The Stony Brook
PRESS
The Community News and Features Paper

Vol. XXIX, Issue 7 "Bananas, you're going straight to hell." December 12, 2007

Warria Exposed!

Hip-Hop Sensation's 'Herb on the Curb' Scandal Lands SB Drug Community in Hot Water

9 out of ten times, it's for a rapper's own good to get arrested.

Warria: "Hey, I wasn't even on the curb."

Plus
Mr. Kotei's Final Opus?

Also
Our Fall 2007 Literary Supplement! 48 Pages of Sheer Madness!

Free two-page reversable poster inside!

drugs

Upcoming Campus Events
Upcoming Campus Events? Yeah, right. It's the last week of class.

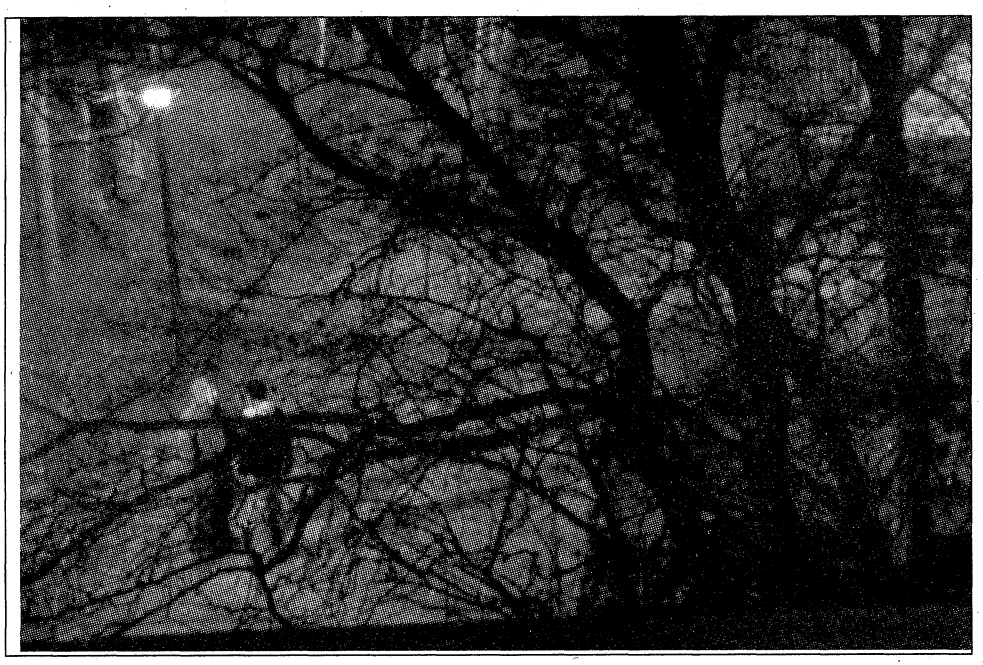
Welcome To The Layer Cake

By Najib Aminy

Two shadowy figures flock like moths to the lamp light. A dark and cold night — their breaths can be seen from afar. One look to the right and left, and both are digging into their pockets. One pulls out the green, the other the goods. They shake hands and head in separate directions. The lamplight is still buzzing, still shining, witness to one of the many drug transactions that occur here at Stony Brook. In the past three years, there have been twenty-four arrests related to drugs, in addition to 124 disciplinary referrals for drugs and paraphernalia with drug residue, as stated on the Stony Brook website. However, these referrals and arrests have only managed to expose the very tip of the iceberg, leaving an underworld of contacts, exchanges and drug use lurking in the shadows. Though laws are written to forbid these drugs, as well as underage drinking. The wall these laws create is merely a small hurdle for many on their paths to getting drunk, high or reaching a state of euphoria. Whether one deems drug use right or wrong, one indisputable fact is that that use is heavily present.

As times change, society grows for the greater good. Learning from the past, people discover what to do and what not to do. Like a plant, with great care and through trial and error, society seems to deem itself better than before. Yet drugs remain the stubborn thorn on the rose of society. They have been used all over and whenever. Drugs have allowed many to become closer to their deities, such as the case of mushrooms and the Aztecs. They have caused wars such as the Opium War. And they have created countries, such as our own United States' early with tobacco trade. They also lead to advancements in medicine, such as using THC to aide multiple sclerosis sufferers. Specifically here in America, drugs played a pivotal role in the free flowing nature of the Sixties, and its aftermath has drastically influenced our society today. Now, nearly fifties years later, drugs continue to affect the way people live, socialize and go on through life, as its presence here at Stony Brook proves.

For most people, drugs have been present since the late years of junior high to the latter years of high school. At the college level, it is no different if not more prevalent. Speaking about the drug situation here at Stony Brook, the University Police's Assistant Chief Doug Little said, "Stony Brook is no different than any other campus in the United States. Drugs are prevalent all throughout society." Little speaks truth, in that drugs are essentially everywhere, whether they are illegal or not. For many, breakfast comprises a cup of coffee, (or a cup of drugs), some vitamins, and maybe a painkiller. Society's answers to all its aches and pains are branded by the logos of many pharmaceutical companies. However, illegal drugs are often simply people's way of having a good time while releasing stress. Yet what may seem harmless is frightening to some, as, according to Little, "90 percent of crimes occur when either the perpetrator or both the perpetrator and victim are under the influence of drugs." This unsubstantial statistic, if accurate, would alone pose serious questions related to the security threat on campus.



The goods for the green. Photo Credit: Najib Aminy

To stem the tide of drug use, Little said, "Stony Brook offers a wide number of education resources, counseling and student health services." Yet it appears that such an educational approach has done very little to stop the drug use. Little said, "Anyone caught using or selling drugs will be punished to the fullest extent of the law." He continued, saying that sometimes "an arrest is the best thing that can happen for someone; it can make them realize that they have a problem and should seek help." While rules are not necessarily meant to be broken, a realistic assessment shows that they always are. Little warned, "As a police officer, if you are going to do drugs and drink, don't get caught, because there will be consequences. Eventually your history will catch up to you one day." However, the benefits of using drugs seem to outweigh the risks, as many continue to blatantly break the law on a day-to-day basis, especially when it comes to dealing.

Due to the nature of his profession, the dealer wished not to be identified, for the sake of his own security. The dealer was compliant, though, in answering questions; almost eager to be sharing his little secret of selling marijuana. It was fitting that pictures of Bob Marley covered his room, along with drug paraphernalia being everywhere. Taking a puff from his cigarette, the dealer says that "to most people, it is just pot. In the eyes of the law, it's drugs. I mean, I think at least 90 percent of people here at Stony Brook have tried pot [at least] once." He went on to talk about how pot, specifically, was more of a social drug — essentially an illegal version of alcohol — or simply a means of meeting people, as he put it. In terms of his competition, "there are enough people that smoke, so there really is nobody stepping on each other's toes." I asked him; "why deal?" "For the free pot," responds the dealer. The nuts and bolts reside in a system in which one can buy so much pot, and all one has to do is sell more than one uses to prevent oneself from going under. If a dealer is wise about it, that dealer can get *free* pot and even make a profit from it. The usual price runs up to twenty dollars for nearly one gram, and given the amount of times some people buy it throughout the week, it becomes costly — thus dealing seems appealing.

The dealer went through the process in which there is a 'factory' location, in which plants are produced and nurtured, which are then transported to a 'wholesale' warehouse. From there, dealers buy what they need, and become the 'salesmen' of the operation. Turning to quality, the dealer explained the differences between *strains*, *regs*, *hydro* and *exotics*. Showing me his most prized possession, the dealer explained his *exotics* were notable for the strong odor and the amount of crystals, as well as the orange strains. In terms of business, one can make $200 into $4000 in only a short matter of time. "I plan on paying my tuition with this money as well as [for] other stuff."

Health-wise, the dealer sees pot as the best drug out there. Compared to alcohol and many other drugs, "pot allows you to enjoy yourself." He argues that dying from pot alone is impossible, in that "one has to smoke three times their body weight in order to die." He added, "a tenth [of the] way there and you will probably fall asleep." In regards to other drugs, such as cocaine, ecstasy and mushrooms, the dealer said that they are "around, however, not as prevalent as pot." He said that, according to people he knows, the rates of other drugs are in the same range as pot, however "they are very addictive and dangerous to become involved with." The dealer went on to give his impression of other recreational drugs. An ecstasy pill is worth $25. However, with ecstasy, the goal is to be in the euphoric state as long as possible, and without it one feels empty and is not the same person. Thus one will do anything to reach that state. A microdot of acid ranges up to about $15, where as magic mushrooms run from $30 to $40. With mushrooms, as the dealer explained, one must take them in two week intervals, for it will not be as effective if taken in close intervals. With cocaine, an eighth of an ounce. runs up to $120. According to the dealer, "one bump of coke which could cost around $5 bucks will be enough to take a trip. However, there is a quick tolerance, and people become addicts and ruin their lives." The dealer went on to say that "ecstasy and coke are unhealthy, once you [use them, you] are not the same person. Also, you deal with shady people where the content of the pill could be altered." According to him, pot it is all about customer service, especially with quality and quantity. With pills though, he says, one is unable to see the contents, whereas with pot, one can simply observe what they are purchasing.

Whether business is booming or slow, students here at Stony Brook are widely aware of the drug culture. A junior from Buffalo says that drugs are everywhere simply because it is college. "It is the time of our life where we don't have much responsibility, we

"Hey, Najib, if your thing is as long as you say it is, it'll be the first thing in there." --James' Mom

Layer Cake cont'd

Continued from previous page

[feel] comfortable [doing] whatever we want and this is not your typical public life, there is a greater peer respect." What he says is true, especially with society building up college to be the glory years of one's life, and it does not help the cause of drug use prevention when drugs are very conveniently accessible. When asked how easily drugs could be purchased, one freshmen from Westchester said, "Very easily, it can't get much easier." He rated their accessibility at 9 out of 10. He believes that many people do drugs "because it is fun and makes up for the lack of things to do here on campus." A junior from Florida says that "the reason why so many smoke pot or do drugs is because of their parents. A majority of our parents come from the sixties when, at the time, it was accepted. And if we see our parents do it, then we believe it is not bad." She believes in the social aspect of drugs also, "because there is little to do here on campus, so people resort to drugs to have fun." She believes that drugs are also a means of being rebellious, and if legalized, drug use would decrease. A junior from Jericho says that "drugs are prevalent here, but compared to other universities I have gone to, Stony Brook is not as bad." When asked about what could be done to curb usage, she replied that "stricter enforcement should be implemented," in regards to room checks and RA's being given more authority. A junior from Queens is well aware of drug prevalence here as well as easy accessibility, but believes that "because there is no monitoring, it is easy for drugs to get here on campus. I mean, you can come here by the train or even through the front gates; you can just show them an ID, not even your ID, and get in."

Through our upbringing, everyday life and environment, it is impossible to be unaffected by illegal drugs. They are simply everywhere, and it has a lot to do with the fact that Stony Brook presents the college environment, but lacks many *things to do*, which may be why drugs are so prevalent. In addition, the easy ways of entry do not help in hindering drug prominence. In general, a lot may have to do with human nature to rebel. However, in the end, whether illegal drugs are used for social purposes, whether they are deemed addictive, whether they result in violent activity, the truth is that they are here. The mere fact that many go on with their everyday life pretending nothing is wrong only adds fuel to the fire. And with that fire, another blunt is lit, another pill swallowed, another deal transacted; another person engulfed into the layer cake of illegal drugs.

The RIAA, DC and Stony Brook

By Alex Berkman

Tucked away on a dead-end road in Patchogue, N.Y., Jared Verdi's dark-red car with the license plate "CARPUTER" sat in front of the two-story red house, but he did not answer the incessantly ringing doorbell.

"That's his car, so he should be home," said a friend who stopped by the house to get a bag of clothing out of the garage.

According to Whois.net, a search engine to find website ownership, Verdi, a Stony Brook University graduate, is the registered owner of beastpetter.com, the host for cronet.beastpetter.com, a page dedicated to discussing Stony Brook's most notorious illegal file-sharing service, DC++ CroNet.

DC++, which stands for "direct connection," is the only program that works on campus for file sharing, due to a firewall, or Internet access limiter. Firewalls limit the types of files that can come through campus Internet connections.

DC++ works internationally outside of Stony Brook. It is a program that allows users to sign into various hubs, such as CroNet, on campus. These hubs act as a central communication port for DC++ users, allowing them to chat and show which files they are able to share, according to dcplusplus.sourceforge.net, the homepage for DC++ software.

The DC++ software connects two users' computers so they may directly share files between them. To ensure that It is unmonitored, the file is transferred from one user's computer to the other within the university's firewall. Files are selected through the hub, but transferring is done between computers on Stony Brook's network.

Cronet.beastpetter.com describes how to sign into the CroNet hub using the DC++ software: "Name the hub 'CroNet' and set the address to 'cronet1.no-ip.info:1090'."

Verdi, in an e-mail, said he communicated with the creator of the hub, who went by the handle "Cro," through the CroNet hub when Verdi set up the webpage. Verdi also stressed that the two never actually met.

"I'm actually not the creator of the hub," Verdi said, adding that he volunteered to host the webpage for "Cro."

"We only corresponded though the hub and I've since graduated from Stony Brook, so I'm not sure that I have contact info," Verdi said. He added, "I just know that he always went by the nickname 'Cro' online."

According to Verdi's website, DC++ CroNet "was created early March of 2004." The site also says that "Cro" and his friends set it up in order to establish a file-sharing server for Stony Brook.

Richard W. Reeder, the university's chief information officer, declined to comment but directed a reporter to the campus code of conduct. He declined an interview, saying he is very busy with the upcoming release of the new version of Solar System.

"I put forward to you the following question: 'How would you deal with someone taking and using your intellectual content without your permission?'" Reeder said, "I suspect that the answer would be that you would not be happy about someone doing this."

A 22-year-old Stony Brook alumnus, who asked not to be named, said he used DC++ and found that it was easy to find music and movies. "Basically anything that's on your computer, you can share," said the former student. He added that some students shared thousands of gigabytes of music and movies, as well as software and programs through DC++.

Section 7 of the university's student code of conduct states that sharing of copyrighted files is strictly prohibited. "This includes but is not limited to the sharing of copyrighted music, videos, etc."

The most recent action against file-sharing college students occurred in November.

According to a press release on their website, The Record Industry Association of America (RIAA) sent 417 pre-litigation letter to students at sixteen universities nationwide.

Schools targeted by the RIAA included Boston University, Brown University, Central Michigan University, Columbia University, Dartmouth University, Duke University, North Carolina State University, Princeton University, University of Chicago, University of Connecticut, University of Maine System, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Pennsylvania, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, University of Texas-Austin and Yale University.

In Rhode Island, the RIAA sent pre-litigation letters to twelve students at Brown University, according to a November 26 article in Brown's newspaper, *The Brown Daily Herald*.

"The 12 letters sent to Brown this month were some of the 417 at 16 campuses across the country," the article said.

The RIAA has also proposed an amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The proposal is now in front of the House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee. According to a letter from the American Council for Education, the amendment would require the Secretary of Education to create an annual list of the top 25 campuses in the United States on which students illegally share copyrighted material.

According to the letter, which can be found at acenet.edu, "The proposal is aimed at colleges and universities - which industry leaders admit are responsible for only a small fraction of illegal file sharing." It also states that the list would require a "technology-based deterrent" to prevent file-sharing, but, according to unnamed experts, "adequate versions" do not yet exist.s

Students who want to use DC++ must share a minimum of 500 megabytes on the hub to remain active, according to cronet.beastpetter.com. "I had to share, at the time, a minimum of two gigabytes," the anonymous alumnus said.

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editorials

Stony Brook Goes Green

Stony Brook pledged this week to become one of the 448 colleges and universities nation wide to sign the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), pledging to reduce their greenhouse gasses 80% by 2050 and commit funding to education and research on climate change and global warming.

The signing of this commitment is just another step in Stony's treck towards carbon neutral, having fitted the campus busses to be ecologically safe and dedicated the better part of the Southampton campus's curriculum to environmental sustainability. This also directly follows the recognition of three professors share by the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for their work with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), along with former Vice President Al Gore, the rock star of Global Warming. If Al Gore can preach environmental awareness at the MTV Video Music Awards, surely we can do something to help the environment.

If the IPCC report is right and Greenland melts, adding an estimated ten meters to the global sea level, the main campus could find itself much closer to the beach than it would like. Parts of Long Island would be under water, to say nothing of the submersion of the FDR Drive in the City.

But Stony Brook can do more. It takes more than a recycling room on every floor of resident halls and paper recycling bins in dorm rooms, or a single environmental club being allowed to use soda bottles to build their Regatta boat as a plea for awareness. This takes the efforts of students as well. A simple signed document isn't enough- it takes action.

Some of the campus buses aren't climate friendly yet. That can be fixed. Many mass produced documents that are distributed at large on campus aren't recycled when they're disposed of. Campus newspapers, ourselves included, have a tendency to be chucked in the waste bin alongside that bag of chips you just finished eating. A wise Wallaby once told us, "R-E-C-Y-C-L-E, Recycle. C-O-N-S-E-R-V-E, Conserve. Don't you P-O-L-L-U-T-E the ocean, river, air, or sea, or else you're gonna get what you deserve." Let's listen to him, and to Al Gore, and oddly enough, to Shirley Strum Kenny. Let's pitch in and do our part to help out our own ecosystem of Long Island here at Stony. *The Press* office recycles now. Do you?

Asbestos Hazard...Unforgivable

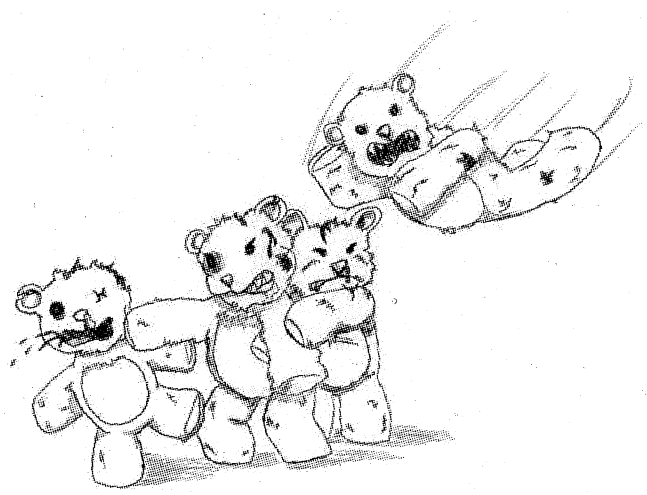
So, this dude came down to our office last week. He was all like "Y'all got a fire hazard in your archives. That fake wall is dangerous. Also, you can't have this couch in the hall." And we were like "Listen, ho, y'all got couches all over the second floor. And they been there forever." And then they gave us the fire threat report. The threat was listed as minimal... minimal! We talking about minimal threat, here.

And so they like "We gonna tear down that fake wall, and take away that couch. And y'all just gonna have to deal with it." And that doesn't sit well with us, no sir.

Besides, we were thinking about it later on, and we came to realize that around half the building is actually lined with asbestos. That's right, bitches, asbestos. So while y'all fools sit in the SINC site, typin yo shit, or while you sit in your clubs, or eat in the Union Commons, y'all bitches are breathing in something that leads to illnesses that kill 10,000 Americans per year....

Unforgivable...

Editor's Note: I wonder if the building administration is aware that after every struggle we have with them in regards to policy, we laugh at how most of them are intellectually inferior they are to every single member in our staff box. We've spent thirty years tirelessly attempting to make you understand the simplest concepts around here, and you still haven't gotten it, you robot-minded buffoons.



THE STONY BROOK PRESS

WE HAVE YOUR GRATUITOUS SLAVE GIRL, AND IF YOU WANT HER BACK, COME AND GET HER.

MEETINGS WEDNESDAYS AT 1 pm
STUDENT UNION ROOM 060

Want your club/organization to be featured in a future Club Spotlight?

E-mail *The Press* at sbpress@gmail.com

The Asstatistics Awards

The *Press* is proud to recognize in print the 2007 winners of the Asstatistics Award, which celebrates the very best in the fanciful fabrication of supposedly statistical information, which conveniently supports the arguments or interests of these highly competitive out-of-ass-pullers. They truly are keeping the dream alive!

The Bronze Medal goes to: anonymous drug dealer.

Quoted frequently in Nejib Aminy's page 2 article about drug crime on campus, the source at one point asserts that "I think at least 90 percent of people here at Stony Brook have tried pot once." This may make a lot of sense to a recreational pot smoker who also sells, and for all we know might be true of the campus. But there's an awful lot of people at Stony Brook, and it's a good bet that he hasn't even met at least two thirds of them, so he's making a hefty generalization.

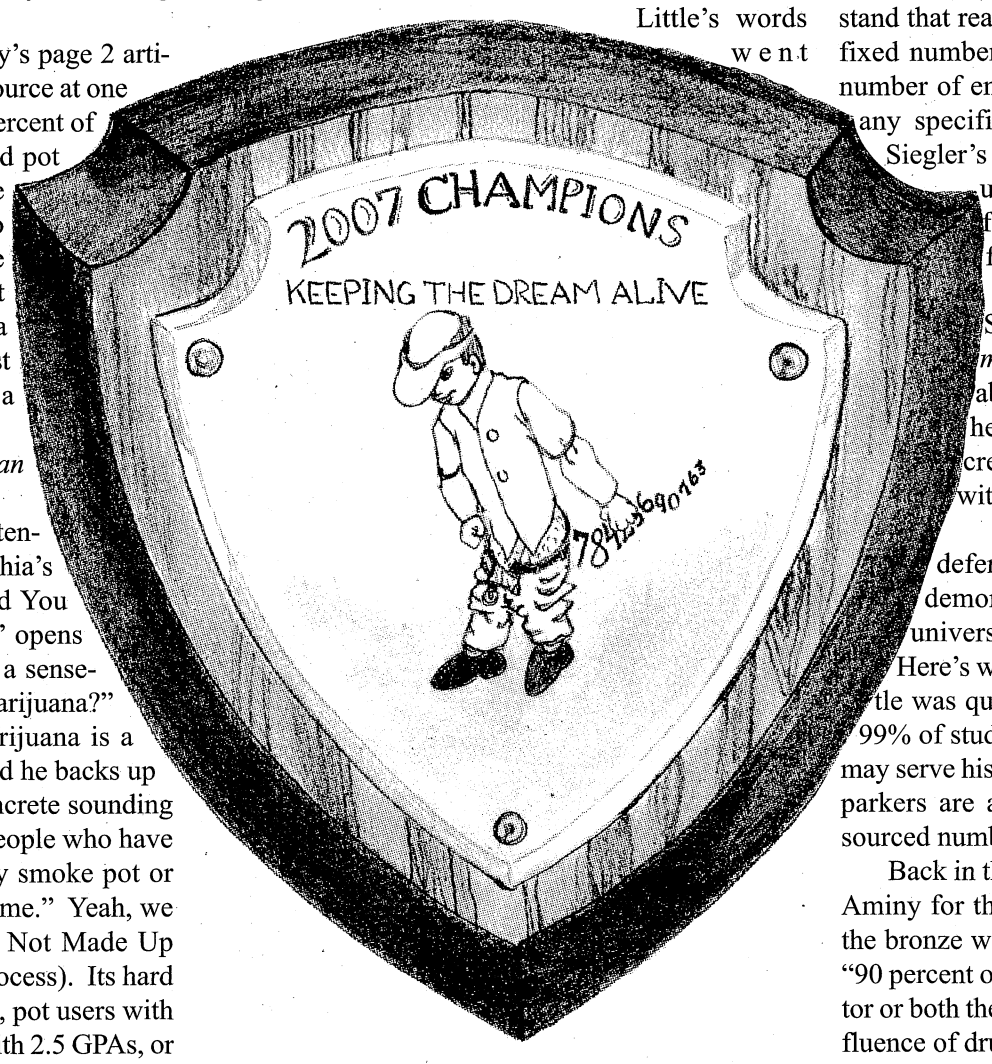
The Silver Medal goes to: *Statesman* editor Suraj Rahmbia.

The hands down winner for unintentional comedy in student media, Rambhia's latest op-ed, "Arrested for Pot? And You Wonder Where America is Going…" opens with the minute martinet pleading to a senseless world, "Why do people smoke marijuana?" Rahmbia wants us to know that Marijuana is a poor alternative to truly living life, and he backs up his schoolmarmish warnings with concrete sounding data fresh from the Rahmbia rear. "People who have 2.5 GPAs, 80% of the time, probably smoke pot or something else illegal in their spare time." Yeah, we think we read that in the Journal of Not Made Up (famed for its rigorous peer review process). Its hard to guess who should be more insulted, pot users with 3.9 GPAs, stone cold sober students with 2.5 GPAs, or the poor unfortunates who read the *Statesman*.

Move over kids, because 2007's champion is a fellow who's obviously been doing this for a long time:

The Gold medal goes to: University Police Assistant Chief Doug Little.

Little sets the standard. In recent weeks we've seen just a few examples that the challengers just can't answer. When the University decided to put the squeeze on students yet again, compensating for New York State's failure to adequately fund the State University by generating revenue from doubling parking fines. Of course, with the University grasping for cash by over enrolling students, more than the campus has room to house, the dwindling number of free parking spaces and the doubled fines drops a devastating combo on undergraduates who need to park.



Little's words went on a whirlwind tour of student media, as he spun the fine increase as, believe it or not, a benefit to students. Reaching new heights in obscene dishonesty, Little argued that student would benefit from the parking fine increase, because it would encourage legal parking and that would mean more parking spaces for students. According to Little's implication, if the same cars are in legal and not illegal parking spots, there are more spaces free, therefore benefiting students. Exactly how stupid does he think we are?

It turns out that Little assumes we are dumber than six year olds. At the recommendation of his peers, we checked with child cognitive development expert Prof. Robert Siegler at Carnegie Mellon University, whose research focuses on "the growth during childhood of problem solving and reasoning." We asked Prof. Siegler at what age does a child understand that rearranging a fixed number of objects in a fixed number of containers will result in the same number of empty spaces. While he didn't know of any specific studies addressing the question, in Siegler's opinion a three or four year old would understand the premise with fewer than four containers, and a six year old would figure it out for larger sets.

(Maybe we should have asked Siegler at what age the average *Statesman* editor would develop the cognitive ability to see through Little's story. They headlined their coverage of the fine increase "Admin Attempts to Free Space with Increased Fines.")

Little's other remarks defending the indefensible seemed intended to alienate and demonize any student who didn't meet the university's unreasonable parking demands. Here's where magical math comes into play. Little was quoted implying that, first 98%, and then 99% of students never park illegally on campus. It may serve his cause to create the impression that rebel parkers are a tiny, shameful minority, but his unsourced numbers are laughable.

Back in the saddle, responding to questions from Aminy for the same drug crime article that gave us the bronze winner, Little more recently asserted that "90 percent of crimes occur when either the perpetrator or both the perpetrator and victim are under the influence of drugs." Sounds good, Doug; 90% is a lot, right? I guess the other ten percent of crimes are when the victim and not the perpetrator are under the influence of drugs.

We'd like to thank everyone out there who is making up numbers to presume the credibility of scholarship in support of their unresearched caprice, you may not have earned a space in the Hall of Fame, but you're living the life, baby. Diner's club!

Letters

Hey...

I'm still really disappointed that the editor of your newspaper discredited or drew attention away from my article on illegal immigration.

Can you guys re-print it as an apology, and also actually ADD IN THE PICTURES I SENT YOU THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE ARTICLE INSTEAD OF SOME BLACK GUY FROM STAR TREK? SERIOUSLY WHAT THE FUCK.

Also, I have an article about the UN and the Rockefeller family and global gun confiscation. It was sent weeks ago, a little lengthy, and you said you'd push it off till next issue and it's been 3 issues past now...so i guess you never plan on putting it in. Can you please publish it? WITH the pictures i sent?

If you need any of these articles/pictures AGAIN, i can dig them up. But it's not really my job to submit articles more than once - you guys should do the right thing and publish them when you can, and in the manner they are sent, without reminders. It's also shitty for your readers to see the same article published twice because the writter got fucked and demanded it be put in again w/out a spoof article next to it and a star trek pic in my article.

It's hard to imagine you guys could be fucking w/ me on purpose because your butt buddies with david rockefeller - but you know, that's actually a real conspiracy theory. Everything i write about is documented and people need to know about it and your an open forum so you have a responsibility to publish it. To that i'm actually very grateful for the good service your newspaper provides. It just sucks that you allow bullshit like this to go on. Please try to get your act together.

Again let me know if i need to re-send any of those above mentioned articles/pictures.

Thank you,
Matthew Rammelkamp

letters cont'd

Matt,

You are an idiot. We don't have a responsibility to publish your far-fetched conspiracy theories. We do it because we feel it's important to print a wide range of views and ideas for people to see. We didn't like the pictures you submitted. We came up with our own. Yes, some black guy from Star Trek. A brilliant way to describe the picture, if you ask us.

We will not print an apology, because we don't owe one to you. All you do is read the bullshit other people come up with and swallow it all just as easily as the average sheep-American swallows the mainstream bullshit. You are not unique, you are not underground, you are not rebellious, you are not a leader or spokesperson. You are a follower. You latch onto one idea after the next, simply because it provides a concrete answer to all that sucks in the world, not to mention the narrow, focused blame it allows you to throw. There are conspiracies all the time, Matt Rammelkamp! Try to do some actual, first-hand research and uncover one of thousands of conspiracies actually happening, instead of reading books and online blogs about way more far-fetched things other people are claiming happened. They may have happened, but you don't know. You provide nothing but third-hand research, and it's lame. Your writing is lame, and you use shock paragraphs to add more severity to it. The world sucks, Matt, and it's people who make it suck. Not some group of six or seven pompous assholes shaping our world, but people. Everyone. Illegal immigration is an important issue, and there's a lot of debate going on about it right now. It would be so easy if you could bypass the gray area and skip right to the conspiracy, wouldn't it? Give it a rest, you manipulated buffoon.

Have a nice day, and fuck you for having the audacity to make demands out of this paper.

Love,
The Stony Brook Press

OK, want to not be a coward and tell me who i am speaking with?

2) i didn't ask for an apology publically, i asked forhaving my article reprinted. it's one thing not to publish all the pictures i send because of lack of room. it's another thing to have a bias against my point of view and to put OTHER pictures not submitted by me, that have nothing to do with my article, and put them in it. ...not to mention allowing a spoof article right next to it that is about fucking people's moms. it makes your entire paper look like an immature stupid fucking joke.

next wednesday that i have an hour to waste; i'll try to take up my issue with your entire staff. i don't think you guys are allowed to run like a dictatorship, so i'll appeal to everyone else.

i'm sure it's just one or two people who like fucking with me and if your not a coward let me know who you are so i can bitch you out next time i see you.

btw, i dont give a fuck if you dont believe my conclusions or whatever. i'm not trying to convince you; but to have my viewpoints heard to the sbc ommunity.

you have the right to disagree, and not research my claims to find out if they are true. but you don't have the right to censor me - and if you piss me off enough i'll try to get your funding revoked. you are an open forum, so start acting like it.

Matt,

Your ignorance is further revealed with everything you put into writing. Your threats are meaningless, not to mention completely unresearched. Since you have threatened us so, we have decided not to print anything you send us anymore. You see, our open forum is a privilege, not an obligation. We have the right to refuse content at any time, and if you don't like the way the editors handled the aesthetics of your article, you should come down and approach us about it.

Oh wait, you did. That's right, you spoke to Mr. David K. Ginn about the situation, and although he rightly defended its place in the paper, if I recall correctly, he apologized to you and said, I quote: "Although what I did wasn't wrong, out of respect for you, a fellow writer, I will not do anything like that again."

This wasn't enough for you, was it? He apologized, saying he never meant to take credibility away from you, and even tried encouraging you by saying that the article should stand on its own, and that if you respect the intelligence of our readers, you'll trust them to make the same judgment on the two articles as you did.

And you miserable, misinformed idiot, you contradicted yourself when you claimed that our open forum policy should prevent such articles as Mr. Ginn's. Apparently, you do fully understand what an open forum is. Also, in an attempt to put things into perspective, you offered to parody of Ginn's own articles, which he gleefully and eagerly accepted. Immediately, since that was not the reaction you expected and thus it didn't help prove your point, you rescinded your offer. That makes you an ass.

We have never censored you, Matt Rammelkamp. Starting now, though, we will not accept your submissions. We can choose what to print based on what we feel works in our paper. Just so you know, every single issue you submit content to, there is a debate on whether or not to put it in, and, here's the ironic twist: David Ginn is one of the people who is always voting yes, citing that he feels alternate viewpoints are what adds much-wanted color and controversy to the paper. Since you accepted his truce last week, then changed your mind in your Dec. 3rd e-mail, Ginn, as well as most others here, do not feel you deserve to be a part of this paper. You got your apology, as well as a promise that your work will never be parodied or ridiculed in such a fashion again. You should know, that's more than any writer or editor has ever received. People who have contributed much more to this newspaper have never gotten an agreement to not ever have their work parodied in such a fashion, and most of them have worked here long enough to actually deserve such an agreement. Still, we went out of our way to accommodate your childish request, and still we received further demands from you. For that you get a big "fuck you". Here it is, wait for it... Fuck you!

So, if it makes you feel good, go and do the only thing you've ever actually succeeded at: snitching. Go and tell mommy and daddy judiciary that the little paper won't run your tin-hatted conspiracy theories anymore. See what they say. Oh wait, never mind, you're not actually in trouble for something, so there's no jail time to avoid by tattling. Hmm. Makes us wonder why you'd waste your time. At least when you were a petty arsonist looking down the barrel of a very large judicial gun, you had a reason to be a cowardly snitch. Now it just doesn't make sense.

So, thank you for your contributions to our newspaper, and good luck to you in your future endeavors! Please feel free to contact us at any time if you want copied of your past submissions. Good day to you, sir!

With much love,
The Stony Brook Press

So THAT'S why you hate me.

Dude, there's not my conspiracy theories. Go do some basic research. Go to wikipedia and read under David Rockefeller...quotations "Some even believe we are part of a secret cabal working against the best interests of the United States, characterizing my family and me as 'internationalists' and of conspiring with others around the world to build a more integrated global political and economic structure - one world, if you will. If that is the charge, I stand guilty, and I am proud of it." - From Rockefeller's "Memoirs", (p.405).

How is that MY CONSPRIACY THEORY? How is it not DAVID ROCKEFELLER'S CONSPIRACY? Go to the library and look on page 405 in his memoirs, for example.

Of course this isn't proof in itself. But, you guys haven't published my basic research article about the rockefeller family, which is the reason i wrote the last email. You've published 3 issues since, but not included my article. This has nothing to do w/ my conversation with David.

A 'fuck you' from an anonymous person gives little weight. Why won't you Identify yourself?

Stop signing your message with "the stony brook press" - your one person and i don't think the group has made a decision to ban my articles. again, i don't think your allowed to, but whatever; your paper sucks and no one takes it seriously anyway (thanks to the immaturity and un-importance / un-journalistic /un-educational / un-muckraking of your submissions).

"They mostly come out at night. Mostly..."

E-mail *The Press* at
sbpress@gmail.com

Matt,

We like our paper that way, thank you. And this isn't coming from just one person. That fuck you is from all of us here at The Stony Brook Press. Hold on, let us ask the room.

Oh shit, they all agree. There was a unanimous "Fuck you, Matt Rammelkamp" shouted in such unison that it defied even the current typist's expectations. Hold on, I'll make a few phone calls.

Oh shit, you're never going to believe this. Most of the Editorial Board says "Fuck you, Matt Rammelkamp." No supporters here, douchebag.

And yes, you have proved our point exactly. By your conspiracy theories, trust me, we certainly did not mean your original conspiracies. The whole point of us calling you a lame follower was to point out how what you write is just recycled bullshit you read about elsewhere. Re-read our last response to you. We would never even dare to give you the credit of coming up with these theories, however insane and stupid they are. If you were an original crazy person, we might respect you a whole lot more. What makes us sick is your sheep-like loyalty to what seems like every conspiracy you can find.

And it seems like we forgot to print your stupid Rockefeller article in the issue you submitted it for. We didn't transfer it to the folder for the next issue, because we typically don't go back and do that. We printed all your other bullshit, didn't we? Obviously we weren't targeting your Rockefeller crap.

Hold on.

Sorry, it was difficult to write with David Rockefeller's dick up our collective asses. There's really nothing like a good dose of Rockefeller sodomy to soothe the ailing soul. Anyways, now that his dick is flaccid and in waiting, we'll give you the real scoop as quickly as we can. We wanted to print your article, honestly! We tried so hard to sneak it in at the last minute, before he got back from the shower that night, but-

Ughhh! (His dick is back in our asses, we'll talk later) Where were we? Oh yes, not printing your Rockefeller article. Well, he's telling us to keep quiet until he cums, so we can't comment further on the issue.

And about "our" one person (maybe you meant "you're one person", as in the contraction, not the possessive pronoun): I hope that it's been made clear to you that this exchange is editorial, not individual. We have all decided not to associate ourselves with you anymore. It is not worth the trouble. Plus, we don't want next year's E-Board to forget one of your articles and find their houses on fire.

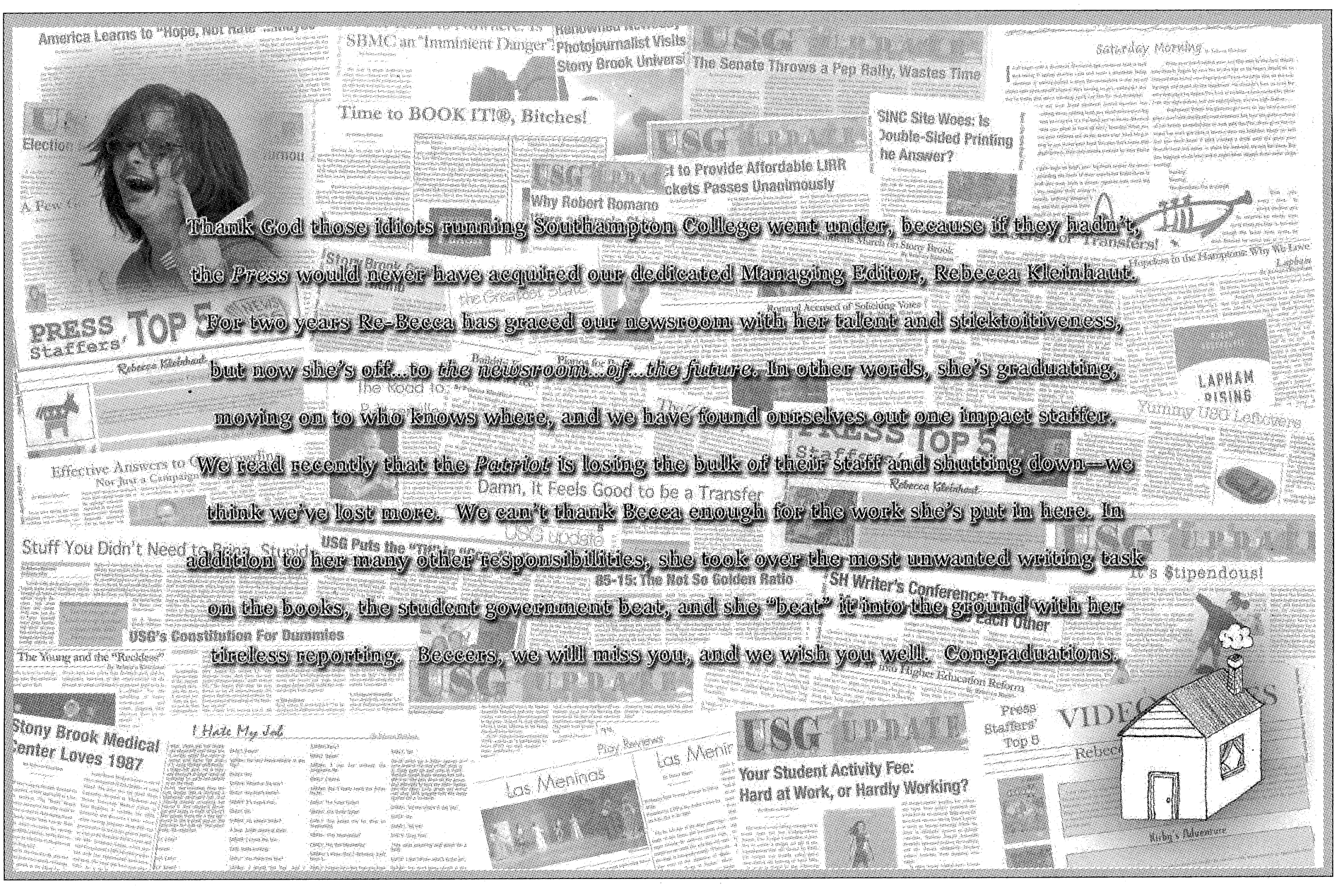
We don't hate you for being a domestic terrorist and a snitch. To each his own, man. We just think that adds to the ridiculousness of your character.

With much love, and a giant "fuck you" from us all,
The Stony Brook Press

Dear *Press*,

Peace out, you crazies.

Love always,
Becca



It's very late, and since I, *The Press'* delivery boy, have been left to finish the issue, I find it necessary to fill the bit of space below with a fan-made wallpaper of Kristen Bell, star of TVs *Veronica Mars* and *Heroes*. I will marry her one day.

Some Christians are Enraptured by Isreael

By Jon Singer

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein looks like a typical modern orthodox Jew – always wearing a kippah and doing little to hide his thick New York accent. But at work, his behaviors mimic evangelists like Jerry Fallwell. Eckstein has been a regular contributor to worship services at Midwest megachurches, where he solicits donations from the Christian right and offends other Jewish leaders at the same time.

The money, nearly $400 million since 1983, goes to Eckstein's International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, a non-profit organization that fosters the lucrative relationship between Christian and Jewish Zionists.

It can be called a sleeping with the devil relationship. According to Timothy P. Weber, author of *On the Road to Armageddon: How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend*, many Christians, over one third of those Americans who support Israel, support the Jewish state because they believe that Jews must control the Holy Land in order for Jesus to return.

Conflict arises when the definition of "the Holy Land" is contested. On the organization's website, the IFCJ calls Arab claims to sovereignty over portions of Israel "illegitimate." They see 1948 as the fulfillment of a prophecy given more than 2000 years ago.

And, in line with this thinking, 1967 was just one more aspect of God defending the Jewish people and their land. It was also when the key Christian city of Bethlehem came under Israeli control. Christian Zionists, siding with right wing Israelis, have no thought of giving the land back. "Splitting Jerusalem would not be a very positive thing," says Andrew Summey, Christian Outreach director of The David Project.

Christian Zionists see Israeli soldiers, politicians, and voters as living manifestations of God's will and testament, even though this average Israeli citizen is not religious. Fighter jets, Uzis, nuclear weapons, and bikini-clad women on the beach in Tel Aviv are not mentioned in ancient scripture.

Secularization is a source of contention among Israelis and Christian Zionists. Dispensationalists in America send money to support a liberal country that might not necessarily agree with its biggest supporters. Pastor John Hagee is the founder of Christians United for Israel, and a pastor at a megachurch in San Antonio. His congregation had been a long time supporter of Hadassah hospital, the Jewish medical center located upon the highly contested Mount Scopus. But last year, donations stopped when the hospital started performing abortions.

Instead, the money was diverted to orphanages and immigration programs. "Our bringing the exiles back to Eretz Israel is a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy," said Hagee, referring to the latter.

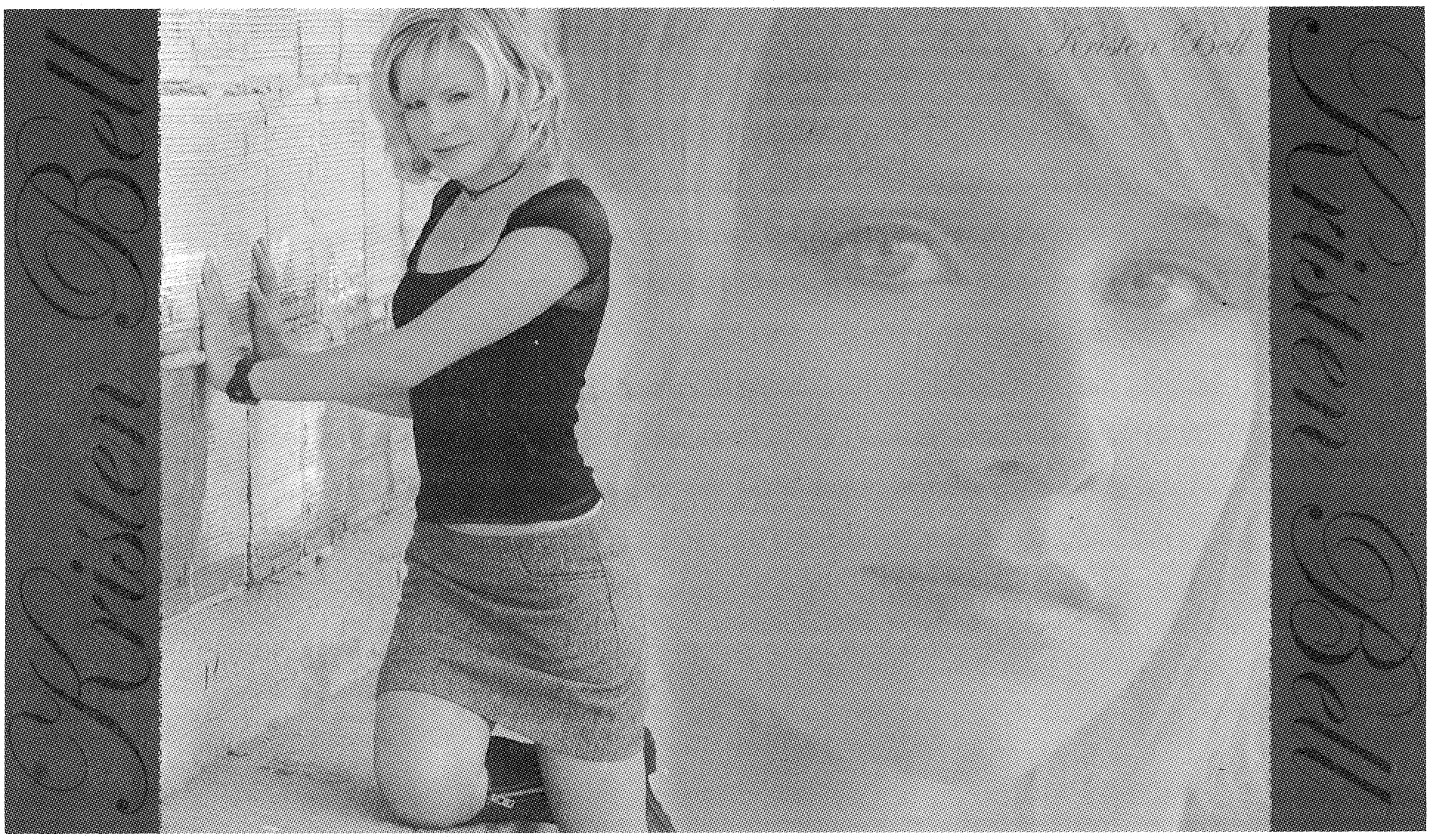
Eckstein's work is publicized in *The Jerusalem Post*, where his latest campaign repaired private bomb shelters in Northern Israel, pumping in ten million dollars raised from evangelical Christians, as reported in the *Post.*

On the other side of Israel's political spectrum, the IFCJ has been criticized in the secular Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. The paper aimed at Eckstein's Fallwell-style infomercials, which are broadcast on Christian Television. "In order to convince people to part with donations, the organization paints a rather bleak picture of Israel, which is not always consistent with the actual lives of Israel's residents," says one report.

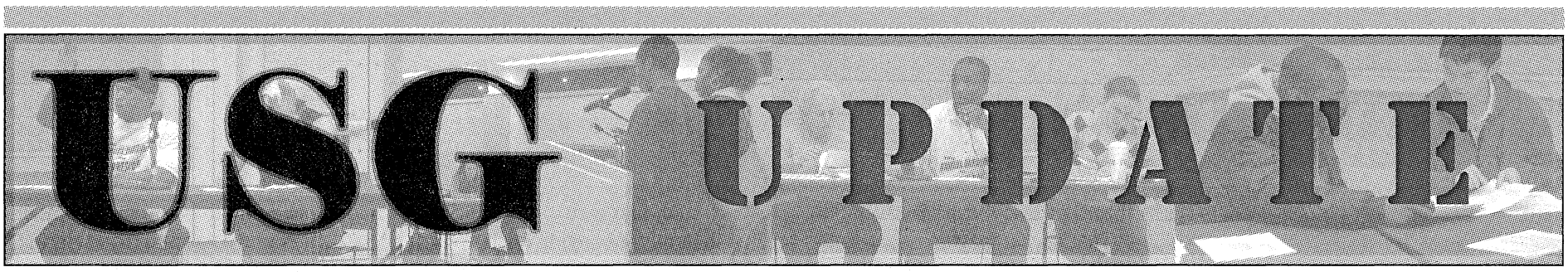
That bleak picture suggests that Palestinian terror attacks occur in Israel on a daily basis, which has halted the tourism industry. As these claims are false, the IFCJ even leads organized trips to Israel.

If one follows the biblical definition, "the promised land" would include The West Bank and Gaza strip. Although the scripture is open to interpretation, as the bible sets boundaries based on biblical areas like the "wilderness of zin" and "Ha'zar-enan," definitions that would over cross the modern day boarders of Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, and surrounding nations. Summey points out that the while the area promised to Abraham is quite large, it has never fully been in Jewish hands. "At some point in time," he says, "All that land is ultimately going to become Israel."

After repeated telephone calls, the IFCJ has yet to respond to inquiries. The organization chooses to play upbeat Jewish music while callers on put hold. Then rabbi Eckstein interjects, to recite bible verses. With regards to Fallwell, Eckstein represented Israel at the reverend's funeral. If the apocalypse does happen to come in Israel, then perhaps it will be up to the Israeli Defense Forces to defend the world from evil.



"Fuckers"



Listen to Reason?

By Rebecca Kleinhaut

Students who were unhappy with the Undergraduate Student Government's (USG) Fall 2007 constitution proposal might get the chance to vote on a reworked document next semester.

On December 6, the drafters of the proposed document returned to the Undergraduate Senate to introduce a revised copy of the new constitution.

The originally overhauled document, which would have replaced USG's current Constitution, was first introduced to the student body on the ballot during the Fall 2007 semester. The document was voted down by 70 percent of voters, receiving 749 "nay" votes.

Jonathon Hirst, Vice President of Student Life and one of the original framers of the new constitution, told the Senate that he went over the proposed document with "concerned students" in clubs and organizations, as well as with other members of USG. Executive Vice President Nathan Shapiro, also an original framer, said that although the framework is "substantially the same," it "addressed some of the concerns" of those students with whom he spoke.

The framers identified unclear language as one of the reasons for the student body's rejection of the new constitution. One change is the specific enumeration of those who would be protected under the constitution. Article One, Section Four now includes a statement that USG "[cannot] discriminate against any [student] on the basis of age, race, sex, sexual orientation [...] or any other criterion prohibited by state or local laws."

Vice President Shapiro clarified that the constitution on the ballot "did protect those [rights]," but the lack of language contributed to the "confusion" regarding their presence.

The extra language was also added to reinforce USG's duties regarding viewpoint neutrality. The framers added a clause that allows clubs to use their funding as "admissible evidence" in discrimination suits against USG.

The framers also added an extra provision for the punishment and expelling of senators. One cause for concern in the previously introduced document was that only two-thirds of the Senate was needed to remove a senator from his or her post. Shapiro admitted that the language surrounding this provision was "vague." They added the stipulation that the impeached senator would sit for a trial with the Chief Justice in attendance. Shapiro said that this move "does provide a few checks" against the practice of corrupt party politics.

Another significant difference from the previously introduced document was the acknowledgement of the treasurer as an elected official. The formerly proposed document identified the president and executive vice president as the only student-elected positions.

The treasurer was previously a position that was appointed by the president.

Senator Blake Wind praised the switch, stating that having more elected officials "works beyond the current administration" to fight against corruption and nepotism in USG. However, Vice President Shapiro expressed to the Senate that he disagreed with the decision, arguing that appointment of the treasurer would force the president to take responsibility for his appointment's competency. Senator Sean Moore agreed, stating that an elected official does not guarantee financial proficiency.

Vice President Hirst said that the change was due to the largely "custodial" nature of the job. "[The Senate] determines standards for [payment] vouchers," said Hirst.

Included with the new constitution were two bills, which, should the new document make it to the ballot, would also be up for student body approval. Shapiro said that the bills were formulated because they recognized that, during the last election, students were "uneasy of approving a system before knowing what kind of system it would be."

The Executive Council Act outlines the position titles and job descriptions of the president's executive council. Although the bill includes the newly titled positions of some current Council members (the Vice President of Student Life becomes the Director of Student Affairs), it does not include any of the class representatives. All positions are appointments with the exception of the treasurer, which is student elected.

Senator Stephen Elardo, who stated that fewer elected officials meant "the best candidates are going to put in the work," praised the cutting of some positions from the ballot.

Also included was the Judiciary Act on Funded Organizations, which outlines the "constitutional rights" of all USG-funded organizations on campus. Rights included those that exist in the Bill of Rights, such as freedom of speech, religion, and assembly. The bill also entitles all clubs to bring USG to trial over accusations of discrimination.

The new constitution and aforementioned bills will be on the ballot next semester if the Senate approves. They will reconvene and cast their votes next semester.

USG Senate Meetings

It's a madhouse! It's a madhouse! It's a madhouse!

It's a madhouse!

It's a madhouse!

It's a madhouse!

Inside the Features section-
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Communist Soy

By Jack Katsman

There is a new epidemic hitting college campuses around the country. It's a little game we like to call syphilis. Oh sorry, wrong article. I mean, *soybeans*! Yes, soybeans, the little green things people put in various meatless entrees and appetizers. Some people even eat it boiled and salted, which is called *edamame*. Surprise, surprise.

But there is a secret to these evil evil little… things! They are all communist spies! Soy beans are the bane of the existence of all that is holy and democratic. Their cream colored exteriors do nothing to hide their black souls, their anti-Christian agendas!

Witness testimony provides much in the way of understanding the allusive and evil soy bean. One, Katie Flanagan, claims that after becoming a vegan, the soybeans took over her sou1! *Her soul!!!!!!!!!* Yes, her soul. They made her do horrible things, things that would make George Bush, Ru Paul, and Jesus cry all at once! Yes, all at once. They made her steal things from the Washington!

Clearly, this is the truth and there is no need for more evidence. But I think I will give you more. Have you ever heard of a soybean takeover? No, right? That's what they want you to believe! Ronald Reagan? Soybean. I mean, whoever heard of an actor becoming president without the aid of soybeans!

I leave you with this tidbit of information. Soybeans are anti-Jesus, anti-America, and anti-Heliotrope. Please, be careful with your soy products. *I beg you. Please!*

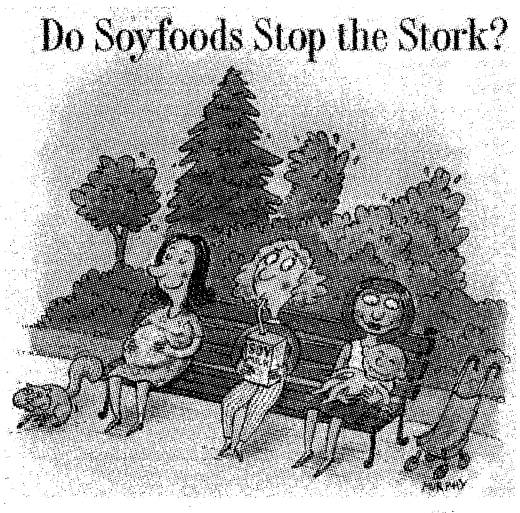
Stoytment on Soybeans

By: Katie Flanagan

I was, at one point in my life, tricked into the vegetarian lifestyle by a band of PETA conspirators. I needed something different, and all the cool kids were doing it. Before I knew it, I was vegan. I thought that I could stop whenever I wanted, I didn't have to avoid animal products. But I was into the organic stuff too; I had no idea how serious the repercussions would be. At that time I didn't know the true meaning of PETA – People Eavesdropping Today Acronym. I don't know why they included the word Acronym in their acronym, but they did.

As a vegan, not only was I doing tofu, but I was into soy. That's right, you've heard the stories. I thought, "That'll never happen to me." But soybeans possessed – you guessed it – my soul, and that is why I participated in numerous spying operations. It was my mission, and I didn't get a choice whether I wanted to accept it or not. Fuck, these are soybeans we're talking about, not some wimpy-ass self-destructing tape.

I was somewhere around the Lincoln Memorial, on the edge of the capital, when the beans began to take hold, and I remember saying something like, "I feel a bit light headed, maybe you should drive." But then I realized I was alone, and I wasn't driving. Before I knew it, I had gone through Washington's security using only a pick ax and George Foreman grill. It was at this point that I came to a realization – not only was my soul possessed by soy beans, but they were Russian soy beans, and I was going to be forced to spy on my own country, despite my enduring, undying, eternal patriotism.



I knew my precious bodily fluids were in danger, and with PETA and the Russians together, my sex life was doomed. Though this was of primary concern, I was also intrigued by what I discovered within our nations capital. Sausages! They make sausages! Still being vegan at that time, I was horrified. It was a disgusting, horrible, corrupt process, or so I thought.

I spotted Ashcroft, and desperately in need of a rising sound, demanded he sing. It was then that the hallucinations began. I'd tell you of the evil I saw, but it's a "you had to be there" story. I was fooled into believing the lies of the liberally biased media. Fucking *New York Times*.

Anyway, I was eventually discovered and taken to room 102, due to a rat infestation in room 101. I don't really remember much from that point on, I think it had something to do with side effects from the soy beans, but luckily, the nice Republicans were there to take care of me. I'm happy to report that I'm eating meat again, but not to worry, I'm a conscientious consumer, and I only eat bacon after the pigs have finished their poker games.

Festival of Lights: an Event I Didn't Really Attend

By Alex Berkman

On Wednesday, December 5, many departments and student organizations on campus sponsored and funded Stony Brook's Seventh Annual Festival of Lights in the Student Activities Center auditorium to bring the diverse campus community together for the holiday season.

Students from different organizations, including various campus ministries, such as Hillel and the Muslim Students Association, helped run tables that offered information on each religion's holiday and gave out free food.

Each table included decorations and a sign describing the history and significance of each holiday to its respective culture.

The event "celebrates diversity of religions and faith," said Cheryl Chambers, the co-chair of the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

The festival was hosted by Rabbi Joseph Topek of the Interfaith Center. It included performances, presentations and choirs including members of religious groups on campus, such as the Muslim Student Association, the Hillel Choir and the Stony Brook Gospel Choir.

Food relating to each holidays ethnicity and culture was served. Christmas had cookies and eggnog, Hanukkah had potato latkes and Kwanzaa had fresh fruit.

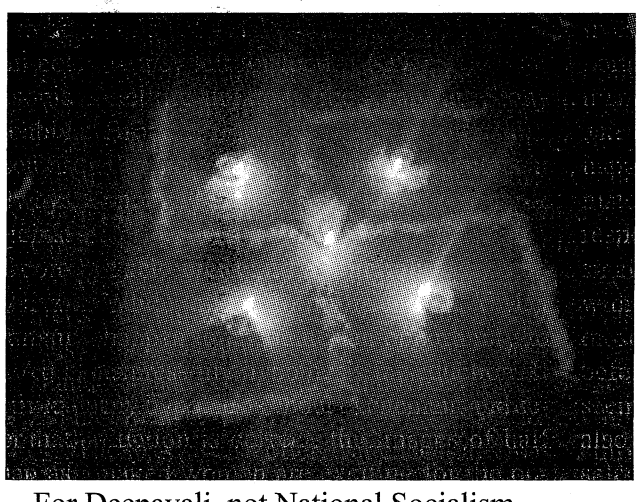
The festival also offered attendees a table to make and decorate their own keychains, ornaments and other holiday related crafts.

"Most events get people to come if there are free food and refreshments," said Shari Marie Vances, a member of the Catholic Campus Ministry, adding that faith brings people together.

"Bringing different religions together," Matthew Anderson, of the Catholic Campus Ministry, said is the reason for the event. "Cultural understanding," he added, was a major goal as well.

Some students came "to get into the Christmas spirit," Bethany Shutsliffe said, adding that she also came for the "free food and crafts."

Student Emma Kobolakis said, "I came for the pineapple and the spectacle."



For Deepavali, not National Socialism

You've gotta fight. For your right. To paaaartyyyy!

E-mail *The Press* at
sbpress@gmail.com

The Booger Show

With
Jon Singer

One day I am going to move to Israel. I'm not very religious – I don't believe that the entire world's population came from six people – but lately I've felt more and more compelled to live in the Jewish state.

I've already been over there twice. Both times I went on what were essentially Zionist propaganda programs. At least my Israeli tour guide was willing to talk about occupations and settlements. He even brought us to his house, to show us a practical example of a Jewish settlement in Northern Israel.

Enough occupation

Throughout the tour, he made countless references to his country being the "secular Jewish state." He doesn't think that Jerusalem, by elevation, is the highest city in the world. But he does believe that the city is the capital of Israel. The disputed status of Jerusalem was conveniently left out of my lessons in Hebrew school. In fact, almost all foreign embassies are located in Tel Aviv, the not-so-holy cultural capital of Israel. On Saturday in Tel Aviv, the beaches are literally saturated with people.

Then I spent a Saturday in Jerusalem. The streets were completely empty. What was a bustling market the day before was now vacant. Even the ATMs at Bank Hapoalim were out of service. So I did what any responsible Jew would do on a Saturday in Jerusalem. I walked to The Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. Unlike the ATMs, the metal detectors at the entrance to the Wall were running.

An Israeli flag waves on a flagpole in front of The Wall. This connects Jewish nationalism to Judaism. Behind the wall is a mosque, and inside that mosque is a prime piece of real estate, to say the least. Called The Dome of The Rock in English, the mosque houses the rock where Abraham almost sacrificed his son. It's also the rock where Muhammad ascended into heaven. I can't prove that either of those events happened.

After a while I got sick of praying and my friend and I decided to wander around the Old City. Shops in The Armenian Quarter were open – Armenian Christians celebrate the Sabbath on Sunday. A bargaining shopkeeper convinced me to spend fifty shekels on jewelry for a girlfriend that I don't have. All the while, for safety purposes, I claimed to be Canadian.

I was told to stay away from a lot of places during my second trip, a six-week program run by Hadassah. I'm sure you can guess what those places are. Disclaimer: I can't say anything about West Bank checkpoints because I've never been through one. But we were inclined to enter the Muslim Quarter of The Old City. We were hungry – we kept up our Canadian charade as we purchased Arab bagels and schwarma. We also had numerous opportunities to buy bootleg DVDs.

Enough occupation

Back in Israel proper, we smoked hashish. It could have been that terrorists in Lebanon grew the drugs that we bought. At least that was one man's theory, a kibbutznik in northern Israel. We downed Vodka Red Bulls and watched *Transformers*. Hebrew is the language of the Torah, and some would consider using it to translate Michael Bay movies blasphemous. The Hebrew word for air conditioning is mazgan, but I don't think central air is mentioned in the Torah anywhere.

Enough occupation

And for some reason I am inclined to live in Israel. Hopefully, if I learn enough Hebrew, I can write for *Haaretz*. I don't agree with the editorial policy of *The Jerusalem Post*, the English language Zionist newspaper. When in Israel, be sure to visit Mike's Place, with two convenient locations in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The gimmick of Mike's Place is that it's an American bar. I went there on the fourth of July and ate barbeque. Mike's Place in Tel Aviv is located next door to the American Embassy, which I thought was a prime target for terrorist activity. Then I learned that Mike's Place was the spot of a suicide bombing in 2003.

Everywhere you go in Israel there are people at the door to check your bag. The only time my bag wasn't checked was when I went to a punk show. Regardless of what they teach you in Hebrew school, an anarchist subculture thrives among Israel's secular youth. On Friday nights, when many Jews light candles and pray, these anarchists take to the streets on bicycles as part of the worldwide Critical Mass movement.

Mandatory military conscription presents a challenge to these anarchists. In Israel, three years of military service is mandatory from age 18 (two years for women). When I move to Israel, I will more than likely not be required to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces For numerous reasons, I wouldn't qualify. Although it's always been my dream to be a Mossad agent.

When I move to Israel, one thing that I will not have to worry about is gaining citizenship. The State of Israel grants automatic citizenship to Jews upon arrival. It doesn't matter if you don't speak any Hebrew or haven't secured yourself a job, The Law of Return guarantees that you're an Israeli. That means I'll see you at Mike's Place.

Jonathan Singer feels like he's missing something in this column. He's ----sure you can guess what.

The Booger Show is a weekly syndicated column. Singer's first entry was about the Jewish porn industry. First published in 1976, it set the standard for what The Booger Show would be forever.

Food For Thought

Live life. Live life...like you're gona die. Because you're gona. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but you're gona die.
—William Shatner

Kotei's Korner 3001

Knowing Who You Ever Work With

After serving two terms at the executive board office of Golden Key chapter, that was enough. First term, I was not officially elected, but served as volunteer. In the second term, I did everything and more than I did in the previous term. Eventually, the tension and the mistrust towards the office grew disproportionately. The core values of the Honor Society are *Integrity*, *Collaboration*, *Innovation*, *Respect*, *Diversity*, *Excellence*, and *Engagement*. I take words literary and decision figuratively. Near the end of my term, the advisors' vision and my own appeared to conflict. I was more exhausted in battling to comply with the conventional ideology than running the chapter anyhow. In each value, there was amendable:

Integrity

For worrying about the prestige, it seems common behavior to neglect integrity. I can, in fact, generalize this to another question: why are people afraid of honesty? Our chapter did not have a general body meeting for two months; we had to postpone one several times. It was ironically administrative mistake; it was not ours. Finally, we were assigned a room for our meeting, and I announced it to the members. I forwarded the message beforehand to the advisors for checking the content. They required us to do this after one of the officers unprofessionally verbally assaulted the member and almost ruined our reputation single handedly. After the shocking incident, the advisors lost all the faith and forcibly ordered us to forward any messages to the general members in advance. When I sent my message for their checking, they deliberately erased the sentences that excused ourselves for having a meeting so late in the semester. I just wanted to explain that our chapter was not inactive. I was stunned when I saw the only editing they did was that erasing, and the rest was left untouched. Where did their integrity go? They taught me its value and they are the ones disregarding it in a fear of exposing unprofessional.

Collaboration

This semester my course load ended up as an excruciating amount. Halfway through the semester, I decided that I could not make it to the executive board meeting. This got in the rest of executive board that some decided to dismiss their duty just by attending the meeting. Don't get me wrong, I was away from the office for quite a duration, but my mind was set to complete my responsibility. As far as I know, when the advisors reminded the officers that we must write up reports with regard to chapter activities and performance, two officers responded. We finished the performance reports before we had to commit to other duty later that day. Later that week, I finished activity reports. Where did the heart of collaboration go? It is hard enough for me to maintain chapter relations outside of campus and member relations on campus. We lost much collaboration within the chapter. I have ignored the advisors' order a few times to check with them before sending mass messages, when I saw the timing was too crucial. After all, it was either we do or we don't. The chapter seemed inactive for such a long time. I needed to step up and do something about it.

Innovation

This is what I'm talking about. Innovation. Keeping conservative values is good, if the ideology is proven to work. But to really flourish, one must take risks. When the old traditions eventually get old, innovative ideas and methods should succeed the soul. I am a strategist. I look things objectively and subjectively, and evaluate with much consideration. Sure, often the ideas seem too vague to execute. Sure, often the proposals were rejected. But I suggest anyway, for the sake of improving and blowing fresh wind of liberalism into old fashion. Not everybody appreciates the liberalism to the full extent; that's the way to maintain the equilibrium. But when one raises excuses based on the conventional view, it is unfair because new ideas cannot be proven for success before the launch. Some methods that I derived from behaviorism worked. It has at least proven some positive correlation that we achieved one of the highest membership (not to mention the number of invitations we sent out) amongst all US chapters and had the most excellent response rate. Who else can handle member relations with over one thousand members?

Respect

When the election came around, I was the only continuing officer. The rest of executive board was graduating seniors. Prior to the election date, the advisors had told me not to run for the president position. They were afraid of my credentials as the "experienced." They also knew my work style, that I tend to spread wide across many areas. Stony Brook's chapter has a reputation around the chapters across countries of running a successful year, so they didn't have any reason to doubt the newly elected officers to run successful chapter either. They had told me about one commitment as president, and that my work style as an officer is not suitable. Sure, I understood and accepted their words. But now, I started thinking it was also one of the series of their clever excuses that they shelved for me. Perhaps I expanded contribution to campus relations, member relations, chapter relations, and all the other goodies. Perhaps I was not purely committed to my duty as Vice President of Activities; I was often taking care of a President duty, a Vice President of Membership duty, a Secretary duty, a Historian duty, a Treasurer duty, and a Community Service Director duty. But at the end, I was the one completing the majority of chapter reports that everybody else forgot about. While President and Vice President of Membership helped me, the rest did not even respond to my messages and calls. Neither did advisors, but it was because they were out of their offices. When it comes to respect, I wanted lasting cooperation until the end. I might be busy with classes and choose getting ready for classes over attending the meetings. But I still fulfilled my duty until the end.

Diversity

As a Vice President of Activities, I tried to come up with activities that we never did. From previous term, I knew people around the States and beyond. At various leadership training conferences, I was one of a few who stayed up late for discussing collaborations and ideas for event. We brought all those ideas back to the chapter. I mentioned the long list of possible activities and such, but absolutely nobody was interested. They wanted to stick with few big events that already have the school's support. All I sought was their interests. None, zero, zilch, nil, nada. What am I? Stupid? Or did those who party away the whole weekend at leadership conference and who were barely awake really contribute to the further success of their chapter? I complied and kept the lists in my time capsule. If the diversity stands for the core value of the honor society, we should be open-minded about how we can improve annual activities.

Excellence

Like in our Induction Ceremony, we maintain the professionalism. I know this is important. However, the only reason I felt right at home was the sense of humor that one of advisors had. So humoring has been one of my methods to attract members and keep member relations. It seems like a success because the member involvement increased. But sometimes the advisors will mistake my showing enthusiasm for suggesting immaturity. I know where to draw a line. I'm not an imbecile. I am just committed. If they have problem with it, tough.

One time, I expressed verbally that I wanted to propose a new addition to the chapter's regular practices. The advisors suggested that I write up a proposal. So I came up with very organized templates, forms, summaries, analysis, and whole nine yards, only to be slapped down by the words, "This is too professional and people will get intimidated." Sure, it was professional because they requested it. They didn't like it. Then they should have said so. After all, I take words at literal values. If they have problem with it, tough.

Engagement

Last but not least, member mobilization is my key objectives as a chapter officer. I value the force that members can bring. I am not yet even talking about well over a thousand members we currently have on campus. I probably see our members other than the source of chapter funds. My principle in Behavioral Economics is consumer behaviors. Just like that, my principle in Golden Key chapter at Stony Brook is also member mobilizations. If we effectively incorporate members on our side, we can potentially achieve something the little executive board cannot. From my past I know that majority of members are interested in chapter involvement beyond being members. We announced our open door policy for their suggestions and offer to help. Few came forward. But the chapter did not pursue on any collaboration. So I changed the policy. I think inviting their involvements is more encouraging than welcoming them. For example, on behalf of our chapter, I would ask a few members for their participation. Those members are ones who showed interests in "more involvements." It works, because I did it for the Induction Ceremony and recognized their presence. They came out on the weekend to represent the Honor Society. It meant a lot finding them at ceremony. As a strategist, I do those little things all the time whether conscious or unconscious, whether planned or spontaneous, whether purposeful or just for fun. It is

Chris Jericho had the best entrance music

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just the accumulation of such efforts that lead to solid success.

Unfortunately, I did not fight near the end of my second term. It was just purely pain in my ass to explain every bit of factors. They served the chapter for over ten years; what is my position to lecture them? I did not bother to share my intention that they would not listen. Besides, I did not intend to suck up just for the recommendation to graduate schools. Only time I wasted was the time I coped with the rejection and anxiety attacks of complying with their ideal.

Average Height

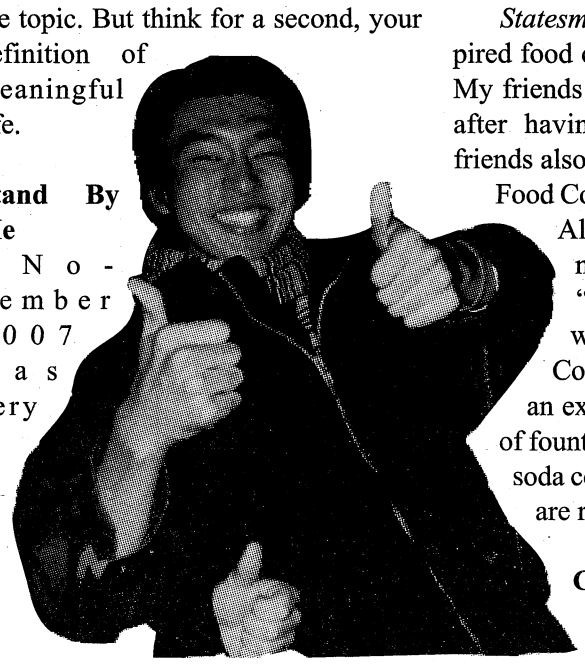
One day I was discussing with my friend the average height. He said 5'4". I guess that's reasonable. So I thought, from my experience, just by observing people on campus. Many are up to my shoulders. Some are taller than that. Occasionally, a few of them are taller than me. So I searched for more information online.

The average height for males goes up to 6 feet – in some mountainous area, within former Slovakia region. European countries marked the average height almost equivalent of US. The statistics show about 5'10". The shortest marked was in Chinese male, average no more than 5'5". No surprise, people seem to get stunned seeing my height. (Alright, so tallness gene may be recessive, who knows?) According to my parents, Chinese people ridicule Japanese for short height. Who's laughing now? Japanese are a few inches taller and looking down upon Chinese, for now, statistically. Either way, one thing doesn't change – I will not tolerate in either country. For female, 5'10" is the benchmark of 50th percentile. Since the distribution is more or less normal, I am more likely to get impressed in Europe with their eye levels above my shoulders. But I'm content to find some of them here. In US, the average height for female is indeed 5'4". The statistic suggests that there are girls taller than 5'10', though less than five percent chance. And they do look great.

One more thing about the average height: it seems like the average height in United States has dropped since the first settlements. Americans used to be taller than Europeans. Native Americans even had taller average height. If the hypothesis that people traveled from the west of Pacific to the east, the vastness of American continent seems to have magical effect on height. However, after the mixing of races, all that is counteracted with culture shun. According to the way people perceive the cuteness, they can judge by the face. By face, the factor is the distance between eyes and nose. Thus, baby faces and smaller faces are generally considered cute. Small faces are often attributed to shorter height. Also many guys became ass-men and teat-man, which are also often attributed to the shortness of height. As a result, by means of natural selection, new generation of boys and girls are born shorter than previous - statistically. But again, to emphasizing the property of statistics, I assure you there are odds like me who are tall and like the tallness.

AIDS day

I went to the AIDS Memorial Quilt on the 29th. My friend was an assistant at the event, so the visitation was inspired by my support. As I was walking around the Ballroom A to check every single quilt, I started wondering about how these people are commemorated and being loved even after their death. When I saw a few "Fr." and "Rev." titles, I was wondering how the epidemic does not discriminate the people. Then I started wondering: will I be cared, will I be loved, will I be missed, will I be remembered, after they lose me? I generally don't care if I would be. But I think many people hope they would be remembered. The key is to ask yourself: did I influence them, did I mark your presence in someone's memory, did I share unforgettable moments, did I have friends who shared secrets with, and questions like that. I'm sure you have one yes. Right now, Dean Martin's "Everybody Love Somebody Sometimes" is echoing my head and distracting for further thoughts. So I shall cut the topic. But think for a second, your definition of meaningful life.



Stand By Me

November 2007 was very much harmonic with the "Stand By Me" tune. I didn't even know the song's title until I was given the music sheet for wind ensemble. It's by Ben E. King. I was more relaxed in playing music of this kind than classics. Second week of November, in the weekend when I had to take a break from the Korner, I was at Fall Retreat by Catholic Campus Parish. This Retreat's theme was "Stand By Me" and during the weekend we watched the movie "Stand By Me." The coincidence occurred at two very unexpected events.

"Stand By Me." What it meant for me I wondered. From a Christian perspective, the message was probably intended to stand close to Him. But I was actually confused the whole weekend. It was not like I did not know what to expect. I knew everything to be expected. I guess at subconscious level I felt "Stand By Me" meant something else. I interpreted it as friends standing up for one another, strangers giving helping hands to one another, and believers of good deeds coming together for the better world, the more peaceful world. One doesn't have to believe in Him to do good deeds. Every good deed should come from their heart. Selfless giving heart is truly pure. When you give helping hands, you are standing by those in need of help.

Conscious Dining

I started to notice that people became more conscious on campus. They know that their voice is heard and is given consideration. When my roommate called up SAC Food Court office for a complaint about an employee, he was amazed that some number of people had already made complaint about the guy. He seemed to be fired quite promptly.

Statesman recently reported the expired food on shelves on Food Courts. My friends had stomach pain one day after having a regular meal. Some friends also reported buying food from Food Court that passed sell-by date. Along with those incidents, I noticed something about "Make It Combo." Most of warm dishes have "Make It Combo" option, such that with an extra $1.50 one gets any size of fountain soda. But 32oz fountain soda costs less than $1.40. So they are ripping you off.

Conscious Hazard

When noisy construction starts at 7 in the morning until lunchtime, I started wondering about the side effects. Although average bedding time for college students is still at midnight, many students still go to bed early and wake up after 8 or 9 in the morning. People can adapt to new environment quick. But adapting to keen noise or beeps and rubble is safety hazard. In psychology textbook, it mentioned about new parents, especially new mom, waking up by the faint voice of their baby but not by the jet airplane flying over the roof. The result suggested that people have selective hearing. Coming back to our situation: if students adapt to the noise of construction outside, it could mean that they selectively block all the noise. If the fire alarm goes off at night, can they wake up? I think that would be considered safety hazard.

Conscious Right Things to Do

Recently, I was boggled up with one of RA in the building. I had a complaint to make. But I just asked myself, what would school do if it hired that RA? So I kept the complaint to myself until I overheard that another RA being put to probation for what I felt was unjust and that I was not the only one who had problem with the RA. I filed a complaint. RHD was quick to react to the complaint and things seemed back to normal soon after. When you felt offended by RA, you have every right to speak up. When you felt offended by anyone, you have every right to express it to appropriate official.

So we have only so many days left of classes. Although we don't have reading days for the finals week, we can finally breathe easy. Yet uno-mas X-mas and New Year 2008. What are your winter break plans?

Meal Point Rollover

This week, I heard a rumor that the rollover of extra residential meal points is effective from this semester on. So I called the Meal Plan office. I opened the conversation by "I want to ask you about this rumor that I've heard in regard to meal points." The person sounded very confused. According to the respondent, only meal plans that roll over the points to next semester are commuter and West Apartment meal plans. I was hoping that I hear good news, but I guess some things never change.

Food For Thought

Yeah! And what about student drivers using my streets to learn? If you learn to play the drums you got to go to a studio! Go to a parking lot, for God's sake! Why are you jeopardizing my life? I can't get behind a student driver! —William Shatner

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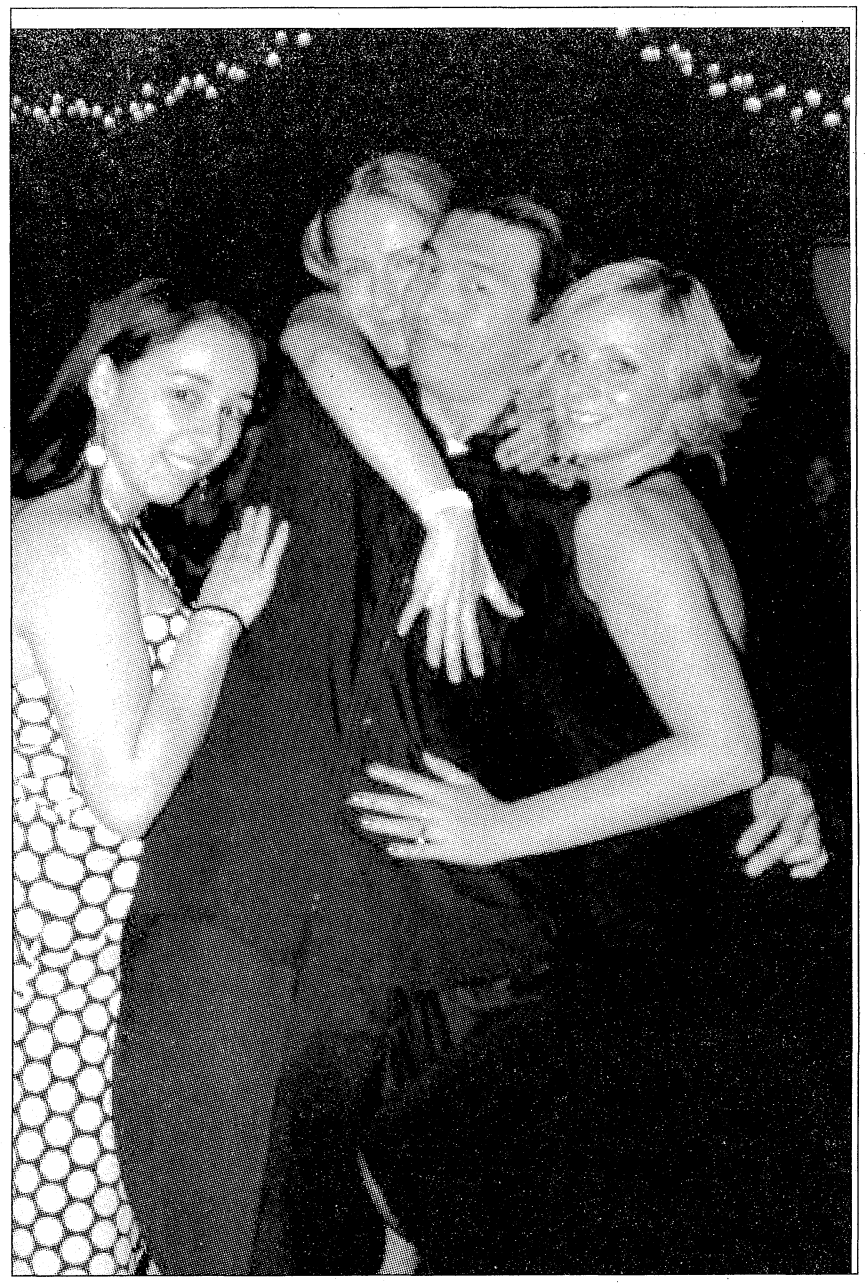
Me and Performing Arts

Actually I'm not restricted to performing arts as long as I feel the excitement and urge to perform "just one more time." I almost forgot the sensation until recently.

Wind Ensemble was great. It had been over three full years since the last time I practiced in a group. There were a few times when I took out the saxophone and played pop/jazz music before this semester, but never in an ensemble. I did not start playing instruments (timpani, tuba, and glockenspiel) until I was 11 and stopped playing altogether in middle school. I returned to music when I was in 11th grade and performed in high school concerts. I was one of few lucky ones to be placed amongst the top players in one semester. For every concert we practice the whole semester. Every semester, I wanted more than one performance. It's not the spotlight I enjoy, because it was always blinding me. It's the performance for which I practiced the whole semester. This semester in MUS263, I performed amongst some performers who have been professionally trained. Three hour practice is weekly, but after working so hard to catch up I knew three hours is barely enough.

After getting familiar with music for years, I still tell my friends that I don't know the pitch. As for perfect pitch and absolute pitch, let's face it; I didn't have any level of music education until 11 year old. When I play music, my pitch is pretty random (in the sense that I don't hit the first note and guess the rest of notes relative to prior note. I think it all comes down to my reaction speed. So it's easy for my friends to assume that I have a talent. At the first team practice, I did keep stumbling. But I can tell you that I observed very shrewdly. Then I replayed the images in my head over and over again, so I picked up the steps quick. I replayed in my head while walking to and fro on campus, listening to lectures, doing homework, eating, and sleeping. Also I simulated and practiced the steps, with my partner and alone. After all such physical and mental work, the dance starts to look decent. I didn't stop there because I wanted to advance to next level sooner. – I still look forward to going beyond. – After all the physical and mental effort, getting callbacks at competition is very exciting. I could dance more!

I may be LMAO 90% of the time, but I do work hard. I seem to be joking around like a fool all the time, but I do my best for the groups when I decide to take part in them. That's how I work and that's how you should work, if you want to gain the same respect that you gave to the group member. Ballroom dance is probably my exception because I didn't think I'd become so single-minded. If I want to be good at it, I guess I couldn't avoid it. I probably seem maniac to some of my friends I took to the team practice. They never came back for the practice for their excruciating muscle ache or what not. I should've taken them to the club practice because that practice is ache demanding.



How *does* he do it?

My Club Involvement

My friends often ask, "How do you get involved in every club on campus and can still make time for social and for friends?" My answer, "I don't know." What I do know is that I only join clubs to have something in the evening every day. Some people look forward to parties and I seem to be a good entertainer in the parties. (But why?) So I'm not a party pooper per se. But I don't go out for "partay" unless good friends of mine are there or they organized it. I'm a shy fella! Instead I join campus clubs for meeting, social, or practice. Compared to my Friday and Saturday evening, the rest of evenings are obviously different. I stay on campus every night until 11.

But my friends remain my top priority. Just second to the classes, might I add. But I would supercede my friends over classes on some exceptional circumstances. That's how I make time for my friends out of my free time. I don't care if I use my free time all by myself or use it for my friends. Besides making my time for others is not difficult.

Male Conductors Sound Good?

In response to overwhelming request to put this comment of mine, I give in. So it was on one of the weekends before heading to intramural volleyball. I was walking from Jasmine to Pritchard gym with some friends. When we were passing by the recital hall, I felt saying, "Male conductors lead the orchestra better than female ones do." Oh how did I not expect back fire from both girls in the group?

One of their arguments was that there are scarce female conductors and should not be compared. But I felt it was because male conductors are suitable for the position. Apparently there's more to consider. They also argued that female conductors may not be given an equal opportunity in leading orchestra. Perhaps. It is plausible. I read some biographies of majors composers and they were all male. But if some women want to become a priest, it is not hard to imagine they may want to become conductors.

They also argued that female learners work harder. If you recall your high school years and before, you remember that girls generally had better grades in school than boys did. Parents would just think that girls grow faster and that boys can be more involved in athletics and outdoors. But they raised that girls work harder in schools. I do admire their work ethics too. Girls do indeed produce better quality work. No doubt about it. But if they work harder than boys to get better grade, that's natural. I poked onto their loop hole. Assuming that female and male conductors-to-be were educated at same capacity, which matured genders show most progress? In high school and before, I cannot imagine majority of kids are enthusiastic about their pursuits. I did not know what I wanted to pursue then. So let that both genders have same goal in the music school – becoming future conductors. Their drive, motivation, and enthusiasm are comparable, no? So the music students work equally hard regardless of gender difference. Then my friends' argument seems to suggest that male students can progress further than female. I am not even inferring to their talents or innate skill, that is an exceptional effect.

I also argued that in general male responds to emergency sooner than female does. I've heard this experiment regarding car accidents. The particular experiment must've been the follow up of another earlier experiment regarding cell phone usage and the distraction caused by phone conversation, not the availability of hands. Response time to emergency was significantly less than a second. However the experiment showed that male drivers respond to emergency quicker. They supposed that

FUCK THE PATRIOTS. If the Steelers can't beat them, who can? The Jets? Hahaha

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the neurotransmitters triggered by brain, in response to what the brain interpreted from the image that was sent from retina through optic nerves, reaches to the nerves in the limbs faster for male. As far as I observed, conductors seem to be reading the measures of all the instruments. I know many female instrumentalists. Male and female equally perform well and know the music. But when reading two or more clefs of each instrument, I suppose response speed is determining factor.

When I talk about gender equality, I am more likely to stand on female side than male. But during the argument with the friends, I felt some female voices sound little overboard as if it says women must take over man now. It's not like a revenge, but a statement that it is women's turn to shine. I fear the time when women's right advocates may cross the boarder. At last I encounter an interesting article from Washington Post, titled "Where Is the Ms. in Maestro?"

Food and Athletics

I often choose athletics. I do eat and I do enjoy eating good food. But when I can exercise, I'll jump right off of the table and into the game. Eating is as tiring for me as exercising. So there is an incentive for me. I can eat 32oz steak plus appetizers and not feel full. I guess it's good that I don't feel full after all. Lucky me, I don't gain weight in proportional to the amount of food I consume. It's either due to all the exercise, strictly not gym workout, or high metabolism. But again I often don't eat the whole day. I prefer spending time in athletics that I often forget the meal. It's okay!

Why Drink For Fun?

For me drinking goes as far as smelling. When my friend from high school ensembles (amongst two bands I belonged, we mainly played classic in one and we played pop in the other), he took me to night club. That day I drank tow glasses of third white wine and two thirds sprite. That was the most alcohol consumption ever.

I "bought" one glass by myself but didn't pay for it because the bartender did not tell me the price. Then my new acquaintance bought me the second. Although I drank two glasses, it was half sprite! At the end of the first glass, I actually felt nauseous. I barely finished the second but I just gulped down. I felt roasted, exhausted, and it was getting late too.

White wine and sprite is the only thing I drink if I was insisted. Beer? Forget about it. My friends say one gets used to the smell after a few drink, but I can't even sip because of the smell. When my friends had rum, whisky, beer, etc, I read the label on the bottles, opened the bottles to smell, and frown. So I don't really know what drives them to think that they want to drink. I drink lemon ice tea because I like its taste. Although I don't drink soda in general, I drink sprite because it tastes good. Alcohol itself doesn't have flavor. It's just the tingling in the mouth and perhaps the tint of adulthood. Although I choose white wine hoping to taste the tint of grapes, I have never tasted.

Maybe the alcohol washes away the external shell and exposes their wild side. If I remember correctly, alcohol is a depressant. Maybe they like drinking alcohol because of taste. What taste? Maybe they like drinking alcohol for the sake of drinking? Yeah, okay, like water makes much difference. What can possibly go through their mind when people decide to win in drinking game? It will remain mystery to me forever unless someone tells me.

Doing Job at Wrong Times

Many students were frustrated when the Sparky stopped working. Homework assignments were given as usual and the correspondences between students and faculties were to be exchanged as usual. However when the Sparky stopped working, everything got deteriorated. That's why I urge you to abolish your Sparky account for your regular e-mail account. Sparky is unreliable and buggy. Many professors in technology related field also complain about the management of the system and the administrators. Now sound more credential, isn't it? Sparky isn't worth your important e-mails. It seemed it was just the system upgrades, but in such a wrong time and took too long in the day time.

I'm sure there are more campus projects that are not very appropriate to be carried out. For those projects, I'm not suggesting that they should do it some other time. Such demand is probably impossible. But some projects such as peeling off the flooring of the hallways can wait. The flooring was against safety standard, but the noise of construction can be considered safety hazard if people accept the human adaptability and selective hearing. All I am trying to convey is that the university officials should also remember that students exist and we are as human as they are, when they decide to carry out a long-term project.

When Undergrad is Paid Inadequate…

When I thought it was only Resident Assistants who were paid below minimum wage, I witnessed a posting by Graduate Student Employees Union. Their comments clearly suggested that the university does not value the graduate students. For example, "A TA's stipend should reflect the value that this university places on undergraduate education is clearly not a priority here."

TA is paid about $13,000 a year. Considering the cost of living in Long Island, it is apparently insufficient. One says, "I love teaching, but I can't survive in New York on love alone." This graduate student is an assistant for one elementary and two elective courses. The stipend is for working 20 hours a week. However many graduate students are TA for more than two undergraduate courses. Many students on campus realize that many elementary courses on campus are taught by graduate students. Also students all know that good education needs good basic. I truly believe that it is graduate students' effort and labor for Kenny's pride for the school – "One of the brightest minds…"

Graduate students have many questions to the university and Kenny. One of a few is "Should I pay my rent or eat?" Especially good one is "Will the SAC Food Court accept food stamps?" The questions thrown at the university illustrates the frustrations that graduate teaching assistantship and its stipend do not pay for their living cost. Ms. Kenny is overlooking the fact that she lives in mansion that was technically donated in the neighborhood of Stony Brook. She should not expect her life style is standard in Long Island.

As of Fall Semester 2007, the stipend increased by $2,000 a year. So referring the quote from the Visa/MasterCard commercial:

My month on $1250:

Rent… $800

Bills… $411

Money left for food… $39

Getting treated like crap at Stony Brook… priceless

I'm not an expert on this. But is it enough?

Excitement and Seduction

While talking to my friend on AIM, I happen to encounter an opportunity to express my hypothesis in seduction. If my hypothesis about excitement and seduction is correct, the images of half naked women are exciting for the opposite gender because it is taboo. Perhaps taboo is not the right word. But the idea is that one gets excited when the scene is something rarely seen. More specifically these rare sceneries are often restricted and even frowned upon. Since our current society expects people to be clothed, naked bodies can provoke one's sexuality and arouse. Seduction goes around the tendency and lures the sexuality by exposing part of bodies that used to be hidden. Many young celebrities wear short skirts and open bosom. I can only imagine to apply for the girls; perhaps women used to be hidden from public exposure? Or as Elaine from Seinfeld remarks, "Well, the female body is a... work of art. The male body is utilitarian, it's for gettin' around, like a jeep." Anyway, I'm sure centuries ago wearing very little cloths was not a problem. There must some villages where villagers, male and female, still walk around half naked and are accepted. But I think that what excites people probably remains to be something that is rarely seen.

At Wolfie's

When the first time I had meals at Wolfie's restaurant, I sat for the lunch. There were probably five waiters. But I had to actually call one of them to make an order. They wouldn't wait on me and ignored that I had nothing in front of me. A thought that came to mind was that the waiters are not motivated because tipping was not expected. Eventually I realized that tips are expected. So the waiters should accept the fact that they wait on their peers.

I ordered pita chips for an appetizers, then chicken and broccoli alfredo. The pita chips were crunchy and came in big portion, for sure. But the bottom half was soaked in oil that I was gnawing on chips like gummi bears and worms (not the German cartoon). Chicken and Broccoli Alfredo was great but chicken was stringy. When I was invited to a dinner with other honor society and organization representatives, my newly acquainted friends reported no stringy chicken. But they did mention the excessively cheesy sauce.

The manager of the Wolfie's restaurant happened to be one of my former classmate and an honor society member. In response to my inquiry, "Wolfie is smaller than EOB, and menu is smaller with only pasta or salad available." For those who ever visited End Of Bridge before it closed down last semester, it seems to be a common opinion. I was also surprised at seeing only pasta, salad, burgers, and some appetizers (French onion soup, mozzarella sticks,

Food For Thought
Chicken sammich.

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chips, etc).
Lastly I also noticed that the paper towel was small. The restaurant setting must not be suitable in serving wings then. I used more than one big paper towel in having hot wings at Applebee's ®.
Overall I had a positive impression. The mood of the restaurant was good. The portion was large enough to satisfy my hunger. Never underestimate a thin man. Go the Wolfie's pride in serving portion.

Default Duplex Printing, what happened?
I remember last semester Environmental Club pushed a proposal to make the double-sided printing default. After the installation of new SINC system with NetID, I think the idea went away. Environmental Club supposedly met with President Kenny to discuss and I thought it concluded that she agrees to enforce the double-sided printing the default. Where in the wilderness did the deal end up?

Asian's Whiteout
So this is not for whole Asian population. It's more about East Asian, such as Japanese, Korean, and Chinese. When I see someone crossing out their pen mark on their notebooks, they happen to look like East Asian. (I dare not to state stereotypically.) I used to be obsessed with my notes. The truth is that I rarely looked back my notes and whiteout didn't make my notes look any clearer. So I started to care less about erasing those mistakes. Honestly as I don't particularly enjoy watching myself in the mirror, I don't particularly fall in love with my handwriting either. So from my point of view, I don't see the point of the whiteout now. My handwriting is clear enough and my notes are still helpful.

Deadlines
When I started fearing missing the deadline, I started submitting the assignments ahead of the deadline. For one it sounds fantastic that I finish my work earlier in schedule. On the other hand, I felt as if I was pressuring myself unnecessarily. But considering that the fear of missing the deadline urged me to finish my work earlier, the fear is quite serious and very much real. Oh I only wished my senior year would be easier, rather it is more challenging. People say it should be challenging but need some break!

School Plays Favoritism
Going along with the topic about Open Recreation's self-centered decision making, I started feeling the favoritism in budget allocation. The campus club will experience hard time fitting in the university if it does not like the club. The treatment that the club would get changes quite significantly. The problem is that the university does not generally have the guts to explain why it decided to treat some particular clubs differently. Some clubs did not even get their club budgets for one semester. The USG apparently gives the mistakes in the forms one by one, to buy time and not allocate money for them. First it will point out a few mistakes to be fixed. When the clubs bring the new form with corrected input, it will show other mistakes. It goes on and on until it doesn't have to allocate the money. I started wondering if the USG already used the money to be allocated to the clubs for some of their own gratification – like dinner party for USG. Perhaps. Who knows what goes on in those places? All I know is that they show the least respect for the current students much like the university. When it comes to luring prospective students, it's whole different strategy. When it comes to demand donations from alumni, that's another story.

God's Work
As a practitioner of Catholicism, my friend's recent thesis was strikingly atheistic. It was titled "Lack of Free Will and Belief in God (tentative)". Personally I tend to support evolutionism over creationism. However as a believer of Agnosticism, I seem to recognize "God's Work." Since I had a free time I read through his thesis on his Facebook note and decided to point out weak points in his arguments.
Following is a series of topics regarding his points and my counter arguments. I try to sound as if I don't care Jesus is God, was a messiah, or a mentally disturbed. Also since the thesis isn't done, I will take a guess on his final conclusion and keep arguing each of his point based on the guess.
Where Big Bang Comes From
First of all, Big Bang theory emerged after the observation made by Hubble using Doppler effect. According to his discovery, the universe is expanding at ever increasing speed. Therefore scientists could extrapolate back to the past. When something is expanding at extraordinary speed, it must have had thrust. Spherical expansion suggests an initial point at which the massive thrust occurred to all directions at once.
Hubble's discovery involved in chasing after atomic particles with a phenomenon known as Doppler's effect. As one hears a roaring car emitting various frequencies of sound waves, generally in decreasing first derivative, as it passes by you, all forms of waves show unique property as it moves. In other word, the person can hear whether the car was approaching him/her or drifting away. See, in the physics we know, we think the ripples on water, sound, X-ray, infra-red, radio, and all visible lights travel in a form of waves. Believe or not, it's your choice but the mathematical and logical explanation for now in explaining all above phenomenon is considering the energy in waves. Take visible light for example, every color has its unique frequency associated with it. We can see this narrow spectrum band of waves because our eyes are capable of capturing it. Hubble was able to aim at sky and capture the massive energy in the still dark hollow.
It all brings back to my first point. Technically, scientists did not conclude that the universe is expanding from knowing about the initial "bang." It is in fact the other way around. A scientist realized that the universe is expanding, then the whole scientific community started speculating about this initial "bang." However I assume that the real cosmological questions come to be whether there was one point and one explosion. Then how can the expansion be increasing speed? In vacuum, Newtonian physics suggests that the objects (or even the particles) keep moving at constant rate without outside force. According to Einstein physics, the gravity takes the phenomenon to a whole different problem.
Multiple Big Bangs
An attempt to contradict [God's Supreme Role] by assuming the multiple big bang and citing the chaos theory and causality seems effective. However the hypothesis of the multiple big bangs is not firm enough.
The world we know can never have two things exactly, let it be our personality or mass produced toys. Consider my ENTP personality and your ENFP personality. Consider occasional product defects and statistical testing at factories. Then compare the world we don't know; some time in the past, before our world was created. If the big bang created all the matter in this world in the universe, it must be the residue of previous world. Are you familiar with a slide in some elementary chemistry class (CHE131 is the only class I took from Chemistry department)? Along the discussion of energy conservation, there was a slide showing the energy level of chemical after reaction. The graph clearly showed that the compound of atoms have less total energy conserved after reaction. For example, let's consider BBQ. Coal and wood burns given that oxygen is available. When they burn, their carbon atoms combine with oxygen, and become heavy as Newton realized. However the total energy conserved is lower because some energy was released in a form of heat. If indeed Big Bang occurred consecutively, the residue from the world before ours is compressed under magnificent pressure. Since the world before ours must have spent some energy. For example, of BBQ or any nuclear fusion of constellation - self-illuminating stars like Sun. After all, if we believe in life forms in other world, how can one explain cellular mutation if energy was conserved? Therefore there are factors suggesting the world after each Big Bang must be different. The world quests different fate each time it is created.
Lastly, let us consider another case in which two worlds may form simultaneously. It is easy to predict that such condition should not happen unless in a different dimension. Recent development of String theory predicted that the Big Bang may have occurred in 23rd dimension. Since we now think time as a dimension with all three Cartesian dimensions, permutations suggest that our world chose latter three dimensions with a probability of C(23,3)^-1~0.05%. If another world may coincide at our time, the chance is at most 2.5e-7% (without including the fact that we assume time as continuum). Previous argument is based on time as one dimension. Now let's assume it actually happened, because it could happen if we let the event be random. Now we have two Big Bangs. Using the Newton's law of motion, two explosions will meet some time. If one is superior to the other, the conservation of momentum suggests the further motion after the encounter. Then one world will become ceased to exist. If the two explosions occurred at same magnitude, which I claim will not happen, the universe would have been static according to the same conservation principle. At least at the equidistant from both Big Bang points. So how can our worlds keep expanding? Thus the multiple Big Bangs cannot happen.
Rest will continue on my Facebook notes…

Asian American E-Zine
http://www.aa2sbu.org/aaezine

2007 CASB Singing Contest

By Denny Mai
Dec 3, 2007

Bright lights surround you. Eyes are closed. Deep breaths are taken. The nervousness of being stared at and the anxiousness to calm down is overwhelming. Your heart beats at a pace faster than normal. Uncontrolled shaking takes over yet paralysis renders you unable to stop it. Standing still, or as still as you can possibly get, you wait and wait and wait as seconds seems like hours; wanting to have more time to prepare yet impatient to get it over with. Finally, you hear it – the musical intro to your song. Eyes are opened. Deep breaths are still being taken. You stare straight out and as you open your lips, the harmonic voice that you let out seems to flow and blend with the harmonic music you hear, and it begins.

Sylvia Crispino singing "No One"

Once again, CASB, the Chinese Association at SB, graced us with the talented voices of Stony Brook students. As we were sitting down holding onto our sweet egg custards and sipping the juice from the box drinks, we listened in awe and envy to our musically talented peers.

Like last year, the centerpiece décors were creatively set up, filled with potpourri scented with the autumn se ason. Autumn hues of orange, red, and yellow covered the tables. Bowls of potpourri laid atop, encircled by the scattering of colorful leaves. Balloons of red, orange and yellow filled the stage, playfully bouncing around and staying afloat for a few brief seconds before they hit the floor only to bounce back up again. And all the while, their different shades gleamed around the SAC Auditorium, reflecting off the surrounding stage and spotlights and creating a festive fall atmosphere.

Students came from all over campus to audition. Twelve made it to be contestants. Three will win prizes, but there can only be one person that stands alone to be first place. Annie Shek, Christina Shen-Bryan Deguzman pair, Flora Huang, Jing Li, Jennifer Olegario, Judy Seng, Katie Lai-Ah Choi pair, Nan Zhang, Qu Zhong, Sylvia Crispino, Winnie So, and Xiaosu Liu were the chosen twelve. They took the stage to sing their hearts out. While some sang with a passion that seized control of the room, others let the taunting stage fright seize control of them. As each one took the stage, for some it was with confidence. For others, their uneasiness was easily shown in their singing - but still to have a voice like theirs is completely desirable.

The CASB singing contest was not limited to just Chinese songs as we heard songs that were American, Chinese, and even Japanese! As each of the twelve sang, the decision to decide the six finalists was underway. As time was taken to make that decision, there was an intermission and we heard more of Stony Brook's musical talent – both instrumental and vocal. After making their début in China Night 2007, the CASB Band had their second performance and took the stage to sing Maroon 5's "Sunday Morning". After hearing their performance and enjoying the egg custards, the judges' decisions have finally been made. Congratulations to the six finalists – Flora Huang, Jing Li, Judy Seng, Nan Zhang, Sylvia Crispino, and Xiaosu Liu!

The music starts once again as the second half of the contest resumes for the decision of which of those six would take third, second, and first place. There was a nice variety of songs in different languages, but there seemed to be a common interest for the contestants to sing love songs. With such powerful voices and emotional songs mixed together, it makes the passion to win that much stronger.

And the winners were - Xiaosu Liu in third place, Nan Zhang in second place, and Sylvia Crispino in first place. Sylvia powerfully sang Alicia Keys' "No One" to advance to the final and took the "First Place" title with Utada Hikaru's "Final Distance." Congratulations to everyone who made it. This year's singing contest was one of the best that I've seen and I'm looking forward to hearing more next year. And next year we'll videotape it so you can hear it too!

Photos
www.aasquared.org/gallery/CASBSinging07

ASC's Asian Awareness Week

Feb 14th - Feb 23rd

ASC (Asian Student Coalition): ASA, CASB, China Blue, KSA, PUSO, SBU AA E-Zine, Thai SA, and VSA

THU 2/14
China Blue's New Year Show
Performances and Food : SAC

FRI - SUN 2/15-17
ECAASU 2008 at Cornell
Road Trip to Largest Asian Am Conference on East Coast
http://www.arts.cornell.edu/asianam/ecaasu/mission.html

MON - FRI 2/18 - 2/22
Info Tables All Week
SAC and Wang Lobbies : 1 - 2 PM

MON 2/18
ASA : Asian Students Alliance
What It Means to Be Asian American
Workshop and Refreshments: SAC

FURTHER EVENTS AND INFO WILL BE UPDATED

TUE 2/19
KSA : Korean Students Association
Performances and Refreshments : SAC

WED 2/20
THAI SA: Thai Student Alliance
Learn Some Muay Thai
Workshop and Refreshments : SAC

THUR 2/21
CASB : Chinese Association at SB
Mah Jong Tournament : SAC

FRI 2/22
PUSO : Philippine United Students Organization
Karaoke Night : SAC

SAT 2/23
ASC : Asian Student Coalition
Cultural Costume Ball
Dinner and Dancing

JOIN SBU AA E-ZINE

On-line and hard copy news, events, photos, vid focusing on the Asian and Asian American SBU / Long Island / metro New York community

1st and only continuously published Asian Am college 'paper' in the country!

Online bi-weekly sent to thousands of students and alumni
Hard copy bi-weekly in the SB Press
Hard copy annual review - new this year!

- **Get Academic Credit**
- **Get to See Events on Campus for Free**
- **Get a Resume Builder**
- **Get Paid Internships and most important**
- **Get Involved in Something Worthwhile!**

Journalists, Bloggers, Writers, Poets, Columnists, Essayists, Researchers, Cartoonists, Photographers, Videographers, Layout Editors, Media Techies

Spring Semester 2008 Meetings on Fridays - TBD

Contact aaezine @ yahoo.com or just stop in to a meeting

www.aa2sbu.org/aaezine

Weekly meetings Wednesdays 5:00PM at our office in Student Union 071.

Arts Calendar
Jam If You Can
10/13, 7:00pm, SAC Ballroom

Seiskaya Ballet: The Nutcracker
All through December, Staller Center

Syriously Syrian: More Like, Syriously Super

An A-WAL Lowdown Joint

Question: Who's better than Warria?

Trick question, bitches! Warria is the best. And if you ever find yourself doubting that fact, just listen to *Syriously Syrian*, the newest Warria album, released by (Unintelligible) Records. *Syrian* is a gem, tour-de-force from Warria's past.

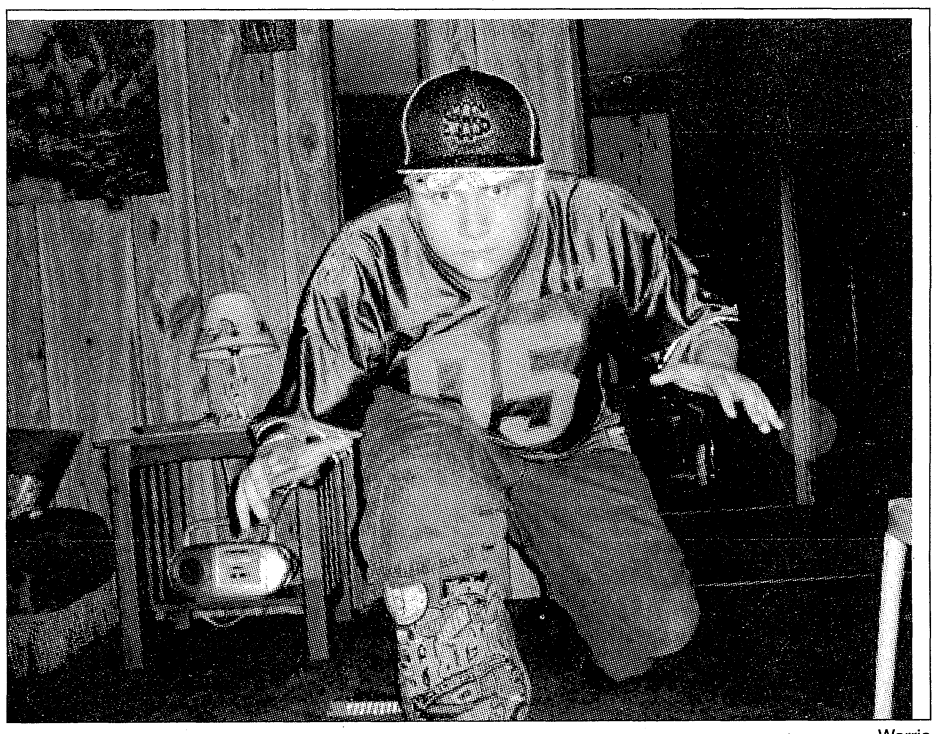
Early in the distribution process, one of the sound lab technicians absconded with the only copy of the finished CD. She then enrolled in a university north of Beirut, Lebanon for the Fall 2006 term. Due to domestic problems in Lebanon, this wayward heroine found herself trapped on the opposite side of the Syrian/Lebanese border. A year later, she wound up back in the States, but could not find the lone copy of Warria's *magnum opus*. Mere days before Thanksgiving 2007, an ordinary looking brown cardboard box arrived at her doorstep in the quiet town of Pawling, NY. Delayed in customs due to its Middle Eastern point of origin, the box containing her possessions left in Lebanon finally made its way home. And there, on the bottom of the box, sat our prize: the as-yet-untitled Warria album.

After finding its way into our hands, inspired by the backstory surrounding the CD, we quickly dubbed it *Syriously Syrian*. And it was good.

The album opens strong with a visit from someone we've all encountered once or twice: The Prince of Darkness, The Lord of the Pit, The Viceroy of Vice himself, Satan! (Operating here under the pseudonym of "The Devil.") Warria, wasting no time in displaying his lyrical prowess makes short work of the interloper, mercilessly buffeting him with rhyme after rhyme.
An example:

"I don't give a damn, mothafucka, I'll beat you in the rap
One two, mothafucka, clap yo' ass with the gat
Even though I worship shit, I don't give a damn
Fuck you, fuck you is a bitch-ass ho."

After dispatching his adversary, Warria demands the release of his soul back to the planar existence…



Warria

WARRIA TA DA TOP A DA GAME SPITTIN TA YA SHOW YA MY GAME.

"I'm in hell, you gotta let me go back to the Earth
Where I be workin'
And I be jerkin'
Everyday ferkin'
I be flirtin' with bitches every day
What you know, you snitch?"

This displays Warria's influence on our culture, his ability to coin a neologism like "ferkin." The true meaning of this word eludes our editorial staff, but we're sure it would make Shakespeare green with envy. Just look at those rhymes!

Touching on a theme from his past, Warria kicks a flow on track two, "Shibby Doo Wop II: The Shibbening." Here he rescuscitates the cry of "Shibby doo wop," a powerful piece of gibberish last seen on his debut album *Revolations*. This track is a powerhouse of lyrical mastery, clocking in at nearly five whole minutes. Indeed, this is Warria's second longest song ever, and does not disappoint. The song's outro includes perhaps the most honestly terrifying Warria moment yet experienced. We won't spoil it for you, just give it a listen. And leave the lights on.

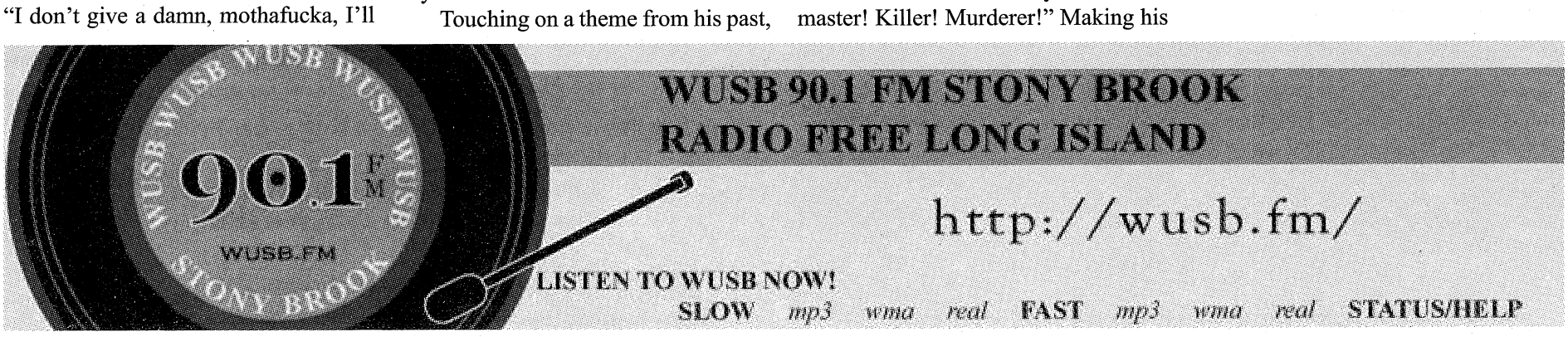
Next up is "Ain't Pleadin' Da Fif, or, An Exercise In Self-Incrimination." The gloves are off once again as Warria delves into his eternal struggle against rival emcee, Benji and his heretofore unknown protégé Reem. This marks the sixth or seventh time Mr. W has made mention of his ancient enemy. The track opens with a heavily produced beat, a veritable assault of reverb and scratching. As the lyrics start, Warria embraces his animalistic side to cry out "I'm a master! Killer! Murderer!" Making his homicidal tendencies known to the world at large, he issues a blanket threat: "You will die quick for messing with the murderer!" At the close of the song, Warria assures us that he is "real" with his "shit." "Are you?" he then inquires, answering his own question with a resounding "I don't think so." Damn. He schooled us.

The last and undoubtedly best track on this golden collection is "Self Inflicted Gunshots at Tojo's Dojo: The Warria Story." This one's dense with content. In a scant three minutes and ten seconds, Warria packs in a South Asian impersonation ("this Pakistan dude" as he terms it), a shoutout to his old stomping grounds of Poughkeepsie, the revelation of his true ethnicity, an attempt at crossover success in the R&B genre, another reference to Reem and Benji, and a bad trip on PCP which results in his near-castration. Nothing we could say would do this song justice. The best that can be done is a sampler platter of lyrics.

"Yeah! Whoa!
Killer, master, emcee
Funnin' on the real
Fun times every damn day
Tellin you dudes
Tryin' to say what I gotta say"

"Y'all know that shit
I'm real with my gun
Oh shit, I just shot myself, son!
Oh no, right in my ball
Damn, shit, that's a bad call
Why'd I do that
I'm so fucked up
So high off the PCP
So tough."

We cannot recommend this CD enough. For those interested parties, you can find a sample of Warria's music at tobybenjamin.com/Warria. For *Syriously Syrian*, however, you'll need to be more enterprising. Stop by Union 060 for details.



Now in Theatres

Selling Herb on the Curb	West Bank Story	The Mummy 3: Mum Hardest	Postcards From East Jerusalem
★★★★★	★★★★☆	★☆☆☆☆	★★★★☆

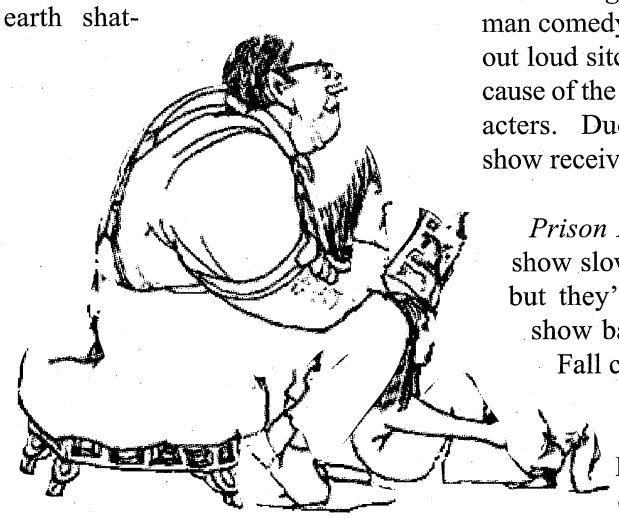
Top 10 Fall TV Shows of 2007

By Andrew Bernstein

Disclaimer: Spoilers contained within.

Friday Night Lights- The most consistent show on television tops my list.

Heroes- This show had a bumpy beginning to its 2nd season, but rebounded with its last four episodes being exceptional. This show had an earth shattering ending with Nathan Petrelli getting shot in the chest twice and Sylar curing himself of the Shanti virus, regaining his old powers. That's the end of volume two, and when the writer's strike ends we will get volume three, which is aptly named "Villians."



How I Met Your Mother- This show is having a great year. They had a few questionable storylines, but the majority of the episodes were hilarious.

The Big Bang Theory- This freshman comedy is a pure delight. A laugh out loud sitcom that works so well because of the perfect balance of the characters. Due to the high ratings, this show received a full season pickup.

Prison Break- This action packed show slowed down a little this year, but they're trying hard to get this show back on track with a strong Fall cliff-hanger.

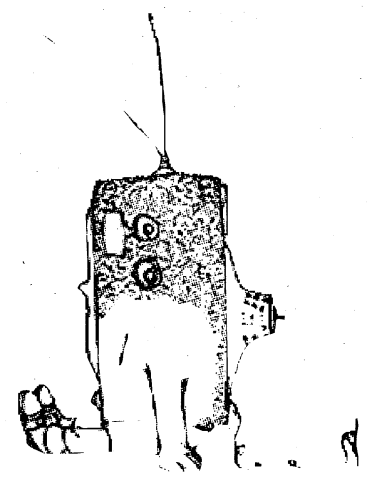
The Office- This Emmy award winning comedy was extremely funny in some episodes this season. A few episodes, though, seemed a little forced to me. However, for the most part they give a strong showing. I didn't like when they had the one hour episodes in the beginning of the season, and I prefer that they stick with the half hour segments. It's a lot smoother that way.

Family Guy- This is the only animated show I watch, and for good reason since it's simply amazing. Seth MacFarlane is a genius for his magnificent creation of the show. You've got to love its unique humor.

Chuck- This freshman show has improved drastically over the season and earned a full season pickup. The creators Josh Schwartz and Chris Fedak blend dramatic storylines and comedic situations very well.

House- This medical drama is a great show mainly due to one character; Gregory House, played by Hugh Laurie. Hugh Laurie is a terrific actor and he deserved his two Emmy nominations in 2005 and 2007 for outstanding lead actor, but lost both times. However, he won two Golden Globe awards for best actor in a television drama consecutively in 2006 and 2007.

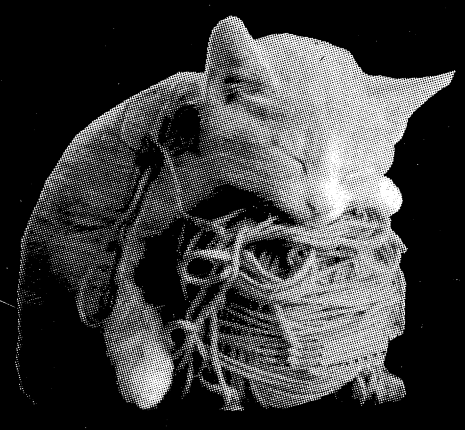
Smallville- This long running show is in its 7th season and, unfortunately, it's not as strong as it used to be. This show has lost a lot the of flair and originality that it used to have in the early seasons. I hope this downward trend turns around and improves itself, but only time will tell.



Play America's Greatest Pastime

"Dead or Sleeping"

Every Wednesday at 1pm
060 Student Union



The Stony Brook Press:

Where dead things and sleeping things can peacefully co-exist... and then we guess which is which

The race...

James never made it to first base with matt

to fill up space!

opinion

Inside the Opinion section:
Vector Marketing Sucks!
A few inches below

That's funny. This is usually the section with the most articles.

The Great Pyramid of Vector

By Jonny Pu

And now, if you look to any bulletin board on campus, you will notice advertisements for a seasonal job with Vector Marketing, offering as much as $20 per appointment.

Sound too good to be true? Damn right it is.

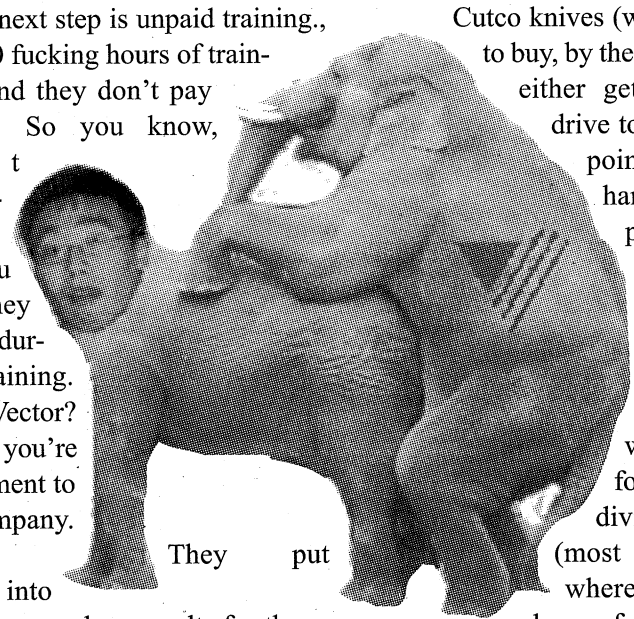
Here's the catch. Vector *is* a fucking pyramid scheme. And I repeat: a fucking pyramid scheme. Why? Alright, let me break it down for you. Here's approximately how the company is set up. There's a CEO and other executives running the company. Under them are regional directors who then in turn are each in charge of a handful of mid level managers. These mid level managers are then responsible for a few branch managers who are each tasked with recruiting and hiring a handful of staff and salespeople. For every sale that the people at the bottom make, their managers make a commission. And the people above them make a commission off them. And so forth. So the people at the top are constantly pushing the people below them to work more and work harder and be their bitches and make them rich. It's a fucking pyramid scheme.

How do I know this? I have personally infiltrated Vector at the lower levels and witnessed, firsthand, their shady business techniquestactics fiirsthand. More accurately, I was enslaved by Vector for nearly a month over the summer. How bad was it? Oh man, don't you want to know?

So I apply for a job with Vector on their perfectly legitimate-looking website. Then within a day, I receive a call concerning my application. Firstly, allow me to mention: no company will ever call you 24 hours after you apply for a position with them. No company is ever that desperate,. Eexcept Vector, apparently. The things they tell you over the phone make you sound like aso prime candidate too. And then tThey give you two possible interview times, which are, by the way, group interviews. You're busy at those times? Well, "are you serious about getting a job?" Yes, I'm fucking serious, assholes. Fine, I'll go in for your fucking group interview.

You're going to get directions and they'll lead you to some shoddy looking building somewhere in the middle of nowhere. It's going to be a cheaply rented building with no real furniture and a toilet you don't even want to piss on, let alone piss in. You're going to walk in and sit down next to other unfortunate souls wearing their Sunday best because the person on the phone told you to dress like it's for a professional job interview. Then the manager will walk in and give you some bullshit memorized speech about how lucky you all are for getting into the interview since it's such a coveted employment opportunity. Lucky, huh? Everybody and their mothers are here, jackass. Anyways, then he'llThey give you a whole crash course on how the job is sales, you have to be good with people, you're going to be selling Cutco knives, blah blah blah. After the "interview," the manager will call you into his office, one by one, and you'll mostly be one of the few who get the job. And by "few," I mean the whole fucking interview group. Good to know you stood out like that, huh?

Then next step is unpaid training., Aabout 20 fucking hours of traningit,. Aand they don't pay you shit. So you know, m M o s t c o m p a - nies will pay you while they train you during training. Why not Vector? BeCcause you're an investment to the company. They put money into you and you produce results for them. Vector? They're not going to give you shit. So you know,. Aand then they pay you shit.



Oh right, the whole $20 per appointment thing? Here's how they *really* pay you. There's two methods of payment. Either you get your base pay which *can* be up to $20 per *appointment* or a 10% base commission for every sale you make, whichever of the two is more. And so you know, it's usually not $20 per appointment. It's usually a lot less and you'll be spending about an hour and a half per appointment, not including the time it takes you to drive from one to another.

Oh right, I never explained the job in detail!. Vector Marketing is the sales branch of a company that produces Cutco knives and other cutlery. In order to market these knives, they use high school students and college students. As such, you're going to be making "cold calls." They're essentially what telemarketers do. You call somebody and randomly bug them about how you just "got this great new job" and was wondering if they could "help you out by letting you practice your appointment with them." Now, They "don't have to buy anything, but if they see anything they like they can just just let you know." I quote those passages because they're part of a passage meant to be memorized and recited verbatim. The people you call are, by the way, friends and family. Way to exploit our personal relationships, Vector. Bravo! Then you drive to the few appointments you're able to make with people who clearly don't want anything to do with salespeople but want to help you out because of your personal relationship. You give your 60-90 minute long memorized presentation, show off the Cutco knives (which you have to buy, by the way), and then either get an order or drive to your next appointment empty handed. And you pay for your own gas. Fun-fucking-tastical.

If you're lucky, like I was, you'll be forced to attend a division meeting (most likely somewhere in NYC) where, for five hours, you'll sit through a bunch of bullshit. To summarize, they'll award individuals, as well as branches, for exceptional sales. They'll then tell you about a "push period" in which they offer incentives to make certain quotas of sales. So you know, they're always having a "push period" so it's not some exciting opportunity like they're going to tell you it is. It's basically a waste of time but you *have* to go "if you're serious about the job." And no, these meetings, as well as weekly branch meetings, are not paid time. Again: not paid time. . My time is valuable, Vector. and if you're not serious about my time, Vector, I can find somebody else who is. Bitch.

Well, now that I think about it, there are Vector success stories. They are, however, a small percentage of the people who are recruited. Chances are, if you take the job, you'll make a bit of spending money which you'll end up spending on the gas you need to drive from appointment to appointment. You *might* end up in management and you might make it up the chain and make money but… chances are that Vector will steal your soul,. bBecause they're soulless bastards.

Did I mention that Vector's been sued on multiple occasions for their business tactics? In 1990, the Arizona Attorney General filed suit against Vector Marketing. In 1994, the company was ordered by the state of Wisconsin not to deceive potential workers. Vector was sued again in 1999 by the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission. In 1996, a Washington Post Article was written on a study performed by the Wisconsin Consumer Protection department. In the study, which surveyed 940 Vector recruits, it was reported that in the state, "workers made less than $3 a day on average working for Vector." Those, my friends, are fucking slave wages. Even the guys I pick up from 7-11 to do my fucking lawn make more than that. And it doesn't take 20 hours of training to learn to use a lawn mower or rake leaves.

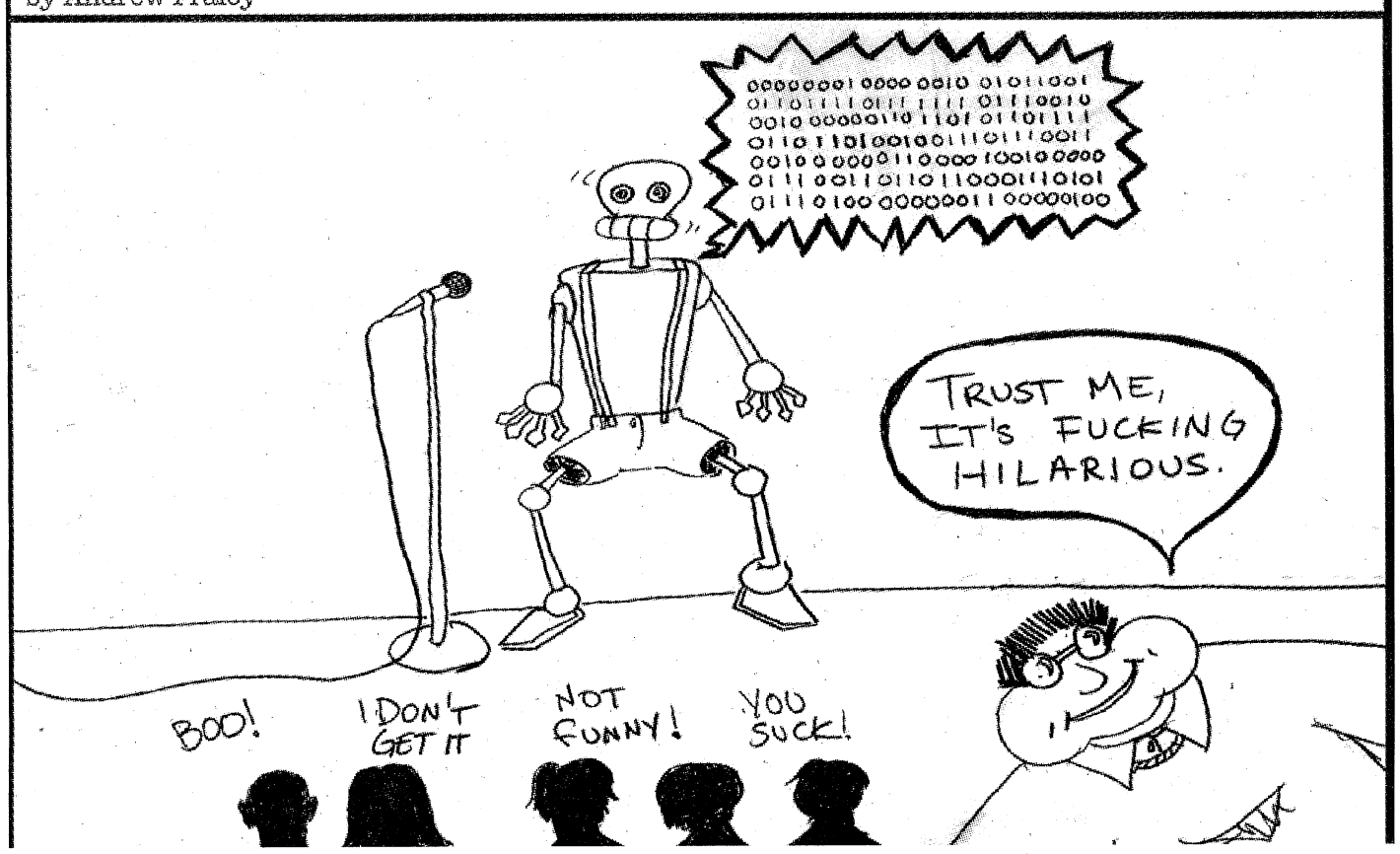
If you want a job, go look for one. Don't call Vector, don't pass go, don't collect $200. Seriously: you won't make $200 working for Vector; you won't even come close. If you break even, I want to meet you and congratulate you in person. They'll milk you for all your worth and collect commissions off the sales you make. And when you try to quit, they'll throw a fucking guilt trip on you that you don't work hard or some inane shit like that. Don't judge me, oh manager of mine. I don't exploit people to fulfill my get-rich-quick dreams. I don't watch other people slave away and then take money from them. You, oh manager of mine, are not my fucking father and you have no right in telling me how shitty my moral character is. Hell, even my father can't throw that one on me anymore. My advice to you, Vector managers, is to go get a job where you don't have to use other people to put food on the table. In short, get a real job with a real company that pays real wages and has real benefits,. Llike health insurance and such. Being a 30 year old who lies to children isn't the pinnacle of evolution, sorry to break it to you shits. Fucking pyramid scheme.

In closing: fuck you Vector. Give me my summer back.

THE COMICS SECTION

FROM THE DEMENTED CATALOGS OF:
SHERMAN P. GLOBBERMAN
UNORTHODOX INVENTOR

by Andrew Fraley



Rejected as non-canonical by Sister Mary Angela!

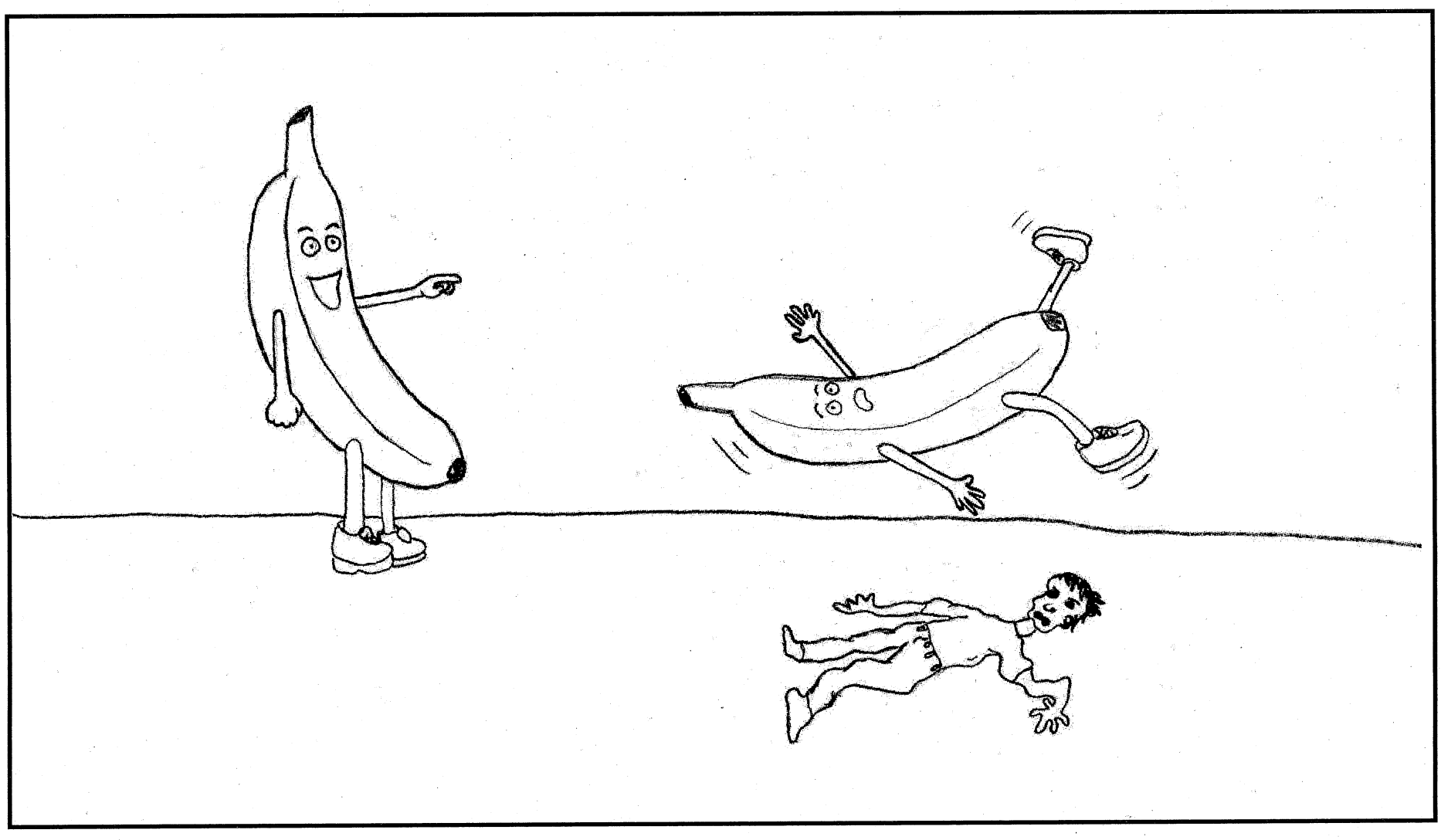
The First Christmas That Mattered -or- How Jesus Discovered Eggnog

by Andrew Fraley

THE COMICS SECTION

Number 10

by Andrew Fraley



ESKIMO JIM

BY DAVID K. GINN

"He said spikes, give 'im spikes!"

Joe's Lucky Day
Written by "The Freshness"

Scene I
Setting: Joe in his car driving to Andrew's house

Joe (thinking to himself): Hmm, I remember the freshman telling me that Patty lives near him…I think I might get lucky today. (pulls out picture of her from his glove compartment). Damn she is a hottie, I definitely have to get a piece.

Scene II
Setting: Joe and Andrew talking, Joe has just arrived

Andrew: Hey man, what's up?

Joe: Doesn't Patty live around here?

Andrew: Yea man, right around the block, I've always wanted to go there at night and watch her slip into her PJs

Joe: You da man freshie (high fives)

Andrew: Word, why did you want to know anyway?

Joe: Well man, I'm feelin lucky tonight (pulls out condom, waves it around, and smiles)

Andrew: That petite slut is gonna get the banging of a life time!

Scene III
Setting: Walking to Patty's house

Andrew: Well, that's her house, right there (points)
Joe: Thanks, man

Andrew: No problem…so uh…do you think I could get a piece too?

Joe: Hell no you idiot, you'll blow my chances

Andrew: (laughs) you're probably right, but just do me one favor…

Joe: What would it be?

Andrew: Get me her panties

Joe: hahah, you're a sick fuck, but OK

Andrew: Thanks man

(Kara pulls up aside the duo)

Kara: Hey there guys (winks)

Andrew and Joe: Hey

Kara: So where you guys headed?

Joe: I'm going to Patty's

Kara: Well why don't you come for a ride with me then Andrew?

(Kara leans over to open passenger door, showing her cleavage as she leans over)

(Joe and Andrew look at each other and Joe makes a motion telling Andrew to get in the car)

(Andrew and Kara drive off while Joe continues walking up to Patty's house)

Scene IV Part 1
Setting: Joe at Patty's

(Joe rings doorbell)

Patty: Hang on!

(hear pitter patter of feet inside the house)

(Patty opens the door)

Patty: Joe Piet! I wasn't expecting you today!

Joe: Well I'm a pretty unpredictable guy

Patty: Well come on in, hang out for a while

Joe: Oh, I think I will (winks at camera)

(Camera shows Patty's tight butt wiggle as she walks up the stairs, Joe is mesmerized)

Patty: So how has your summer been?

Joe: It's been pretty cool I guess, just relaxing, what about you?

Patty: Mine isn't as good, I just broke up with my boyfriend a week ago…

Joe: I'm so sorry to hear that

Patty: Don't be, he was a jerk, not as cool as you are Joe (puts hand on his)

(Joe slightly blushes)

Patty: Well I must look like a wreck; let me go take a shower…

Joe: I'll wait out here

Scene IV Part 2
Setting: Andrew and Kara in Car

(Kara stops in the Genovese parking lot)

Kara: Wait here, OK?

Andrew: Alright

(Kara gets out of the car, slightly bending over to show her butt as she gets out)

Scene IV Part 3

Setting: Patty's room (Joe is looking through Patty's drawers, and finds a vibrator, and some pictures of him from class)

(Patty suddenly gets out of the shower, in a towel)

Patty: (acting surprised, but not really) Joe! What are you doing?!

Joe: I was just um..uh…I'm sorry

Patty: It's OK, I know you wouldn't be able to resist this body for so long (drops towel, Joe's jaw drops open)

(camera pans from her small feet, up her legs, to her perky tits, and shows her with a somewhat dirty look on her face and she shakes her head, sending her wet hair in every direction)

Joe (really surprised, gets a grin): What is this all about (shows her the pictures of him next to her vibrator)

Patty: (walks close to Joe, and hugs him, slightly humping his leg) I've liked you for a long time Joe…

(Joe starts to get a stiffy, and Patty slowly starts kissing him)

(Joe takes off his shirt, Patty's boobs and his chest start rubbing together)

(Patty slowly makes her way down to Joe's waist, and begins unbuttoning his pants)

Patty: You know why my boyfriend broke up with me?

Joe: (catches his breath) Why? Why would he give up a hot piece like you?

Patty: Because I accidentally screamed out "Joe" as we were having sex

(Patty finally gets Joe naked, his long dong already pretty hard)

Patty: (surprised) Wow! Your cock is huge, it will feel so good down the back of my throat

Joe: Ugh yea, Patty take it down

(Patty starts playing with Joe's wiener in her mouth, Joe is in a world of pleasure from this)

Joe: Oh… (Joe puts his hand on Patty's head)

(Patty stops for a minute)

Patty: Do you want me to swallow your hard cock?

Joe: Oh God yes

(Patty starts taking Joe's 7 inches little by little down her throat)

(Joe slightly pushes on the back of Patty's head, forcing his entire length down in her mouth)

(Patty almost chokes, but quickly gets used to the big cock in her mouth)

(Patty starts licking Joe's shaft wildly, Joe starts moaning)

Joe: Oh…Patty, I'm about to cum

(Joe quickly tries to pull out of Patty's mouth, but unloads a big wad in her mouth and a bit on her face)

Joe: Sorry about that; it was soo good though

Patty: It's ok, I like it (swallows some cum)

Patty: Alright, let's go get cleaned up

(Patty and Joe walk to the shower)

Scene IV Part 4
Setting: Andrew still in car (Kara walks back to car with a black bag in her hand)

Andrew: What did you buy?

Kara: Oh, just some stuff

(Kara pulls out a tube of AstroGlide lube and a pack of Trojan Ribbed Condoms)

Andrew: (sarcastically) oh, what are these for?

(Kara gets out and runs to the back seat)

Kara: Get back here, right now teehee

(Andrew leans to the back seat, kissing Kara)

(Kara and Andrew undress in the back seat and start making out)

(Andrew sits as Kara gives him a handjob)

Kara: You like this? (starts to give Andrew head, taking just the tip of his cock in and playing with it)

Andrew: Ohh that feels so good (he reaches to a condom)

(Kara applies condom to Andrew's hard cock, and climbs on top of him)

(Kara starts to ride Andrew, Andrew is in heaven, watching Kara's tits bounce up and down, and watching his cock slide in and out of her wet vagina)

Kara: (pant) Oh (pant) God this is good (pant)

(After a while of her riding him, they flip over)

Kara: Do you want to fuck my tight asshole?

Andrew: Yes please (he grabs the astroglide lube)

(Kara flips over, and spreads her butt cheeks, you can see her hole and her woman hood as she offers it to Andrew's willing cock)

(Andrew applies lots of lube to her asshole and to his cock and finger)

(Andrew performs the shocker to Kara :1 in the pink, and 2 in the stink: Kara squeals with pleasure)

Kara: Slide your cock into me!

(Andrew enters her back door and begins to hump her)

Kara: Oh God! I love it in the ass

Andrew: Uh huh…oh yea

Kara: Fuck me!!

Andrew: Ahh

(more anal sex…Andrew gets closer to cumming)

(Andrew pulls out, removes the condom, and shoots a load of cum all over Kara's back and ass)

Kara: mmm, that's good

Andrew: Oh yea baby, you're amazing

(Kara and Andrew start driving back to Patty's, all the while Andrew is fingering Kara as she is driving)

Kara: I hope no one catches us haha

Scene IV Part 5
Setting: Patty's house, Joe and Her in the shower (Steamy room and camera shows the silhouette of 2 bodies in the shower)

(Camera shows Joe and Patty together, all soapy and looking lustily at each other)

Joe: (thinking to himself) Now's my chance to repay her…

(Joe starts kissing Patty, Patty's wet pussy is shimmering in the light)

(Patty sits on the corner of the tub and spreads her legs to show her pussy to Joe)

Joe: Now I'm going to make YOU cum

Patty: Oh Joe…You're so thoughtful

(Joe starts by putting a finger in Patty's hole, and starts lightly fingering her as he playfully tongues her clitoris)

Patty: Ahh, that feels so good, more more!

(Joe is now fingering her harder and licking her entire pussy harder, also he is teasing her clit)

Patty: OH GOD I think I am going to cum soon!!

Joe: Do it baby, cum hard for me!

Patty: ohhhhh ahhhh

(Patty squirts on Joe's face)

Joe: I didn't know you were a squirter!

Patty: That was just payback haha (winks)

(They get out of the shower and dry off and sit on Patty's bed)

Patty: mmm that was good…

(Joe hears a car pull up to the house)

Joe: Oh shit! Who is that?

Patty: Oh damn I forgot that I invited Sally over! But don't worry; she is a little slut too.

Joe: Cool, I've always wanted to fuck her

(Patty goes to open the door for Sally, while she is still naked and "glowing")

Sally: What the hell, why are you glowing?

Patty: No time to explain, come on!!

(Patty leads Sally up the stairs, practically running)

Sally: What is this about? Why are you naked (Sees Joe on the bed) Oh…my…God…

Joe: Glad to see you too Sally

(Joe walks over to her and kisses her)

(Patty pushes them both onto the bed, and gets out fuzzy handcuffs)

(Joe and Patty handcuff Sally to the bed)

Patty: Get ready Sally, Joe is 7 inches!

(Patty gets on top of Sally, so that their pussies are on top of each other)

(Joe takes a whiff of both their pussies)

Joe: Mmmm….

(Joe starts fucking Sally, Patty hands him the vibrator)

Patty: Put it in my ass

(Joe quickly does as he is told, thrusting his hard cock into Sally, fucking Patty's ass with the vibrator, and Patty is making out with Sally)

Sally: Oh my, this is really amazing….

(It doesn't take that long until Sally lets out a scream and starts to cum and gets Joe's cock all slippery)

(They hear another car pull up)

(Joe pulls out, and leaves the vibrator in Sally's vagina, Patty and Joe go to answer the door)

Patty: Oh…can I help you?

Andrew: Holy shit Joe! You did get lucky today hahah

Joe: haha Patty, this is my friend, Andrew…or as I like to call him, Freshie

Patty: Well Fresh Meat, there's something waiting for you upstairs, come on in!

(They all go back to the room and find Sally writhing in pleasure from the vibrator)

Andrew: Oh this is amazing!!!

(Andrew walks over to Sally, and pulls out the vibrator, replacing it with his cock)

(Joe looks deep into Patty's eyes, they kiss)

Sally: Who the hell are you?

Andrew: The one who will fuck your mouth right now!

(Andrew pulls out and stuffs his dick into Sally's mouth; she does wonders with her tongue piercing)

(Joe and Patty are in lust heavily, Joe slides on a condom and starts fucking Patty doggy style)

(Joe shoves his entire 7 inches into Patty from behind and is pumping away, his large manhood stretching her tight hole, Patty is moaning with pleasure)

(Andrew is doing Sally missionary style, her legs are high over his shoulders and he is pumping fast also)

(Patty has to now bite a pillow in order to stop herself from making too much noise and waking the neighbors up, she is cumming over and over again as Joe fucks her)

(Andrew pulls out of Sally and beings to slide his cock in between her breasts, he is pinching her nipples, and he uncuffs her so that she can play with his cock and balls)

Andrew: I am coming close…

Joe: Me too…

(Patty and Sally move closer to each other…Joe and Andrew are whacking off onto each of their faces)

(A large stream of spooge comes out and covers both Patty and Sally's faces, they lick it off each other and stuff)

Scene V
Setting: Front door of Patty's (Patty and Sally wave goodbye to Joe and Andrew)

Andrew: Well that was a cool day

Joe: Damn right I got lucky…and then some

Andrew: haha me too

Andrew: So, you want to go catch a movie or something?

Joe: Nah…wait a minute, doesn't Christine live around here too!?

Andrew: You're not thinking…

Joe: Oh hell yes I am!

Andrew: Let's go!!

(Andrew and Joe run into the setting sun)

FIN

Epilogue: Patty's brother saw her and Sally naked…he almost cried right there, but Sally soon made him a man. Joe still sometimes goes to Patty's house, and they make wild love on her roof, in pools, almost anywhere really. Kara found out about the orgy, and was kind of pissed that she didn't stay. Joe never did get those panties, but Andrew didn't care. They eventually did make it to Christine's house, but we'll save that story for another day….(wink)

THIJS
WILL

BLOW YOUR

MIND

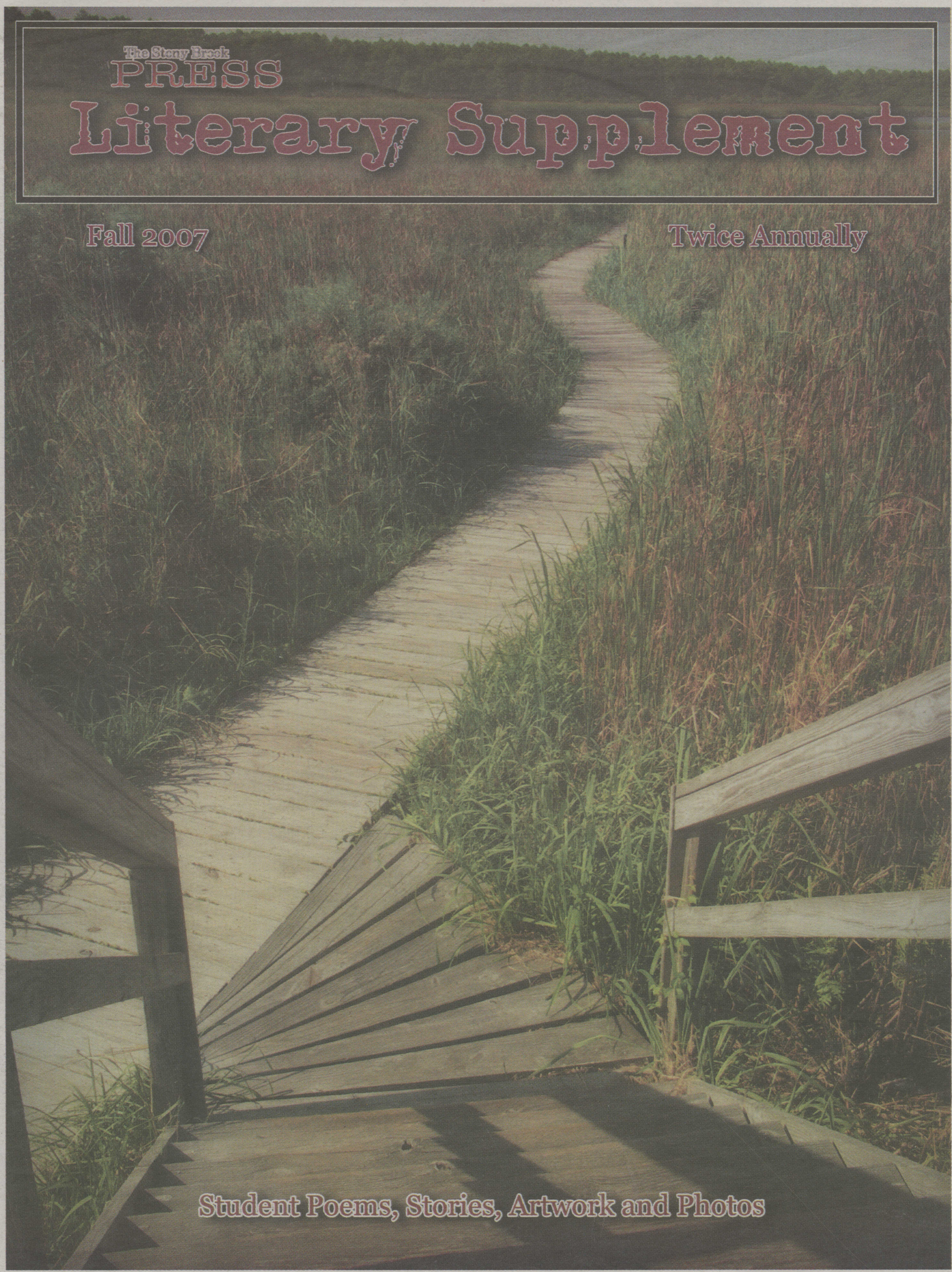
search youtube.com for Focus Hocus Pocus

The Stony Brook
PRESS

Literary Supplement

Fall 2007

Twice Annually



Student Poems, Stories, Artwork and Photos

Chorus to the Universe

Language is the music of protein chains
Arranged in the ways a throat is shaping
The rush of wind through rings of flesh and bone,
Melody of memory playing low
Jazz arias bleeding into the next
Lines of rhyme keeping step with time and text,
Lines of rhyme keeping step with time, a beat,
A break, when vocal chords shake and repeat.

j. daniel taylor

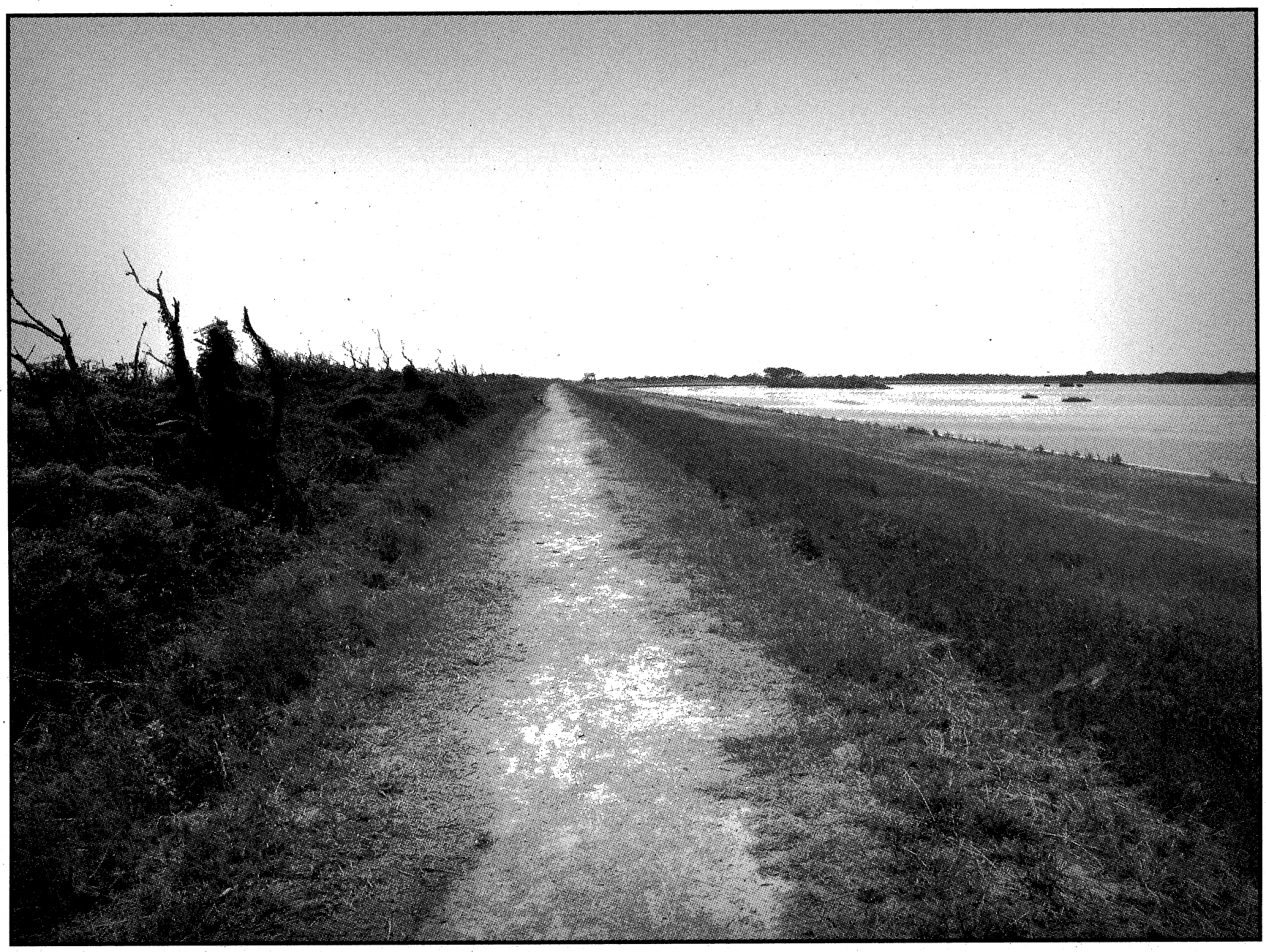


Photo by Mike Glukhovsky

The Stony Brook
PRESS
Literary Supplement

News

Welcome to our LitSup house of madness. We hope you enjoy your stay with us, but be careful; we can't always keep track of our patrons. Read at your own risk.

Want full size copies of the photos or art-work, or have a question for the authors or editors E-mail sbpress@gmail.com.

Inside the Emporium

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POEMS

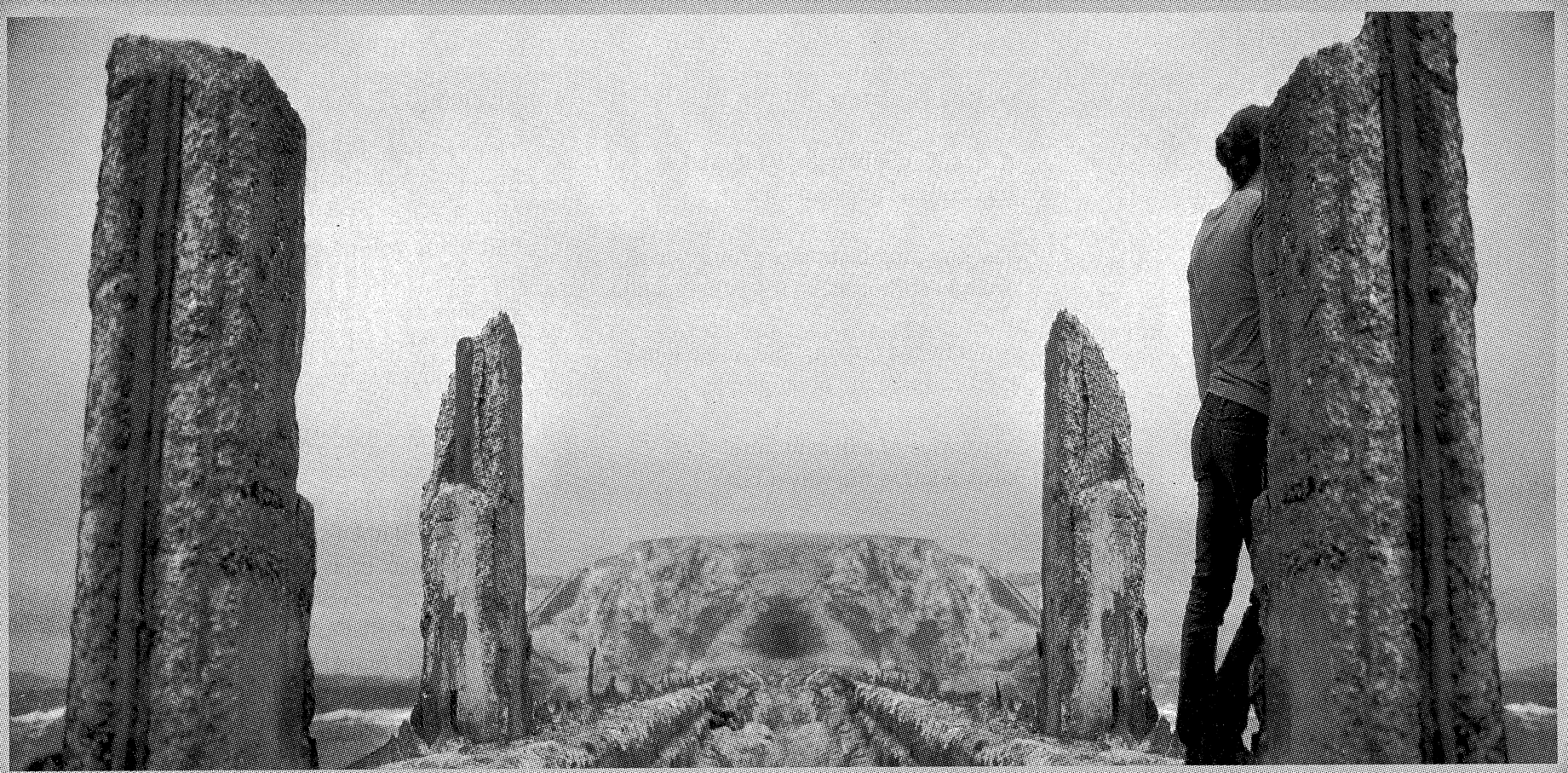


Photo by Brian Wasser

AM Radio

This talent (a lack of)
flows from finger
to pen
to page
to air and space
Empty thoughts infiltrate a vast
nothing
Confusing those that dare to
tune in and listen
Confusing those (I) that dare to
think it

By Katie Knowlton

Cigarettes in Bed

The sex was great.
You light up, and pass the cigarette to me.
You're just as addicting, but it feels so good.
You're hard to quit, but sometimes I'm not sure if I want to.
We smoke in bed, our bodies each wrapped up in a sheet.
And nothing is said.
But words aren't really needed, because our actions say it
all.
I'd have a fit if I couldn't have you.
And after a while withdrawal starts to kick in.
And as soon as I think that I've kicked my bad habit.
You're back again, and the cravings start all over again.
And just when I thought I could pass, I give in to you, my
bad habit.
You're like a cigarette, right after sex.
Feels good for the moment.

For Winter

Echoes whisper 'round a tree
The sun is cold and still
Dawn finally breaks free

A sparrow chases a bee
They dance over the hill
Echoes whisper 'round a tree

My wakened eye has only gray to see
Soundless static on my sill
Dawn finally breaks free

Obscurity blurs my cup of tea
Heated for when I was ill
Echoes whisper 'round a tree

Knees creak without any glee
Snowflakes resting on my sill
Dawn finally breaks free

Winter is a lonely, unyielding sea
Frosty tides batter my will
Echoes whisper 'round a tree
Dawn finally breaks free

By Ross Barkan

Golden Nostalgia

A slender chain with dainty links
was not just an accessory.

The dangling heart close to my own
brought soft peace to my aching soul.

But now the charm, cold to the touch,
is frozen like the photographs.

Memories of a distant time
suspended in the velvet box.

By Marissa Dooling

Monday Train Rides

The first light breaks from tunnel's edge
Skimming silently we rise above tenements,
brick jungles awakening,
ball fields, rolling grass, ashen lots
my eyes graze all of it
slumber's spectacles fall upon my nose
I throw them off and drink more
of morning's sun.

Light cannot hide the growing cracks
like rust racing over a silver pot
I turn to chaotic bustle
a waltz of flatbeds, hardware
free carwash, cries a sad sign
my fingertips caress the ticket
a saint's hospital turns its ruddy cheeks away
down in the tunnel we go.

Where does the light run
when it tires of chasing me through
the shadows?
nether travel never suited me
the people want their grass, their rain
sunset cloaks to wrap their sorrow
what else is needed?
I will wear slumber's spectacles.

By Ross Barkin

If I Did It

If you'd like to know how my ex-wife died
if I did it, and youíre not grilling words and digits
over BigBrotherís orange flames, then you'll need
to travel lightly. The skins segregating the land of
if I did it and here are ghostly, and brutish lifetimes.
the skins always catch the slow ones. Be speedy.

Then go underground, to the labyrinths with cave
graffiti and stalagmites of steel, censured
in septic water. Keep marching, over the sog,
and trudge. If you see the billboards of blue skies,
turn backóyou are not wanted there.
If you survive, leave back into the city lights.
Things will appear the same: taxis are street hornets,
statistics rule and gum costs two quarters from
your pocket. But breathe. The world should be different.
Go to the white mansion. Go to that night.
The sky might suggest it's your L.A. city purple,
but ignore that.

Where I do it, there should be a shiv, shining
under the plastic chandeliers and lamp.
It's the only glowing thing there.
Notice that I am the walking shadow (if you also brought a ladder,
you can notice the sleeping children, bounteous in sleep).
The only noise should be the dog, uncertain what
conspiracies bleed on the hardwood floor
with amputated stomachs.
Madness should become heavy, but itíll scurry from the mansion,
as if it murdered the sun, into the streams of metal cars,
and Iím there, a marathon runner,
running into the pool of citrus lightsóforgotten.

Thatís all that is there.
Go home: itís where you live.

If you want to know, here, in our world,
that if I never feared the summer traffic, or had friends
shouting cannons to the sidewalk that he was locked
to my pistolólocked to me; if I never became the highway,
under the heat, and forgot that the police are winged birds
with weaponsódisturbing the street magma and skiesó
if the news helicopter cameras never building-hopped, or promised
the photo negatives of my sweat, the world would be in stringed
ribbons, the darkness tearing the strings of strings of strings,
and the paradox would have consumed itself.

Personally, I donít know who did itówho
slashed my ex-wifeófaithful and streaking in
Mexicoóand her friend (like presents for the mortician,)
but whoever it was left my paws on the desk
and the silverwareóa job that couldn't be washedóif
I really did it, there are things Iíd have changed (though
their bodies were paper thin; the crime makes sense) the police
would think that a phantom, out of servitude,
packaged the women, and reclaimed its darkness.
Iíd only know darkness,
not photography, as I dissipate into my Bronco.

Too Long

Cute, isn't it, when a boy wraps his shivering girl
in a huge jacket? The ends of the sleeves dangle,
the coat could to fit two of her.

You held me close,
as we hurried together
out of the cold.

Through the rain, I walk alone now,
with jacket-sleeves far too long.
My hands are submerged in them.
Past my fingertips, the sleeves continue,

the way my thoughts about you continue
past the distance between us,
past the days, the weeks. Past months, even.

When I wear this jacket—
like all my jackets, too big, because
I am small (small-handed, small-boned)—
your jacket comes back, enveloping me,
your hands return, enclosing mine.
I cannot help remembering:
with you, I always felt little, and taken care of.

But you're gone now, and I am simply
small, without even the consolation
of sleeves too long for me
because they were meant for you,
but merelysleeves that are too long,
long like our time apart.

By Jennifer Park, 27 November 2007

Moth Winters

buffeting against a
mustard-dusted nox,
we limp a triple-legged,

double-headed spirit.

we are pushing uphill, contending
this caustic sandstorm.
if there's a reason to gag,
(sit down.)

it's because we lied.

from that moment onward,
i had never more wanted to

finger my coal-crusted lips
with such ferocity.

darling, we were never

born to drink juice from
a lead can. nor could we

rub ourselves against the

sun's frequencies forever.

(such a strange way to

be exiled from life.)

Poem

if people don't like my poetry
and say really bad things
i will shoot myself. i have
a shotgun rusting in the back
of my ex-dad's toolshed. i don't
want my death to be a painless
way to go so i will shoot myself
in the foot once, then the torso,
maybe i can say hello to my bone
if i shoot enough flesh off.

then maybe i can go one step forward
(though if you say nice things now
and then wait i might be able to get a
cooler gun to shoot myself with. i
just need the money from christmas.)
so please nice things only and then
i won't kill myself by shooting myself
in the foot.

please say only nice things.

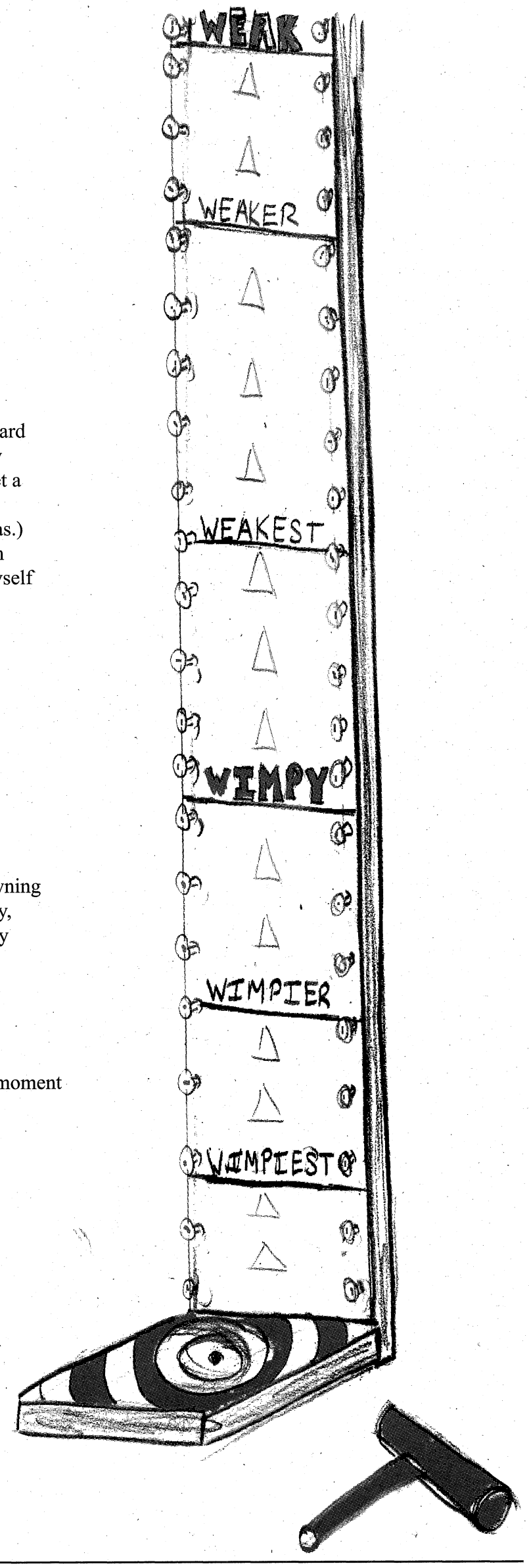
when the...

when the water meets
the sky,
clouds stretched and yawning
with a lazy look of lovely,
i can almost see infinitely
into the serene calmness
of being human

and i wonder
if i,
gazed innocently into a moment
of pure forgetting,
am the only one here
looking and wanting
to be held (by it)

but no, i am not unique
and i am glad for that
i think

By tiffany russo



Reading at the Six Gallery

Someone once told me
(or perhaps it was myself)
that these lines are nothing short of shallow.
My failed attempt to create
and to believe
in something greater than my very being.
But I only copy what I see,
regurgitate what is fed to me
by those ever looming towers
controlled by that monster
whose talons have an iron grip
on the smallest, most hidden branches
of my mind.

And now
I feel as though
the ghosts of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg
haunt me with perpetual frowns.
They wish to hang me
down
from a noose attached to a telephone pole
for my betrayal of beat and Bohemia,
my heroin addiction to that sweet, sweet
mass media.

Regardless, I will stand and say:

I want to be "America,"
simply transform to rage
to rage against
all that I've been told is wrong.
But I would always be
plain and simple
hypocrisy.

I want to stand, deliver
to my audience (mainly you)
all these values I supposedly hold true.
But I would always cower, whisper
and bring weakness
to lines that were already lies.

And lastly,
I want to fix my caffeine induced stutter,
slow down and speak
something,
anything,
I believe.

By Katie Knowlton

Record from Interstellar Space

Long before Space and time,
A single lonely and endless entity produced a record.
It was to be heard by all walks of life in the universe.
At the end of time, when the last of stars would collapse
and the fabric of existence itself will tear itself apart,
this record was set to be played.
It would reunite all the beings left in the universe,
one last dream, one last kiss, one final moment.
That day,
When the crimson skies of giants scorched the surface
of everything habitable.
When research and discovery was at its senior and
immortality seemed near.
When million year life-spans drained unpredictability and
adventure out of the meaning of life.
When intelligent beings reached its peak at the
full height of evolution and every trait was chiseled beyond perfection.
Every race in the universe realizing that it was towards it's end,
planned to cried out at the exact same time,
this was one last time to make a mark that they were once here.
The signal was faint, but after they all cried out in unison...
a voice dripped from her lips,
scattered slightly by static,
she plucked a string that spun through the dying stars.
Her metaphors and soliloquies,
wrapped it self around everything living.
The spirits of a trillion old civilizations sprung up from
burning nebulae to rejoice one last time.
She sang of everything and nothing,
her voice unaltered by the unspoken tongues of the many.
All of the races of the universe came out of the underground
and onto their planetary surfaces.
Meteors gleamed a thousand times brighter,
magnificent supernovas twirled gracefully in the indigo heavens.
Everybody asked her. Why were we here?
Until they all realized, it was only a record.
A recording at the beginning of time.
And nobody, not even the single, lonely entity at the beginning
have the answers to.
one last dream, one last kiss, one final moment.
The end of time approached and the fabric of existence tore it self apart
as predicted and the universe ended.
And the single lonely and endless entity began to record another song.

"Sex and Religion"

Why does something feel so great;
When you know it's just wrong.
It always begins with a call,
A hug, a kiss on the cheek.
But we feel the tension between ourselves,
And we just fall back into bad habits.

I wish I could confess to someone, maybe this should be my confession.
A piece of paper will be my invisible priest.
Forgive me father, for I have sinned.
I've broken someone else's heart again,
Knowing well how badly my own has hurt.
I can't stand how much I love you, want you.
I can't stand how much I also want to just let you go.

I washed my hands until my palms were red,
And I showered, thinking I can wash the actions of my
Sins away.
Dammit, I can't believe I went back down that road again.
I sit in the closet for hours,
Where no one can see me, because I am so ashamed.
Because I love the power you have over me.
I'm a masochist.

They say love is a strong word,
I think lust is an even stronger word.
Nobody understands us.
We are tumultuous, like waves colliding
Against a cliff.
I try to think if the nights I've cried over you,
Balance out
The nights of passion I've had with you.

I'm trying to decide, if the nights my pillow was soaked with tears,
Compares to the nights you made me cry out with ecstasy.
Are we too immersed with each other to think of others?
Will you tell me one day that you love me? Will it be too late?
I think of all this, as I let you into my bedroom.

We are the definition of sin, of sex.
Of what is right and wrong,
We are each other's forbidden fruits.
Nights we were separated, we still thought of each other.
As we hurt the ones lying next to us, without them even knowing.
Mr. Big and his Carrie.
The reason why there is a night.
Forgive me, yes I have sinned.
The sad part is: I wish I were sorry.

seasons

seasons change
and the sun,
tired and worn,
sleeps early and welcomes the moon
so that days become nights
and weeks become a slow crawl
time is a trick
and i am always fooled.

By tiffany russo

Intermission During Linear Algebra Homework

The wind rustles through the leaf-canopy.
Its susurrus revives me from a reverie
of coordinate vectors (some darting free,
others caged, but all marked with a Gothic B):
I look up into the slim, spreading branches
of the tree at the patio's center,
the one set apart like the sacred sibyl,
attended by four maidens (north, south, east, west).

A bright-breasted bird spurts
out of the tree's hub, a flash
of rust and flickering feathers.

When the bird vanishes, I am back
to the central tree, to the center of the central tree—
the point that would be the origin, (0,0,0),
if this patio were a three-axis coordinate space:
I ache to climb the y-axis into a flourishing of leaves,
to sit in the tree's lap, and look up,
to see fragments of the blue heavens
through parted leaves.

By Jennifer Park, 26 Nov. 2007

have you...

have you ever watched a water
drop
fall (fall), so gracefully
with its unliving, scientific animation
its stillness, but moving way
holding a glimpse in the dance of gravity?

and then beyond that the glow
of a red yellow leaf
shimmering with perfectly circular wonders
showing how delicately it can hang
without
dropping to the ground of dull afterthoughts

finally a gust of wind blows
pulling and pushing at your
heart full of autumnal weariness
and you breathe in the cool warmth
of death
and rebirth
(and the circle of your eye upon their colors)

By tiffany russo

Illustration by Rebecca Kleinhaut

Space

The final frontier?
I think not.
More like a breeding ground for robots and aliens.
Robots have no compassion.
Aliens probably don't exist.
Bunch of jerks.
In case you're wondering, there is no metaphor here.
It would be cool if this were about globalization
xenophobia
or some such bullshit
but I swear to you it's not.
It's about robots, man.
You can fuck a machine
but it doesn't give you the same self-confidence
as fucking a person.
Again, no metaphor. No sarcasm, either.
Robots in space

By David K. Ginn

Smoke Signals

I sit staring
at the wall.
Endless possibilities float up
with the smoke of a long ago lit
cigarette
that I can't bring to my lips.
I watch the smoke
as it gathers near the ceiling.
Because of the boundary
it never reaches the sky.
The embers are orange, but slowly
dying.
And the wall is still blank.

By Katie Knowlton

Best of the Worst

a collection of poems by j. daniel taylor

Wings without Feathers

Me and the bees got a special deal:
Don't fuck with me and I won't fuck with you.
I don't have the same deal with flies, though.
They attack my sandwiches during meals,
They find a way to ruin summer naps,
They dance on lobes of dog shit, or inside:
Buzz in my ear, avoiding the fly trap.
I wonder about the way it was when
We didn't need any clothes, fly swatters,
DEET, or mosquito netting. It was just--
Slight hunger pangs and guiltless sex; back then
Before the flood, not knowing what was wrong
Or right in front of our faces, until
Someone fucked it up for the rest of us.

Semester Abroad

When studying etymology,
I get a call from home,
The old man and his only query.

Ear to the phone, my lungs blow
A sigh the sound of falling leaves.
I watch acorns drop outside my window.

They dream of roots of their own, far from the canopy.
I let him know everything is just fine
Amidst the barrage of his inquest into my activities.

His words echo a vague sense of hope on the line,
Knowing that his youth is now gone
And for some reason I am reminded

That the archaic phrase 'all one'
Is the root of the word Alone.

Shades of Gray

If I look at you
And you look at me
Through tinted glass
Just so far apart
That our faces
Are the same size
Would it matter
What color
They Became?

On the Six O' Eight from Penn

During this time of year,
After drinking like a sailor,
If the trains run on schedule,
You can see the outline of the city
In front of a red orange backdrop
Below a sobering amethyst sky.
As it moves down the track,
Ocean waves of silhouette treetops
Give a sea to the power lines
Troughing and cresting from pole to pole,
A water tower buoy bobs in the distance.

Retina Fatigue

I tried listening to a friend who said
'Avoid looking directly at her face,
It's like staring at the sun for too long,
The image burning itself in the back
Of your eye sockets just like a shadow
On every girl you end up meeting
Later in life.' But I did, and she does,
Linger that is, on the face of every
Girl I've met, a ghost image overlay,
A smudge on the windshield fogged on the glass
Where erasing it would ruin the view.

Best of the Worst

a collection of poems
by j. daniel taylor

Eulogy without a Funeral

I tried to write a poem about my mom
For a day to remember her whole life
But there's not a whole lot of time for that
Well, there never seems to be anyway
What I ended up writing down for this
Were evening news snip-its on pipes and roads
Bridges falling into rivers. Symbols
Of failing infrastructures as organs
Shut down in the middle of summer's heat.
She is gone now and I am left to try
And make sense of loss, to make sense of grief.
Where could I begin other than to find
An analogy of flesh and machine
Like the rusting fenders of an old car
Leaving puddles of oil in the drive
The remnants of a working car sitting
In front of the garage at her new house
It was her late mother-in-law's Chevy Nova
One day it stopped working for whatever
Reason, the oil pan cracked or gaskets
Needed replacing, too much maintenance
After so many years of neglecting
Little things that could have kept it going
A clich lesson about the body
As a templebut it was a Nova
I guess it's the same for man and machine.
It's an inevitable consequence
To living ultimately, we wear out
Whether we make sure we maintain ourselves
Or fail to heed the warning signs of wear
And tear. The trick is, I guess to not go
Too fast, not burn us out too quick, to sit
In the backyard and just watch the trees sway
In the soothing mild breeze of late summer
With our terminal case of life, we think
About that absence that we can't avoid
And look to other places to find peace.
The best one out of the good book I found
Was from second Esdras, the fourth chapter:
You are at a loss to explain this world
It says in the first verse, I find it fits
Because there's nothing out there that makes it
Ok and easy to deal with the death
Of one who didn't deserve it at all?
All I have are memories of my mom
And a few photographs, I have them taped
To a wall in my bedroom. Small slices
Of time, light having left an impression
On a piece of paper. And it will fade
And fall off the wall. It's ephemeral,
A word I learned from something else my mom
Left to me a long while before she passed
Her old college books, worlds in words I cherish.
Those authors knew how and what to say
About death and loss and everything us.
But that's all they could do talk about it
Like me, I reminisce about her life.
Or mine rather, and those places she was
As time flowed toward her final moments
One second at a time, as with us all.
In that river of life, amongst the tears
I remember family reunions
And Horseshoes in the backyard on Glenside
A pear tree next to a gas barbeque
In a cement driveway. And the people:
Grandma Pepe, Aunt Phyllis, Aunt Rita
And my mother talking at a picnic
Table behind the garage while my sis
And Susan and Erika played dirty
Word scrabble on the back porch patio
In the basement wrestling with my brother
By metal shelving covered in thirty
Years of board games, lots of fading stickers
A mask of ET that will still scare me
If I'm alone in the dark, by myself
The way it feels now that I've lost my mom
It's not that the world has ended with me
The lone survivor, the family lives on
The days continue one after the next
So what can I say about a mother
Whose children kissed her at the neighbor's house?
Every time they passed through the dining room
And her neighbors were amazed at the sight
And she didn't notice until they said
How wonderful that must be to have kids
To do that for her. And she knew from that
She led a good life, had picked a good man
Had raised children as good as anyone
And she didn't need words the way I do
To express something part melancholy
Bitter sweet, a tragedy. It's a shame.
Again, I'm left only with words to use
To explain how it's felt for me to lose.
Mother, sister, daughter, wife, for me all
Of the names one can call her, I would have
To choose something else. Because I didn't
Just lose my mother, I lost my best friend.

Best of the Worst

a collection of poems
by j. daniel taylor

Fata Morgana Expurgatorius

I didn't know what to call us until
You labeled it on the pub's back patio;
You slid your sweetly smelling sleeve through mine.
A car ride to another town, far from what
I had known; in my car my best friend left
A condom; that first night I was nervous
Stamina on a stranger's bed –
The second night that we slept together:
You finished an entire bottle of gin;
Hour long naked skin frictions, using me
Like an endless supply of batteries;
Floor covered by a cheap Chinese throw rug;
Red kneed woven limbs on your friend's futon;
Before you passed out, you said you thought you
Were falling in love; I heard what you said,
Wanted you to say it again, to hear
You say it to me once, sober; a four
Letter word used to maim, you fell asleep
On top, pinning me in place;
We were almost always full of liquor
Or beer; billowing smoke between kisses;
You hocked a loogie inside the garage
Connected to your friend's house; she and I
Stood taken aback by your logic of
What constituted the difference between
Inside and outside; that night we had sex
On her little brother's bed; it became
Harder and harder to wake up hung-over
And think you were beautiful: one night you
Called out your ex's name, hitting me like that
Thirty-five year old ex-heroin addict;
Who took a swing, knocking off my glasses;
A girl you didn't know said you did
A line off the back of the toilet
With her at our bar; on my way to work,
I drove passed your car parked outside his apartment;
Things that soured my stomach the way food
Never seemed to stay inside of your own.

I caught a glimpse of bile on your cheek
By your lower lip: undigested
Franchise pizza wiped off with a sheet of
Charmin; your parents' eyes glued to satellite feeds
Pouring out the Fifty inch Sony;
I sat on the couch next to the dog –
We were both hungry for those slices
Ending up in the toilet, only one
Of us was willing to retrieve; the year
Ended and so did we: severed by a
Letter you wrote at Christmas; I stayed your
Friend under the weight of better judgment;
But the lies you told in silence tore holes
In the thickest skin I could have put on;
You ended up a Jeffery McDaniel poem:
Scrawled in the etchings of my mind – There
Are girls you want to kiss on the lips,
And those you do not; Girls you write poems about
And those you do not; Life is loss and endless
Clichés: unrequited love dancing on
Pages of burning paper; bitter, like
Aged wine after its best years, just before
It ends up turning into vinegar;
I think about it a lot when I'm alone
With my thoughts: I take a long time to let
Things go; Never one to write an angry
Letter and not send it – I would compile
Letters into lists of related words,
Combining those words into sentences,
Forming sentences into paragraphs,
Making little sense beyond sentiment.
Recounting nights with you as something else,
Spending my hours making us a myth,
A rhythm, a rhyme in my memory,
would do injustice to the misery
every day without you with me has been
or so I would like to say about this
empty space and onslaught of days to come.
The truth I could say is that you fucked up
But having a heart so haggard as yours,
Writing about you paints over flaws in me;

Best of the Worst

a collection of poems
by j. daniel taylor

Cellmates and Acquaintances

She asked us to paint our prison walls for others to see
I didn't know what hue to cover them with aside from blue
Is that not the color of alone, the surrounding color of islands?
The blankness of a cloudless sky capping off the cell?

I thought of my eyes and the head behind them
They're blue like veins taking the blood away from temporal lobes
Or bruises from fists to the face, called black, but still blue
True blue like the song or moon at night if it's not yellow or red.

I thought of escape and the keys and key holes we're equipped
And the youth we spend trying to figure out whose lock they fit into
How there's no color in the dark and everything's grey
And static like on television between channels that get no feed.

But mostly i thought of the effort it takes to make the change
To get up every morning and follow a routine
Why can't I just sleep, I think, as the darkness dissolves from dreams
Into the pink-beige glow of out of focus, paper thick eyelid skin.

This Far Inland

You made such beautiful things with your hands.
That's where the soul is, not in the eyes.
I try not to think about castles made of sand,

Their walls and moats, towers unable to stand,
Thumb sculpted palaces melting in the rising tide.
You made such beautiful things with your hands:

Seashell ornaments stolen from hermit crabs
To make necklaces with fishing line.
I try not to think about castles made of sand,

Your ring finger seaweed wedding band,
Torn away so quickly when I said it was alive.
You made such beautiful things with your hands,

Your fingers paid the price in blues and blacks.
You thought stars on still water were an awesome sight.
I try not to think about castles made of sand,

Or the sweet, sticky kisses as we rolled around on the grass
Along the boardwalk, having eaten ice-cream so late at night.
You made such beautiful things with your hands,
I try not to think about castles made of sand.

Mere Fate

When you look on that watery mirror
You'll see a face that a clock's hands have stretched,
Pulled toward that dark pool in which you stare.
The flawless face of youth cannot be wrenched
From Time's grip; nor can one tear be taken
From the puddle they leave in your own palms.
Like the ebb and flow of ceaseless ocean,
Time disassembles with relentless calm.
For we are droplets under a cliff's ledge,
Staving off our inevitable drip,
The darkness below, where we find our dregs,
That eventual brine we all must sip.
Worry not over laugh-lines. Sweet sorrow
Would it truly be to part with your smile.

Cherry Snow

Cherry blossoms fall
To the ground in a strong breeze,
An unmelting snow.

Victorian Structures

The clouds were never as comforting
As the ones I've seen
In the skies over the northeast
The Midwest is too humid
To ever grant eyes the right
To see upward
Amidst a hazy summer thunderstorm
Without the aid of air-conditioning
The cirrus swept visage
Of a pacific rimmed west
Held no more interest
Than the passing glance
Against the sand
Dunes of Monterey
But the simple breeze
Of mild wind in the sixties
Where albatrosses swim swiftly
Is a solace known too sweetly
To a weary travelers eye
It is there where I sit and begin to stare
At the moorings of foundations
That sink silently and peacefully
Rhythmically making ethereal
Mountain castles
Breathing something to hold

Haikus

By David K. Ginn

Where do you go-oh?
My lovely. Where do you go?
I want to know-oh

Garfield, don't get up
You know what happens Mondays
You fucked up again

Conan rose again
Was joined by a friendly face
Together they fought

They braved the cold winds
Fought a beastly snake monster
And then met their match

From a misty cave
Came Thor, bright as a disco
Ready to attack

"Oh no!" Conan screamed
"We're doomed!" echoed Friendly Face
"That's right" shouted Thor

But Conan was brave
And stopped time as we know it
To cut up his friend

Friendly Face filleted,
Conan climbed inside his skin
And sealed him back up

He recommenced time
Thor was utterly confused
Where had Conan gone?

Conan struck him hard
Wearing his companion's skin
Thor fell, sliced in half

Conan stood, silent
Then ate his way through the skin
Just another day

Jonathon Singer
Likes to freestyle ill-ass beats
Kill 'em, Jon, kill 'em

Fake Shemp. Wait, wait, what?
Sam Raimi, what does that mean
Explain it to me

Where are the robots?
This has gone on for too long
We need some robots

The mark of a man
Is the fury of his gland
Remember that well

For you, Kristen Bell,
I write this moderate plea
Marry me, right now

Okay, let's hang out
Get to know me a little
We'll see how it goes

Maybe you'll like me
If not, you can leave right then
But you don't have to

We'll make it easy
Marry me, it'll be great
Don't think about it

Yeah, that seems creepy
If I ever do meet you
I'll apologize

Don't take any shit
Remind me if I forget
Creepiness ain't cool

So there, that's my plea
Probably no chance in hell
But a boy can hope

Yes, it's two o'clock
Thank you, robotic bitch voice
I now know the time

Haikus

By Poemy McRealpersonton

The fateful hour struck
Gaping hole in the lit sup
Haikus are a must

At autumn's first blush
Waited for Pumpkin Spice Ale
But I had too much

Ask Ray Romano
Why does he always appear
To be so damn tired

That's a gross abuse
The fire code is for safety
Not assholery

Homie Spumoni
Born Black, Raised Italian
Totally confused!

Where is Jon Singer?
He said he was coming down
That man raps the most

Ordering O'Doul's
You should expect ridicule
Seriously. Come on.

Anyone tell James
We put his face on top of
Genitalia?

The proper term is
Rapid ejaculator
Thank you very much

So much ad money
Why do you need student funds
At all, then, hot shots?

Tell me once more who
Is the drink of the death squads?
Oh, that's right. It's Coke.

It's so fucking cold
Thoughts shiver inside my head
And they die in there

Why would they cancel
Arrested Development?
What, are they stupid?

Dennis Kucinich
Bring me magical presents
You Christmas Elf, you

Sometimes when I see
Brian Wasser's photographs
My eyeballs will sing

Jessica Alba
You were best in *Idle Hands*
They give you bad roles

Hilary Clinton
You make me want to throw up
Inside my own mouth

Don't try and pretend
You didn't support the war.
Maybe in your mouth?

In the summertime
I like pies and fireflies
In the summertime

I want to go to
Honolulu, Hawaii
And never come back

Because it's so cold
I don't know if I was clear
With my feelings there

Maybe real haikus
Have something that I'm missing
Or maybe they don't

Alex Rodriguez
Is a fucking slumlord, too?
I'm not that surprised

Nancy Pelosi
Sanctioned the waterboarding
Bunch of wind-up clowns

Without Rebecca
Who will managing edit?
Oh no! We are sunk!

If you own TV
Get your head out of your ass
And pay the writers

Snow falls in Boston
The New England Patriots
Win it all, again

Oh, and the Red Sox?
Don't even get me started.
Why bother playing?

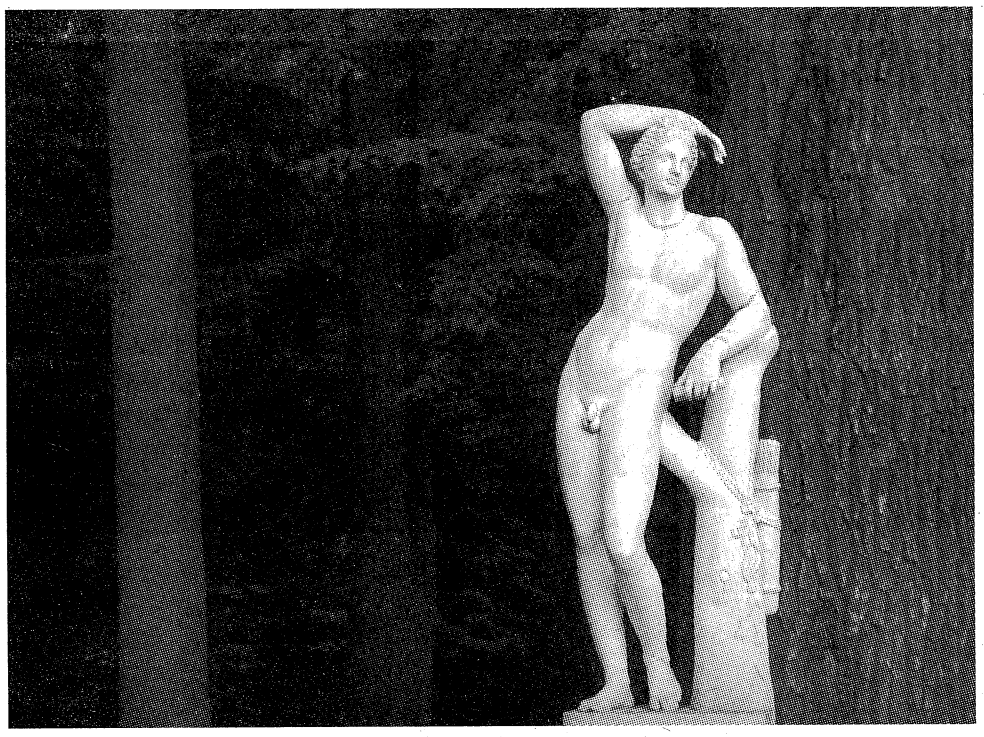
Focus - "Hocus Pocus"
The hardest rocking ever
Dial up the youtube

The Assistant Chief
Has a fondness for numbers
Of dubious source

Hey, what happened to
Four million Congolese?
Yay, cheap Playstations!

There is no bottom
There is only dangling here
On this bitter string

Photos



Photos by
Mike
Glukhovsky

SPRINKLES THE CLOWN

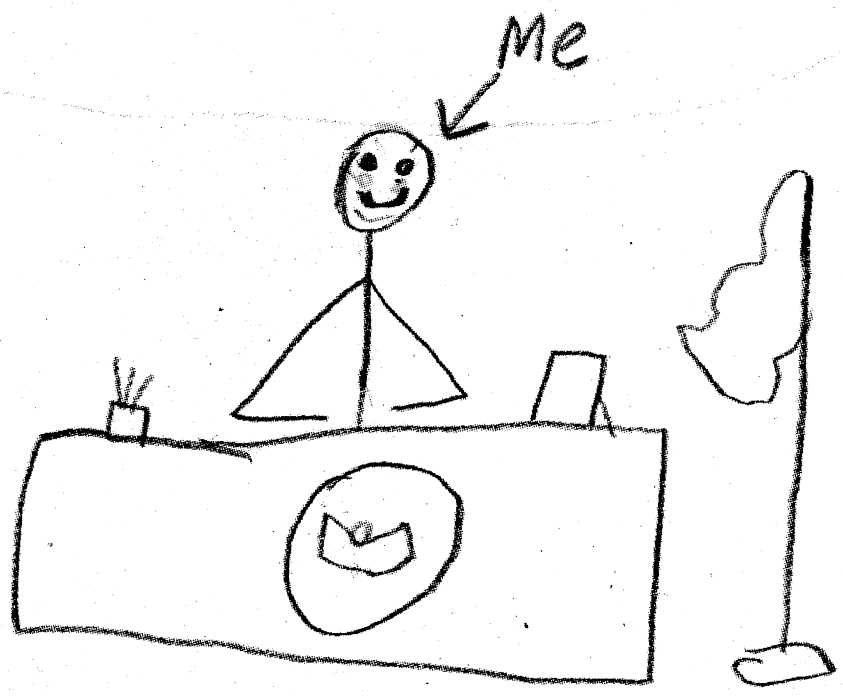
With father and son his manner is mild
But alone with the kid and he goes wild
He's Sprinkles the clown
He terrifies even the bravest child

The parents of victims upon which he feeds
Try to blame him for his misdeeds
He's Sprinkles...the clown
He has his urges, desires and needs

The children struggle with all theit might
They kick and scream, put up a fight
He's Sprinkles the clown
He ties them down and dowses the light

By Andrew Fraley

When I Grow Up...

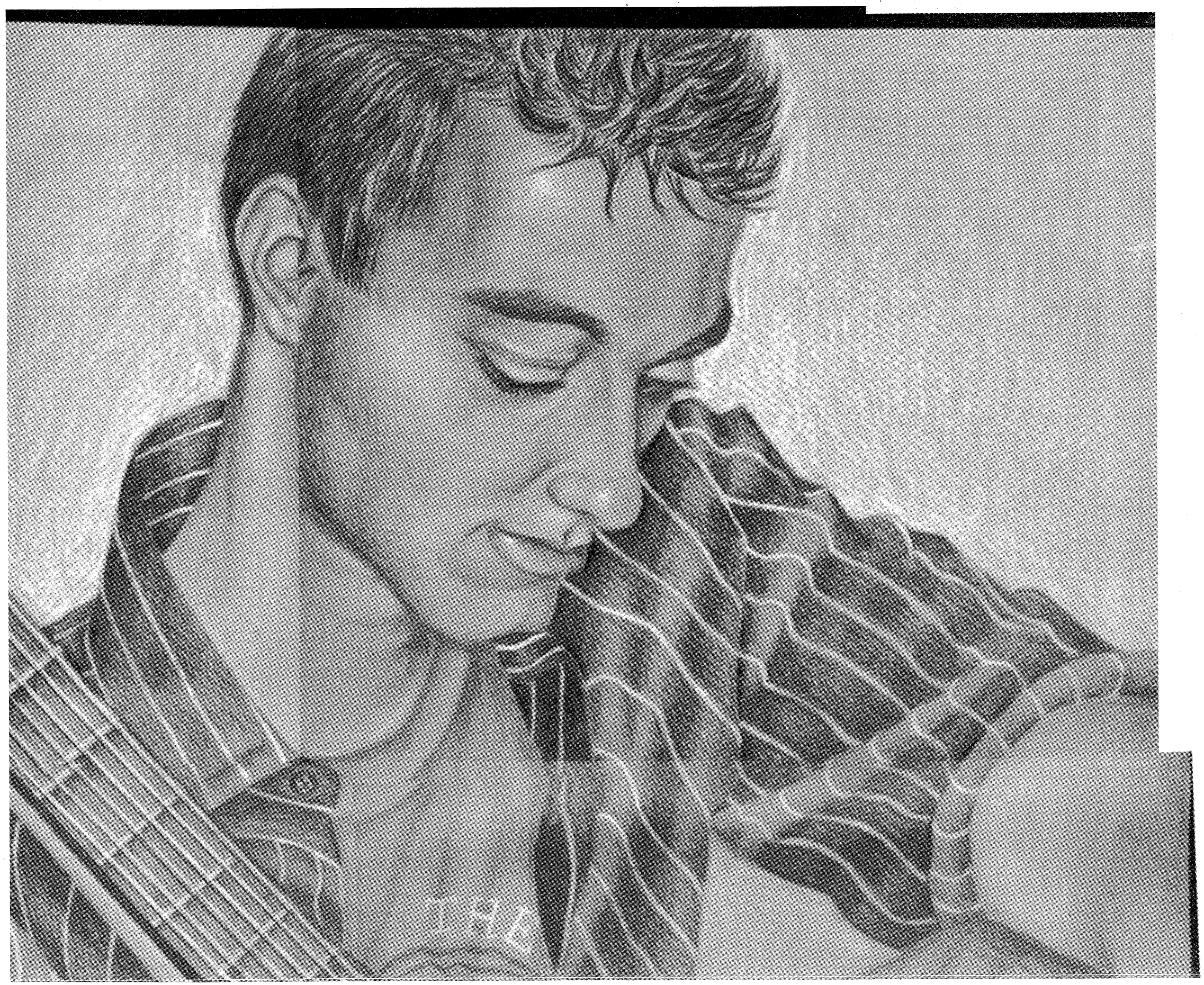


I Want To Be President! Or A Supreme Court Justice! Or a Senator! Or a Cowboy! No, wait, an Astronaut! A Fairy Princess! A Baseball Star! Reichsfuhrer! Indiana Jones! Robert Sean Leonard! A Coal Miner! Stacey Keach! My Mommy! A Ghostbuster!

By Alex,
Age 5

By David K. Ginn

Drawings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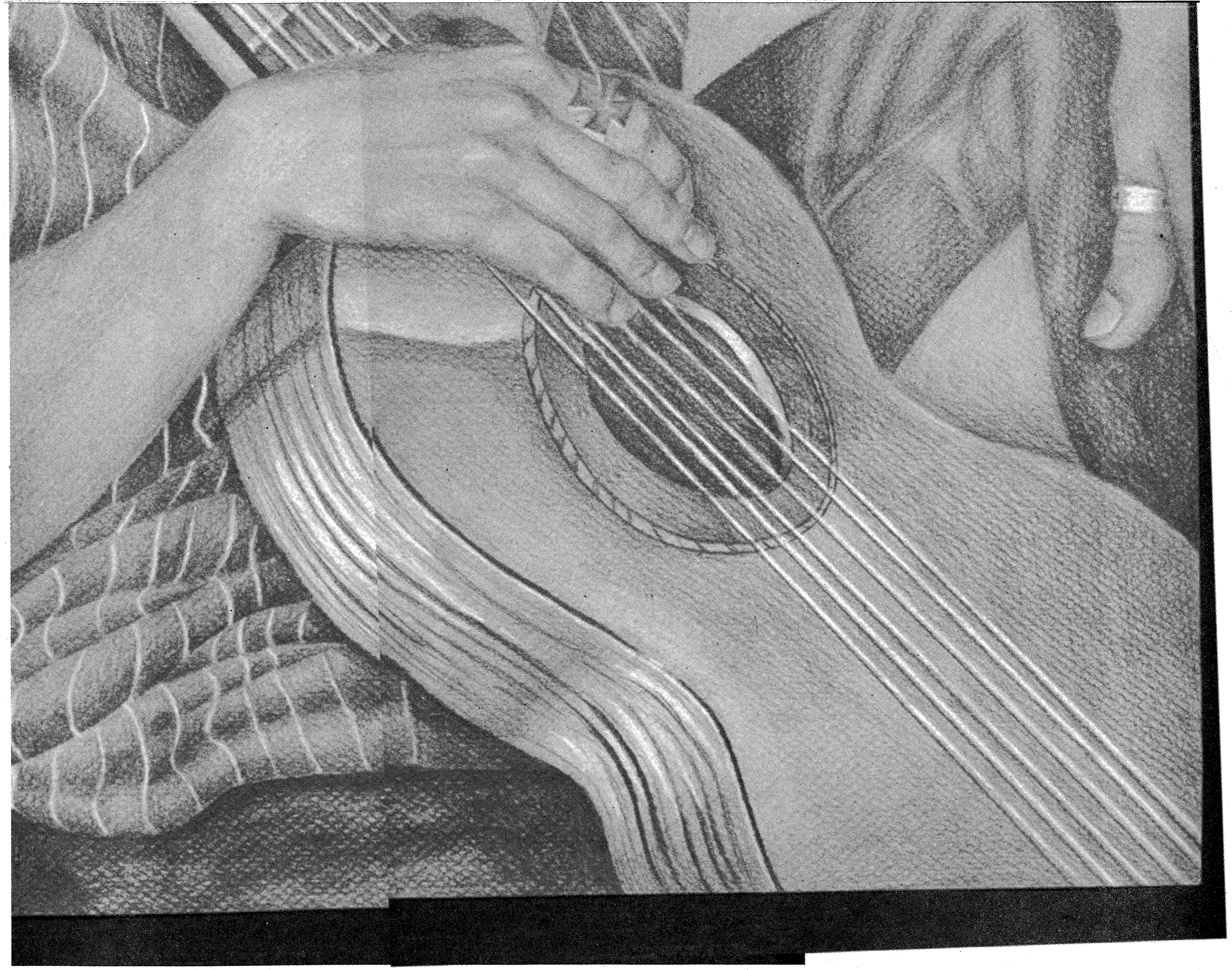

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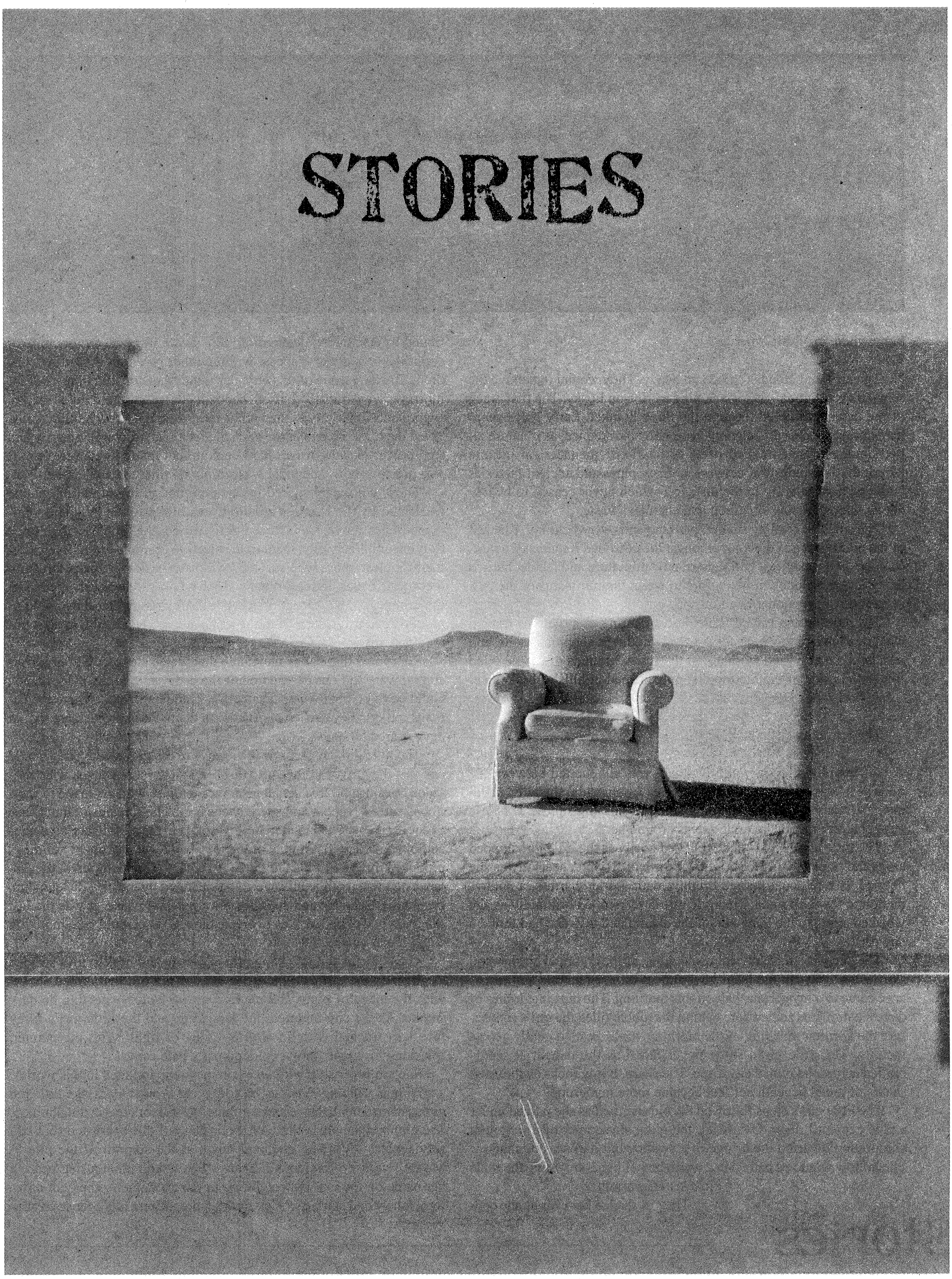
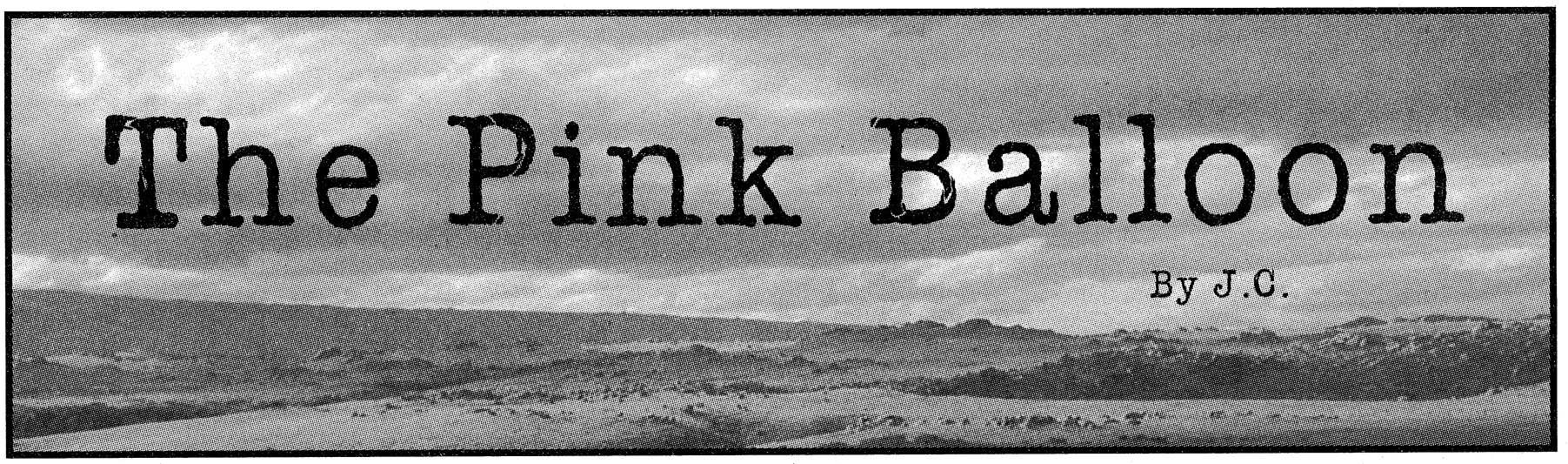


Photo by Brian Wasser



Somewhere in North America

The artificial clouds. Thick and heavy. They wound out above the ruins of an autumnal city. Blanketing a crimson lit sky. The first crack of the dawn splintered through the thick blanket. Early gales shepherded them across the opening symphony of radiance, as if nature allied amongst itself to shed itself of this toxic menace. An infinite labyrinth of an industrial network of rusty pipes and ancient factories hummed nonchalantly in the distance, which never ceased to bellow out its thick columns of carbon and chemical waste.

The smell of burning rubber, piercing and overwhelming. The last of the night bonfires died out amongst the corroded remains of countless car shells and tires. Old flames, now miniature and feeble, burned in the long and lonely night before to warm the ruminants of the citizens of this once modern and thriving city.

The humble and ruined skeletons of man-made structures framed what remained of the giant commercial buildings, shopping malls, and restaurants that nested eternally in the ruins. Mounds of rubble piled freely, the pride of the metropolis, now heaped in hills of broken cement and twisted steel.

The forgotten city.

A vibrantly red and youthful figure was silhouetted between the ruins as it hopped innocently and carefree amongst the shattered pavement. Already use to the stabbing smell of burning rubber, the little nose couldn't notice the toxic scents around her.

The little tap-dancing shoes clicked nosily as the little girl skipped along the ruined path. Her bright yellow hair flowed cheerfully as she hopped. Her red coat burned brightly with scarlet warmth, a contradiction to the drab ruins. The little girl in red smiled brilliantly as she whisked along to the huge pile of the abandoned toys she had found a day earlier.

The day was unusually calm and quiet, as the common clashes and skirmishes between the local government military patrols and resistance came to a mysterious halt on this morning. The buzzing drones of distant patrol bots somewhere behind the rubble filled the girl's ears before the familiar dwelling of the morning winds nestled gently across the city. The little girl's smile never faded as the industrial scents drafted across the ruined cityscape. The sharp, biting rocks and twisted shards of metal beneath her feet became more numerous.

The little girl's steps followed the old riverbed as she passed under a pale cement bridge. Overhead, the giant skyscraper of a forgotten corporation dwarfed the bridge in a swallowing darkness of shadow. The hollow windows bathed in a warm bed of light, drowning the ruins in a sea of warmth.

The girl shaded her eyes as she continued to her joyous destination. She swam in ravished thoughts of countless toys at her disposal without other ravenous and filthy children. The innocence of this city, our minds and constructionists of tomorrow, were mostly buried beneath the rubble and ruins of the supergiants in the city as the bombs fell. Although a few buildings survived the blast, no one dared to challenge their structural integrity and step bravely inside. It was hard enough that many lives were lost. It was precious now, and there was simply no time to dare another life.

Those who were spared by the columns of the tumbling giants, weakened by the careless atomic blasts orchestrated by some inhumane finger above, were forced to live under the rubble of their once thriving and lively city. Unnatural selection prompts often. Even after their first test, those who survived will have to deal with the dirt from the atomic blasts, fallout. What was left of that life was salvaged from the ground, as the remaining governments doing what they could to rebuild society. To start from the stone age all over again, to start humankind anew.

Some said that it was inevitable that we be cleansed of our never-ending wars and our destruction of the ecosystem of the planet. They could be right, but then yet again, they could be wrong. Where the humans settled, they carried conflict with them. Perhaps the blast should have spared no one.

The little girl had skipped to the edge of the graveyard. They would call this the graveyard because this old industrial residence zone provided housing and free dental insurance to those workers in the factory. It was entirely rubble and silent chaos now. The screams of thousands of souls that perished in mere milliseconds in the atomic blast were inaudible now. The flat rubble of the low, two level apartment buildings produced a field of hills and hills of cement. The factories in the distance on the top of the hills were still operated by the new dictatorship, producing weapons and supplies for a baffling cause. It was the last thing anybody needed, was to create objects that would take more life when it was so precious.

The colorful and ravishing pile of plastic and broken toys seemed to glitter in the girl's bright green eyes. A tall hill that dotted above, with the maze of pipes and chimneys of a factory spewing its dark smoke. As the sun matured, the landscape and the little girl's filthy face was washed with an alluring glow of light. With the painter, splashing his most vibrant color across a pale canvas.

She ran feverishly with an excitement unparalleled in this world.

Almost tripping over jagged rocks and broken glass, the little red girl sustained her balance and continued to trot for the dazzling bullion. She climbed the almost mountainous heap of dirt-encrusted (but still serviceable) toys. The girl bent down at the summit of the pile. A Mount Everest of children's dreams. She would plant a flag bearing her name on the top, but caught up in the excitement, she bent down ferociously and started to pick through the infinite pile of lost dreams.

The Pink Balloon

By J.C.

She brightly smiled and almost gasped at what she had just found.

Countless miniature toy cars retarded and twisted into odd shapes when most of the plastic was melted and deformed. Tiny toy soldiers, mutilated and beaten, what resides of once a proud little army, ready to be deployed to any children's house, and waiting anxiously behind the plastic of the gift box to fulfill their objectives. Many of the once, most expertly crafted and beautiful dolls in the world, fresh off their assembly desk, ready to be nurtured and cared for in thousand's of little doll houses all across the homes of America.

The blasts had destroyed more than just humankind, but another minuscule civilization. She tried to salvage much as possible of the deformed treasures into her coat's pockets and envisioned the world she could create for them, a universe of utopian society. Another world, perfect in every single way.

This was once a toy factory, now just another causality of the nuclear holocaust. It was owned by the proudest European family whom migrated into American in the early 1900s during the massive waves, they brought their generations of experience in toy making. Creating European toys that wouldn't be seen before in America. Children once all over America visualized a dream visit to this wonderful toy factory. What that remains of the rubble and the pile of broken toys is a once idyllic reminder of the factory.

As the little girl in the bright red coat continued to scour through the toys, a melancholy and delightful sound of a windpipe filled her ears. Curious, she pocketed what she had salvaged in her hand and tried to locate the source of the mystifying tune. She peered around, her ears sharp to the sound and eyes sensitive to what she would see. The carbonic chemical smoke continues to bellow out in deep columns. It drowns against a dark atmosphere; never stop flowing as a byproduct of the droning factories above.

What she had found next had astounded her.

There was a bearded figure in a long and torn brown coat, playing the plastic toy flute and rocking on a colorfully painted wooden chair. The man had wrinkles all over his subtle face, with white hair bushing on the edges of his lips. The stunned little girl couldn't tell of his age, but this man seemed to be the oldest person she ever had saw in her life.

With his eyelids closed as he meditated and deeply absorbed into the notes of his bright plastic flute, he continued to drown out the world with his deep and effervescent tunes. He did not even notice the little child come up and stared bemused at the mysterious musical object that he had in his hand. A creaking over the old wood of the wall-less shack and the clicking of her dancing shoes lightly startled the old man. He slowly opened his eyes to survey the little girl in front of him. The man's eyes were deeply blue and sincere.

Hello.
His thick European accent stirred in his words.

"Hello."
The little girl's shy but curious tone.

Such a lovely girl comes to visit me on this fine day…
She blushed and giggled.

There was a comfortable silence.

What of years are you sweetheart?
The old man curiously broke the silence and questioned.
His voice had a soothing and calming tone of none she has heard.

"I am 4 today Mister"
She smiled.

Fier? Certainly not by looks, I say six.
The old man's thickly accented "four" made the girl to giggle again.

But the little girl couldn't keep her fascination off the old man's mysterious musical instrument that he had now at his side. The elderly man noticed her unrelenting interest at the multi-colored woodwind.

Thes is one of my flutes from my days when my toy factory was up and open in the pre-war days.
He held close to his heart.

I had this flute to keep close by…. But… forbi... because this was special to me…

The little girl struck up a curious curl at her lips.

Thes would always remind me of my toy factory that made many children happy…
The old man said softly.

The detached emotion in the man's eyes subsided and he would turn back towards the girl with a warm smile.
The old man would gently question.

Ahhh, would you like a balloon?
He smiled.

"What's a balloon?"

It's a thing little children would love… They would be floated in the front and many children would run by with wonderful smiles when I give them away…

The girl sat in ponder.

Here, let me show you...

The old man led the little red girl to an old part of the crumbled factory and there she saw many of these tall and rusty cans. She marveled the height of the mysterious rusty cylinder as it towered two heads above her. She was mentioned to sit down as the old man searched through a creaking, wooden cabinet.

As he searched through the cabinet, he spoke in a warming and earnest tone.

I remember the world vividly as it was back then.

"World? Here was not the same be-

The Pink Balloon

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fore?"

The little girl had questioned peculiarly.

No, you see, I could remember the days when the world was beautiful and free…

Memories would flow through his head.

…people were allowed to do anything they could ever imagine. When things ever got too rough and painful, people would go on long trips called vacations… One could go to wondrous places, see the wonderful beaches, sat and listened to old records… music, we were right to say anything and everything we would ever want.

"What is a va-cay-shoon?"

That's where families and couples go to free themselves and escape to beautiful places they would always imagine themselves going to. I saw things you wouldn't believe, bright red rose gardens, lush and green and wonderful palette bed of the flowers when my lady planted and watered them. I saw the most wonderful places… cities, their tall skyscrapers beaming their dazzling neon glow at midnight; I loved when the many other children just like you as they would come to the factory doors every Sunday for balloons…

He continued and she would listen attentively.

It was a world where everybody was free, and we had the right to say anything. Televisions broadcasted what they wanted to, and newspapers were free to write the latest ongoing events around the world. And where everybody had the right and even was required… to be educated! It was a free world of expression, artists were allowed to state their minds through their canvas, and writers would create any kind of fiction they wanted to. I would almost imagine seeing those children again, and you would be peering into the factory to see what was on the production line.

He had continued to look in the cabinets for a long while, but she never became uninterested at what he had to say about "back then".

The old man handed her a flat and droopy red bag as they heard a slight humming in the distance.

She felt it between her fingers and ran it through her hands. She giggled at the new soft feeling it gave her fingers, as she had never seen anything like this before in life.

Now… wait until you see what I can do…

The old man smiled and she handed him back the lifeless pouch.

A humming ever grew more steady, as it seemed creep closer and closer.

The old man operated the mysterious controls on the tip of the tank as the girl stood impatiently for the result. The flat, red pouch suddenly came to life as a hissing sound filled her ears. It expanded as the girl gasped when it came to its final shape.

Here we go…

He said as he switched off the gauge and tied one end of the balloon with a long string.

Look… a pink bear… just for you.

In his deepest and heartfelt happiness that long ago he had felt and missed. The moments would come back to him as he started to hand the magical sphere to the girl's trembling hands.

The whining mechanical clicks and startling buzzing of a hunter-killer sentry robot suddenly shot through their ears, alert surging through their spines like a red hot poker. As it came closer and closer, a synchronized stomping of heavy boots reigned in the nearby distance. The little red girl felt her stomach twist.

An intense spark of an icy sensation reverberated throughout her back as her own predictions frightened her. She could remember. There were the shadows in all-black uniforms, with those heavy mechanical clicking vests they wore and their big black, glowing and whining sticks as they keep poking her own father to talk until he finally gave in and they took him away. He was never seen again.

What did they do wrong? Why were they coming for us?

She snapped her eyes back and forth at the huge military men standing before them.

She had seen more conflict and violence then any other four year old would ever experience. It was at the heart of it, now she could be on the receiving end of the pointy, glowing, and stinging stick.

The old man grasped the little red girl in a strong protective hug his other hand held on to the pink balloon defiantly. The figures came into view with a terrifying resemblance of a mechanical attack dog. Some of the men in their horrible masks like the ones that resembled nuclear technicians when they went to scan for radiation. The snarks of their masks snarled their robotic breaths in a labored and mechanized pace.

The Pink Balloon

By J.C.

Little tears were squeezed out of her eyes as she stood frozen and crying into the bearded man's protective arms.

The ghastly stomping of boots surrounded their protective circle as a cloud of stinging dust besieged them. Noisy radio chatter in their unfathomable language was emitted continuously from their headsets. The mechanical attack dogs barked in their pre-recorded computerized growls as the helmeted mechanized soldiers stood taming the rabid, programmed beasts with a steel-linked leash. They had nowhere to run, and even if they did run off, the dogs would find them anywhere on the planet within a few hours. They would sic the dogs on runners, and when the dogs returned, the steel jaws will be filled with blood. They stood terrified and puzzled at their unexplained crime they may have committed.

"MR. DANGERFIELD, YOU HAVE JUST VIOLATED THE SECTION CODE 45923 OF THE TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENT OF THE NEW UNITED REPUBLIC OF CLEMENTS"

The heavy robotic and pre-recorded voice didn't intimidate the old man as he bravely questioned.

What crime have I committed exactly?

"MR. DANGERFIELD, YOU HAVE BEEN COMMITTING CRIMES OF…"

(As another soft pre-recorded feminine voice sounded)

"… Violating the misinformation abuse act of conversing about or related to the topic of utopian society, presenting the misinformation to another "children of the wastes", spreading of your infectious words to one who is born after the time of August 30, Two-thousand fifty-nine…"

(The feminine voice promptly ceased as the horrible helmeted mechanization continued)

"THE PUNISHMENT OF THIS VIOLATION IS TERMINATION, YOU WILL NOW FOLLOW US TO YOUR LOCALE OF TERMINATION BEFORE YOU VIOLATE ANYMORE LAWS OF THE NEW UNITED REPUBLIC OF CLEMENTS"

Someday, you all will learn that we would never forget the world before, where everybody was free… away from your murderous government…

"MR. DANGERFIELD, WHAT YOU SAY NOW IS MEANINGLESS AND YOU WILL COME WITH US NOW"

The old man, with a surprisingly calm reaction, questioned selflessly.

Very well, but what about the little girl, she has done nothing, she has committed no crime…

"THE CHILD WILL NOT BE HARMED"

The snarks gave another coordinated breath among themselves and electronically cuffed the old man as they started down the rubble.

The little red girl had wanted to cry, this was the only true friend she ever had, but was taken away from her in mere minutes. She tried to, but there was something inside that would resist her to cry in front of the eyes of her new enemies.

Little girl in red, such a beautiful girl you are, I won't forget you and this day…

The bearded, sincere old man turned towards the girl and talked in his soft eternal voice he was being marched to his death.

If I could find a souvenir… just to prove the world was here… And here is a pink balloon…

His parting words almost drowned amongst the heavy stomping. The old bearded man let go of the pink balloon he had defiantly held in his hands during the entire raid. She climbed to the top of a mound and barely grasped the pink balloon floating upwards towards the dark, swallowing industrial clouds.

The girl stood frozen, as she looked painfully of her best friend being carried away above the horizon over the mounds of devastation to oblivion.

Because within, she will always remember her friend in her heart, in her new undying resolve to learn more of the past, to learn of the utopia that once nestled beneath the rubble.

On the mound of giant toy robots, little plastic cars, playhouse dolls, toy soldiers, and countless dreams of children everywhere, the little blonde girl dressed in a red coat held the balloon high above the murky sky and industrial pipes and fallen ruins of skyscrapers.

If I could find a souvenir, just to prove the world was here, and here is a pink balloon…

I think of you and let it go…

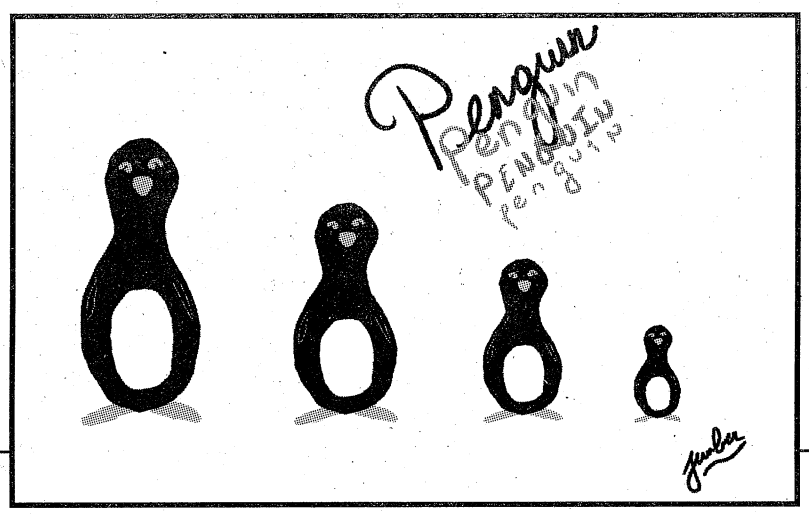
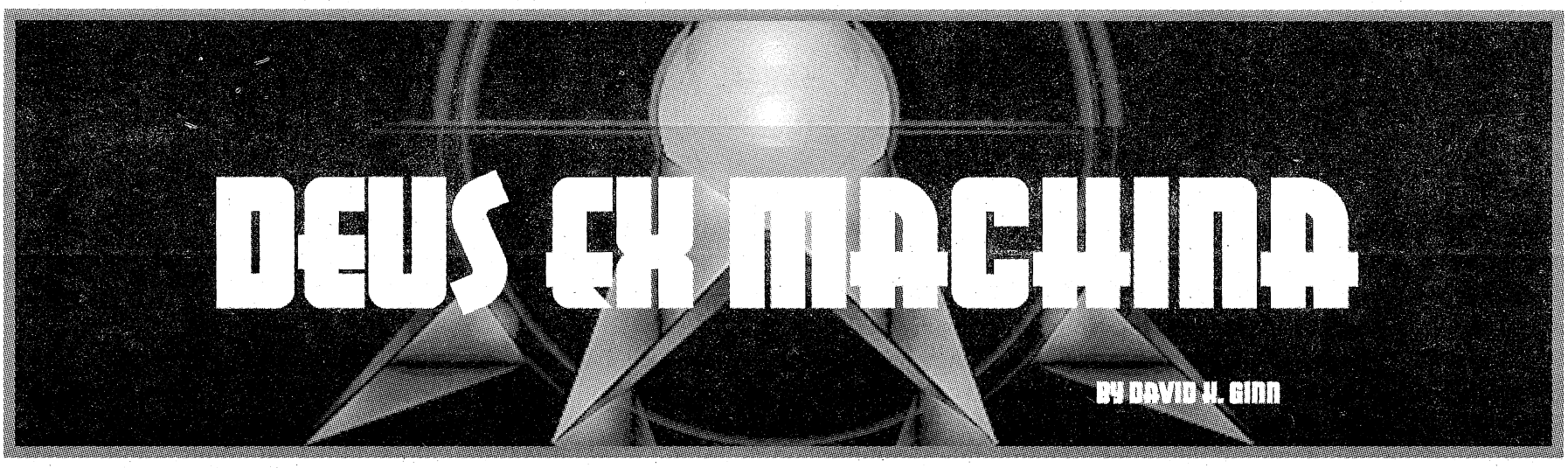


Illustration by Jack Katsman



Neil Hebringer opened his eyes.

The room looked the same as he'd last seen it, although there were less people now. He couldn't hear anybody inside the room or out, and the steady beeping to his right was starting to give him a headache. He felt for it, hoping to shut it off without getting up. It continued to beep.

As he turned his head, he felt an uncomfortable jab in his neck. He groped at it and found a tiny black box with a blinking red light. He pulled it off and the beeping stopped.

He lifted the bottom of his shirt and examined the wound. It was four centimeters long, curved, and was neatly stitched together. The stitches were ready to come out.

He swung his feet over the bed and tried to stand before stumbling backward. He looked out the door and saw no one.

"Hello? Anyone there?"

He waited for a minute with no response.

"Captain? Haile? Doctor? Anyone?"

He walked into the docking area and looked around. The ATVs, loading equipment and shipments were all there, and the ominous hum and rattle of the ship's engine reassured him that it was still traveling.

"Doc, these stitches are ready to come out. How many days has it been?"

There was no answer.

He walked through the first corridor and into the kitchen. He'd never felt so hungry after sleep before. He searched the cabinets, found a jar of hazelnut fudge and started eating it with his finger. He sighed and sat down at the mess table.

Across the table, a short-haired woman was sitting with her face down.

Neil jumped back in his chair and froze before waving his hand in front of her. "Hey, is that you, Haile? What are you doing? Where's everyone else?"

He stood up tilted her head back. Her eyes were closed. He felt for her pulse. Nothing. He sat back down.

Neil laid her body on a metal tray, flipped a series of switches above the plexi-glass bubble and sat next to a small computer monitor. A menu appeared on the screen, and he used the touchpad to navigate. The cadaver entered the bubble, and a light inside panned from one end to the other.

A new page appeared on the computer screen, with a see-through representation of the body rotating in the top-right corner. A text box appeared next to it, reading:

NECROSCAN REPORT
Cause of Death: Asphyxiation
Days Since Death: 3
Other Contributions to Death:
Trauma: No
Lacerations: No
Bites: No
Reactions: No
Post-mortem Hemoscan:
Vitamins/Minerals: Moderately nourished (at TOD)
Foreign Substances: Yes (EXPLAIN)
Subject Report:
Age: 29
Physical: 130 lbs. (at TOD)
DNA Analysis/DNAtabase Cross-Check? (YES)

Neil touched the word EXPLAIN. Another page appeared:

Foreign Substances:
Substance: Drug
Type: Psychoactive
Group: Benzodiazepine
Class: Nitrazepam
Primary Use: Sedative
Possible Relation to COD: Not likely (3.9%)
(BACK) (EXIT)

Neil touched EXIT, looked at Haile's body again as it slid out of the bubble, and left the room.

She's died from a lack of oxygen, which meant it was either intentional (not likely, considering the absence of bruises), or the supply had been cut off. What frightened Neil was the foreign substance. Nitrazepam was a common sedative used on insomnia patients and people suffering from recurring nightmares. The computer had said there was only a 3.9% chance the nitrazepam had something to do with her death, which meant she may have intended, successfully or not, to die in her sleep.

Neil knew that wasn't what had happened, though. If a person could predict their own suffocation, he or she would take a sleeping pill for the main purpose of conserving oxygen.

He opened the door to the computer room and turned the monitors on.

"Give me a lifescan, ultra-sensitive, all levels."

One of the monitors displayed a map of the ship, systematically highlighting rooms red and producing a rapid display of numbers. The display zoomed out to show the entire ship, then zoomed back in to the computer room.

"Lifescan report: one life form on board. Species: human. Location: main computer room. No other life forms on board."

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"Keep scanning." Neil replied. "Give me a carbonscan, deceased life forms, all levels."

Another monitor performed a similar function as the first, this time highlighting the rooms blue as it scanned them.

"Carbonscan report: seven deceased life forms on board. Species: six human, one non-human. Non-human species: trimeresurus flavoviridis, commonly habu snake. Locations: two deceased humans in second level lounge; one deceased human in medical autopsy room; two deceased humans in- there are no more deceased life forms."

Neil banged on a monitor. "Computer, tell me the location of the remaining deceased life forms."

After a long pause, the computer replied, *"There are no more deceased life forms."*

"Computer-"

"-main engine room. One deceased human in dorm three. One deceased trimeresurus flavoviridis in mess room. There are no more deceased life forms."

Neil sat at in a swivel chair and stared at the monitors. Everyone was dead. He, was the only survivor. He gazed blankly for a moment, partially traumatized. It wasn't just that a group of people he had considered friends had all mysteriously perished while he'd been in a coma; it was horrible, but it also brought up the fact that he had no first-hand experience doing anything he needed to survive any longer.

"Computer, give me the main log for the past week, highlighted."

"Thursday, 23:01: landing on planet Insintia. Friday, 00:37: medical emergency – crewman injured, security level raised. Friday, 01:48: exit planet Insintia. Friday, 14:09: mechanical failure of oxygen ventilation system. Saturday, 13:07: oxygen level warning. Saturday, 21:36: mechanical worm detected in ventilation system. Sunday, 02:26: carbon-dioxide ventilation repaired. Sunday, 02:36: carbon-dioxide stabilization executed. Sunday, 14:08: oxygen level critical. Sunday, 23:00 to 23:36: three on-board life forms deceased. Monday, 00:37 to 01:49: four on-board life forms deceased. Tuesday, 11:06: oxygen ventilation system repaired. Tuesday, 19:38: ventilation environment stabilized. Today, 03:26: Necroscan ship-based DNAtabase confirms deceased: Triguian, Haile; rank: crewwoman; chain: six; position: computer analyst. Cause of death: asphyxiation. Time of death: Monday, 00:46 to 00:57. End Necroscan shared analysis. There are no more highlighted logs."

The entire crew had probably tried sleeping pills, but they hadn't lasted. Likely, they'd all been working to fix the problem. If they'd slept to save their oxygen, they could have only done it in shifts.

Another few hours and he would have died with them.

"Computer, where are we?"

"Sector twelve, Outer Reaches."

"Are there any nearby civilizations?"

"No objects or planets within four days travel time. Probability of nearby civilization: zero percent."

"How long will our fuel last?"

"Fuel amount is at sixty percent capacity. Estimated time before critical shortage: two weeks."

"What about older fuels? Is there any way to increase that time?"

"Necessary amount of classical fuel for one week of travel is approximately fourteen times the mass of the ship. Probability of locating classical fuel: twelve percent. Probability of locating and installing classical fuel: six percent. Probability of locating, installing and-"

"Okay, I get the point. What are the chances of performing a successful landing on a civilized planet or station before we run out of fuel?"

"Probability of scenario: eighteen percent."

"What if I knew how to pilot?"

"Probability of updated scenario: forty-one percent."

Neil sank in the chair. There was no way out of the situation. In two weeks, the ship would stop moving. Soon after that, the oxygen would run out, and he'd finally die the way he was supposed to have died to begin with.

He got up and walked around, trying hard to think of something that would change the odds. The ship's computer was a nearly perfect model, so the navigational and tracking systems were about us trustworthy as they came.

He flipped a panel in the hallway and pressed a red button. A large door swung open from the bottom, connecting to a pressure-seal on the room's ceiling and stopping with a low hiss.

There was a man sitting at a desk, his ear against a sheet of paper and his eyes closed. In his right hand he held a ballpoint pen. Neil looked at what had been written, all in very neat script:

> To Mary,
>
> I know it's been a while since we've seen each other, and even though you think I've forgotten about you, I haven't. You're on my mind every day, wherever I go, whatever I'm doing. I knew I could never love anyone as much as I loved you, and so I never tried again. You asked me to stay with you and start a life, and I was scared. I'd never started a life, and never thought I would have to. I'd intended to drift along until I died, and it looks like that's exactly what's about to happen. At least, for a few months, I was still. In that short time, I actually lived like you do every day. Now I think I'm about to be still again. If I'd kept living like you do, I would have died the same way: together. I chose to live alone, and now I'm going to die alone. I thought I was exploring the universe, but for some reason I never explored the most amazing thing in it, even when I had the chance. I will always, always love you. I hope

The letter ended there.

Neil left and closed the door. The room was a tomb, and what didn't smell like death forced the reality of it onto him just the same.

"Lifescan report: one new life form on board. Species: unknown. Location: main loading dock. One other life form on board. Species: hu-"

Neil froze. "Computer, what do you mean by one new life form?"

"One new life form scanned in main loading dock. Species: un-"

"You've made a mistake. Why are you even still scanning?"

"Command log: VoiceRecog: Hebringer, Neil. Command: 'Keep scanning'. End specific command log."

"Was someone not quite dead before?"

"Report: negative."

"You screwed up. Either someone was alive before who you thought was dead, or they're all dead and you're making this up."

DEUS EX MACHINA

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"Report: negative."

"Report: positive."

"Report: negative."

Neil sighed. "Is it an animal?"

"Bioscan report: life form descendant of animal kingdom. No further breakdown available. End bioscan report."

Neil was stiff with fear. In all the years he'd traveled, he'd never once even heard a story of extra-terrestrial life. The very idea frightened him more than being alone and running out of fuel. "Computer, is it a xenomorph?"

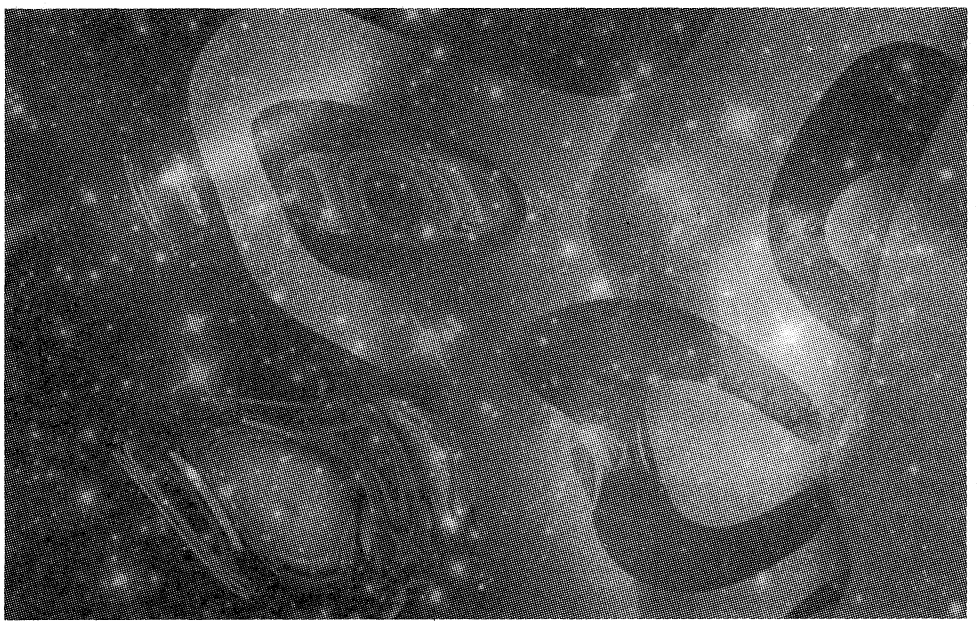
"Report: uncertain. Life form not native of planet Earth. No known animal species are known to be native to another planet. Probability life form native to Earth: two percent. Probability life form native to registered planet: five percent. Probability life form native elsewhere: ninety-six percent."

"Computer, where is elsewhere?"

"Report: uncertain."

"Behaviorscan on life form: possible threat."

There was a long pause, then a small hiss of static. *"Behaviorscan report: cultural civilization highly detected. Malicious intent also present; projection: uncertain. Possibility of physical or fatal harm: eighty-six percent. Probability of physical harm: thirty-two percent. Cautionary contact may be advised. Scan advisory: not advised. End behaviorscan report."*



"How did it get on the ship? You've been scanning this entire time and you just picked it up now?"

"Affirmative. Life form has been on board for two minutes and thirteen seconds."

Neil walked down the hall until he came to a metal door two feet from the ground. He pulled the small, rusted latch; nothing happened. He banged it with his elbow and the door swung open.

Inside was an assortment of guns, ranging from classic, ballistic pistols and rifles to more modern, laser-based weapons. He grabbed a Jericho 941, slid it into his belt and slung an SKS rifle over his shoulder. He looked through the modern weapons, hoping to carry something less dangerous through the ship. He took a Conja AKML-49, loaded it with a power cell magazine and shut the door to the armory.

"Computer, has there been any change in the loading dock?"

"Negative."

"Recommended point of entry?"

"Southwest, Door C-1."

Neil cocked the rifle, which let off a loud, electronic hum in response. The 2-inch digital monitor lit up and displayed:

%76

Load systems… complete

He walked slowly down the corridor and stopped at a small catwalk above the warehouse. The warehouse was what travelers called large, open space adjacent to the loading docks on most ships. The loading docks were typically small, about the size of two large trailers side-by-side. Beyond that was one of three airlocks. The dock was designed to itself be a secondary airlock, used mainly for trafficking between the airlock (leading outside) and the warehouse.

Inside the warehouse were two ground ATVs and one AGV. Steel boxes were stacked, thrown, lined, stuffed and shoved throughout the middle of the floor and along the curved walls. Neil climbed down the metal ladder from the catwalk and made his way to the loading dock entrance, which was designed as a large garage-style door that opened from the middle, like a mouth.

He flipped a glass cover next to it and pushed a large red button. As the doors began to open, he aimed the laser rifle and stood still, trying hard to stop his arms from shaking. The doors disappeared into the track slots and stopped. There were a few boxes that had been carelessly tossed about, and a giant hook on a pulley system that hung from the ceiling. It was too dark to be sure, but it didn't seem like there was anyone inside.

He lowered the rifle, and at once was knocked onto his back with a swift tackle. In the same movement, the attacker flipped the rifle out of his hands and pointed it at his forehead.

"Who are you?" she asked.

He surveyed her from the feet up. She wore no shoes; her feet were dirty and slightly blistered. Her dirtied, tattered white dress was torn so that it ended at the knees. Her long blonde hair fell along her shoulders in an almost elegant lack of grace. Her eyes, beautiful, mesmerizing and intense, stared down at him impatiently.

"My name is Neil Herbringer, C-7, research and field preparation."

"Why am I here?"

"I was going to ask you the same thing."

She looked around the warehouse, keeping the gun aimed at him. "What is this?"

"This is the warehouse. It's the main storage and loading area for the ship."

"Ship?"

Neil nodded. "Yes, the ship that you're on."

"Are we underwater?"

Neil looked at her, taken off-guard. "You really don't know where you are, do you?"

"Should I?"

"You're at least two weeks travel time away from the nearest civ-

DEUS EX MACHINA

BY DAVID K. GINN

ilization.

The girl continued to stare uncomprehendingly.

"You're in space."

Neil sat in the computer room's swivel chair as the girl looked at the monitors in amazement.

"Are you going to point the rifle at me forever?"

The girl looked at the gun as if she'd forgotten she was holding it. She placed it on one of the consoles. "What do these devices do?"

"They serve different functions to keep the ship running."

"Where is the rest of the crew?"

Neil was silent for a moment, remembering the letter he'd found. "They're dead."

"All of them?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"It's sort of an odd thing, really."

"I can handle odd."

"We landed on some no-name planet to do a job-"

"What kind of job?"

"You want the truth?"

The girl reached for the rifle.

"Okay." he said. "Illegal transport of stolen property, black market trading- that's what we do- did."

"What was your position?"

"I researched civilization, found jobs, sometimes acted as a sort of ambassador when we made deals in person."

"What happened?"

"Our job went sour. The buyers knocked us over. We fought our way out, took as much as we could, and I got shot in the process."

"Then what?"

"We got back to the ship, they operated on me, and I lapsed into a coma. I woke up this morning and everyone was dead. Asphyxiated. Oxygen systems malfunctioned, apparently."

"How did that happen?"

"I don't know. The buyers may have messed with it before we got back. If they found a way to hack the system or physically damage the hardware, I suppose it could have been done. Either that or it was just an accident."

"How are you alive?"

"I used less oxygen than everyone else. They'd all died by the time the ship isolated the problem and fixed it."

She looked around the room, mesmerized by the blinking lights and flashes. "I'm sorry about your crew. I don't mean to be insensitive, but what happens now?"

Nick shrugged. "I've been wondering that myself."

"You can't fly or land the ship, can you?"

"I might be able to. There's more than that, though. I told you already that we're two weeks from anywhere. That's my own guess, not the computers. It could be more. Whichever it is, we're going to run out of oxygen, fuel and all sorts of things before then. We are, to put it lightly, completely screwed. Now that you're here, we'll both die a little sooner."

The girl pointed to the guns. "Your ambition for self-preservation is remarkable for someone who's accepted his own death."

"I don't like it any more than you do."

"Then we have to find a way out of here."

"I don't even know who you are or how you got on the ship. You want to explain that to me?"

"It would be too complicated for you to understand."

"I can handle complicated."

They walked down the metal corridor, stopping at the archive room.

"This is where I do most of the research." Neil said. "Anything that's been published is accessible through a shared server."

The girl went in and sat at the chair, instantly familiarizing herself with the touch screen.

"You're a fast learner." Neil said.

"Technology is the least formidable of powers."

The girl scanned hundreds of digital book covers, narrowing the search results as she went along. After a few minutes, all that appeared were books, most related to the occult.

"How do you know about all these books?"

"These books are some of the most important that exist. Most are printed throughout dimensions; many originate there."

"Dimensions? As in, alternate dimensions? Is that where you think you came from?"

"You've expanded from Earth. Not many people see the need to branch from where their dimension originated. Technology has caused you to needlessly exile yourselves."

"You'll have to explain a little further."

"Time runs differently where I came from. I was with a companion. He must've left a few minutes after I did. It'll be hours before he appears."

"Who is he?"

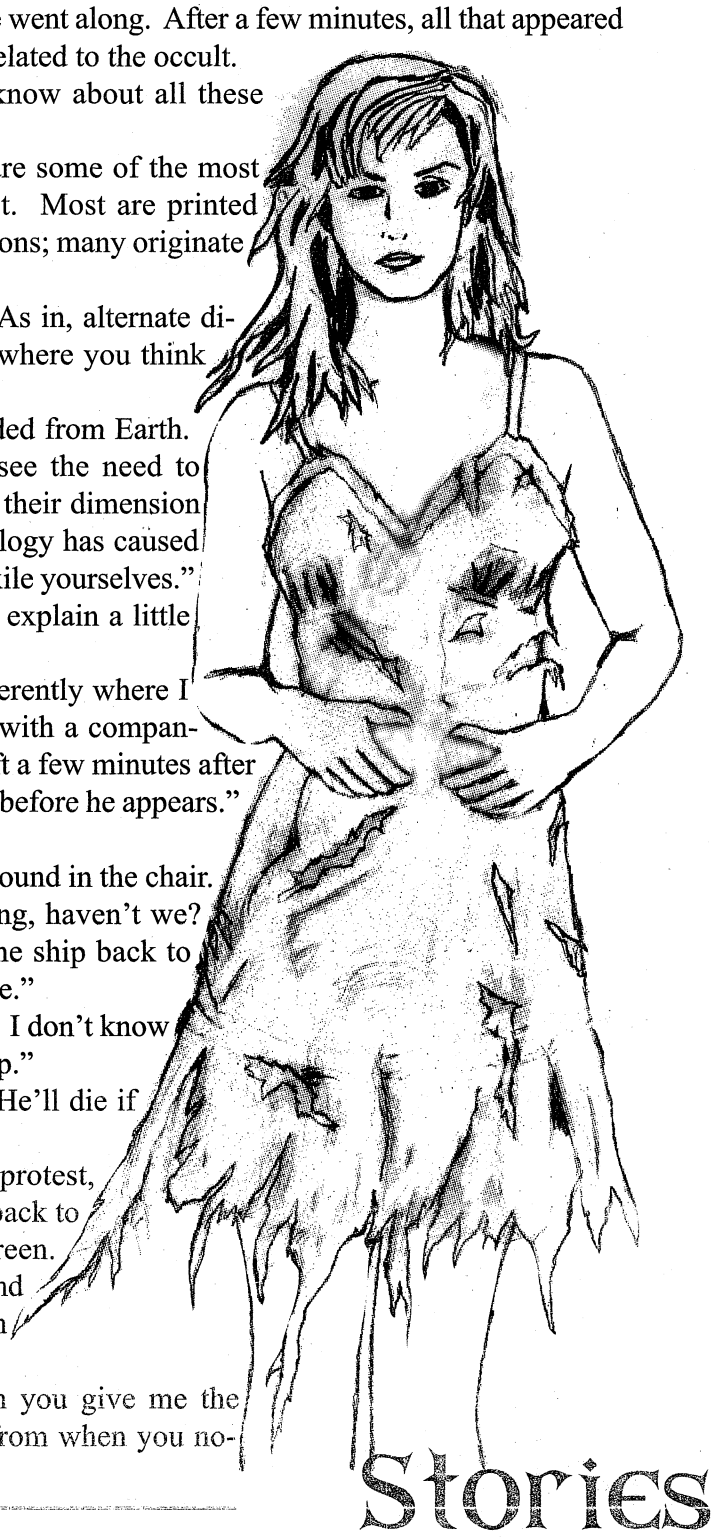
The girl spun around in the chair. "We've been moving, haven't we? You have to take the ship back to where you found me."

"I can't do that. I don't know how to pilot the ship."

"You have to. He'll die if you don't."

Neil began to protest, but the girl turned back to the computer screen. Neil shut the door and walked to the main control room.

"Computer, can you give me the exact coordinates from when you no-



Stories

Illustration by David K. Ginn

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ticed the new life form?"

There was silence for a moment, then a whirring sound. *"Yes. Coordinates saved in logfile slot number two."*

"How long would it take to position ourselves there?"

"Approximately one hour, three minutes."

"Can you autopilot?"

"Yes."

"Do it, and make a full stop once we've reached the coordinates."

"Command accepted."

Neil walked back into the archive room and found the girl reading a book on the monitor.

"What's the book about?"

"Time portals."

Neil nodded and sat across from her. "Now you're time traveling?"

The girl turned to him and relaxed in the seat. "A time portal is the only way to fix it."

"Fix what?"

"We were cast into another dimension four years ago, as punishment for trying to fight a group of spirits. In the time we spent there, we studied as much magic as we could, trying to survive but at the same time trying to find a way back to finish the fight on Earth. It was hard to believe a lot what the books said at first, even after what we'd been through. But I-" She paused. "I had a natural gift for it. I still don't know why. But the fight- what I was learning, we knew we could use it against them, if we could get back." She pointed to the monitor. "The information in this book will help us,"

"Wait, so you're saying magic is real? Like, actual magic? Witchcraft?"

"It's hard to believe, I know, and if not for whatever it is inside of me, I wouldn't believe it either."

"Even if what you're saying is true, it doesn't matter. It's all in the past. Whatever happened is ancient history; you can't change any of it."

"Yes, I know."

"Then why do this?"

"Because whatever the history is, I'm a part of it. If they're already destroyed, it's because I did it. You would know it if they were still around."

Neil nodded. "So you're going to demonstrate your abilities by opening this portal?"

"If that's the proof you need."

Neil managed a smile. "This ought to be entertaining."

The girl sat on the floor of the loading dock, holding a stack of papers. She moved her hand gently over the text and closed her eyes.

"*Usla un lo pensun a nor*"

"Is that it?" Neil asked.

"*Anon dun sur eil vuer*"

The girl sat still. Neil looked at her strangely. "Is that it?"

"Yes, that's it."

"I don't see anything."

"You won't, at lease not for a short while. A time portal breaks the fabric of the fourth aspect, existing in space but transcending that space's temporal boundaries. Usually, it will open immediately, because it will exist in all moments of time, although only visible and accessible from the two moments given. Since my target is on Earth, the portal needs time to align itself."

Neil nodded and walked back towards the control room. He turned for a moment, watched her run her hands over the paper, and then walked calmly to the armory.

He took a tranquilizer rifle from its display and loaded it with three darts. He closed the door and walked slowly back to the loading dock, carrying the tranquilizer and laser rifles.

The girl stood up as he entered. She seemed confused for a moment, then sighed. "What are you going to do with that?"

He tried to stay calm, but he knew he was sweating. "It delivers a high-powered tranquilizer that will keep you unconscious until we land somewhere."

"Why do it now?"

"You've got space dementia. I don't know who you are or how you ended up on this ship, but the only thing you're going to do is get us both killed. Our oxygen will run out again, and so will our fuel. We're in an unmanned, malfunctioning vessel in the middle of nowhere. My abdomen hurts where I was shot a week ago, and I woke up this morning to find everyone else dead. It hasn't been a bad day, and you're not making it any better."

"Please, you have to understand-"

A purple light flashed behind her. She fell forward and the light expanded to a large perimeter around a black hole. She got up and stared.

"It worked. It actually worked."

Neil lowered the gun. "What the hell did you do?"

"It's the portal. It opened."

"No, no way. This isn't real. What did you do?"

"I gave us a way home. Back to water, air, freedom- back where we belong."

Neil dropped the tranquilizer and stared into the black hole. "You're talking about Earth?"

The girl nodded, smiling softly.

Neil walked closer to the airlock, mesmerized by the portal. "I- I've never been."

The girl touched his hand gently. "Now's your chance."

"What about your friend?"

"The portal moves through relative time on both sides. It'll only last another two hours, but if your computer's coordinates are right, he'll transfer here, right next to the hole."

"This is really going to work?"

"Yes. This is our way home. Are you in?"

Suddenly, it felt as if his head was completely cleared. Maybe she was crazy, maybe she really had opened a portal. It didn't matter. Hours ago he was sure he was going to die, and then she appeared. Now he was staring down what could be his saving grace, and all he would need to do is walk through it.

"I'm in." he said. "Let's do this.

An alarm sounded.

"*System failure. Oxygen systems malfunction. Unknown cause. Running advanced diagnostic.*"

"What's that?" the girl shouted over the alarm.

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Neil's body went cold. "It's happening again."

The girl grabbed his arm. "We have to hurry!"

"*Redirecting ventilation systems.*"

The girl looked around as lights flashed on the walls and ceiling. "What does that mean?"

"It's performing a backup procedure. I'm not exactly sure, but I think it's pulling air from unused rooms and concentrating it in certain areas."

There was a loud a buzz as the door between them began to shut.

Neil jumped into the middle as hard as he could, but the halves were moving too quickly. The girl grabbed a steel box and jammed it between the doors. The box began to crush.

"You can make it." she yelled.

"I can't override the system while the ship is idle. It's a security feature."

"You're coming with me, I don't care what you have to do!"

"If I open this door, we lose the portal."

The girl shook her head and grabbed his arm again. "I can stay with you. We'll open the portal again."

"No. There's no time for that. This is your chance and you know it."

"There has to be a way."

Neil shook his head. "I think-" He paused. "I think I wasn't supposed to survive. They all died together, and I lived because of random luck. Now- I think maybe it's caught up to me."

The girl gently felt his arm. "You helped me. If you'd died, I would have too."

Neil smiled softly, his body shaking. "I guess I was put on hold, wasn't I? One last thing before I go."

He slid the laser rifle through the opening. "You might need this. I have no use for it anymore."

She grabbed the gun, then leaned her face forward to kiss him. "I'm Aimee." she said.

"Nice to meet you."

She let go of his arm and walked backwards to the portal. "Good luck."

"You too."

He pulled back as the steel box caved, spitting its sides across the room. The doors shut with a loud crash. Aimee looked at him once through the window before running through the portal.

She disappeared instantly, filling the room with a bright flash of light. He turned away from the window and looked around the warehouse, oblivious to the computer's endless figures and status updates. He grabbed the tranquilizer rifle and walked towards a stack of boxes. He pried the first one open and found three table lamps. He tried another and found an unassembled table. He looked through a few more until he found a set of couch cushions.

He set the cushions on the floor, shot himself once in the foot, and lay down quietly. He dreamt of a lake. It was the last thing he did.

Stories

Photo by Mike Glukhovsky

Stealing Water for the Wishing Tree

by J. Daniel Taylor

One morning, in a time long passed into the memories of yesterdays, I awoke to the calls of children. They were shouting to some brave soul who had trespassed upon my property, stealing water from the spigot at the back of the house below my bedroom window. The young boy was accompanied by a friend over the fence, pails en tow. The splash of water set my mind to wonder why they ventured this far through thickets of brush and over chain linked fences to steal water for a purpose most unclear. Too young to have to care for decrepitated automobiles afforded on a pittance wage whose radiator fins could no longer cool an engine suffering over usage and rot, its gaskets and piping warped and misshapen, my curiosity was piqued.

I climbed from slumber into the early morning wrapping my bed sheet around my torso and made my way towards the door to the backyard with intent of discouragement to this life of transgressions such behavior would lead. At my harsh beckoning they desisted in the manner of a doe walking into the path of a car's headlights after dusk, eyes wide with dismay and an already quick pulse increasing with anxiety.

One ran quick, leaving his bucket still filling under the spigot. The other looked upon me, his pail full, down to the running water, then back to me. He snatched the abandoned receptacle the other had left and proceeded to trip over his own feet, sending it flying in the direction of his departure.

An expletive so foul a child so young should never have passed from innocence into the knowledge of its meaning left his mouth. His defeat too much, adrenaline coursing his veins, he decided to return to the faucet still running for something consolatory if not simply to temp my wrath.

At this, with a mixture of pity and anger, I asked what the purpose to his brazen return entailed.

The Wishing Tree, he said to me, it must be saved, we children still have dreams.

Of this thing he did speak I was most intrigued. Stories I had heard, but the location so close seemed unfathomable. I inquired more upon this matter and a tale of pathos he did recant, for to receive from the Wishing Tree you must eat its seeds, and for so long have so many have attempted to gather below its limbs to fulfill their personal needs, false deities of arbordom had been felled, though just as many saplings have emerged like weeds.

The tale goes that no more than one tree exists, all the others dying off from the Wishing Disease, a blight that keeps the tree from procreating when too many trample the ground above its roots. Now, this lone survivor of which these children had discovered, whose days are short according to the chipping of bark at its base by all the climbers searching for the next seed blossom, sits atop a hill on sandy soil, slowly starving from a lack of moisture and trampled roots, just beyond the thicket behind my abode.

The children had grown on the stories of fulfillment and contentedness which came to those generations prior. The histories told of forefathers happening upon its stewards, a people less clothed and aware of techniques of propagation, or so the paler group assumed. These men of yore found the time for a new tree to come into being was too long to spare a single seed for purposes beyond their own desires. All others were harvested that didn't die, men of science did dream of their secrets unlocked, splaying unformed buds, attempting to graft severed limbs to other species which might yield a better crop, but to this day only one is left, through the woods and over the hill, behind the house in which I live.

The child continued to tell of how it sways wearily in the wind, bearing but one seed occasionally, or so they believed from the stories given to them before sleep. Since their discovery, the children sit around it by day in case the wind shakes one free.

Realizing his posse's abandonment of him, the storyteller ventured quickly away with a gait much like a gazelle upon the African savannah. As for me, I followed the young boy through the woods in my slippers and sheet, not wanting such a yarn to remain a mystery of myth, keeping a close yet discreet distance. I managed the whole way unseen and waited till hunger took its course in their bellies, sending them to dinner tables covered in the bounties the daily wages their parents made, cornucopias of processed dairy product and processed animal flesh.

I looked upon the tree, its sad limbs dangled as arms damaged by pestilence, or a loneliness of heart. It having no progeny, it could not be blamed for its tragic visage. It was then when a wind blew a gust like a sigh from a yellow red sky, the sun having crested the edge of the hills in the distance. Then stillness encapsulated that moment. From this breath fell a blossom from the height of the top of the tree's canopy. It danced to and fro as a gowned princess descending a spiral staircase. I stood with my hand outstretched, gently clasping it once gravity had taken its toll.

Staring at the flower drenched in sepia tones, I looked about to see if I was in possession of true solitude. Finding I was alone, I studied the beauty within my grasp intently. The blossom was indescribable in manners of comparability, such a thing never seen before in my life, nor since in the years hence. Its coloring too varied, shifting with each change of perspective, a structure and scent haunting the mind for archetypes and finding none. This thing which I held was truly a gift that heaven had let fall from its vault. I guarded it carefully all through the journey home, where I placed the seed into a safe place and pondered the dream it might bring to me and the justice served or denied in the decision to be made.

The tales told to me, when my age was that of those children, were of building the foundations to castles in clouds and not to eat strange seeds with the expectation of great things. And yet now I possessed the possibility of a promise unbroken, of a hope to be fulfilled. But

Stealing Water for the Wishing Tree

by J. Daniel Taylor

what is it to wish and not be selfish? The wants one has for their own lives can outweigh the needs of others when one's emotions dictate the tool of logic their mind contains. For recently I have suffered a loss, a grief incurable by time or material vice. My brother, my best friend, whose life voice has been quieted from his last breath to this day, passed away, a euphemism which does not convey the anguish the heart feels. I could ingest the seed and wish to bring him back so that we might enjoy each other's company again, if only for length of my own existence. But to this he might say, upon regaining an ability to speak, I have been selfish and wasted a true gift and chance to right a world so full of wrongs. The specter of ruin lingers over us now, as the fate of the Wishing Tree is echoed by the Earth in so many ways.

The tree has died, as I've visited its felled remains many times since that day when the children led me to it. Its demise came at the hands of those who would lack possession of its seeds, who had hoped to procure remedies as potent in other structures of the tree, but to no avail. Now only the hollowed trunk of its stump stands monument to our lack of foresight. And still I sit, meditating upon the choice I must make even if the choice is not to choose at all. The debate remains whether to sew the seed for a dream I shall never see by wishing for a return to green, or ingest it knowing that children no longer wait for the wind to pass its fingers through any tree's mane of leaves. I have learned that it cannot be sewn to grow the Wishing Tree anew, as the female which the children found lacked the counterpart to offer such a possibility – the plucking of an easy answer to their dreams, their futures forever gone because its seeds could never become trees.

After so many thoughts upon this matter have been sorted like a sieve, it has come down to a question pertinent to justice and our placement in a world so devoid of compassion for things which constantly give for our own well being. The question being: do the children to our history truly deserve to have it so easy?

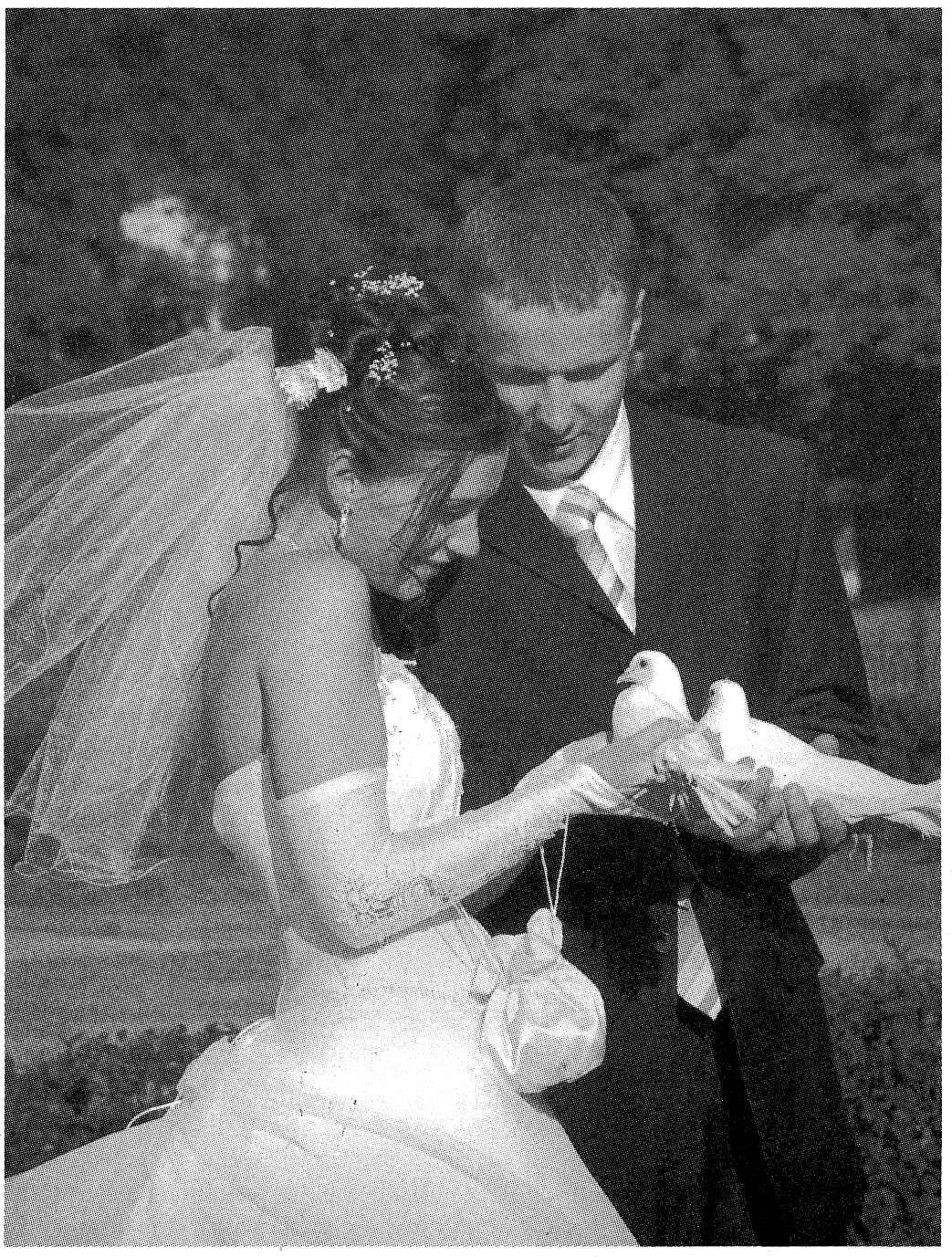
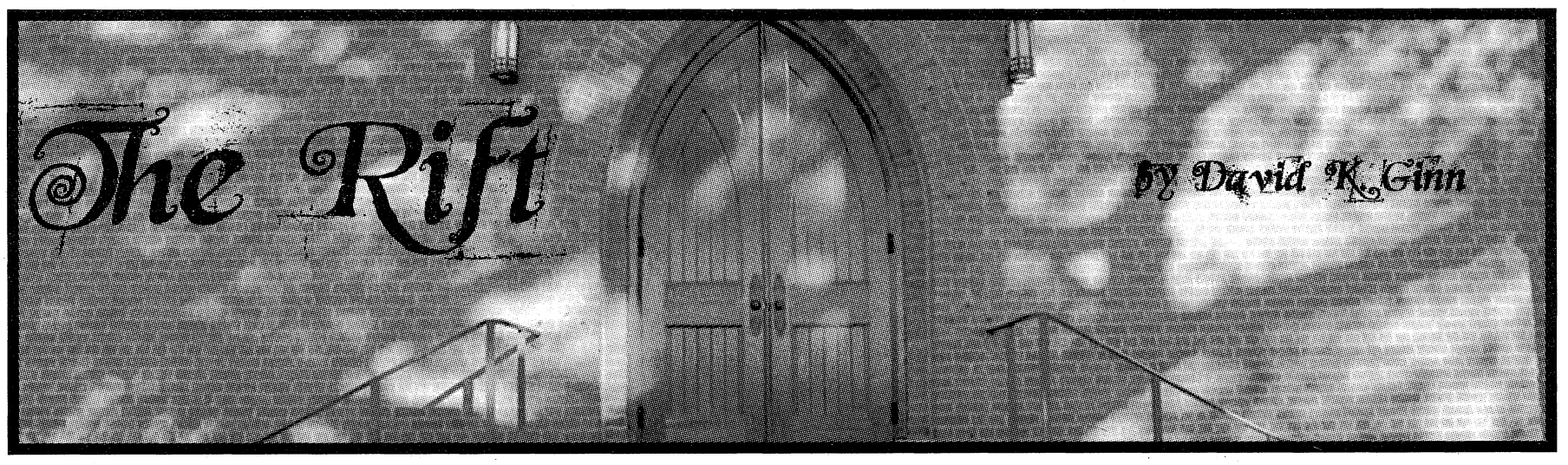


Photo by Mike Glukhovsky



The Rift

By David K. Ginn

The roar of the bus engine was strangely comforting. After a few pages of reading, James felt his eyes get heavy. He closed the book and looked around to see where the bus was.

There were still three or four miles to go, which, at the bus's speed, left plenty of room for a short nap. He shifted in his seat a little, then stopped when he saw the most beautiful person he'd ever laid eyes on.

She had shoulder-length dark hair and deep, mesmerizing blue eyes that seemed, even from a distance, like gateways to another world. Her face was small and round, and for a moment he could almost feel the soft weightless texture of her skin beneath his fingers.

He thought about getting up to talk to her, but quickly decided against it. Conspicuously, he stole another glance at her body, reconsidered his courage, then decided against it again. It appeared, though, that his deliberation had cost him; he had already walked half the distance before he realized he wasn't sitting down anymore.

He grabbed the nearest pole, briefly considered the embarrassingly stupid move of returning to his seat, and found himself once again walking towards her side of the bus. Standing in front of her, he had no more than four seconds before the situation would turn awkward. He moved a dirty newspaper from the seat next to her and sat down.

It was, despite his best efforts, still awkward for at least a minute. The time was well-spent running through a vast mental library of interesting things to say, finally yielding the profound gem of them all:

"Hi."

She looked at him quickly, only slightly startled. Clearly, it wasn't a clever secret that his reseating had been a planned catalyst for random conversation. "Hi." she responded.

"Heading to the university?"

"Yes." she said. "You?"

He couldn't tell if she was smiling, mostly because her face was cast downward, but also because he was focused on seeing her eyes again. "Yeah, I'm a student there. I work with the physics department. What about you?"

She lifted her face, a necessary move to run her hair behind her ear, and yes- she was smiling. A mental scoreboard in James's mind clicked on, and, as of the first inning, he was doing exceptionally well.

"I'm an English major." she said. "I have classes later in the day, but I like getting to campus early so I can catch up on the readings."

"What are you reading now?"

"Melville."

"Ah, the shorts or the novels?"

Her smile brightened. "A little of both."

He smiled back. "What's your favorite? Tell me it's not Moby Dick."

"Hey, I like Moby Dick, despite what people say about it."

Strike.

"Well, yeah, but-"

Strike.

"But what?" She was still smiling.

"I think it's a bit overrated, but I don't think it's bad. Really, I like his shorts better."

"Me too."

At least a single. Maybe more.

"Which is your favorite?"

She thought about it for a moment, and for the first time he noticed the red flush in her face, tightened by the smile. "I know it's what everyone says, but my favorite really is Bartleby. Are you going to say that's overrated, too?"

He was about to say no, and it would have been the honest truth, but instead what came out was the story's iconic phrase, so clever and apt for the situation he was surprised to hear himself say it: "I would prefer not to."

She laughed. "I'm Kaylie."

They walked through the third floor hallway of the Physics Building, trying hard to ignore the damp smells from the walls and ceiling.

"When are they going to fix this place up?" Kaylie asked.

"Sometime after never, or so I've heard."

"Which one of these rooms do you work in?"

He pointed to the last door on the left, set back in the most decrepit looking stretch of the hallway.

"It doesn't look like much." she said.

"It isn't."

He turned his key in the lock and pushed the door open slowly, making sure the room was empty. "I can show you some of what the people here have been working on, but we have to do it before someone comes back. Stupid rules about visitors, and such."

She followed him in, looking around the room with the expression of someone who has just entered a brand new exhibit at a museum. All around were scattered metal poles and coated wires, but set inside pens made of double rows of frayed rope were machines so home-built and naked that they were, among other things, simply beautiful.

"What are these?" she asked.

"Unfinished experiments, I think. I should know more about them, but I don't spend a lot of time in this section. I know some of them really well, though."

"Like which ones?"

James pointed to a large, cylindrical machine with seven LCD displays attached to its base. "That was an attempt to manipulate electrostatic energy in a projected point in space. The idea was: let's tell the computer to aim it at a storm, then see if we can produce more or less lightning from a safe distance away."

"Did it work?"

The Rift

by David K. Ginn

"Not that I know of."

"What else do you know about?"

He gestured to a large metal ring on the ground in one of the pens. Intertwining wires ran from the ring into a set of old-looking computers, each covered with a thin layer of dust.

"I don't know this one too well, but I know it has something to do with bending light. The tests were either a huge success or a huge failure, depending on how you look at it."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, they didn't do much, except make the light disappear. They set the parameters, turned it on, which creates a funky-looking electric wiggle thing in the air, and aimed a lamp at it. The first tests were with different kinds of light, but the only one I remember is the visible light. It shone into the ring, but the light didn't appear on the other side. It just vanished."

Kaylie smiled, and he had to fight every urge in his body that told him to grab her by the waist and pull her lips up against his. Instead, he replayed the thought over in his head. Even in his imagination, it felt real, every detail of her face as it moved closer to his, the soft, moist pressure of her lips as they slide slightly downward after the first connection-

"I'm sorry." she said.

He opened his eyes and realized she was closer to him than he'd thought. "For what?"

"I've never done that before. Well, I mean, I've you know, done that before, just not- not after I've just met the person."

He thought about replaying the moment again, searching for signs that it had, in fact, really happened, when he realized how stupid he was being. "You can do it again." he said.

And so she kissed him. For real.

There was a moment afterward, not particularly awkward but not entirely comfortable. It was an odd, gray area between self-awareness and tunnel-vision that seemed to paradoxically compromise both extremes while exploiting them to their fullest.

"So," she said, after almost a minute of silence, "the machine."

James held the lamp above his head. A few inches from him, a noodle-shaped blue light hovered above the metal ring, wiggling in and out of different frequencies. He turned the lamp on.

An energy field formed above the ring, absorbing the light.

Kaylie walked around the ring, reaching her hand out to the field but jerking it back occasionally. "How does that happen?"

"I have no idea."

"What would happen if we put something else in?"

"I've never tried it before. Then again, I don't usually do this."

Kaylie grabbed a loose stone from the floor and tossed it lightly into the field. It disappeared immediately.

James turned the lamp off.

Kaylie stared at the machine, then turned to James. "That was weird."

*****

The alarm was buzzing loudly. James tried to ignore it, but it seemed to get louder every minute he did so. He reached aimlessly for the controls and, after many failed attempts, made the buzzing stop. He closed his eyes and tried to remember the dream he had been having.

"It didn't do that yesterday." said Kaylie, sleepily moving closer to him.

"Do what?" he said, without opening his eyes.

"Get louder."

So it hadn't been in his head. "Yeah, I must have set it like that last night. I didn't know what I was doing."

She burrowed her head in his chest and giggled. "You seemed like you did."

James smiled. "Yeah, that was… that was pretty amazing."

Kaylie pulled the sheets off and stood next to the bed, hugging herself to keep warm. James turned and looked at her, watching intently as she let one breast slip from her arm's cover so she could grab her shirt. She turned to him as she pulled it over, giving him full view of her naked chest for a few seconds before the white linen flapped over and came to rest.

"Enjoying the show?" she asked.

"Do you have to ask?"

She finished getting dressed and threw his jeans at him. "Come on, we have to go if we're gonna make the bus."

As much as he wanted to lay in bed and not move, this was the day they planned to figure out what the machine really does. It had been two weeks since they'd met, and James couldn't remember a time in his life when he had felt happier to be alive.

The previous night had started with pizza delivery and a much-anticipated cinematic exchange. She had them watch *Science of Sleep*. He chose *Crocodile 2: Death Swamp*. The results of this exchange were beyond exceptional. There were two ways his movie could've bombed: one, if she considered herself above awful movies; or two, if she didn't get the irony and was genuinely frightened. Luckily for both of them, a shared appreciation of unintentional humor prevailed. *Science of Sleep* was also fantastic. They made out a lot during it. Art movies have that effect on some people.

After their DVD double feature, they made love in a few different places around his basement apartment, ending in the bedroom with fewer sheets than they needed to keep warm overnight.

He put his clothes on and re-checked the time. They'd make it to the bus if they ran.

James turned the lights off as they stepped into the storage room. They had been studying the machine somewhat infrequently since the first day, and since then all they'd been able to do was make the energy field widen slightly.

"What do your parents think of what you do with your time?" James asked.

Kaylie smiled. "You mean would they approve of you? I think they would, yes. And they're my adopted parents, by the way. Don't know if I told you that already."

"You did, and now I'm thinking you don't like them too much."

"No, it's not like that. It's just-
well, it bothers you as a kid not know-

The Rift

by David K. Ginn

ing who your real parents are. It kind of gets stuck in your mind."

"So you never found out?"

"No. It's alright, though. I've got a great family, and that's what counts, really."

He turned the machine on as Kaylie opened a pack of Magic cards and set them on and around the metal ring on the floor. She backed herself against the door and readied the lamp. James turned the last switch, causing the blue worm-like lines to form vertically. Kaylie turned the lamp on and watched the cards in the ring disappear in the energy field. James switched on a second lamp, and the field expanded, eliminating the cards around the ring. They shut everything off and stared for a while, unsure how to proceed.

"Erm- maybe let's try again tomorrow?" Kaylie asked. "It's getting kind of freaky."

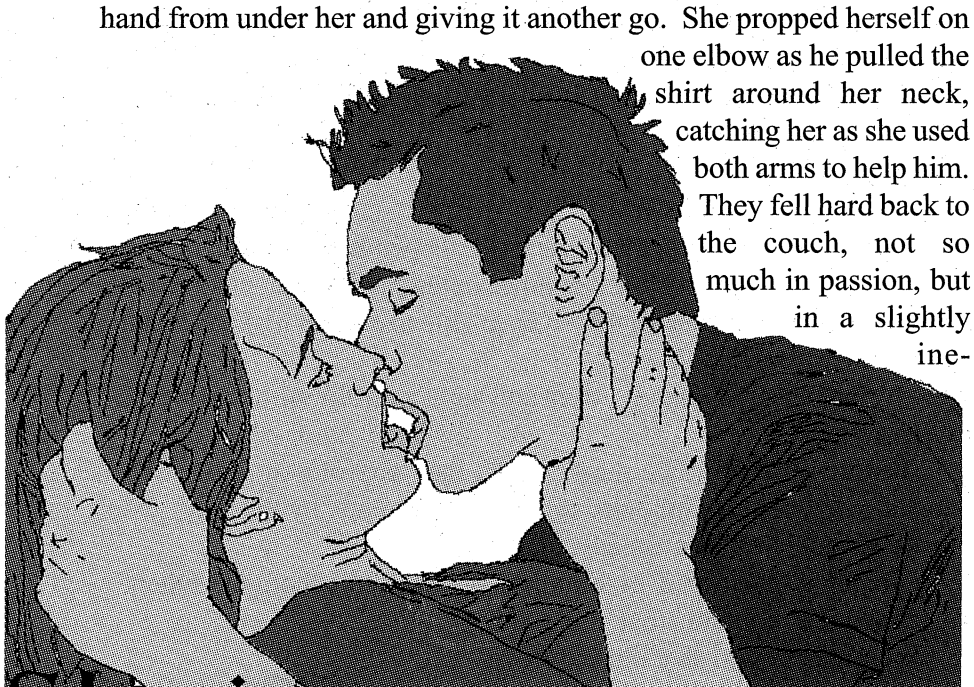
"Yeah, that's a good idea."

They started that night at McAle's, the newly-re-founded Irish pub around the corner from James' apartment. In the past four months, the building had been Pharaoh's Pyramid, The Crazy Aardvark and The Night-Light Beer Pong Extravaganza. James wasn't sure if the same owner was constantly trying to redefine the place, or if one idiot after another really thought they could make it work.

Journey was playing from the speakers. A lot of people were trying to sing along. James held Kaylie around the waist and navigated through the crowd.

After a half hour, the noise was too much for both of them. They managed their way back out and into the cold, which didn't seem so bad, as they were pleasantly buzzed. They got back to the apartment a little after midnight.

They watched the public access channel for a while, finally turning it off when the hour-long showcase of an old couple eating oatmeal reached its quarter mark. They sat lazily on the couch, not thinking about anything but glad to be next to each other. As they started to kiss, he felt his hand move along her side before he consciously told himself to do it. She grabbed onto him and they slid into the couch, laying equally as lazily facing each other. He tried to pull her shirt off with one hand, failed, and reconciled by untucking his hand from under her and giving it another go. She propped herself on one elbow as he pulled the shirt around her neck, catching her as she used both arms to help him. They fell hard back to the couch, not so much in passion, but in a slightly inebriated carelessness. She pulled his clothes off, fumbling awkwardly for his belt before she managed it.



They were both naked, buzzed and quite unaware of anything around them. They rolled onto the remote, and the television blinked back on, the old couple still working on their show-stopper. James and Kaylie didn't notice. Something briefly occurred to him, but by the time he realized it he was already inside of her, pushing slowly in as she dug her hands in his back.

They woke on the couch, heads aching slightly. The television was still on. James got up first, climbing over her and, not feeling his balance, slouching on the floor against the couch.

She ran her hand through his hair, and he could tell it was shaking as much as he was. "It's okay, you know." she said softly. "The chances are really slim that anything could happen. I mean, that was my first time, you know, without a…"

"I feel so stupid for letting things get like that. I should've been thinking right."

She looked at him severely, eyes penetrating every defense. "I love you."

He smiled a little, unsure why he suddenly felt better because of that. "I love you too. Let's grab some pancakes and get to class."

She looked up at the wall clock and frowned. "It's 12:30. I missed my first two."

"Damn, so did I."

Her frown faded and she smiled again. "You don't sound too broken up about it."

"You wouldn't be either, if you had my classes."

He tried to catch a glimpse of her as she got dressed again, but since they had less than twenty minutes to catch the next bus, he was too busy getting his own clothes on to get a good peek.

She went into the bathroom and emerged four minutes later, her face beaming brightly. "Let's go, let's go."

Five o'clock was their meeting time for what they swore would be the last attempt to figure out the machine. He opened the door as he'd done the day before and set about making the preparations. Kaylie set a small jar on the metal ring. Inside, a cricket hopped, tapping the glass as it landed.

James flipped the switches, followed by the lamps, and the cricket vanished expectedly. They turned the lamps off and thought about it for a minute.

"So it disintegrates anything, living or dead." Kaylie said.

"That's so… pointless."

Kaylie nodded in agreement.

"Do you want to try something else? See if there's a different reaction?"

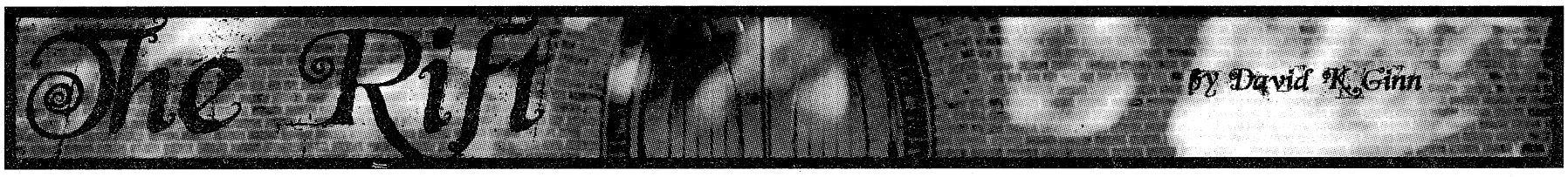
Kaylie shrugged and kissed him, nearly missing his lips in the dark. "Maybe. Let's get the lights back on, though."

She walked to the door and flipped the light switch. Something snapped in his brain. The machine was still on.

"Kaylie, no!"

Light filled the room from the overhead bulbs. James felt a sickening sensation in the pit of his stomach. He fell to his knees and vom-

Interpolation by David K. Ginn



ited on the floor.

James opened his eyes, unaware he'd passed out. Kaylie was sitting next to him, shaking his shoulder.

"I'm sorry. I-"

"It's okay, I passed out too."

James sat up and looked around the room. Everything looked the same, with the exception of the machine being gone. The other machines were still in their places. Kaylie helped him to his feet and dusted him off.

"The floor got really dirty overnight." she said. "Look at you."

There was a loud knock on the door.

James and Kaylie froze, both thinking of a way to explain the missing machine. There was a jiggling sound of keys, and the door opened. A short, thin man of about sixty walked in slowly, peering at them through narrowed eyes. He was wearing a gray jumpsuit, and his white hair was slightly disheveled.

"What are you two doing in here? This room's off limits."

"I'm allowed in here." James said. "I have a key. I work in the department."

The old man scoffed. "What department? No one works in here, excepting myself. Now get out before I call the campus security. Go back to your dorms and do whatever it is you do."

Not wanting to argue, they pushed past the old man and headed for the door. He thrust his arm out, nearly knocking them over.

"What's with these gadgets? Did you bring them in here?"

James exchanged a puzzled look with Kaylie. "Um, no."

The man scoffed again. "New shipments. I swear, no one tells me anything around here. Alright you can go."

The made for the door quickly, and just as they stepped into the hallway, the man shouted at them: "And if you want your cards back, you can come to my office!"

They stopped. James turned around, thinking of what to say, but Kaylie grabbed his arm and pointed down the hallway.

Everything was different. The walls were newer, the doors were older and the floor was a completely different tile. She pulled on him and they walked quickly outside.

"What's going on?" he said, once they were hidden on the side of the building.

"I don't want to say it."

James looked out onto the parking lot. There didn't seem to be a single car that had been made in the last ten years. "No."

Kaylie stepped onto the lawn and watched a girl wearing brown corduroys get in the passenger side of a yellow Pinto. The same song they'd heard in the bar the day before blared loudly from the car's failing speakers. Kaylie turned back to James. "I think- we might know what the machine does."

They sat in the boiler room of the Engineering building, reading the most recent newspapers. The year was 1986. Every time they tried to convince themselves it wasn't true, they ended up with the same evidence. They had traveled twenty-two years into the past, and they had no idea how to get back.

Kaylie stretched out on the floor and propped her head on James' legs. "Are we gonna sleep here for the night?"

"Isn't it kind of dirty?"

"I don't really care. It's better than going out there." They had already both agreed that seeing more than what they already had would be too much to handle.

"What about tomorrow?" he asked.

She looked at the newspaper she was holding and let it fall to the cement floor. "We'll figure it out then."

They stayed in the boiler room for three days, venturing upstairs only to steal food or break back into the storage room in hopes of finding a way back. When they woke up on the fourth day, their pain from sleeping on the cement floor was unbearable. Unfortunately, the little cash they had was worthless, since all the bills had been redesigned in 2001.

Three weeks passed. They had found a condemned room in the basement and had begun moving in chairs and old furniture from other places in the building. Kaylie has been feeling sick for three days, and they suspected it was something in the room.

*****

Another month had gone, and James had since gotten a job at a small video store. They moved into an apartment, and after almost two months of squatting in a basement, it felt like paradise.

James opened the door and looked around, happy once again to be home, where he could forget about what year it was. He threw his keys on the counter and kicked his shoes off.

"How was work?" Kaylie called, from the bedroom.

"Weird, as usual. Kind of like going outside, but for eight hours. I don't know how much longer I can take this." He walked through the living room and opened the bedroom door. "I mean, it's hard to get away from it, you know-"

He stopped and stared.

Kaylie was laying on the bed, wearing a neon pink corset and skirt. She smiled and held her arms above her head. "What's the matter? You look startled."

"Well, I- you've never really, eh, with the outfit."

"You'll have to excuse the pink. Unless you're weird and you like what the adult shops sell in this decade."

He climbed on top of her and she kissed him immediately, pulling his clothes off wildly. They'd been intimate since the time travel, but not like they had been before. Feeling a surge of excitement and suddenly remembering what it had been like the last night before the incident, he attacked her neck, kissing it and biting without realizing what he was doing. He felt along under the corset, trapping his hand between the leather and her soft, warm skin. She jumped.

"Are you okay?"

She grabbed him. "No."

"What's the matter?"

She pressed his hand harder against her stomach. "Do you feel that?"

"Feel what?"

The Rift

by David K. Ginn

She took a deep breath. "I think I'm pregnant."

*****

The doctor walked into the waiting room, pulling his latex gloves off and throwing them in a trash bin. James stood up quickly, clenching his fists in frustration.

"Is she okay? I have to know."

The doctor nodded solemnly. "Yes, she's fine."

"What's the problem? Please, tell me."

"It's nothing bad. It's a girl. She's in perfect condition, and you'll be ready to take her home tomorrow."

"That's good news."

The doctor nodded again. "Yes, but I need to know something: why didn't you go to a hospital?"

"I told you, it was the insurance-"

"Are you and the baby's mother in trouble? Understand, when it comes to the welfare of the child, I find myself deeply concerned."

"We're not in any trouble. I swear it. I've just had problems with finances, lack of credit, identity theft-"

"What do you mean by identity theft?"

James sighed. "You'll find out."

The doctor looked at him quizzically. "Bring her back in three weeks for a check-up."

*****

James sat on the couch with his arm around Kaylie and the baby sleeping between them. An episode of *Happy Days* was on, and as he watched the Fonze hit a jukebox yet again, he had a moment of realization.

He was watching the show as if he hadn't already seen it. In fact, he'd been doing everything lately as if it hadn't already happened twenty-two years ago. Something gripped at his chest, a horrible, unavoidable fear: he was getting used to living in 1986. He turned to Kaylie, maybe in hopes that she was realizing the same thing at the moment, but she was holding the baby with a warm smile on her face.

"We have to get out of here." he said.

Kaylie shifted uncomfortably. "And go where?"

"Back home. Our real home."

Kaylie sighed dreamily. "Yeah, the future."

"Don't call it that. It's the present. Right now, we're in the past, and for the first time I'm realizing just how much we don't belong."

"We're a family now. I think that's a sign we belong."

James turned the television off. "See, that's just it. We've brought out child into this world. Who knows what we're doing to screw up history? This isn't our place."

"How do you know she wasn't supposed to be brought into this world?"

James looked at her, and for a second something occurred to him. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but something important had just happened. He stared at her for a while, trying to recall what it was. Then, another thought hit him, this time as clear as day.

"Sweetheart?"

"Yes?"

"I know how to get home."

*****

James and Kaylie stood outside the storage room door, peering in through the tiny glass window. Inside, the room was empty except for a small jaw on the floor with a beetle inside.

Kaylie had to employ every method she knew to keep the baby from crying. They'd been standing there for six hours. Then it happened. The room lit up, and the jar disappeared with a flash of white light.

"Yes!" James yelled, hugging Kaylie so tightly she thought he might hurt the baby. "Did you see it?"

Kaylie nodded silently, too shocked to speak. James pulled her to the end of the hall, where there were a set of lights switches.

"The machine has an automatic shut-off; it's a safety feature. After an hour or so of being on, it powers down. There's a master switch in the basement that turns the whole building off, used on the weekends to conserve energy. On Monday mornings, they flip the switch back on, and everything else that was switched on comes to life."

"You mean-?"

"Yes! There's an hour window, and I believe it could be our way home. Think about it: whatever's on either side transfers to the other. It's perfect."

"What about the other stuff that's gone through?"

James shook his head. "Remember the deck of cards? It went through the day before, and the janitor found it the day before. The machine opens a doorway exactly twenty-two years into the past, from whatever moment it's used. We've been missing for over nine months. Our families, our friends, they're probably worried out of their minds."

"So we drop everything now and run through?"

"No. We wait a week. Then we go."

*****

They lay together on the bed, James stroking her hair as he went over things in his mind. He looked at her body, admiring how beautiful she was in the same way he had when he had first met her. Then the thought worked its way back into his mind, the thought he couldn't quite comprehend but somehow knew he needed to. Not knowing how to help it along, he said the first thing that came to him.

"Is the 17th your actual birthday?"

Kaylie stirred. "What do you mean?"

"How did they know when your birthday was, at the orphanage? They had to guess, right?"

"I don't remember. Do you remember your own birth?"

"I was just thinking, you're alive now. You were born two weeks ago. We could actually go and see you if we wanted. Maybe meet

The Rift

by David K. Ginn

your birthparents. Find out the exact date. Kaylie, if you think about it, this is what you've waited your whole life for. Now you actually have a chance to know who your parents are, something a lot of people like you can't do."

Kaylie sighed and cuddled closer to him. "You should get some sleep."

"How can this not excite you? I don't get it."

Kaylie shifted, then relaxed and drew a heavy breath. "You haven't figured it out yet, then."

"Figured what out?"

"I've met my birthparents already. I've known them for a while."

James stared at her, mouth slightly open. "But- what? How?"

"It's us, James. I gave birth to her… to me."

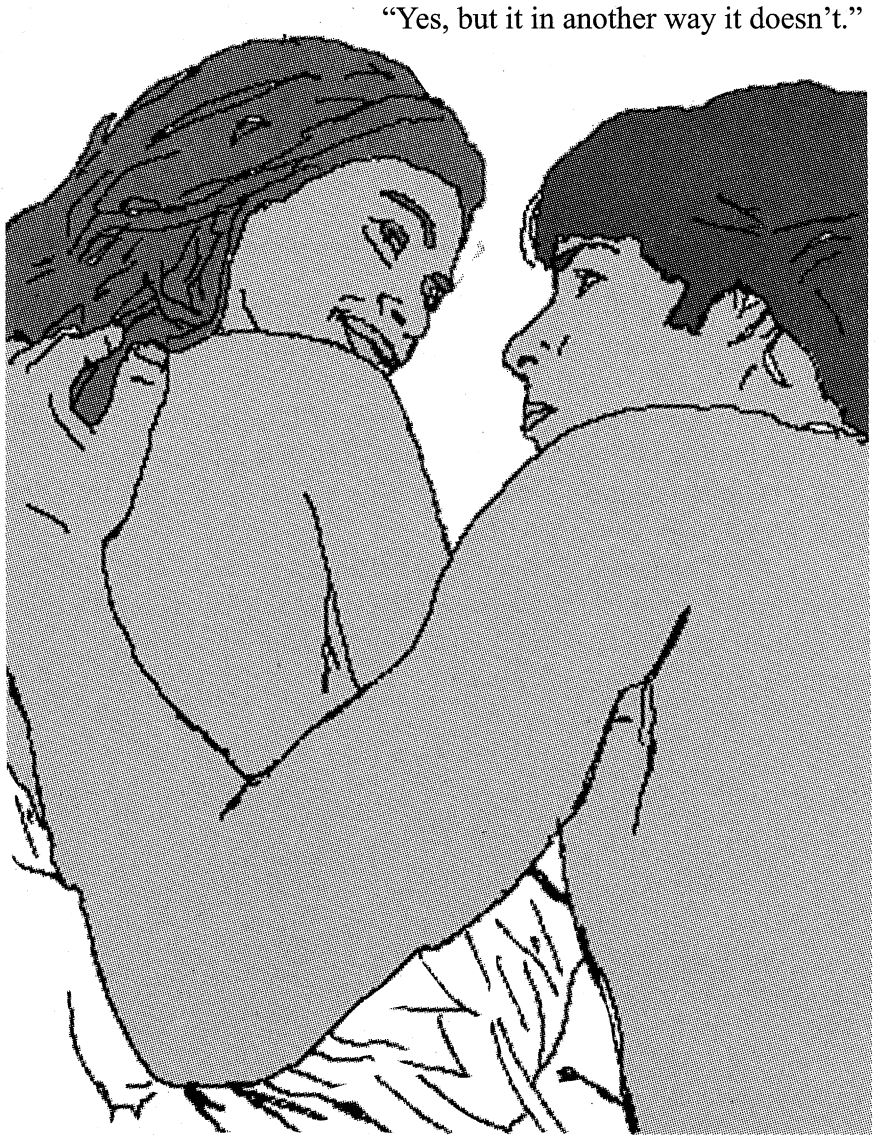
"No." James said quickly. "That's completely insane." Yet as he said this, he began to understand that what she had said was the very notion that had been biting at him for the past week.

"I didn't want to believe it, until you found our way home. That's when I realized it was true. We traveled here the very day she was conceived. Is it a coincidence that we ended up exactly nine months before I was born? We traveled past her entire lifetime, so that from the first day of her conception she lived here, now, in this year. It wasn't a coincidence, James. We were brought here to give birth to her… to give birth to me."

"This isn't happening. Things like this can't happen. It doesn't make logical sense."

"You know it does." Kaylie said softly.

"Yes, but it in another way it doesn't."



"Like which came first, the chicken or the egg?"

"Exactly! If this is all true, how were you ever alive to begin with?"

Kaylie shrugged. "All I know is that it's always been us. You were right, this is the past. This has all happened before. The accident, our arrival here, our ba- me. It happened twenty-two years ago, and now we get to live it first-hand."

"But what happens next?"

"You know that one, too."

James shook his head. "No way. I don't care what you say about history or destiny, we're not giving our baby up."

"If it were even possible for us not to, I would cease to exist. Both of me. We have to do it."

*****

James tucked the baby in her blanket and kissed her forehead softly. Kaylie crouched next to him and pet the baby's bare temple.

"Goodbye." she said. "Take good care of yourself. For both our sakes."

James rang the doorbell and they walked across the street, watching as a young nun opened the door and slowly lifted the baby's basket. After making sure the baby was alright, she looked on the basket's side, where KAYLIE was written in custom printing.

"Come on." Kaylie said, running her hands over James' shoulder. "You were right. We don't belong here."

*****

The roar of the bus engine was strangely soothing. After a few pages of reading, James was having trouble keeping his eyes open. He closed the book and looked on his lap; she'd lasted even less, her copy of Melville's collected works tucked under her forearm as she slept.

There were still three or four miles to go, which, at the bus' speed, meant there was plenty of time to doze off. Instead, he watched her, still the most beautiful person he'd ever seen.

Her hair was a bit longer, her eyes were closed, but her skin felt as soft as he'd imagined it a year ago.

"Do you think we'll have that again?" he whispered. "You, me and the baby laying between us?"

"Not for a while." she whispered back. "But yes."

"I wish they knew. When they look at us, I wish they'd know that we had our own family."

"When it happens again, they'll know."

He closed his eyes, hoping the driver would wake them up when the stop came.

Interpolation by David K. Ginn

Beatnik Algebra

by Jonathon Singer

I was sitting in front of my computer, reviewing the day's photographs. I had taken the day off work so that I could go to the peace rally. But all of the pictures sucked, so all I really did was waste money.

I spent ten dollars on a blue t-shirt. I figured that the rally's organizers needed the donation. Then I spent five more dollars on a vegan corn dog. I'm really getting sick of this beatnik shit.

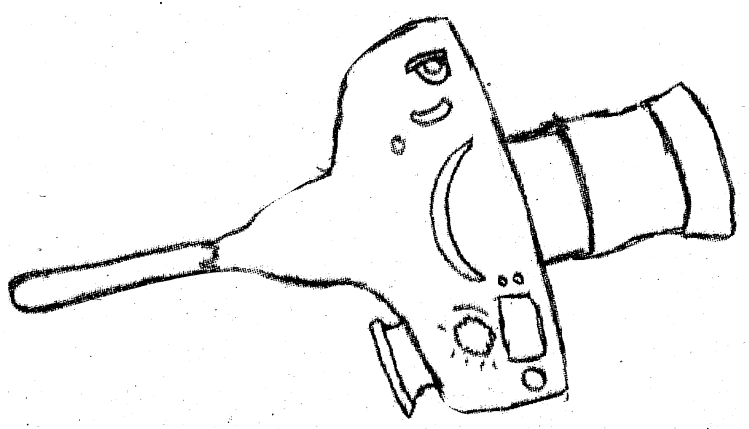
I had just dropped out of college but money wasn't really a problem. I landed a clutch job at the local food co-op, stocking shelves full of organic lemonade and local spinach. I sold my car and bought a Vespa Scooter for long trips. Other than that I just rode my bicycle. I know that the math doesn't really add up, but somewhere in there digital photography became a hobby of mine.

I started by taking pictures of the kikes in my fraternity. I wasn't feeling very spiritual at the time. Then I photographed my friend's punk band, The School Lunch Pogrom. I don't know when I became a war correspondent.

The rally, like the war itself, seemed rather pointless. I tried to listen to the cries, but couldn't. There were too many artists but not enough scientists. My camera was one of them.

I did get one good picture of Molly. She was hiding her face behind a black bandana as to not be seen on CSPAN. Her lovely green eyes were staring right back at me.

I considered selling the picture to the newspaper, or maybe NPR. But instead I deleted it. God bless the digital age, and Godspeed Molly.



CRUISERWEIGHT

BY JONATHON SINGER

He was sitting in front of the television with a bowl of fruit loops, watching Saturday morning wrestling on Channel 2. He called it 'rasslin.

Like clockwork, he had woken up at 9:50 as to not miss the first match at ten, some beer drinker who quotes himself from bible verses versus some retarded potter.

But he was most excited for the main event, when Benjamin Herzl would face off against The Eurocentrist.

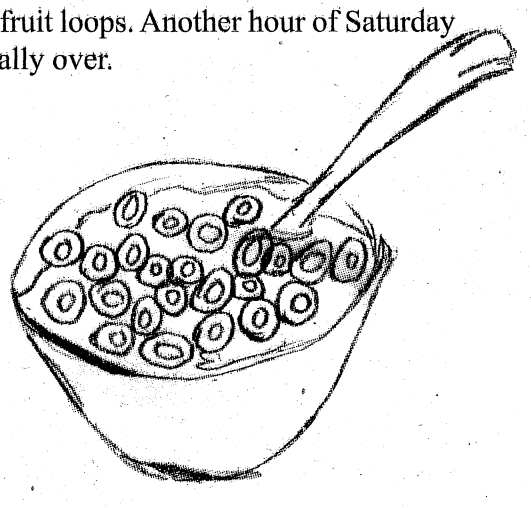
Last week, the professor was giving the fans a lecture on Mādhava of Sangamagrama, and his contributions to the development of the calculus. The Eurocentrist came on with a steel chair and busted the professor in the head. This week, The Eurocentrist would face off against Mossad agent Benjamin Herzl.

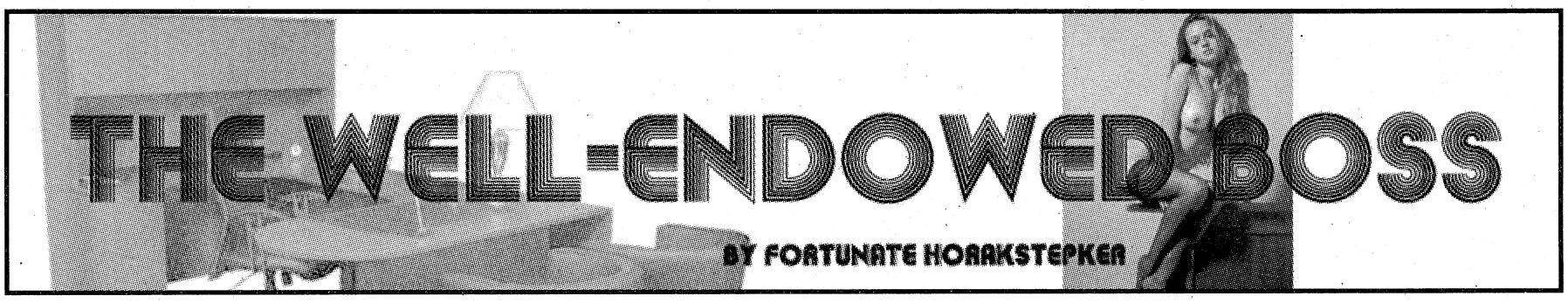
She was standing in the doorway, still in her underwear. She usually wore next to nothing whenever she slept over. She couldn't figure out why anymore.

"He still eats Fruit Loops," she thought to herself, as he gazed into the television, unaware of her presence. She thought of saying something along the lines of "I'm pregnant". but she knew even an anecdote like that wouldn't work

The bell rang as Herzl and The Eurocentrist squared off against each other. She couldn't figure out what she saw in these guys. "He's only a cruiserweight, but he's got the technical skills to fight with the powerhouses," he said, referring to Herzl. She was still wondering why a wrestler billed as the great great grandson of Theodor Herzl would be fighting on a Saturday. Maybe he saw him as a role model. He was only 5'5" and weighed 125 pounds. She had always had a thing for skinny boys with glasses.

Herzl pinned the Eurocentrist with a one, two, three as the clock conveniently struck 11. She walked over to the couch to sit next to him. He offered her a bowl of fruit loops. Another hour of Saturday morning 'rasslin was finally over.





I really enjoyed today's porn. It was a new download, which is always doubly exciting to watch.

The clip wasn't a typical sex scene with a girl sitting on a couch expecting to have sex with some random guy holding a camera. It was one of those scenario-based pornos - this time, office sex with the hot boss. The scenarios are a lot more fun, just because it's easier to imagine the same thing happening to you. It's more of a typical situation, despite the fact that there's only a 0.0001% chance that your boss will happen to be a hot, well-endowed, and female nymphomaniac.

The scene starts out pretty slowly, and we're shown a shot of the girl. I was looking to relieve my sexual tension, so some premature stroking was already in progress, but when I saw the girl, I realized

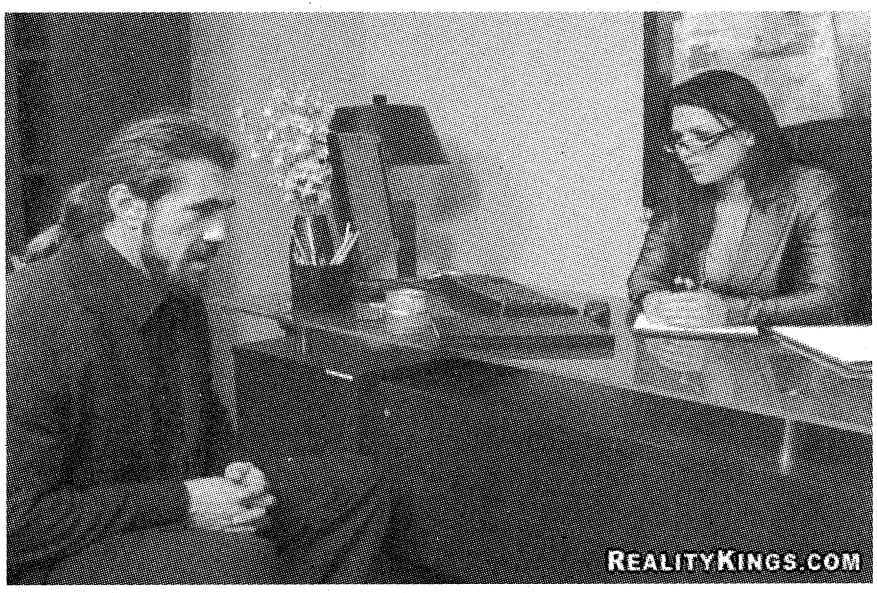
this would be one of those times when I would probably be satisfied before I even witnessed any fellatio. To my surprise, I didn't even have to see past lingerie.

I was immediately taken with the girl. Perfect lips (Not too thin or full, though perhaps a bit wide. I'm fairly strange considering I don't think Jolie's lips are as sexy as everyone else does,) pretty face, long hair, smooth skin, and, unlike most females in porn, sensible makeup =). She had large breasts, with, while revealing, a non-too-flattering suit jacket. It frustrated me several times. I think it just broke the illusion of reality. You can have a revealing top without having to make it seem like some cheap hooker's.

I usually prefer breasts that are large enough to grab, but aren't big enough to knock a guy out if he looks at them the wrong way. It's more rare for large boobs to be nice-looking, and are usually strange-looking due to the likely surgery. This girl's boobs fell into the second category (D, or perhaps double D?), but I didn't mind. It was because her bosom actually fit her body type in harmony, and I had little patience in terms of seeing them.

Not wanting my housemates to be privy of what I watch, I turned down the volume just enough for me to hear the occasional gasps and moans. Unfortunately, in this clip the introduction is rather lengthy (almost 5 minutes with effectively no touching!) and the girl is so hot that I could've been finished before I even saw the guy if I wanted to.

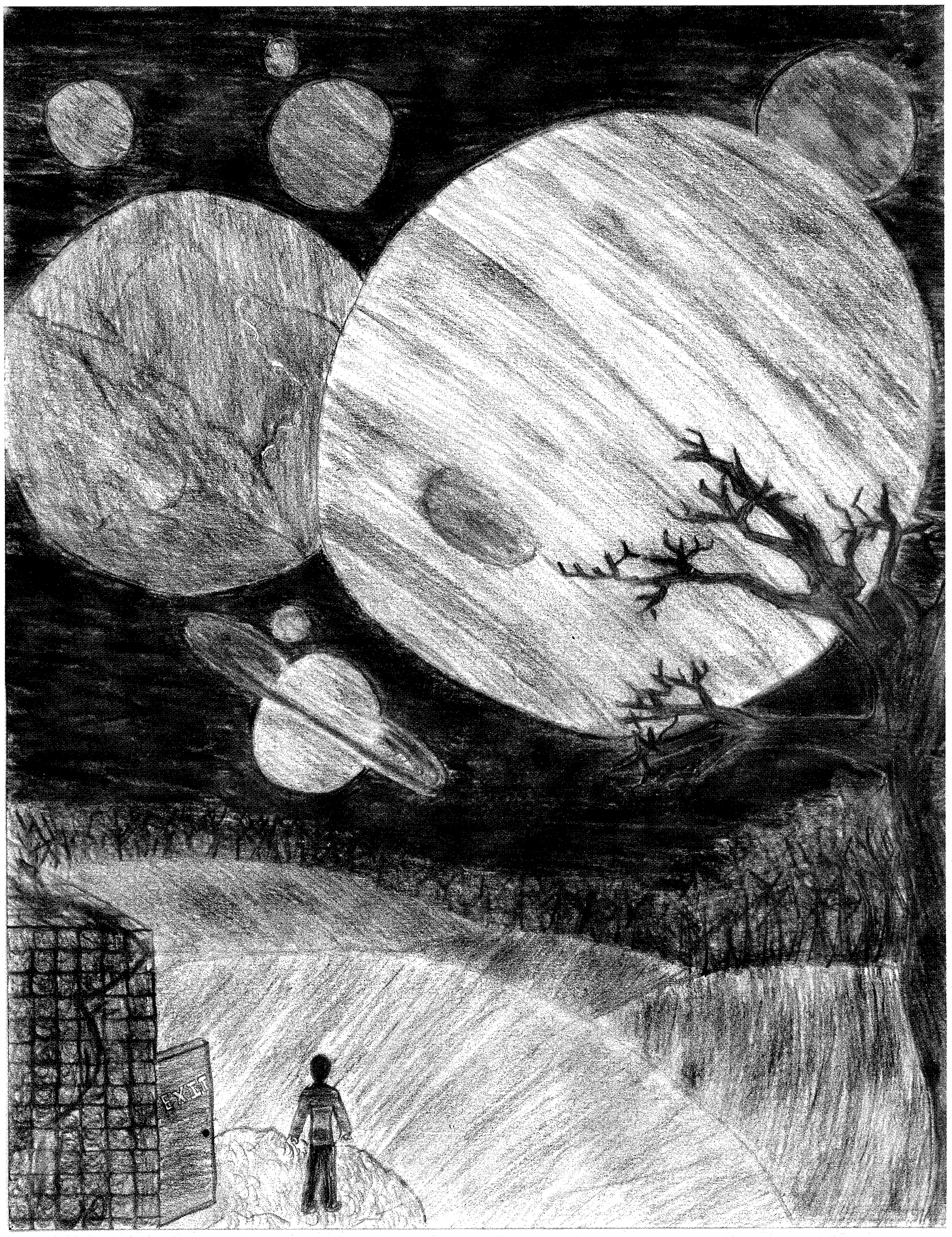
Ugh, then the guy walked in. Not sure how they get grizzly bears to have sex with women.



But I guess it doesn't really matter to me, though once again the reality was a bit ruined since it was hard to see why she would be interested. The next few minutes were excruciating. She was criticizing him for something (probably for the hair or something), but I couldn't hear due to the low volume. It lasted far too long before she actually started coming on to him, which is when we got a look at her bottom.

I should mention that I didn't fast-forward because I was waiting for the process of baring her skin. In my opinion, that part is the most arousing in any sex scene. The unfortunate detail being is that it's skipped or rushed in most porn, and is entirely mutilated in most porn.

Her ass was as luring as the rest of her. Her breasts, in her green bra, overcame my expectations when the jacket came off, and by the time she leaned and rubbed against him with her back, while still in her lingerie, I was done.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