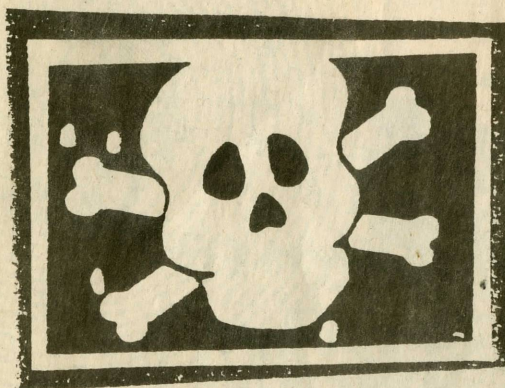
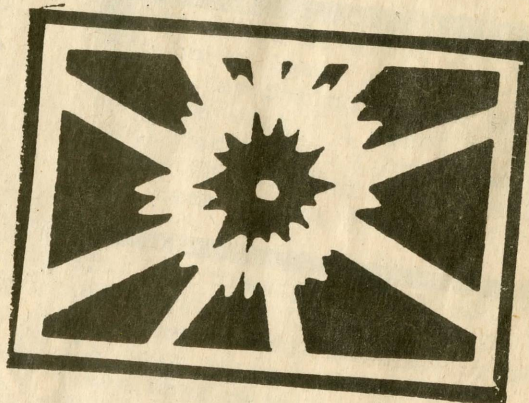
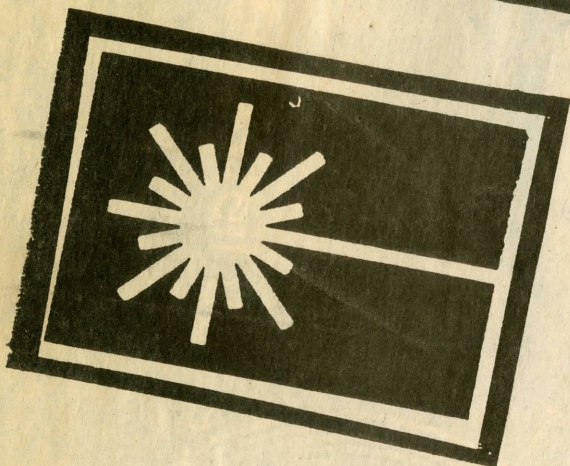


SORE

issue #12

\$1





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INTRODUCTION TO SORE #12

June 17, 2001.



I wrote to a friend about a week ago and guaranteed him that, due to the first days off I would have in at least three or four months, within one week of my last exam I would publish my twelfth issue. My last exam was Wednesday. Today is Sunday. Too true.

To completely delve into exactly what has happened since February, when SORE #11 came out, would make me look like a liar, a coward, and generally, an ass. Without the job I'd held for nearly two years, I funneled all

energy into SORE, which basically resulted in issue #11. However, about a week after SORE #11 came out, I was given the opportunity to go back to the same job I had just previously left. The complications and conditions are many, and though it was hard, I put my tail between my legs, and went back. Imagine the surge of excitement and creative energy I had when I left. Now imagine the anti-climactic end result.

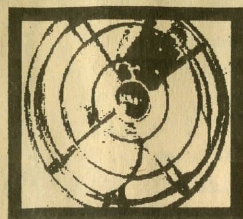
But, I'm not unhappy that I went back. In order to allow for this to happen, I'll admit that I felt it necessary to be at least slightly bitter while there. But this quickly waned, and as soon as Spring rushed in, I realized that I had forgotten how much I loved the work. I spent my weekends awake and in the sun rather than sleeping until darkness. I breathed fresh air, and worked again with my second family. So the tradeoff was even. I'm both glad I had the winter off and glad I went back in the Spring. It's all just so ironic, I conclude.

So, SORE #12 might not be quite as spiteful and dreary as #11. But I think it's better. I am, honestly, more excited about what's going on in the corner of my bedroom than ever I've been before. The content of this issue seems to me to be the best SORE has seen in its four years. (June 7th was SORE's fourth birthday.) It makes me happy to see what people are putting into my 'zine, and it only makes me feel more like there's a lot of really amazing things going on out there in the independent realm of things. In the way of music, zines, books, thinking, writing, and doing. I know now that I'll never leave it.

So, this is the season of five AM conversations, road trips, excessive reading, surfing (finally), late night walks, sleep, creation, and experience. For three months out of every year, everything just falls into place, and it's the most calming feeling ever. Because I know that no matter what, come Christmas, I'm going to look back on every single day of this summer with a pleased sense of envy.

Take your copy of SORE with you on your summer journeys or just read all the pages before you fall asleep in your stuffy bedroom in the early morning hours of summer. Or read it on your back porch, or at the beach, or on the roof with your friends. Just enjoy your summer, and take me with you wherever you go.

TAYLOR



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reservations are recommended.

the deadline applies. payment and artwork are due at the same time. cash, check, or m.o. made out to TAYLOR BALL.

distribution

to sell SORE at shows in your area, or through the mail, send:

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\$10 for 30 copies

\$15 for 45 copies

for more than 45, contact me.

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submissions

submissions are needed, encouraged, and accepted if space and quality permit. you can submit fiction, personal writing, artwork, photography, non-fiction, informational pieces, or anything else you can think of that would fit in nicely in SORE.

get your stuff here by the deadline (listed to the right) along with contact info. unfortunately i cannot pay you, but you will receive a copy of the issue you were printed in. if you have questions, e-mail me. i'm nice.

back issues

issues #10 and #11 are available for \$1 each. buy both and get a free button. yay.

subscriptions

see back cover for more information. rates are:
\$5 = 3 consecutive issues
\$10 = 6 consecutive issues
subscribers will receive a welcome package along with special treatment in the way of complimentary SORE merchandise, occasional CD's, stickers, other rad zines, and anything else i can find to send to you. send cash, check, or money order made out to TAYLOR BALL.

review material

review material is accepted in any format and sending it is encouraged. it may not be reviewed in the very next issue, but it will be reviewed as soon as possible.

merchandise

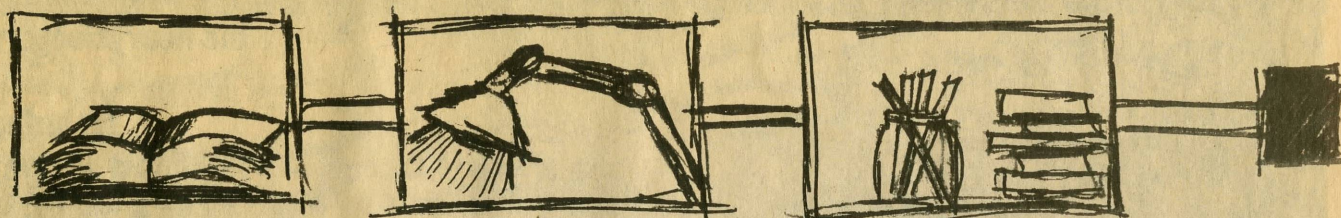
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they look cute, trust me.

deadline

deadline for SORE #13 is
September 18, 2001.

blather on reading.

zach savich.



On the runway, let's say, building up skill and steam for liftoff, while making endless laps, it can be easy to fall into the postures. Rather than sitting down to write, I go for a walk and urn into Marlene at the bus stop. She tells me about a literary discussion group she's starting. Todd's on the bus, going to make copies of the zine he has written about what zines mean to him. I go with him to Kinko's and we end up folding and stapling in the back of Mike's station wagon (how quintessentially hip!). Then there's a coffee shop - we sit on the sidewalk and chat about books we've never read - and then there's a reading or some party where we can justify wanton hedonism with the non-writing writer's cry of "experience." By the time I return to my garret, swearing a future of puritanical asceticism, I've avoided writing for the day - all while engaged in convincingly writerly postures!

Oh, the joy of being a writer! It makes excuses for laziness and lust, for depression and insensitivity. Of course, as the common observation goes, while we judge others by what they've done (or, perhaps, by what they have failed to do), we judge ourselves by what we will someday accomplish. Yes, we are certain of our seat at the great banquet among the elite. Never mind our actual output - we are so pure that we don't need even to write. The writer becomes a quasi-mystical social species, with nothing to do with the active, engaged verb. In a culture of confession, of cheap copies and cheap copying, of ego projects and disposable dreams, we - I'll say it, as conservative as ever - we lose our connectivity to all those scribblers of the past. If all the world is a shrink, if everyone is engaged in these sweating, forever-emerging masterpieces, we lose a bit of reality, of permanence, of continuity, as intense concentration shifts our natural north. We forget, and become foolishly self-absorbed. You think you are new? You think others haven't labored under the same desires? The problems repeat, the paints are the same, the stories refract and reassemble like the continents in shift. Cycles, like the tide or civilization as a whole.

Oh dear. That's why I will call myself a reader, foremost. That seems arrogant enough (as arrogant as writing a piece about writing). When I am a reader, the goals and limits of writing stay in perspective. The pleasure remains, as well as the initial impulse toward entertainment, ideas, and well-crafted sentences. I could be happy with a good library and some rice. Make me a monk, copying classics canonical and new, browsing dusty-shelved cellars, retreating into the froze-time for ten years just to begin to grasp the connections and developments.

This is my vision: reading, not as study, not as storing up technical knowledge for the future, but reading with the pleasure with which one eats chocolate. To the point where, if dying, you would ask a friend to sit beside you and read aloud from some meaningless chapter. It is only consolation, perhaps. Only escape. Only entertainment. But the power. But the possibility. To enter a world without answers - more than a political pamphlet. Where the keys are complexity and concentration. Where we receive the opportunity to discover the world. Et cetera.

I don't intend this bland appeal as an order to tackle - you, cadet! - to tackle the leather-bound volumes that fester on every summer reading list. They're just empty fiber, after all. The literature of a culture develops because of what that culture needs, and the literature that endures should be born the same. It is obvious, but I'll say it anyway: Hold yourself to high standards - hear, hear - but also trust your taste. There's enough time to read. There's enough time to hit all the fat Russian novels. Trust that if you don't like something today, there are enough good books for you to move onto something you enjoy; you can return to the old tome when it is what you need.

And then, when we see what's missing, when we realize the connections and future directions, when we know what we want to read but have never found, then let us write. Then we can move beyond mere cleverness and conceit, beyond image and inexperience. I haven't argued this thoroughly, I know, because I have been writing sloppily, with the assumption that, man, dude, you, like, know what I mean. But it's alright, since I'm only a reader, after all, a reader trying to make sense of it all, trying to balance between brashness and inactivity.

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SAVES THE DAY



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part II. By Oscar O'Connor

So, you've met Thomas. People are rarely who we think they are. Thomas, a shining beacon to our youth, is under no obligation to think any differently than you or I. He hates what he always hated. He loves what he always loved (OK, I may have exaggerated with the grotesque fantasies. They were more for my benefit - respectfully, Thomas is quite the pacifist and a consummate gentleman.). We, however, give birth to unique versions of everyone we meet. It begins at home. Your father, at one time, was invincible. My dad can beat up your dad was an indisputable fact in the dogmatic world of childhood. You had no idea your dad was kissing some other dad's ass eight hours a day, five days a week. It progresses into grade school. The indelible images of the school marm who essentially lives to tell you that A, E, I O & U are vowels and that $6+3=9$. Again, oblivious to the fact that Mrs. Johnson in room 7 is manic depressive and has a fetish for all things leather. High school. Stoner, slut, punk, dork, jock equals suicidal, incest, identity crisis, serial killer, homosexual. The point is, you will never know or understand the real thing. Everything is tracing paper or paint by the numbers. And as far as I'm concerned, your reasonably close facsimile is just as valid, if not more so, than the truth. Because your version, if delivered properly, can become the truth to others. Anyway... I assure you this will come up again.

Back to Thomas. Thomas is the guy that stayed in college and continues to go to college and plans to look into more college. You begin to envy his endurance. By this time he is extremely well-read. His thoughts on politics, art, and philosophy (personal philosophy - not prehistoric textbook rhetoric) are coherent almost to a fault. You can listen to him for hours and never question his sincerity, honesty or conviction. As he speaks you are drawn to his stature and poise. Yet, he is not your usual, as defined by Webster, academic. He stands above six feet tall, wears a pony tail and a beard, is clad in surf gear, and as we know now, enjoys the herbal jazz cigarettes. He shuns classical for rock'n'roll. He prefers Kerouac over Hemingway. Almost, but not quite a beatnik. Now, let me introduce you to his one weakness.

Having successfully completed a week on the job, we find Thomas making the drive to a friend's house. And what an unfortunate friend he is. What an unfortunate person, this Daniel. It amazes me that Thomas, with all of his intelligence and promise, finds this man engaging. First of all, he goes by Daniel. Not Dan. Not Danny. Daniel. Everyone shortens it anyway. Why not let it go? Secondly, this guy is everybody's best friend. He doesn't try to be. At least that's what he would say. But I really can't deny that he is sought after and edified along with his family, his home and his dog. I mean his dog? I can't stand it. He's one of those hippy love children in cynic's clothing. I don't know if you know the type. Jaded about humanity, but willing to make a 45 minute trip at two in the morning to serve as designated driver for an idiot who recently caught his carpet on fire. Able to make you laugh at your parents or listen to you bitch about them for two hours. Works in a huge office, but feels bad if he can't remember everyone's first name. The guy with all of the answers. He lives a fucking after school special life. Completely holier-than-thou yet embraces his numerous flaws. Pick one or the other asshole.

He is definitely the unspoken leader of a small army of derelicts and this is completely inexplicable. Physically, he's no marvel. He is actually quite average. And he knows it. Average weight and height, chin length brown hair, green eyes that mock the very idea of sincerity, a small nose that ironically, points slightly up at the end. He would be easy prey for some of his cohorts. But that will never happen. He's the fucking life of the party! The godfather. And for all of this everyone loves him, follows him. You hate

him already.

Thomas is greeted at the door by Danny who beams every time they get together. It is disgusting in a sick Hallmark way. You'd think they were going to kiss. They sit and begin discussing Thomas's first week as a public servant.

"How was it?" asks Danny

"Honestly, it still feels like the first time I was in high school. You'd think that four years of college would give you a new perspective on things, but it really doesn't. The same people we hated are still there and there are less people like you and me."

"I don't think we would recognize ourselves anyway. In school, it doesn't pay to have anything to say or to believe in or even act like you do. We both stayed relatively quiet, through the first three years at least. Remember, it was easy then to get an elitist attitude around the crowd. We kept our mouths shut because we didn't feel anyone was worthy to hear us speak."

They laugh. How is Thomas sitting through this? Consider this. You read for leisure and interest. You probably did the same in school whether it was required or not. Did most others? No. Intellectually, you are superior. You have a greater desire to learn and to think. Danny can never just show some grit and call it like it is.

Thomas replies, "That's true, but I'd like to help someone get over all of that earlier than we did. There was an element of elitism, but we also never thought anyone would listen in the first place. I want to be an audience to some and I'll ration off the curriculum to the others. That's the other thing. The whole idea of a curriculum is going to be a burden. I think that I'd be more effective if I were allowed to do things the way I wanted."

"I agree. Our best teachers were the ones who seemed to have a personal stake in what they were saying. I hate to say it, but they'll probably lose their jobs if they haven't already. But I'd say better to be courageous about it. And now I'd like to quote some random dialogue from Dead Poet's Society."

They laugh again. But the conversation will have to be earmarked because the unmistakable car horns and residential area speeding can mean only one thing.

Here comes the freak show. Every Friday, they congregate at Danny house. This flock of complete assholes that Danny just shakes his head at as if he's their benevolent father. I'll introduce you. Family first. There's his younger brother, Luke, such a contrast to Danny's good boy act. You should see the two of them together. It's like the id and the superego at a family reunion. Big brother claims that Luke has a heart of gold, but by my estimation, he lives to fuck or fight. Picture a bulldog with A.D.D. and you've got the idea. He has a boxer's frame along with completely Aryan features, speaks with a cartoonish southern drawl and sports a crewcut. He doesn't boast the same intelligence as his brother, but has a gift for foul language and insults. If he's in the right mood, he has the comic timing of a genius. And women love him.

Entering with him is Cousin Ari. He always hugs his family on arrivals and exits. If Luke is the id and Danny is the superego, Ari is the ego. A recent transplant from the dude culture, Ari is always aware of the right thing to do and occasionally does it. Other times, however, he contributes to what Danny calls the "problem". He preaches humility yet makes every effort to expose his chiseled physique. He claims sobriety yet gets busted at a circus for smuggling two fifths of Crown Royal. Bestows the virtues of peace and love, yet comes close to inciting a riot at a local bar. He always feels bad about it though. Sincerely bad. These random transgressions are usually followed by a hang-dog apology to Danny. This is answered with an assurance that Ari is a good person, that heart of gold thing again. As if he's a priest!

"Are you getting drunk tonight Tommy?" asks Luke.

"I might drink a little. I have to drive back home some time tonight," Thomas replies. This makes absolutely no sense. Thomas occasionally makes a two hour drive from his house to hang out with these idiots. You would think that Thomas was a better judge of character. Be patient. The cavalry is on the way.



east lake low.

lan excerpt; a chapter; an installment; part of a book hopefully by taylor hall!

It was one of those nights that I had actually fallen asleep in my own feeling of filth. Draped with cigarette smoke in my hair and on my face and skin, I was still too exhausted to wash it off, and went to sleep dirty. I knew it was a mistake; I knew the feeling of waking up with the remnants of the night before completely inescapable. On these nights I would typically wake up the next morning in complete disgust with the previous night's events, swearing up and down that I wouldn't do it again, that it feels too bad to wake up like this. (Naturally, this sentiment would wane by late afternoon, and I'd fall into the same cycle again). With all this in mind, I went to sleep dirty.

Eventually I fell asleep in my own filth, too exhausted to think any more frantic thoughts.

I'm not quite sure what time it was, but it had to have been after four o'clock because I hadn't even fallen asleep until then at least. Something stirred me from my deep sleep, and when my mind became even slightly alert, I was aware of the pain under my eyelids and the heaviness of my limbs more than anything. My joints were slightly sore, and the pains in my stomach were further remnants of the night before; more evidence I knew I'd wake up with. But I knew something had awakened me early, too early, and my sense of sleepy curiosity drove me to reveal the source.

I heard something on my window across my bedroom. The wind, maybe. No, it was a sharp tap, not a creak of worn window panes under wind pains. I knew better than that, I assured myself. I quickly ruled out the possibility of the noise at my window being an animal. For, birds aren't known to fly directly into second-storey windows, and though bats occasionally are, I somehow pushed this possibility aside as well. A bat flying around my sunken neighborhood in the dead of March struck me as odd and unlikely.

I heard the noise again. A sharp, hard tap on the glass. I waited, my eyes hurting less under the exhilarating conditions, and my heart beating noticeably faster. The fact that I was so disillusioned made determining what exactly was going on an almost impossible task. But about thirty seconds passed, while I sat upright in bed wondering exactly what was going on, and the noise as hard and loud as ever, struck again. I pushed aside the heavy pile of blankets that secured me to the small, warm bed. I stepped on leg out into the blue moonlit darkness, and then another. Walking to the corner where the window was I paused briefly to allow the fierce lightheadedness and blinding corners of blackness to pass through my eyes and head.

I yanked the cord on the blinds. The dull blue of morning shot into my face, and I was tempted to close my

eyes and hiss into its direction. But I didn't, and immediately witness the source of that awakening noise as a small rock flew and hit the glass two inches from my eyes. I flinched, cursed, and opened the window. Looking down, I saw Neal standing, wearing the same clothes he was wearing the night before. He was wide awake (unlike me) eating a banana in my side yard. The man liked his fruit, no doubt.

"Hey jerk," he called, endearingly, "get dressed, quick. Come down here."

"Why?" the sleep in my head was still difficult to ignore.

"We're going to drive today. It's cold. Come on. Grab some food, I'm hungry."

I don't have any damn bananas, you fool, I thought; I would have laughed had I not been so tired.

"Wait, where are we going?"

"Does it matter?"

"No, but screw you I'm sleeping you bastard."

"No you're not, you're hanging your head out the window. Let's go. We're going to drive out to see Matt."

"Bastard." I muttered back, and shut the window, and let down the blinds.

It took me a few minutes to remember exactly who Matt was, and why Neal would go see him, and more importantly, why he thought it was important for me to go as well. As I stumbled around putting on same clothes (just like Neal) that I had worn the night before, the pieces fell together. Apparently this guy Matt at one point was terrific friends with Neal; sometime around college. And the few times I had actually listened to Neal go on about him, I did gather that he was a brilliant kid; an excellent writer and intensely fascinating conversationalist. Worth the visit, I was beginning to think. But somewhere during Neal (and Matt's) first, and only, couple years of school in Pennsylvania, Matt's father had died. The details I knew here were few. I knew the man had fathered a handful of kids, most being younger than this guy Matt, and that he had fallen ill rather quickly and died in the dark of winter. Neal had mentioned to me that, though he and Matt were such friends, when his father died Matt headed home too quickly to speak with Neal. Apparently, being the oldest male in his family, Matt took on an typical, almost archetypal role of family-leader-in-time-of-crisis for his strong but torn mother and five younger siblings. He'd gone home to Ohio; future dim. Neal had heard from him just a handful of times in the two years since his departure.

And so my mind was in working order, and this was all pretty exciting, especially at five o'clock in the morning. But I did mutter to myself about going down to see Neal this early in the morning, but only because it felt fitting. I figured why not add a little to the excitement by pretending that this is a terrible idea. I ran on my toes down the stairs, scribbled a note saying I'd gone out for the day, grabbed assorted fruit for Neal, and went out the side door, locking it behind me.

I met Neal laying in the cold grass on the frozen earth beside the tree that I had planted when I was six and climbed when I was twelve. His eyes were closed and he made no effort to arouse himself, almost as if in the two minutes it took me to dress he had grown bored and tired of waiting, and had fallen asleep, spontaneously, like everything else he did. So I looked at the sky and wondered what this day would bring, and where this day would take me. The clouds rolled quickly across the grayish canvas and though it was cold, and though it was March still in the wooded mountains of East Lake, I felt warm and alive.

So I walked over and kicked Neal in the ribs.

"Let's go." I said solidly, and started walking toward his car, hearing him curse me and get up, and start walking behind me. Almost as if the excitement had passed fully from him to me. Its possible that I was more excited to be going on a road trip than I was to meet this guy Matt, but I was quick to assume that this, too, was worth it.

+

And so as the sun was rising behind us, it created these amazing long shadows on the road in front and ahead as we drove west. Staring into the Ohio that I'd never met, and into the vast open lands that I'd never seen. The sun rose nice and big, behind trees and hills, peeking out every few hundred feet and warming the backs of our heads. Neal put the top down on his brown LeBaron (too young to be in such terrible condition). And so the noise of the morning wind, chilled to perfection, and the bursts of rising sunshine on our heads made for an amazing couple of hours. I felt warm at heart and he seemed relatively content behind the wheel of his car, wind

slapping his hair around his face. It was noisy; and conversation was non-existent. So I still had no idea where he was taking me or why. But it still felt right, so I let him drive on, and I watched as things whirled past us, the only car on the long road west into the vast open lands. Eventually I fell asleep with my knees against my face, and my head leaning on the top of the passenger side door. I was precariously close to the outside. It felt like something I'd read about before.

A few hours past, I thought, and I was awoken again by Neal. I'd known him just less than a year, but it was becoming more and more obvious to me that he thoroughly enjoyed waking people up. Either that, or he just couldn't stand other people sleeping when he was awake. I felt something sharp and hard driving into my right cheekbone which aroused me quickly and made me shoot my head around to turn and look at Neal. He was chuckling, looking over at me while glancing toward the road every couple of seconds. I looked back to my right again and noticed that he was rolling up and down the automatic window from his side of the car. It's impossible to guess that the man is a creative genius and can write better songs than any that have made your palms sweat. It's difficult to realize that he's twenty two and not sixteen. And that he supports himself fully, despite his almost subsidized carefree persona.

Almost to prove this, he woke me up by rolling my head up; automatically.

"Hey buddy," he called over; the wind was still whipping around inside the car, and he still smiled a bored, mischievous smile.

"Where are we?"

"I'm not quite sure, somewhere west of Pennsylvania, obviously. What do you think about that?" The same mischievous smile, almost like he was making jokes to himself about me.

"Food."

"Agreed."

We ended up pulling into a dirty, gravel parking lot that a twenty-four hour diner sat in the middle of. It looked ridiculous from the outside — far from safe to eat in. But we probably couldn't have thought up a better place to eat. Secretly, I think we both hoped the food would be disgusting, the waitress to be dirty, old, and toothless. Just so we'd have stories to tell when we got back home.

At the booth, I looked across the table at Neal. His facial expressions lacked the usual up-turned mouth and wide eyes. Sometimes it's difficult to be concerned about Neal, at least for me. But, on occasion it happens. And unfortunately I thought this might be one of those occasions.

After the waitress, who, incidentally, was old and toothless, left to get our coffee and toast, he pulled out a pack of cigarettes from his jacket pocket. Taking one for himself, he set the pack in the middle of the table. He smoked slowly, and something about the thing started to induce a conversational drive in the man, and he began talking.

"You remember who this guy Matt is, right Cole?" he asked me.

"Your friend from college, right? Went home because his dad died. You haven't heard from him much."

"Yeah, you remember. Real amazing kid. Best damn writer I've ever met. Or read. Wrote screenplays. For movies. He wanted to skip live shit. Hated most theater. Wanted to go straight to films. You'll like him, I'm pretty sure." He didn't look me in the eye this entire time, instead he looked just past and to the left of me, out the window and into the plains past the interstate.

"So we're just going to see him, or what?" I asked.

"Well, yeah, I guess. It's just been too long since I've seen him, you know, and I don't hear from him enough, so I figured I needed to go check on things. We were really great friends."

I almost felt terrible for Neal. The way the words dribbled from his mouth and how distant he was. I felt sorry. Here was this solid guy sitting across from me. Tougher than I in all respects, and it felt like he was breaking down in front of my eyes. I don't know, really, I was starting to get interested in this Matt guy, and what we'd find when we "checked" on him. There had to be more to the story.

"I feel like a beetle on it's back." This time Neal looked me right in the eye, and took a drag off his cigarette.

finding the platonic

in love.

by special ed

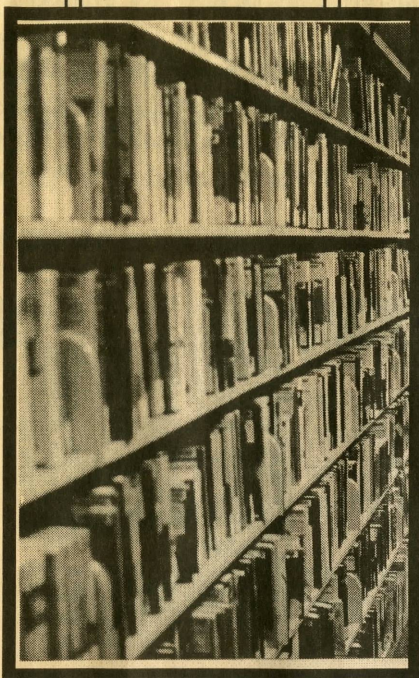
I have learned in the past few weeks something valuable and true. A truth that will not hinder me nor hold me back, but set me free. This truth is the truth of self-reliance. It's been a while since I could just rely on myself, free from the burden of needing anyone or anything. I have found that anything I want to do I can do on my own. I have realized that no one in this world, friend or family, is always going to be there for you. In fact to a certain degree of the trouble you find yourself in, you will easily find that no one will stand by you.

The realization of truly being alone in life came to me in a state that was not my own on a night full of terror and desperation. At a time that I was burdened with just a moderate degree of trouble I had found myself alone and fending for myself when just minutes before I was surrounded by familiar faces. It was this night, after many sudden panic attacks and danger on every side of me, that I realized what true loneliness was and what the true definition of platonic was.

That fearful night put me on a downward spiral of thought. Throughout the next week the repercussions of that night had me analyzing and picking apart every aspect of human nature. I felt a certain denial in the conclusions I kept returning to. And the conclusion that would come up would be that everyone is fallible. In this regard there is no such thing as a true friend or platonic love. At a certain degree of trouble people will always let you down... always.

My mind reverts to that night again. Drifting in and out of sleep in a broken down van. Waking up calling my departed companions' names, praying hard they would come back for me. My body in complete shock that I was stranded two hundred miles from home with not a familiar and/or friendly face in sight. There were times during the night where there were actual bouts of physical pain from the jolts of fright I would get from the beings beyond the streetlights that were breaking bottles and yelling to one another. I hoped quietly to myself none of them would take it upon themselves to come over my way. Every couple minutes I would find myself on the brink of insanity. I would be upright with my eyes wide open, looking at the street in front of me and see headlights approaching. "The cavalry has arrived," I would tell myself. I would wait in childlike anticipation for that car full of my traveling companions to come whisk me away to safety. But it would be the same story of just a passing car every time. So, finally, instead of buckling down and accepting my fate of being alone and having to wait until daylight to fix my problems, I took three shots of absolut and fell asleep hoping I would be woken by my partners. I awoke to daylight and the cold fact that I was still alone.

Trouble in any degree is enough to break any tie that binds. It was after this incident and a few preceding it that I realized this. A lot have said I have made "bad friends" in the past. No one I have met has been a bad friend. But friends are phases, they are like clothes, they usually get outgrown. There is nothing forever about a friend. There is nothing forever about anything or anyone. Except for yourself. Self-reliance and the ability to take humans for what they are and live with them is very important. Don't count on anyone to be there at all times or forever, that will be the biggest let down you can hope to achieve. But enjoy and learn from your phases while they last, because they might not last long. In the end the only one in anyone's life who will be there every day, who will deal with all the problems, and who will never go away... is yourself.



books to read.

Bridges With Spirit

written by Adam Voith

I couldn't have been more excited when I found out about this book. I had finally found a serious writer who published his own book independently within the punk rock community. And so I started reading it as soon as I got it. And some of my excitement, unfortunately, waned. I am, however, for the most part impressed with the book as a whole. It contains elements that make it hit close to home: taking weekend trips to see shows, the lives of people that I could see parts of myself in, and other such things. But, this wasn't necessarily consistent throughout.

The novel starts off telling of weekend road trips and college shows and punk rock and other things I would enjoy reading more about, from a first hand, half-fictional basis. And for some reason, I was under the impression that much of the book would end up like this. However, *Bridges With Spirit* is, for the most part, a collection of drawn out stories and recounts (or fabrications) of experiences, which ended up still leaving a sweet taste in my mouth; but a slight sense of being caught off guard. The book slows down toward the middle, but right after the midway point we are introduced to Franklin Chappelle, a crazy schemer, and his friends. I found myself chuckling about Chappelle's attempts to make a movie with his friends and was relatively entertained by this larger chunk of the book.

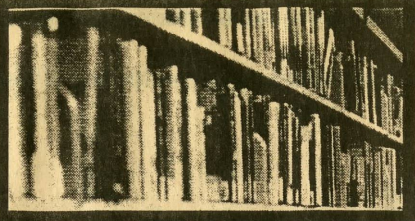
I am, of course, still impressed by Voith's accomplishment. Independent and underground writers everywhere should take time to read this, because if nothing else, it definitely contains elements that are likely to be found in almost all self-published books; those being honesty and an obvious importance of the independent lifestyle. [TNI Books | 2442 NW Market #357 | Seattle, WA 98107 | www.tnibooks.com]

WE OWE YOU NOTHING punk planet: the collected interviews

edited by Daniel Sinker

In theory, this publication couldn't possibly be a better idea. Take every amazingly top notch interview *Punk Planet* has ever printed and throw them all into a big thick, paperback book for readers to hold onto on their bookshelves instead of in the recycling bin. However, in actuality, the book seems more like a novelty than a read. True, I haven't read all of the interviews that were included in the book, but many I had previously read and felt no need to do more than skim through again. Unfortunately, I think many people will feel similarly.

Regardless, the production quality is high on this small dictionary sized book, and the highlights include the interviews with Ian Mackaye (perhaps the best I've read with him), Noam Chomsky, Jem Cohen, Steve Albini, and Mordam Records. In total there are twenty five interviews, all with relatively big names within the realm of punk rock. For punk rock information-junkies, this would clearly be a must read. For newcomers it will prove both educating and entertaining, and loyal *Punk Planet* readers



will likely hold the book in high regard, just as the magazine.

For me, it's difficult not to compare this to Charles Dickens' use of publishing installments, which resulted in the same work being sold three or four times to the same people. But, that's a harsh comparison, for the publication of this book seems to be for all the right reasons. To preserve and inform others of punk rock culture and opinions, and to create something that positively represents the above mentioned.

A unifying force, without dispute. Unfortunately, I think that at \$16.95, people would rather flip through their old issues of *PP*. Or, if they can afford it, it's unlikely that it will be read again in full. In an attempt to balance my cynicism, and further my honesty, this really is a good resource nonetheless. [Akashic Books | P.O. Box 1456 | New York, NY 10009 | akashic7@aol.com | www.akashicbooks.com]

Heart of the Old Country

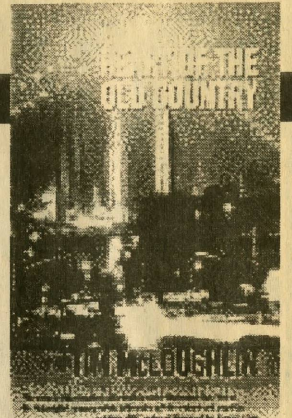
written by Tim McLoughlin

Heart of the Old Country is rich with feeling and description of old Brooklyn, and to say that it doesn't supposedly embody some sense of relatively modern life in this region of the country would be a complete lie. McLoughlin tells an honest tale of a motherless young man, Mike, who lives his frustratingly stagnant life in Brooklyn and further becomes a part of it after being employed as a part of an organized crime group that his father has had some dealings with.

The front half of the book is spent describing Mike's current life situation. He works as a driver for a local car service, he's had some dealings with local college, and he is forever tied down by a ridiculously childish and needy girlfriend. To her he has some sense of obligation, and this proves to be a hindrance throughout the entire plot.

The conflict arises when a high school hero and Mike's coworker, Nicky Shades, a recovering drug-addict, makes a relatively large mistake by robbing a local bar that has strong connections to the organized crime group. Mike is forced to take part in the mob's counteraction to Nicky's action, and his involvement only escalates from there, almost always putting him in a position somewhere between loyalty, obligation, and personal freedom.

Though the book is good, it didn't take my breath away. Because it takes place so currently, I think time can only make it better. [Akashic Books | P.O. Box 1456 | New York, NY 10009 | akashic7@aol.com | www.akashicbooks.com]



records.

godspeed you

black emporer!

[all releases]

the lot six

gang of four

bright eyes

[all releases]

last man laughing

7"

SORE #12 LISTS

zines.

journal song #3

box of rocks #2, #3

books.

bridges with spirit

adam voith

of mice and men

john steinbeck

the perks of being

a wallflower

stephen chbosky

all john irving

exaggeration. In an attempt to write with a more active voice, more openly, I'm going to recount, with needed exaggeration and the occasional fictional element, the last two or three months of my life. Some of you may know I left my job to work on my magazine and to finally write a book. Interesting that I say finally because I sound like I'm forty, when really I'm eighteen. But finally is right, really, because I've felt like I needed to write a book since I was at least nine when I wrote this story about a cat and an alligator that were traveling to the city from the country and found a Mexican restaurant in the woods where the pig that owned it dropped food all over their table when they went there to eat. It was honestly going to be my first novel. Wouldn't that be terrible? To write a novel that did a poor job of representing your real thoughts and abilities. I guess that's the fear in writing a novel at such a young age. I guess that's why if I can't get anything done right now, it's really okay. But I still think about Luke the cat and Edwin the alligator. I still read through the near twenty chapters I spent months writing, only to eventually lose complete interest in the plot of the animals all together. But I was ready. I wanted that book written. I'd talk to my dad for hours about how amazing it would feel to have a book written, and to have people read it. He too shares the writer's spirit. Only he's produced nothing more than an edited psychology textbook. But I'm convinced something more will come from him. He's still got retirement to look forward to, after all.

winter storms storms storms winter storms storms storms winter storms storms storms

BY TAYLOR

And so I left work to work on my magazine and finally write a book.

I've done a little of both. I've worked on my magazine until my eyes stung before bed (at three or four o'clock in the morning) and my fingers were sore from typing and writing letters. And I did start a book. A really terrific plot, that I'm working on slowly and cautiously, so as to not ruin my interest in it. And the best part about when you're writing a book is that when you decide you need to do some studying up, you just curl up in bed, and read your fucking brain out. You read the classics like Maugham, Salinger, Dostoevsky, and all the others that inspire you. And you feel like you're getting credit for everything you do. It's really an amazing feeling. Writing through reading.

But this winter turned into stagnation as soon as the new year hit and the trees stood bare and cold, and the winter puddles warmed into their winter homes in the gutters and potholes of the neighborhoods I walk at night, feet cold from my holy (not Holy) shoes. My weekends would be my saviors, naturally. I'd work through the week, pushing my new issue to get to the printer, trying to make sure everyone made deadline, and then keeping up with schoolwork too (yeah, high school. It's ridiculous). And I'd crash into having no inhibitions and having no motivation for two days straight. But damn did it feel nice. Most of my friends being older than I, I'd hang out over at their house, and for a few months people did nothing but get

completely drunk, scare me, and burden (though I would never turn the responsibility down; for someone must take it, it might as well be me) myself and a few others with the task of playing parent to drunken idiots. Preventing them from escaping dangerously, preventing them from becoming too aggressive, and most of all, hoping that they still love you, and trying your damndest to still love them, despite their maladaptive behavior.

I consider this era to fall somewhere between January and February. Come the end of February, things started to pretend like they were getting better. Stomachs churned at the sight of more alcohol, and the behavior finally became something left for the colder, barer months. A road trip to DC in early March proved to be one of many (hopefully) to come eras of good feeling. Spending four or so hours in a minivan (we call it the tank for there's nothing tougher) with five other people who you like a whole lot and who you enjoy talking to really helps heal January's cabin fever. Which is strange because you'd think that more confinement with the same people you've been with for the last two months wouldn't help at all, but in actuality, it was the best I had felt in a long time. The concert in DC was terrific, and the power drive home to get some sleep before work cooked inside the car a comfortable warmth of contentedness and humility. I actually spent three or more hours having one of those amazingly good, solid, full-spectrum conversations with my favorite helper. The first in a long time. On an empty interstate, in a sleeping car filled with warm contentedness and a general feeling of effective youth. They smoked cigarettes and we sat in the back of the tank. When we finally got home, after dragging sleep all across Virginia interstates, I went to my couch to sleep myself silly surrounded by stinky blankets. I knew I'd wake up with a strange pain in my nostrils and sinus, but it couldn't seem more petty as part of the tradeoff I was making.

And so that trip helped a little. And so did the coming weeks. Things turn around with spring, I've said it a million times before and I couldn't possibly believe in my statement any more than I do. So spring, at this point, has technically begun, though I wouldn't doubt another week or so before warmer weather is the norm, and the azaleas come into full bloom.

The last few weeks have been strange. I feel like I haven't stopped moving in more than a month, and it won't stop catching up on me. Naps only create more problems, and studying only creates naps. Writing is difficult to focus on, because for some reason I can't get it out of my head that sitting down and writing for more than an hour isn't a waste of time. But I keep working on that book, because I know I'll feel good enough to say I'm done with it some day. And I keep writing my zine because if I didn't I'd have no substance; nothing to claim to my name. I did go back to work at my old job. After my gluttonous and stagnate winter, I felt some sort of wage paying commitment was needed, but I'd completely deny it after re-evaluating my schedule and clarity of focus.

So right now I fall asleep listening to amazing works of recorded art; symphonies of sounds that pulse through my bedroom and stir up thoughts and excite me to the point of my palms sweating. I'm convinced that it's quite possibly one of the best times to listen to music. Dark. Loud. Perfect. Sleepytime. And I rip through book after book, because they're all clues and pieces of wisdom; a little bit of help on my novel. A little bit of comfort.

And so I wait for spring. With the symphony's crescendo at night and the perfect last sentence of a book that I read before I fall asleep, the palms of my hands and the bottoms of my feet sweat with excitement as spring approaches. For winter breeds just enough conflict and claustrophobia to provide outlet for the other nine months of the year. And when spring lays down warm and green, and music sounds sweeter, and air tastes better it's time to start creating.

winter storms
winter storms



zine reviews

Ad Hominim #10

\$3 | 72 pgs | full-sized | copied?

This is a fairly thick zine with a lot of stuff packed into the high amount of pages. There is a very short (and very bad) interview with Ian Mackaye from Fugazi and Dischord in which the editor asks the usual questions like "Are you still straight edge?" and you can almost see Ian cringe through his response of "Why do you ask?" There are better discussions in here, thankfully, on a twenty question format. Twenty questions with Mike Park, and more notably Astropop 3, Elliott's Chris Higdon, Gameface's Jeff Caudill, and plenty of others. Thankfully there's enough twenty question interviews that there's bound to be somebody that you're interested in. Also included are a bunch of short pieces on various topics, some fake ads, and some pretty good comics in the back. Also music reviews. [1401 Portland Ave. S #C303 | Minneapolis, MN 55404]

Biondo's Ghost #1

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

Biondo's Ghost is composed entirely of short pieces by the writer, Jason. Much of the topics discussed are on the personal side of things, but also have a hint of diary-like recounts of experiences and examinations of thoughts. Written pretty much stream-of-conscious, on occasion, the words border on ranting. The layout is all the same type and headings, with a few pictures here and there.

This isn't outstanding, but it has enough to read to hold your interest and wonder when the next issue will be out, because it's sure to be even better. [P.O. Box 9876 | Cedar Rapids, IA 52409]

Bohemienne #11

\$1 / trade | 32 pgs | half-sized | copied

This is a pretty personal 'zine, with an emphasis on life events and some fiction. There's pretty much a goth theme throughout, though it isn't too heavy. The layout is mostly cut and paste, with a few pictures and a lot of cut out words on top of patterned backgrounds. Most of the writing is a notch above average, where the fiction is detailed and fairly interesting, and the more personal stuff comes across as less meditated and awkward. There's a couple pages at the end of zine, book, music, and movie reviews. And because Rose gave Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* (perhaps my favorite book of all time) a glowing review, I can't help but feel that she's got her stuff together. [c/o Rose | 71 Lakeside Dr. | Nutley, NJ 07110]

Box of Rocks #2

\$2ppd | 76 pgs | half-sized | copied

Box of Rocks is, honestly, probably one of the best zines out there right now. This is a literary zine in the true sense of the word, containing nothing other than fiction and writing from a handful

of people from all over. Though the writing is typically hit or miss, the theory behind the entire zine couldn't be better. The writing is raw, idealistic, and creative. Granted, some pieces are utterly terrible, but there are enough pages, and enough pieces that more than one is bound to be good. Box of Rocks is great for both readers and writers. Chad is helping to strengthen a sect of the scene worth encouraging. Please check this out. [c/o Chad Redden | P.O. Box 841 | Bloomington, IN 47402-0841]

Brainscan #13

\$1/trade/more? | 84 pgs | quarter sized | copied

This is a pretty thick and relatively interesting zine done by a girl who lives in Portland. Everything in the zine is very personal, and as with many personal zines of this type, it is pretty fun to read through and learn more and more about the thoughts and life of the writer. There are traveling stories, punk rock love stories and interesting events in Alex's life. The writing, for the most part, is very open and straightforward. Honesty weighs heavier than almost anything else through the words, which is a pretty nice considering most of the pages read like little pieces of a journal, or notes to a friend. The layout combines handwritten pages, typewriter pages, and computer pasted pages, almost all with a hint (or more) of cut and paste style. Another interesting part of this zine is that the cover is made from paper that is home made (I imagine) from those little tickets that come out of arcade games. Overall, a pretty good read. Worth checking out if you are into in depth personal zines that stem from punk rock lifestyle experiences. [c/o Alex Wrekk | P.O. Box 14332 | Portland, OR 97293 | brainscan@ureach.com]

Counter Theory #3

\$3ppd | 72 pgs | full sized | newsprint

A third look into the pages of this south Florida zine that is rapidly gaining popularity. Combining a crisp layout, and tons of information, Counter Theory is destined to be a prominent source of music news and information for the independent scene. The columns in this issue, though relatively abundant, are only about half-interesting. The real meat of this zine lies in the interviews, this time with The Promise Ring, Alkaline Trio, Elliott, Small Brown Bike, The Faint, Planes Mistaken for Stars, and Status Fanzine. There are a ton of reviews; both records and zines. Also included with this issue is a lengthy sampler CD containing tracks from Pilots v Aeroplanes, Falter, and other mostly south Florida bands. [8608 NW 59 Court | Tamarac, FL 33321]

Destroyed By You #3

\$2ppd | 48 pgs | full-sized | newsprint

The third issue of this 'zine contains an enormous amount of interviews, totaling fifteen, with highlights including Hot Rod Circuit, The Stryder, Saves the Day, and others. Also included with



this issue is a big fat compilation CD featuring all kinds of pop punkish bands such as The Movielife, Whippersnapper, The Enkindles, and some of the other bands that were interviewed in this issue. As far as other content goes, there's personal writing and record reviews, all on top of artsy (and rarely seen on newsprint) layout that looks great. [705 Woodland Ave. | Westfield, NJ 07090-2320 | poltergeistpunk@altavista.com]

Hectic World Magazine #6

\$1ppd | 16 pgs | full-sized | newsprint

This is a very short, but relatively information-packed zine focusing on independent music entirely. The bulk of the content lies in a short interview with Chris Higdon from Elliott, and another with the editor of Uprising! zine. Also included are a slew of reviews of recently released records, and a few zine reviews. Overall, with the up to date record release dates and general focus on the independent music scene, this is a fairly complete source of information. Unfortunately, the zine has temporarily (?) moved online. So visit: www.hecticworld.com. Or for this issue write: [P.O. Box 199 | Clawson, MI 48017]

JournalSong #3

\$1 | 48 pgs | quarter-sized | copied

The third issue of this excellent personal zine proves to be, well, just as excellent. More honest and interesting writing from Steve about his winter in Portland. Stories about friends, houses, cats, bedrooms, and more. There's enough emotion and sincerity to make you feel like you were there with him; or at least like you want to be. The layout is all typewriter and fancy copy machine tricks and there are drawings and images mixed in with the words. I read this issue, like the past two, in one sitting and felt pretty good about reading it when I was done. Steve writes well, and with so much truth (or believable truth) that it leaves me impressed. You're going to want to read this. [P.O. Box 3444 | Portland, OR 97208-3444]

The New Scheme #2

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

It sure is nice to know that there's some publishing going on in Colorado again. For a while, it seemed like what was once a prominent and prolific zine scene had turned stagnate. However, Stuart has successfully published his second issue of The New Scheme. And honestly, I can say that this is the first time since the first few issues of MBD that I saw that I have actually been really impressed with what Stuart has done. The content in this issue of The New Scheme far surpasses #1, and I feel very good about the direction that Stuart is moving in. The information he covers in this issue include interviews with underground writer Al Burian, Second Nature Recordings, and a guy who runs a recording studio called Eight Houses Down. Also included are pleasantly mature conversations with Cave In, Waxwing, and Evil Design, a little project that features sticker designs and other stuff. Worth checking out, even if you hated Midget Breakdancing Digest. [P.O. Box 19873 | Boulder, CO 80308]

Razorcake #1

\$3 | 80 pgs | full-sized | newsprint

Formed in part from the ashes of the popular Flipside magazine, Razorcake contains two of the previous 'zine's staff. Razorcake is significantly better as far as content goes, however, extremely comparable to Flipside as far as layout and mood go. The

columns are set up more like articles, with a relatively personal feel, with topics including Texas, mix tapes, and a relatively in-depth, though difficult to follow article on

the Bloody Sunday incident. The interviews are with Selby Tigers, Smogtown, The Causeyway, The Gossip, Youth Brigade, and a pretty interesting one with Fat Mike and his wife Erin, of Fat Wreck Chords. Also included are music, zine, and a few book reviews. Not bad, but definitely similar to MRR and/or Flipside. [P.O. Box 42124 | Los Angeles, CA 90042 | www.razorcake.com]

Skatedork #4

\$2 ppd | 36 pgs | full-sized | offset

This is a pretty interesting zine, even more so if you're into skateboarding. Though it's not necessarily a bad thing, I don't think there's a single piece in this entire zine that doesn't have to do with skateboarding in some way. As editor Steve claims, "this issue is... a collection of stories about skateboarding." What makes the reader even luckier, though, is there is an abundance of clear photographs, of skaters and just cool places. There is also a pretty obvious tie-in with punk rock, which helps the zine cover two things that seem to go together very often these days. You'll definitely want to check it out if you're into skateboarding. [c/o Stephen Voss | 221 Spring Ridge Dr. | Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922]

Slug & Lettuce #67

\$.55/ donations accepted | 20 pgs | tabloid | newsprint

This is S&L's 15 Year Anniversary Issue, which I consider quite an accomplishment, considering that at this zine's conception, I was merely three years old. Easily one of the most respected and widely read zines in the punk rock community, Slug & Lettuce continues to be one of the few forces of unification and communication that still writes to a receptive audience. There are slews of zine and music reviews in here, some ads, a comic strip, a few interesting columns (one about natural medicine that proves to be informative, educational, and interesting), and classifieds in the back. I'm pretty sure that Slug & Lettuce has followed a similar format for the last fifteen years, or close to it, but it definitely seems to be working, and I'm glad that there's something out there that people still continue to read readily. Check it out at least once if you claim to have anything to do with punk rock. [P.O. box 26632 | Richmond, VA 23261-6632]

Supreme Nothing #6

\$1 | 80 pgs | 1/8 sized | copied

This is a pretty solid collection of very personal writing and ranting from solely the editor, with the slight exception of reprinted letters written to the editor from other people (is that okay?). The size of the zine (intensely small, with intensely small print) makes reading difficult, I won't lie, but reading it in short spurts, quitting right before serious eye pain sets in will do you justice. The writings give a pretty intimate look into the details of Denny's life, which can either be boring or clenchingly fascinating. Check it out if you're into very personal zines. [c/o Denell Lewalk | P.O. Box 211 | Burton, OH 44021 | supremenothing83@aol.com]

That Girl #7

\$2 | 44 pgs | half-sized | newsprint

This is a relatively interesting, and surprisingly long and detailed zine focusing entirely on a summer trip to Eastern Europe for the editor, Kelli, and her fourteen year old brother. I'm pretty sure this is one of those things that actually happened a long time

before she actually published the zine about it. Regardless, the story includes descriptions of events for every day for about a week and a half. I find it hard not to review Kelli's *trip* instead of her 'zine- I certainly would have tried to do more, see more, and buy less (of course would likely fail in all three). But she took some great pictures, which are included in the zine, and tells stories of hanging out in Bratislava, Prague, Vienna, just to name three. I read it cover to cover in one sitting and feel pretty good about it. Anybody who's been to Eastern Europe, or would like to go should check this zine out. [P.O. Box 27894 | Los Angeles, CA 90027-0894 | bottle_blonde@hotmail.com]

The Europeans Say You're An Asshole #1

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

Joyce calls her new project her "drunk diaries." I guess that's exactly what this quick little read is. And though it somehow kept me interested enough to keep reading on, I was really unnerved by everything she wrote about. These are late-night stories about a life that, I assume, to Joyce is relatively every-day. It all seems insanely dramatic, and hugely alcohol-induced. Two things that, to me, create an almost awkward feeling for me when I read about, or experience either in excess. In this case, I actually read about both occurring to Joyce in excess. And yes, as I mentioned, I did continue to read on, rather readily. However, I feel both put off by and sympathetic toward everything that goes on in the lives of those written about here. A good and relatively well-written zine, but also slightly disturbing and aggravating. [co Joyce | 205 Maylock Lane | Fairfax, VA 22033 | bajdistro@punks.org]

Uprising! #10

\$1/ 3 stamps | 32 pgs | full-sized | newsprint

This zine focuses primarily on punk rock music, culture, news, and other things associated with the genre. There are a few pages of show reviews, a fairly journalistic story about a new punk rock outlet in Toledo, and interviews with The Eycliners and The Fairlanes. Also included is a page long rant about kids growing up and transforming in the scene, which I wouldn't expect to see printed in a zine like this. There are CD and zine reviews, featured band reviews, and a story about a punk rock house in Pittsburgh called 300 Orchard Place. [P.O. Box 2251 | Monroe, MI 48161 | uprising@email.com]

Who Will Pay the Royalties for the Voices in My Head & Other Poems

by Christopher Robin

This is a pretty DIY poetry book by the same person who writes Zen Baby zine, Christopher Robin. The whole thing pretty much looks like a really clean, really thick half-sized zine. There are somewhere around fifty poems in this book, each one taking up about one full page. The topics are diverse, and cover almost everything imaginable, on a relatively personal level. The entire thing is pretty interesting, especially if you're really into underground/independent poetry, which I'm not really. Christopher is pretty good, and definitely creative. I'm always impressed with something like this, given how it takes a whole lot of time, energy, and devotion to put together a DIY self-published book. If you're into that kind of thing, this is a pretty good example, worth checking out. [\$6 to: Paved & Unpaved Hwy's Publications | P.O. Box 1611 | Santa Cruz, CA 95061]

Zen Baby #7



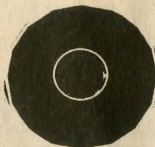
\$1? | 36 pgs | half-sized | copied

This is a very busy-looking 'zine with words from at least five different sources cut and pasted onto each page. Most of the writing, which makes up the bulk of the content, is submitted poetry, and some written by editor Christopher Robin. There is also a rather lengthy mail interview with Morgan Connery - a transgender activist. When it comes down to it, the layout is hard to see through, but looks good with a hard glance. Check it out if you're into poetry. [c/o Christopher Robin | P.O. Box 1611 | Santa Cruz, CA 95061]

Zen Baby #8

\$1? | 52 pgs | half-sized | copied

The newest issue of Zen Baby appears to be, in my opinion, significantly better than the last issue. Number eight contains a lot more writing from editor Christopher Robin, and slightly less submitted poetry, which is probably a better move, seeing as how others' writing seems somewhat out of place in this intensely personal and artistic zine. The layout is still very busy for this issue, but I'd say with better taste. There are also a lot of pages in this issue devoted to Christopher's story of attending an anarchist book fair in San Francisco. [c/o Christopher Robin | P.O. Box 1611 | Santa Cruz, CA 95061]



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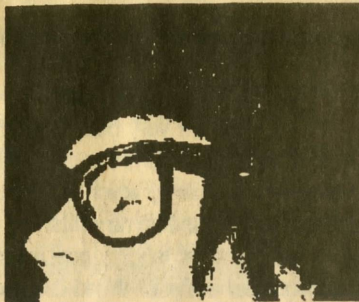
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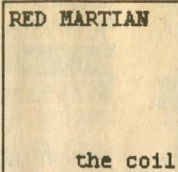


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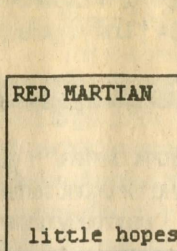
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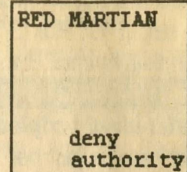
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the hope of the possibility

i should have known better. i did know better. so why did i end up feeling like a crazed teenage girl? i should have noticed that look in his eyes. but as the years pass, i notice myself falling for every trick. and...he smiled at me. he talked to me. he was interesting. he was nice. he simply leaned across from behind the bar- touched my hand, looked into my eyes and smiled. unbelievable. at the age of twenty five (which i'm constantly reminded is, in fact, a quarter of a century old)...even at this age, i still find myself falling into love with everyone who smiles and makes me listen.

but wasn't it obvious? things were not as they seemed and maybe more importantly- things were exactly as they were. we spent the night together. a night full of debauchery and infidelity. what did i expect? of course he would retreat. of course he'd stop calling. how could i expect anything otherwise? after all, it was one night. but- how do i explain the way our conversation rolled over top of one another or how it felt to share a bed- warning ourselves of the dangers of touching?

and as if i haven't learned a damn thing in all my years...there i was a week later, letting my movements, thoughts and smiles be carefully dictated and altered by his memory. and it was me...only me who felt anything that night. and i'm just sitting in some coffeehouse that blasts folk music from its speakers...sitting here wondering...whats the purpose of this constant heartbreak? why haven't i learned to be as cold as the others? not allowing myself to imagine or feel beyond the obvious? why do i continue to offer up my wrists with the plea to bleed me to death?

i've learned that a kiss isn't a promise. an embrace isn't anything but a passing moment. but maybe i've decided to learn that more importantly, a kiss is a hope of the promise. the hope of the promise of the possibility that i might have found someone to share a bed with. someone to talk with until we both pass out. someone to laugh out loud with. and this is what i still know. that without the hope. the endless nights of searching. the days of hit-and-miss. all these experiences would turn me from realizing the possibilities that lie around me.

so. i don't hate him. and i'm glad that we took that ride. because at least for a few days, i felt ridiculous. i felt vulnerable. i felt stupid and naive. i felt the joy that comes simultaneously with the anxiety. the one that arrives before the impact of any great love. and it honestly felt nice to feel it all again.

-katherine everhart

worth more than a review.

the lot six



Let's talk rock.

Either I'm too quick to claim a band to be revolutionary, or I'm working on the assumption that the title is too great to hand away too readily. Regardless, I don't feel bad at all in my decision that Boston's The Lot Six come pretty damn close.

Take five guys that know damn well how to rock hard enough to create a musical carnival composed of equal parts innovation and emotion. Also take the time of introduction; the time of unveiling of this record. Sweaty spring nights and the rebirth of life following an insanely stagnant winter. The result is The Lot Six; specifically, "the code mode," their latest EP on Espo Records.

Innovative punk rock influenced music like The Lot Six couldn't have come at a better time for me. This short record pounded in my upstairs bedroom at exactly the same time that Spring came to Virginia. Music becomes my seasons and periods of life; this is absolutely undisputable. And so the energy that is The Lot Six signaled the excitement of approaching warmth, of approaching summer, and most importantly, the new-found abundance of energy. The Lot Six became my Spring.

SONG: "Swimming With Sharks"

The third on the EP, "Swimming With Sharks" starts off with a highly jazz-influenced rocky beat that continues throughout the entire song. The song is relatively drum-heavy, as the drums, coupled with the thick and chunky guitars carry much of the melody throughout the song. The vocals are better on this song than on any of The Lot Six's others; melodic and forceful, they reach peaks close to screams, and valleys close to whispers.

INSTRUMENTS:

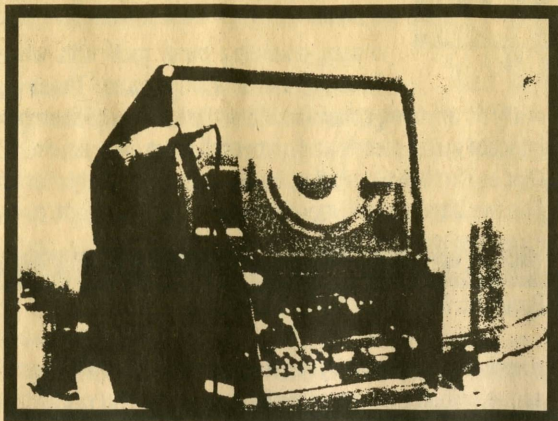
Aside from the typical band line-up of guitars, drums, and a bass, The Lot Six cleverly employs the use of more abstract percussion along the lines of a triangle and tambourine. Also added to the melody are an electric piano and trumpet. The trumpet is played almost discreetly, most noticeable on the second song "This is Coincidence" as it pulls through a lull in the music playing a gurgly jazz-like note some distance away. Well used additions, for sure.

WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY:

"I haven't written anything in a really long time, except for lyrics, little notes to myself, and requests for days off work, and now here I am, in Boston, in my friend's room, sitting down, smoking a cigarette, and not only do I have to write something, but I have to write something about the band I play in, which really seems kind of difficult. The first thing that comes to mind when I think of The Lot Six is music. I love music, I would die for music, my whole life is music. It's been there for me when I've been happy and when I've been sad. It's been the one constant, the one thing I can depend on. It has taught me understanding and given me hope. I kind of feel in debt to music, I guess this band is my way of paying it back, giving back to something that has given me so much. Just trying to write the best songs we can and to play a live show as hard and as tight as we can. The next thing I think of is friendship and how lucky I am that I play in a band with my best friends in the entire world. The people I can tell anything to, the people I understand, which makes The Lot Six feel more like a serious relationship sometimes. We have our ups and downs, we love and we hate. We have been together for two years, I guess that's a pretty serious commitment, but it also feels like it's just the beginning. I guess we just want people to find some sort of acceptance in our music, the way that we have all found that in other bands. To have something to relate to, and find comfort in... the soundtrack to your happy days and your sad days. It all really boils down to writing the best songs we can, sticking to what we know and just being five normal guys that are trying to get through it like everyone else."

-dave cave, boston MA 2001.

CONTACT: via Espo Records: P.O. Box 63 | Allston, MA 02134 | www.esporecords.com



21 Rest "20/20"

RATING: X ½

21 Rest, hailing from San Diego, plays a brand of relationship rock that I haven't heard much from in quite some time. And further, I can't deny the fact that this entire CD, and band in general, just weirds me out a little. I'll never look with seriousness at the picture on the back of the CD where the lead singer clearly takes the opportunity to passively show his enormous biceps. Weak guitars and very vocals-centered melodies make the ears nothing but tired. There really isn't very much in the way of dynamics, even from song to song, and nothing stands out in any of them. Aside from all of this, they do list good influences, so perhaps with time they'll rear their heads more clearly. [c/o Weston Boucher | 17837 Valle De Lobo Dr. | San Diego, CA 92064]

Age of Ruin "Black Sands of the Hourglass"

RATING: X

And once again, I can't quite get used to the sound of burping on a digital recording. What kills me is that when, though rare, the guy doesn't growl so much, he actually has a great, strong singing voice that I'd still consider tough enough to be in a band called Age of Ruin. The record drones together, with the exception of their one great song, "Angel Dusted Dreamlock" that is an acoustic ballad with a great tempo and melody. And even when the acoustic solo intro is over, the guitar lines contain a similar amount of melody for a change, and further, vocals are left out of this song. Overall, these guys will find a nice home within the genre, but it is unlikely that I'll ever thoroughly enjoy anything else they find there.

[www.darkmoonempire.com/ageofruin]

AM Stereo "Suffocation Town"

Intelligent Records | RATING: XXX ½

Imagine, please, a type of indie rock that has in it a surprisingly comfortable stadium-like sound, a too-sunny and hot southern rock and roll feel, and a combination of thick guitars and melodic vocals. It's likely that the band you begin to imagine is something like AM Stereo. Everything on this record somehow contains an element of energy, even the softer parts of songs. The choruses to every song somehow remind me of the last chorus of the last song of a great band's second encore. Surprisingly, these guys

music reviews



are from Massachusetts. I would have definitely guessed South Carolina, for sure. The only downside to this record, really, is that this sort of sound (and feeling) get's a little bit stale around the center of the disc. That aside, these guys definitely have some real talent, and are pretty fun to listen to. With that in mind, along with their abundance of energy, I highly doubt they put on a bad live show.

ASD "when people fly" demo tape

RATING: XX ½

Sort of a mixture of ska, punk, and indie rock, ASD isn't all bad. My only real complaint is that the music tends to drone on a little bit overall; this seems to be a result of both the recording quality and the recording format (that being cassette). Nothing really stands out on the demo, but that's not to say that the general musicianship is poor. Though there are some melody-change difficulties, for the most part the band proves to be fairly solid. I'm assuming the members are young, in which case improvement is almost definite, and with most kinks worked out already, a full length or EP down the road will surely have promise.

Bedford / The SuperEighteen / Sometimes 7 / Flotation Walls 4 way split CD

Grub Records | RATING: XX

I can't quite figure out if this is a good idea or not. Four bands on one CD is either a great combination or two bands over the deep end. Bedford plays the first five tracks of this CD. They have a mediocre pop/punk sound with some better parts here and there. The SuperEighteen is better, combining crisp and steady vocals with punk and rock guitar spots. Sometimes 7 is also not bad, with a more crisp and melodic punk sound. The Flotation Walls bring up the back end of the CD and combine submissive guitars with very thick moog sounds and sometimes good vocals. Pretty interesting stuff, but also surprising that it ended up on the same CD as these other guys. Overall, the bands aren't too bad, but it's the concept I feel sort of iffy about. More than two bands on a split record tends to lose effectiveness and personality. Starts to turn into a compilation.

The Caribbean "Verse by Verse"

Endearing Records | RATING: XXXX

This three piece, each living in a different state (Maryland, Kentucky, D.C. respectively), play very mellow rock with a solid beat behind the melodies. The vocals are melodic, though almost weak. However, this tends to mix very well with the melodies, which are all also relatively thin and mellow. But, the melodies are indeed filled with steady and solid beats that act as a nice contrast to the great deal of sing-songy vocals. The drum work is pretty technical, and almost sounds synthesized. (I'm not ruling out the possibility, though it obviously isn't on a number of songs). There are a slew of other recorded in sounds that both increase the depth of the sound as well as induce more melody. These guys are tight. For fans of mellow Deep Elm Records style rock as well as bands along the same lines as Kent.

Choke "Needless to Say"

Smallman Records | RATING: XXX

Though this was released sometime in 1997 or 1998, Choke still seems to be a very popular and well-respected band in their native Canada. At first listen, their sound comes off as little more than speedy, youthful punk rock. But upon closer examination, it becomes more apparent that these guys truly do mix pieces of rock and pop in with their music. Crisp vocals that lack the nasal twang found on most punk records remain strong throughout, and the energy packed onto this disc is almost amazing. Tight, fast, guitar lines match the punchy drums with heavy chords and real good riffs. But, though they're good, I can't listen to this too much without getting impatient and bored. They get points for execution.

Close Call "Too Close"

Espo Records | RATING: XX ½

Close Call plays tight, fast hardcore with group choruses and other remnants of old school fire. Though they are fairly good at what they're doing on this record, I honestly don't care for them too much. The mixing isn't too great and instead of allowing the band to sound as big as they can, I'm pretty sure this forces them to sound more bland and meshes all instruments together more than necessary. Upon close examination, the guitar lines are filled with hooks and tight riffs, but the vocals sound too low and musty to make much of an impact. Next time maybe.

Crash Smash Explode 7"

Amendment Records | RATING: XXXX

This is some more great stuff that is exactly what I've been craving lately. A relatively seasoned Virginia Beach band, these guys play a dynamic mixture of thick rock with heavy punk and hardcore influences. The vocals are somewhat screamy at times, directly proportional to the music itself. The drumlines are amazingly complex and carry a lot of the melody. My favorite song on this 7" is definitely "Zombie Lights" as it combines more dynamics, rhythm and melody into all corners of the music. I only wish this was a full length so I could hear some more rock.

Cripple Kid / the Little Dipper split CD

Microcosm Records | RATING: XX ½

Microcosm Records is prolific. This new CD is a split between two relatively mediocre punk bands. Cripple Kid, who takes the first five tracks on this record, isn't necessarily bad. Scratchy,



muggy-sounding punk rock with whiny guitar lines and lots of fat bass parts. These guys don't really do anything special until their last song, which employs more intricate guitar pieces and an overall more crisp sound. The Little Dipper is relatively similar, though maybe slightly more melodic. The two bands fit well together on this CD, and worth checking out if you like raw, rockish punk. It's not bad.

Death On Wednesday "Buying The Lie"

SideCho Records | RATING: XXXX

Produced by Trever Keith of Face to Face, it's no surprise that Death On Wednesday contains a slight Face to Face-esque twinge. However, right now I'm feeling pretty tired of the Face to Face sound, and I definitely like Death On Wednesday better. To create a sound slightly similar also to old school early British punk rock, this three piece plays around with minutely reverberated vocals with a European accent, on top of thick, quick, and dynamic melodies. "Buying the Lie" is an interesting combination and/or juxtaposition of new school west coast punk rock a la Face to Face and old school pre-punk rock a la The Clash. The result is something that I've never quite heard before, and am pleased to. Sounds like a serious version of the Before You Were Punk Vagrant Records compilations.

Face to Face "Standards and Practices"

Vagrant Records | RATING: XXX

If you get past the relatively uninteresting-looking cover to Face to Face's newest collection of songs, you delve into ten cover tracks of some of the best songs from some of the best bands that did or are performing. For example, The Smiths, Jawbreaker, Fugazi, and The Ramones, just to name a few. For the most part, these guys do a pretty good job of re-playing the songs, as well as adding a few new twists. As can be expected, the songs end up sounding very Face to Face-ish, and by the end of the CD, a lot of the flavor seems to become lost. But, if you are into both Face to Face, and some of the bands mentioned above, you'll likely revere this record.

The Fairlanes "Welcome To Nowhere"

Suburban Home Records | RATING: XXX

Seeing as how many of the zines I read come from the Colorado area, as does this band, I have spent the last six months or more hearing a lot of good things about The Fairlanes. Unfortunately, I don't think I am as impressed as some of my contemporaries are. Their sound isn't necessarily new or shockingly well done. They're good, mind you, just a little along the lines of the status quo. Generally speaking, The Fairlanes play rock-heavy punk, with a thick sound. The vocals are strong, quick, and only slightly snotty. The nice thing about the vocals, though, is that every member of the band at one point plays a part in singing. Because of this, the songs are mixed up a little, making things a little more interesting. Not really what I'm looking for right now, but pretty much "all there" regardless.

Five Eight "The Good Nurse"

Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXX

Though I've found that most of the records that Deep



crash smash explode



Elm has been releasing lately all seem to be somewhat undistinguishable and tend to fall into the marketable category of emo, Five Eight really does mix things up a little bit more than other members of the label roster. The record is mixed amazingly well, with every range of sound possible mixed in. Simple, high guitar lines add to the base of the melody, and airy drums remind me of Elliott. Pianos, saxophones, and other instruments are likely to be heard submissively throughout instrumental sections of the songs. The vocals, though crisp, are almost forgettable, which could prove to be Five Eight's major flaw. Unfortunately, I don't think this record carries enough strength to gain interest, and will likely fall through the cracks.

Flinch "Dyslexic Rhino + Flesh Enema"

RATING: ½

Poorly recorded, almost lacking pre-meditation, Flinch's CD, which contains two of their EP's, isn't good. Flinch probably falls most effortlessly in the street punk genre, with an old school edge. The male vocals are gruffy and half-screamy. The female vocals (found on just a few songs on the first half of the CD) are slightly better but also slightly monologue. With two guitars, this might be the best area of their music. The rhythm guitar plays repetitive beats parallel to bass and drums, but the lead guitar does have some better solos. I can't enjoy this record. [13213 Dairymaid Dr. | Apt. T-2 | Germantown, MD 20878 | BBGMM1@aol.com]

Gameface "Always On"

Revelation Records | RATING: XX ½

Another installment in a huge line of releases from a very prolific band. True, Gameface doesn't suck, but they've never really been my cup of tea. I have never been able to pinpoint exactly what it is that I don't particularly care for about these guys, but something about the melodies, and the chord progressions, all seem too similar, too droning. The rare break in melody proves to be the only times that I awake from the coma that is induced by this record and listen with anticipation for a new sound. The vocals also do very little for me. Jeff Caudill isn't a bad singer, but he rarely exercises any sound different from the grungy, twangy, though strong vocals that are present on almost all Gameface records. On this record, "Balance" is one of the only songs where Caudill drops down and loses his almost forced throaty voice. It's my favorite song, to say the least.

Gotohells "Rock n Roll America"

Vagrant Records | RATING: XX ½

Think eighties hard rock meets a much less classy Ramones, and you might be on your way to the Gotohells. After a few listens, the record grows on me only slightly, which is unfortunate because in my opinion it had a lot of growing to do. The melodies are fast-paced and guitar heavy, with melodic but super-tough vocals beside them. As the album progresses, you can pick up a lot more on the eighties hard rock influence. If you heard some of the songs on an eighties rock compilation CD, they would hardly stick out. Not too bad, but not all that great. Worthy of credit for landing in the almost long-since-navigated waters of blatantly

eighties rock and roll.

Henry "Sounds Like"

Reticulated Records | RATING: XXX

Henry's "Sounds Like" is probably one of the very few records that both my father and I could equally enjoy. These aging punk rockers with impressive resumes (ex Ground Zero, and bands that in their day opened for the likes of Duran Duran) have mixed together their every last influence to create a bluesy, jazzy, bar-rock collection. With monotone but very crisp vocals and complex, ever-changing guitar lines, these four kids can boast a well-recorded record complete with jazzy breakdowns and a whole slew of songs to prove it on (this disc contains twenty). Though it's possible for this record to wear thin on me, thank god somebody is doing middle aged men some justice.

Imbroco "Are You My Lionkiller?"

Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXX ½

Consisting of ex- and current members of bands such as Pop Unknown, Mineral, and The Gloria Record, Imbroco will likely please most fans of the past bands; however, with a completely different sound. Imbroco sounds nothing like Mineral or The Gloria Record (who both fell along the mellow, virtually vocal-less line of things). Instead, Imbroco plays rock that is often comparable to Five Eight or Seven Storey Mountain.

Rocking harder for the most part, but with plenty of wimpy vocals floating out from behind murky rock outs. An occasional mellow song seems to work better. Nothing at all sticks out about this record, save from the members' resumes. It's a damn shame too, because I really enjoyed both Mineral and The Gloria Record. And Pop Unknown.

Junction 18 "This Vicious Cycle"

Fearless Records | RATING: XXXX

Junction 18 is a relatively new band on Fearless Records. This release—I'm pretty sure it's their first full length—displays a pretty good version of an almost typical brand of music. That brand being guitar and vocal-heavy emotional rock with punk rock influences. The vocals are strong and melodic, and on almost all occasions they are definitely meaty enough to stand next to the melodies. This being a five-

piece, the two guitars really add a lot to the melody, reminding me a little bit of what it would sound like if Fastbreak's "Whenever You're Ready" were to meet Get Up Kids' "Four Minute Mile." Surprisingly, for this type of music, these guys really *aren't* all that catchy; this can be a very good or not so good thing, depending on who it is you ask. Also easy to pick up on throughout "This Vicious Cycle" is the pleasant hint of old school punk rock found in both the vocals and the melodies. Well done.

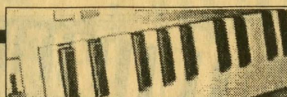
Kicked in the Head "Thick As Thieves"

RATING: XXX ½

This stuff is more difficult to place than I thought it would be. I expected good old school straightforward hardcore, but instead what I've found is a thick mixture of punk and 80's rock guitar sounds, rock breakdowns coupled with hardcore elements

RATING SYSTEM

X = not very good
XX = alright
XXX = good
XXXX = great
XXXXX = revolutionary



throughout. This interesting genre salad is a pleasant and new **approach, but at times I think the sound lacks enough real bite to hook me into it. But you all know how fond I am of old school hardcore**, and it's almost the only way I'll have it. But these guys put a nice twist on things, and what they're doing seems to be respectable. But it is long record, and it's flavor loses its punch, without doubt. [Kicked in the Head | 202 Whitwell Street | Quincy, MA 02169 | www.kickedinthehead.com]
Last Man Laughing "...when everything fell..." 7"

RATING: XXXX ½

Apparently somebody decided to send me some music I'd be into. This is nice. Pretty screamy (though stomachable) dynamic hard rock with obvious hardcore and punk rock influence. The bass plays a prominent role in the melodies while vocals are sung, while the guitar takes a definite lead during periodic instrumental rock-outs. "Autumn" combines slightly more singy vocals and a great little guitar line that turns into powerful and cathartic spurts of rock and roll through electricity. Impressive. Got any more? [c/o Matt | 750 Locust St. | Denver, PA 17517 | lastmanlaughing@hotmail.com]

Last Stand "Any Battle Won"

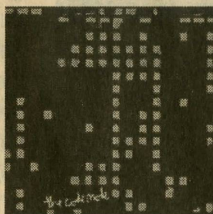
One Way Productions | RATING: XXX ½

With energy and accuracy, Last Stand combines old school hardcore sounds with new wave California punk rock. Tight guitar riffs and breakdowns, solid bass and drums, and gruff but melodic vocals all mix together on this relatively short CD. At times, the vocalist (and subsequently the entire band's sound) remind me greatly of Down By Law, one of my favorite solid punk bands. Unfortunately, upon closer examination of the lyrics, their third song couldn't be worse off in that department, "Drinking beer and playing punk rock, I found that very hard to beat." Thankfully, other songs show improvements. From swirlingly tight guitar lines to matured-over punk rock vocals, I'm honestly surprised that in their seventeen year history, a bigger label hasn't picked them up.

The Lot Six "the code mode"

Espo Records | RATING: XXXXX

Three days after first receiving this CD for review, I've listened to it nearly thirty times and completely fallen in love with it. The Lot Six play the perfect sound for me right now. It's springtime, and I'm energetic and excited, and the sound these guys create is the perfect backdrop for that. They've got enthusiasm, innovation, excitement, and energy. Combining tough but melodic vocals, good choruses "the code mode" by the lot and tight, noisy melodies, these guys put six together a brand of art rock and roll with obvious hardcore influences. Amazing. You'd never guess there's only four songs on this record.



The Lot Six "the hot spot" 7"

Espo Records | RATING: XXXX ½

I think it's important to remember that I'm reviewing this record *after* I've heard the EP, reviewed above. Whether or not you think that is important, this 7" really is almost as good as the EP. It contains a great mix of punkish rock and a little bit more melody than found on "the code mode." I think the guitar work on this 7" is

a lot different than on the EP also; here the guitars play a different part of the melody, they more often visit the area of thin, note-by-note, high pitched guitar lines. Overall, the 7" is definitely more melodic than the EP, and slightly less dynamic. Regardless, both are definitely worth picking up.

Marion Delgado "three songs" CD

Bug Records | RATING: XXXX

This Richmond four piece plays a brand of melodic punk-influenced rock that sits well with me for the most part. Marion Delgado is dynamic, and fairly clean. The vocals, for the most part, remain relatively melodic, and steady, though as the music heightens in energy, so do the vocals, peaking with the occasional scream. The distortionless sections contain nice guitar and bass lines, with cymbal-heavy drums in the rear.



marion delgado

The first song, "Painted Stones

And Marigolds," may be their best representation, as it combines almost all of the band's positive qualities. Marion Delgado is similar to Pilots v Aeroplanes, but a little more mature, and a little rougher. [www.mariondelgado.com]

The Missing 23rd "Ctrl+Alt+Del"

Sessions Records | RATING: XXX

If you close your eyes so as to ignore the name of this band, as well as the album title, you're much more likely to enjoy their music, which isn't bad at all. Mixing DC-style hardcore with old school punk rock, these guys are very likely to impress quite a few people. The sound is pretty thick, but with nice breakdowns and a little bit of added dynamicism that helps carry the songs, and break up the monofony that could ensue otherwise. One of the most impressive things about this band is that there is only one guitar, which is a quality one wouldn't be likely to guess at first listen, since the music is so thick. The vocals are melodic and strong, bordering spirited screams, but also given the opportunity to calm down while paralleled with the occasional calm sides and breaks in the melodies. Pretty good.

The Modifiers "Show and Tell"

Intelligent Records | RATING: X ½

This is some highly mediocre rock music from Massachusetts. There's absolutely nothing that sticks out on this record; everything about it is completely regular. The vocals hide in between the drums and the guitars so as to appear almost non-existent, or, perhaps to merely blend too much with the music. Because the tempo is fairly slow throughout the record, it almost drags on. For an eleven song record, the good to bad song ratio is terribly low. The only song that consists of something different is the fifth, "tonight," where the bass and drums play a relatively beaty somewhat Violent Femmes-esque melody as the intro and is continued throughout the song. This record is likely to put you into a coma.

No Justice "Still Fighting" 7"

UnderEstimated Records | RATING: XX

Straightforward, old school and youth crew

influenced hardcore, No Justice seems to have messed it up somewhere along the line. Perhaps it's the recording quality, but I feel safe in saying that these guys would come off a lot better if the vocals weren't so loud. I can pick up on the good guitar work and I like the group



Rose of Sharon

choruses a lot (naturally), but the vocals stand out too much and sound like they aren't mixed quite right because the lyrics sound like they're sung with a swollen tongue. Aside from that, this four piece has a lot of energy and some nice tempo changes and speedy drum work in the middle of songs.

No Motiv "Diagram For Healing"

Vagrant Records | RATING: XXXX

For some reason when I found out that No Motiv would be putting out a new record on Vagrant, I was expecting something absolutely amazing; something that contained all of the elements in "And the Sadness Prevails" that I loved, and a slew of new stuff that would just make the record stick out. Unfortunately, though "Diagram For Healing" *does* contain a lot of the great elements found on their last full length, that is almost all there is. Granted, this still makes the record good, it just also makes the record surprisingly similar to their last. The music is the same great foggy-sounding rock-heavy punk with crisp melodic vocals and well-mixed guitars and drums that combine to create solid chunky punkish rock beats. One obvious plus is that the vocals seem to be bolder, a little more ballsy, which definitely adds to the amount of energy found on the record. If anything "Diagram For Healing" is almost entirely an extension of "And the Sadness Prevails." Great for veteran fans, though I would have liked to see these guys mix things up a bit more.

Organic 7"

Microcosm Records | RATING: XXX ½

I guess it's been too long since I heard a powerful combination of poppy hardcore and punk rock. Organic provides the mixture. Whether or not I'll be able to continue to enjoy the 7" is, however, questionable. There are some good qualities. There are two vocalists, at times singing separately, and at other times singing on top of each other in a round-like fashion. This is a good thing, though one of the singers has a near-typical sounding nasal pop punk voice. The guitar work is choppy but the beats mix well with the rock. The song "Broken" has an amazing and dynamic melody. Bass and snare heavy softer parts lead up to guitar heavy and vocal-less breakdowns. Pretty nice stuff. Definitely good to listen to for a change. I look forward to an LP (I think they should stay on vinyl, for I believe it adds a crucial textured sound necessary for the type of stuff they're playing).

The Purpose "art as a weapon" 7"

Underestimated Records | RATING: XXX ½

The Purpose put together a style of melodic hardcore with heavy rock influences that definitely stands out above most bands along the same lines. Four short songs on this record prove that these five guys can mix together clean and strong rock vocals with

hardcore guitar stylings and punkish rock drum beats. Solid vocals and punky hardcore music.

I'm relatively impressed. Innovative hardcore is something to be more and more respected as of late. I'd say they're pulling it off.

Red Letter Day "The Best of 1985-1999"

Zip Records | RATING: XXX

Red Letter Day is supposedly a relatively classic, widely-admired punk rock band from the mid eighties. I've never heard of them. I don't think they are that great. Imagine all of your favorite British punk rock bands from the eighties; the ones that grew out of The Clash and other seeds in the genre. Now imagine a band similar to these, though slightly mediocre. Red Letter Day's anthology on Zip Records makes it clear that the band plays well enough, and sounds good enough, but isn't quite as good as the real classics. Granted, the guitar work at times is amazing, with dizzying solos and some pretty great riffs. There are other highlights as well, without doubt. But overall, if you don't already really like Red Letter Day, it's unlikely that this record will change your mind. For me, all this really does is add one more band to my encyclopedia listing for late eighties European punk rock.

ReJX "300 Orchard Place"

Uprising! Records | RATING: XX

Very fast-paced, poppy punk rock with snotty vocals and nonsense lyrics. Overall, the stuff isn't all that bad, but the ReJX just play a brand of music that I've never really enjoyed, especially not at this point in my life. The guitars are chunky and tight. The vocals are whiny, loud, and definitely wear on you after a short while. There are a couple songs on this record that are worth hearing for most people, but as far as I'm concerned, most of this just doesn't sit well with me. For fans of west coast speedy pop punk.

Right Brigade s/t CD

Revelation Records | RATING: XXX

I honestly think that it's pretty unfortunate how much these guys don't seem to stand out as far as I'm concerned. Right Brigade is definitely good, and the music they play is, also, good, but they don't seem to introduce anything new into the genre of heavy hardcore. Perhaps that is far from their goal. Regardless, this Boston five mixes straightforward, thick guitars, fast drums, and melodically shouted vocals to create fairly chunky hardcore. The lyrics and vocals both tend to land along the slightly pissed-off lines. Well-mixed, well-played, and likely to be well-taken, but there's nothing surprising on this record. But it does make me feel a little nostalgic, because the entire thing sort of reminds me of the early nineties hardcore via Revelation that my brother used to like.

Rocket from the Crypt "Group Sounds"

Vagrant Records | RATING: XXX ½

Recorded in their own recording studio, Rocket from the Crypt's "Group Sounds" seems, at first, an unlikely addition to the Vagrant Records roster. However, after a few listens, its placement seems a lot more understandable. These guys have a very thick sound, with some punk influences as far as tempo and vocals go, but the end result is something more along the lines of loud, full, energetic rock and roll. Additionally, there's pretty much an ever-present raw edge to the songs, something that somehow embodies a sound more likely to be found in the last decade, and

something that makes Rocket from the Crypt stick out for sure. These guys have a refreshingly unique sound.

**Rose of Sharon "even the air is out of tune" CDEP
Espo Records | RATING: XXXX**

With pumppy soft melodies and a very vocal-heavy overall sound, Rose of Sharon, in my books, is probably one of the better bands performing and recording right now. Though nothing extremely amazing sticks out for me on this short record, the overall product is one with talent, quality, and a very punk influenced style of rock. With pretty little guitar lines and an appropriately filled back end, the harmonies are fairly mellow and the slightly spoken vocals at times create a lazy rock that feels good with sunny winter mornings or late spring nights. My only complaint is that I've been itching for something with a little more energy and dynamicism, which isn't often found on this relatively even keel record. But, I guess that's more my fault than their's. Definitely worth checking out.

**Secret Service / Disney Violence split 7"
Goodbye Blue Skies Records | RATING: XXX**

These are two south florida bands with relatively original and pleasing sounds. Secret Service plays pretty rough and hard sounding punk and hardcore influenced rock with pretty melodic vocals. It's hard to get past the terrible recording, but somehow I can feel assured that there's some music behind it all with potential quality. I like the rarely-seen mixture of frantic and energetic melodies behind sweet vocals. Disney Violence plays a more obviously hardcore sound with vocals that lie on the edge of screaming (sometimes a downer) and relatively dynamic melodies. Lots of noise here, like the opposite side of the record, but with pretty nice sounding guitar work that sticks out over the mush. Both band seem to have obvious promise but naturally there are some kinks to be worked out. Both in recording and execution.

**The Sissies "Look Back and Laugh"
New Disorder Records | RATING: XXX**

The first song on this record almost convinced me that I wouldn't like the entire rest of it, but I was wrong. The Sissies really aren't bad, it's just a matter of whether or not you think you'll be able to handle the music. The melodies are pretty creative, a combination of extra-poppy rock and punk beats with a drum and bass heavy tone. The vocals are pretty good, strong, and all female. Two vocalists share parts of each song, and sing on top of each other often, which makes for a fun sound, and adds to the thickness of the music. Pretty nice stuff.

**Small Brown Bike "dead reckoning"
No Idea Records | RATING: XXXX**

Small Brown Bike correctly play a combination of some of the most widely appreciated forms of music in the scene today. Combining melodic punk rock vocals and melodies with hardcore guitar lines and thumpy drums, Small Brown Bike is either punk rock, hardcore, or hard indie rock. Who knows? But they're pretty good. With solid, tough and powerful vocals, often backed by more tough and powerful vocals, makes these guys slightly similar to Hot Water Music (who, incidentally, they spent both March and April touring with). Thick and rocking guitar, bass, and drums all accent the strong vocals well. Singing along is difficult, due to the dynamicism

of the lyrical tempo, as well as the almost complete lack of choruses. However, this is an interesting move in music, a step cleaner and more melodic than Hot Water Music, though definitely a new spin on punk/hardcore.

Strength In Numbers "the youth" 7"

Underestimated Records | RATING: XX ½

Illinois youth crew hardcore with unfortunately typical vocals and melodies. Occasionally they seem to prove to have something new to offer in the way of tight bass lines that work up to power hits. The vocals are a little bit low and don't seem to sound very different. One song, "I Won't Be Content," seems to mix together the better elements of the band all at once. More dynamic vocals and melodies with pretty good guitars and group choruses. Nothing real fancy can be found on this record.

Supersleuth "...and still it beats"

Underestimated Records | RATING: XXX ½

Supersleuth seems to have been around for quite a while, considering I reviewed their last 7" back in SORE #8, and here they are again with a new full length to boast. "...and still it beats" is another good hardcore record, that definitely outshines the majority of stuff seeping into people's stereos lately in the way of hardcore. With dynamic vocals (though sometimes mixed a little too low), an occasional second vocalist, fast and full drumbeats, and solidly heavy guitar and bass combinations. There are some nice breakdowns and breaks in vocals that pick up my attention as the record proceeds through its thirteen songs. The only real problem I have with this is that as far as guitar work, nothing really stands out, which has the potential to make or break a hardcore band as far as I'm concerned. Luckily it isn't dreadful. Check this out if you're into spirited hardcore a la a few (or is it five now?) years back.

Tinkerclay "the as all get out e.p."

Bittersweet Promotions | RATING: XXX ½

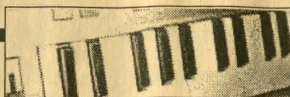
Actually originating in Suffolk, VA, Tinkerclay has a jazzy indie rock sound. The sometimes-thin guitar lines have a great deal of depth despite their lack of full chords. This is, however, not necessarily the norm. Mixed almost side by side with submissive, almost masked female (and occasionally male) vocals, the guitars take on a different, chunkier approach, while the drums accent the breakdowns. The idea of mellow and vocal-light indie rock is evident. Granted, there is some punch, though my only problem with this is the even recording quality. Unfortunately, I think on a couple of songs it inhibits a little bit more energy that would, despite the nature of the band, add some texture. Not bad. Think The Warren Commission, maybe Rainer Maria.

Together Alone "the linus sessions"

Creep Records | RATING: XX ½

This is a five-piece hardcore band from Pennsylvania with a fairly basic sound, though further from terrible than from good. Vocals are tight and tough, neither screamy nor extremely melodic. The music is meaty, with thick basslines and a somewhat meshed together sound of guitar and drums. Nothing sticks out very sharply, but overall, I can see how fans of rockish hardcore with almost Hot Water Music-esque vocals (though not quite as dynamic) would like this.

Turnedown s/t CDEP



Sessions Recordings | RATING: XXX ½

Falling into a genre between fast rock and melodic punk rock, Turnedown plays some pretty good music on their newest release, this self-titled EP. Interestingly, the recently added singer, who appears on this record, is Joe Clements, who also sang for Fury 66, one of my favorite bands from the mid-nineties California hardcore scene. Turnedown has only a slight resemblance in sound to Fury 66, with a more melodic and west-coast sounding punk rock approach. Melodies can either be faster and harder indie rock sounding music or well-played classic punk rock. This mixture serves for an interesting combination, and overall, a very respectable sound. The guitar work is thick, dynamic, and well-done. The bass and drums complement each other for the most part, and the vocals are strong, melodic, and dynamic. For fans of punkier indie rock, and rockier punk rock. Almost a perfect medium.

The Twigs self-titled CD

Endearing Records | RATING: XXX ½

This seven year old Norwegian band puts together an echoic mixture of harmonious and thin one-note-at-a-time guitar parts and crisp but soft drum parts, all behind equally harmonious and accent-rich female vocals. Though the record tends to drone on a bit toward the end, the combination of sounds continue to stir up vivid images and memories for me, due to it's dream-like sound. Definitely for fans of bands like Coldplay, Kent, and yes, fellow labelmates the Caribbean. It should appeal to people who are mesmerized by other quiet but dynamic harmony acts as well.

The Unknown "Pop Art"

Microcosm Records | RATING: XXX

These guys play pretty speedy modern punk rock, but with a definite British influence. The melodies are quick and jumpy, with high guitar lines that dominate over the drums and bass. The vocals are pretty melodic and are sung pretty strongly. Occasionally choruses are group-sung, which adds a nice element to the almost old-school sound. There doesn't seem to be a whole lot of musical innovations going on through the course of the record, but the overall performance and product isn't bad. The recording quality, thankfully, is pretty good, so points are saved there. The greatest thing about the record, though, is that the last song is a really terrific solid punk rock instrumental with some great guitar hooks and a steady tempo that really does prove that these guys have talent.

V/A "Vagrant Records: Another Year On the Streets"

Vagrant Records | RATING: XXXX

As with most of Vagrant's compilations, this is a powerful collection of some of the better stuff that seems to be getting attention these days. Including songs from Vagrant's new lineup of such bands like: Alkaline Trio, Saves the Day, The Get Up Kids, No Motiv, Gotohells, Automatic 7, Face to Face, and others. Many songs are unreleased tracks (even those from The Get Up Kids, No Motiv, and Alkaline Trio). For the most part, these twenty tracks are relatively satisfying to hear, and the fact that the bulk of them are unreleased makes this even better. This record will give you a healthy taste of good music these days.

V/A "Digging it Up"

Grub Records | RATING: XX

I've never been extremely impressed with anything that Grub Records has put out, but this compilation seems to be a step

in the right direction, even though I don't care for most of the bands included (all twenty-nine of them). Muhammad Skali (a ska band - go figure) is terrible, and also the third band featured. Most of the bands blend together toward the middle and nothing much stands out for a while. But, this is expected with a compilation of bands that fall in a genre that one doesn't really enjoy. An up track would be Dirt Bike Annie's "Moo For Cash." After that, most of the ska songs are replaced with punk songs and the cd drones on until the end.

V/A "Disarming Violence"

Fastmusic Records | RATING: XX

This is a relatively mediocre (though lengthy) compilation of punk and hardcore bands. Though there are twenty-five different bands on this CD, and most of them are relatively well-known, the only ones that really stick out include Midtown, Deviates, A New Found Glory, Youth Brigade, Ann Baretta and Dynamite Boy. However, the most important thing about this CD is that Fastmusic Records was nice enough to put together the entire thing as a benefit for PAX, an anti gun-violence organization (www.paxusa.com), which is definitely a worthwhile cause, and something to keep in mind if deciding whether or not to check this CD out.

V/A "I Guess This Is Goodbye" Emo Diaries - Chapter 5

Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXX

Another collection of current or soon-to-be Deep Elm Records bands. Nearly all of the bands included are ones that I've either never heard before, or never heard of before, with the exception of the White Octave. However, all tracks are previously unreleased and there really are some bands' songs that stick out pretty well on this collection of twelve. Reubens Accomplice mixes poppy and rocky vocals to create a pleasing sound. Both Billy and Eniac combine mellow rain-like sounds with powerful dynamicism to create sounds along the lines of more melodic Mineral or The Gloria Record. Overall, this might just be the first Emo Diaries CD that sounds good as well as different, while still retaining a very Deep Elm style of indie rock.

V/A "No-Fi Trash"

Floppy Cow Records | RATING: XXX ½

This is a new record label out of Switzerland, and if this is any representation of the type of bands they plan to release, they'll be set pretty well, for sure. This record contains twenty-eight tracks from some of the biggest and best bands in the punk rock community right now. To name just a few: The Promise Ring, Midtown, The Anniversary, Hot Water Music, No Motiv, Six Going on Seven, A New Found Glory, The Get Up Kids, and plenty of other big names. I'm pretty sure that all tracks are previously released, though, at least the ones from the bands I knew were. I imagine that this is planned to be a way to hype up Floppy Cow Records, but I also don't doubt that it will be successful. A strong compilation; more like a mix tape of some of my favorite bands. Distributed exclusively in the U.S. by Suburban Home Records. [see Suburban Home Records]

V/A "Out of Step Records - Bottled Punk"

Out of Step Records | RATING:

This is a pretty extensive punk rock compilation including a lot of smaller new bands that seem to be playing a lot of NOFX-



esque stuff throughout the thirty tracks (and thirty different bands on this CD). Granted there are some bigger names on here such as Anti-Flag and others. The overall concept is pretty nice, this seems like it would be pretty cheap if not free, and it's a great way to get a lot of different bands a lot of attention. It's also a great way for someone new to the genre to get their hands on some new, different bands. There is definitely a lot on this record as far as listening goes, but the majority of these bands really do resemble each other in sound, and most have an obvious NOFX, early Pennywise influence. However, the whole idea of supporting D.I.Y. bands is a good one, and for that this should be on anyone's list that is really into this kind of music.

V/A "Pop & Circumstance"

Eskimo Kiss Records | RATING: XXX ½

This is an independent compilation of solid, innovative rock music. Indie rock in the true sense of the word. There are nineteen different bands featured on this record, all of which originate from Atlantic coast states including New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina; unfortunately excluding Virginia altogether. Most of the acts contain a similar sound; that being sort of thin and spacy, mellow tunes with a hint of samples as part of the melodies, and a whole lot of simple guitar lines and dull vocals. There are, though, among the nineteen, some songs that are relatively upbeat and stand out against the rest. Almost all of the bands will be of interest to anyone who has a love affair with completely disconnected indie rock. Though I can't quite figure out if this record is insanely depressing or hugely encouraging, I'd take it on a road trip, for sure.

V/A "Re-Direction"

Polyvinyl Records | RATING: XXX ½

This is a pretty decent compilation/sampler from Polyvinyl Records that features some of the better names in punk rock-influenced indie rock these days. Some of the bigger names include Rainer Maria, American Football, Radio Flyer, Braid, AM/FM, Hey Mercedes, and more. For me, this was my first recorded experience with some of these bands, and so it really was a good way for me to sample a lot of what I've been hearing a lot about lately. American Football's song "Never Meant" was pretty impressive, as was Paris, Texas' "Le Tigre." With nineteen well-recorded tracks, this is a good sample of Polyvinyl rock music, a good way to hear some of the favorites.

V/A "Twinkie Legal Defense Fund"

Their Old Stuff Is Better | RATING: XX

This compilation contains twenty-one tracks from a bunch of smaller punk and scratchy rock bands. None of the bands are ones that I've heard of, so there wasn't any initial excitement about the record. Interestingly enough, though, the title of this comp doesn't lie. All proceeds from this record go toward the Harvey Milk Institute. Actually, though most of the bands included somehow find their roots in punk rock, a lot of them play different styles of music. There's experimental techno, sampled beats, and all kinds of other weird stuff, as well as some indie rock that is pretty good. There isn't anything that sticks out too much, so overall the record is a little bland. But check it out if you like new music (both original and recently found).

V/A "Young Til I Die" Waggy 'zine compilation

RATING: XXX

This is a pretty good compilation that comes to us by way of Waggy 'zine, which is also a pretty good 'zine. There are twenty-eight tracks of mostly New York punk rock bands. Most of the bands are smaller ones that have yet to gain a whole lot of popularity. Despite this, most of them sound pretty good, for sure. The mixing on the CD is also pretty impressive; with most compilations, songs vary in mixing quality dramatically. Refreshingly, a lot of the bands fall into a genre of pretty tough rockish punk. Some of the big names on this record are the Bouncing Souls, who include a song called "lifetime," and Youth Brigade play "it's not like that anymore." A band called No Redeeming Social Value sings a song about a blowjob called "hard candy cock," which is perhaps on my list of absolute shit, if I had one. Overall, this is well put together, and more interesting than most of the other compilations that are coming out lately. [\$10ppd to: Waggy | c/o Gracie Martinez | 9 Black Gum Tree Lane | Kings Park, NY 11754 | waggyzine@hotmail.com]

Whippersnapper CD

Second Heaven | RATING: XX

Who was it that had the great idea to form a band that sounded exactly like three hundred other bands? I guess that was these guys' plan. Propagandhi, NOFX, and for the cleaner side of things, Face to Face, all make up the description of Whippersnapper. And yes, I can't deny that these guys are good at what they do (but is that mimicking other bands' sound?), but I also can't deny the fact that I don't like it. [www.secondheaven.com | 1-800-201-3710]

White Octave "Style No. 6312"

Deep Elm Records | RATING: XXXX

Straight from Chapel Hill, the White Octave falls on the better side of Deep Elm's releases. Think Brandtson or Imbroco meets a thick and somewhat chunky rhythm guitar to create a rough and melodic rock. Also included are some nice jazzy breakdowns, metallic-sounding basslines, and unorthodox guitar lines. Ex-Cursive guitarist Stephen Pedersen's vocals are slightly gruff, and almost tough. Definitely not bad.

Zero Down "With A Lifetime To Pay"

Fat Wreck Chords | RATING: XXX ½

Believe it or not, I don't have a huge problem with this. As soon as I got past the bad band name, cheesy album title, terrible cover art and design, I didn't mind their overall sound too much. The three members of the band have played in Strung Out, Pulley, and yes, Down By Law. The resulting sound is a combination sound of the three bands, with a little heavier influence from Down By Law. Seeing as how Down By Law may be one of my favorite punk bands, Zero Down went over surprisingly well with me. Milo, the drummer (originally of Down By Law) is jazz trained and produces complex drum beats that definitely rear their face on the majority of the songs. True, these guys are essentially a California pop punk band, but, like some others of their type, good resumes and excellent musicianship in at least one of the three areas gains them my approval. Important to remember, though, that I'll likely not listen to this often.

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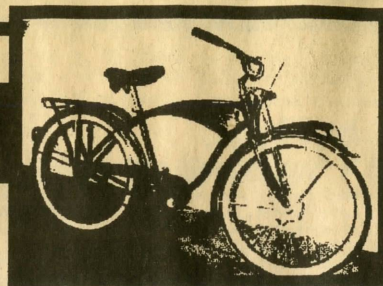


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by taylor



Put yourself here.

Spring tempts your senses, somehow you have urges, even mind-bending fantasies, of sitting outside on the Virginia grass, watching cars pass by, drinking Seattle soda, and talking with friends. Somehow you picture it just at dusk. Somehow your friends couldn't be happier, and the crust that enveloped your bodies for the winter time slowly breaks away, and conversation is good again, and spirits are high. Hopes have hope, and dreams are much more. Tomorrow seems plausible, next week painfully exciting. For it's time.

Put yourself here.

A temporary break from obligation and restrictions allows for a near-summer experience known as spring break. Four AM diners with friends, and perfectly summer-simulating weather forces you to find your shorts, wear your favorite t-shirt, and buy a pack of sunflower seeds ("because it feels right") at the seven eleven down the street. Conversations are thawing out, and buying a newspaper five seconds after they re-stock the machine tempts you to believe that somehow you've been made aware of the future, for the sun hasn't risen, and you haven't fallen, but it all still feels like yesterday even though it's today, or maybe tomorrow. These days seem to slide away, but with good reason. For, the nights are late and so are the mornings. Productivity is high, and stress is low. Days no longer feel wretched and long, but cooling and right.

Put yourself here.

The sudden post-afternoon sleep urge drives you to visit a friend you've known for quite some time at her place of employment. The department store appears to be sucking the life out of everyone inside, but the conversation lasts, and there's plenty of clothes to be folded, thankfully. Carefree conversation and carefree work. Unemployment seems appealing. Remind yourself that you're the only boy who's ever bought her dinner. Good going. You leave the store, shuffle across the parking lot. Somehow it feels better than when the air would bite you, convincing you that you were wrong to ever leave bed in the morning. Now you curse downtime, curse stagnation, for there is a life to be lived, and days to be seen. It's that important.

Put yourself here.

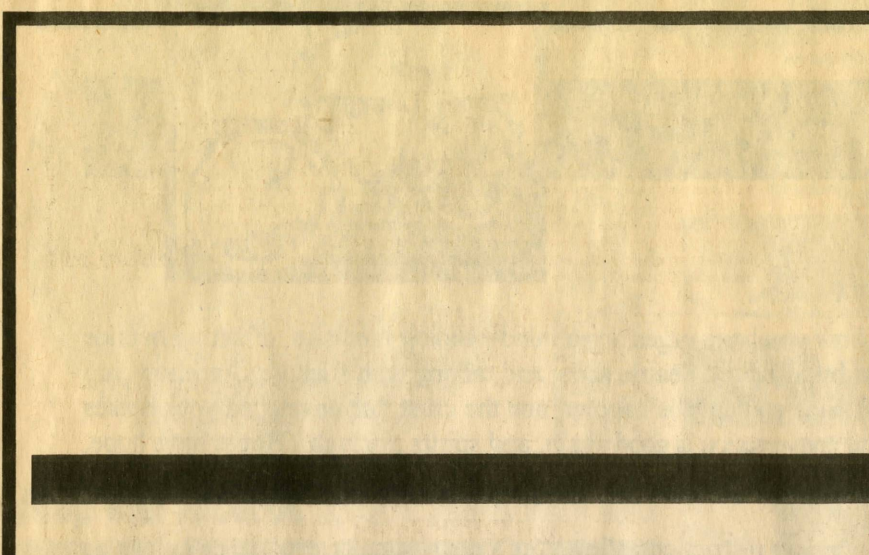
This time of year, tradition molds experiences for some, but not you. Instead, you find time on your Saturday night to balance every hour, every minute and second between everything that you love. Hard honest work with vegetation drives you home with a paycheck in your back pocket, mail in the mailbox, and that amazing dusk sunset that you love more than you think is possible. Cross the Great Neck bridge on your way home, and the symphony in your stereo crescendoes to a pinnacle, and you look to your left, your right. Later in the evening excitement and generally high spirits drive you and a few others, relatively older but somehow equal, to creatively make an angry man more angry.

Put yourself here.

An extension of the previous experience, you find yourself slightly warm and wonderfully social, among lost friends, old friends, and new friends in another one of these amazing late-night diners. Still, tradition molded the night's experience for a huge majority of the population, but not you. You watch them with their evening attire, you thank yourself for being who you are, for the first time in maybe years. Conversation is endless, conversation is collectivist, and it couldn't feel better, you're sure. You realize it's the best you've felt in a long time, so you let no self-destructive habit habitually slaughter your morale, instead, it is an extension of the night, a necessary accessory, and it is welcomed. You are welcomed. The night is welcomed.

Put yourself here.

Right now, I'm just two weeks away from a significantly smaller amount of work, window open, school in the morning but absolutely no sense of requirement to it. Lights are dim and I can hear the trees outside, when the symphony that decorates my garage-hovering bedroom dies slightly. Air is fresh.



night drive

BY CHAD REDDEN

Jump in the car, there's nothing else to do tonight. We'll hit the back roads and get lost. Go to the place people point to and call "Out there." Night drive, seven hours until the sun comes up. Put your window down and stick your arm out. Feel that air, combing each one of the hairs on your arm. You'll get goosebumps if you do it too long. Driving this fast must clean the air, because it tastes so good. Switch mix tapes and hand me one of Grandpa's butterscotches. They're in the ashtray; we don't use it because our cigarettes go out the window. Red embers in the rearview go out because they're spend or we're driving away too fast. Turn here, country road, then dirt road, then lost road. We can find our way back. Headlights reflect off the eyes of a stray dog that runs off into a field. Out of sight, out of headlight. Shame every animal can't have a home. A gas station marquee glows in the distance. We're no longer lost, but we stop for gas on the outskirts of some town, a small one with a -ville or a -burg at the end of its name. Fill the tank then hit the restroom. Moths dive bomb our heads from the light bulb above and the condoms only cost a quarter. Jump in again, you drive, I'll point the way. Back on the road the station lights disappear. The night is ours, no other cars around. Insects explode on the windshield. It's so quiet between us, feels like God could be listening to our thoughts - as if we have any. Narrow bridge then cemetery then fields. The moon pops up for the first time tonight, dug itself out of the clouds. Goosebumps again, pull the arm in, light another one. The road is rough, watch for holes. I'd hate to blow a tire out here, never know what kinds of things sleep in those fields. Arrows flash by; warning of sharp turns ahead, pay attention. The speed limit isn't posted because out there it doesn't matter. So drive fast, but watch for the arrows and the occasional animal. A bridge comes up and we get out. This is what we drove for. A ghost lives here. Died on a winter night fifty years ago, maybe longer. Hot-Rodster on the way home to his girl. Hit ice, then the bridge. It's never been repaired since that night, that gash is from his crash. Flung him out the windshield to the creek bed below. Some stories have the car falling on him after that. Some also say if you drive over the bridge, turn around then drive back, he'll stall your car and his image can be seen in the woods. He does this when he misses his girl. She's a ghost too. We light bottle rockets to throw off the bridge. Once in the water, they take off, a bright white streak leads to explosion, probably driving the fish mad. The moonlight dims while we talk of hopes and dreams. From the bridge we point to where we came from and call it "Out there." Get back into the car, I'll turn around and drive across the bridge again. A moment of anxiety as we cross, the car doesn't stall. No ghost this night so we head home. Turn here, lost road, then dirt road, then country road; light another one. A pink halo peaks out over the distance. We see trees, then barns, then houses. The headlights are turned off and we look forward to our beds.

A community filled with fuck-ups and outcasts... What more could you ask for at age 13? What more could a kid with nothing to live for and no plans for the future want but fast, angry, pissed-off music? What more could a 17 year old who is starting to realize that there is more to life than doing drugs, drinking, and generally wasting your time/money want than a community filled with people who understand what it's like to be considered an outsider based on values and ideals? What more could a 26 year old who refuses to hold a downtown career job, become an addict, become a professional criminal, end up in jail, or otherwise disappear within the cracks of a system designed to remove any traces of individuality want, than a music scene that spans the globe and encompasses all sorts of different values and ideals? No other music can compare...

Dead End

"Killing the Messenger" 7"

9 melodic punk rock anthems from Sweden. Songs that make you want to sit up and take note that life is going on all around you, and you need to get up and do something about it, and not just let it pass you by. This record kicked me in the ass when I heard it, and is amazingly inspiring. A day at work, money problems, not having a place to live, having a flat tire on my bike, unexplained feelings or being trapped in a dead end (no pun intended) life seemed to just melt away when I put this on for the first time.. Maybe you'll like it too...



The Real Enemy

"Too Little... Too Late" 7"

Their best release to date. Originally to be part of an LP, but due to various problems, that never materialized. What they had left was 5 songs they had already written to go towards that. Fury, aggression, and social commentary. Fast old time hardcore, with a tinge of the metal / Judge styled influence. This ain't your older sister's straight edge. Besides, she started drinking years ago and sold her Beyond long sleeve to fund her trip to the hash bars in Morocco.



Supersleuth

"and Still It Beats..." LP/CD

Naperville's melodic hardcore heroes return with their follow-up full length (their first "Thirty One months" was released on Enerject). Drawing from a wide range of influences, they create a sound that is recognizable and distinct. Intelligent and upbeat, Supersleuth has been around for 5 years now, and this is a showcase of those years of hard work.



Outlast

"As Sure As I Live" LP

Music is a form of communication. A means to express ideals and get a point across. Sweden's Outlast bring forth this attitude in the music that they play. Not always serious, or life-altering, but never pointless. Simple, straight forward, relevant lyrics, set to powerful hardcore/punk. This LP contains their 10" and newest 7" both released previously on Bridge records in Sweden.



Vitamin X

See Through Their Lies CD

Intelligent thrash/youth crew styled hardcore from the Netherlands in the vein of Larm meets Side By Side meets olde tyme rock n roll. 17 uplifting, fist raising anthems of pure, honest, aggressive music. LP out later.



Fairfuck

S/t 7"

Kongsberg, Norway's Fairfuck play aggressive punk/hardcore in the vein of Minor Threat and Black Flag that doesn't let up from start to finish. They have a healthy dose of attitude, and a cynical, yet light-hearted outlook on things. A repress of the 8 song 7" originally pressed on Kick and Punch.

Strength In Numbers

"the Youth" 7"

Dupage county youth crew. Young kids playing hardcore and having a lot of fun doing it. More honest than most bands of this genre. It's as if they grew up on all the "youth crew" bands and didn't realize that most of them were all full of shit and instead took their messages to heart. A very diverse bunch of kids, and have a wide variety of tastes, which comes across clearly.



Purpose

"Art As A Weapon 7"/CDep

Melodic hardcore from New Jersey. Reminiscent of mid-'80s Dischord bands, such as Dag Nasty and Rites of Spring. Emotional, without being emo, Hardcore, without being hard. A balance of so many different aspects of punk rock fused together with inspiring lyrics.

No Justice

"Still Fighting" 7" /tape (same price)

Straight up, no frills, aggressive hardcore punk from Maryland. Well known for their intense and energetic live shows, they quickly became one of the most talked about bands in hardcore, with good reason. This is their only recording.



Also Available: All Systems Go! comp LP/CD, Cornerstone: Beejing the Masses LP, Reinforce: One Life Thug Free 7", Supersleuth: the Hate Divides 7"/CDp, Walls of Jericho: A Day and A Thousand Years 7" in the distant future: (no pre-orders yet): Vitamin X: See Through Their Lies LP, Bloodpact: "Guns and Ammo" 7", Bomb's Away 7" (split release with Lifeline records), Kill Your Idols: skull shaped 12" EP/CD, Sick Terror 7", Vitamin X: discography CD (all their 7"/comp tracks)



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Spring In Madrid

By Dallas

I wake up with the quiet of the morning air light on my skin, muted sunlight through the Venetian blinds slinking in soft lines across my shoulders and the nape of my neck, and, when I catch my breath, I can hear the vague chiding of birds clutching the sill outside the window pane. The breeze is fragile and cool, dodging the warm rays that somehow evade the shadows of the city's ancient architecture. My own window overlooks a shady side street; the neon lights of a small bar two buildings down barely visible in the daylight. I push down the sheets and rest my feet, bare and callused, on the cool hard wood floor of my fourth story room. It is already late, and I can hear the maids in the room down the hall, dissonant and nasal as they exchange their bawdy anecdotes in rapid-fire madrilenio Spanish. The street below my window is suddenly busy with voices and bodies pulling toward the subway and pushing in and out of the fruterias and pastelerias that line my little alley; from my view, all beautiful and petite and dancing with one another. I am amused with my own romantic view of the city and by the lilting soundtrack provided by the little Spanish bird still gripping my window sill. The frenetically moving bodies that crowd the avenue part hesitantly for an impatient motorist in his little European car, bumping over the cobblestone that characterizes this side of Madrid, and puffing out exhaust that provides the scene with a pleasant haze.

I shower and pull a comb through my messy hair, tying my shoelaces and brushing my teeth at the same time. By now the maids are hurtling through my door with a wave of ear-shattering energy. They demand that I go downstairs and eat breakfast before the maitre'd decides that the breakfast hour is over. My Spanish is lazy and nonchalant as I internally quake at the prospect of buying my own croissant outside the confines of the continental breakfast my hotel offers. I hurriedly throw all I need for the day into my shoulder bag, sling the thing over my sweated shoulder, and rush downstairs to find the camareros packing the last few croissants onto a tray to return to the kitchen, presumably for tomorrow's brunch.

"Disculpe, Senor... es que estoy tarde... por favor, es posible que pueda tomar un pedazo? Lo Siento..."

"Senorita, sabe usted que el desayuno termino a las once..."

"Si, ya se que la hora ha pasado...si, lo siento..."

"Pues, no se preocupe, Senorita. Es un placer servirse."

"Ay, muchas gracias, Senor, que tiene un buen dia!"

So, with my croissant in hand, I dash from the semi-darkened lobby of the hotel into the sun-slashed street, joining the dance I admired from above, and pivoting and sliding my way down the stairs into the chilly underworld of the subway system. I gleefully become part of a sundry amoeba, pulsating through the corridors and squishing into an anorexic river flowing down the escalators. I am happily pushed and shoved under arms and chins, and finally find myself potatoed between a large pink woman and a surly ten-year-old. I lean my head back against the window, and feel the lurch of the train as it flies into the next dark tunnel. I close my eyes. The gentle jiggle of the car moves my shoulders slowly left, then right again, then left and my feet vibrate warmly on the motorized metallic floor. Another foot touches mine slightly, a curved sole in my arch, and I open my eyes to find the train had quite suddenly filled past capacity as I lounged. The foot belongs to a beautiful boy who is indifferently gripping the bar above my head, rocking from heel to heel as the train haves forward. Each time the boy lists to the right our feet collide. I manage to tear my gaze away from the web of meeting feet, and my upturned eyes are immediately locked into the awaiting stare of that belligerent and beautiful man whose foot is meeting mine every four seconds. His eyes are rich and burgundy and feel like spiced rum and coke at first glance, and I wait for my stomach to knot and my hands to sweat at the uninvited but not unwelcome attention. And I surprise myself by remaining completely blase, recklessly returning his more-than-passing glance and discreetly arching one eyebrow as though I were inspecting him - which wasn't far from the truth. The rum and coke eyes are framed by caramel-olive skin, which in turn dissolves into a playful mess of dark hair. My attention makes him bold, and he juts out his jaw, little boy dimples tugging at the corner of his lips and belying the neat gleam of unpracticed smile. I am ridiculously proud of that grin, and sneak a peek over my shoulder to make sure that there is no pretty girl hiding behind me who is the real cause of his concentration. All that meets me on the other side of my shoulder is a somewhat distorted reflection of my own nose in the window and an unrecognizable curse scratched into the back of the plastic seat. The chimes clang into my wonder world and announce in barking tones that my stop is fast approaching. I hear the voice continue past its actual message, sarcastically informing me that my entire body will be mashed against the masterpiece in front of me in approximately thirty seconds. A giggle escapes my lips. The pink lady and the surly ten year old both scowl as though I had belched loudly, and my lovely boy manages to get pushed ever further toward me - our knees meet, and the chime dings again, and I try to rise without mauling either one of my seat mates; the train flails to a stop, and I feel my feet lose their bearings, and I envision myself flopping face-first onto the dirty show web below, and that vision of a man, who is now less than an inch away from me, places a steadying hand on the small of my back, saving me from the inevitable flop and simultaneously sending forty-nine thousand shivers down my spine and releasing a mob of butterflies into my stomach. I drunkenly bear my teeth in a failed attempt at a coy smile.

My grimace, it appears, is less of a deterrent than I had feared, and as I trop out of the potato salad train, I am keenly aware that the large, warm hand on my back is, well, still on my back. I am pretending to concentrate on the flood of people carrying me up the stairs, and hesitate to look behind for fear that my darling has been transformed into a hideous ogre outside of his train car kingdom. The

soft pressure disappears as I push my hip through the turnstile. I glide through at a calculated angle, peeking over the crest of my shoulder to find his eyes for a quick moment. And he is gone. I freeze for a complete second, stupidly devastated that my good fortune has made an exit as discreet as he had made his entrance. The pink lady I had earlier entertained with delinquent giggles broadsides me, and I am yet again confronted with the inevitability of a face-to-floor interview. This time, there is no assured hand to catch me, and I land hard on my butt, clutching my shoulder bag like a small child, and feeling like a baby myself. It occurs to me that I look positively ridiculous, sitting like a stunned four-year-old on the floor of the subway, and it also occurs to me that I want to cry. Hot salt tears of embarrassment blur my vision as I scramble to regain my footing while still dodging the lethal stilettos of the madrileno women. I hear a low chuckle behind me, and feel the support of one hand under my forearm and one on my waist, gently steering me away from the crowd and up through the stairwell into the now-blinding sunlight. My pupils contract violently, punching the tears from my eyes and into mini-turrets down my cheeks. I whole them away quickly with the shaking back of my hand, snuffle proudly, and turn to face my deserter-prince. I am sure that if I had not already won his adoration with my fancy footwork downstairs, that my red-rimmed tear-filled eyes and quivering lower lip would certainly speak volumes of my poise, class and maturity. I can only hope now for a sense of humor and a damn good explanation for his little disappearing act, on which I blame the entire butt-meets-floor episode of three minutes ago.

He said nothing at all for a long minute as we walked toward a lonely park bench. The Parque Retiro is absolutely perfect for long walks and unsaid nothings - it is a sprawling garden with fountains and musicians and glass lake filled with happy people in canoes, all set to the backdrop of an ancient set of dream-colored parchment paper arches that reflect in the water and cut into the blue of the sky. I drink in the statues of army heroes and their beautiful lovers, and absorb the shouts and shrieks of happy children flying through the grass after the brightly colored soccer ball. I mentally cut and paste each image into my memory, tasting the breeze and remembering the rough wood of the bench on my palms and the music of childhood echoing in my ears. I almost forget he is sitting next to me, my mysterious and evasive stranger, until I hear him speak. His warm honey-colored fingers catch the last few tears from my flushed cheeks, and I can feel my whole body shake at the touch of his fingertips. I concentrate hard on breathing.

"No llores, Senorita. Todo esta bien... una mujer tan quapa que ti no debes llorar... una mujer tan bella debe... hmmm... aque... un regalino para ti, Senorita, que te sientes mejor..."

And from the convenient tree lingering beside us, he plucks a small flower and tucks it sweetly behind my ear, letting those electric fingers linger for a moment on my jaw before pulling away. I am reeling. My left hand jets upward to adjust the little blossom, the petals silky and warmish between my fingers, and I smile as I see the tiny glimmering granules of golden pollen that are sticking diligently to my thumb. My lovely prince notices the powder, and, smiling that same slow smile, takes my little hand into his and lifts it to his lips, blowing the miniature seeds into the transient breeze. I murmur a nonsensical sentence about not really crying and pink ladies and potato salad, and he leans back on the park bench, his grin now widespread and hypnotizing. I am grateful for the intrusive shade of the tree.

His voice melts in and out of audibility as he introduces himself. I return the formality, and he laughs outright at my accent. We exchange stories, at least abbreviated and somewhat embellished versions of the truth, about how he is from the southern coast, where, he explains everything is very bright and magical; and I am from the other side of the ocean, where everything is dull and suburban. Our voices, at times see-sawing in time with the rowing paddles behind us, at times overlapping like the undulating waves, at times united in laughter, mine high and his low, filled the space of hours in what seemed less than a moment. His fingers occasionally brush my hand on my cheek, and they maintain their dynamism, and my lips tingle and my stomach aches a pleasant ache, and the conversation continues. We leave our park bench to stroll around the inner pathways of the Parque, our pinky fingers playing electric shock tag with one another and the dialogue faltering only for comfortable minutes of silence or reflection. Birds like my little alarm clock dive in and out of view. The sounds of the afternoon are giving way to the ruckus of the evening; the lonely street musicians are joined by basking bands that lay their guitar cases out like communion rails around their expensive speakers. We stop to watch a three-man gig wail out the acoustic melodrama of their young lives. Their voices pitch and heave from note to note with such desperation that my heart stops several times and I send my hand to my throat to curtail the sigh. By now, the sun is well below the peaks of the parchment arches, and its rays are reminiscent of my Venetian-blind morning. The bass resonates in the chests of the onlookers, and he weeping guitarist thanks the congregation for their tithes as we move on toward the subway station.

Back down the stairs to the fluorescent lighting of his train station kingdom, my darling's warm hand on the small of my back. I punch my card through the machine, the black ink stabbing into the virgin white of my stub. Again, the hip through the turnstile; again, the brief absence of that warm pressure; again, the glance over my wishful shoulder; again, the boy is gone. I do not stop, and there is no pink lady to tackle me and there are no salt ocean waves breaking in my eyes. The cement and tile tunnel is chilly and abrasive as I dodge the knees and chins I had befriended this morning. Back onto the train, back to my little side street. The neon light from the bar two buildings down is now screaming to the dusky dancers climbing out of their subway. Is it down on the spongy barstool and envelop myself in a docile cloud of cigarette smoke. My crystal glass of sangria reminds me of his rum and coke eyes, and I gulp it down, the smooth liquid slipping down the back of my throat. One more, I think, and rest my hand on my chin just as I hear a low chuckle and feel an electric finger on my spine.

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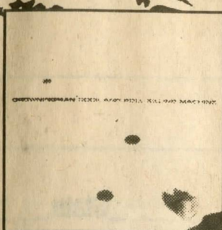
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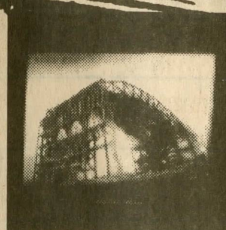
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