and gives info on each of the respective creators in a very witty way. I was especially impressed with they way they dissected the power problems they encountered while putting Little Words together and then went on to investigate how to work things out as a group. Very progressive. The feature "Bathroom Activism 101" was great too and helped explain why the can is such an ideal place to petition, persuade or leave literature. One criticism I offer is that although the zine itself is pocket-sized, it is very long, with small type and the photocopying makes the words run off the page so it's a bit uninviting to read at first. Overall, I'd call it a success. (Heather Ball)

The Anarchism of Emile Armand

political zine, 20 pages, Larry Gambone, PO Box 174, Succ. D, Montreal QC, ?3? 3B9, redlionpress@hotmail.com

If you are interested in English translations of anarchist theory, pick up this zine. Its premise implies that the ideas of the classical anarchist Emile Armand are needed in our society which is constructed of "political correctness and unending governmental interference in our lives." As capitalism and democracy suggests, the government is

"Running shoes"



from Wicked Twist

comprised of the collective rights of individuals bound to a similar ideology. Such is the way of our world, and certainly blind acceptance is not the goal of this zine but to educate the reader of the ideals of anarchism as they represent individual rights or, in the words of the theorist, the "negation of governmental authority...antagonism to all situations regulated by imposition, constraint, violence, governmental oppression, whether these are a product of all, a group, or of one person." The read is dry, repetitive and I don't believe a person needs to label themselves in order to be an individual. (Lara Rock)

In the Fence of Reality

zine, #7, \$1 + postage, Martin ITFOR, c/o Martin Sasseville, 1853 Des Ormes, La Baie PQ, G7B 3W3, inthefenceofreality@hotmail.com, http://inthefenceofreality.cjb.net

Gimmicks, even in zines, suck. Having your zine open from the left instead of the right is cheesy, not clever. Given that this zine is based in Quebec (ie North America), this zine should open from the right. Now, why? Other countries and cultures open publications from the left. Yes, true Jimmy, but those cultures do not read text from left to right. Their method is fine for the way they read. In North America, people who are reading English or French text generally read from left to right, top to bottom. So, when you get to the bottom, you get to the right edge, and then you turn the page and can begin at the top on the left in a seamless continuance. Why am I making such a stink about this? Because it sucks to have to read pages backwards. And because I was not familiar with this zine, I first looked at the back (which would make a decent front page of a zine) and got all bloody confused. Don't mess with my reality Martin! Inside you'll find very typical band interviews (of the noise genre, in this case) and reviews of music. And a bizarre (bad bizarre) piece on flatulence. Work on the presentation, and then try again. You might be on to something, but you'll piss off too many people if you stay your present course. (Jon Pressick)

The Gospel

arts& lit zine, #1, 54 pages plus a cd insert, \$5, Mark Ainslie and Sacha Jackson, 2077 Tupper St. Suite 11, Montreal QC, H3H 1N9, thegospelzine@hotmail.com.

I love musical inserts in magazines. One of my most



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The Dying Poem

\$18.95, a novel by Rob Budde

Filmmaker Jay Post is shooting a documentary about poet Henry Black, taking us through stories within stories in search of the mystery behind the poet's artful suicide. The *Globe* called it luminous, wry and stunning.

Shiva's Really Scary Gifts

\$21.95, stories and drawings by John Scott

From catching a baseball bat in the teeth to harbouring the FBI's most-wanted fugitive, visual artist John Scott has done it all. Join him as he terrifies robbers, loses a parent and tries to get a gun permit for an art installation.

Cars

\$17.95, a dialogue by George Bowering and Ryan Knighton

It's not where you're going but how you get there ... Join Poet Laureate Bowering and young poet Ryan Knighton as they spin a series of car stories - from boiling fish in the radiator to jousting with a forklift - into an auto biography.

Seven Pages Missing Volumes One and Two

\$24.95 each, poetry by Steve McCaffery

Volume One collects selections of McCaffery's published work; Volume Two makes available never-before-gathered material from this important innovator, including the legendary *Abstract Ruin* and McCaffery's hilarious translation of the *Communist Manifesto* into Yorkshire English.

pppeeeaaacccccc

\$15.95, drama by Darren O'Donnell

A new play from the acclaimed playwright of *Boxhead* and *White Mice*, pppeeeaaacccccc talks about the revolution, examines our being, asks us what we're doing and reminds us there are monsters in here.



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prized possessions is a floppy record of whale noises that I tore from a National Geographic when I was a kid. I dig listening to them go: "ooooaaah...eeeeeeiii-ii-i." I think every zine should include a soundtrack, otherwise readers might listen to crappy, incompatible music, and it'll unconsciously seep into the experience. ("this zine possesses a Shakira-esque quality.") Editors Mark Ainslie and Sacha Jackson sure knew what they were doing when they tucked a cd by the one-man Hamiltonian band Waxmannequin into the back cover of *The Gospel*. Waxmannequin: edgy, intricate, layered, ever-shifting, slightly eerie, entirely piquant. *The Gospel*: ditto. (Jon Sasaki)

Upstream Journal

newsletter, Vol. 18, #2, 16 pages, by donation Social Justice Committee, 1857 de Maisonneuve W., Montreal QC, H3G 1J9, sjc@web.ca, www.s-j-c.net

The mainstream media doesn't pay a great deal of attention to grassroots struggles for social justice. This is an excellent place to find out what is happening in places like El Salvador or what you can do to support those working for economic and social justice in situations of ongoing repression of dissent. While global solidarity ebbs and flows as a priority of the left, this periodical show the need for it continue. (Brian Burch)

Atlantic

Qwerty

litazine, 68 pages, \$4, UNB English Department, PO Box 4400, Fredericton NB, E3B 5A3, qwerty@unb.ca

Qwerty is just as unique as its title, taken from the first six letters of a keyboard. It's a University of New Brunswick publication, but not all of its contributors are from the school. In fact they're from all over Canada, making the perspective as diverse as the content. The poetry is interesting, especially "gravity" and "self," each exploring the idea of shape-shifting. The art is great too, especially the realistic drawings by Fernando Aquilar that possessed a slice of surrealism. My favourite aspect of this issue of *Qwerty* are the two short stories. The first by David Rachel called "Don't They Know There's a War On?" about a five-year-old boy growing up during World War II. The language is straight from a five-year-old's mouth. I really connected with Andy and felt as though I was hanging out with him while he watched the "splotions" and met his dad for the first time. "Pauline Who Left Smokecrest" by Sarah Roberts was another moving short story included in this zine. I enjoyed both works of fiction so much that I am looking forward to the next instalment of *Qwerty*. (Lara Rock)

Fuzzy Heads Are Better

zine, #10, 36 pages, \$?, Patti Young Kim, Halifax NS, thabzine@interlog.com

Cerebral, punk, sensitive and pragmatic are only a few ways of describing this great creation. It opens with some anecdotal stuff on the life of a grad student and goes on with a very interesting interview with Siue Moffat (a zinestress/renaissance-woman), a recipe and pictures. It is also full of relevant quotes from some great minds. This is the "pivotal number ten" issue, so Kim is quite the veteran zine-maker and it really shows. She constantly provides you with her own thoughts and at the same time never forgets to give a shout-out to her favourite zines, creating a real sense of community. While exile is a big theme here, things come full-circle with the realization that home is more than just a place. *Fuzzy Heads* is an intelligent, compelling read that is free of pretence and as a bonus it fits nicely in your pocket. I loved it and look forward to the next one. (Heather Ball)

Nightwaves

music zine, #12, free, Gary Flanagan, 23 Fourth Street, Rothesay NB, E2G 1W7, muzikman84@hotmail.com

I must admit, when I looked at this latest edition of *Nightwaves*, I was a bit confused to see it billed as a "Special Tribute to Depeche Mode Issue"; because when you open it up, the first article you will see is an interview with forgotten 80's musician Greg Kihn. That was weird. But sure enough, as you get into it, there is some Depeche Mode stuff. Some, but for a dedicated issue, I'd be a tad bit disappointed if I were a DM fan and found that pretty much the only things in this issue that are DM related are memories, reminiscences and a few facts here and there. But more disappointing is that there actually is some pretty interesting stuff in *Nightwaves*. Interviews with musicians and DJs (Greg Kihn notwithstanding) such as Fr/Action, Das Radio, Andrew Duke, Mood Organ, as well as a good piece on Electric Café, a radio show dedicated to 80s music on CFMH. Basically, you've got a zine here that seems like an essential

guide to east coast culture, disguised as a non-existent Depeche Mode tribute. Gary Flanagan, a musician in his own right, is the brains behind this unfortunate farce, hopefully next time he'll just stick to a simple plan: the good stuff. (Jon Pressick)

A Softer World

comic, 11 cards, \$3, j comeau and e horne, Untoward Comics, 4 Knob Hill Cres., Halifax NS, B3N 1R5, aw096@chebucto.ns.ca

The comics in this collection are printed on rectangular cards, which you can flip through like photographs. The grainy photocopied images with captions typed overtop gave me the feeling that I was peering into the little pieces of a dream which are left over in one's memory after waking up. Giant babies, lonely mannequins, the feeling of being watched in the city by halogen eyes. Some are thought provoking, some are humorous, and others are chilling. I like that you can pass them around. Or lay them all out on your desk and sort them however you want. You could even give one to a friend. Each comic also includes a free sticker. (Dale Duncan)

USA

Twist

litazine, #2, 28 pages, \$3, PO Box 441, Ames IA, 50010, twistsubmit@yahoo.com

Twist is a cool zine out of Ames, Iowa. The second issue deals with a subject which each author seem to show an intimate knowledge of: lies. I really enjoyed the poem "healing professions" by Gene Dios M.D. (is this a lie, too?) which includes all the stereotypical lines that a physician in any situation would deliver. Phrases like "just slide down, you'll only feel a bit of pressure," or "I'm sure your insurance will cover that," and one of my personal favourites, "sometimes these tubes end up in the wrong place." Sounds like the world of Western medicine, doesn't it? I appreciated the anonymously written "24/42" reminding all those lying boys out there to "open wide baby" while the lines are fed to their "high-minded platitudes." Twist's second issue is a good one and all the contributors fabricated (?) some great work. (Lara Rock)

Maximumrocknroll

music zine, #233, \$3, PO BOX 460760, San Francisco CA, 94146-0760, maximumrnr@mind-spring.com

This is the punk/hardcore music almanac. This is the most comprehensive punk and hardcore music zine I've ever come across. This San Francisco zine has been around for more than 14 years, covering various punk and hardcore bands from all over the globe. Among literally hundreds of indie music ads are featured columns on anything from gig reviews to articles on online punk resources (www.mp3s4punx.com being a personal favourite). MRR also includes a news section on various political issues from Sri Lanka rebels to John Ashcroft's plan to put "enemy combatant" citizens into massive camps. The zine's best sections are by far the interviews and reviews. MRR interviews more than ten different bands, ranging from established to up and coming



words from "NO WAY IN HELL" by Throwing Muses, drawn by CARRE on wed, march 15

from The Assassin and the Whiner

Verbicide

zine, #6, \$3.50us/\$4.95cdn, Jackson Ellis, Scissor Press, PO BOX 206512, New Haven CT, 06520

Deliberate distortion of the sense of a word. Think of Broken Pencil with slightly poorer paper quality. Then think of MaximumRocknRoll. Now stop thinking and start reading the Rollins interview. Yes, Henry Rollins. He is scary to look at in the bookstore when you walk by the music shelves teeming with George Harrison books, and Rollins is there all bleeding on the cover of one of his books; but he's got a lot of interesting things to talk about like writing and his publishing company whose

name I won't endorse here. From what I can tell there is only one story in the magazine, so I don't know why the word literature seem to be so prominent. I really enjoyed the content and style, there's a feature piece on Lee Ranaldo by Douglas Novielli which is quite thorough. Novielli knew a lot of the beats. He went to Burrough's house in Kansas two times. This makes it hip I guess, and it's kinda cool. Ranaldo wrote the obituary for Ginsberg in the Village Voice. There's a whole lot of record label advertising in here as well, and a couple of pages of poetry. Fine print record reviews and an interview with a band called "Angels in the Architecture." There's a real whatever we like feel to Verbiage, and it feels pretty good. (Nathaniel G. Moore)

Ladyfriend: The Driving Issue

zine, #3, 41 pages, \$2 + postage, Christa, PO BOX 606118, Cleveland OH, 44106, <http://ladyfriend.homestead.com>, ladyfriendzine@hotmail.com

This issue is about everything related to driving: cars, mechanics, road trips, backseat sex, car thieves, and so much more. I'll admit that this issue did not intrigue me at first, causing me to leave it to the bottom of my review pile. I don't exactly love cars, and I would for sure chose walking or biking over driving any day of the

week, so the idea of reading about cars for 41 pages was not that thrilling to me. I was wrong though since this driving issue is great. The content is of high quality, well written, and covering a wide array of topics from the personal to the practical. I really enjoyed Christa's "Van-tastic Voyages" in which she reviews some lesser known tourists attractions such as Wigwam Village (a weird tepee-style motel), the hometown of Superman (they call it The Planet!), and what is in my opinion the most intriguing attraction of all: West Virginia's Mind-Baffling Mystery Hole. I also enjoyed the Book Mobile interview as well as the interview with Chris Cozad, a lady mechanic who gives out some good advice for women who are sick of getting ripped off every time their car needs repair. The whole thing looks good too. Oh and the best thing about this zine has to be the Create-a-Car page where you get to make your own car using scissors and a glue stick. Great fun! (Audrey Gagnon)

The American Funeral Home

comic, 24 pages, \$?, Dead Tree Books Inc., California LA, www.geocities.com/deadtrees-books

Definitely one of the more aesthetically attractive zine I've come across, despite the extremely morbid content. The cover is in colour on coated paper and the inside covers feature really beautiful colour paintings of cemeteries. The drawings inside look pretty great too, so it evens out the depressing feeling you might get from reading it. I mean depressing in a wake-up kind of way, as the zine is full of social commentary in the form of well-written classified ads selling coffins with tons of drawers (so you really can take it all with you) and talking tombstones. If you have a dark side, you'll appreciate the humour. I recommend digging into your pockets so you can bury yourself in this zine. (Heather Ball)

Laundry basket: Tales of Washday Woes

laundry zine, 31 pages, \$1 or trade, A.J Michel, Station A, PO BOX 2574, Champaign IL, 61825 - 2574, lowhug@yahoo.com

I really like the idea behind this zine... I mean it's a good idea to write about stuff related to laundry and Laundromats. Something that everybody is forced to do from time to time and a place where people are trapped together whether they like it or not; as Michel writes in the introduction: "... the Laundromat is such a communal experience - no one really wants to be here, but we're all stuck here, at least for an hour or two." So like I said the idea is pretty good but the content is so-so. I mean it's sort of like when you go to the Laundromat and decide to spend the extra \$1.75 to use the big machines that are suppose to be more gentle on your clothing and quickly realize that it does the same thing as the small machine except that a load takes twice as long to finish. So I guess you can say that Laundry Basket is kind of a let down. The publication is organized in entries from various people who reveal stories related to laundry experiences they have had over the years. Some of it was ok, like "Stupid bitch Indeed" and

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"Coda." Over all a little boring, a little stale but then again what can you expect, it's about Laundromats after all. (Audrey Gagnon)

The Assassin and the Whiner

comic, 24 pages, \$1, Carrie McNinch, PO BOX 481051, Los Angeles CA, 90048 9651, asswhine@hotmail.com

The Assassin and the Whiner is a tormented look at the life of an alcoholic. Set up as diary entries, this zine succeeds in documenting the admittedly self-deprecating existence of the author who is experiencing a downward spiral expressed almost too vividly through animation. The art is simple and pure, along with the written words comes a sense of sadness, including a bold acceptance. Carrie is a poet and an artist, her descriptions are beautiful and her sensitivity is explored passionately within the pages of the comic. I truly enjoyed this zine, her brutal honesty and tone made me fully sympathize with her plight. (Lara Rock)

Listen to This

short stories, #1-3, 28 pages, \$2, Paula Mayberry, Overground, PO BOX 1661, Pensacola FL, 32591, paulamayberry@hotmail.com

I received volume one through three of Paula Mayberry's stories in a package, and after reading all twelve I was pleasantly surprised to find completely unrelated, creative and intriguing tales. What pulled me in was that each narrative is written in first person, so as the diverse stories and situations unravelled, I found myself in the head space of a different character thrown in the middle of a situation that required resolve or attention. The sagas ranged from a late-night phone call, to a few crushes, to a couple's decision to move in together, to another couple's decision to break up; each more diverse than the next. The writing is simple but completely straightforward, descriptive and candid. I completely enjoyed every first-person account, turning the pages eagerly to read on and devour every word. (Lara Rock)

Daybreak!

newspaper, #3, 12 pages., #3, donations: cash or credit, PO BOX 14007, Minneapolis Minnesota, 55405, daybreak@tao.ca, www.freespeech.org/mn/daybreak

For those of us with very long memories, there were a number of local radical community papers around in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They encouraged support for local co-ops, provided advice on resisting gentrification, covered police violence against protesters and street people and on occasion even expressed concern about multi-national corporations taking control of the family farm. Daybreak is much more that type of publication than something arising from a specifically anarchist milieu. It is something encouraging to read — practical advice on urban gardening combined with news of anarchists involved in public dissent may be laying down the foundation for a new world without hierarchy, the state and socially sanctioned violence. (Brian Burch)



from Laundry Basket: Tales of Washday Woe

Loving More

political magazine, #31, 40 pages, 4 issues per year @ \$34/yr, Mary Wolf, PO BOX 4358, Boulder Colorado, 80306, Marywolf@lovemore.com, www.lovemore.com

One core within the anarchist tradition, best worked out by Emma Goldman, is the need to challenge the traditional monogamous, institutionalised restrictions on intimate, long term relationships. While not an anarchist periodical, this magazine does seem to build on a century's worth of personal reflection and experience on how to ethically live out an ideal of polyamory/polyfidelity. Poetry, personal reflections, resource reviews and information about support groups can be found here. (Brian Burch)

Gargoyle

literary journal, #45, 162 pages, \$10, PO BOX 6216, Arlington VA, 22206-0216, gargoyle@atticusbooks.com

A wonderful collection of works by talented poets, short-story writers and artists, Gargoyle is truly a pleasure to read. Because of its length the reader is given the luxury of choosing from a variety of pieces in different tones, styles and on different subjects. Sometimes it's gentle, sometimes more harsh, but I found something to read no matter what kind of mood I was in. The only downside (and this isn't really a huge deal) is that most of the authors featured here have been published elsewhere, several times before, so it doesn't seem like the best place to submit stuff if you're a first-timer. But it should be read. (Heather Ball)

Attempted Not Known

comic, #7, 14 pages, \$1, Peter S. Conrad, PO BOX 64522, Sunnyvale CA, 94088, www.peterconrad.com

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to appreciate this one. In fact, being a rocket scientist might actually hinder your ability to enjoy some of the more low-brow humour here. Personally, I never liked aeronautics too much, but I am always game for a good bum or fart joke. Some of these strips remind me of the Aragones margin cartoons from Mad Magazine, as they possess the same clarity of concept and execution. Others, like the "serious" Osama Bin Laden piece come off heavy-handed and discordant with the rest of the book. (Jon Sasaki)

Counterpoise

magazine, Vol.5, #3/4, 99 pages, 2-4/yr @ \$45/yr, Charles Willett, 1716 SW Williston Road, Gainesville FL, 32608-4049, willet@lib-lib.com, www.civicmediacenter.org/counterpoise

The official numbering of this issue is misleading. It wasn't actually released until the middle of 2002 — I know because I regularly contribute reviews to Counterpoise. There are two sides to this publication: continuing efforts to push libraries and librarians to support the alternative press and the publishing of a wide range of reviews of books and other print resources that makes this, in many ways, the U.S. equivalent of Broken Pencil. There are reprints as well — I particularly liked Jeff Nygaard's "Act of War? Crime Against Humanity? The World Weighs In" reprinted from Nygaard Notes. This is a provoking opinion

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piece based on polls seeking information on attitudes towards possible U.S. responses to the events of September 11, 2001. (Brian Burch)

Out of the Blue

zine, #11, 36 pages, \$2, Larned Justin, PO BOX 471, House Springs MO, 63051, candid-cartoons@yahoo.com

Sometimes it's really hard to admit you have a problem with something. It's not exactly like attending a first AA meeting, but that's the route I'll have to take: admitting it is the first step. OK, I'm divided on this one. I like it because it's of substantial length and all the contributors try really hard to make it interesting. It's clearly a great old-school DYI zine, with lots of visuals, talk about comics, jokes and stories. A truly memorably part was the section "Great Moments in Rock 'N' Roll." But, all that aside, I was disappointed on the whole because most of the writing was so incredibly weak. The writer of the opening article almost puts more in brackets than outside of them, making it really hard to follow. The longish poem "Cold December Mist" is OK, but the rhyming made me laugh and the guy in the story is so depressed he contemplates flinging himself off a bridge. I did, however, enjoy the final story about a trip to Florida, but don't understand why the writer (or editor but I don't think there is one) feels his readers aren't worthy of a quick spelling and grammar check. Do you see my dilemma? I really wanted to like OOTB, because it's done in great spirit and has some cool moments. But the bad parts were too hard to ignore. (Heather Ball)

Fellowship

magazine, Vol. 68, #11-12, 34 pages, 6/yr @ \$35/yr, Richard Deats, 521 N. Broadway, Nyack NY, 10960, fellowship@forusa.org, www.forusa.org

This is the official publication of the U.S. Fellowship of Reconciliation: a network of faith based organisations working for social justice and for peace. This particular issue has a special section dealing with the U.S. encouraged war with Iraq, but includes regular sections providing news of local actions, a calendar of upcoming actions and events and information on other resources for those working for a world without violence. The most encouraging piece in this issue is Mary Abu-Saba's "A South Lebanon Village Peacefully Liberated by Students." While faith based, this is an inclusive publication — reflecting the makeup of Fellowship of Reconciliation, which ranges from the Muslim Peace Fellowship to the Unitarian Universalist Peace Fellowship. (Brian Burch)

Overground

distribution catalogue, 2002, 14 pages, \$?, PO BOX 1661, Pensacola FL, 32591, Overground_distro@hotmail.com

In just a few pages, Overground managed to pique my interest in many of the dozens of zines they distribute, which is pretty amazing since they only devote one or two sentences at the most to describe them. A distro operation with a social conscience, they specialize in passing along valuable information such as stuff about

women's health issues, transportation, anarchism/social theory, self-defence and history. Best part is that I'd never heard of any of the zines in the catalogue, so it might be especially useful for Canadians who want to check out what they're putting out south of the border. Plus nothing costs more than a few bucks. Definitely worth perusing. (Heather Ball)

Twenty-Four Hours

litzine, #2, 18 pages, 4/yr @ \$12/yr, Josh Medsker, 6002 Dunbury Dr., Austin Texas, 78723, increasethegrease@elvis.com

I found this a pretty dull read. Fine for reading on the bus on the way or from work, but not what I'd want to spend my free time looking over. I liked the interview with Gregory Smooth, dealing primarily with riding freight trains. It took me three tries to get through the excerpt from Levi Asher's novel The Summer of the Mets — included here as "Chris and Lianne." (Brian Burch)

Jupiter Beat

zine, #1, 8 pages, \$?, trixy b, Portsmouth, trixy99@netzero.net

This is a fun to read, primarily perzine publication from Portsmouth. I have no idea where it is but I get strong impressions of the place from the pieces here. Whether it is a change in attitude at Bull Moose Records — a once independent and now corporatised store — to a call for a Goth Club, there is a vivid world bursting from these pages. I was surprised by the inclusion of two

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poems by Suzanne Somers (yes, her of infomercial fame) I'm haunted by the rather unremarkable lines in Somers' poem "Maybe Tonight." "If you fall in love with your lover/does it spoil everything?" (Brian Burch).

Cain

zine, #5, 48 pages, \$2/free to prisoners, Michelle, PO BOX 200077, New Haven Connecticut, 06520, cainzine@yahoo.com

My favourite piece was "The Good Fight: Profiles in pacifism"; a review of a visit to the office of the Ware Resisters League. It has the same sense of detached sympathy shown in articles such as "One Night Only," a rare appearance of Bill Collins with MDC, or in "Lucky Night," a visit to a bingo game held at the New Haven Gay and Lesbian Community Centre. I liked this. It was enjoyable to read and see the world through non-jaded but knowledgeable eyes (Brian Burch)

Food Geek

food zine, #5, \$1 + postage, Carrie McNinch, PO BOX 49403, Los Angeles CA, 90049, foodgeek-mmm@hotmail.com

I don't like food. I don't like chewing, I don't like cooking, I don't like watching cooking shows (except maybe for the Iron Chef and that Jamie Oliver guy who I could eat up). So, I kinda came at this zine with a bias. But you know, it surprised me. A lot. I didn't try the recipes or anything (though they sound edible), but I did very much get into the stories, particularly the travel/eating stories. And what is best about this nice little package

(presentation is everything, right?) is that the eating/food is often secondary. Two great pieces are about eating when you have no money, dumpster-diving and food-banking. There is also a funny little comic about eating while on a cross USA backpacking journey that mentions Montreal's cheap pizza and Toronto's numerous veggie dog carts. And the writing is very strong throughout, making Food Geek a very tasty morsel of reading. (Jon Pressick)

International Inner City Pagan

comic/perzine, #5, 41 pages, \$7US, Lee Kennedy, 58 Durrington Tower, Wandsworth Rd., London UK, SW8 3LF, sheelanagig69@hotmail.com

Lee Kennedy's not afraid to point out those things that a lot of us stuff back into our unconscious out of pure bashfulness, like the way her cat shows off its anus to her when he climbs onto her stomach, and the various people she's performed sex acts with in her dreams. This delightful collection of comics detail the everyday thoughts and happenings in the life of the author who happens to be an overweight, almost 50-year-old woman living in England. We're privy to her love for things Italian, the history of her gradual discovery of different kinds of cheeses, and her fondness for the hot, smooth pebbles of Brighton Beach (she's even been known to lick them). One of my favourites was "on the way to the dayjob" which details some of the different people, thoughts, and experiences she's had while bussing it to work. There's the

"sadly malformed man" who "always looks genuinely happy and interested in everything," and the woman with attitude who dresses in thigh boots and wears hair accessories that look like varnished wood shavings. The second half of the zine is filled with random doodles — the kinds of things she found herself drawing while bored at her job, or on the bus. These are also amusing, but I'd much rather see more of the comics themselves. It's too bad that this might be the last issue of Kennedy's self published zines because reading her comics made me smile. (Dale Duncan)

Viva Sparky!

Music zine, #4, 10 pages, free, Penfold, Catchpenny Records, Blwch Post/PO Box 88, Yr Wyddgrug/Mold, Ch7 4Zq, CYMRU/Wales, catchpenny@lycos.com

This tiny zine from Wales consists of about ten album reviews and a small news section of upcoming gigs in the area (Wales). All I can say about this zine is that if you're interested in the Welsh music scene, then check it out, if not, just stay away. The album reviews are decent enough, but there really isn't anything but the reviews. The lack of any articles or gig reviews (which they're requesting from readers) seriously hurt this zine for me. It took me about ten minutes to read and I didn't feel like I got a whole lot out of it. The concept is as good as any music zine, but Sparky just seems to be incomplete. The other stumbling block I ran into, which might deter some, is that some of the reviews were written in what I'm guessing is Welsh. In any case, I couldn't understand, and this zine remains a good start but seems kind of unfulfilling. (James King)

ENDURING FREEDOM 2002

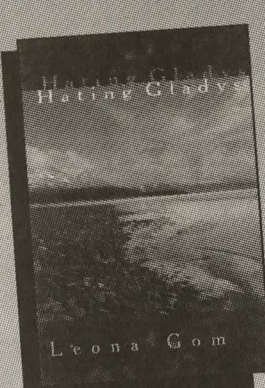
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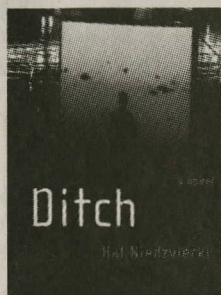
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Small Beer Press Straddles Two Worlds

Science Fiction Meets
Surrealist Literature

by Emily Pohl-Weary

Combine pop fiction and high literature in one book. Pay serious attention to the editing process, commission original cover art and maintain a stalwart do-it-yourself ethic. According to Small Beer Press publisher, Gavin Grant, the result will be "good writing."

In this era of mammoth corporations that churn out "product" instead of books, it's hard not to compare Northampton, Massachusetts' Small Beer to other American renegades like Autonomedia, Seven Stories, McSweeney's and Soft Skull. Like the others, Small Beer's becoming known for its eclectic, mostly (but not exclusively) young, original writers who transcend literary borders. What sets it apart is its unabashed affiliation with genre fiction.

"I have a strange relationship to science fiction," says Grant. "I suppose I'm like any other reader who ignores most of a genre. I read a lot of it as a teenager, moved away from it later and in the last couple of years have reviewed a fair amount of it. I don't want to publish pure science fiction, unless it's very good. What I really enjoy are the stories that mix things up in new ways."

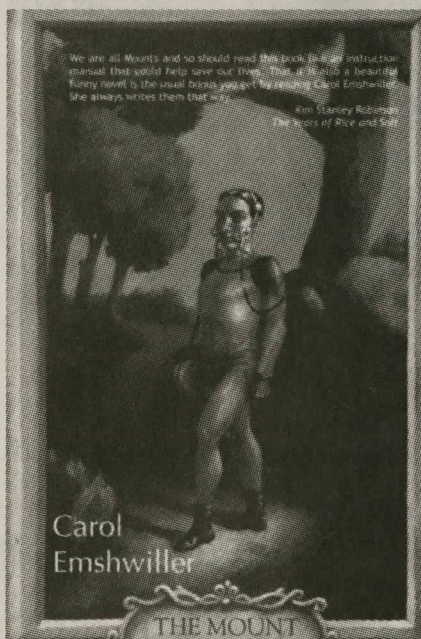
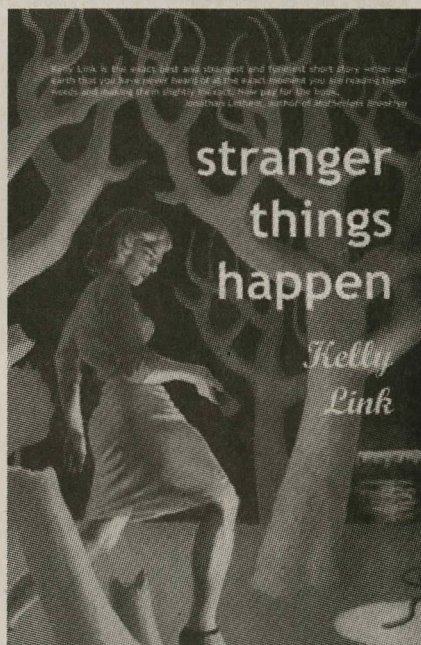
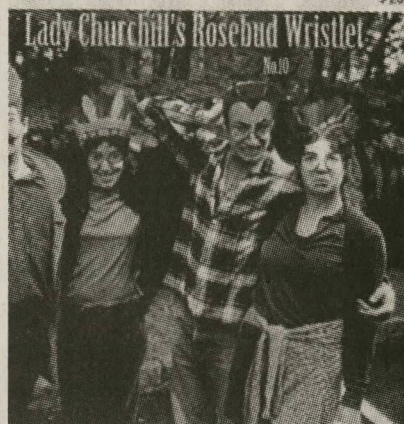
But, when pressed, the list of people whose work inspires Grant are almost exclusively working within the genre:

"Authors like James Sallis, Karen Joy Fowler, Luis Alberto Urrea, Ursula K. Le Guin, Kelly Link, Alan Moore; editors like Ellen Datlow, Terri Windling, Gordon Van Gelder; Clamor Magazine and Doris, and all the writers who send in great stories to our tiny magazine!"

Grant operates Small Beer with co-editor Kelly Link, herself an award-winning author of one of Small Beer's first book-length collections of stories, called *Stranger Things Happen*. Their first publishing endeavour was their twice-yearly literary zine, obscurely named *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet* — "I wanted a really simple name like *Fiction*, *Zine* or *Stories*. But I found they were all taken. Naming things is odd." LCRW is both a romp through the inner sanctum of literary sci-fi and a glimpse of a new generation of amazingly like-minded writers.

"LCRW is tiny, takes a lot of work, breaks even if looked at with a generous eye, but I always find some really great stories," admits Grant. "Recently, someone looked at it and said, 'So, you put as much work into that as a single-author collection, right?' It was kind of horrifying to realize they were right."

Well, they're obviously in this business for love, not money, because they branched out to chapbooks in May 2000



and launched their first two books in June 2001. Those two outings (Link's and Ray Vukceвич's *Meet Me in the Moon Room*) created a bit of a stir in New York literary circles when they received a rush of critical acclaim from both the science fiction and mainstream literary worlds.

"I publish books because I wasn't finding enough of the kind I wanted to read," says Grant. "After doing the zine for a couple of years, we made a couple of chapbooks to see what that was like. We talked to a lot of friends who worked for huge publishing companies and realized that we could publish books that the big publishers have trouble publishing, like short story collections and odd novels."

Grant says *Small Beer* doesn't accept unsolicited manuscripts (they're too small a press) so their selection process includes scouting — reading a lot of magazines to find work they would like to publish: "Everything from *Doris* to *The New Yorker*. Also, people whose taste we trust will occasionally tell us about good books they know about."

This year, they made the odd business decision to publish two books by a single author at the same time (*The Mount*, a novel, and *Report to the Men's Club*, a collection of short fiction). Of

course, it helped that the author was science fiction great Carol Emshwiller, whose first books were published in the seventies.

"So far the books, after sinking some initial money into them, are paying themselves off — thank god," says Grant. "It is just about running so that the earlier books finance the new books. We both also freelance and until recently I had a full-time job, so the next year will be a test to see what happens, money-wise."

They just moved from New York to Northampton, "where we'll have a lot more space for the press. Before it was in my office which measured maybe 10 feet by 6 feet. Now we have a bigger room with space for my desk and all the reference books, a table for Kelly to work on, and a shipping table, so that our dining room table will no longer suffer the indignity of being forced into work as a shipping and receiving station."

After their experience publishing LCRW, Grant and Link found that there were a lot more formal rules in place when it came to putting out books, such as: "Where and when you should send your books out for review, who will carry them, etc. With zines you can pretty much do as you like. If you want to produce a weekly zine, go for it. The space

for zines is a lot more accommodating." And the industry is not all candy and flowers. Grant says his pet peeve is "the returns conundrum. Bookshops over-order, then return lots of unsold books, usually when the invoice comes due."

Because he's so adamantly independent, I ask Grant what kinds of things would make him get up and protest. "The Figurehead for Industry that is the so-called President of the USA — especially if he goes to war," he answers. "I've sent my letters, called politicians and done what I can, well, except for camping outside the White House. Loads of other things. The world drives me nuts. I send a lot of letters for Amnesty International."

Perhaps *Small Beer* is one tangible way to make the world a better place, by encouraging a diversity of voices and supporting the little people. Currently, they're helping a couple of other people and groups start their own presses. In the new year, they will bring out two new books: *Trampoline*, an anthology of fiction by both new and established writers edited by Kelly Link, and *Kalpa Imperial*, a novel by Angelica Gorodischer that was originally published in Argentina and translated from the Spanish by Ursula K. Le Guin. "After that," muses Grant. "Who knows?"

Books



HEROINES

Lincoln Clarkes

Heroines

by Lincoln Clarkes, photographs, \$29, Anvil Press, 6 West 17th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V5Y 1Z4

My favourite art first repels then slowly reveals itself. I can actually feel my brain cells firing and transforming. It wasn't the content of *Heroines* — Lincoln Clarkes' photographic series of female heroin addicts — that repelled at first, it was the idea itself. Anthropological porn I



thought. Why heroin addicts? Why women? From these questions came digressive answers supplied by the work itself.

Far from being romantic or exploitative, these photographs constitute a cultural reversal. What is ostracised and marginal is, for 105 photographs, given the privilege of normalcy. The book begins with a lone photograph and Clarkes' own simple words about his project. The photo is of Leah shooting up in front of a Calvin Klein ad featuring rich junkie Kate Moss. It wasn't planned. The shelter was used to block the view of patrolling cops. Clarkes had known Leah since the early



eighties, when she wasn't using, when she had friends. *Heroines* is a quest to find meaning in what happened to his friend and tellingly, that first picture of Leah is the only one in the collection to feature blatant displays of addiction. To Clarkes, it's the moment of truth that transforms how he sees, and it's a credit to his skills that this comes across in the collection.

Spending several years photographing the female addicts of Vancouver's downtown, Clarkes worked with the women in the photographs. They chose their outfits and "spruced their hair up." They are simply women living, and the photographs are unlike anything else I've

seen (with the possible exception of Andres Serrano's "Nomads" series.) Throughout the collection there's a return to that compositional technique of the first photograph: women posing in front of bus shelter ads and billboards featuring fashion spreads.

One gets the sense that Clarkes, who has worked for years in the fashion industry, is wiping his karmic slate clean by putting such representational struggles at the heart of his work. The question of whether he has the right to take these photographs is made insignificant by the more troubling question of who is given the right to beauty, to be represented as a human and not a public service announcement. Clarkes shocks us not with the lives that the women lead but with our own assumptions. This book shatters and raises a thousand questions. Clarkes has taken an idea that could have been merely transgressive and created something imbued with powerful and sublime truth. (Brian Joseph Davis)

For Weeks Above the Umbrella

by Todd Dills, short story chapbook, \$10, www.the2ndhand.com

Todd Dills, the editor of the notorious Chicago literary broadsheet called *The2ndHand*, has recently produced a short little collection of his own bizarre, surrealist stories. Urban, humorous and completely nutty, the autobiographical in FWATU demonstrates Dills' considerable talent.

He tackles everything from hunting for the mythical Skunk Ape (apparently a Southern American character similar to Bigfoot) to a week longing for the grits of his youth in a mid-western city. There are short stories, itineraries (wherein Dills records everything he does during a single day) and what appear to be stories comprised of journal entries.

Fiction and fact blur together in many of the pieces, making for fun little diversions for the reader, while you wonder how much of this hilarious stuff is made up and whether or not Dills' life is this bizarre. The note on the inside cover proclaims, "This is a work of fiction, except where otherwise indicated." OK, whatever that means.

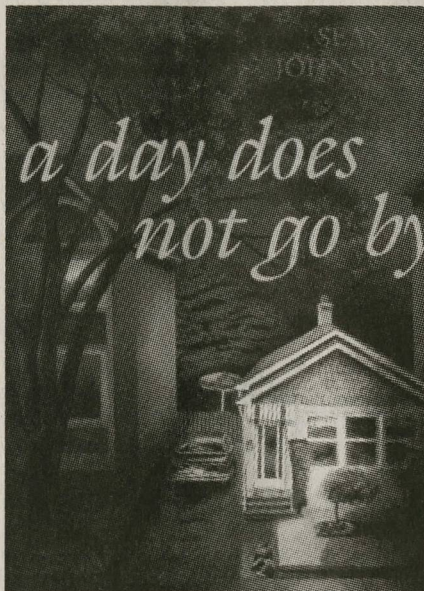
His open letter to CIA director Buzzy Krongard "concerning the Canadians," in which he reveals classified information like the stereotypes depicted in the film *Strange Brew* were pure fabrication and the word "hoser" is not in common usage up here is worth the cover price, alone. Highly recommended. (Emily Pohl-Weary)

Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road

by Neil Peart, autobiography, \$23, 460 pages, ECW Press, Stewart House Distribution, 195 Allstate Parkway, Markham, ON, L3R 4T8, www.ecwpress.com

Yes, it's that Neil Peart, the drummer from Rush. He has written a hefty paperback about his spiritual journey, and what to say about it? His daughter died, his wife died, he went riding across the country on his motorcycle to assuage his grief. He stayed in a lot of hotels, ate a lot of meals, wrote about them in letters to friends, and then compiled the letters into a book. I sympathize with Mr.

Peart, because he's had a very rough time, and it turns out that he's well-read and knows a lot about birds and seems like a nice person. But this isn't a very good book. He makes it quite clear that he is travelling in order to numb his pain, to relegate it to his subconscious for processing, so the book is necessarily pretty much devoid of reflection; and this sort of travelling doesn't lend itself to good storytelling, involving as it does long expanses of highway interspersed by expensive hotels and, for the most part, no people. In its favour, this might be a good book for grieving people who are trying to numb their own pain. (Wendy Banks)



A Day Does Not Go By

by Sean Johnston, stories, Nightwood Editions, R.R. #22, 3692, Beach Avenue, Roberts Creek, BC, V0N 2W2, www.harbourpublishing.com

In *A Day Does Not Go By*, Sean Johnston mixes up the ordinary and surreal. From the bank machine that spits out a baby, to the salesman who deals in spiders, to casual everyday conversations, this collection of stories questions the bonds between lovers, friends, and family.

Most of the stories take place in the prairies, with characters holding jobs digging ditches or working in factories, which suggest parallels to the author's real life as a surveyor and labourer. The characters are often shown dealing with death, regret, or loss of identity, and usually do a bad job of it.

"I wanted to tell her why I hadn't left this town. I wanted her to think there were good reasons. I wanted to find the words to tell her why I didn't know what to say to a girl like her. I wanted her to know it wasn't my fault... It's a dying town."

The prose in the stories is clean, neat, and full of great details, while omniscient commentary is kept to a minimum. Johnston lets the characters drive the stories, with their own needs and obligations: "But that summer has turned into the old days and that summer we all had friends. I loved a girl called Stacey, but she was my best friend. The things she said, the secrets she told me, were too much. I wanted to tell her don't laugh at my jokes. There were things I wanted to say. Sometimes, she said, I want to talk to a man without fighting to keep his

hands off me."

The best stories in this collection are: "The Whole Time I was Here," in which Jeff and Beth try to figure out what to do with a dead body; "Here, And Now," which details the stress of waiting in an emergency room; and "They're For You," which portrays a woman leaving her lover, and his inability to cope with it.

A fantastic debut. I wonder what Johnston will come up with next. (Mark Sauner)

Back Flip

by Anne Denoon, fiction, \$24.95, *The Porcupine's Quill*, 68 Main Street, Erin, ON, N0B 1T0

This book, about the Toronto contemporary art scene circa 1967, reads like a British farce — and that's a compliment, not an insult. Curators, patrons, assistants, artists and writers philander and scheme their way through an important exhibit organized by a visiting British gallery owner, resulting in heartaches, betrayals and a heart attack. Here, the owner of the Gonzaga gallery (the locus of the swirling machinations *Back Flip* describes) considers his lifeblood and thus one of the central tensions of the book: "Artists were like spoiled children, Bruno believed; troublesome creatures whose ability to create precious, significant objects won them freedom from bourgeois responsibilities and (within reason) the right to certain carnal and chemical indulgences. Like children, too, they craved attention and approval but actually required discipline. They didn't need money. Material things were the consolation of less fortunate beings, like himself, who had to toil ceaselessly for a living." (Ryan Bigge)

Café Alibi

by Todd Swift, poetry, 74 pgs. DC Books, 662-950 Decarie Montreal, Quebec H4L 4V9

On a strictly linguistic and structural level there is nothing terribly wrong with *Café Alibi*. One can read *Café Alibi* and its direct and at times blunt narrative as simple and without compromise; however, there are rich moments of discursive and predictive self-touching or self-referencing contempt, a grating verve against what seems to be an entirely unsentimental foundation. "Critical Theory" is such a moment, with its momentous entrapment and focus patiently waiting in the bushes. "What was it Herrick once said? Get your rocks off before it's too late. He was correct to be so blunt. If the menu has it, order cunt."

At times thematically bland, this collection does have its gracious moments of acceptance. "Coming to your Senses" comes as close as is possible to romance before the tone begins to alienate; the subject or object of attention becomes a limp, even diluted corpse parading cliché. "Couplets" is a nice fast-paced piece that reads as it sounds and flutters through the eyes nicely. Another great piece is "What We Do," a focused, concise work that doesn't mess around.

But too often in this collection, the reader's sense of physical reality is assumed and appointed; Richie Rich, *Montreal Star*, Lycra, Gore-Tex, being some of the causalities of commerce we are fed. "Seven Eights Are Fifty-Six" is a great narrative piece with a clear goal and no physical or time limitations. "the calendar says April 8, 1942. They're in a grocer's. The woman's finger points

at some slices of ham she'd like to have the butcher wrap up, so she can take it home to make butterless sandwiches, and during this procedure, the little girl, who has tall socks on, is squinting at a cat, sitting on the counter..."

Todd Swift is a prolific and important poet with many great gifts as a writer. However, *Café Alibi* is a hit-and-miss encounter, and far too often the flatness of his poetry comes out in yawning efforts such as "Hume Knoll": "but as stiff green guards fall around / the cutters will recover older ground — finding during work's pause grass / my grandparents mowed — as it was."

Years from now this book will be curiously dated in terms of the liberal corporate and brand name-dropping, and perhaps Swift is addressing another point altogether, (though I'm not sure what it is) with regards to the mechanics of photography in the sure-to-be-replaced technological term, the JPEG. (Nathaniel G. Moore)

Killing Things

By John Degen, 91 pages, \$19.95, Pedlar Press, P.O. Box 26, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S6

The first thing that struck me about *Killing Things* is the beautiful simplicity of John Degen's poetry, from the first verse: "Tuesday mornings on St. Andrew Street/ a truck idles, stacked twelve high/ with live chickens; when it rains/you smell chickens through your skin"; to the last: "This red bicycle hurts me now/ I look at the city/ and think/ fall on top of me now/ bring all the bricks down on me/ I'm ready now."

Degen describes everyday situations with intricate detail and clarity. In the book's three sections — Things that Kill, A Deadly Physics and The 400 Series Poems — Degen turns his eye to everything from crows ("Born times-wasters, they're/ the TV watchers of nature") to break-ups ("When Jim left Jane/ or the other way / see Jane kick Jim's ass out the door/ see Jim leave/ there was a wine of bitterness") to dog parks ("The dogs come back/ in the morning, happy/ to see themselves/ decorating the air").

Degen is a poet, playwright, fiction writer and arts journalist. His first book of poetry, *Animal Life* in Bucharest, was published in 2000. His work has also appeared in *Taddle Creek*, *Queen Street Quarterly* and *The IV Lounge Reader*. This collection is a pleasure to read and get lost in. (Jennifer O'Connor)

Cars

by George Bowering and Ryan Knighton, stories, \$18, Coach House Books, 401 Huron rear, Toronto, ON, M5S 2G5, www.chbooks.com

Cars is a ride through one hundred fragmented nostalgias, fifty by Brown and fifty by Knighton, which directly or indirectly involve automobiles. Each story is under a page long and most detail cruising around in British Columbia.

The stories are full of wit and humour. You don't have to know anything about cars to enjoy them: "Automobiles are erotic places... I am fond of the way in which a seat belt situates itself between your passenger's breasts... There are so few sights endearing as but so quickly glimpsed and gone than a woman in a skirt getting into the driver's seat of a shiny car."

Bowering and Knighton relay both on their own memories and the importance the car plays in our

culture, be it in television, movies or pop songs. This is a very fast, funny book that details each author's particular insight or confession about being in the driver's seat. *Cars* is an entertaining read that connects cars to people in ways you never even thought of. For instance, Knighton writes, "I drove for two jaw-clenching years tight-fisted and legally blind behind the wheel. Please feel free to take a moment for your uncomfortable pause. Yes, you should worry." (Mark Sauner)

Captain Fascist

by Andreas Gripp, Harmonia Press, London, Ontario, harmonia@execulink.com

The poet as activist is the integral theme in this collection by London, Ontario's Gripp. There is another theme at work here and it's the mental sentimentalist: "The last few seconds in mind Edith" and Princess Margaret's Eulogy, but the overall feeling I got from most of these pieces was didactic and lyrical. There are a few black-and-white pictures throughout the book with a narrative unto their own.

The title piece pits good against evil, with a religious twist that was compelling beyond the limitation of our own idea of 20th century history. ("...proclaiming the love of Jesus/ who'd trade his nails/ and crown of thorns/ for toxic gas/ and a hail of bullets/ so he might know/ a Caesar's rage/once more.") is lumped in their somewhere. This is thought provoking and not tied down to the conventions of poetry, but then again, it is a poetry book.

Josephine Pornographic, while not my favourite piece in terms of quality of craft, did succeed in making me study the words that clashed within the narrative. I was left both vacant and totally enthralled. In my estimation this piece peers through the osmosis of self into the processed world of brand name sacrifice, with a distinct voyeuristic sympathy in voice and mood that educates as much as it abandons. But I could be wrong.

Overall, these pieces were entirely vulnerable to oppressors of honesty and freedom, who Gripp must know walk the earth in the apathy academy of zombies with more pride than there are words. I admire the author's ability to fuse current events and re-narrate with a new legitimate subjectivity, perhaps lacking in our media world. (Nathaniel G. Moore)

Grunt and Groan: The New Fiction Anthology of Work and Sex

edited by Matthew Firth and Max Maccari, fiction anthology, \$20, Boheme Press, 192 Spadina Ave., #308, Toronto, ON, M5T 2C2

Give a monkey a pack of smokes and a typewriter and he or she would create a less arbitrary and more successful theme to build a collection of fiction around.

These stories struggle to combine action and setting; some are well-detailed work stories that awkwardly shoehorn the bump and grind, occasionally the reverse. The sex often feels like product placement, an anthology requirement that punctures story logic and narration. Worse, the sex language is generally Penthouse Forum obvious, tired, crude or ineffectual. (In "Truth Serum," Moe Berg describes semen as "joy jam").

"Smoke," about a fire-fighter's troubled relationship, manages to locate love and loss within his job, generating more impact in a few pages than many of these stories combined. Meanwhile, J.E. Knowles writes of co-worker lust in "I Walk the Line," a story that succeeds (ironically) because obsession is never consummated. Both stories are buried deep in the hindquarters of Grunt and Groan, not up front where they belong.

Also, it reflects poorly upon an anthology when the editor includes their own work. Maccari is smart enough to avoid this faux pas; Firth should get wise pronto. (Ryan Bigge)

Ireland's Eye

by Marc Jarman, travelogue, \$33, House of Anansi Press, 110 Spadina Ave., #801, Toronto, ON, M5V 2K4

A travelogue in which the rambunctious Jarman, better known for his short story collection *19 Knives* and his novel *Salvage King*, Ya!, goes to Ireland and hangs out with his relatives. Jarman doesn't stick to the story as he searches for the truth about his drowned grandfather and we wouldn't want him to.

This is a ride alongside streets and dirt roads down to the river. Moving from the decline of the copper trade (killed by metal kegs), to a discussion of the perfect Irish drink, Smithwick's with a Guinness head, to a visit to a Dublin gay club with cousin Padraic, this is a book of asides.

When Jarman does get back to the central issue, there are some nice touches. Ruminating on his grandfather's death after finding a clipping from the 1922 Irish Times, he notes: "I want to chase the place down possess it somehow a tanned tourist believing he has the right to summer souvenir."

This passion and honesty are a credit to the book, though at times it seems like Jarman tries too hard to make meaning, and spins every pub encounter into multiple allusions, weighing down sentences with Gaelic and Dublin slang. He writes: "His voice is threatening; he seems ready to explode. Some in our party drift away from trouble (the Troubles)." No need to weigh the present with the past when bombs are exploding and parents are throwing stones at kids heading to school.

Miscues aside, Jarman keeps this surprisingly dense book moving with equal parts personality and history, boisterous pub crawl and philosophical journey. It comes complete with notes on the Irish real estate market and the fascinating peccadilloes of family: "my mother is prone to depression but not tolerant of it in anyone else." (Hal Niedzviecki)

The Harmon Chronicles

by Harmon Leon, humour, \$18, ECW Press, 2120 Queen St East, #200, Toronto, Ontario M4E 1E2

According to the press release, this is a humour book by a guy whose claim to fame is hanging out with Dave Eggers before he was famous, working side-by-side on that *Might Magazine* project Eggers chronicles in his best-selling book, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*.

But wait! Before you jump to the conclusion that Harmon Leon will have that same wry jumping-through-conceptual-hoops, aren't-I-so-very-clever kind of Eggers

humour, I have to tell you that Harmon Leon's book is straight-up funny. Obnoxious and irreverent, occasionally naïve or cliché, but nothing at all like the kind of humour we might associate with someone associated with Dave Eggers. (Not to put Eggers down, I would still agree with his self-pronounced "genius.")

However, our hero Harmon writes very simply about ridiculous situations. A guy goes to a beauty contest for babies — without one! A guy applies for a job as a clown, and gets sent to "clown boot camp" where "Like Mr. Miyagi coaching the Karate Kid, he teaches me the wax-on/wax-off of being a children's party clown." A guy goes to a shooting range dressed like a character from a Flannery O'Connor novel. "I would like to shoot for the Lord," he says. No one bats an eye.

Juvenile? Yes. Funny? Sometimes. Occasionally the humour is obvious because it's not so different than what you or I would come up with if we decided to phone up a funeral director and pretend we were planning a funeral for a friend who'd just been mauled by a bear. But other times, it is the obvious nature that makes the book funny. One example is when Harmon makes attempts at nudity on the Internet. We can all imagine a chat room where the script goes:

Mr Sock 5: WHO LIKES VOYAGER???

Kendus: Nobody likes voyager.

Panther: Go jerk off to a Star Trek episode!

Mr Sock 5: MY TRICORDER IS PICKING UP IDIOTS AT 10 DEGREES

Me: I'm a 450 lb nude man on the Internet!

Kendus: Voyager sucks.

Me: 450 lb of nudity!

Sure, we can all imagine this scenario, but seeing it in print in a real book makes it funny. Funnier yet is Harmon's attempt to get a job as a nude maid. The Harmon Chronicles probably isn't "The funniest book ever published in Canada," as the cover blurb claims. But it's not bad. (Emily Schultz)

Resources for Radicals

edited by Brian Burch, annotated bibliography, fourth edition, \$12, Toronto Action for Social Change, P.O. Box 73620, 509 St. Clair Ave. West, Toronto, ON, M6C 1C0, tasc@web.ca

Weighing in at 149 pages, this annotated bibliography of "publications focusing on feminism, union organizing, popular culture, humanism, anarchism, radical Christianity, strikes, demonstrations, ecology, black bloc tactics, non-violence, socialism, co-operatives, aboriginal rights, pacifism..." — and that's just for starters — is dizzyingly comprehensive and remarkably easy to navigate. If you're looking to change the world and need a place to start, get your hands on one of these. It oughta keep you busy for a while. (Wendy Banks)

emergent publics

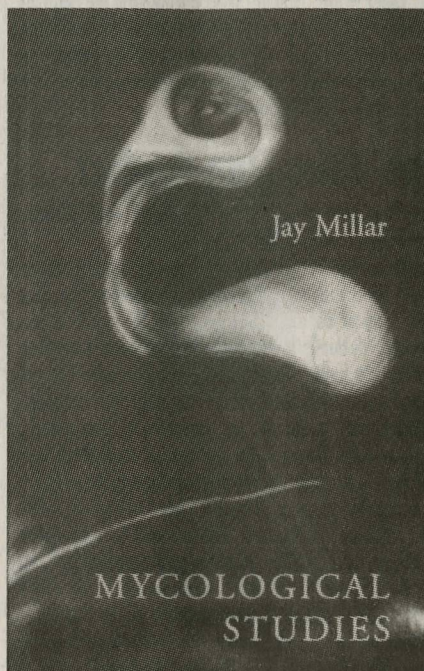
by Ian Angus, non-fiction, \$20, Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2-91 Albert Street, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1G5

While there is nothing truly new or original in this work, it is a good synopsis of existing work dealing with the radical rethinking of democracy.

It fits more into the tradition of possessive individualism or some of the ideas of Paul Goodman than ideals of democracy from the orthodox left or neo-con right.

It's much more of a philosophical text than a political science one, reflective rather than prescriptive, which I suppose is not unexpected from a humanities professor.

Most books on this theme seem more concerned with conversion to a particular approach than with actually examining the problem of democracy and encouraging a broad approach to ensuring that the concept of public participation is lived out at all levels, including the discussion of the problem. I intend to follow up on the suggestions for further reading, particularly the ones that link social movements and democratic structures. (Brian Burch)



Mycological Studies

by Jay Millar, poetry, \$17, Coach House Books, 401 Huron Street (rear) on bpNichol Lane, Toronto, ON, M5S 2G5

This is poetry. If I knew what poetry was, I reckon this would be it. Reading Jay Millar's *Mycological Studies*, I want to go back and take away some of what I have said about other poetry books. Not to make them less, but because this one collection is so much more. Truth, fact, and gorgeous illusion bud in half rhymes, occasionally swerving into brilliant wordplay or flat-out bad puns.

Poems spread across the pages, grow off one another in a way that makes it almost impossible to tell where one ends and another begins. Part minimalist, part concrete, part complex, part simple, part academic, part pot head. Do not let the negative parts of this review scare you. This is a volume you can — and should — read many times. Here experimentalism is grounded (pardon the pun) in all those traditional things that make poetry poetry (sound, shape, meter, metaphor).

This is one of those texts that reaches in all directions through the book as if trying to escape the covers and itself. Thus, the phrase "WRITING OPERATES / LIKE A TOADSTOOL / BUT MUSHROOMS" appears three times, always on its own page, always with the bold falling to emphasize a different line of the saying. From the opening section "False Morels" to the creeping "Entries: A

Field Journal / Fruiting Bodies" to the dense, daunting columns in "Unidentified Species" lies every type of mushroom and every type of writing imaginable, popping up eventually with the appendix "XXVI Fungal Threads," 26 pages of visual/verbal explosions divided by letters A,B,C, etc. In "Entries: A Field Journal" Millar writes: the illusion was complete./ slight headache & mild nausea./ no way to distinguish between/ what was & what wasn't./ everything present before me in language./ objects took on lives like emotions./ real upon their appearance in language./ there was nothing to do but lie down in the dark & feel.

In spite of the competing forms, the entire book is beautiful, ambitious and ambiguous. But don't listen to me. I was a C student when it came to literature and I skipped all the hard courses. The publisher's press release and the Author's Statement both say it's about 'shrooms, so I'll stick to that. (Emily Schultz)

Bent on Writing: Contemporary Queer Tales

edited by Elizabeth Ruth, anthology, \$30, 309 pages, Women's Press, 180 Bloor St. West, Suite 1202, Toronto, ON, M5S 2V6, www.womenspress.ca

"Good writing breeds good writing," says Elizabeth Ruth in the introduction to this anthology, and she's got to be right. How else could seventy pieces, all culled from one long-running reading series, be so consistently good?

Bent collects poems and stories from writers who have performed at the Clit Lit reading series. Each piece is preceded by a description of the author's first time reading at Clit Lit, and maybe it's the warm, supportive atmosphere they describe, or maybe it's something in the beer, but the average for all this writing is pretty darn high.

Genres range from poetry to science-fiction to creative non-fiction. Subject matter generally hovers around queer issues: love, gender, oppression, community, and lots of exceptionally non-icky writing about sex. If that's your cup of tea, get Bent. (Wendy Banks)

Excessive Love Prostheses

by Margaret Christakos, poetry, \$17, 101 pages, Coach House Books, 401 Huron St. (rear) on bpNichol Lane, Toronto, ON, M5S 2G5, www.chbooks.com

The epigram, by Lola Lemire Tostevin, reads: "the amputated/ truncated text/ follows an imaginary line/ / and grows/ extravagant." This gives you an idea of what to expect. Christakos is a wizard of amputation.

Her poems start with a text, for example a description of a recurring dream, then trim it, jumble it, transpose lines or parts of lines with another; or else they start with the stump of a text, say two words from the middle of each line, let you mull it over and imagine what it could mean, and then elaborate it, fill in its blanks. Or else they take a fistful of familiar texts, say a collection of nursery rhymes, and invert them, cannibalize them, intersperse them with other poems or with newspaper

clippings.

Several of these poems are composed entirely of fragments of others. The cumulative effect, collages of collages, is intriguing, evocative, and sometimes kind of frustrating. Christakos doesn't cheat, though; there's always a payoff, some way that her bewildering kaleidoscope of cut-up phrases comes together to finally make sense. (Wendy Banks)

How to Survive the Recession and the Recovery

by Anna Farago (introduction by Benjamin Gallander), non-fiction, \$16, Insomniac Press, 192 Spadina Avenue, Suite 403, Toronto, ON, M5T 2C2

As one of the financially fucked, I was very interested in this book. Would Anna Farago provide more helpful tidbits than the oft-repeated "don't buy new what you can get used" (often a matter of necessity, not choice) and "bring a teabag from home instead of buying a cuppa when you're out"? Indeed, she does.

The book is divided into four chapters: History and Anatomy, Debt Management, Job Security and Retention, and Investing. After reading this book, I knew a lot more about the (American) history of recessions as well as economists' theories about why they happen. There are also a few handy tips on paying off debt ("As a general rule, about 75% of an individual's income is needed to maintain necessary daily living expenses. In light of this, make your payment goals realistic, otherwise you will not stick to them") and keeping your job ("Make an effort to communicate with your boss's boss and to develop some kind of professional relationship. Putting a face to your name...with the next level of management means that it will be more difficult for them to give you the axe"). Some of these tips (e.g. "Make yourself essential to your department") aren't likely to be news to anyone who has read other financial guides. The final chapter filled me in on everything I wanted to know about stocks, bonds and funds but was afraid to ask.

Once I knew the difference between balanced, sector and index funds, I moved on to the appendixes to organize my life. There are charts here to list creditors, debts owed, monthly living expenses, and a debt payment plan and listings for (American) bankruptcy courts and state labour offices. There's even a quick-reference glossary of terms, in case the financially fucked forget what foreign currency operations are. (Jennifer O'Connor)

On Every Stone

by Rachel Vigier, poetry, \$19.95, Pedlar Press, PO Box 26, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S6

A reader can always expect fine-tuned poetry from Pedlar Press, beautifully arranged and subtly rendered. On Every Stone is no exception. This is Rachel Vigier's first collection of poetry, and unlike many first collections, there's a kind of narrative cohesion that made me want to read the poems more as if they were chapters, than poems. Focusing on loss, these sparse poems sometimes veer too far into ambiguity, that sort of floating-

universe-on-the-tip-of-our-tongues thing that happens when writers are trying to get at the big meaning and display its elusiveness at the same time. That said, the details wind up being all the more startling and hard-hitting when they are given. Not to delve into cliché, but...very much like stones thrown in a pond. A sudden rippling effect.

For a book about the disappearance and possible death of a sister, there is a surprising amount of humour. Dark humour, sure, but very necessary. In "Strange Bones" the narrator contemplates the "formal voice at the end of the line" which has told her about the discovery. Vigier writes, "Did the skull vibrate? Did the ribs/ lift and shake? Did the pelvis,/ did the pelvis rock and rock/ with pleasure when you touched it?" Then comes the unexpected ending, "No? Then these strange bones/ are not my sister." (Emily Schultz)

The Yoko Ono Project

play by Jean Yoon, \$15, Broken Jaw Press, www.brokenjaw.com

The Yoko Ono Project may be the best contemporary play I have ever seen. Seriously. Channelling Ono like some kind of obnoxious, in your face fairy godmother, the play debunks stereotypes about Asian-Canadian women in a funny, outrageous and blunt manner. At the same time, it's a celebration of "the most famous undiscovered artist in the world," inspired by Ono's work, music and life. Onstage, the audience is confronted over and over again with controversial and incredible works — from her Part Painting to Eternal Time Clock to Cut Piece. Now, thanks to Broken Jaw, you can read Yoon's script in its entirety and see how the performance took shape. The artistic director of Toronto's Loud Mouth Asian Babes company has written a whopper of a work. Not to be missed! Oh, and if the actual play ever comes back to town, don't miss that either. (Emily Pohl-Weary)

Like Mangoes in July: The Work of Richard Fung

edited by Kerri Sakamoto and Helen Lee, non-fiction, \$20, Insomniac Press/Images Festival, c/o Insomniac, 192 Spadina Avenue, Suite 403, Toronto, ON, M5T 2C2

This one was passed around the BP office like a hot potato. Out of confusion really, as no one really wanted to answer the question: "What is Video Art?"

Some say it should explore the farthest fringes of cinema, and push the boundaries of narrative and time. Others say it should be raw and personal, using the immediacy of the medium for an indisputable statement of protest and identity. Somewhere in the middle are a dozen or so sore asses sitting in plastic chairs at Cine-Cycle on a cold winter night while a diseased cat slithers in between legs.

The underground can be very unseductive at times. But Richard Fung doesn't consider himself an artist, his video-works for the most part operate as recorded moments of protest. This monograph is composed of short pieces by Fung's many friends and collaborators including John Greyson, Sara Diamond and Cameron Bailey.

That's actually the book's major fault. Without an offsetting critical voice, the work in question — whether it's art or protest — cannot be given its full critical due and is left suspended in some kind of love-added limbo. (Brian Joseph Davis)

resume drowning

by Jon Paul Fiorentino, poetry, \$16, Broken Jaw Press, Box 596, Station A, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5A6, www.brokenjaw.com

This is a collection of poems that, by and large, I would rather hear performed than read in print. Even in my own voice, they seem liberated and more accessible than when they are scattered through the pages of this book. Perhaps this is due to the fact that substantial sections are really one extended verse/concept and the printed page is designed primarily to divide rather than blend. I, therefore, enjoyed this collection less than I had hoped. I wonder how this collection would work as a streamed work on my computer screen, a flowing revelation of ideas. (Brian Burch)

Echo in the Heartwood

by Matt Rader, poetry chapbook, \$5 or interesting trade, Mosquito Press, 2055 Nevis Place, Courtenay, BC V9N 9V5, matt@onelessrock-star.com

A gorgeous little chapbook. Crisp earthy image on the cover of a leaf with a whole root system. I'd like to apply that image to everything inside this 20-page book. It's small and fragile and it goes deeper than one expects. These are strong simple poems by a serious poet.

These aren't typical poems of love, lost love, ethereal mental meandering, etc. They are story-like poems about banging nails into walls, having wisdom teeth complications, trying to catalogue the debris that collects in swamps, jumping off bridges into water in summer ("released into the rush/ and grab for air, the cold dark shock of water"), and — my favourite — a pregnant mother attempting to fix the truck that will take her to the hospital. (Emily Schultz)

She Writes: Love, Spaghetti and Other Stories by Youngish Women

edited by Carolyn Foster, short story anthology, \$19, Second Story Press, 720 Bathurst Street, Suite 301, Toronto, ON M5S 2R4 www.second-storypress.on.ca

Billed as an "assemblage of the new generation of women writers at the start of the 21st century," Carolyn Foster has put together an odd but good little anthology of writing by writers who aren't quite young and definitely aren't old. Contributors include Elizabeth Ruth, Natalee Caple, Heather Birrell and Kelly Watt.

The most striking thing about this collection is how different all the stories are — both in terms of style and in content. This book is almost a study in the diversity of contemporary Canadian short fiction. In her introduction, Foster notes that an extraordinarily high number of them

are about love and reference spaghetti (hence the book's subtitle), but what these writers have in common is that they all write in a style that appeals to a hip, youthful audience. They are relentlessly modern and urbane.

When the pieces really work, they're all about that magical combination of unique perspective and simplicity. Annabel Lyon's "My Monkey" starts the collection eloquently with: "I can look over my shoulders at my twenties, bits of my twenties are stuck in my teeth..." and fleshes out into a funny story about a graduate student who dates a guy with a kid. Her story is a reflection on the awkwardness of leaving adolescence behind for good and entering full adulthood. Dana Bath's "Bottle Episode" is a work of genius with its innocent truths that reveal greater meaning. The final story, by Teresa McWhirter, "The Girl with the Blue Hat," is a little fable, a la Francesca Lia Block, about a woman whose lover leaves her and who becomes consumed with unhappiness.

Released in October to almost no fanfare — I'd never heard of this book — *She Writes* is nevertheless a fun and inspiring book for "youngish" readers. (Emily Pohl-Weary)

Enter Avariz

by Marc Ngui, graphic novel, \$25, Conundrum Press, PO Box 55003, CSP Fairmount, Montreal, QC, H2T 3E2

The long-awaited full-length Zak Meadow tale from comics genius Marc Ngui does not disappoint. His hilarious, rambunctious and horrifying take on post-modern capitalism is remarkable.

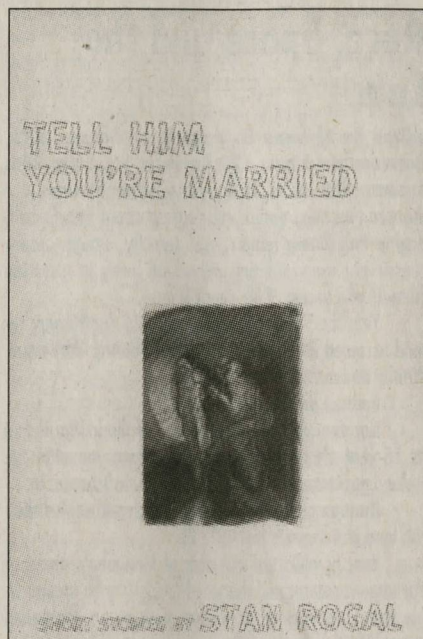
The backdrop is pristine, surreal Zak Meadow, populated by vaguely familiar iconic cartoon characters like Kite, Mr. Smart, Sparklee and of course our hero, Boy Ugly. All is well until two ominous characters in black suits and dark glasses arrive. "No jobs! (100% unemployment)," notes one of these figures, "No shops! (zero competition) Wow! That's one underemployed, under privileged, indigenous population! They must be desperate! They need our help!" The two suits look deep into each other's mirrored gazes. Then they high-five. "Jackpot!"

Soon, the meadow is carved up into housing developments, factories spewing chemicals, vast parking lots, corporate headquarters, and worker drones. Half-horrified, half-attracted, Boy Ugly takes us on a tour of what has happened to his and our home. At the pinnacle of the invasion, he naively attempts to return a dropped cup and ends up trespassing on the corporate inner sanctum. For his transgression, he is shoved into the worm, which gives Ngui a chance to work his magic on a series of awesome pull-out pages.

Thankfully, Ngui is more trenchant observer than activist. Boy Ugly even manages to find some good in the changes when he discovers he can use flying memes (bemes) to convey information. This helps keep the tale of Avariz Corp's meadow entry more on the side of satire than earnest whine. Ngui's potent ability to imagine such memorable characters as the boyband Boyasaurus and the Mogul (a floating Conrad-Blackesque head who advises on how to destroy the meadow's first and only protest newspaper), give potent realization to a universe that is, when you get right down to it, probably even

uglier and scarier than Marc's imagination.

The final page of this story leaves us with a happy if ambivalent ending: Boy Ugly frolics in a reclaimed meadow but in the background, sheep drink deep from an elaborate sprinkler system. (Hal Niedzviecki)



Tell Him You're Married

by Stan Rogal, short stories, \$20, Insomniac Press, 192 Spadina Avenue, Suite 403, Toronto, ON, M5T 2C2, www.insomniacpress.com

Reading this book made me think a whole lot about Raymond Carver and his stories, especially "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love." Maybe it's because there's so much booze in Rogal's stories — people are always mixing drinks or entering drinking contests or going through bitter hangovers.

Or maybe I just can't stop thinking about Carver because Rogal actually quotes him at the beginning of Flirt: "I'm reading Raymond Carver. A story begins: 'My marriage had just fallen apart. I couldn't find a job. I had another girl but she wasn't in town. So I was at a bar having a glass of beer, and two women were sitting a few stools down, and one of them began to talk to me.' I slip in a marker and rest the book on the table. That's me in a nutshell, I go. That's my life."

OK, here's why I can't stop thinking about Carver: Carver's stories are about suburban blue-collar no-name characters, and Stan Rogal's stories feature the same recognizable cluster of people. We know who these people are and chances are that we often see ourselves in them. This book is a series of strange yet familiar dinner parties. It's all about watching the game on TV with some buddies, married people's drunken affairs and guilty hangovers. It's about realizing who you are and what you'll never be and pretending to accept it all and trying not feel too horrible in the end.

This collection of short stories is great and clearly demonstrates that Rogal is a distinct and competent writer. (Audrey Gagnon)

Intensive Care: A Memoir

by Alan Twigg, poetry, \$14, Anvil Press, 6 West 17th Ave., Vancouver, BC, V5Y 1Z4, www.anvilpress.com

This is an unusual and intimate collection of poetry, based on one year in the writer's life that was centred around a brain tumour and related surgery. Even though I do not agree with the writer's assumption that the imminent experience of death is life enhancing, I found this collection a complex and revelatory work.

I was deeply moved by the lines in the prose poem *The Homecoming*: "We have learned from each other. Sex can be either a/ paradise or a minefield. One Sunday mornings, after I get up and shave, we make our way carefully into/ paradise. Neither of us wants explosive love. This is/ our hard-earned place of belong, beyond the/ outside world." While it's not the most magical of language, it does reveal a depth of feeling in ways easy to understand and share some delight in.

There are also political concerns woven into this collection, specifically concern over the accessibility of health care. I found the inclusion of hand-written drafts of work, done in the aftermath of surgery, something that provided a real glimpse into the process of reclaiming life. (Brian Burch)

Black Coffee Night

by Emily Schultz, stories, \$20, 155 pages, Insomniac Press, www.insomniacpress.com

"The night is a saucer catching all the spills." "There are varying depths of humiliation." "What does she think about when he fucks her?" "The city was nothing but scaffolding that I could see straight through." In Emily Schultz's first book, she demonstrates her ability to encapsulate high school eighties lust, nineties angst, and the meaninglessness of all those assignments in a series of exuberant aphorisms that cut through the night like a searing espresso.

This is a great example of what a first book of stories should do. Schultz explores, tries different forms like diary, poetic incoherence, omniscient sarcasm, but still manages to produce a body of work fused together with the classic first-book themes: betrayal, regret and (sexual) coming-of-age. Simply told moments of adolescence like the story about twin sister soccer players read most fluidly but ultimately are least memorable. The next story picks up the thread of adolescent psychology, but takes greater risks and delivers the reader a bigger payoff. As teen pals line up to pop-out semi-accidental offspring, the similarly horny narrator explains that "The thing inside me was not a baby. It was a disease... In this case, tongs were not necessary." There's that sharp tongue again effectively deployed as an antidote to otherwise dreamy scenarios reminiscent of the Virgin Suicides.

The more important stories in this book, however, take place in that netherworld between adolescent and adult. This is a time that stretches between twenty-two and thirty, even thirty-five these days. While writing about high school is time-honoured and worthy, writing about what happens after high school is far more

complicated and no longer governed by the true clichés of parents, teachers, booze infused nights of heavy petting.

There is more territory here that is less explored so it's no surprise that Schultz produces her most interesting work. "The Physical Act of Leaving" is about a girl-girl couple in an open relationship pursues the issue of identity in a formless void of possible emotional entanglements, smoky bars, newspaper moments and a cold murky river beckoning to anyone who thinks, foolishly, that it is truly possible to leave it all behind. In "The Amateurs", the story of a boy-girl couple undone by emerging ambition, the high-school themes of lust, betrayal and painful moments of impending maturity are all there but different. It's just how they are different that makes these stories so interesting. Both stories feature beautiful writing depicting women in the moment of orgasm. In a way this becomes a metaphor for the after-adolescent stories in this book, tales about the fleeting joy of being in-between yet in the moment.

There are times in this book when the writing is not as crisp as it could be. Jon tells us that "my heart sang and my body mourned." Whatever Jon. Such moments are rare and one is better off dwelling on some of the other lines Schultz comes up with to show us the hearts and minds of her in-between characters, like: "Despair was like a flickering spectre kneeling on their living room floor in front of the television." (Hal Niedzviecki)

Hamilton Sketchbook

by David Collier, book of illustrations, \$23, Drawn and Quarterly, www.drawnandquarterly.com

Hamilton Sketchbook chronicles a couple years in the life of underground cartoonist David Collier, as he moves away from the wind-swept prairie town of Saskatoon and settles in the industrial town of Hamilton.

After a dozen pages, the reader becomes aware of recurring themes. Then Collier complains, "My book about me comes back again and again to my family," and it all comes clear. Rather than being a simple graphic autobiography, this is actually a collection of stories about the people who leave impressions on Collier — his parents, his wife, his baby boy and hundreds of strangers — as he settles into his new home and memories of his previous life come rushing back.

His trademark scratchy, real-life illustrations are all accompanied by little stories about the subjects he draws. We're right there with Collier when he meets the terrifying Smokin' Mom, who puffs vigorously as she bundles her helpless infant victim into an SUV outside a gas station. We watch Collier's infant son develop into a curious toddler and his wife settle into a new city. We're along for the ride when Collier visits his old barber, Ted, the nursing home from hell, and the editor of Saturday Night.

Collier, who self-published his first mini-comic in 1981, is an established force in the underground Can-comix scene. He's probably best-known for his one-off comic book, *Surviving Saskatoon*, the graphic biography of David Milgaard, who was wrongfully convicted in 1969 of murdering a nurse and imprisoned for 25 years.

Hamilton Sketchbook is a study in contrasts that exposes the environmental and cultural diversity of our

country. What makes his work so fascinating is that it allows us a glimpse of ourselves as seen through his eyes — mundane creatures of habit that we are — and while we're not all that pretty, he loves us anyhow. (Emily Pohl-Weary)

Race, Space and the Law

edited by Sherene H. Razack, anthology, \$25, Between the Lines, 720 Bathurst St., Suite 404, Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4, www.btlbooks.com

So here I've been getting all riled up about Israelis bulldozing Palestinian homes, and secretly, smugly, semi-consciously congratulating myself on living in nice safe friendly ol' Canada. Well, check it out.

Year the Federal Government paid the Ojibway for land occupied by Oshawa, Trenton, Cobourg, Port Hope, Whitby and most of Toronto: 1923

Amount paid for said land: \$375

Number of years after the end of World War II that an 18-year-old Japanese-Canadian girl was forced by the federal government to relocate from BC to Toronto: 3

Number of Manitoba Indian bands still denied their full land entitlements in 1991: 25

Year in which the Speaker of Manitoba's House of Parliament determined the word "racist" to be inadmissible with reference to provincial policies on Aboriginal issues: 1995 ...and so on.

The premise of this anthology is that "place becomes race," that people in power allocate land and set laws in order to make it easier to identify and control people they consider different and inferior, and that these allocations and laws in turn reinforce dominant social hierarchies. And, well, really, that's what Canada's all about. We got reservations. We got Chinatowns. We got angry councillors and homeowners trying to shut down mosques because of all the Muslims littering their front lawns with empty liquor bottles on their way to worship. Muslims being, you know, notoriously fond of booze...

Although parts of this anthology are written in an almost impenetrable dialect of Academese, it's well worth the slog to get at the juicy, eye-opening facts. Guaranteed to radicalize the most complacent winter couch potato. Grade 10 history was never like this. (Wendy Banks)

ShoreLines Magazine: Showcasing Young Writers

literary journal, \$6, Shawnigan Lake School, 1975 Renfrew Road, Shawnigan Lake, BC, V0R 2W0

Published twice a year, this new journal devoted to young writers (aged 12-20) is likely to be the place where the next wave of poets and novelists begin. Imitating perfect-bound lit. journals like Prism, Grain, Descant, etc. this one starts teenagers on that route of getting published professionally. There are lots of routes to go and often they'll overlap if you're serious about

writing. This quality offset-print journal includes photography, poetry, fiction, and interviews with both emerging and established writers.

ShoreLines is a vibrant newcomer to the growing group of teen literary mags, like In2Print and The Claremont Review, and in my humble opinion, the selections in ShoreLines may be better. In particular, excellent work by David Dakin and Alanna Quock, two high school students whose poems are at a beyond-university level. Much of the work here is better than what I myself was producing at the same age — or even beyond... But I got my first "real" credit in a magazine that was sent primarily to high school guidance offices and called Teen Generation. So I think that says it all. In the past ten or twelve years, there are — thankfully — a lot more options for young writers. ShoreLines prefers not more than 5 poems, 2 fiction pieces, or 5 photographs per submission with Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope. (Emily Schultz)

Beer and Bagels for Breakfast

by John Carson, non-fiction, 211 pages, \$9.99 UK, Fusion Press, 20 Queen Anne Street, London, W1M 0AY

For a whole year, John Carson lived a communal life on a kibbutz just miles from the Gaza strip. He had such a good time that he decided to write a book about what happened during his stay.

The book is 211 pages long, but this is basically what happens to Carson during the year: get on plane, get to kibbutz, make friends, go to pub and get drunk, get laid, get bad hangover, go to work, repeat the get drunk/get laid/hangover/work part over and over again until the book is over and Carson assures us that everything in the book really did happen. That's the book.

Question number one: why did Carson even bother going to the kibbutz when he could've easily and more conveniently done the exact same things (drunk/laid/hangover/work) from his home and neighbourhood? Question number two: why did Carson write a book about his adventures at the kibbutz when nothing remotely fun and adventurous seems to have occurred during that entire year?

I think the problem might be that John Carson is just too honest. Everyone knows that when you tell people a true story — starring yourself — that a certain amount of bullshit must be inserted into the events. You make yourself look cool and keep your audience entertained and awake. People don't care about what really happened (note: there are some exceptions to this, like mostly when you find yourself in court and such things), and usually people also don't care if you lie, as long as the story is good. It's unfortunate, but John Carson can't lie. Or if he can lie and the whole book is only half-true, then he might just be a boring liar. I don't know.

One last thing. Is it just me or is this line really funny in a why-oh-why-would-you-ever-write-this-kind-of-way: "I fondly remembered how her tongue had played sweet music on my tonsil piano." Wow. Because of this line, I now have a hard time not laughing my ass off whenever someone plays music on my tonsil piano. Tends to ruin the moment. (Audrey Gagnon)

Raising the Dead

<http://raisingthedead.ca>

In 1999 a Vancouver man dies in a car crash. In 2002 his brother builds him an online memorial. But Raising the Dead is not a celebration of a life too soon ended. This is a macabre meditation on violent death. The graphics and music are menacing in a vaguely medical way. Your host at the site is the deceased himself, who looks out of his own tombstone directly into your eye in video clips culled from home movies. One area of the site allows you to peruse the victim's autopsy report. In another, the man's young son casually recites the details of the accident over an animated recreation of the event and pictures of the twisted wreckage. Play the voyeur at the funeral. Go through the newspaper reports. Listen to friends and family members speak about their loss. It's downright freak-inducing, and I'm not sure it's meant to be. (Derek Winkler)

Omnitectural Forum

<http://www.omnitecturalforum.com>

Omnitectural Forum. Is it an abstract exploration of contemporary architecture, or is it a Web-based visual arts installation? It's not clear, nor is it meant to be. There's a lot to see here, but surprisingly little to read. Every piece is like a choose-your-own-adventure story. Everything is a link spiralling off to some other tangentially related thing, often at some other Web site completely. It's also good to see a site that still puts in the effort to make every damn page a unique work. Suppose, for example, you decide to sample the current not-article on the La Maison du Egg Roll restaurant in Montreal. The first page is a montage of images offering no guideposts. The first image take you to an old Gazette article about Pierre Trudeau, who used to hang out there. The next takes you to an appreciation of the Redpath sugar refinery in Toronto, for reasons unexplained. Other links take you to a shrine to the big orange in Montreal and a guide to unusual toilets around the world. This trip doesn't even take into account the multiple links to other delights on some of the sub-pages. Some of the other efforts presently listed on the homepage are even more oblique in their presentation. If it all gets too confusing, you can check out "An Overview of Architectural Guidebooks." There's actual writing in that one. (Derek Winkler)

Stupid

<http://www.stupid.ca>

Once upon a time, according to the history lesson given on this Web site, Stupid was a band. Then it became "Stupid NThe Zine." Unfortunately, that "looked like a bad computer photocopy, full of crappy suckiness." So, Stupid came to the Web. Which is where some of us thought it had been all along. In any case, Stupid is where you will want to hang out if you want some stupidity. Some of it is fun; some of it is cranky; some of it is dumb. Well, whatever. It's Stupid. So, what did you expect? If you're going to spend any amount of time on this Web site, you'll probably want to get to know some

of the ex-band members first. Anya, for example, has moved back to Ontario from Nova Scotia. This is big news for us stupid-ites everywhere. The site has advice about how to stay fit during the holidays and some nifty cartoons (I thought they were the best part of the show). This site also provides some face time with the most powerful stupid dude on the planet, George W. Bush. I've chosen a Web-friendly quotation from the great man: "It's important for us to explain to our nation that life is important. It's not only life of babies, but it's life of children living in, you know, the dark dungeons of the Internet." Ah, yes. Stupid people in high places. Where would we be without 'em? (Michael Bryson)

Freelives.ca

<http://freelives.ca>

Freelives.ca is out to foment revolution among the socially excluded of Toronto. The site hosts a very angry collection of essays and a mailing list aimed at distributing policy alternatives to the underclass. Built in a straight-text style for the express purpose of being readable on cheap obsolete computers, Freelives.ca is a grassroots movement of one. In its pages the author lays out a radical social program based on a guaranteed basic income, co-op public housing and activism at the local government level. There's a lot of material here, considering that the site has only been up since June 2002. Unfortunately, a trip to the mailing list archive reveals that all the posted messages come from the same guy. At that rate of growth, the revolution won't likely take place anytime soon. (Derek Winkler)

Ethelbert Street

<http://www.ethelbertstreet.com>

Ethelbert Street is a Web site for expatriate Winnipeg folks now hunkered down within the unforgiving confines of Toronto. I am one such. I spent two very good years in the Peg, and it warms my heart to see such a spirited defense of the Perimeter. This is a balm to the homesick, in essence. It gives advance notice of Winnipeg bands that are coming to T.O., links up news stories about the old home town from around the Web and, perhaps most valuable of all, provides a directory of places to get Old Dutch potato chips in these uncivilized Hogtown surroundings. The photo gallery this issue shows bicycles in snow. For everyone who's spent time chillin' at Portage and Main, for all those who still mourn the death of the Jets, for enlightened souls who appreciate the Zen beauty of a really flat piece of ground and for whom burning stubble is the sweetest incense, your Web site is out there. (Derek Winkler)

Idea Museum

<http://www.ideamuseum.net>

The full title of this Web zine is actually The Idea Museum of Collective Consciousness. As you might expect, the Web site reinforces its Jungian origins throughout. The site's founders say the site "is a creative conjunction of art, design and writing." The mandate of the Web site is

"to promote energy barter," which seems to mean the site intends to "foster intellectual, artistic, and technological growth." The site is well designed, though I found the neon-sign-like font hard to read. The site is divided into 16 sub-sections, which is probably too many, as the variety of stuff made casual surfing a pain in the ass. I did find some interesting things though, including book reviews, poetry, profiles of artists, and advice about how to find food after a nuclear war. The latter comes from Duncan Long. Long says, "Food will be hard to come by following a nuclear war. But radioactive fallout doesn't penetrate or contaminate as much as many people think. Provided you have a little know-how and the foresight to plant some fruit trees, save some seed, or take other survival precautions, you and your family can produce food and survive long after a nuclear war has come to an end." Apparently, the energy barter will go on after the end of the world, though you might want to print out this advice before the Big One falls because there's no guarantee Google will be up and running. (Michael Bryson)

insolent rudder

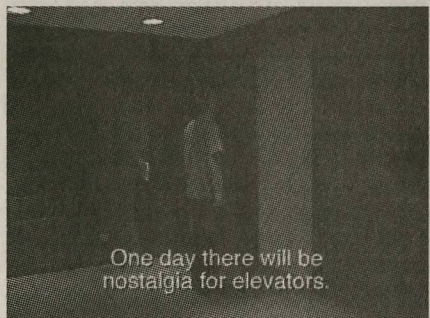
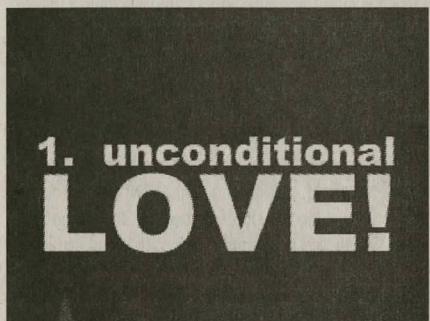
<http://www.insolentrudder.org>

"Furiously fresh flash fiction" says the definition page of insolent rudder. This seems to mean really, really short stories. Stories that run for a couple of paragraphs and describe the emotions of one person during a few moments of time. Many of them are very effective, like Ellen Parker's gruesome little ode to mutilation, "Ring Finger." On the other hand, Jeff Callico's moment of gun porn, "Prediction," didn't do much for me. Check this site out, but if a little pop-up message asks you to install additional Quicktime components so you can hear the MIDI music in the background, do not, under any circumstances, do it. (Derek Winkler)

zoombafloom

<http://www.zoombafloom.com>

Blog blog blog. In the future, every child will be issued a domain name at birth and required to participate in mandatory weblogging. Anyway, there are two things to do the first time you come up against a new weblog: get a sense of the blogger's habitual sources and rate the blogger's capacity for stimulating commentary. In the case of zoombafloom, the sources consist of the usual suspects: the big mainstream news sites, the popular Web magazines and the heavyweight weblogs everybody already reads anyway. The commentary is slightly leftist, slightly cultural-critical and slightly pissed off. In other words, it's pretty much like a hundred other weblogs out there, just slightly more Canadian. That is a good and noble thing to be, as long as you don't mind that it's been done before. Hey, bloggers! I already know the URLs for Salon and The New York Times. The Weblogs I go back to are the ones that show an ability to dig up interesting stuff from places I would otherwise never find. Not to pick on zoombafloom, which is a perfectly good example of the breed, but unless you really care about the opinions of zack, leah and mark you'd be just as well served by browsing Google News. (Derek Winkler)



One day there will be nostalgia for elevators.

Film & Video

Video Zinester Meesoo Lee

by Ted Baker

Vancouver

-based video-maker Meesoo Lee prefers e-mail interviews to the face-to-face variety. "I'm better in print," professes Lee, who likes to have time to articulate his thoughts and, one suspects, likes to be in control. In person he is soft-spoken, self-deprecating and radiates sharp intelligence. He recalls vividly his fateful decision, eight years ago now, to move to Vancouver. Back then the 24-year-old Lee was a University of Southern California dropout who was living unhappily at home with his parents in London, Ontario. "There was this opportunity to teach English in Korea that I seized upon as something I could do," says Lee. "I was on my way to Kinko's to fax my passport to the Korean language centre and I thought, 'No! I'll go to Vancouver and I'll work as a production assistant! I want to make movies! I'll go to Vancouver and I'll start at the bottom.'"

And that's exactly what he did. A professional set dresser by trade, Lee has also churned out an impressive number of experimental videos. Definitely lo-fi in their aesthetic, these videos explore identity, alienation, failure and the surreality of the mundane. He doesn't adhere to a signature style but instead experiments with disparate tones and techniques. "I think that it's been a priority for me to know what my own process is and to try things out and make mistakes," he says. A constant of Lee's work has been a slyly understated sense of humour. In the video *Dream of Donuts*, a woman (Jeanette Ordas) dreams of a donut-filled fridge and awakens only to find a forlorn jar of pickle brine. The movie showcases Lee's impeccable comic timing and his ancient camcorder captures washed-out hues that add to the dreamlike strangeness. In *Pie Frenzy*, Lee abandoned his deadpan timing for accelerated motion. The video depicts a woman (Elizabeth Zvonar) making pies unceasingly as *Mission Impossible*-like music plays with groovy urgency. By contrast, *Crushed* — which shows Lee emotionally hugging a concrete pillar — unfolds in turgid slow motion from a fixed camera position.

Lee cites the French New Wave, Woody Allen, Jim

Jarmusch, early Hal Hartley, and the Coen brothers as early influences. "There was a time when I wanted to be making those kinds of movies but I'm starting to feel that what I do in video is intrinsically different from film." He was also heavily influenced by Paul Schrader's book, *Transcendental Style in Film*, which focuses on the minimalist aesthetic exemplified by Carl Dreyer and French director Robert Bresson. "[Schrader] was basically saying that you can't represent interior or spiritual states. He would say that the strategy was to represent the surface of reality in all its banality. It gives the viewer the opportunity to experience something as a character in a film experiences it."

With the 2001 movie *Bad Hair Day*, Lee got personal when he turned his camera on himself and his parents. The video consists of Lee countering his parents' urgings for him to get his hair cut during a visit to Korea. To his Korean-born father, Lee's uneven and slightly punk-rock hairstyle is almost obscene. He calls it "filthy" and tells his son that he looks like a drug addict. The video zeroes in on not just a parent/child generation gap but also upon a cultural divide. "They haven't seen the entire tape," says Lee who ended up sending his parents an edited version. "There's a kind of irony or use of the authoritative text [in the movie], and I don't think they have the sort of cultural literacy to read it."

Recently Lee has produced videos using songs by the Vancouver bands *Young and Sexy* and *The Radio*. The videos employ "appropriated footage" that is slowed down to such a degree as to suggest a melancholic alternate reality. For *The Radio*'s song, "Is it Strange," Lee has used scenes from the original *Star Trek* series. Mr. Spock is in conversation with a beautiful and scantily clad alien woman. She stares at Spock with lovesick intensity just as the lyric "Can I look into your eyes?" plays. *Young and Sexy*'s "Take What You Got," with its achingly sad Paul Pittman lyrics and vocals is paired, somehow effectively, with footage of a young woman competing in a skipping rope/dance competition. The forlorn song

mixed with the girl's slow motion movements evokes a kind of bug-turned-over-on-its-back sensation of futility. Young and Sexy's song "Chikubi" plays as the soundtrack for a lethal encounter between a lynx and a rabbit. Commenting on the videos Lee notes that "there is an interesting push-pull kind of thing between irony and empathy going on in a lot of the music videos. I think it's important to keep in balance." In the music videos, as in many of his works, Lee has achieved a balance that works — a balance struck between the ineffably strange and the everyday.

Tapes are \$5 plus postage and can be ordered from Meesoo:

Meesoo Lee
1745 Napier Street
Vancouver, BC
V5L 2N1

E-mail is the best way to reach meesoo:
meesoo@direct.ca



Film & Video

Fork Keeps

narrative, Dir Anne-Emanuelle Romanelli, 8 minutes, video, annemanuelle@yahoo.com VUFF review

A clever little nervous-date story with a punk rock edge, a girl who eats forks and her doomed fish. It's nice to see an old standard — romance — get the underground treatment. The actress playing Alice walks that fine line between pro and amateur, where the real actors live. (Flick Harrison)

Metronome

experimental, Dir Daniel Cockburn, 10 mins, video, distribution@vtape.org VUFF review

An intentionally mesmerizing film about a dude who decides to pound his chest all day to a specific beat. Both wacky and stirring, a comic but intriguing analysis of the universe and the human soul. I will see it again (I hope). (Flick Harrison)

Love Flush

comedy, dirs Adam Thomas / Chris Bizzocchi, video, 12 mins www.lo-fibre.com VUFF review

Love Flush is an exercise in taking one joke as far as it can possibly go, then bailing quickly. In the middle of a hot date, a girl finds that the guy's roommate is actually living in the bathroom — but he doesn't mind, everyone goes while he's there. It's amazingly acrobatic to keep going for 12 minutes, but I think they made it just a smidge-poo too long for a one-joke wonder. Braden Jones, an actor I've worked with recently, is of course awesome. (Flick Harrison)

Hemorrhage

narrative, dir Nick Hartley, 12 minutes, video, http://www.home.earthlink.net/~karhar, decomposingpictures@hotmail.com

This is a student effort by Nick Hartley, who is nevertheless restless about getting it out there and getting it reviewed. There's a stock taste for blood, unexplained zombies, gore, some timid corpse-humping, etc. and obligatory bloopers at tapes' end. Making an Evil-Dead-derivative proves a filmmaker can convince their friends

to spit blood, fake hump, stand around in public in zombie costumes etc., a good start towards getting them to do even more ridiculous, embarrassing and interesting things in the future (see Pink Flamingoes — please). More interesting is the fact that this video was opened and watched by Canada Customs on its way to me, then they sealed it with a big yellow tape with their logo on it. (Flick Harrison)

Knee Level

experimental narrative, by Sarrah Abbot / Tanya Boggs, 10 minutes, video, distribution@vtape.org VUFF review

I love a good short film formula. A single camera that doesn't move, showing the passage of months in a bedridden woman's apartment by the comings and goings of her caregiver, while the unseen sickie describes her last-minute sexual awakening. Deathbed confessions are a shaky genre, but this one manages to contain its deadpan, breathy honesty inside a narrative framework rather than the more common race to the bottom of the expository barrel. (Flick Harrison)

Novel Amusements #2

compilation, Editor Jim Monroe, CD-ROM / online, free online or by mail, www.novela-musements.org, images at http://www.nomedialkings.org/clickme2.htm

A new compilation from the strange entity that is No Media Kings (.org). It contains perhaps the ultimate low-budget music video: the Zen concept of mu, meaning half empty, half full, could apply to Last Nights of the Werewithal by Kara Blake and World Provider, but more like: half earnest, half ironic. If you don't grok this, try to close your eyes after watching the video, find a quiet place, and meditate until you are in a universe in which that clip constitutes all of infinity. It's worth it. It has a couple of videos by Meesoo Lee (see article this issue), and a staggeringly fucking hilarious story by Munroe himself called "Confession," told in voice-over with just a waveform for visual. Wow, the treats are endless. There was a series of annoying videos made, admittedly, by teenage boys, but they serve as a museum of video or something, reminding us that lo-fi crap can travel just as far as big-budget crap. The Circle

Game is an amusing anecdotal essay about that game in which guys make a circle with their fingers and get to punch you if you look at it. Lee Bave's Lust is one of the weirdest things I've ever seen, which seems to be a video shot by a tour guide in a bizarre Old West wax museum, then handed back to the goofballs making out with the dummies (or the dummies making out with the goofballs). Or is she their mother? It's hard to say. There's more on this compilation, and you can get it for free just by contacting the Website above. What are you waiting for?! (Flick Harrison)

The Provider

narrative, Matt Smith, 16mm, thuja@webuniverse.net VUFF review

A really dark, short sci-fi film is a beautiful thing. Last year, the VUFF showed the lovely Purgatory by Brendon Sawatsky; this year they filled the niche with The Provider. A guy goes around harvesting brain-like lobes from thorny pods, growing in the nooks and crannies of semi-abandoned homes. Then he, well, GO SEE IT. After doing what he does, he trundles on through the crypto-apocalyptic countryside. Blinding Light / VUFF programmer Alex Mackenzie underestimated this film by warning people that it might be slow-moving; after a night of hit-and-miss earnest-monologue experimental works (though the hits were, to be honest, hard ones) this piece was a dream come true — as it would be in any lineup. Proof that infodump (the intrusion of long-winded sci-fi background, of the "As you know..." variety) is sometimes completely unnecessary. This could be the opening scene (or the ending) of a really wicked B-movie. (Flick Harrison)

FCMM

Montreal International Festival of New Cinema and Media

October 10–20, 2002

I hadn't attended this festival in years and was pleasantly surprised by the bountiful lot of good films on display. Lots of major work had already played at the big shindigs in Toronto, Cannes and Venice but were getting their first screenings in Montreal. There were also a number of ambitious new media pieces presented along with a retrospective of Canadian jack-of-all-arts Michael Snow

featuring a launch of a DVD (celebrating and cataloguing his work) and a performance by his long-running improv music group CCMC. British film/television maverick Dennis Potter was feted with a retrospective as well. Big films that made a ruckus included the soon to be released *Ararat* and *The Pianist*. Experimental and short film programs were consistently inconsistent, but a plethora of great documentaries kept me nourished. The projectionists were not entirely on the ball though. This created some embarrassing moments, the worst one I experienced being when the wrong film was put on at one screening. It took 15 minutes of complaining from the audience till they finally turned it off, only to announce that the scheduled film was missing. Despite a few dodgy programming choices and a ludicrous pass holder policy once the reserved 20% of seats were scooped up, Public passholders, visiting filmmakers and members of the media couldn't get in — even if there were many empty seats. Hopefully they will re-structure this in the future. This festival provided many good reasons to sit in darkened theatres despite the fine fall weather outside.

A Bookshelf on Top of the Sky — 12 Stories About John Zorn

documentary, by Claudia Heuermann, 82 minutes
claudiaheuermann@aol.com

This German documentary about prolific born-again Jew John Zorn provides an interesting look at this talented New York musical fixtured. It also tells the story of narcissistic filmmaker Claudia Heuermann's tedious difficulties in coming up with a suitable structure for her film. What could have been a fascinating portrait of hardworking Zorn becomes an almost unwatchable exercise in the filmmaker's self-analytical navel gazing. We watch the camera pan slowly across Heuermann's editing studio as she searches for ideas to organize the story she wants to tell. Look, she's got a pile of cue cards with themes written on them! In one particularly banal sequence, she writes, phones and sends faxes to her subject, desperate to get him to commit to finishing the film. While there are tasty selections of performance footage from a number of Zorn's musical incarnations (from *Naked City* to *Masada*), the filmmaker's whiny narration and self-reflexive meandering make for a tiresome exercise. (Z. Asher)

Ken Park

drama, by Ed Lachman and Larry Clark, 96 minutes
info@fortissimo.nl

The stakes were very high for this one. A nasty script by Harmony Korine and the combined directing talents of Ed Lachman and Larry Clark made this a potentially promising ride. Technical problems at the FCMM had the curtains close as the film began, at which point Mr. Clark's twangy American accent piped in from his seat with "What's up with that?" The projection got better but the film seemed to deteriorate despite many fine elements. Playing out like the wails of an angry child, Ken Park takes Larry Clark's fondness for beautifully framed

naked teenage bodies and throws psychotic parents into the mix. Lots of nice wanking but no big climax. (Z. Asher)

Open Hearts

drama, by Susanne Bier, 113 minutes
info@filmtonic.com

One of the best recent entries into the tired DOGME idiom, *Open Hearts* is a no nonsense acting tour de force. Susanne Bier's focused direction combines with great performances to make for a chillingly good tale of marital infidelity in the face of disaster. A car crash leads to an inadvertent romance between the driver's husband and the victim's girlfriend. With an underlying element of scathing dark humour, *Open Hearts* is yet another fine example of those great Danes with their digital video cameras and vows of chastity. (Z. Asher)

Marlene Dietrich — Her Own Song

documentary, by David Riva, 100 minutes
info@celluloid-dreams.com

A very pleasant and well-paced documentary about German cultural icon Marlene Dietrich. Plenty of fascinating archival footage as Ms. Dietrich enjoys success in America, repudiating the felonious actions of Germany's Third Reich. This is a very slick and satisfying piece of work. Strangely, the narration is delivered by aging scream queen Jamie Lee Curtis. (Z. Asher)

Reeperbahn

experimental doc, dir Samuel Topiary, Video 14 mins, topiary@difficultmusic.com VUFF review

This compelling documentary was so flawlessly intimate as to completely confuse about who the author was, and how they related to the two young women in Hamburg whose lives we get to pierce. This makes me automatically suspicious of the invisible editor/narrator and so on. But the doc takes us so close that we feel enrolled in the mundane conversations on harsh topics, like local fascists the German chick tensely describes and how the visiting Jewish-American chick feels about all that. Their little spats and jokes are engaging for their realness. (Flick Harrison)

Elsewhere

documentary, by Nikolaus Geyrhalter, 240 minutes
office@geyrhalterfilm.com

I have developed a particular soft spot for films from Austria. Over the last decade there has been a steady flow of amazing work from directors like Michael Haneke and Ulrich Seidl. This Austrian documentary is an exhaustive look at the first twelve months of the new millennium as witnessed from remote outposts in Papua New Guinea, Finland, China, Australia, Greenland, India, Siberia, Micronesia, India and northern British Columbia. Fascinating in an anthropological way, *Elsewhere* can also be a bit grueling for those whose patience runs thin at the thought of four hours of slow-burning cinema verité. One of the highlights is an Indonesian man in Irian Jaya who discusses the cannibalistic consumption of

"sorcerers" in his grandfather's days. As far as epic documentaries go, this one was well worth enduring its excess length. (Z. Asher)

Pleasant Days

drama, by Kornel Mundruczo, 100 minutes
filmunio@elender.hu

This amazing Hungarian feature was probably the most affecting in the festival. A stark and unsettling study of disaffected youth, it unspools like an after-school Greek tragedy (Hungarian-style). 26-year-old director Kornel Mundruczo has concocted a dazzling sophomore effort that is well shot and performed by his brilliant young cast. With minimal dialogue and attention to odd details, the film has a unique tone that is abrasive in its subtlety. Just when you think you've got a sense of the main character's moral boundaries, the story takes a startling turn which leads to a wonderfully (o)bleak denouement. Riveting cinema, but not for the whole family. (Z. Asher)

La Deviniere

documentary, by Benoit Dervaux, 90 minutes
filmsfleuve@swing.be

An enthralling Belgian documentary about a group of severely mentally retarded adults who reside together at La Deviniere, a rural psychotherapy institute where they are encouraged to live with their madness. The nineteen patients were brought there as reputedly incurable children in 1976. The film begins with archival footage of these sick kids and then takes a slow and unflinching look at their progress, over twenty years later. The "institute" allows the residents to do as they please. They are not given any medication and seem to have minimal supervision. In one astonishing sequence, one of the men attaches an air raid siren to a long pole and then stands grinning as its piercing sound blasts away. The camera provides shots of some of the other residents as they have to endure this "performance." One of the females reacts with shrieking and howls of terror, while others remain indifferent. *La Deviniere* is a compelling and compassionate look at a radical and seemingly successful social experiment. (Z. Asher)

Corpus Callosum

experimental, by Michael Snow, 93 minutes
info@fondation-langlois.org

I guess when a man reaches a certain age his penis stops functioning and he has to find different ways to masturbate. This is a vague self-congratulatory reflection of Michael Snow's past work enhanced with some awkward and uninspired digital effects. Brazenly sterile and grueling to watch. Your tax dollars, hard at work. (Z. Asher)

Erotography for the Fastidious Connoisseur

experimental, by Etienne Desrosiers, 4 minutes
e.desrosiers@sympatico.ca

This was a four minutes collage of old porn films set to the moog-driven sounds of Montreal band The Unireverse. Perplexing and not very erotic. Part of a program called "Incarnated Body." (Z. Asher)

Acts of Creation: IroniC Crafting and the Not-Martha Revolution

by Sarah Jane Johnson

Everyone's an artist these days, at least when it comes to home décor. Or so every decorating mag would have you believe. From Canadian Living to Martha Stewart, articles abound urging readers to be creative with household artefacts and glue and to express their own personal style in their bathrooms and back sheds.

And then there's the new wave of magazines and zines like Ready-Made (the exemplar) and Not Martha and Crafty Chica and The Church of Craft, which take DIY creativity out of the atelier and onto the barricades. If you follow their instructions for producing recycled funky folk art, you're doing more than just making something cool. You're striking a blow against the great Capitalist Manufacturing Monolith. Taking back the power of creation is a political act.

Let's talk about Ready-Made ("instructions for everyday life"), which after only 4 issues, has become the lifestyle bible of culture jammers. Published, inevitably, in Berkeley, CA, it features coolly attractive 20-30 somethings brandishing glue guns and modelling handmade or customized hipster fashions. With a tone hovering somewhere between irony and earnestness, it offers cheap, chic advice on "how to" do almost anything you can think of: how to remove your name from catalogue mailing lists, how to get on a game show, how to build your own mini-golf course ("Every spring, my wife and I get the urge to build large structures out of foam core, metal tubing, tape and Astro-Turf"), how to stencil 60s-style pop art graphics on your walls, how to seem like you read several newspapers without actually buying (or reading) any, how to re-use cereal boxes as gift wrap: "Not only will your gifts be sugar coated, but eliminating store-bought paper that gets tossed away like a prom dress after one use will make

MARTHA



you a better person. You do want to be a better person, don't you?"

Despite all the archness, Ready-Made undoubtedly sees itself as a mag with a mission. It positions itself as the enemy of brainwashed, homogeneous, consumer culture, and the champion of the ironic, the idiosyncratic and the personal. One article celebrates Toronto's own recycling fashion house, Pre-Loved: "The hand sewn nature of their work puts a cap on productivity, making mass production impossible. That's the point." Ready-Made's values could well be those of the Green Party (recycling, community, sustainable development) coupled with a passion for hardware (its paeans to bandsaws and other power tools must be read to be believed). It's the décor mag Naomi Klein would read.

Judging from the letters, its audience has been waiting for this magazine for years. A reader writes of his joy in discovering that "there are other creative, money-saving individuals out there on this mass produced, product wasting planet." "Thanks for saving me from Martha Stewart" another writes.

Yet Ready-Made's debt to the Malevolent Martha is nowhere more marked than in editor Shoshana Berger's letter to her readers. A little ruefully, Berger cites endless descriptions of Ready-Made as "the magazine for hipsters with Martha Stewart under the mattress" and "like Living for the deprogrammed set." At the same time, she doesn't even bother to deny the charges. "Martha, you're the top" she concludes, and somehow, you know she really means it.

And this is what is so interesting about Ready-Made and its ilk. They truly have been inspired by Martha, in the best sense of the word. Somehow her ideas, as improbable and precious as they often are, have unleashed in Gen-Xers a sense of possibility and even action, that their endemic jadedness might otherwise have stifled.

This inspiration is an odd thing. On the face of it, Martha Stewart is not an obvious fomentor of revolution. Authoritative, tradition-loving and above all, irony-free, she stands for a kind of idealized status quo. She both assumes and set standards for a single correct way of doing things. Her emphasis is on the classic, the timeless, the supposedly universal: "inexpensive gifts that will please almost anyone," "tips for perfect fudge,"

and "how to trim a Christmas tree's branches so that it is perfectly symmetrical."

At the same time, she has an almost 18th century preoccupation with the idea of the transformative power of individual taste "Attaching a pretty tag to a present is like adding a favourite accessory to an outfit. They both express personal flair. So instead of labelling gifts with generic store bought tags, make your own."

What's more, although aesthetically Martha's and Ready-Made's projects may differ, the emphasis on doing it yourself, finding new uses for old things is identical. Some Martha how-tos include: using yarn as ribbon for Christmas presents, making candle holders out of mismatched tea cups, warming up faded sofa cushions with covers made from old sweaters.

And before Ready-Made came along, I knew a lot of women who secretly read Martha and acted on her tips, even if their tastes ran more to tattoos and t-shirts than cashmere and chintz. So are Ready-Made and its ilk just offering a hip alternative to Martha's WASP-y aesthetic, or is there something bigger going on?

I think the real relationship with Martha Stewart and Ready-Made is that, for all Martha's apparent bossy preppiness, she is really a kind of advocate for personal accomplishment in both the personal and public arenas. It's not just that she shows women how they, themselves, can make their homes prettier and more efficient, or even that she legitimizes so-called "feminine" pursuits as a worthy endeavour. It is that she makes women feel like they can do all kinds of stuff and improve their lives as a result.

Of course every skeptic will point out the essentially pornographic nature of Martha Stewart's notions: projects so pointlessly ornate and time-consuming that no sane person would ever undertake them. They are projects that fetishize a fictional free time that no actual woman ever has, and with a blithe assurance designed to make even the most capable woman feel inadequate. All this is true, and yet somehow the people who love Martha see beyond this. How else to explain the host of zines on the Web which are clearly Martha's daughters?

Rebellious daughters, admittedly. Not Martha cheerfully celebrates amateurism and imperfection in all its crafty undertakings: "My first knitted thing ever!" "My second knitted thing! A com-

plete failure!" "Adventures in making lip balm," and "Tiny Pinata Gift Containers thingies." Sew Wrong ("Mama Didn't Raise a Seamstress") and Sew Geeky feature posts on basic sewing questions, personal discoveries ("my new funky chicken pincushion"), favourite supply stores (not chains), and projects (necktie skirts, scrap material makeup bags etc.). Cate's Garage is "a gallery of evil crafts" including "Vomitously Overdecorated T-shirts," "Cakes Run Amok," and "When Crafting Goes Too Far." The Girl from Auntie is a Canadian site by an Avengers-obsessed knitter. It includes links to both knitting and gaming sites, as well as "The first part of a continuing (for now) saga that has rocked the knitting world (or at least, a small part of it)." The Church of Craft "aims to create an environment where any and all acts of making have value to our humanness." Then there's Crafty Chica, DIY with a Hispanic aesthetic, and The Disgruntled Housewife, which doesn't actually have any crafts but is featured as a link on many of the other zines.

What's interesting about these zines is that not only do they refer to and support each other, but they also refer to both Ready-Made and Martha Stewart, calling attention to great articles on Hemming 101 in Martha and the hipster joys of Ready-Made. They have no boundaries, and neither do the women who build them. Some of these zinesters are corporate lawyers by day and funky seamstresses by night and have no difficulty reconciling the different hats they wear and their multiplicity of interests from crafting to shopping. They pick and choose from the world around them and create their own way of doing things.

This is post-modernism in action, and it has its pros and its cons. On the one hand, it's encouraging to think something as institutional as Martha Stewart Living can inspire people not to follow, but to forge their own paths. But that's in the private sphere. On the other hand, where does this leave something as overtly political as Ready-Made?

I suppose it's possible that some people actually do follow its instructions for turning old computers into coffee tables. But on another level, its ironic tone and deliberate silliness can result in its use as sheer entertainment. Does this undermine its mandate? Or is it simply the only way we jaded Gen-Xers can accept our political protests to be packaged?

back cover of Homesick

Erratum: page 79 of BP20, the image was reprinted from "Passenger and Tour Guides" by Derek Sullivan and Kevin Rodgers, reviewed on page 78. The art editor apologizes for the error.

Homesick

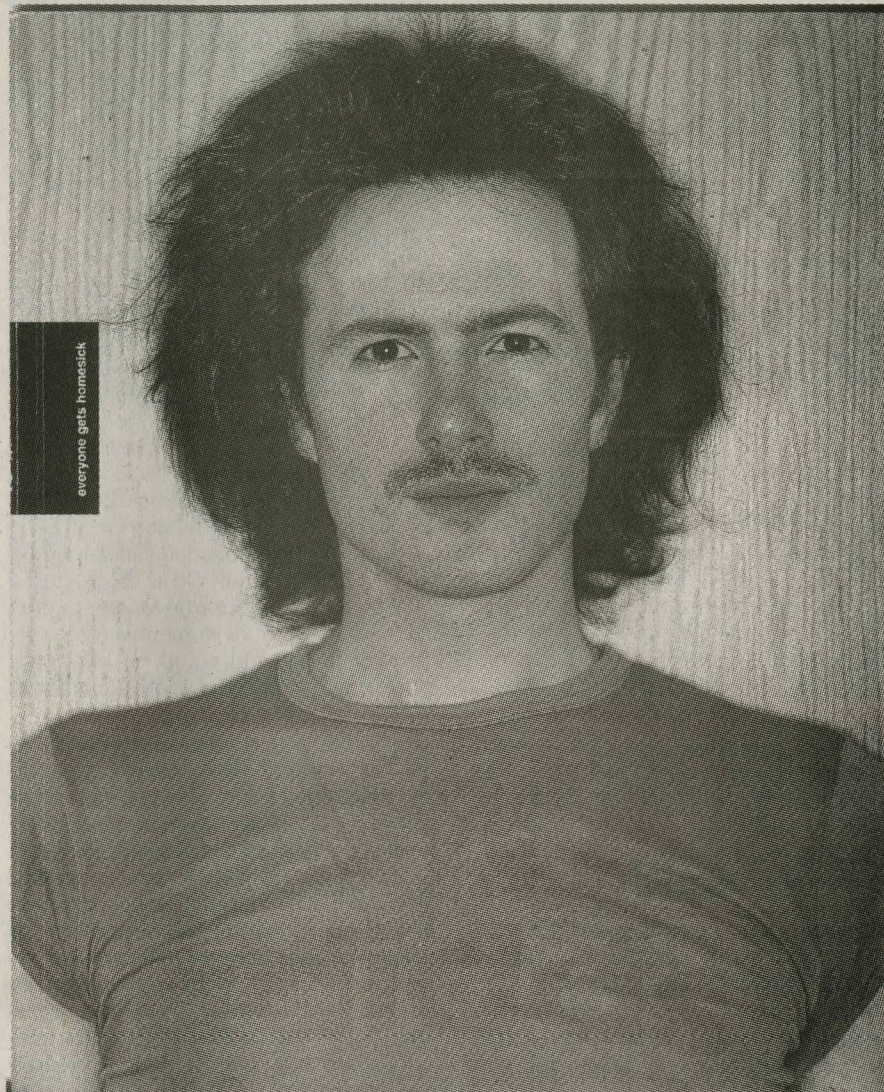
Visual arts magazine, Issue 1, limited edition of 1000, 48 pages plus a cdrom, \$20, www.homesickmagazine.com.

When did this happen? When did Canadian magazine design stop sucking? (Broken Pencil excluded, of course.) Maybe when said magazines shot to \$20 a copy, as is the case with Homesick, #1, the Vancouver issue. Besides being home to the talented visual artists featured in this book, Vancouver is also the home of the super-cheap \$1 pizza slice. So you know, those Vancouverites can afford to spend a bit more on their magazines. Eat some pizza, flip through the magazine, and listen to Marc Belke's 2-track soundtrack CD that comes packaged with it. Or chuck that CD in your computer and watch Tom Svab's quicktime video *Nothing is Faster than Us*, a visually arresting short film that packs a hyperspeed roadtrip into 4:43 timecoded minutes. Homesick's forty-eight full colour pages showcase work by Atmos, Doris Cheung, Chris Gergley, Human Five, Amy Lockhart, and Mia Thomsett, accompanied by Q and A "get to know ya" artist bio pages. As if that weren't enough, a sliver of a Jason McLean drawing appears on the spine. One eighth of a Jason McLean drawing to be exact, and when the next seven issues of Homesick have arrived at my doorstep, I shall assemble them all on my bookshelf and have the whole image. Unfortunately, by that time, my copies of homesick will be so worn from people reading and re-reading them that the spines will be all cracked and fucked-up, and McLean's drawing will look all scratchy and fingerprinty. (Jon Sasaki)

Fuse Magazine

Volume 25 number 4, \$5.50, 68 pages, 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 454 Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5V 3A8, www.fusemagazine.org.

If you haven't done so already, run to the store immediately and buy the 25th anniversary issue of Fuse Magazine. And pick up a few 8-1/2 x 11" picture frames while you're at it. The issue is packed with frameable artists' projects you'll want to yank out and hang in your space. Gems like Toronto artist Janis Demkiw's certificate pull-out. No Olde Englishe calligraphy, no signatures here, just a sheet of grey marbled diploma paper with a



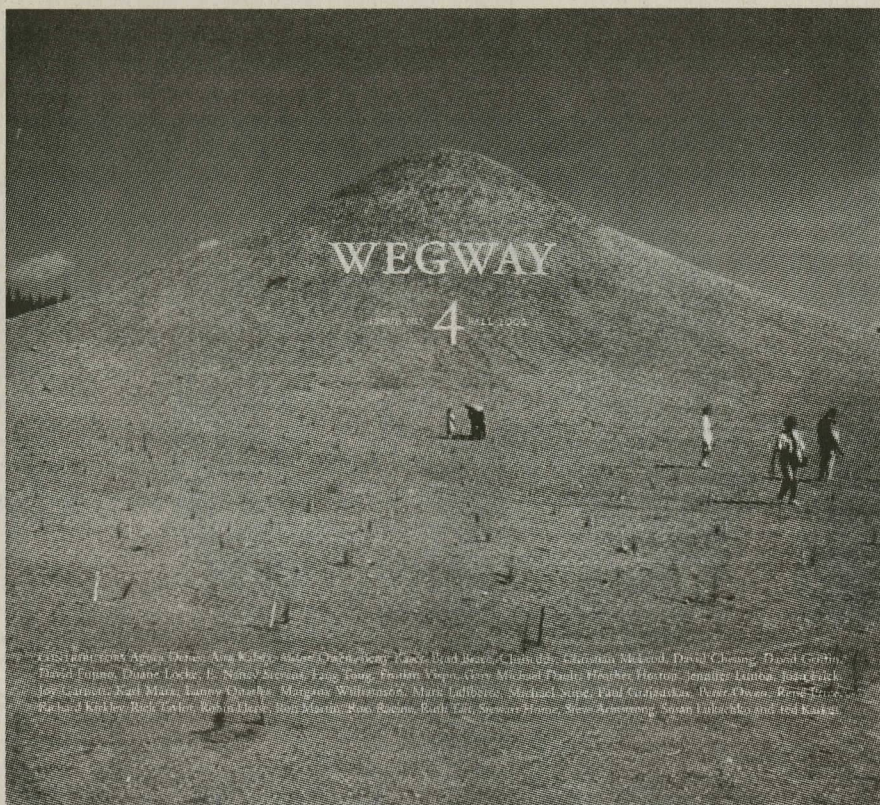
gold seal stuck randomly within the very official looking border. Some time ago, when my university diploma was being mailed to me, the cap popped off the end of the tube in transit, and the paper slid out, lost forever. To be honest, I'm much happier having Demkiw's diploma on my wall. Collaborators Roula Partheniou and Dave Dymant contributed a stamped insert that boldly announces "OLD IS THE NEW NEW." Agreed, and fitting for a magazine that is celebrating a quarter-century of longevity; with its finger as always, on the pulse of the new. Hence the issue's theme of "future," explored in sometimes sanguine, sometimes pessimistic columns that you must read at your own leisure in your new, sexily-decorated pad. (Jon Sasaki)

Jawbreakin' Julie

Comic, #3, 31 pages, Reg Stacey, \$?, 31 N Trent Street, Frankford ON, P.O. Box 511, K0K 2C0, regstacey@yahoo.ca

When we're first introduced to Julie she's waking up to

the "blazing inferno of light". The accompanying drawing shows her body silhouetted against the dawn of a new day — on her hands and knees, grasping the earth in front of her with her perky butt raised in the air and large breasts dangling beneath her. She can't recall if she's ever been beaten up this badly before. If you've never read this zine, *Jawbreakin' Julie*, is a buff, big-boobed, bombshell who may be her family and friends' last hope if they are to survive the "horrendously zoomorphic" creatures that are wreaking havoc on their world. Her uniform consists of cut off jean shorts, and a tight, cleavage and belly revealing tank top that reads, "fully armed" across the chest. "No, I'm not crazy about the uniform, and I know feminists would freak out with respect to its 'exploitiveness'" says the muscular yet voluptuous Julie. "However, [my boss], beneath his gruff exterior, is very considerate and rather protective of his employees, so I don't have to put up with any shit." How sweet. *Jawdroppin' Julie* might be a better name for this zine, as my mouth remained opened in shock the entire time I was reading it. It's an action packed story matched



with detailed pencil drawings, and if you like combat, violence, and scantily clad, big breasted women who have been "chosen" to save the world, then this zine's for you. (Dale Duncan)

A Softer World

Comic, 11 cards, j comeau and e horne, \$3, Untoward Comics, 4 Knob Hill Cres., Halifax, NS, B3N 1R5 aw096@chebucto.ns.ca

The comics in this collection are printed on rectangular cards, which you can flip through like photographs. The grainy photocopied images with captions typed overtop gave me the feeling that I was peering into the little pieces of a dream which are left over in one's memory after waking up. Giant babies, lonely mannequins, the feeling of being watched in the city by halogen eyes. Some are thought provoking, some are humorous, and others are chilling. I like that you could pass them around. Or lay them all out on your desk and sort them however you want. You could even give one to a friend. Each comic also includes a free sticker. (Dale Duncan)

Nekusis

Literary and Arts Journal, #1, 37 pages, F.C. Estrella (Editor), \$2, 65 Mason Rd, Scarborough, ON, M1M 3P9

"I'm tired of people saying, 'Wait till you get to the real world.' I'm there can't you see???" says Trolle in the pages of this new zine. Nekusis is a compilation of poetry, prose, art, and rants written by teenagers, and for teenagers who feel that their ideas, feelings, and opinions aren't always represented in the world around them. The work covers a variety of topics such as love, anarchy, parents, being young, being outcast, desire, and change.

In her self-described rant, Emily Armstrong declares, "We know you think we're 'godless heathens' (actual quote) who worship Satan, but I gotta tell ya, it's sure as fuck better than your religion which praises money or 'Gawd,' which usually means money." Despite the fact that it's been a while since I was a teenager myself, I found that I could identify with some of this writing, and anyone else who still feels misrepresented and misunderstood from time to time will too. The content in this zine ranged from angry, to humorous — Ravager provides some witty advice on how to stay healthy, which includes eating, not dying, and not becoming a character in a horror movie — and from depressing, to optimistic — Emily Borkowski writes "we are the people, the power and the change/ we are the hope for a better day." (Dale Duncan)

Inner City Pagan

Comic perzine, #5, 41 pages, Lee Kennedy, \$7 (US), 58 Durrington Tower, Wandsworth Rd., London UK, SW8 3LF, sheelanagig69@hotmail.com

Lee Kennedy's not afraid to point out those things that a lot of us stuff back into our unconscious out of pure bashfulness, like the way her cat shows off its anus to her when he climbs onto her stomach, and the various people she's performed sex acts with in her dreams. This delightful collection of comics detail the everyday thoughts and happenings in the life of the author who happens to be an overweight, almost 50-year-old woman living in England. We're privy to her love for things Italian, the history of her gradual discovery of different kinds of cheeses, and her fondness for the hot, smooth pebbles of Brighton Beach (she's even been known to lick them). One of my favourites was "on the way to the dayjob" which

from wegway

details some of the different people, thoughts, and experiences she's had while bussing it to work. There's the "sadly malformed man" who "always looks genuinely happy and interested in everything," and the woman with attitude who dresses in thigh boots and wears hair accessories that look like varnished wood shavings. The second half of the zine is filled with random doodles — the kinds of things she found herself drawing while bored at her job, or on the bus. These are also amusing, but I'd much rather see more of the comics themselves. It's too bad that this might be the last issue of Kennedy's self published zines because reading her comics made me smile. (Dale Duncan)

Wegway

Magazine, #4, fall 2002, 72 pages, \$5 (shipping included), PO Box 157, Station A, Toronto, ON, M5W 1B2, www.wegway.com

Wegway feels like a buffet. Not those gross all-you-can-eat buffets where you feel all sluggish afterward, but more like a gourmet buffet where you leave feeling zippy and energized. This fourth issue is an eclectic mix of poetry, visual art, essays, interviews, along with pages of other things that aren't so easy to categorize. That being the point... Wegway's mandate is to provide print access for "unique and important projects that don't fit into the formats of most art and literary magazines." Translation: Lots of "I wish I had thought of that..." pieces like editor/publisher Steve Armstrong's *The Communist*, an excerpt from Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*, adapted to exclude all nouns "...in order to make it formally consistent with The Theory of Dialectical Materialism..." Rick Taylor's *Dead City: View Source* is a short story about a neighbourhood in flux, partially written in HTML. Issue four also functions as an out-of-the-white-cube exhibition for the artwork selected in Wegway's First Annual Juried Show. Lucky for those that missed the gallery version last spring at Toronto's Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts, we can still enjoy the print version of a show that was as compellingly wide-ranging as its magazine parent. Digital images, oil paintings, installation photographs, etc. share page and wall-space, adding up to something more than the sum of its diverse parts. Ever full of surprises, Wegway promises a "clip art from the age of coal" cd thrown in with their 2-year, \$15 subscriptions. A lesser magazine would mail out a cheap clock radio with every subscription. Did I know I liked coal-age art? No. Do I like it now? You bet. Outstanding. (Jon Sasaki)

The Sadness of Morris Johns

Comic, Deluxe Sexy #2, 12 pages, Matt Collins, 75 cents, 106 Huron Street, Guelph, ON, N1E 5L6, HipHopJorge@Zombieworld.com
Morris Johns is really sad. Even rock music makes him

by James Silk from The Gospel

cry. I almost got sad reading about him, but the drawings are really cute, especially the mischievous aliens who seem to take pleasure in Morris Johns' sadness. He reminds me of this guy I used to know in university who'd do things like stand speechless in the middle of the living room, staring at the blank screen of the television set with a vacant look on his face when his housemates were listening to music or reading. He'd also eat peanut butter straight out of the jar with a spoon and sulk because he spent all his OSAP money on a new snowboard, which he almost never used. He liked to blame people for things. Probably thought aliens were after him too, just like Morris Johns. Poor guy. This humorous (yet sad) little zine is worth a look-see if you ever come across it. (Dale Duncan)

The Gospel

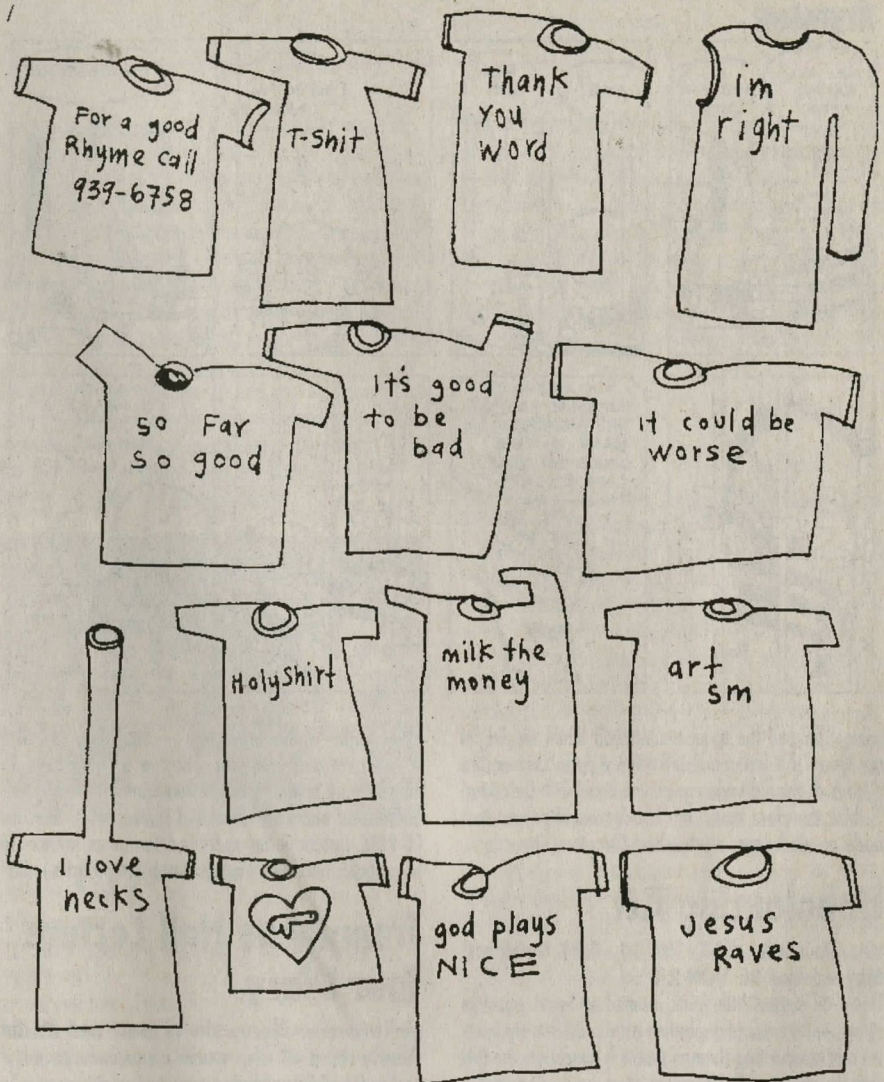
Arts & lit zine, vol. 1 #1, \$5, 54 pages plus a CD insert. Mark Ainslie and Sacha Jackson editors, 2077 Tupper St. Suite 11, Montreal Quebec, H3H 1N9, thegospelzine@hotmail.com.

I love musical inserts in magazines. One of my most prized possessions is a floppy record of whale noises that I tore from a National Geographic when I was a kid. I dig listening to them go: "ooooooooo.....eeeeeeeeiiiiiii-ii-i." I think every zine should include a soundtrack, otherwise readers might listen to crappy, incompatible music, and it'll unconsciously seep into the experience. ("this zine possesses a Shakira-esque quality.") Editors Mark Ainslie and Sacha Jackson sure knew what they were doing when they tucked a CD by the one-man Hamiltonian band Waxmannequin into the back cover of The Gospel. Waxmannequin: edgy, intricate, layered, ever-shifting, slightly eerie, entirely piquant. The Gospel: ditto. (Jon Sasaki)

Front & Centre

Magazine, #4, 44 pgs, Jason Copple and Matthew Firth (editors), \$5 per, 1 year subscription \$11, 2 year subscription \$21. 573 Gainsborough Ave., Ottawa, ON, K2A2Y6.

This magazine contains eight new works of short fiction, an interview with writer Alexandra Leggat, and book reviews. The reviews, the interview, and the editorial reveal a group of thoughtful literature enthusiasts who earnestly care about what they're doing. The interview for example is more of a dialogue between the two authors about their craft, not unlike what you might overhear at a grad student café. The stories, which make up the bulk of the publication, also seem influenced by what I imagine to be a grad school sensibility. They engage with relevant "issues" and themes from a youthful perspective, while also playing with style and structure. There are the odd instances of overly enthusiastic "literary" intrusions (weather, repeated phrases, awkward similes) that seem show-offy and distracting, but these can be forgiven because the writing is honest. The



stories mostly feature twenty- or thirty-something protagonists dealing with some problem or bad situation, alone in an ugly world and unable to connect. "This is My Life" follows the thoughts of a bored office worker as she waits for the bus. The protagonist of "Minimum Wage," the best story here, is a convenience store clerk whose mundane job poisons him. It reminded me of all the good parts of Clerks. Another particularly good one, "Kissing Lindsay," is about the joy and pain of the often transient and fluid nature of non-traditional romance. It is told with urgency, and like all of the stories in Front & Centre, it doesn't settle for easy answers. (Brian Nugent)

Suspension of Disbelief

Comic, #1, 33 pgs, Paul Quinn, \$5 + \$1.25 shipping, Lightningstrike Publishing, 358 Danforth Ave. Box 65174, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N0, lightning31@hotmail.com

Hey, what do we have here? It's an indie comic, awesome! What a charming low-budget design. Independent art is so important, you know, especially in under-appreciated mediums like "comix." This sure is a witty comic I'm holding here, bursting as it is with insightful commentary on relationships in these turbulent times. But

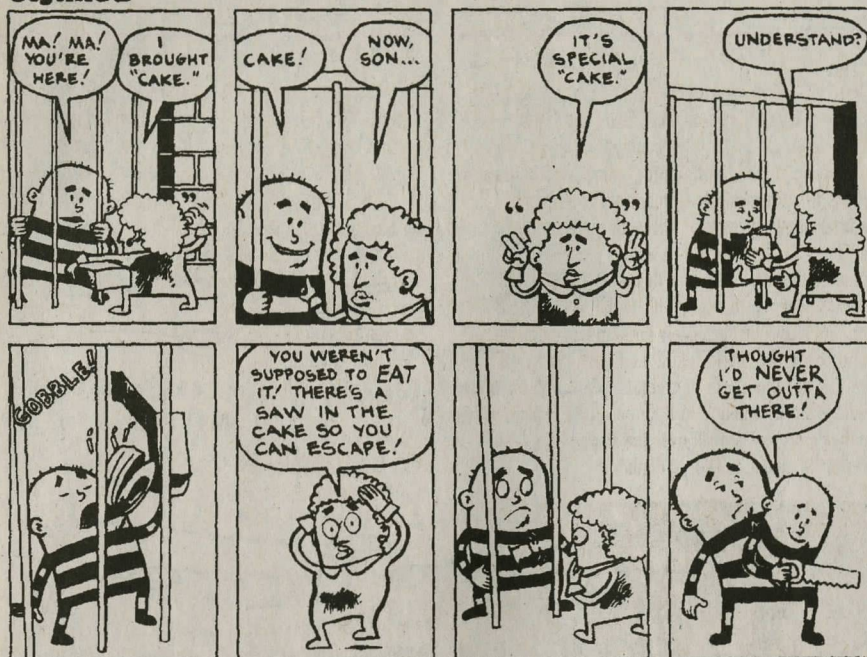
that's not all. See, the comic's protagonist is himself a comic artist, so there's all this mind-blowing self-referentiality. And the drawings are—woah man, check out the hooters on that chick the protagonist is trying to bone! How do they even go like that? And cool, now she's getting undressed for no apparent narrative or thematic reason... Now she's wearing this impossible tank top. Shit, this comic art stuff is hot! And what's this now—she's drunk and taking off her top and passing out into his lap?! Damn. It's like an Archie comic but way better dude, because it's indie. (Brian Nugent)

Afield

Florentine Perro, \$10, Site 19, C-21 Quadrant, Mayne Island BC, VON 2J0. f_perro@hotmail.com

Produced with cardstock and colour copying, the strength of this zine is in its craftsmanship. It tells an abstract story, the plot of which "could be summarized as the search (eventually successful) for someone who is having trouble making a fluid appear." This piece of text is juxtaposed with a statement regarding the orgasms of molluscs; that, and a recurring theme of ducks, makes one think that this is an exploration of the emotional life of

Stymled



beings, beyond the usual mammalian limits we put on our ideas. If it walks and talks like a duck, chances are it's a duck the old saying goes. Combined with Descartes' "I think therefore I am," this booklet would suggest that ducks are ducks because they are. (Timothy Comeau)

Unbalancing Act

zine, Jo Cook, \$10, Site 19, C-21 Quadrant, Mayne Island BC, V0N 2J0

This is an elegant little book, printed on heavy paper in colour, with a nice juxtaposition of printed text (computer) and handwriting (human touch). I appreciate the fact that the narrative is oblique as much as I appreciate its physicality. The title could refer to a psychological condition, the unbalancing that occurs through trauma. The narrative and loose drawing only hint at this however, and wide latitude is given to the viewer to imagine their own interpretations. (Timothy Comeau)

Caffeine Screens

Screensavers CD-ROM for either PC or Mac, \$5, Jon Sasaki and Instant Coffee, www.instantcoffee.org

Yet another installment of how fucking much Broken Pencil loves Jon Sasaki. Not only does the dude edit the art section at Broken Pencil with no adequate recompense or hope of ever receiving recompense, he makes cute little tags with oblique threats that can attach to your shoelaces AND he made this collection of screensavers with the Instant Coffee group. See, there are but two paths to the world of digital arts. The first is the bad way. An example. At a film festival last year I saw a piece that was more or less a very boring screensaver file. Of course in the film statement it was actually a "delineation of possible and seductive strategies for the post-flesh world." In other words, this was art that over-arched past the possibilities of the medium (and the talent of the artist). Jon Sasaki and the IC crew take the

other path — the smart one — and dare to call a screensaver a screensaver. They've enlisted over 35 international artists to create some mind-bending, fun, nonsensical and very functional screensavers. Buy this CD-ROM, Instant Coffee rocks and Jon never invoices so he probably needs the money. (Brian Joseph Davis)

Trampoline Hall Lecture Tour Diary

performance diary, Sheila Heti and Misha Glouberman et al., www.mcsweeneys.net/books/thalldiary.html

Once upon a time Sheila Heti, a young bright shining star, emerged on the Toronto literary scene, and a kind of frenzy was released into our polite indifferent black-bloused city. It was like an epidemic, a plague. People I imagined too frigid to ever care about anyone or anything absolutely loved this girl. The love shone from their faces and spewed from their pens. Everywhere I went there were media bits on her book *The Middle Stories*, and posters hung haphazardly on every plywood "Do Not Poster" surface in the city. Yes, truly, if one can reach one's peak at the tender age of 23, it seemed she had reached it. Then a fascinating thing happened, as it will, after there is an outbreak. Everything got very quiet. And just when I thought there would be nothing more for a long while... Trampoline Hall emerged. And strangely, the genius of this event has seen very little fanfare. A very good write-up in a Toronto weekly, but considering the lecture series' perpetually packed-house status, nothing much. The lecture series is Heti's brainchild, with the help of Misha Glouberman who MCs the event with a prattling, nervous charm. Essentially, lecturers speak on topics of their choice, the only stipulation being that it should be a subject in which they are not experts. If that sounds wacky, well... it is. Here's an example, stolen directly from the Trampoline Hall diary: "a tall, young, floppy-haired blonde named Erik... has

from Attempted Not Known

decided to expose his roommates' personal issues on stage while his roommates sit onstage and listen, not having expected this at all." The diary outlines the adventures of Heti, Glouberman, and their crew as they hit the road in conjunction with the American release of Heti's aforementioned book on the McSweeney's imprint. Should you think it's all a pointless promotional circus, I can assure you that it's not. Though Heti took her stories to America, she brought back the American lectures for us here, including one reenactment which has already been staged at the show's regular Toronto digs (a very fine lecture on how to get from "What did you eat for breakfast?" to "How many virgins?" in a minute and thirty seconds). My only criticism of the online diary is that the tour starts on day 14 and runs backwards. So you end up with Heti's husband Carl Wilson musing on fears of not getting past customs and into the US after you've already toured the entire US with the Trampoline Hall crew. What a way to spoil the ending! (Emily Schultz)

Attempted Not Known

Comic, 14 pages, #7, \$1 (USD) Peter S. Conrad, PO Box 64522, Sunnyvale, CA, 94088. www.peterconrad.com.

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to appreciate this one. In fact, being a rocket scientist might actually hinder your ability to enjoy some of the more low-brow humour here. Personally, I never liked aeronautics too much, but I am always game for a good bum or fart joke. Some of these strips remind me of the Aragones margin cartoons from *Mad Magazine*, as they possess the same clarity of concept and execution. Others, like the "serious" Osama Bin Laden piece come off heavy-handed and discordant with the rest of the book. (Jon Sasaki)

Hive

Magazine, Pol Williams and Richelle Forsey, publishers. Limited edition issue 00, winter 02/03. 24 pages, \$6.50, Unit 2, 148 Dovercourt Road, Toronto, ON, M6J 3C4. www.hivemagazine.com

Subtitled "the Construction Issue," this much-anticipated first glimpse at Hive Magazine looks real promising. The ambitious new inter-arts quarterly strives to "open up the intricacies between sub-culture and mainstream art practices," via snappy articles paired with well-chosen visuals. A suite of self-portraits by invited artists reveal some of the codes by which we construct identity, and Andrew Jones' feature on the Canadian DIY experimental music scene gets the Mr. Miyagi award for covering a lot of material in an effectively condensed lesson. Looking forward to seeing where this one goes. (Jon Sasaki)



Operation Makeout

Hang Loose

CD, Mint Records, PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3Y6

mint@mintrecs.com

Recently, whilst catching a show at the Opera House, my best friend commented on how out of place she felt without the apparently regulation-issue "sensitive hair and glasses" affected by most in attendance. I, too, was one of the offenders — which leads me to believe I may have liked this album simply because one of the band members sports a rather fetching pair of frames. No matter... I am neither ashamed of my gawky, clichéd looks, nor of my enjoyment of the quirky, pulsing pop-punk tunes which abound on Operation Makeout's full-length debut, Hang Loose. Ferocious, eighties-infused energy bristles throughout the album's ten tracks, particularly on standouts like the creepily voyeuristic Life On Your Windowsill, the warping and dislocated On the Steps, and the tension-filled wind-up that is Housewrecked. Contact lenses be damned! (Karyn Bonham)

bugskull & the big white cloud

CD, Scratch Recordings, 726 Richards St., Vancouver, BC, V6B 3A4

www.scratchrecords.com

bugskull & the big white cloud are the kind of basement electronic hermits that should be more famous. While they have a tendency to stay on one riff for too long (3 minutes and 55 seconds), the songs manage to keep your interest. Sounding sometimes like Stereolab and other times like Sonic Youth and some other times like all sorts of other bands, bugskull & the big white cloud make beautiful basement/bedroom collage music. Of the six tracks, I like three and for guys doing music in their basements that's not a bad ratio. I'm sick of people telling people to get high and listen to this kind of stuff so stay sober hippies and try listening to this shit without blood shot eyes. It's still good. Get high after. (Alex Snukal)

Jim Christy

A Night In Grombalia

CD, Scratch Records, 762 Richards St., Vancouver, BC, V6B 3A4

www.scratchrecords.com

There are some records which people tend to gravitate

toward as guilty pleasures: Frank Sinatra Sings Mrs. Robinson, Elvis In Hawaii, Neil Diamond's Hot August Nights. As much as the listener may take ironic pleasure in listening to the sentimental, somewhat bombastic stylings of such music, it is important to remember that the artists themselves took this work quite seriously, and intended it to be enjoyed as a serious musical endeavour. I imagine that is exactly how this project began; the poet earnestly wanting to express his tough, cynical Beat persona, the musicians sensitively backing him with film noir soundscapes and world beats. And yet, I just could not take this as seriously as its creators wanted me to. When someone starts thanking Jack Kerouac (Old Flannel Shirt) for their personal growth over the strains of a lullaby, I just start to giggle... (Karyn Bonham)



The Gay

3 Song EP

CD, Mint Records, PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, V6B 3V6

www.mintrecs.com

Whatever the reason, be it curmudgeonly skepticism on my part or wet around the ears wad-blowing on the part of tyro musicians, but the greatest benefit and the greatest drawback of the many Can-indie CDs that pass over the BP music desk is that they make great fodder for mix-tapes. There are a stack of tasty singles (and doubles) by a slew of slightly more than unknown Canucks that swirl around my head these days. The problem is what to do with the even larger slew of indistinct tracks (to refer to them as songs would mean I remember what they sound like; truth be told, they are but numbers to me, numbers for my CD player to skip). The solution is to follow in the footsteps of Vancouver's the Gay (though not in the direction of band names) and release concise, condensed tuneful three-packs with nary a dud track in the bunch. It's over before you know it and you're left wanting more. That's a lesson these supergrouping smart cookies must have learned in any one of their day-job bands (Bif Naked, Tennessee Twin, Maow, Vancouver Nights, Superconductor, among others). It used to be called a single (as in seven inches), now it's just a good deal. (Terence Dick)

jonathan inc.

Halfway To A Better Place

CD, Anniedale Records, www.anniedale.com

This five song EP finds the introspective Vancouver-based quartet sorting through the pained humanity of it all.

This mood is oddly intensified by front-man Jonathan Anderson's evocation of Bruce Cockburn's unique vocal stylings on opener, Wandering. It is apparent then that this album is taking the listener on a journey into a wilderness suffused with the harsh beauty of an Ernest Buckler novel. Indeed, the songs on this album are sad, evocative, and deeply charged with emotion, particularly You Do As You Do and the incredibly naked final track, The Lakes of Canada. One to save for those days when you just can't get out of bed. (Karyn Bonham)

Nasty On

CitySick

CD, Stutter Records, nasty_on@hotmail.com, stutterrecords@hotmail.com

It takes a lot of balls and tempts a lot of hubris to call your first EP Lester Bangs. The late Dean of Ur-Rock Critics and prophet of all that is asocial and inchoate about r'n'r, Bangs is a mighty reference to live up to. Having not heard that record, I have only CitySick by which to judge Nasty On's stepping up to the bar (so to speak). Luckily for all involved (and saving Lester another rollover in the dirt), the sounds stand up and the sonics are not reduced and the pigs are fucked, by which I mean, this ably continues the grand old tradition of pig-fuck rock (pre-grunge, post-hardcore, very 80s, somewhat forgotten but still holding a warm place in my heart at least). I've spent the last week listening to this, trying to figure out where I've heard it before. Lost bands like the Laughing Hyenas, Skin Yard, Green River, Scratch Acid and all the other children of the Stooges, bands who groove as the pummel and rock from the groin in a non-embarrassing way, all come to mind. The Nasty On were probably in diapers when those bands ruled the stage but they drink from the same pool and this old critic approves and I believe Lester would too. (Terence Dick)

DOA

Win The Battle

CD, Sudden Death Records, Moscrop, PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC, V5G 3H0,

www.suddendeath.com

It's like this, eh... I'm sittin' at the hotel, just minding my own business, when this guy comes up to me, eh... I dunno... he looked kinda crazy, right?... like some kinda' guy on a tear after being up in the bush fer awhile.... he sat down at the bar and ordered a 50.... seemed like an okay guy after that, eh?... anyways, we get to talkin' and it turns out his name is Joe and he's in this here band called DOA, right? Well, I almost lost it right then and there, cause I love those guys, eh? So, I tell him how much I like his new record, 'cause it doesn't sound all wishy-washy like a lot of stuff out there, know what I mean? I mean, DOA's always pissed about somethin', right, and this time it's the World Trade Organization — they just give the WTO the gears, know what I mean? And then they've got that cool chick on there, that Bif Naked (on All Across the U.S.A.)... my kids really like her, eh? So that was real good.... and he writes a lotta funny songs about stealing beer (The Beer Liberation Army), and being Canadian (I Am

Canadian)...so I bought the guy a beer, right....and then my buddy, Kevin, tells me it's really Kim Mitchell pullin' my leg....and I just about flipped....that Patio Lanterns song is genius, eh? (Karyn Bonham)

The Wolfnote.

Dancing to a Rhythm.

CD, 5407-109A Ave., Edmonton, AB, T6A 1S6
www.thewolfnote.com

I bet when they play in Toronto the crowd just stands there, feet planted, arms crossed and a slight head nod. BUT, in Edmonton, the crowd slams together in such an orgzmatroned frenzy that no one is safe and some guy just stepped on your foot. Not so long ago the members of Wolfnote must have met some sort of rock'n'roll Canadian legend like the Guess Who's Bill Wallace in a bar, asked him for advice, then while he rambled on and on, they decided "Fuck this, we know what we're doing," then stole his beer and walked away. They were right, but stealing is wrong. (Kieran Dick)

The Perms

Clark Drive

CD, Hugtight Records, 521 Doreen St., Winnipeg, MB, R3G 3H5
www.theperms.com

Instantly you'll want to compare the vocals to Elvis Costello, but then you'll remember that he was a really, really good singer and songwriter. So then maybe you'll compare them to some of their many obvious influences like Sloan, Ben Folds Five, the Beach Boys, or Weezer, but that's not right either. The Perms are aiming high and coming so close on so many fronts that I'd really like to compare them to these bands but I just can't. Their sound is tight, they have power in their pop, they have catchy hooks, they're definitely on their way up, and one day those comparisons will be merited. Maybe if I hadn't heard the New Pornographers, the Perms would've done it for me, but there's just something missing. It's worth the listen just to figure out what that missing part might be. Perhaps you'll think of Joe Jackson, but that's not right either. So if you really, really need me to compare them to another band just so you can read this and know what the Perms sound like, I'll say..... General Public. (Kieran Dick)

Closet Monster

Killed the Radio Star

CD, Underground Operations, P.O. Box 13, Ajax, ON, L1S 3C2

www.undergroundoperations.com, www.closet-monster.com

The Noam Chomsky sample on track 1 sets the tone for the whole album: righteous issue-driven punk. Closet Monster's style is reminiscent of melodic So-Cal punk, before the likes of Sum 41 and Blink 182 watered down that sound. The performances are high quality and the band adds some original touches here and there, like the trip-hop coda to The Great Mall Explosion and the tempo changes and harmonized guitar lines on Playground. However, the band can't get out of the contradiction that plagues most political punk groups: the lyrics proclaim revolution, but the music is conservative, almost classicist in its repetition of canonized musical structures. This isn't

to say that Closet Monster isn't capable of creating original and memorable songs. Melody's Song is a memorial to a departed friend that doesn't degenerate into emo sappiness. On the rest of the album, however, Closet Monster bludgeons the listener with anthem after anthem. Aren't there other ways of rallying the troops? (Eric Weissengruber)

Protest the Hero

...search for the truth

7 inch, Underground Operations, PO Box 13, Ajax, ON, L1S 3C2

www.undergroundoperations.com

I was planning on ignoring this but then my conscience got the better of me and since I tell everyone that we review every Canadian release that comes my way, here goes... I knew I wouldn't like this on sight, expecting boring generic hardcore. The instrumental intro hooked me with the appealing rigor of metal lock-rhythms, the fact that everyone in the band is 16 or 17 is intriguing, but the vocals reduce the two tunes to homogenous one-two, one-two speed metal galloping. And then I get tired being yelled at by teenagers. Teenagers suck. (Terence Dick)

Meligrove Band

Let It Grow

CD, Endearing Records, PO Box 69009 RPO Tuxedo Park, Winnipeg, MB, R3P 2G9

Alternating between blistering bursts of rockabilly and retro-pop exuberance, this chirpy harmony-infused trio entertain but don't necessarily get under the skin. Theirs is a loveable if at times forgettable brand of archival feeling music. Lyrics like "Here now look at what you've done, were you only thinking of number one? You never stopped to consider numbers two and three, you never stopped to think about your mother and me" complete with bursts of trumpet and a whole lot of bah-bah-bah-bah-ba in the background provide immensely enjoyable easy listening. Nonetheless, the harmonizing, falsettos and nods to the Beatles and the Beach Boys eventually start to grate. Refreshingly lacking in irony, but I wonder if it's possible to make retro-pop music about the world we live in without some degree of sarcasm. (Hal Niedzviecki)

Friendly Rich and the Canadian All-Stars

Live at Innis Town Hall

CD, The Pumpkin Pie Corporation, 16 Shirebrook Court, Brampton, ON, L6X 1Z2

www.friendlyrich.com, friendlyrich@hotmail.com

Friendly Rich is a Canadian composer who has contributed to the Tom Green show on MTV and has for years been turning out peculiar albums for his own label, the Pumpkin Pie Corporation. He has also been featured on CBC Radio's documentary program Out Front. It's nice to see a young fellow working so hard. It's a shame that all of Friendly's hard work has failed to produce any music worth listening too. The music on Live and the Innis Town Hall borrows liberally from Stockhausen, Zappa, and John Zorn. The instrumentation consists of banjo,

guitar, violin, bass, and harp, supplemented by home-made percussion instruments. With Friendly Rich's odd Beefheartian barking in front of it, the band sounds like Harry Parich and his home-made instruments playing a square dance where Tom Waits is calling the tunes. At times, the band indulges itself in free improvisations that chug along aimlessly. They manage to sound like an uninspired Can. I guess that when Friendly sings about wanting to watch his mother douche, sucking a priest's cock, or fucking someone up the bum, I am supposed to be shocked. I won't give Friendly Rich and the All Stars a pat on the head for being "daring." Now that one can download bestiality films from the Internet and pay for a bondage session with VISA, pathetic no-talents can't rely on the old "shock the bourgeois" strategy to get them the attention they crave. Our ears and minds have become jaded, so anyone who wishes to shake things up artistically will have to actually be interesting and not just play at being "shocking." (Eric Weissengruber)

Barracuda 72

Tetragammoth.

CD, Plague Language

www.plaguelanguage.com

Straight outta Guelph-town, crazy mudd-puddah named Barracuda72. Remember rap lyrics a while back? They were slow and boring and one line rhymed with the next and they were timed to the kick and the snare? You know, one line at a time talking about how badass the MC was? This guy's raised the speed and skill level of flowing-out declarations whilst keeping up with the high-hat. Some of the more enjoyable tracks feature an attempt at growling dancehall vocals while others keep pace with drum and bass loops going at about 160 bpm. Barracuda72's experimentation with non-standard instrumentation is their strong point. In most cases they've thrown in a symphonic touch with a woodwind or string section sample. It all gels together pretty well and the production level is good. All in all, a solid effort that deserves a listen. My main complaint is a general one: When will hip-hop artists stop using movie dialogue samples between tracks? That aside, jammin' on da one! (Kieran Dick)

earrl

wicked still

CD, Planet Earl Productions, 388 Carlaw Ave., Unit 111, Toronto, ON, M4K 3R9

www.earrl.com

This album is a bit disarming for several reasons. Though earrl is mining for the same audience that enjoys the odd Nickleback or Matchbox 20 song during the "drive at five," the band's lead vocalist deviates sharply from the Eddie Vedder template which has held fast in alternative rock over the last decade. Instead, one hears something akin to an unholy union between Michael Hutchence and Roch Voisine. This allows earrl to be flexible in its choice of influences. Hence, some of the music presented here is a bit more funk and roots-driven than expected (In The Sun), though the album still remains power ballad-friendly throughout. Overall, a solid, radio-oriented record that breathes some new life into a very tired genre: how many times have you heard the phrase "principles of algorithms" thrown into a regretful love dirge? Neal Peart smiles somewhere. (Karyn Bonham)

The Weekend

Teaser EP

CD, teenage USA, PO Box 91, 689 Queen St. W., Toronto ON, M6J 1E6

www.rocktheweekend.com

All my favourite records of last year hovered around the half hour mark. If the music industry had its ear to the ground around my feet, they would pay heed to my limited attention span and cut dross in favour of teaser EPs. Marketing geni the Weekend are already hip to the cresting wave of product placement. And a good thing too; any more than 30 minutes of this sugar-coated pop-rock pop would saturate my system, tire out my tapping foot and nodding head, and give me cavities. Five songs are just enough for me to feel the love. And what love it is. If I were a teenage girl, I'd want to be the girls in this band. If I were a teenage boy, I'd also want to be the girls in this band (but that's our little secret, right?). (Terence Dick)

Mean Red Spiders

Still Life Fast Moving

CD, teenage USA, Box 91 - 689 Queen St. W. Toronto, ON M6J 1E6

www.teenageusarecordings.com

Airy vocals (some people call them ethereal but I won't), the kind of analogue synth orchestrals that one has come to expect from the new millennium, acoustic guitars, guitars through effects, and classy drums are what make up the Mean Red Spiders. The only thing this album lacks is a French femme fatale doing an existential and lovesick rant over the lounge theatrics already present. Yet even without said French woman, the album pulls it all off. They swing, they bossa, they rock, they make you bob your head, and all at the same time. Serge, eat your heart out. (Alex Snukal)

Fallout

Ontario

CD, Red Menace Records

www.fallout.ca

Fallout is group vocals, catchy riffs, old-style punk and an agenda. The choruses make you throw your fists in the air. Think of Rancid, sometimes the Clash and any other band; if what you put together is good, then you've got Fallout and you've got a new CD to buy. (Alex Snukal)

The Russian Futurists

Let's Get Ready to Crumble

CD, Upper Class

upperclass@canada.com

Someone who was born in 1981 recently tried to school me in the excellence of the 80s. She cared little that most of the decade was absorbed subliminally by her while I consciously suffered through those ten years in concert with my adolescence. Russian Futurist Matthew Hart is young like her and adapts that most 80s of sounds — second only to hair metal — synthpop to contemporary bedroom indiepop as only a tourist could. Like previous generations of tourists (eg. the Rolling Stones or British rave culture), Hart benevolently mutates a dying breed into a thriving lifeform. I don't mean to dismiss



Blancmange or Howard Jones, but what have they done for me lately? The Russian Futurists manage to redeem synth tones once regulated to the reject pile of my discography with blissfully melodic songs that hide the sounds in the music. (Terence Dick)

The Yeehaa Cowboys

May the Twang be With You

CD, www.theyeehaacowboys.com

The liner notes come with a definition of twang and we're told it's at the heart of The Yeehaa Cowboys but I can't hear any twang at all. So what are we left with? Twang-less country. Buy some Hank Williams (Sr.) or Johnny Cash if you want some real twang. The Yeehaa Cowboys are like some joke country band but it's a bad joke. (Alex Snukal)

Nicole Dueck

CD, nicoledueck@hotmail.com

It's a cold winter's night. You are alone in a log cabin. You're privileged enough to have a fireplace nearby to stare at from your rocking chair. Its glow reflects on your surroundings and warms your face. You feel safe and content that frailty and sadness have no place here. Rocking back and forth brightens your hopes and shades your insecurities. The gentle radiance from the fire heats up your body and soul until you blush like the first time you savoured a kiss. If only you could burn wood to make a CD, Nicole Dueck would be the light from that fire. (Kieran Dick)

Ember Swift

Stilt Walking

CD, Few'll Ignite Sound, 50 Charles St. E., #732, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2N6

www.emberswift.com

There is much to admire about Ember Swift. She's an extremely accomplished musician who writes clever, politically astute songs, records with an all-woman band, independently produces her work through her own record label, and always remembers to say thank you. There is certainly nothing wrong with any of this, and it is

a remarkable achievement for any musician, especially in such a small country as Canada. It is obvious that much hard work has gone into the development of both Stilt Walking and the organization that works to get it out to potential fans. However, it sometimes feels like everything is too perfect on this album; there is no room for the happy accidents that make music so much fun to listen to. I certainly cannot fault the very funny Boinked (the bride) or the hardcore political commitment of songs like Include My Food or Competing? You Choose, but sometimes I just longed to hear a song that sounded just a little more ragged and incomplete. Indeed, the final vocal track, When A Gypsy Makes Her Violin Cry — which Swift recorded with her mother and grandmother — definitely captures some of that spirit. I guess I'm just a sucker for three-part kitchen harmonies. (Karyn Bonham)

Maximum RnR

CD/7inch, Box P62, 275 King St. E., Toronto, NO, M5A 1K2

www.maximumrnr.com

Not a particularly original name and not a particularly original sound and not even a particularly original look (denim, black t-shirts and tattoos), but somehow it doesn't matter. Draw a line through the MCS to UIC to Max RnR (with maybe a million bands in between) and you know what I mean. Producer Ian Blurton knows. I believe it's called meat 'n' potatoes rock. (Terence Dick)

Paintbox

Here's to Modern Living

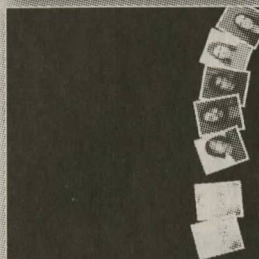
CD, Fulgoh Records

www.paintboxrox.com

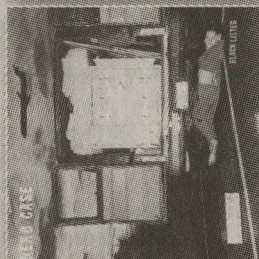
Shoegazing for the new millennium? Paintbox have been kicking around the Canadian college rock scene for a few years. Their early recordings displayed, a little too obviously, the influence of Ride, Blur and other atmospheric British acts of the early nineties. Here's to Modern Living shows the band employing more elaborate pop song structures while still trying to create trippy guitar rock. Imagine Spaceman 3 diligently studying the music of Brian Wilson and you will get some idea of the kind of



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PO BOX 3613, VANCOUVER, BC V6B 3Y6
www.mintrecs.com

music on this disk. The music makes far more of an impression than the lyrics. I cannot remember a single verse from this disk, despite having listened to it four times. The singing never creates the kind of atmospheres that the music creates. Paintbox composes some interesting sound textures, and some soaring guitar lines, but these get buried in the mix. Paintbox's ability to create stimulating sonic atmospheres is evident in the instrumental tracks Departure Lounge and Theme in E (See the Sun), as well as in the introductions and codas to their other songs. Instrumentally, Paintbox comes close to creating trance-inducing music reminiscent of Pink Floyd, Yo La Tengo, or Television. Lyrically, they sound like Sloan at their most twee and self-pitying. (Eric Weissengruber)

Samuel Andreyev

Songs of Elsewhere
CD, Torpor Vigil Industries, 548 Roxton Rd.,
Toronto, ON, M6G 3R4
andreyevinfo@torporvigil.com

Remarkable simply for being so different and unexpected, Songs of Elsewhere is the sound of modern pop if Europe had never expanded. If America had never been discovered, if the blues and its progeny were never heard, if Andre Breton was Bernie Taupin to Scott Walker's Elton John, if Disney made cartoon musicals from songs by Erik Satie and Van Dyke Parks replaced Quincy Jones as godfather to the music of the last half of this century, then one might hear Songs of Elsewhere as just another album. Until that time, I remain pleasantly perplexed. (Terence Dick)

Space Elevator

CD, Rocket to Rock Records
www.spaceelevator.ca

No matter how I might one day really feel about this CD, right now it's Boxing Day, my girlfriend is away and I'm suffering from post-Xmas depression as I also try to meet my well past-due deadline for BP (and I'm getting a cold). All I want is its chipper, melodic power pop to wash my troubles away. I want the hooks to pull me out of my funk, the choruses to silence my worries, and the drums to kick my mopey ass and get me up and out and dancing around the room. My head is nodding and I air-drum along because it's good for my circulation and for a moment, this very moment, I'm up up up in the Space Elevator. Like the chorus goes, "everything's gonna be all right!" (Terence Dick)

Chris Field

All the Drugs in the World
CD, Warm Gun Records, 125 John St., Toronto,
ON, M5V 2E2
www.chris-field.com

Chris Fields' influences are obvious — Lennon, Hendrix, and Sly. His retro sensibility does not, however, prevent him from writing some pretty original rock. All the Drugs in the World is a high-speed blender slicing and dicing chunks of 70's rock and funk into a pretty tasty psychedelic smoothie (the kind with the bee pollen and the Korean ginseng). Even the occasional Kraftwerkism, such as vocoder-processed vocals, doesn't disguise the fact that this album is, essentially, a guitar-driven head trip. The guitar sounds range from Land Inside of Your Mind fuzz-

tones to heavily compressed Reelin' In the Years-style solos. Fields' lyrics evoke urban anxiety, not the vapid pseudo-hippie peace and love vibe that Lenny Kravitz retails. Fields has pleasantly nasal voice, reminiscent of John Lennon. It's a shame that his singing doesn't have as much energy and glamour as his music. I am also wondering why he chose to bury an amazing April Wine-sounding heavy rocker in a secret track at the end of the album. It is just as strong as, if not stronger than, any one of the album's ten listed tracks. Fields is at work recording a new album with big names and high-priced session men in the U.K. It is possible that he might end up a radio-friendly pastiche artist like Kravitz, but his musical creativity and his strength as a lyricist can hopefully prevent this. (Eric Weissengruber)

Morgan Finlay

Uppercut
CD, Brisco Bodai, 253 College St., Suite 111,
Toronto, ON, M5T 1R5, www.morganfinlay.com

I'm not a professional. I'm an amateur. In everything. Writing, music, art. Even my day job is a curiosity to me rather than a career path. Zines are for amateurs and since Broken Pencil is for zines, the music in BP should be for amateurs too (and before you get all upset or anything, recall the root of amateur is amator or lover). Morgan Finlay is professional, or, by all accounts, aspires to be. He has an excellent press package, clean design, letterhead and a crack band. He's got a good looking CD, a pro producer and six tight rock/funk songs. These are songs that I wouldn't be surprised to hear on the radio. If I did, I would change the station. (Terence Dick)

Inner City Surfers

Laughing on the Outside
CD, www.innercitysurfers.com

Being a cute, young guy (or even a not so cute guy) in a melodic punk band who has their act together enough to get out of the basement and make a CD and tour around and write poppy little ditties must be the best feeling in the world. It might be the closest some dudes get to stardom but for minutes, hours, maybe even days at a time, I'll bet they feel invincible. That's a good feeling. You might get a contact high if you listen to this CD 'cause the Inner City Surfers are those kind of guys. (Terence Dick)

Cuff The Duke

Life Stories for Minimum Wage
CD, Three Gut Records
www.threegutrecords.com

All along, I kept thinking to myself that there was something I didn't like about this record. I convinced myself that its youthful exuberance was immaturity, its country-twang guitar licks were poseur-driven, and its earnest lyrics ("what can I say/that hasn't been said") were easily dismissed teen angst. And yet, when I put Life Stories back on to write this review, I realized I was wrong about it all. The first album from a quartet of Oshawa hipsters (if there can be such a thing) is a combination of the best features of all of the above. Immaturity and earnestness free this group to fuse ambient ballads with country croons and furious hard rock moments. The result is spontaneous and, if not totally original, remarkably cohesive for a young group. The last track has a lengthy instrumen-

tal section which sounds very much like a Godspeed moment, but Wayne Petti's slightly nasal whine of a singing voice ("don't say goodbiiiiiye") returns to rescue us from what has become the Godspeed cliché of big picture doom and gloom. Chalk one up for youthful enthusiasm. What's most impressive about this record, really, is how seamlessly it fuses alt-country with post-rock and some just plain fine songwriting. The more The Sadies meet Kepler, the better this album gets. When the boys get too-country, like on the second tune Hey Baby, I can't help but picturing them sipping Pepsi in some carpeted Oshawa basement, then singing "hey baby whattya doing with that gun?/It's loaded and you've got it aiming all wrong." But a song later, a more personal exploration of laziness and incoherence (hallmarks of the twenty-something generation) backed up by steel guitar, a staccato drumbeat and moody set-the-scene organ rings true. (Hal Niedzviecki)



Atomic 7

...Gowns by Edith Head

CD, Mint Records, PO Box 3613, Vancouver BC, V6B 3Y6

www.mintrecs.com

Surf Nazis must die but surf scholars should take heed. Brian Connelly, the six string magician, once a Shadowy Man, ex-Boyfriend of Neko Case, and now one third of Atomic 7, brings the twang like a rockabilly mentalist channeling a whole history of fabulous guitarists in his endless array of instrumental tunes, suitable for dancing, western spaghetti and yes, even the mighty surf. (Terence Dick)

The Undercurrents

Demo N

CD, Pupkin Records, 2057 Schoolmaster Circle, Oakville, ON, L6M 3A1

www.theundercurrents.com

Why don't I like this? I was asking myself the same question when I finally heard Broken Social Scene's new record (which should unqualify my judgements for a great many readers and place the Undercurrents in stylistically very different but well respected territory). And the best answer I could come up with is that it sounds too intentional (and this is another personal judgement so discount it if you will). There is rock that is a mess, barely able to stand, bad at functioning in the world, awkward and yet beautiful because it is so at odds with the status quo. That's what makes rock important to me. For others, rock is studied and serious and a discipline and a craft to be mastered (rather than a demon to be exorcised). That rock is catchy and competent and

sometimes very enjoyable. But it bores the hell out of me. If you like it, listen to this. If you don't, listen to the Nasty On. (Terence Dick)

Million Dollar Marxists

Status Que?

CD, Million Dollar Music, PO Box 77062, Ottawa, ON, K1S 5N2

www.milliondollarmarxists.com

The Million Dollar Marxists lay down a heavy slab of Detroit-style punk rawk on their debut EP. These six songs were supposed to be demo tracks for an upcoming LP, but the band felt that the results were strong enough to be released on their own. They were right. These are not half-assed sketches: the songs are tight, the band is full of energy, and the production sounds very professional. The songs are about feeling alienated, being pissed off, learning that love can be a mind-destroying prison, and getting enraged at the hypocrisy that surround us. In other words, classic punk nihilism. But the Million Dollar Marxists deliver their bad news with energetic riffage and frenetic vocals. They are also pretty damn clever. The final track, Give it a Name, evokes the neo-noir gangster film *Things to Do In Denver when You Are Dead*. The protagonist of that flick is Jimmy the Saint, a man who is living under a death sentence. He must clear up the mess in his own life, and stick it to his sinister boss, before he gets it in the neck. What could be more punk than that? (Eric Weissengruber)

The Pop Shove Its

CD, 106 Arthur St., Ottawa ON, K1R 7C2

www.popshoveits.com

There's a strategic gamble in putting your catchiest song first on the CD. Sure it gets people by the short and curries right off the bat. If you saved it until later, peeps might give up before they get there, they might not even get past your first weak song. But then again, maybe you're blowing your load, maybe the promise of that first popstastic blast leaves the rest of the CD a letdown. Or maybe it's such a tasty tune that the listener can't even get past it, hitting the rewind like Pavlov's dog a ringin' a bell. And that can be a good thing if your thing is mildly familiar alt-pop that smells a bit too much like early nineties college radio. But what do I know? I'm still listening to track one. (Terence Dick)

Hanged Up

Kicker in Tow

CD, Constellation, PO Box 42002, Montreal, QC, H2W 2T3

www.cstrecords.com

The Futurists had it right when they acknowledged the pleasure of machine rhythms and the musicality of noise. A lot of folks have picked up their baton and not all of them are po-faced industrialists who pummel you with unfunky jackhammer patterns. Some of these folks are downright folky and lock step in a trance inducing motorik rhythm that fits nicely into the gears of your noggin, driving your feet to pogo and robot dance like it's 1999 but with Fred Frith on violin and Chris Cutler on drums. Or, in this case, Montreal's Gen Heistek and Eric Craven. (Terence Dick)



Noah23

Quicksand

CD, Plague Language

www.plaguelanguage.com

Noah23 is a Guelph-based hip-hop artist with a growing reputation. Quicksand features more of Noah23's intricate rhymes, but this time out they are supported by the underground vibe of executive producer Orphan. It sounds like they took ProTools and built up Quicksand's laid back, uncluttered grooves out of a million samples of acoustic instruments. The lyrics, like the music, meld the organic with the digital. Noah23 takes us into his visions of a world where information invades the body like a virus, and where the individual dissolves in a tribal consciousness created by media, the Internet, and hip-hop. While Quicksand never wanders off into somnambulant trip-hop, too many of the tracks fall into the same mid-tempo slouch. Exceptions to this are Resistance, with a snappy drum and bass beat, and the closing track The Fall. The latter is a lengthy vision of the apocalypse, accentuated by ominous orchestral samples. It presents the melding of consciousness and technology in a more sinister fashion than the other tracks of the album. Noah23's rhymes are dazzling in their complexity. They sound like a fusion of Alan Ginsberg and William Gibson. Noah23 doesn't tell stories, or strike gangster poses: he creates word landscapes. It all gets a little abstract at times. This album never engaged me viscerally or got my feet moving. It did get my head nodding as I tried to think my way through Noah23's tricky word games. (Eric Weissengruber)

Exhaust

Enregistreur.

CD, Constellation, P.O. Box 42002, Montreal, PQ, H2W 2T3

www.cstrecords.com

Ingredients: Clarinet, tape loops, some vinyl breakbeats, bass, drums, a dash of white noise, and lots of creativity in the studio. Directions: Take all these things, throw them in a cauldron and reduce. Now, while

that's cooking go and turn on your subwoofer. Check on your mixture every once in a while, scraping off the skin on top. Forge whatever goop is at the bottom of the cauldron into a CD or record, and start the music. Turn off all the lights, sit back, and let yourself tumble into a realm of acoustic narrative collage. Put your faith into the sounds around you and go on a journey without even leaving home. You'll be surprised where you end up. It's ok to be afraid sometimes. Exhaust is experimenting with sound, you should too. (Kieran Dick)

Alexis O'Hara

In Abulia

CD, Grenadine Records, PO Box 42050, Montreal, QC, H2W 2T3

www.grenadinerecords.com

Alexis O'Hara creates songs with their own inner life; repeated listens to her debut album continually overturn new sounds, new thoughts within the tiny universe she has created in these fourteen sharp little tracks. O'Hara is a poet who commands attention both for the strength of her words and for the deft way in which she weaves them through skeins of electronic ephemera, skewed samples, and traditional instrumentation. This sets her work apart from the majority of spoken word artists who merely content themselves with floating their work atop the wreckage of other people's musical endeavours. From the stirring opener, Etends ta bougie alumee, to the choppy cool of Gastown Blues, O'Hara has constructed a taut aural landscape through which her listeners may roam unfettered, though not necessarily undisturbed. (Karyn Bonham)

Godspeed You Black Emperor!

YANQUI U.x.O

CD, Constellation, PO Box 42002, Montreal, QC, H2W 2T3

www.cstrecords.com

Six songs. Average length is probably fourteen minutes. By now, you've probably heard about Godspeed's portentous instrumental the-sky-is-falling orchestral tuneage. If you haven't, then you really should. A ten piece band that captures the slow creeping spread of post-industrial decay across our world and our minds is worthy of attention. If you don't know Godspeed, check them out. But don't start with their new work. Start with their first album, then move on to their second. After that, you've probably got enough to keep you sated. After that, the band's slowly mounting instrumental laments, cello sawing, drums marching in place, violin crying, electric guitars getting louder and louder, start to sound, well, kinda the same. Godspeed sticks with the formula on Yanqui and the result is surprisingly predictable considering how innovative a band they have been in the past. The first 2 songs, both titled 9-15-00 according to my CD player, are named after the date when, according to Godspeed liner notes, Ariel Sharon provokes the latest intifada by visiting a holy mosque. So, fine, why not stretch the repertoire a bit to somehow

convey that mood in the music? A touch of John Zorn here, a hint of an Arabic prayer there? Yeah it's not that simple, I know, but if you want to have a song that conveys a sense of despair over a particular situation in a part of the world where some of the most distinct cultures meet and clash, well, it's not good enough to just do the same old thing and name it after a politically charged date. As a Godspeed fan since the beginning, I'm disappointed by this album; it lacks their hallmark voice-overs and the cinematic soundtrack-without-a-picture ability to transcend mere mood and actually tell us a story about a different way for us to see the world. At the same time, there are some great moments on this album; lost in the twenty minute "rocket falls" are eponymous pockets of decrescendo that utterly capture my attention and rival anything Godspeed has done before in terms of straight symphonic exploration. (Hal Niedzviecki)

Fourtredieu!!!

Noizuja

CD, Martin Sasseville, 1853 Des Ormes, La Baie, QC, G7B 3W3

www.fourtredieu.qjb.net

It may seem pretentious or at least ridiculous to review a noise record but ... I've got no defence. This album is all standard issue noise. Their ain't nothing here you never heard before and at some points the noise is (this will sound ridiculous) pure kitsch. A reliance on phaser, flanger and stereo-panning goes for easy effect and makes Noizuja sound dated. "Trying to fuck with your head" is such a clichéd artistic project and, as we've heard it all before, Noizuja is rendered void of any psychological effect. Splicing in bits of jazz recording is an obvious attempt at validation but the juxtaposition of musical notes over square wave noodling just comes off as silly. In the liner notes it says "Jazz is [the] 20th century's subversive music, hated by millions (including Nazis) and liberation soundtrack for others...." Jazz is fine and all, but there isn't anyway it can be called subversive anymore. When jazz trios ply their trade in small cafés, corporate gatherings, and every wedding reception for the last twenty years one can safely assume that its ideological and subversive import has been absorbed into the dominant culture. The back of the album says "Support DIY Music" and it's trying to guilt me into giving a good review for the sake of independently produced music. I ain't falling for it. This is a bad CD and I support DIY music and that's my review. If you're going to make noise, make it good, make it interesting and don't validate it with jazz clips and an anti-institutional backdrop. (Alex Snukal)

Below the Sea

Les Arbres Dépayseront Davantage.

CD, Where are My Records, 4142 Baffin, Laval, PQ, H7R 5W5

www.belowthesea.ca

I saw some other reviews for this band, and every single one of them mentioned fellow Montreal-based ambient, post-rock conglomerate Godspeed You Black Emperor! So, I was going to try and not make that comparison,

until I accepted the fact that if Below the Sea does sound something like GYBEI, maybe it's ok that my review sounds something like all the other ones. So here goes: Does this sound familiar? Did people keep telling you to buy the Godspeed album cuz it's really good, so you did, but just ended up holding down the scan-forward button on the CD player? Then, you told some people it was really good, but you never fully listened to it and now you feel like a phoney. Here's how you get rid of that feeling: Buy this Below the Sea album, listen to it with a walkman while you wander around a shopping mall, or while you sit on a park bench. The music in your ears will turn any reality into a waking dream. Instruments blending and swelling at a steady pace, hypnotic rhythms that keep your fingers away from the next track button. Once you've listened to the whole thing, call all those people who talked about Godspeed and tell them they should buy this CD too. You'll feel glad you did. (Kieran Dick)

Gary Flanagan

Future Fashion

CD, www.garyflanagan.ca

Gary Flanagan has managed to capture perfectly the sound and the feel of early '80s electro-pop. Early synth-pop can be described as the nervous copulation between thrill-seeking humans and unpredictable but seductive technology. It is Harrison Ford getting it on with Rachel the Replicant in Blade Runner. The lyrics of the kick-off track Night Club sum it up — "photogenic people/artificial bliss." Contemporary electronic pop is really post-human disco, where the human is fragmented and dispersed throughout a digital network. Gary Flanagan, however, is at the center of a machine-generated whirlwind of staccato drum machines and dizzying sequencers, and you can hear this living musician coaxing performances out of unpredictable and funky monophonic analog synths. He is especially indebted to the Montreal sound of acts like Rational Youth and Trans-X, as is evident in French-language numbers like Metro Boulot Dodo and French In Action. If he had only included a truly fierce dance track like Trans-X's Living on Video, this would have been a perfect electro-pop record. Check out Flanagan's website for sample tracks, and be sure to read Nightwaves, Flanagan's zine dedicated to electronic music. (Eric Weissengruber)

Full Whit Drag

The Independence

CD, Inner Flight Records P.O. Box 1722 Radio City Station, NYC, NY, USA 10101

www.fullwhitdrag.com

Full White Drag combine Fugazi-esque riffs and structure with the kind of melancholy sound that characterizes Mogwai. While the vocals sometimes sound slightly contrived or maybe like they're trying too hard, all is forgiven when the songs really come together. If FWD can do anything, it's make their songs work. Every transition feels natural and the use of dynamics is so strong that The Independence takes on a rarely felt energy and power. (Alex Snukal)

Saturday

by Sarah Wayne

"It means a year of good luck, you know."

"Regardless," I say. "You still have shit on your head right now."

We duck into a McDonald's and do our best with toilet paper and hand soap. When we leave, he smells as sanitized as a laboratory. But there are no rats in cages today, or parts of frogs in mason jars, or fetuses floating in thick brine.

There's just the heat on the sidewalk, the punks, the hipsters, the sweat between the underwire of my bra and my dirty skin. And us. Through some horrible twist of fate, my Pandora's box is an ignorant white boy in a clever T-shirt, who's so skinny that when our wrists bang together by accident it hurts. I will love the bruises through their purple and navy stage, to red and pink, and then finally, like this stupid fantasy, they will be gone.

All I can say today that I haven't written down and slid across the kitchen table with my eyes averted, whispering "Please be nice," is "Let's go look at records." In my fantasy, I find *In a Silent Way* for five dollars, an old lived-in copy with peeling corners and that special smell old things have, like used books with yellow pages that say "Property of Janet Grube" in practised sophomore cursive.

I don't get drunk that night to avoid thinking and my words don't sleep heavy in my throat. I don't feel the bile rise as I force myself to walk, even though everything about me is bruised and sore and eaten up.

From the subway to his door, we go up each step to the hall that smells like decomposing bodies and then inside to break my own heart, while he sits idly on a broken kitchen chair.

The closest thing he has to sex music is Air, which is sex music, I guess, for indie-rock kids too white to have Tricky or Massive Attack or even Portishead. Not to say that the CD doesn't fill the room while I sit or stand self-consciously, with big window-washing arms and a frozen teeth-together-lips-apart smile.

His CD collection implies irreconcil-



illustration by Joe Ollman

able differences. He will never be in my world and I don't want to be in his, because there is nothing in it for me but him. That isn't enough.

Walking home that night, all fucked up from too much coffee and too many cigarettes, I feel like there are pins and needles somewhere under my skin, tiny bouncing balls of static electricity. I follow the bouncing ball and it leads me onto the streetcar, where I have to take deep breaths to keep from crying because I am going to explode with need and caffeine and too many words. Mostly too many words.

It feels contrived, all of it. The way I

told him like it was a scene from a movie, like tomorrow I'm going to come out of the clinic HIV-positive and my prettiest friend will meet me. She'll be negative like a movie star and I'll say, "But I only slept with Telly," even though she won't get the joke. I'll say it anyway, and laugh, because I wouldn't be one bit surprised with this life, the way things turn out.

Sarah Wayne hit her literary peak while writing a grade four project about medieval hats. Since then she's been big into 70s gym socks, dancing shoes, and doing stupid things with a terrifying sincerity.

Swimmer

by Christine Murray



illustration by Joe Ollman

I feel like drinking a whole pot of coffee, like becoming a big dehydrated lump, like smoking until the hairs on my tongue stand straight up, tickling the roof of my mouth.

I've been trying to be normal for a while now, but I'd rather revisit the Sal years – lie on his bed, drink tiger tea and listen to music. I used to collapse, stare at my hands, or my feet, or the floor. I was very dramatic.

Only now I'm in London, not Toronto, with Laz, not Sal. And even with the rain, clouds, yellow soot-covered buildings and damp bed sheets, everyone in London is all right.

"Are you alright?" they say, putting up umbrellas, running from buildings, sipping Evian, or Highland Springs, or Volvic Natural Spring Water.

"Yes, I'm alright."

During the Sal years I was important. I would spend dizzy weekends and intermittent afternoons writing, thinking it

decent to feel so ill, thinking with melancholy sadness "je suis malade."

I sucked his tongue and spat out poems like eight line questions.

In London, the floor of my room peeks through my clothes. I see that it needs vacuuming, and cover it up again.

"If I felt differently," I tell myself, "I would uncover things."

Sal calls long distance to say he loves the girl who doesn't wear dresses. The girl with the smile that bites into her cheeks. The girl he fucked behind my back once. (A few times.)

"She isn't pretty," I say, now that we are just friends. I see her as a fist clencher, clenching things. She squeezes Sal like oranges.

In London people stand on the edge of the street like they would stand on the edge of large precipices. Waiting, then jumping into the sea like salmon, swimming upstream.

I met Laz here. He kisses my fore-

head and my thoughts recline. They lift their feet. "Take it easy for a while," they say, "You think too much."

In London, the salmon swim down Oxford St., through Soho, up Portobello road, flipping around on the streets of Camden. On sunny days they pause, turn their fisheyes to the sky, lie in the park and stare upwards.

After sex, Laz often tells me to get up and go write something, but nothing comes.

"Ma belle petite slug," he would say with a British inflection, if he could speak French.

It's reckless to stare at the sky: a way of averting your eyes. You become the fixed point. The world moves about you.

Christine Murray is working on her Masters of English Literature and Creative Writing at Concordia University. She prefers writing fiction and poetry, but mostly writes for fashion magazines.

The Story of Nature

by Tess Owen

Two girls were together behind a brown hill. Kneeling in the dead grass, sticks in hand, they touched the object below.

One of them, a tanned princess with black eyes and a pink shirt, looked back to the playground. An ant bit her naked toe.

The second, an androgynous tomboy with no socks and worn sandals, poked her thin stick through the body of the sparrow. No blood came out.

"It's dead, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Should we go back?"

"They'll look for us when they're leaving."

The sun baked their arms and left uncomfortable red burns at the backs of their necks, but this was a special occasion. They couldn't stop now.

The tanned girl scratched a mosquito bite on her arm and watched the tomboy spread one of the sparrow's wings.

"I wonder how it died."

"It probably hit the baseball fence. Those birds can't see when they fly too fast."

The girl nodded, and picked up her stick. She drove the tip into the bird's closed eye. The tomboy yelled out: "That's disgusting! You can't poke out the eye!"

"Why not?"

"Because it's gross."

"Well I already did it. I can feel her brains."

"Really?"

The tomboy helped the princess with the stick. Soon, the sparrow's head was cracked open, and her pink brains stuck to their stick like bubble gum.

"We should go back."

"Yeah."

A small ant crawled onto the carcass. The two girls heard yelling in the playground.

"They're calling for us."

"Are we going to be in trouble?"

"We're not far away."

A day camp counsellor walked from the playground to the top of the hill. She saw the girls, and below them, a gruesome bird carcass that had once been beautiful and intriguing. She saw dirty



illustration by Joe Ollman

knees, and broken sticks. Anthills loomed nearby.

"Come on girls, you're filthy. Dead animals are not toys, you should know better. Wash your hands right now or else you'll get a disease."

The two girls got up and walked slowly behind the large counsellor, like they were marching in a death procession. Their naked legs were streaked with impressions from the dry grass they had kneeled on.

The other children in the playground dug innocently in the sand and played tag.

The two girls were dead to them, outcasts.

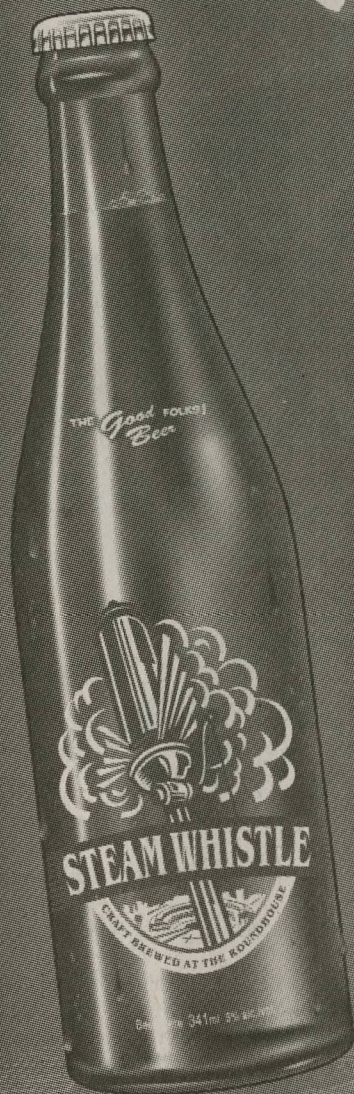
The princess began to cry and the tomboy looked down at the concrete they were approaching. All she could see were ants. Within a week, the sparrow had disappeared.

Tess Owen is a B of Ed. student at Grant MacEwan college in Edmonton, AB, Canada. Along with her studies, she is an avid painter and plays the bass in an indie alternative band called Cypher (www.cypherrocks.com). This is her first published piece of literature.

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How To Quit Your Day Job and Still Survive

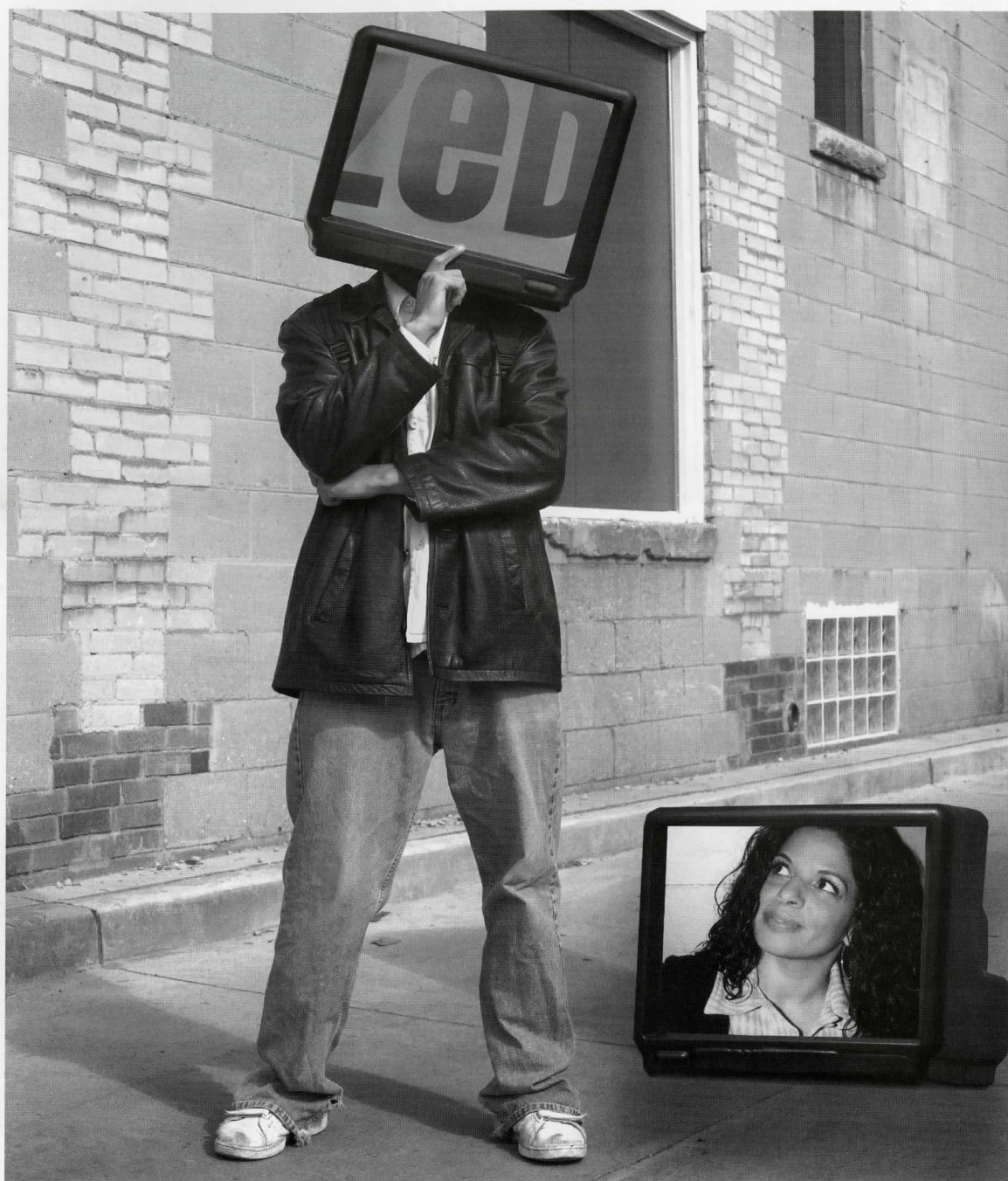
by Emily Schultz

1. Come home in a foul mood from your office job in Mississauga (or some other horrid suburb). Spend at least an hour and a half each day commuting. Do this for many days, weeks, months. Waste your little free time by crying in the street. All of this is best done if there's an audience. Don't fake it — don't act sad, etc. Let the bad feelings come on their own. This should be easy. After all, you're working for a multi-national company and are essentially a toad, hired only as a friend/whipping post to your supervisor.
2. Develop insomnia. And maybe spastic bowels. That's always a good one too.
3. Have your boyfriend threaten to leave you if you don't quit and devote yourself to full-time writing.
4. Apply for grants. Wait. Get rejected. Wait some more. Finally! \$1500!
5. Quit. It's not as hard as you think.
6. Give up the idea of a real home with a back yard or a kitchen. Move yourself and your dog into your boy's "dream" apartment... a studio, a.k.a. converted industrial garage without any natural light.
7. Merge destinies in some way, shape, or form. In other words, join forces, bank accounts, get married (the relatives love that). It helps if this person has blind faith in your art. If they can also lend you \$200 now and again, even better.
8. Justify video-game playing as an essential part of working at home. Plunk down \$30 on retro magazines also as "research" for your novel.
9. Sleep in 'til noon.
10. Wake up one day and realize your grant money is almost gone and you still have six or seven chapters to write before you're done your rocky first-draft.
11. Email everyone you know with no thoughts of how pathetic you sound. Ask if they know of any part-time/ freelance work.
12. Get an interview with a major women's magazine. Get sick that week, and stumble into your interview hoping to make a good impression, a wad of Kleenex in the pocket of your only suit. You're doing great until halfway through when your decongestants seem to run out. When they ask you what you'd do to make their magazine better, pick on absolutely everything. When they ask you what your best qualities are, tell them you're "nice." When they tell you how much you'd be earning, don't hold back — laugh. Laugh right out loud. It's clear you're not ready to go back to a full-time job.
13. Hound some more friends for part-time work until one of them takes pity and gets you a regular gig that you can do from home...writing the weather for the Naked News. Keep sleeping in 'til noon.
14. Subsist on this for many months, using your Visa as a crutch.
15. Copy edit a couple of feminist detective novels.
16. Drop hints to your mother about vet bills and car repairs. Act



- surprised when she pays off your Visa.
17. Get a second credit card but don't tell her about this one. After all, you have your pride! And now, even more debt...
 18. Publish a collection of short fiction. Give away more copies than you can afford. Wind up in debt to your publisher. Wonder privately if you can wait and pay off what you owe with your royalties cheque...
 19. At the peak of poverty, decide to start your own chapbook series. What genius! You now have yet another major expense!
 20. Interview for two jobs simultaneously. One is an interesting art-related three-day-a-week gig with a good salary. The other pays half as much and requires maximum commitment.
 21. Don't even wait to hear back from the first one. Take the one that pays half as much. Thank you and God bless Broken Pencil!

Emily Schultz is the new editor of Broken Pencil. Her collection of stories Black Coffee Night was recently published (review pg 57) and she is tackling rewrites of her novel.



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