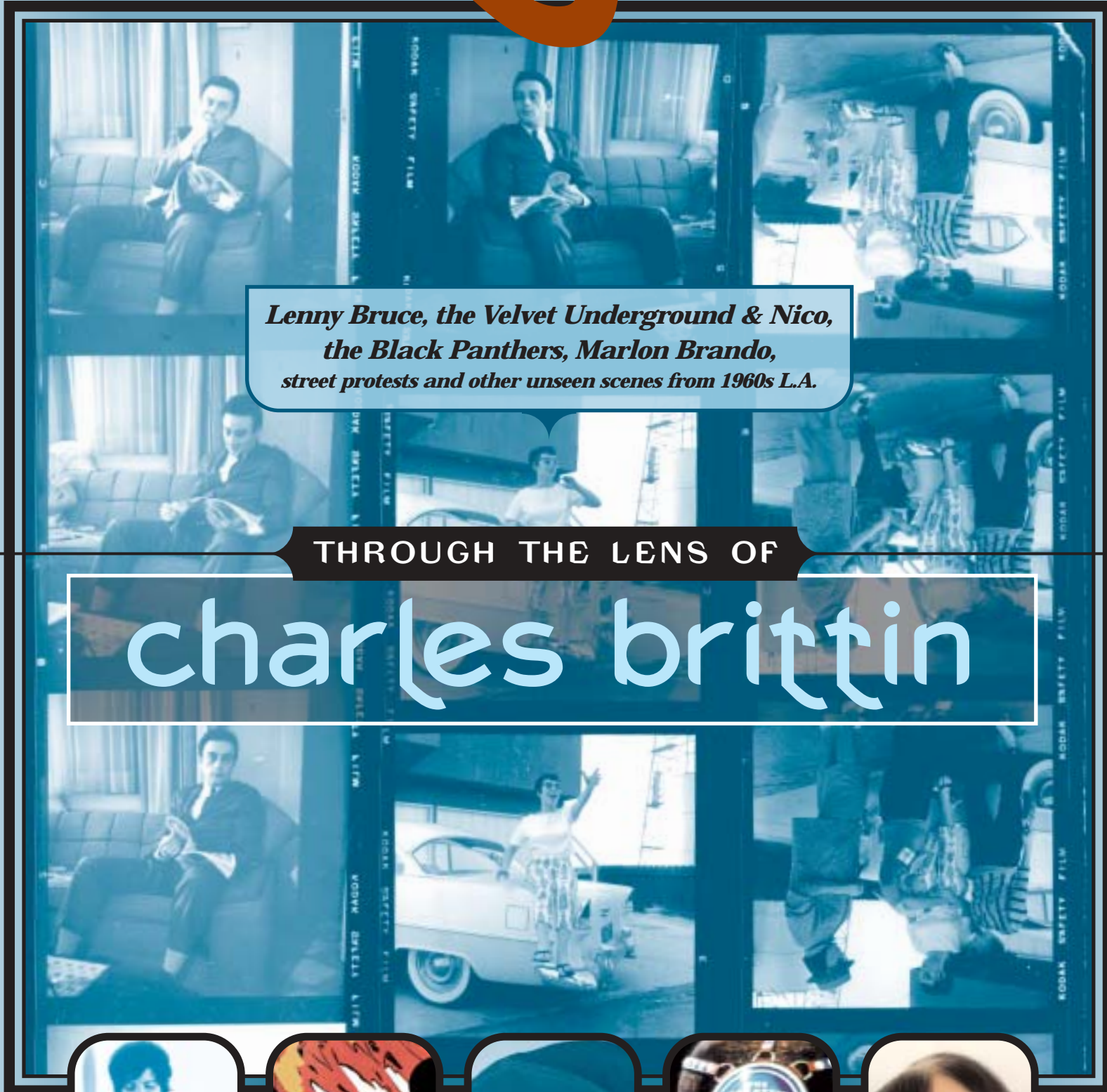


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arthur



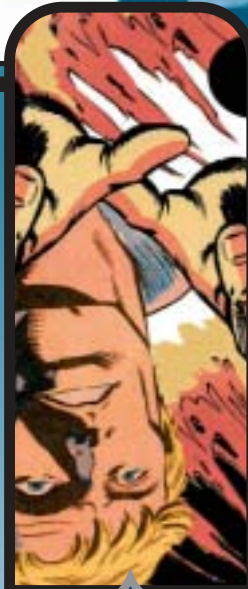
Lenny Bruce, the Velvet Underground & Nico, the Black Panthers, Marlon Brando, street protests and other unseen scenes from 1960s L.A.

THROUGH THE LENS OF

charles brittin



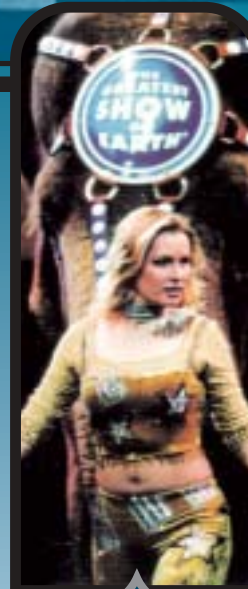
GABE SORIA
MEETS
FREAKED
FOLKNIK
DEVENDRA
BANHART



STEVE
AYLETT
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JEFF LINT



T-MODEL
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BIG TOP
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table of contents

5

ASK T-MODEL FORD

Depressed? Hair falling out at age 23? Having sex with your cousin? "I know all about that stuff!" says Arthur's new advice columnist, 78-year-old bluesperson T-MODEL FORD.

7

...AND THEN I JOINED THE CIRCUS

Self-described desk-bound journalist SUE CARPENTER finds out firsthand how women are transforming the 21st-century circus. Ringling Sisters, anyone? With photographs by LAUREN KLAIN.

9

JEFF LINT, THE BURST SOFA OF PULP

Britwit-novelist STEVE AYLETT revisits the legend of pulp fictionist/rogue maniac' Jeff Lint, author of *One Less Bastard* and creator of *The Caterer*.

11

"THE WHOLE PLANET IS THE MUSEUM!"

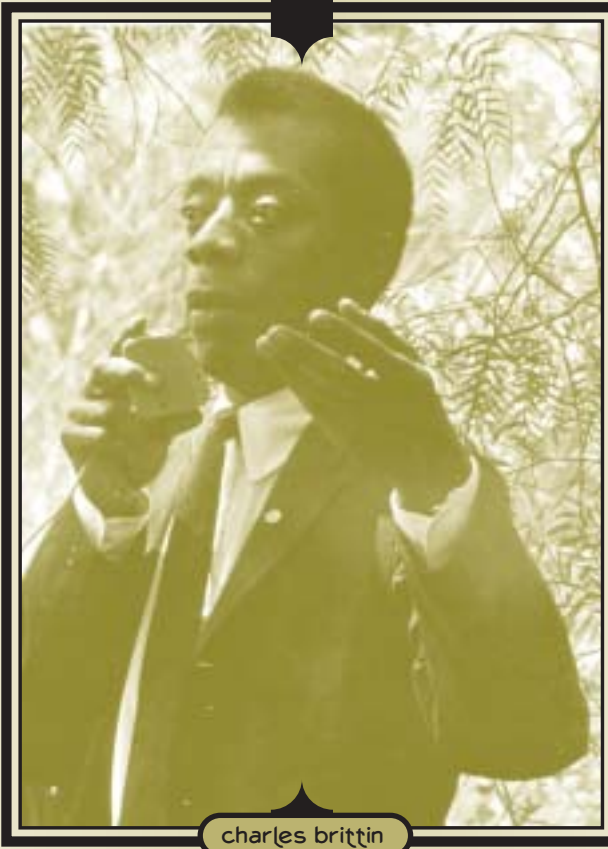
Language as incantation, the art of the cut-up, larval culture, neural re-wiring and what does it feel like to live in a post-authorship world: all in a Sunday afternoon's teatime with visionary artist-provocateur-human GENESIS P-ORRIDGE and hotshit media theorist DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF. Photos by SHAWN MORTENSEN.

16

LIKE HONEY TO THE FLIES He plays guitar and he writes/sings songs like you've never heard. He's also 21 and has got a certain elfish charm. Ladies and germs, DEVENDRA BANHART, as witnessed by scribe GABE SORIA and shutterbug SHAWN MORTENSEN.

ARTHUR 2 | ELECTRIC BOOGALOO | JANUARY 2003

James Baldwin, at a fund raiser in a Pasadena home for the congress of racial equality, 1964.



charles brittin

"Baldwin was on a national tour for CORE, and he spoke at eight or ten events at churches and so forth when he passed through L.A. He had a moody white boyfriend tagging along who was always drunk, and they hardly acknowledged each other at that Pasadena garden party. Baldwin was an enormously moving speaker; and all the white liberals and Hollywood people would turn out when he came to town. He was aware that he was the hip, token black writer to those people, but he accepted it because he knew that's how you raise money, and that you lend your name and take advantage where you can on behalf of important causes."

22

THROUGH THE LENS OF CHARLES BRITTIN

The West Coast premiere of the Velvet Underground and the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, in 1967? Lenny Bruce and Anita O'Day waiting to score? James Baldwin, Marlon Brando, the Black Panther Party and other good-souled political activists doing what needed to be done? CHARLES BRITTIN was there, and these are his never-before-published photographs, as curated by KRISTINE MCKENNA.

32

DIVINE, MARVELOUS

In an exclusive excerpt from his new autobiography, legendary Brazilian musician CAETANO VELOSO takes us to the political, cultural and hallucinogenic frontlines of authoritarian Brazil, 1968. It's all here: tanks, ayahuasca, street protests, witchcraft cults, and of course, Veloso's fellow Tropicalistas, the musicians Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa and Os Mutantes.

43

BULL TONGUE

Byron Coley & Thurston Moore sort the pepper from the bugpoop in underground recordings, performance, poetry and text.

54

THE TURNTABLES MIGHT WOBBLE, BUT THEY WON'T FALL DOWN

Peter 'Piper' Relic remembers Jam Master Jay.

THROUGHOUT THE MAGAZINE COMICS

by Kevin Huizenga, Jordan Crane, Anders Nilusen and James Kolchaka as well as a drawing by Sammy Harkham.

arthur

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i'm just sayin'

Letter to the Editor

Re: Carducci on crud culture ("Life Against Dementia," October, 2002)

Personally (and this will sound Marxist) I've come to see American pop culture as a smoke-screen, a modern "bread and circuses" used to plaster over the cracks in a country that is quickly beginning to resemble Brazil socially and economically. Monopolization of the media and entertainment industries (and the possible "synergy" between them) is why the mainstream mass culture stinks; everything is designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator so that it can be sold here and elsewhere with as few changes as possible. In short, the moneymen (always there) have finally won, and the real artists have gone independent. Which means most people will never hear, read or see them.

But enough of me, let us move on to Mr. Carducci. Yes, everybody is overeducated, but it has become de rigeur for the majority of young Americans to spend at least two semesters at a community college before dropping out to form a band, start sniffing glue, get the high school sweetheart pregnant, etc. In 1940, a majority of Americans had less than a high school education (usually they dropped out after the seventh grade, especially in the farming states). Therefore college is the high school of today, due to the fact that we are an advanced nation and the affects of the GI Bill, as you noted. It could be worse, Mr. Carducci; in France brilliant students go to the Sorbonne for free and wind up as taxicab drivers. On the baby boom, Stalin, and intellectuals: All of this 3-0 to 40-year-old stuff will pass away when they do, and it hangs around because boomers have major buying power.

"Postwar academic rebels" did not turn away from Stalin after one look; some were against Koba from the git go (Trotskyists, Noam Chomsky, William F. Buckley); others



photograph of arthur h.q. by john coulthart

turned away due to their dealings with the Party (arch nutcase Arthur Koestler comes to mind), but most dropped all affiliations with Marxism-Leninism due to Senator McCarthy and the House UnAmerican Activities Committee which had been after commies, Nazi spy rings, and people they just didn't like since the 1930s and would not stop until Abbie Hoffman gave them a hard time. You can blame Mead and Kinsey, I blame the Cold War, the zombie nightmare that is suburbia, and a throwaway society that produced a throwaway culture.

Finally, I don't think a shift in the format of how media is delivered will make the product better. For example look at cable TV; we still have ad breaks even though we are paying for it, and most of what runs on cable could be running on broadcast. I'm beginning to think that Jerry Mander was right about the boob tube.

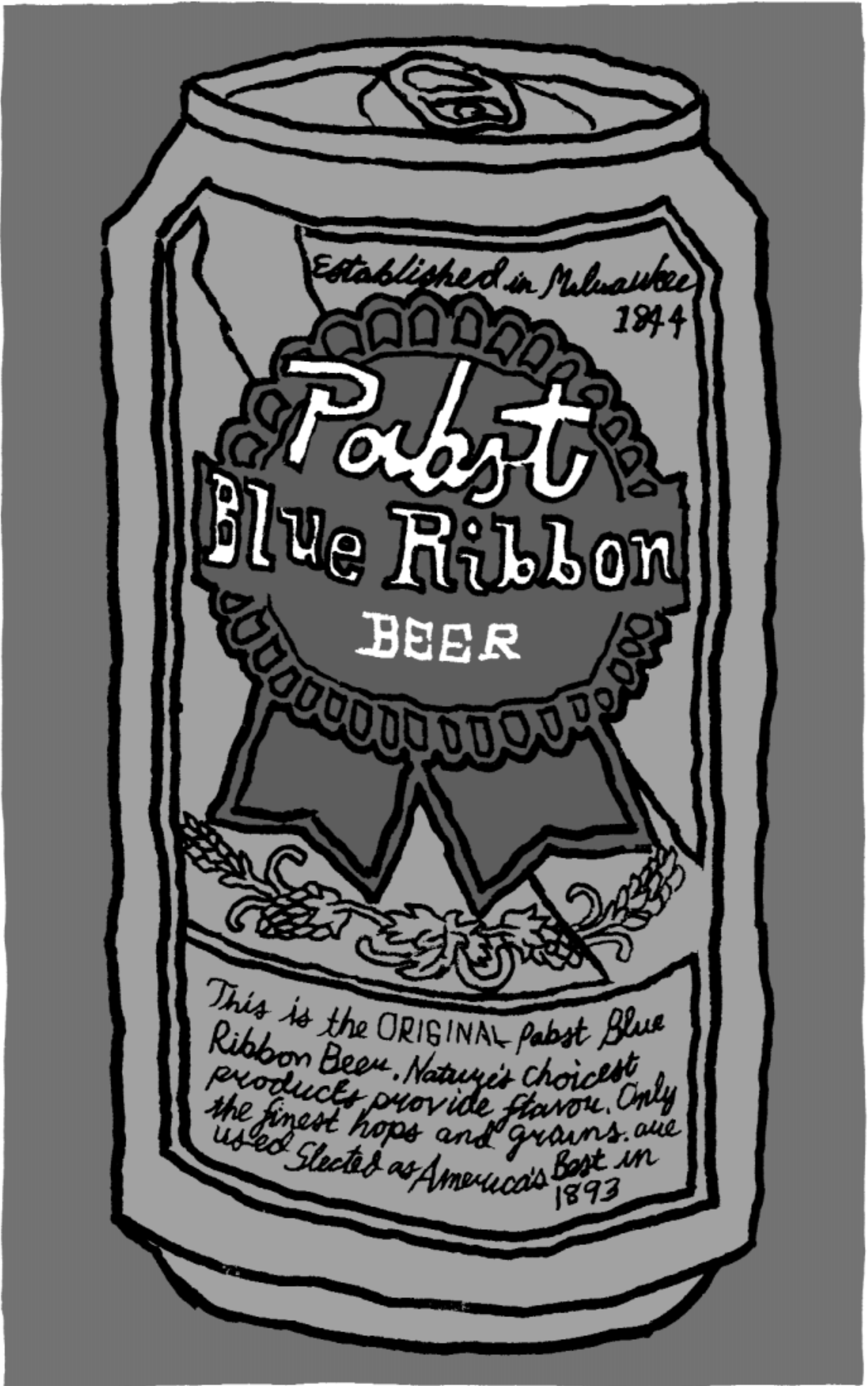
Keep on Producing,
Jake Christie, non college graduate
Spring Valley, CA

Send a letter of comment to ARTHUR at "I'm Just Saying," 3408 Appleton St., Los Angeles, CA 90039 or via email to editorial@arthurmag.com

ARTHUR reserves the right to edit letters of comment for clarity.

Correction

The photo of Eddie Dean in "Ice Cream for Crow" (October, 2002) was in fact by David Ellis. Arthur regrets the error.



ask

t-model ford

[Note: ARTHUR has traded our former advice columnist, Neil Hamburger, to another magazine for a comedian to be named later.]

This issue's advice columnist is Fat Possum recording artist T-Model Ford, the self-styled "Boss of the Blues" from Greenville, Mississippi.

"I know a whole lot," he says. "What I tell you, I ain't gonna tell you nothin' wrong. If I can't please you, I ain't gonna hate you. I'm gonna make you feel all happy. You WILL get happy. If you shake my tree, I'm gonna shake your orchard. That's the truth. I'm hangin' like a apple on a tree. That's why I ain't fell. Cuz I'm HANGIN'!"

Q: I'm 18, my boyfriend is 19. We've been together a year. We see each other on weekends. My boyfriend is so loving, but I just lie there. We've tried going out to dinner, massages, lots of kissing. Nothing works. I like having a cuddle, but I don't want to have sex with my boyfriend. What should I do?

A: Uh oh. Well, it's like this: you know, you go out, you kiss, and you hug? Well now, that don't get it. When you kiss, that's some dessert to you. If he ain't interested in, he'll ask what else to do. He ain't interested in what she want to do. But now, if he is interested in it, and she ain't interested in it, she can't change him. If he in it and sexy, he already ready, he waiting on her to tempt to do! If she don't want to, he can forget her, try to find him somebody else that wants sex.

He gonna leave her! Age ain't got nothin' to do with it. I looked at bugs and ants. They do it! You take a hog, when she lay a pig, and three days after she lay a pig, the little male pig tryin' to ride some-thing'. That's what sex is! Sex is ruler of the world. That's for old—and the young. If you've got an old woman and she ain't sexy, you ain't got nothin'! You got an old man, and he ain't sexy, you ain't got nothin'! If he don't feel on you, don't rub on it, he might as well be DEAD. You take an old woman, you feel her, she close her legs up, don't let you feel what's down there, you LEAVE her. She ain't sexy! I'm an old man, myself. I'm 80 years old, I mean, uh, 78 years old now, and right now, I'm sexier than a young man. You hear me? I'm sexier than a youngun.

I'm gonna tell you somethin'. In this week since I've been home...I'm gonna tell the truth. I done had sex three times since I been home. Now, can you beat that? I know you can't. You know why? Coz this lady woman, she opened her legs and let me feel down there, and rub on it, and I'll suck on her tittie, but I won't suck on that other thing. I got some-thing' to put in that other thing! Now, that's an OLDER woman! Older as I am! Now how come'n your woman can't be that sexy? Huh? If a young woman ain't sexy for you, you don't need her! You hear me?

Q: I'm 22. I have a cousin, she's 21. We've known each other for most of our lives. She's a fantastic person. She's become really beautiful as she's grown up. Well, one night three

months ago she came round. We decided to stay in, watch a videotape, have a couple bottles of wine. I'm not sure how it happened, but we ended up showing each other what we like our partners to do, and this of course lead us to having sex. Now it was really good. I think I'm falling for her.

A: I know you is. You need to go your way, and let her go her way. Don't try it with cousins. Dogs don't know any better. He wouldn't have his sister and he wouldn't have his mama, but if he don't know better, he'd have the mama and have the sister. You don't want your name out like that, do you? Put her down, get you somebody who ain't kin to you. It's

that myself. I used to get angry with my girlfriend cos she lookin' at somebody else. Just reach up there and get a handful of hair and pull it, break it loose, and when I comb it, all of it come out! That's what do that. Or, either you're sleeping at the foot or the head of the bed, and it's rubbin' it so, you can't get off it, then when you do get off it, it done broke the root of it. And it wear your head bald-headed. He's worry-ing, getting angry, he breaking his hair loose hisself. I know it is. You just watch him and see don't he do that.

Q: One day I'm happy and my future looks bright and hopeful. Then something unexpected happens, and I'm

self, or... You ain't happy with it! You need to leave it alone. If you can't live happy, go on by yourself. Don't let it run your brains up, your pressures up, and have you doin' somethin' you don't wanna do. You feel like you wanna suicide yourself? Get out of that! Quit that! Get round a big bunch and enjoy yourself, that's what you got to do. Get out with a big bunch and enjoy yourself. Don't let that cross your mind. If you don't want em, get you somebody that you can have sex with, and get with them. That'll help it. I know: I've been through all up and down that line. See, I had a woman when I was in my young days, and she had me where I couldn't eat, and I couldn't sleep. I couldn't work by myself, coz all my mind was on her. And she had another man. Her husband. I took her away from her husband, and he come back into town where I went, and they poisoned me. For him, could get her then. I don't know who she with, I ain't seen her since that day. So I'm livin' happy, and I feel good. Don't NEVER let a woman get into your brains. When you got a woman and she got you worrying and getting close to your brains, if you ain't gonna live with 'em, you better cut out!

Catch the first thing smoking going north, and don't come back.

Q: In my relationship, I am the gift-giver. During the year and a half that I've been together with my boyfriend, I've given him many presents. I've been very generous. It's my way of showing that I like him. Yet he hardly gives me anything. That's important, isn't it?

A: It's important, and otherwise... he USIN' her. He don't like her flesh and he don't care about her a bit. She givin' all of her good times to him, she makin' him happy, but he not makin' her happy. If he can't change it, or she don't want to change it, or if she like it like thataway, he gotta take off hisself and go into some other town. Or some other state. Stay away from her. When she go to writing him, and calling him, she done send a bad mistake. And she wanna call him back, and try to make up for it. But it's too late! If her buggy don't ride like mine, or like his, don't get mad with him. Let it go. Go on into another town and make you a new life. That's the way I do. When things don't work like I want 'em, and I can't make 'em work, I leave town and find me another town. And let the town furnish they own woman and you will do better. Don't you carry a woman to another town for you to make up. LEAVE that one where you found her, and go to another town and try. You might get lucky. I know all about that stuff! I don't let one woman stop my buggy from rolling! Let somebody else do it! I won't wait. But if you don't, it'll hurt. It'll get your mind all messed up. That's what I'm talkin' about. ☹

Email your questions to editorial@arthurmag.com



T-MODEL FORD'S LATEST ALBUM, BAD MAN, WAS PRODUCED LIVE BY THE GENUINELY LEGENDARY JIM DICKINSON AND RELEASED BY FAT POSSUM THIS PAST SEPTEMBER. IT'S YOUR OWN DAMN FAULT IF YOU HAVEN'T BOUGHT IT YET. MORE INFO AT WWW.FATPOSSUM.COM

DON'T NEVER LET A WOMAN GET INTO YOUR BRAINS.

not trouble if you go with your cousin, it's DOG. It's dog do that. No human being don't do that. If he's a dog, he'll do that. But if he's not a dog, he ain't gonna do that!

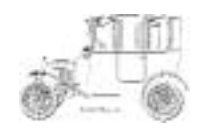
Q: My hair is falling out, and I'm only 23. My hair was perfect up until about four months ago. Now when I wash it, it comes off in my hands. Nobody in my family is bald. I can't understand why this is happening to me. Is this normal?

A: In one way it is, and in one way it ain't. You got a worry, and you gets mad and angry, you reach up and get a handful of hair and pull it, break it loose from the roots and leave it there, then when you comb through it, it all comes out! It don't hurt you. You see what I'm talkin about? Alright. See, I done

suddenly depressed and negative. Everybody I know seems to go through the same kind of thing. I feel like I'm on an emotional rollercoaster, up and down, up and down. I mean, is this why we're alive? To experience this, to be up and down, up and down, is this the way it's supposed to be?

A: Not exactly. You worrying about something. You thinking about something you done done, and you worrying about you can't get to that no more. And it's worrying your mind. You out by yourself, you wishin', if you ever done it, you're worrying about it now, it's on your mind, you wants to do it and you ain't got nobody to do it with. And that's what it's doin'. You lay in the bed and think about it, or go out walkin', sit by your-

sammy harkham



STARTING A MODEL T FOR THE FIRST TIME

POSTED BY PETER ON THE MIFCA FORUM ON JANUARY 09, 2002 AT 15:12:35:

CONGRATULATIONS! I HAVE A COUPLE OF SUGGESTIONS. FIRST, I'D MAKE SURE THAT WITH THE SPARK LEVER ALL THE WAY UP, THE TIMER IS SET SO THAT THE PLUG DOESN'T FIRE BEFORE THE PISTON REACHES TOP-DEAD-CENTER. THIS IS A MATTER OF PRESERVING YOUR EQUIPMENT FROM CATASTROPHE. ONE WAY TO DO THAT IS REMOVE A PLUG. USE A PIECE OF WIRE OR A DOWEL RESTING ON THE PISTON, AND HAVE SOMEONE SLOWLY TURN THE CRANK (KEY ON), AND MAKE SURE THE PISTON IS ALL THE WAY UP BEFORE THE COIL STARTS BUZZING. OF COURSE, YOU MAY HAVE TO GO SEVERAL TURNS BEFORE YOU COME TO THE COIL FOR THE PISTON YOU'RE TESTING. (BY THE WAY, THE COILS SHOULD BUZZ, NOT CLICK).

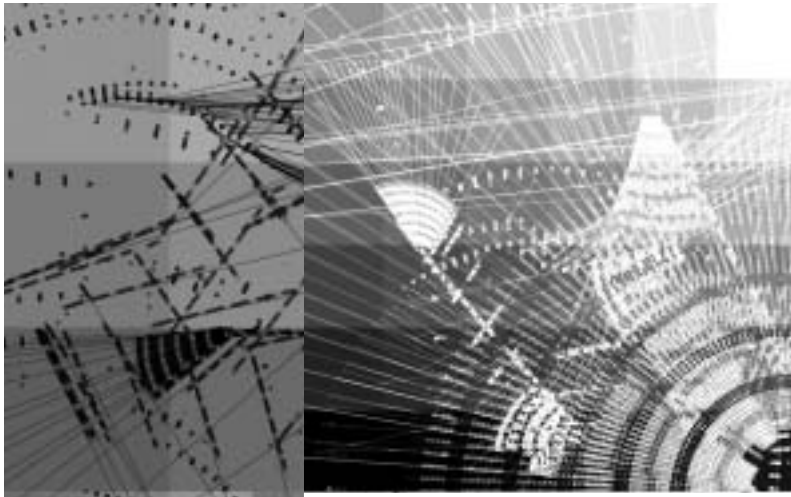
TURN ON THE FUEL VALVE ON THE BOTTOM OF THE TANK. OPEN (MOMENTARILY) THE VALVE ON THE BOTTOM OF THE CARBURETOR TO MAKE SURE GAS IS GETTING THAT FAR. CLOSE THE FUEL MIXTURE SCREW (WIRE COMING THROUGH THE FIREWALL BELOW THE CHOKE ROD), AND OPEN IT A COUPLE OF TURNS. MAKE SURE THE TRANSMISSION IS IN NEUTRAL (BRAKE LEVER BACK). PUT THE SPARK LEVER ALL THE WAY UP, AND THE GAS LEVER 1/4 TO 1/3 DOWN. PULL UP THE CHOKE ROD ON THE DASH, AND MASH THE STARTER BUTTON. AS SOON AS IT STARTS, PULL THE SPARK LEVER DOWN TO THE POINT WHERE THE ENGINE RUNS SMOOTHLY. THEN TAKE SOME TIME TO FINE-TUNE THE MIXTURE. GO FOR A RIDE. TOAST YOURSELF FOR YOUR GOOD WORK.

IF THE STARTER CAN'T TURN THE ENGINE OVER FAST ENOUGH, YOU MIGHT TRY JACKING UP ONE REAR WHEEL AND PUTTING THE BRAKE LEVER FORWARD (HIGH GEAR). THIS COULD BE RISKY, SO BE SURE THE OTHER WHEELS ARE WELL CHOCKED.

IF THIS PROBLEM EXISTS, IT WILL PROBABLY GO AWAY AS SOON AS THE TRANSMISSION GETS LOOSENEED UP BY WORKING AND SHIFTING.

GOOD LUCK!!





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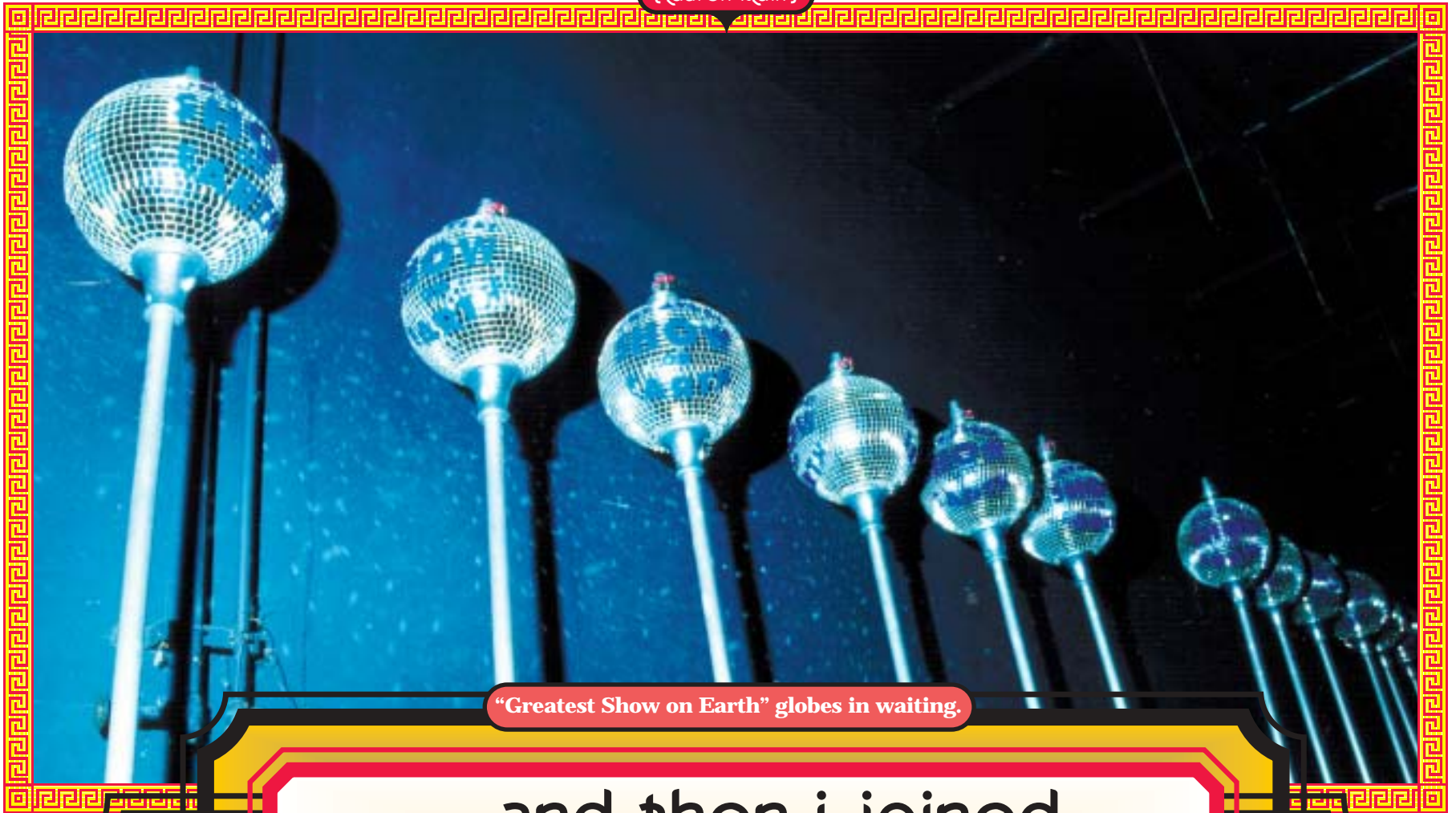
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{ lauren klain }



"Greatest Show on Earth" globes in waiting.

...and then i joined the circus

SELF-DESCRIBED "DESK-BOUND JOURNALIST" **SUE CARPENTER** DECIDED TO FIND OUT FIRS^THAND AND FEET-FIRST HOW THE FEMALES OF THE SPECIES ARE TRANSFORMING THE 21ST-CENTURY CIRCUS. NOW HER BACK HURTS.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LAUREN KLAIN**.

Xia Kemin has Ember pinned. He's got her left leg lodged under a foot-thick gym mat while he presses her right ankle up behind her ear. Ember is crying. Kemin, the former Chinese acrobat who is her teacher, just laughs. He knows that pain is the only way Ember, a 20-year-old daycare worker and wannabe contortionist, will ever become the human pretzel she's dreamed of.

Ember is a beginning student at San Francisco's Circus Center, a school that teaches "anything in the air, upside down, backwards and humanly impossible" to aspiring circus performers. The Center is also my first stop before joining Ringling Brothers for a couple days as I attempt to figure out why women are still running away to join the circus—and whether they do anything more these days than sit pretty on a trapeze.

I've never been to the circus, not even as a child, but it's getting harder to avoid it. Circus is everywhere, nudging itself into the public consciousness through books like Katherine Dunn's carnivalesque *Geek Love*, movies such as *Freaks* and the neo-pagan art festival known as Burning Man. I knew it had reached critical mass last summer when a friend from San Francisco asked if 20 of her friends could stay at my house while their gypsy caravan whirled through L.A. in a flourish of fire wands, wigs and stilts.

Circus used to mean men wrestling snakes while women in glittery unitards flew through the air in front of sticky-fingered children. That all changed when the flashy French Cirque du Soleil came to town in

1987, throwing mimes, bungee jumpers and Chinese pole dancers into the mix and attracting a more adult crowd. Circus hasn't been the same since. Today, there are not only more circuses—and schools to train for them—but there's also more women joining the circus, fusing their own sense of style with traditional techniques. The centuries-old art form, it seems, is finally getting a much-needed kick in the pants.

The Circus Center is in a run-down gym that used to be a boys' school. I'm here to take a contortionist class, in a room nicknamed the House of Pain by the school's director. Class starts at 1 p.m.—right after lunch. Most students show up an hour early just to stretch—a great idea since this building has no heat. It's freezing. When I walk in, there's a girl in a velour sweat suit doing a handstand, her back bent into a Zorro-esque Z. Ember is bent in half

backwards, her hands planted next to her feet. Another woman appears to be climbing a curtain, but she's in a different class.

The school's director puts me in the care of Chris Roguskie, a chatty transvestite with blue eyebrows whose 29th birthday is today. A New York transplant who's been a student for about six months, he wants to combine "classic fetish stuff" with Mongolian dance and bowl balancing. He is the only boy in the class. Contortion is traditionally female, since women are naturally more flexible than men. Men have less subcutaneous fat than women and also have larger muscles, making their bodies more stiff. But everyone here has a tough row to hoe because they are older. Most contortionists begin training when they are toddlers.

Circus has, traditionally, been a family thing, with tricks of the trade passed from generation to generation. An ancient and traditional art, circus

has long been home to outcasts and oddballs who've leveraged their abnormalities into financial gain, with a vagabond existence reinforcing their outsider status. Oftentimes, it was simply easier to marry another performer than to go outside the group. When kids came along, they were trained young and folded into the act, growing up to re-live the lives of their parents.

"Sometimes you wish your family had generations and generations, but it's not like that, so you have to maybe work a little bit harder because it's not in your blood. It's in your own blood, but not your family's," says Michaela Barcklay, a 27-year-old student whose father was an FBI agent. Michaela has been taking trapeze, acrobatics and still-walking classes at the school for about a year and hopes to eventually join a circus. She was turned onto the idea at Burning Man. The hardest part of training, she says, is "doing it on days even when you don't feel like it because you have to."

The homework for aspiring contortionists takes about two hours a day and must be done every day. It includes 30 splits, 10 bridges (backbends where your hands are planted next to your feet) and 10 pretzels. That's in addition to class.

Chris leads me through 45 minutes of intense leg stretches, then asks me to try a handstand against the wall and hold it for one minute. No problem, I think. I last 20 seconds before my arms give out and my head starts its collision course with the floor. I kick my feet down and whine: "My back hurts."

"Everything hurts," Chris tells me. "This is circus," continued on page 49



JAMES KOCHALKA HAS WON AND/OR HAS BEEN NOMINATED FOR MANY PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS INCLUDING THE IGNATZ AWARD, THE FIRECRACKER ALTERNATIVE BOOKS AWARD, AND THE HARVEY AWARD. HE'S ALSO A ROCK STAR. TAKE A LOOK AT HIS WEBSITE FOR MORE DAILY GOODIES: WWW.AMERICANSELF.COM



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jeff lint

the burst sofa of pulp

an appreciation by steve aylett

Pulp sci-fi author Jeff Lint has loomed large as an influence on my own work since I found a scarred copy of *I Blame Ferns* in a Charing Cross basement, an apparently baffled chef staring from the cover. After that I hunted down all the Lint stuff I could find and became a connoisseur of the subtly varying blank stares of booksellers throughout the world.

Born in Chicago in 1929, Jeff (or Jack) Lint submitted his first story to the pulps during a childhood spent in Santa Fe. His first published effort appeared in a wartime edition of *Amazing Stories* because Lint submitted it under the name "Isaac Asimov." 'And Your Point Is?' tells the story of an unpopularly calm tramp who is pelted every day with rocks, from which he slowly builds a fine house. The story already reflected the notion of "effortless incitement," which Lint would practice as an adult.

"Jack was fantastic," says friend Tony Fleece. "Went around blessing people—knew it was the most annoying thing he could do. A dozen times, strangers just beat the hell out of him." Lint perfected the technique when he stumbled upon the notion of praying for people.

Lint's first novel was published by Dean Rodence's Never company in New York. The relationship between Rodence and Lint was one of complete mistrust, rage and bloody violence. When submitting work in person, Lint insisted on appearing dressed as some kind of majorette.

"He was a large man and clearly wasn't happy at having to do this," explains Fleece. "He blamed Rodence, was resentful. I still don't know where he got the idea he had to dress that way when handing his stuff in."

The first novel with Never was *One Less Person Lying*, in which Billy Stem must tell the truth or be transformed into the average man. Rodence persuaded Lint to change the title word "Person" to "Bastard." On a night of pre-press jitters, Rodence then partially re-wrote the final sections of the book so that Stem puts on a space-suit and goes berserk, killing an innocent stranger with a large rock. The book was published as simply *One Less Bastard*. In the 25 years of their association Lint never forgave Rodence for the incident, and often alluded to it by repeated use of the word "bastard" when speaking to him.

Around the time of his second published novel *Cheerful When Blamed*, Lint met his first wife Madeline, who was attracted to him by a knife scar which led from below his left eye to his mouth. This was in fact a sleep crease and Lint managed to maintain the mistake by napping through most of the marriage. But after five months a bout of insomnia put paid to the relationship and left Lint with nothing to occupy his time but his writing—luckily for the world of literature, as he produced some of his best work at this time, including *Jelly Result*, *Nose Furnace*, *Slogan Love* and *I Eat Fog*, all of which appeared on Rodence's new Furtive Labors imprint. *Turn Me Into a Parrot* took

issue with the fundamentalist notion that the world was only a few thousand years old and that dinosaur bones had been planted by god to test man's faith. Lint asserted that the world was only 60 years old and that the mischievous god had buried sewers, unexploded bombs and billions of people. In my own book *Shamanspace* I make it clear that humanity arrived eons ago but, like a man standing in front of an open fridge, has forgotten why.

By the '60s Lint's reputation was established firmly enough for several feuds to develop with other equally unknown authors, the main one being Cameo Herzog, creator of the Empty Trumpet books, who once conspired with Rodence to kill Lint with a truck. (The story is unclear, but it seems they killed or injured the wrong man and had to make reparation to the mob.) The levels to which this feud imploded were difficult for outsiders to understand. Lint and Herzog were once seen glaring silently at each other for seven hours in a freezing lot, each holding a differently colored swatch of velvet. In an interview with *Bloody Fantastic Idea*, Lint spun the notion that since crustaceans were skeletons containing meat and mammals were meat containing skeletons, then since the bones of human beings enclosed organs and marrow, humans were in fact crustaceans. In a subsequent issue Herzog countered that calcium traces in organs and marrow technically constituted a central bone system and that we were mammals after all. Impressed, Lint agreed.

Herzog was unable to accept this turn of events and ran amok with some kind of rubber hose until police cornered him in a slaughterhouse. Lint had to help the cops by insisting through a megaphone that Herzog was wrong—within calcium were atomic particulates of carbon molecules and so on. Herzog gave himself up, his hose was confiscated and he was led away swearing revenge. While on parole he wrote several letters to the Boston Globe declaring that Lint was a "rogue maniac" published only through criminal indulgence. "Shoot me if I ever write like that."

When Herzog's body was found a year later, his forehead containing a 9mm Parabellum slug, Lint was hauled in as the key suspect. But his surprised laughter upon hearing of the incident was so clearly honest, the police felt foolish (and reportedly "soiled") in holding him.

At this time Lint published a series of essays under the ominous collective title *Prepare to Learn*. This included *Running Bent Double—The Poor Man's Protest*, *Debate This*, *You Mother and My Beauty Will Blind You*, in which he stated: "Some animals have a life span of only a few days. I suspect they eat food only through habit. Why has nature never bred a creature which eats nothing for its few days of life? Such hordes would have a distinct advantage over other species." He then suggests that humanity was meant to be such a species but wrecked everything by stuffing its face the moment it entered the world.

Several of Lint's early books were also being re-published by Doubleday and New English Library, and the startled Lint rushed to exploit his raised profile, pulling on a skirt and bursting into the offices of Random House with a proposal he dreamed up on the spot. *Banish Colleagues* would tell the story of a bull elephant on its way to the elephant's graveyard, only to find it full of ambulances. The ivory-white confusion of the landscape is a classic Lint image, as is that of Lint being ejected from Random House by twelve security guards. In 1973 Lint instead batted out the trash novel *Sadly Disappointed* about a child who is not possessed by the devil. Published under his Asimov pen name, it is a minor work redeemed only by the parents' laughable attempts at activism. These seem mainly to involve the placing of ignorable gonks on people's driveways—the baffled press is then alerted when the toy is backed over by a car. Lint was at a low, beaten down by a stint in Hollywood which saw his screenplays repeatedly diluted by studio hacks. He felt justly proud of his scripts for *Kiss Me*, *Mister Patton* (eventually filmed as *Patton*), *Dire Murder at Hampton Place* (eventually filmed as *Shaft*) and *Despair and the Human Condition* (eventually filmed as *Funny Girl*).

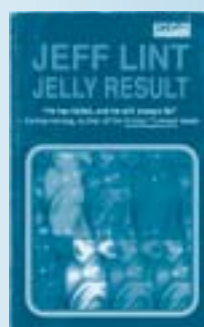
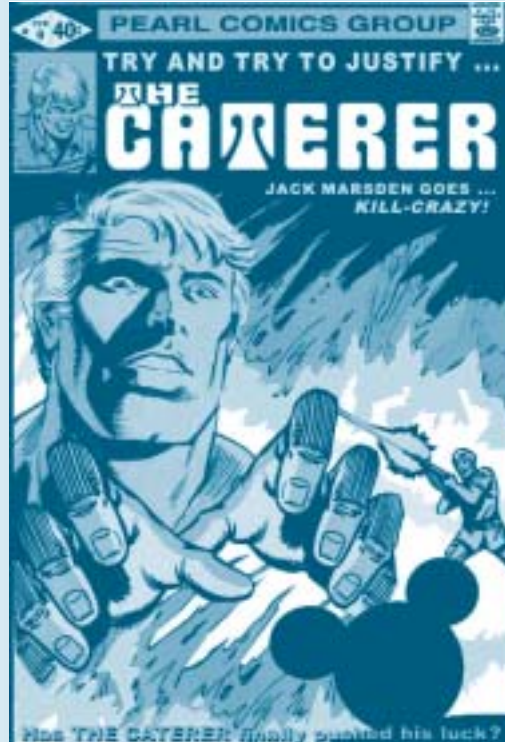
The mid-'70s also saw Lint's incredible foray into the world of action comics with his creation of *The Caterer*. This unfathomable title lasted nine issues, during which the hero was never seen to cook or prepare food in any way. The *Caterer's* wordless shooting spree in Disneyland in the final issue was as ill-judged as it was relentless, and its blithe use of certain copyrighted characters sank the publishers in legal defense costs.

Lint was by now a Hemingwayesque figure and had developed the ability to speak out of a different part of his beard each time. "Keep 'em guessing," he rumbled.

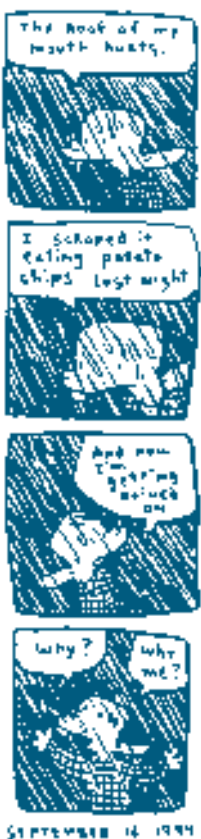
After a second marriage and short stints in London, Paris and Tangiers, Lint returned to the New Mexico of his childhood and produced the first book of his *Easy Prophecy* series, *Die Miami*, which many say was a decoy for more interesting work as yet unearthed. He lived there until his death in 1994, since when Lint scholars have hunted for the gold-dust of lost stories, endlessly analyzing the last novel *Clowns and Locusts*, his thankfully incomplete attempt at autobiography, *The Man Who Gave Birth to His Arse*, and his whispered final words, which seem to have been "There's no marrying a cat."

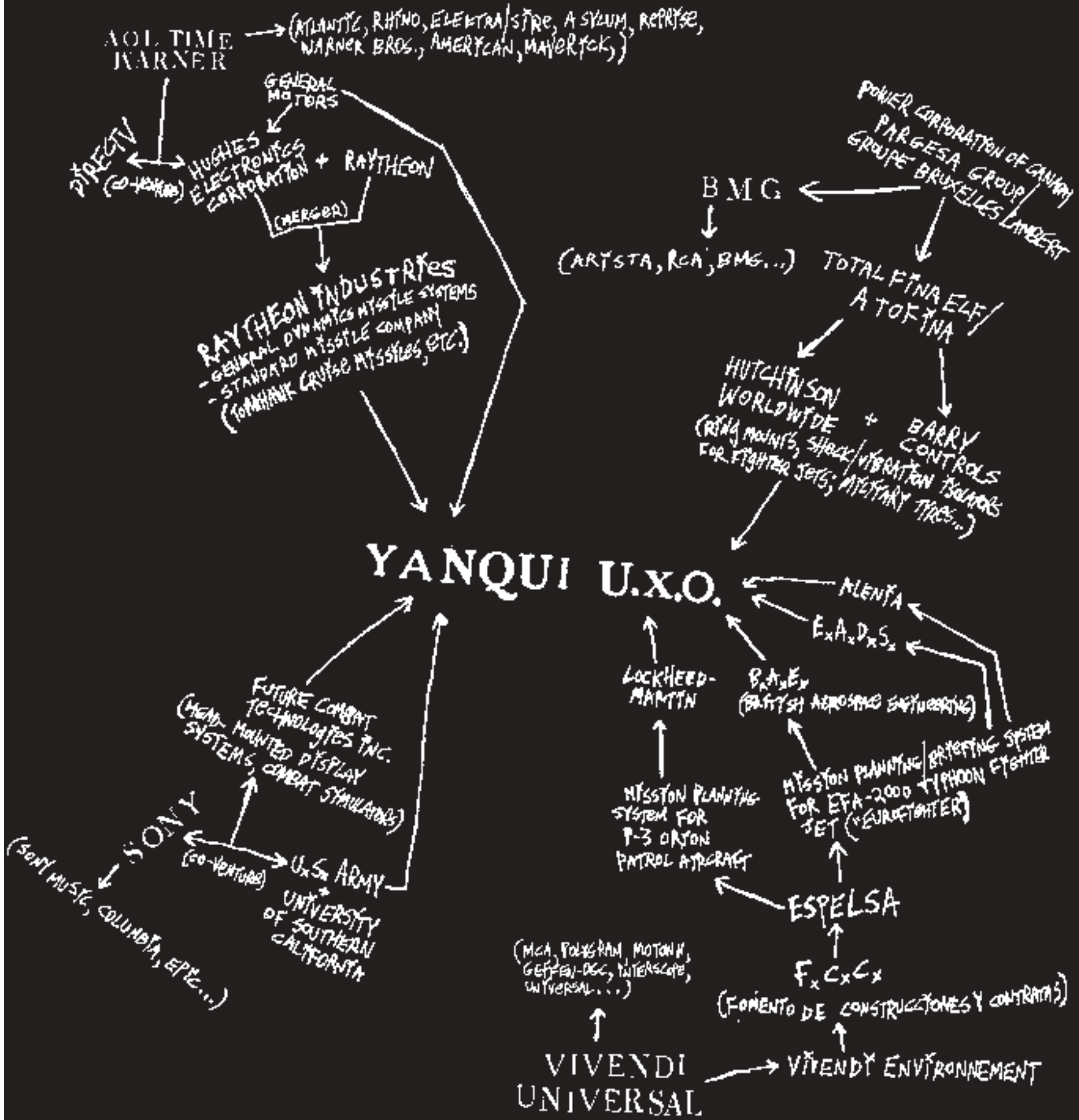
Jeff Lint is buried in a Taos graveyard, his headstone bearing the epitaph: "Don't think of it as a problem, but as a challenge which has defeated you." ©

STEVE AYLETT is a Brighton-based author. His books include *Shamanspace*, *Slaughtermatic* and *Toxicology*. Visit www.steveaylett.com for more info.



Three examples of Lint's literary output.





the whole planet is the museum!

AUTHOR-THEORIST DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF TAKES TEA AND TALKS REALITY WITH VETERAN MINDBOGLER/ARTIST/VISIONARY GENESIS P-ORRIDGE, BEST KNOWN FOR HIS WORK AS IN SEMINAL INDUSTRIAL OUTFIT THROBBING GRISTLE AND NEO-PRIMITIVE-SHAMANIC RAVISTS PSYCHIC TV.

met Genesis in the early '90s in the Bay Area. He needed a lift to Timothy Leary's house in Beverly Hills, and I needed an interview for a book I was writing about viral media. We spent about six hours in the car together, trying to impress one another with our strangest thoughts while Gen's two daughters fought in the back seat.

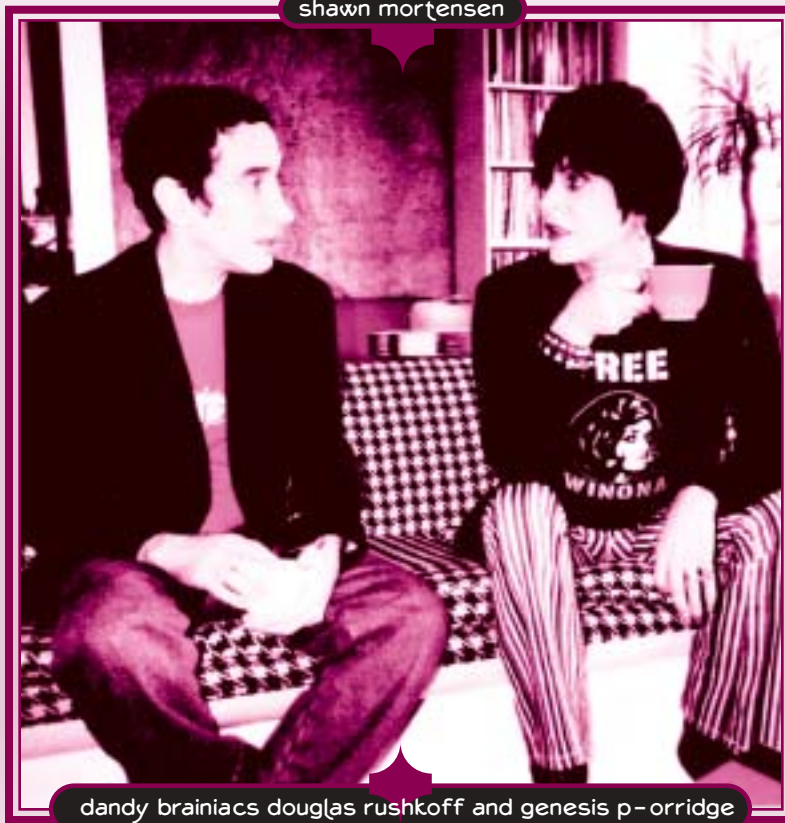
We've been friends ever since.

I guess it's about ten years later, now. I've gotten married, become an author and university professor, while Gen has been kicked out of the UK forever, gotten divorced and married again, replaced his teeth with gold ones, and done some other stuff to his body that I'd be scared to. Still, in spite of our outward differences, we're on the same path, and often use one another for guidance along the way.

See, if you're going to be an artist or writer or magician, you've got to navigate through some treacherous zones. If you're not traversing new territory (or at least forgotten territory) then why write instead of just reading? And many of these regions can be culturally, intellectually, physically and psychically challenging. Disorientation can't be avoided—it is the rule. Panic is the thing you have to watch out for.

So, Gen and I have these long talks every month or so. Sometimes they're data dumps, and sometimes they're progress reports. This one is probably a little more the latter, coming as it does on the release of Gen's new book, *Painful but Fabulous: The Lives & Art of Genesis P-Orridge* (Soft Skull Shortwave).

—Douglas Rushkoff



Genesis: Well... The preamble would be this: in the early '60s, somewhat parallel to my becoming aware of the beatniks, I started to discover Dada and Surrealism. The first time I'd heard of cut n paste, I think was Brion Gysin giving Raoul Hausman and one or two of the Dadaists the credit as one of his inspirations. He said they would cut up words from

permutation: "Poets don't own words, words poets don't own, own words poets don't" and it was only recently that I actually experienced it in a visceral way, that that's been the big change. This is what you're talking about: that we are blessed, or gifted, or pushed, by various events to deal with the information that's coming at us, and that society and culture

what's happening parallel to the art world in science at the time, whether it's called 'alchemy, or 'science' or 'physics.' Here, the big moment, really, is just after the Second World War, when we learnt to split the atom and we also learned to split consciousness with psychedelics at almost exactly the same time. Then you had people like Brion Gysin and William Burroughs learning to split the *cultural* atom with cut-ups in a much more methodical and conscientious way. Instead of it being a reaction against the Horror, it was actually a considered and very carefully and very meticulously observed process of... Well, in a sense they challenged themselves: How do we short-circuit linearity and control? Let's experiment, and let's be methodical, let's CHOP THINGS UP—just like a scientist would!—and see what the building blocks are. And in their case of course, the thing to chop up would be language. So they started to chop up words.

I came in around this point, where suddenly it's ALL up for grabs. I was born in 1950, so in 1960 I'm ten: my mind's beginning to really think, make thought processes as well as just observe and absorb, and so I was *really* blessed in that the material world, the world of consciousness, and the world of accepted forms of writing and painting and music, all suddenly came up for grabs. They all became malleable. To many people, the rulebooks were thrown out. I don't think it's just coincidental, all of this splitting of atoms and consciousness and cultural forms—I think that it was a very important evolutionary moment, that we still haven't fully grasped. As you said, it's TOTALLY affected the culture on every possible level—on television all the adverts are just cut-ups!—to degrees that most people haven't even considered yet.

At the time, I was being educated in an English public school and the basic bumper sticker for those is, We're building the leaders of tomorrow. The 'leaders of tomorrow' were supposed to be the shepherds and farmers of inertia: to maintain the status quo, the Establishment. There was a book that came out that was called *The Shock of the New*. [pausing] Let me think about what it felt like. I'm just trying to track back. This seems weird to say this, but I remember during the Cuban missile crisis going to school and being told, You may not come home tonight because there might be an atomic war. I remember being on a bus, with my face on the window, and I suddenly imagined the glass just melting around my face. I imagined there being an explosion, and the result of that explosion being me enfolded in molten glass. Preserved in this shell of molten

Now, it's always good to look at

EVERYTHING I'D BEEN TOLD ABOUT REALITY JUST WASN'T TRUE.

g. p-orrige

one of their poems, putting them in a hat, and then they'd draw words out of the hat, and make a new poem. What had happened was that more emotionally based artists, the ones who were actually involved in feeling human as well as just glorifying creativity, had become very disconnected from the concept of linearity, the concept of Reason, all the material concepts of the world. They had just experienced the first world war, which had led to this Armageddon, this hell on earth, and this was their reaction against what they saw as that war's cause: the misplaced celebration of Reason, the *control* over information and culture in society, the harmful repression of irrationality, which had backfired.

That's really where the first step came, that disconnection from, and obsession with, a finished, perfect result that was 'owned' by the artist that made it. One of Brion Gysin's greatest poems, which I didn't understand until very recently, was 'Poets don't own words.' He would do a

are, if you like, a solidity that's based on the inertia and linearity. This solidity is oppressive, and in order to even begin to be anything one might label 'free' or 'liberated, you have to short-circuit control, as Burroughs used to put it. Because control is ultimately an oppressor. Control really DOES contain all the feedback loops of consumer culture that you've talked about so astutely.

I'm know I'm going in a weird loop here, but basically the point is that during the middle of the last century, the idea of having to be an Artist who owned each thing fell apart. The Dadaists did live events. They did collaborations. They did 'The Exquisite Corpse,' where they would do a drawing, fold it, next person would draw some more, fold it, and then the result was the art. And of course no one could say with any of these activities, 'I did that.' They *all* did it, but it also made itself. That process intrigued the more interesting artists from then on.

Now, it's always good to look at

Douglas: Your new book has served for me as an occasion to look back on the history of cut-and-paste, as well as its tremendous influence on art and culture every since. Cut-and-paste can even be understood as a first, rebellious step towards the attainment of genuine co-authorship. From a broad, historical perspective, it seems to me that we move through three stages. We begin by passively absorbing the information that's fed to us—the datastream. Then, maybe with the Protestant Reformation and the printing press, we gained the ability to interpret this information for ourselves, to some extent. Then, with cut and paste, we achieve the ability to take what's been presented to us and move it around a little bit. We can create new meanings through transpositions of what's there, but that's limited, in a sense, to a kind of satire or self-conscious juxtaposition. And now, finally, with computing and the internet, with the ability to actually author what for lack of a better word would be 'original' material, now we move into artistry. But a truly interesting moment was that first cut-and-paste moment, that first moment of, "Okay this is being fed to us, BUT we can do this with it, or to it, and get something else." I'd be interested in hearing from you what was it like to be part of that moment.



atomic glass. That image somehow simultaneously suggested to me the idea of preserving oneself, and that the shell that is oneself is invisible and transparent, and that in fact everything I'd been told about reality *just wasn't true*. Don't ask me why that image made that happen for me! [laughter] But that was my epiphany, and that was when I decided to seek out alternative methods of reporting upon experience.

In a way, I think that what we've always looked for is methods and media and techniques to report back upon what experience is and what being alive is. And as social life and civilization and Western culture, which is what I know, as they have developed and become more and more complex, you would think that that implies we would be seeing some kind of shimmering atomic kaleidoscope that would be really vibrant and exciting, and constantly getting more complex. But the irony is that Western civilization seems to be more and more like threads binding rather than atomic splitting.

So what happened was, I was given a tape recorder by somebody at around the same time. Because I had very little tape, it just became natural to go back and use the tape more than once. It didn't take long to notice that as I used it, I got these weird intersections of sound. So, on my own, by a mixture of poverty and desire, I discovered that I could actually change the order of time and reality and information. And it was exciting. I started to look for other ways of describing what I was feeling, because what I was being told was a description of being alive and reality just didn't fit what I was feeling. As I said, I came across the Surrealists, the Dadaists and the beatniks. At that time, it was not well documented that the beatniks were cutting up and pasting. But because of my own experiments and these little bits of information from the Dadaists, when I did see little references to tape recorder experiments, it had a really profound resonance for me, and I started to seek out all the information I could, and later on get to know the Beats too. And at the same time I started getting involved with all the underground press and so on.

What you really end up doing is, you surrender to the idea of oblivion. At some point you have to wipe absolutely clean every preconception that's given to you both by the senses and by the culture—the 'datastream' that you talk about. You have to actually at some point dismiss it *totally*, and then you can start to make choices about what you wish to allow back in.

Douglas: I have always understood the kinds of shifts you're talking about as the same kind of shift in perspective that occurs through a full-fledged renaissance. If you look back at the original "capital-R" Renaissance, what do you really have going on there? Perspective painting, successful circumnavigation of the globe, the printing press, calculus, and then the sonnet (which is really just an extended metaphor). Each of these 15th-century innovations is all about being able to see three dimensions where there had formerly been two—or being able to relate two dimensions to three as in calculus, or being able to go around the globe, which is to experience the planet as three-dimensional rather than as flat.



That's renaissance. And we're going through a similar shift, now. From the 1940s to the present, you have a series of analogous innovations. Instead of being able to circumnavigate the globe, we can blow the globe up!

Genesis: [agreeing] Or go into space and look at it.

Douglas: Indeed, or go into space and see it from a distance—which is just another increase in perspective. Instead of the printing press, we have the Internet, which rather than just allowing the individual in his drawing room to interpret a piece of literature, enables him or her to write one and then disseminate it through the whole network. Instead of just having perspective painting which allows you to see three dimensions on two, you get the holograph, which allows you to see four dimensions on two: the bird wav-

faster pace, between say 1940 and the year 2000. That's why we've had all these ideologies passing through until very recently—this increased amount of dimensionality, this sense of 'Anything goes, so what do we want to bring back in?' Which is what happens during any renaissance. It's as if a renaissance is a moment of shift in dimensional perspective which allows for the implantation of a new idea. Renaissance means you're going to have a rebirth. Literally, a "renaissance," or re-birth, of old ideas in a new context. What do we want to let back in? There's a bit of a battle over ideas, over which ideas are going to make it back in now that everyone has the ability to re-frame this thing. Maybe what we're in now, in the 21st century, is this struggle over authorship, this struggle over story, this global debate over narrative. In other

A RENAISSANCE IS A SHIFT IN DIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE WHICH ALLOWS FOR THE IMPLANTATION OF A NEW IDEA.

d. rushkoff

ing its wings, or the girl winking her eye as you walk across the plate. And then instead of calculus, which allows you to relate the second dimension to the third, or the third to the fourth, you get fractals, which is about fractional dimensionality: this thing has two and three-quarters dimensions, and what does that mean? Instead of the sonnet, which gave us the extended metaphor, we get hypertext, which allows us to make anything into a metaphor for something else—it's all potential allegory.

Now, take a look at the results of the original Renaissance and the newfound ability of people to interpret their own culture and religion. For most of Europe that meant overturning the Catholic Church. It led to the Protestant Reformation, and eventually to bloodbaths. But before then, it was an extremely positive possibility being presented—that every man can interpret religion for himself.

And we are going through something like that again, obviously at a much

words, whose narrative is going to be used as the template for the next several centuries or more?

Genesis: And of course the answer is no one owns the narrative anymore. That's the thing that's disturbing and frightening so many people, is the displacement of ownership in a very, very fundamental way.

Douglas: It's a sense of 'We won. But: uh-oh.'

Genesis: Yes, because even DNA is no longer a finite fixed program. DNA was once God's book, you know. Well, now we can engineer the genetic book, the thing that's the nearest we have to a source book of the 'intended unfolding.' *There is no longer a fixed unfolding.* For the first time we've actually almost surprised ourselves. Instead of us looking in the mirror, the mirror has literally dissolved. Maybe that's what that glass metaphor was about!

The point you're making is absolutely right. I was looking at the television news just yesterday and there was a

person from a Muslim country and they said, 'Well, you'll never understand because you're all Christian.' And their assumption is still that the narrative in the West is ultimately a linear narrative that has an author, that it's an unfolding linear story; and that if you're not Muslim, you *must* be Christian, and that *your* whole behavior is based upon Christian dogma, because *theirs* is based on their dogma. So, for this Muslim, that's obviously the problem: it's Muslim dogma versus Christian dogma.

But the problem *isn't that at all*. The problem is that we in the 'West,' are in their sense, amoral. *We don't care!* Most people over here DON'T CARE what religion people are. Most people in the West don't label themselves 'Christians' or anything else. The majority in the West are *irreligious*. They don't have a faith. I'm not saying that's a good thing—I'm saying it's a fact. They're a *godless* people. And in a sense, maybe, God is supposed to be 'The Author.' In the past, God was the 'ultimate author.' Well, guess what? We always said we wanted to challenge God and be like God—and now we have! We've just fallen, you know? [laughs] It's as if the story of the fallen angel—Lucifer—has just happened. In a way, we've just started to reap the rewards of having decided to ask the questions.

Douglas: [agreeing] Right. Lately, I've started to wonder, 'What if the painful truth is that we *really* are a fungus on a rock, hurtling through cold and meaningless space?'

Genesis: [laughs] Oh, I think about that every day!

Douglas: To me, it doesn't really matter, because just as easily as the idea that God could have created us with meaning, is the possibility that just as life emerged from this cold and meaningless rock, and that meaning can now emerge...from us!

Genesis: I absolutely agree with you. This is our great opportunity to grow up as a species, and stop being larval. Because ultimately I think we're still in a larval, primitive stage. Because

there's no other excuse for the way that we treat each other.

If this *isn't* primitive and pathetic and early behavior, then as a species we really are in trouble!

Douglas: And just as it's a painful moment for any child to realize that his parents aren't gods, it's a painful moment for a civilization to realize that its god is not a parent.

Genesis: And that it's actually making itself.

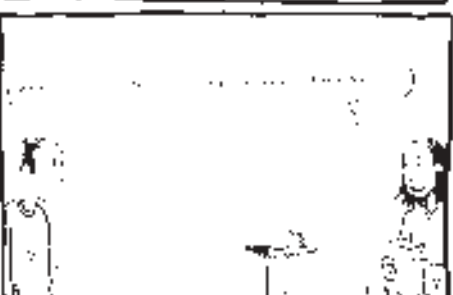
Douglas: Right. We are the adults here. We are in charge.

Genesis: Hence, it is painful—but fabulous. And that, in a way, is the whole point of the book. That's why it's not written just by me. This is dealt with in the book. What happened was, it became impossible for me to make a book that was both by me and about me, because *I don't even know if 'me' exists*. And whoever 'me' is, is shifting and changing too—because one of things I've done is cut-and-pasted *identity*. I've taken it even further, you know?

Douglas: I ran into the same problem in my own SoftSkull book too [the novel *Exit Strategy*, published earlier this year], which is that if I'm writing a book about our ability to co-author the reality in which we live, how can I do that as a solitary author? So I had to put it online and let people con-

ALL CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES DESIGNED AND MADE BY GENESIS P-ORRIDGE AND MISS JACKIE FOR PWE INC. PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHAWN MORTENSEN.





truth that they WORK.

Genesis: Yes. [laughter] That is mind-boggling, isn't it?

Douglas: I don't believe in magick, exactly. But I know that sigils work, if they're created the right way. And sometimes they work so well that they almost come back at you as a joke. Like Grant Morrison was telling me about this big sigil he did: he wanted to meet Superman. And then he was sitting on a park bench and Superman walked up. Now, it was a guy working at a convention, but Grant treated him like he was Superman, though, and had a great interview. So sometimes it's obviously not going to be that magical, in the sense of a puff of smoke or something. And obviously if you pick something too specific, you end up getting it, which can be scary.

Genesis: As they say, be careful what you wish for! It's like the genie-in-the-bottle thing, isn't it? You've got your wishes, except with sigils you get more than three.

Douglas: Right. And you can work sigil magick completely though language I suppose, but it affects realms way beyond the linguistic ones.

Genesis: Oh yeah. Well, it's the whole butterfly-in-the-West Indies thing, isn't it?

I think what's really important is, if you make a decision to work within life, you let go of the scientific concept of matter being only objects. You'll see that culture is a material, language is a material, time is a material, emotions are material. Basically you'll think of *everything* in terms of matter, and all matter is ultimately flexible, fluid, manipulatable and malleable. (Of course, as science and physics goes on, it keeps on confirming everything that we've speculated anyway. There's not been any dissent yet about this, from what I've looked at in scientific journals.)

If you start to cut things up and re-assemble them, at first it's kind of fun. You go, Well ooo that's nice. But it really does seem to be more than that—cut-and-paste seems to be one of the few practices that any person can use to *truly* re-wire their inherited neural system and the DNA program. You *can* re-wire what you were given.

Douglas: That's why for me the open-source software movement is such a terrific allegory and practice for accepting the fact that we live in a malleable reality. Or certainly for accepting that a hell of a lot more of our world is programmable software than we've previously thought. There might be some hardware down there somewhere, but we haven't got close to that yet. People are starting to accept that they have indeed been the programmers, whether they were witting or not, and that they're actively programming the world we live in. I think it's healthy for people to realize this. I think that then they start to experience everything—from their bodies to the air we breathe—as a medium through which they can create and transmit their story.

Genesis: Absolutely. Well you know that Burroughs and Gysin used to say, In a pre-recorded universe, who made the first recording? I've thought about that a lot. And what it led me

to wasn't so much wondering about that question, because I think you're right, it doesn't matter, actually, but what it did make me realize is that *the entire planet is a recording device*. That, as you and I are speaking now, on this planet, there is, certainly it seems that way, and we'll probably find more, there's some kind of data recorded—whether it be fos-

actually HOW IT IS.

I mean, I walk down the street and if I meet somebody that I know who's from Nepal, I also quite deliberately try to keep in mind that I'm talking to somebody who's from a different century, in terms of where they grew up. That doesn't mean anything in terms of their intelligence! What it means is I have to *remind* myself that there's ALL these stories happening simultaneously. All the stories are unfolding simultaneously. Each individual being, walking by, is the center of their own particular universe, in terms of subjectivity. You're the only person who'll be in your world every second that your world exists. And your world is all the things you perceive while you are—theoretically—'alive.' And that is your unique universe, because you do go out into what's out there just the same as I do. So this place is just amazing, because there's billions of universes clustered on this point of intersection, and all the stories going right back to the beginning are still here too! We have trillions and trillions of universes, many of them mobile, because they're in human bodies, all clustered in these tiny, tiny, concentrated places.

Douglas: That's why the real artistic act is not one of authorship but one of resonance. You know, being open to these conversations...

Genesis: Yes, it's remaining open to dialogue. It's not about the ego—'look at me, I'm a great artist, I

have something in the Tate,' you know? That is SO redundant. Museums? THIS IS THE MUSEUM! *The WHOLE PLANET is the museum!* I call all of that The Museum of Magic, because it's all about illusion. That's the whole illusion.

We really are in a new place. And as people kind of grasped almost immediately, the Internet is, they knew it would be a metaphor, but it's actually also a reality. Yes, we are actually building some kind of new brain. A global brain, as Howard [Howard K. Bloom, author of *Global Brain: The Evolution of Mass Mind From the Big Bang to the 21st Century*] would call it. That's actually going on. These AREN'T abstractions.

That's the thing that I think that we've got to get hold of.

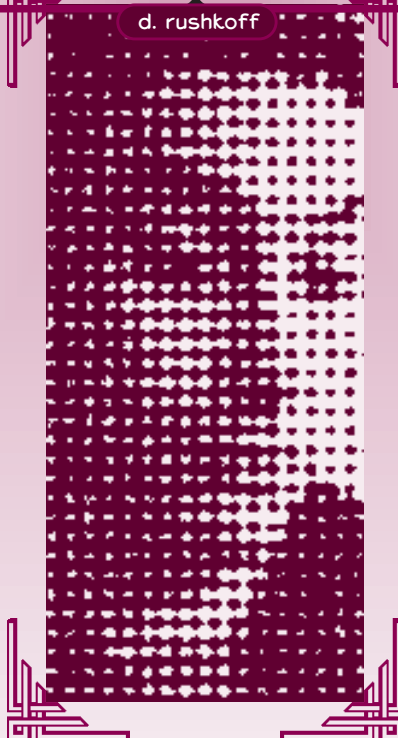
Douglas: What words of encouragement would you have for the passionate but still currently amateur and underappreciated young artist who might be reading ARTHUR at this moment, who makes her cut-up tapes and homespun zines and online blogs, and yet there's not anyone willing to pay for what she has to say, not that many people coming. But this person feels she's resonating with everything that you're saying now, or might be saying in one of your books...

Genesis: Well... In doing this book, I had to go right back to childhood and look at my entire unfolding so far, as a character. I had to look at everything. And one thing that immediately struck me as significant is that I've always worked in collectives. I've never had this need, or this motivation, to identify myself as the sole source of anything. 'Oh, it's because I'm clever that this happened.' No.



A LOT MORE OF OUR WORLD IS PROGRAMMABLE SOFTWARE THAN WE'VE PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT.

d. rushkoff



sils, geological strata—

Douglas: [laughing] Or the digital cassette that we're recording on right now.

Genesis: —basically everything that's happened so far is still here, recorded. On the planet, and in the planet. And there are people in New Guinea living in different centuries to the ones we're living in. The people in the Kalahari are living in the pre-Stone Ages. So we actually still have the pre-Stone Age, parallel to the next phase, which is, because some people in the West and Japan and so on, high-tech societies, are already in the future, so ALL the realities humanity has programmed through history are still here simultaneously! We're actually layering more on top. So what we really have is a point of intersection, which is the earth, and everything that's ever been manifested is still here. That's not just a concept, this is



All the time I say, over and over again, we just did what was inevitable anyway. And that's the important thing, is the people should LET GO of the concept of success and celebrity and fame and fortune. That's not important. Of course we'd all love to have whatever it might be that fame represents for us—which is mainly not worrying about bills, for me! [chuckles] I think that although Warhol was wonderful, he did us all a great disservice by making celebrity into this red herring. And I think that people will find that if they just, as I used to say, 'change your own bedroom and you can change the world.' It's about self-discovery and it's about collaboration and collective action, WITHOUT any kind of narcissistic, secret agenda. That's over!

You know, sometimes someone for whatever reason happens to be chosen to *represent* a collective metaphor, as a person. That's why I chose a fictional character, Genesis P-Orridge, in the first place. Neil Megson is the artist, not Genesis. Neil Megson created this fictional character, and then let loose that character to see if it was true that you could cut and paste a person, and what would happen if you put a truly flexible and malleable being out there.

Douglas: But 'Genesis' is still the author of the book.

Genesis: Actually I think if you look it doesn't say that at all. It says it's by everyone else.

Douglas: Oh, right. "With text by..." Well, Neil's not on there.

Genesis: No, but he's discussed in one chapter. So no, I don't put myself as the author. I'm *not* the author. I'm blessed to have let other people do it for me! [laughs] This is an open-source book, see? I said to everybody, Look you've got carte blanche for once, no one's gonna censor you, you can use me as an excuse to say something you've always wanted to say, I don't care, I don't have to agree with you, use 'Genesis P-Orridge' the idea to say whatever you want, and if you need 'Genesis P-Orridge' the idea to trigger something, feel free. And that's basically how the book happened, as you know. And that's why I love it so much. Because I got to see it happen too! I was just as much of a witness as anyone who reads it. And of course truly I do feel incredibly humbled and honored by the amount of positive energy that people gave me based around this character, that they *HAVE* found that something was useful for *them*. And at the end, the last page says, 'To be continued.' For the very reason that this isn't over, this is an ongoing thing. I don't know the end. That's why there's all these different faces in there. Which one is me? I don't know. Funny thing is, none of those is how I look now, so...

It's all about letting go of those preconceptions, and not being afraid to not exist in a sense, because even as you are theoretically here and present, you still don't really know if you exist. It's incredibly liberating when you let go of that need, and let yourself become fictional—as well as *knowing* you're fictional. Because

actually we all are fictions. We're all just stories unfolding.

Douglas: And until you accept that you're fictional, you don't stand a chance of writing your own story. You get too bogged down.

Genesis: In answer to that question, then, with those young people that you want me to encourage. However this may sound, this is the basic exercise I've used. First of all is the classic Sufi thing, which is always try to go to sleep feeling that the day you've just had, something *extra* was added into the world. Something that you're proud of, or pleased about. It may be that you cleaned a room. Or you wrote a nice postcard to a friend. Or made a phone call to Mum. It doesn't have to be grand. Something that happened that day, that wouldn't've happened without you being alive, something that is somehow to *you* a positive thing. Feed the dog, stroke it, whatever. That's one thing to do. The other exercise is to be able to think at any moment during the day, whenever you're doing something... like if you're writing a letter, think to yourself, 'If I died now, and my life was judged by what this letter is like, would I be proud of that?' Do EVERYTHING so meticulously...make it so full of passion and of love for the moment and

other thing, the other trick: *always try to work with other people, because none of us know everything.*

My feeling is, if I can have one good idea, and it's quite a good idea, and I know four really clever people, and then I share it with them, then the odds are higher by getting four clever people, or four people I trust, to be involved, it's gonna be somehow better than I could do on my own. Now why do I need to prove I can do it on my own when it's not gonna be as good or as useful to other people? The old way was, to try and claim individual genius.

Douglas: That's the academic's way, at least.

Genesis: [continuing] But a), it's not the most efficient method, and b) it's not glamorous to be narcissistic like that.

Douglas: [laughing] And c), it's not as much fun!

Genesis: When I did *Contemporary Artists* (1977), I'd sent these questionnaires to the thousand 'most important' artists in the last century, and they would write back, and one of the things asked was what were their influences. Most people would say 'oh I was influenced by meeting this person or reading that book,' but once in a while you would get somebody who would say,

'Nothing.' They would basically say 'I am just so brilliant and I have this God-given talent that's MINE ALONE, and

NOTHING influenced me.' That's ridiculous! Everything that happens to us every second is influencing everything else. That's the new way. That's what we've taught ourselves.

Douglas: Right, and to be open to that is to be open to being a great artist for this century, and to be closed to that is for an artist die.

Genesis: It's also just being modern. There's the old way, which is all about individual ego, individual power, individual self-gratification and so on. It's *over*. Just geographically, there's too many people now. You've GOT to learn to get on with each other. We're pushed up against each other, that's why there's friction right now. There's a lot of individual universes clustered here, and they've got to start to not trying to keep maintaining that little separation, they've got to start becoming, if you like, instead of atoms and molecules, instead of molecules, something else. So, as we're more and more able to go smaller in terms of what we observe with science in a literal sense, we have to, funnily enough, get *bigger* in terms of us as beings. ☺

A deluxe boxed 24-CD edition of Throbbing Gristle's *24 Hours of TG* has just been released by Mute. A new Throbbing Gristle compilation will be released in early 2003. For more information on Genesis P-Orridge, visit www.genesisp-orridge.com Douglas Rushkoff's new book, *Nothing Sacred: The Truth About Judaism*, will be published by Crown in April, 2003. For more information on Douglas Rushkoff, visit www.rushkoff.com

THAT'S THE OTHER TRICK: ALWAYS TRY TO WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE, BECAUSE NONE OF US KNOWS EVERYTHING.

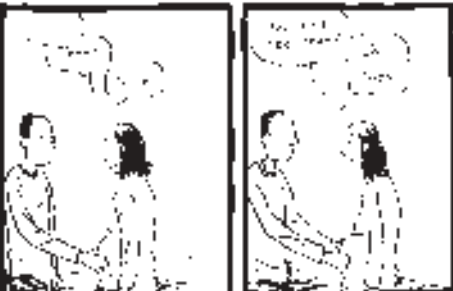
g. p-orridge

for the thing that you're doing, so that you would always be proud to be remembered by that thing. Whatever it is, whether it's cooking for a friend, washing up, anything. To always feel honorable and proud and that you've given love back by the way that you act every day.

And then another exercise is this: Imagine your life is a book, and you're going to write this book. So when you're thinking, What should I do? Should I have this relationship or not? or something, you can think in terms of would doing that make for an interesting chapter. Even now sometimes I sit back with Miss Jackie and go, There's another good page in the book. [laughs] In the theoretical autobiography that I could never write because it's too much stuff, but... It's a good exercise, to just go 'Well yeah, that was a good bit of the book.' Sometimes it's 'Well that was dramatic, but that was a good bit of the book too.' Or, 'That was terrible, oh, argh, but it'll look great in the book.' Or if you want to get more contemporary, you can imagine your life as a movie: 'Was that a good scene?'

Suddenly you will find more balance. The great ups and the great downs start to become the coloring of the story—they start to have their own special value and emotional joy, because it's YOUR story and it's your passion and it's your tragedy and it's your moment of...whatever. All these wonderful emotional events that take place that make us more individual than anything else—those are always wonderful, no matter how hard they are to experience. And that's the





Glenn Ganges is an excerpt from the critically acclaimed *Supermonster*, Kevin Huizenga's fourteen issue series. You can order his books at www.ussscatastrophe.com. He is 24 and based in St. Louis.

like honey to the flies

DEVENDRA BANHART PLAYS GUITAR AND HE SINGS SONGS LIKE YOU'VE NEVER HEARD. HE'S ALSO 21 AND HAS A CERTAIN MAD ELFISH CHARM, LEARNS GABE SORIA.

It's a cold and gray afternoon in Brooklyn. I'm sitting in Devendra Banhart's fourth floor walkup apartment and we're both slightly hungover. The furniture in the apartment is old and scrounged looking, full of ramshackle character. Devendra asks me if I want to hear a new song, something he wrote the evening before. Keep in mind that I've known the guy for a grand total of five minutes, and in those five minutes, we've already been witnesses to the aftermath of a car accident on a nearby street. It's a good, we're-unemployed-so-what-the-hell feeling, and there's nothing to do but roll with it.

Of course, I say.

He begins to play me a lilting, sexy lullaby, something that sounds as if it could have been written in 1910. It's gorgeous. Later I'll learn it was partially inspired by a new girlfriend. But now, once he finishes playing, a little wobbly (there's that hangover again) but unaffectedly so, Devendra announces that he "sucks" this morning. I assure him that that's not the case, but he's unconvinced.

A week later I will see him play for his record release party, and the song formerly known as "Sucks" will be polished to a rough sheen, so beautiful that the air at the show is almost palpable with the audience's need to shed an appreciative tear. No one needs to be told that they're witnessing something special. Everybody sips their drinks quietly and the room is hushed. Even the bartender looks sheepish when she has to go through a particularly noisy drink preparation. It's not an affected pose though, this silence. It's not the silence of pretentious jazz fans, or avant-garde indie kids who aren't aware that their emperors of silent cool wear no clothes. This is the silence of a group of people in smiling awe of a genuinely talented and wonderfully strange kid, a young man whose charm is almost effortless, whose skill is obvious and whose soul is on his sleeve.

But that show is still a week in the future. Right now, we're still slightly fuzzy from our respective previous evenings and are both in need of coffee. "Do you mind if I take a shower before we go? I stink real bad," Devendra says.

Go right on ahead, I say.

He hops off to his bathroom, and I sit there in his apartment, staring at the walls. Everything I know about Devendra Banhart so far is from listening to his peculiar and beautiful debut record, *Oh Me, Oh My the Way the Day Goes By the Sun Is Setting*

Dogs Are Dreaming Lovesongs of the Christmas Spirit (recently released on Michael Gira's Young God Records). At first glance, Devendra seems like a prime candidate to be dismissed as yet another in the long line of "weird white folkies" that cynical rock critics have been setting their watches by from Dylan to Oldham. He fits the racial profile: a kid with a patchy beard who's studied his blues 'n country licks. And there have been so many who reek of artifice and calculation. But when the real thing comes along...wow. It's nutsy bananas. Devendra Banhart and *Oh Me Oh My...* are, without trying to sound like a super-happy hype machine, the real thing. His is the sound of a skeleton playing his blues on the front porch of a haunted house, banging out curiously hopeful cemetery songs with a celebratory, surreal zeal, singing out with a high, quavering voice that is at once bizarre, unearthly and old, yet completely inviting and totally ingratiating.

And he's 21, I think as I wait for him to finish getting ready. This kid's

all a beautiful, soulful mess, full of unhidden love and fastidious, inscrutable detail.

Devendra emerges from the bathroom, scrubbed and ready to go. We hit the street, in search of food and caffeine. He begins reflecting on his as-of-yet ungentrified corner of Brooklyn.

"During the day this neighborhood is all families and kids, but at night... it's all shadows. Walking shadows." A group of youths pass by us, dragging baseball bats along the concrete behind themselves in an unconsciously threatening way, underscoring his point.

"The other day I found a piece of a guitar, just a fretboard, and I was carrying that around," he says as we watch the kids recede into the distance. "I think that would be a great weapon. Just a fretboard. That's what I'd fight with."

After this, I just let him go on as we walk. His speech, like his music, is peppered with observational non-sequiturs. He's one of those great free-associating story tellers that defy conventional structure and logic. Like so: "Why do bees make honey?" he asks. "Are they trying to make something else and honey is byproduct that we dig on? I don't get it. Is it bee shit? What beautiful shit. That's the best shit. We don't... well, we kind of feed flies. Our dead bodies are like honey to the flies."

Then: "One time I was in Paris, and they have this beer there, this whiskey flavored beer, and it tastes like a skunk's ass. But I drank so much of this shit that I blacked out and I woke up and I was in an Ethiopian, a Jamaican... something. An all-black calypso bar and I'm dancing, man. This was the only time ever where I blacked out and ended up somewhere else and I was moving. It was such a bizarre thing to wake up to. To wake up dancing in an all-black calypso bar. That was last summer."

Or: "The first time I played in New York was like at a Puerto Rican rally, and the band before me were these Puerto Rican dudes, and they had this twelve-year old boy. 'Here's our grandson on the mic.' And he's like, 'Mama, yo quiero...' And I had to follow this, so when I get up, I'm like '¡Viva Caracas!' And everybody's laughing, it was such a weird-ass show. There was this old Japanese dude who was rocking out. It was like a festival. It was bizarre."

This is more of what I found out



shawn mortensen

"DO RATS EAT MICE? WE DON'T EAT MIDGETS..."

got his entire creative career ahead of him. Jesus.

While I continue to wait, I wander around Devendra's small room off of the apartment's living room. He apparently likes picking up playing cards he finds on the sidewalk. A Queen of Spades, the 10 of Hearts and the 2 of Clubs share space among photographs of friends, torn pieces of artwork. The cluttered collage look seems to be a physical reflection of Devendra's speech and attitude: It's



HOW A CORN PLANT GROWS

CORN PLANTS INCREASE IN WEIGHT SLOWLY EARLY IN THE GROWING SEASON. BUT AS MORE LEAVES ARE EXPOSED TO SUNLIGHT, THE RATE OF DRY MATTER ACCUMULATION GRADUALLY INCREASES. THE LEAVES OF THE PLANT ARE PRODUCED FIRST, FOLLOWED BY THE LEAF SHEATHS, STALK, HUSKS, EAR SHANK, SILKS, COB AND FINALLY THE GRAIN. BY STAGE Y10, ENOUGH LEAVES ARE EXPOSED TO SUNLIGHT SO THE RATE OF DRY MATTER ACCUMULATION IS RAPID. UNDER FAVORABLE CONDITIONS, THIS RAPID RATE OF DRY MATTER ACCUMULATION IN THE ABOVE-GROUND PLANT PARTS WILL CONTINUE AT A NEARLY CONSTANT DAILY RATE UNTIL NEAR MATURITY.

CELL DIVISION IN THE LEAVES OCCURS AT THE GROWING TIP OF THE STEM. LEAVES ENLARGE, BECOME GREEN.

AND INCREASE IN DRY WEIGHT AS THEY EMERGE FROM THE WHORL AND ARE EXPOSED TO LIGHT, BUT NO CELL DIVISION OR ENLARGEMENT OCCURS IN THE LEAVES AFTER THEY ARE EXPOSED. ALL LEAVES ARE FULL SIZE BY Y12, BUT ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THE LEAVES ARE EXPOSED TO SUNLIGHT.

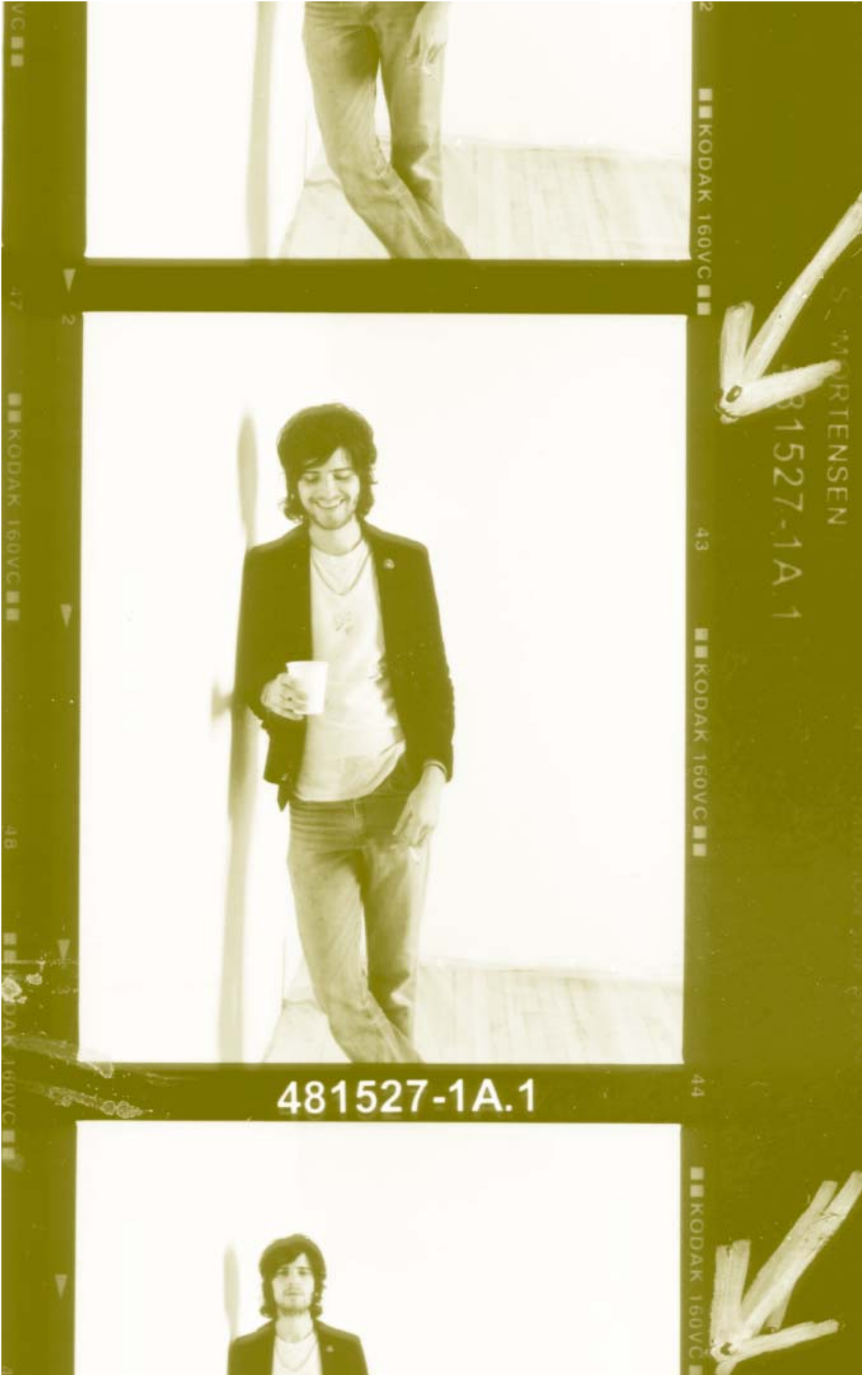
IF A CORN PLANT IS GROWN UNDER LOW PLANT DENSITY, PROFUSINESS MAY RESULT. INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PLANTS IN A GIVEN AREA REDUCES THE NUMBER OF EARS PER PLANT AND THE NUMBER OF KERNELS PER EAR. THIS REDUCTION IS GREATER FOR SOME HYBRIDS THAN FOR OTHERS. GRAIN PRODUCTION PER HECTARE (OR ACRE) WILL INCREASE WITH AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF PLANTS PER HECTARE UNTIL THE ADVANTAGE OF MORE PLANTS PER HECTARE IS OFFSET BY THE REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF KERNELS PER PLANT. THE OPTIMUM PLANT POPULATION IS DIFFERENT FOR DIFFERENT HYBRIDS AND IN DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS.

HIGHEST YIELDS WILL BE OBTAINED ONLY WHERE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE AT ALL STAGES OF GROWTH.

UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS IN EARLY GROWTH STAGES MAY LIMIT THE SIZE OF THE LEAVES (THE PHOTOSYNTHETIC FACTORY). IN LATER STAGES, UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS MAY REDUCE THE NUMBER OF SILKS PRODUCED, RESULT IN POOR POLLINATION OF THE OVULES AND RESTRICT THE NUMBER OF KERNELS THAT DEVELOP; OR GROWTH MAY STOP PREMATURELY AND RESTRICT THE SIZE OF THE KERNELS PRODUCED.



{shawn mortensen}



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about Devendra Banhart on that walk.

Some of Devendra Banhart's many loves:

Corn: "Corn is magical. You ever been in a cornfield? It's magical. I don't know what it does to me. Sometimes I just want to disappear in a cornfield."

Fred Neil: "I couldn't believe the obituary. It was just a little thing: 'Fred Neil: Songwriter.' That made me so sad when he died. I loved Fred Neil so much, so much."

Harry Smith: "He made such beautiful things. They make me want to do psychedelics in the park."

Churches: "I want to be a church janitor, man. Wouldn't that be beautiful? I love churches, and just to be able to walk in when there's no one there and polish things and just live there. I don't know, there's just something I like about that. But it sounds cheeseball, huh?"

Mice: "When I first moved to Brooklyn I got this little mouse for a dollar twenty-five or a dollar seventy-five and his name was Mister Journey. I built him this big cardboard house with velvet and pictures, but he attracted all the rats. I had these huge rats stuck in my room. The walls were so cheap that they were eating through the walls. It made a hole big enough for its head, so I had to get rid of my mouse. I set him free in this forest, and the minute I set him free, ten rat heads popped up. Do rats eat mice? We don't eat midgets. I just hope they didn't eat my mouse. He was a quick motherfucker."

Dance-offs: "I heard about this thing where these two girls were in the subway, and one of them was all like, 'Aw, bitch, let's fight,' and the other one was like, 'No: I'm gonna dance you off,' and she starts dancing. A dance-off! Wouldn't it be cool if you could do that in real life? That'd be so cool."

And some things that he does not love:

Newspapers: "Anytime I want to get bummed out about my life, I just read the newspaper. It's so fucked up. These are definitely the dark ages, man. These are definitely the dark ages."

Serious misuse of language: "When words like divine are used to describe ice cream, everything is fucked. Sacred words like that... I don't know man."

Papayas: "I can't stand papaya. My mom used to be the color of papaya. She ate it my whole life and she eats it everyday as much as she can, so she became papaya colored and I don't know what that is. I love my mom but I hate papaya, man. But oh, I love mango. You can replace your girlfriend with a mango. I tell you, those things are so sexual. They're just like sex. They're these beautiful things. At my grandmother's house in Caracas, if you walk outside there's this tree and it's just dripping with mangos, the biggest mangos. And they're all over the floor, because mangos are everywhere. You can literally just walk out and grab a mango. It's amazing."

Devendra begins to explain his personal history to me as we sit down to tamales and cups of coffee in the back of a neighborhood Mexican grocery store/taqueria. He was born to a



"I'M 21. I'M NOSTALGIC FOR EIGHT. I FEEL LIKE I REMEMBER TOO MUCH ALREADY, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING."



Venezuelan mother and a Texan father in Houston in 1981. In 1986, his parents split up, and he and his mother and his brother left Texas for his mother's home country of Venezuela. "My mom moved back to Venezuela with me with I was five," He pours a little jolt of whiskey into his cup and offers some to me. I shake my head and tell him that my New Year's resolution for the coming year is to develop a taste for brown liquor. This amuses him, and he shakes his head. Whiskey is a treat to him - he pronounces the word "whiskey" with the same joy a child reserves for the words "candy" and "ice cream."

"I lived [in Caracas] until I was twelve or thirteen," he explains, "and then we moved [back to the States]. I never went anywhere, I never visited anywhere. Now I go back there as little as I can. I hate it. It's just so fucking dangerous and corrupt. It's like a reverse volcano, you know?"

He laughs, thinking. "I guess that's what a valley is, huh?"

"There are mountains surrounding Caracas," he continues, "but the mountains aren't mountains. They're just covered in shanties and the city's in the middle part. No one's really rich, but there's no sense of pride in being working class or poor. Everybody's just trying to fuck everybody else. It's a really dangerous place. At eight o'clock, the streets just empty. I

know people whose kids have been killed for wearing Air Jordans. They don't even take 'em and tell you to run. They'll just shoot you and take it. It's so fucked up."

But when Devendra hit his teens, his mother decided to leave Caracas behind and headed to California, settling in a small canyon community somewhere above Santa Monica. "It was beautiful, so beautiful. Then I went to college in San Francisco. I went to art school for interdisciplinary studies, like sculpture and film and all that, but I was like fuck, I just want to go home and play songs. I was working and studying everything except for what I love, which is music, so I dropped out. Then I just started playing in San Francisco. Then I went to L.A. I moved to New York five months ago. I came from L.A. I hate that place. It fucking sucks. I had to drive and I'd be driving drunk. You have to. It's so flat and nothing."

"I'm 21. I'm embarrassed. I feel like a baby, you know? I guess I'm nostalgic for eight. I feel like I remember too much already, but I don't remember anything." Devendra shakes his head, looks up at me... and apologizes. "I'm sorry if I fucking suck at this interview. I feel like a dork, man. I feel totally fucking stupid. This is only the second interview I've done."

I assure him that he's doing just fine, but by this time, we've finished our meals and we decide that that's the end of the interview. It's early evening now in Brooklyn, and we decide to walk to a neighborhood bar and have a few drinks. All the way there, we sing songs by the Monkees, make up fake band names and song titles and toast the fucked up beauty of the world. ☺

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through the lens of

charles brittin

anita o' day, venice, california, 1956



"I took this picture outside of her apartment at Avenue 54 and Speedway. She lived upstairs from me there for about a year with her drummer and companion John Poole, and she liked to come downstairs in the morning and walk around the beach a bit. I never saw her high but I knew she had a drug problem then, and she spent a lot of time by herself up in her apartment. I saw a good deal of John because she liked to be alone when she got high, so he'd often come down and hang out with me in the evening. She seemed unhappy."

Charles Brittin was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1928. He was the youngest in a family of three children, and following the death of his father in 1943, he and his mother moved to Los Angeles where he enrolled at Fairfax High School. "After six months at Fairfax I was a Marxist, a radical, and I'd found the world culturally," Brittin recalls. "All the people I met there were liberals and they directed me to wonderful books like Irving Stone's biography of Clarence Darrow, which is an excellent history of the United States during the first half of the 20th Century."

In 1946 Brittin enrolled at UCLA where he studied film, but by 1950 he'd concluded he wasn't a filmmaker and shifted his attention to photography. Living in Venice in the early '50s with his first wife, he supported himself with a series of odd jobs and constantly took pictures: of Venice, which was still a sleepy little beach town; of L.A.'s burgeoning avant garde art community, which included Wallace Berman, John Alton, George Herms and many others; of the gorgeous women who served as muses to those artists; of the assorted hipsters and outsiders living alongside him on the margins of mainstream society. Brittin's work took a sharp turn in 1962 when he and his third wife, Barbara Brittin, began devoting their lives to political activism. "We felt compelled to do something because the times demanded it," says Brittin, who spent the next 13 years documenting public protests in Los Angeles, the deep South, and the Bay area.

In the mid '70s Brittin's health began failing, and it continued to deteriorate until 1990, when he received a liver transplant. He was then on dialysis from 1990 through 1996, when he had a kidney transplant and began to regain some of his strength. It was then that he revisited for the first time the hundreds of boxes of photographs, prints and contact sheets he'd been accumulating throughout his life. It is those photographs that appear here in print for the first time.

The power of Brittin's pictures is largely derived from the purity of spirit in which they were taken. Brittin never harbored notions of himself as a great artist or an important photographer—he is both, of course, but he's never been driven by those sorts of concerns. Rather, his steadfast presence on the front lines of American history during the '50s, '60s' and '70s is a reflection of the simple fact that he cares about people, and is moved by the complex events that ensnare us all. —Kristine McKenna



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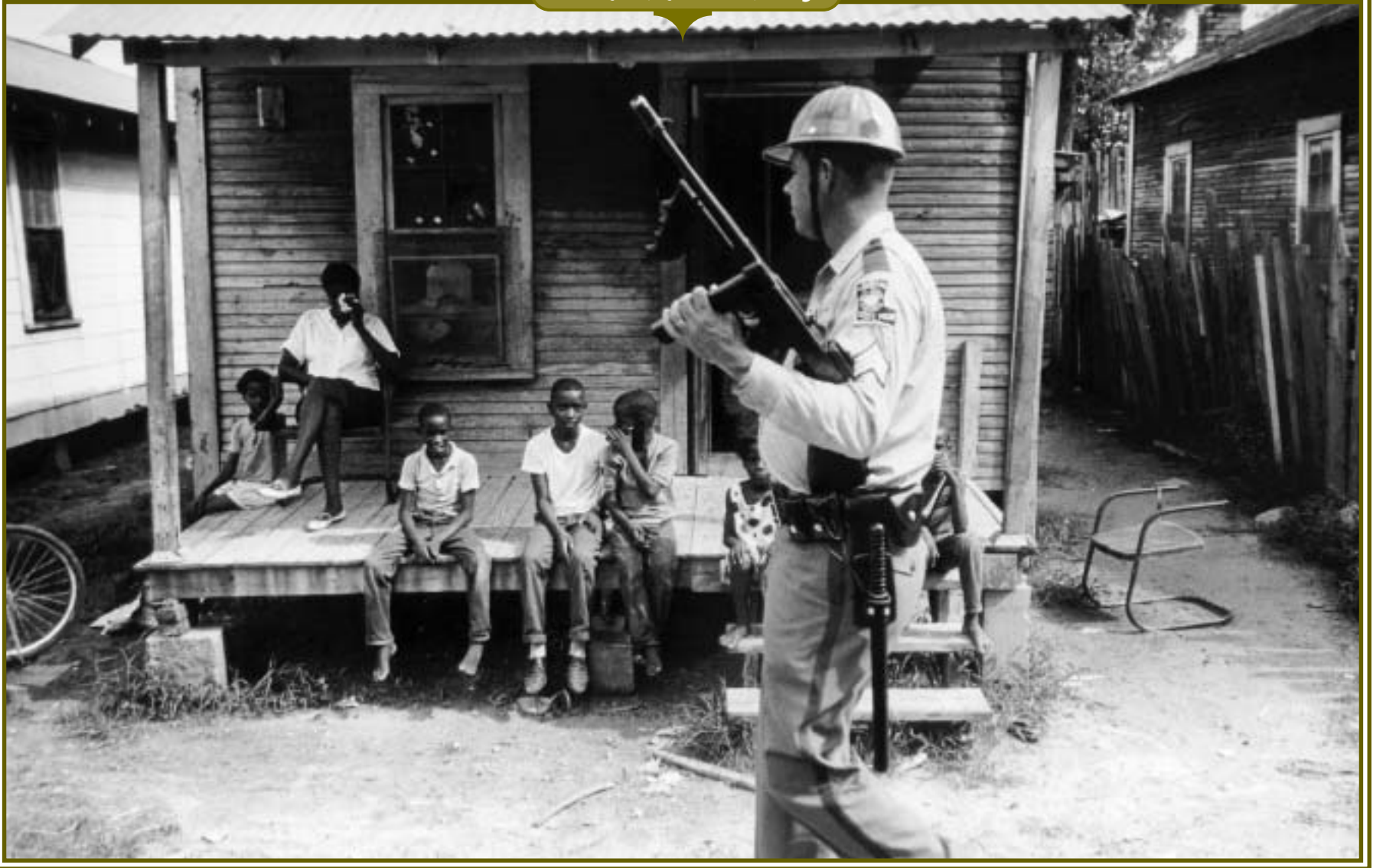
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bogalusa, louisiana, 1965



"My wife and I went there as CORE volunteers for a series of marches that were expected to result in violent confrontations with the white community. These were nationally observed marches and Louisiana's state troopers were present, ostensibly to protect the marchers, but they were really there as a display of force intended to intimidate and deter people from participating. These protests were organized in the local churches, which were the centers of leadership in these small southern towns, and they were backed up by a local self-defense group called the Deacons For Defense which was mostly made up of former black G.I.s. On Saturday nights white drunks would drive through the black community shooting at random, and the Deacons were there as an armed presence to protect the community. We spent three months in the South staying in motels up and down the delta and with black families in homes like the one in this picture, and we were scared to death the entire time."

lenny bruce at a sunset boulevard nightclub, 1961



"At that point his work hadn't yet become enormously controversial. He was a clever, sharp comic doing his snot routine, and his bad problems hadn't descended on him yet."

the ocean park pier in the process of being demolished, 1974



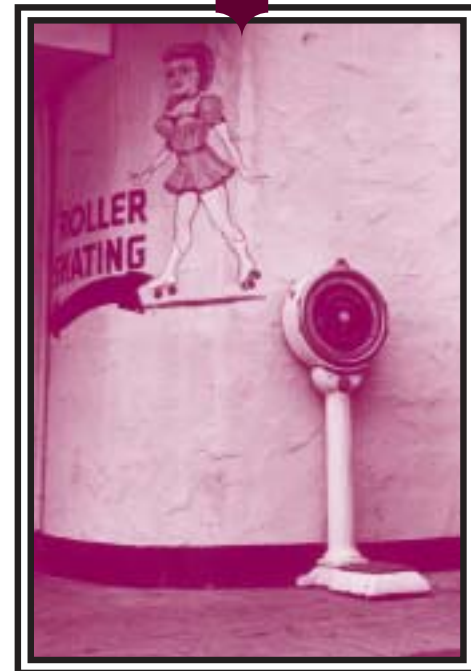
"After a series of fires on the pier in the early '70s it was clear that the pier would never be restored, and it stood there like that for about six months before it was demolished."

a black panther community center in south central los angeles, 1968



"You can see by the sign in front of this center that the Panthers' original intentions revolved around community services. Nonetheless, I suspect there always was somebody armed on the premises there—in fact, I remember from working as a volunteer that you usually knew exactly where the guns were behind the counter. And, when there were warnings or indications that there was going to be violence, everyone would be on high alert."

entrance to the skating rink on the ocean park pier, 1955



marlon brando at a core fair housing march in torrance, california in 1964.



"Brando always seemed to know what was going on politically and that particular protest received a great deal more attention than it would've had he not been there. These demonstrations had been going on for two years at newly built housing tracts in Torrance and Dominguez Hills that were financed by Home Savings and Loan, and refused to sell to black or Asians. If a non-white attempted to purchase a home there they'd be told that nothing was available, but perhaps they could find something in Southwood, which was where they were sending all the blacks. It took two years of public protest and about a thousand arrests before that policy was changed. They arrested people week after week at sit-ins and picket lines, but they finally had to drop all the charges against the protesters because the city couldn't afford to process all of the arrests. They finally changed their policy—at least on the surface they changed it."

members of core and the american nazi party demonstrating at a housing tract in torrance, california 1964



"When CORE and the Nazis protested at the same location both sides would basically ignore each other. Later there were situations where animosity was expressed, but at that point both sides were observing the rules, whatever they were."

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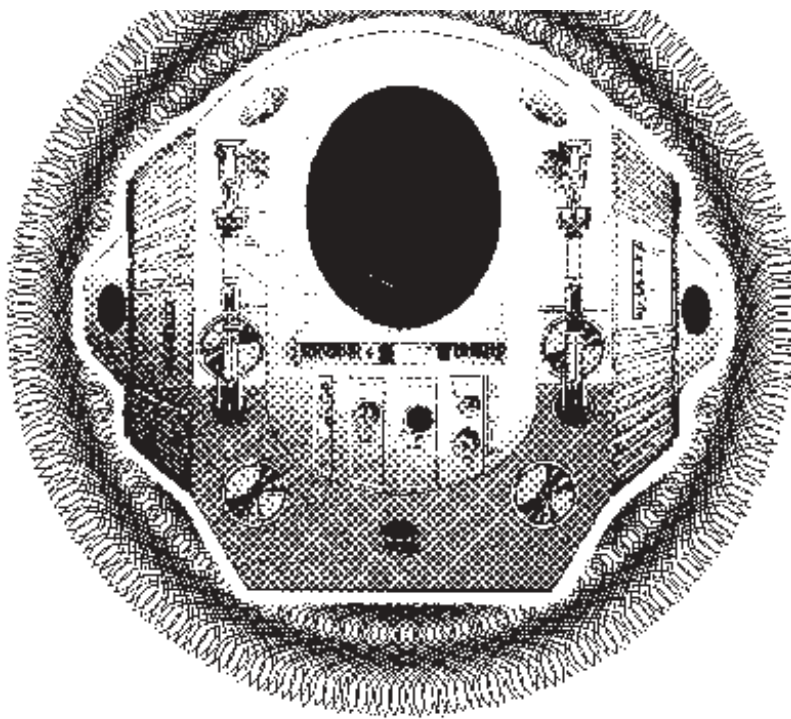
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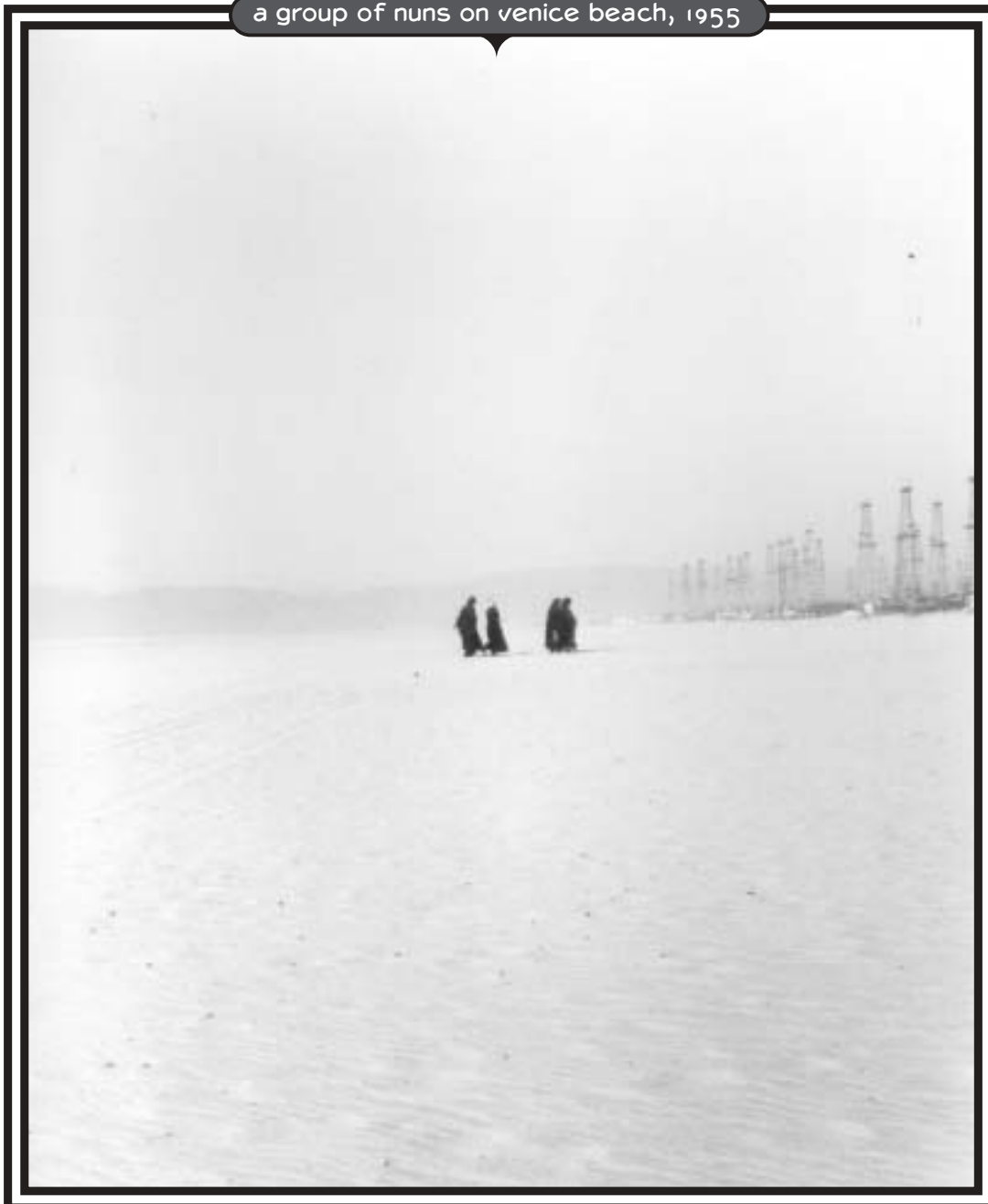
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rachel rosenthal rehearsing instant theater in los angeles, 1958

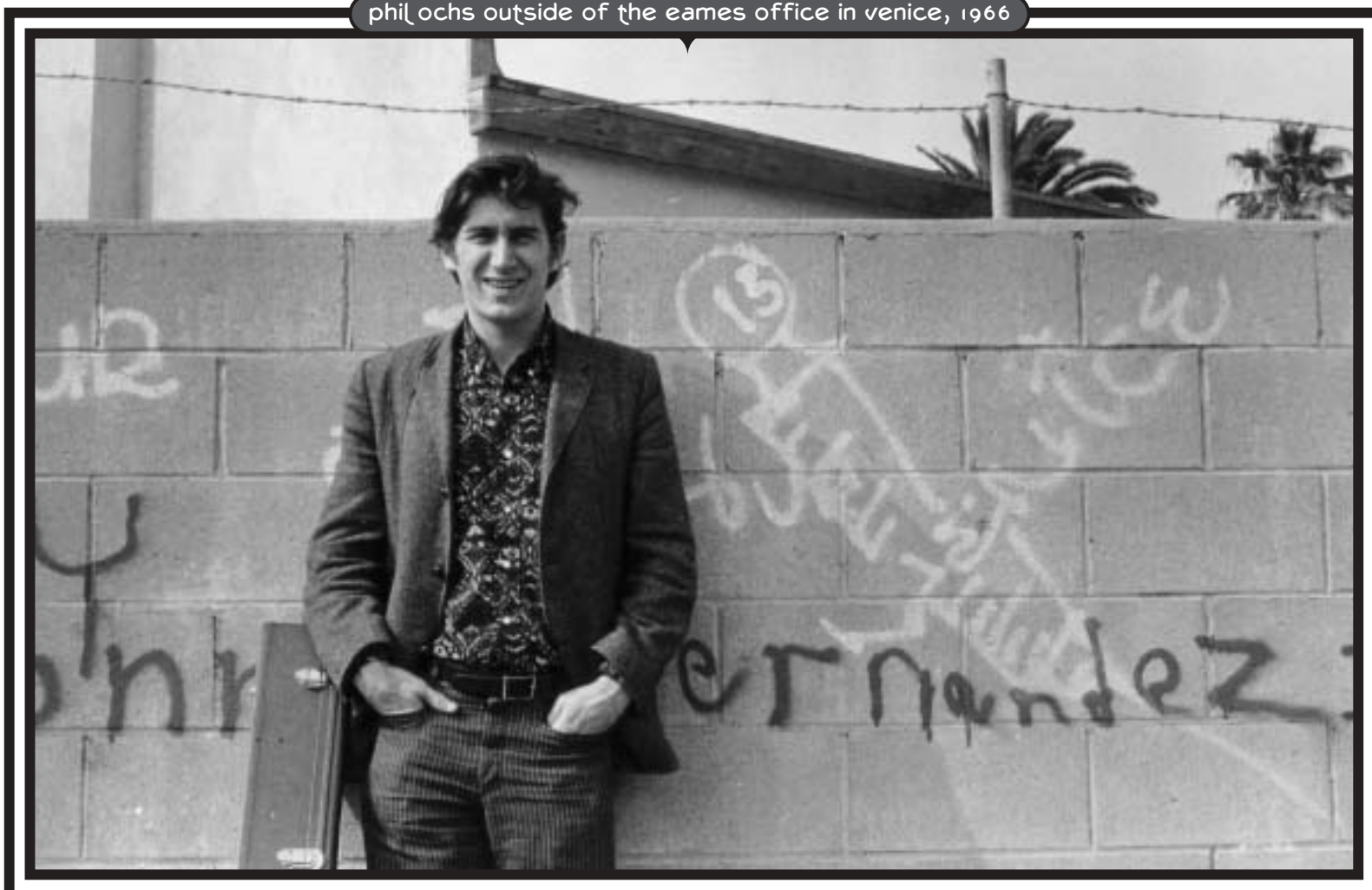


a group of nuns on venice beach, 1955



"I remember being startled to see them out there on that hot summer afternoon."

phil ochs outside of the eames office in venice, 1966



"I was friends with Ed Pearl who ran the Ash Grove on Sunset Strip, so Ed introduced me to Phil one night when he was appearing there. Phil wanted to see Los Angeles so I took him to see the Ed Kienholz exhibition at LACMA—which was hugely controversial at the time—and he also wanted to visit Forest Lawn. He didn't have many buddies in L.A. and always seemed kind of lonely, so we became friends, and every time he was in town he'd contact us looking for two things; a throat doctor, because he had problems with his voice, and a connection to buy some pot. I was surprised when he committed suicide in 1976, because I hadn't detected that degree of darkness in him. The last time I saw him was at Schwab's Drugstore after the big demonstration in Century City. He was with a group of Yippies who were saying 'we declare that the war is over, we've won the war.'"

marchers in los angeles protesting the war in viet nam, on wilshire boulevard at virgil, april 4, 1969





"That was the biggest anti-war march that took place in L.A., and it was a coalition of many groups—Students for a Democratic Society, the Peace & Freedom Party, CORE, Angry Arts, and many more. Everybody participated, and people walked east on Wilshire Boulevard to a mass rally at McArthur Park."

unidentified mourners at
bunchy carter's funeral, 1969



an unidentified protester being arrested
during a sit-in at the l.a. federal building, 1966



"The thing that moved me about these people is that they weren't crying and something in their posture suggested they'd stay with it and endure. The funeral itself was sort of festive in that everyone was dressed up, but these people went all the way and stood at the gravesite in the rain."

kathleen cleaver at the funeral in a south central l.a. church for black panther leader bunchy carter, who was slain on the ucla campus by members of ron karenga's rival black militant group, the united slaves, 1969.



"This demonstration was part of a series of public protests demanding that the federal government intervene to protect the civil rights marchers in Selma. This woman was participating in a sit-in blocking a driveway at the Federal Building, and this is how such people were dealt with by the police."

"Kathleen Cleaver was an enormously poised, self-possessed woman, and unlike many of the Panther spokespeople, she was never emotional. She was clear and immaculate—in fact, she was a graduate of an eastern girls school. At that point none of us knew about the trouble she was having with Eldridge Cleaver; that he was abusive to her."

andy warhol's exploding plastic inevitable, featuring the velvet underground with nico, and gerard malanga & mary woronov's whip dance, at the tripp on sunset boulevard, 1966.



"The mood at the club that night was one of great fun and excitement. There was Nico, who had that unearthly presence and didn't seem to really be a part of it all, loud music, flashing strobes and a light show, Gerard and Mary's whip dance—nobody had ever seen anything like that as part of a rock show. Nobody thought for a minute, however, that anything genuinely depraved or kinky was going on, so it was astounding to see it described in the paper a few days later as this scandalous show."

the fun house on the ocean park pier, 1955



"Everybody spent a lot of time there during the '50s and 60s. There was a roller-coaster and restaurants and everybody was there. It was run down but it was lively, and because it had been there for such a long time, we all assumed it would remain there forever." @



divine, marvelous

TROPICALISTA CAETANO VELOSO REMEMBERS AUTHORITARIAN BRAZIL, 1968: TANKS, HALLUCINOGENS, MUSIC, STREET PROTESTS, LITERACY CAMPAIGNS, WITCHCRAFT CULTS AND TV VARIETY SHOWS.



The March of a Hundred Thousand: the protest against the murder of a student, Edson Luis, by the police. Front row, from left: Chico Buarque, Arduinho Colazanti, Renato Borghi, Zé Celso, Paulinho da Viola (facing away), Dedé (Veloso's first wife), Caetano, Nana Caymmi and Gilberto Gil. June 26, 1968.

CAETANO VELOSO, now 60 years old, is widely recognized as one of the most important and innovative pop musicians of the 20th century. As a young musician coming of age in the right-wing military dictatorship that was Brazil of the late-1960s, Veloso co-founded the Tropicalia movement, a collective of Bahian artists, poets and performers that included the musicians Os Mutantes, Gal Costa, Tom Zé and Veloso's close friend, the singer Gilberto Gil. The Tropicalistas, as they called themselves, were dedicated to making a fundamentally new and rule-less music out of traditional Brazilian pop and the radical new rock n roll arriving from England and America. In this excerpt from his new memoir of the period, Veloso details how the cultural movement was overtaken by the political developments of the day—and how a strange hallucinogenic drink from the Amazon opened personal artistic and intellectual vistas for him and other Tropicalistas...

Carlos Marques, a young Carioca journalist who had gone to the Amazon region to report a story, brought back for Gil [Gilberto Gil] a bottle of something he said was an indigenous sacred drink that produced dazzling visions and heightened states of consciousness. Gil took some on the same day that he was supposed to fly to Rio to pick up Nara, his two-year-old daughter, and bring her back to São Paulo. He says that when he arrived at the Santos Dumont airport, he came upon a group of military officers who were there to inaugurate some exhibition connected with the air force. The changes in perception caused by the drug were just starting to take effect, and he arrived back in São Paulo saying that he'd become aware of extraordinary things in the presence of those officers. It was as though he had understood in that moment the true meaning of our destiny as a people under authoritarian oppression, and at the same time he could see himself as an individual, alone, carefully carrying his small daughter, but also able to feel—beyond his fears and political inclinations—a love for the world in all its manifestations, including the military oppressors.

The 1964 coup—which the military dates to March 31 but which really happened on April 1, the day of fools—had caught me precisely at the moment when I felt ready for a politically responsible and socially useful action. Professor Paulo Freire, a left-wing Catholic educator, had

created a very effective method of overcoming adult illiteracy, which involved concurrent education in social and political issues. It is important to point out that at the time no one would have deemed such a program political propaganda camouflaged as education. Indeed, with the exception of the reactionary forces that plotted the coup, there was a consensus that Brazil needed such "basic reforms," a vision shared by the federal government (which was deposed for that reason as well). The classes taught by Paulo Freire's teams were seen as instructive in the broadest sense, a means of preparing the general population for great social changes. Furthermore, the social and political implications of Freire's method entered the courses as subsidiary to the final objective, which was to teach adults to read. Yet the Brazilian social structure, entrenched since colonial times down to the unconscious level, reacted against the double threat posed by accelerated literacy and politicization of Brazil's poor.

I had attended a meeting to train volunteer instructors when the news broke that a coup was going to take place that night, causing the work to be suspended. Some of the participants wanted to continue, arguing that it was no doubt an unfounded rumor. But the more experienced ones immediately canceled the meeting, advising us to go home while they investigated the possibilities of resistance. The next day classes were canceled, and rumors circulated of professors under arrest or being questioned, and of the whereabouts of missing students. Even more frightening were the tanks in the streets. I have a very vivid

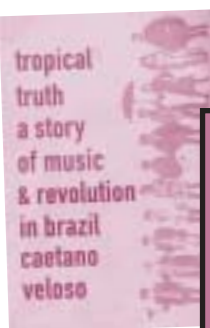
memory of the sensation I felt walking from the end of the line in the Nazaré neighborhood, where I lived, to the old faculty building of the university, in the middle of Joana Angélica Street. Looking at the tanks, I asked myself whether I had the courage to take part in a revolution, whether I was willing to lay down my life for the social causes I thought I supported. But at that moment—and from that moment on—I was not sure what "my life" meant. The silent streets, the tanks, everything seemed unreal. I felt fear and hatred for the army in the streets, with its soiled colors and anonymous air. I childishly wished it would all go away quickly.

Between 1964 and 1968 the Brazilian cultural movement not only intensified, but took on even more markedly leftist overtones, bringing together writers, actors, singers, directors, plays, films, and the public in a kind of spiritual resistance to the dictatorship. Politics was never my forte. But I saw myself faced continually with the demands for political definition, in the realm of artistic creation as much as in that of individual conscience.

When I was seven years old, I commented one night at dinner that my teacher had told us communists were bad. My father—filling me with pride by addressing me as an equal—told me not to listen to that kind of talk, because communists, generally speaking, were intelligent individuals fighting for justice among men. His face seemed irate, but it was clear that his anger was not with me but rather with the teacher whose aim was to instill fear. That episode taught me to distrust anti-communists ever after. There was in my father's tone a

complicity with greatness (a profession of faith in greatness, and perhaps a recognition of a vocation for it in me), and that, too, filled me with pride. And so I grew up seeing anti-communism on some level as the reaction of the mediocre against any particular greatness I might possess.

At the end of the war, my father was proud to have carried on his shoulders my brother Roberto, who was little then; he made him wave the flag of the Soviet Union during the parade (the Carnival of Victory) in Santo Amaro. He had done so to demonstrate pointedly his resistance to the reigning Catholic anti-communism—thus taking an independent position at the dawn of the Cold War. On the other hand, there was a photograph of Franklin Delano Roosevelt on the wall of our dining room. My father used to say that this homage—which lasted perhaps a few years—was owing to the fact that this American president had been a great defender of democracy, and so my father did not endorse the anti-Americanism typical of communist sympathizers. At the end of the sixties, during *tropicalismo*, the ideas of the New Left concerning sexual freedom, changing lifestyles, and so on, allied to the renewed prestige of Hollywood and rock, opened up a space in which it was possible to scorn orthodox communism. The "Big Party" was old hat, aside from being perennially hitched to whatever might be useful to Moscow where the internal politics of each country was concerned. The Cuban revolution, which seemed to promise a mulatto socialism in the tropics, minus the shadows of the European East, had not garnered in Cuba itself the support of the Communist Party. We believed, to paraphrase the Leninist saying, that "leftist ideology is the infantile illness of communism," and further, that the French, Brazilian, and American students, by identifying with Fidel against the Party, and by supporting Che Guevara against Fidel, would



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cure all the Lefts of the senile illness of orthodox communism.

In 1967 and 1968, when the military president was Artur da Costa e Silva, an ex-minister for the armed forces and Castelo Branco's rival, the rejection of the dictatorship overflowed the theater auditoriums, spreading out into the streets. The demonstrations increased, and student leaders appeared in the headlines.

A student called Edson Luís was killed by the police in Rio during a demonstration at the student cafeteria, and the resulting wave of indignation compelled the leaders of the students, religious groups, workers, and artists to organize a protest that drew more than a hundred thousand into the streets of Rio. Gil and I came from São Paulo to take part in it. There were some uncertainties as to whether the demonstration would be repressed or whether there would be violence. But the only noticeable presence of the mechanism of repression was an army helicopter that followed the demonstrators' movements from above. Some of the participants declared proudly that the oppressors had been driven back by the sight of the multitudes—the leading lights of Brazilian culture among them. After that protest, many smaller ones followed. In São Paulo one could sense a great indifference or even hostility on the part of the population, while in Rio it seemed the city supported the marches. Confetti would fall from the buildings in the center of town, and the climate was friendly, but this only provoked the military police to intensify their reactions.

During one of the long nights of conversation and beer at 2002, Waly Salamão, Luís Tenório (a friend from Salvador who would later become a famous psychoanalyst), and I had stayed up until daybreak, and we continued to talk nonstop until the sun was high. Suddenly, we became aware of a commotion in the street. Looking down from the twentieth floor, we saw that it was a student demonstration against the dictatorship. I decided to go see it at close range, and Waly and Tenório came along. The procession was moving along Ipiranga Avenue, and when it came to República Square, it was intercepted by police detachments in huge armored cars, whose appearance caused the students to disperse in all directions.

Many were caught by the police and beaten. My two friends remained at my side, quiet and tense. I was wearing an old European military jacket (a general's tunic) over my naked torso, jeans, sandals, and an Indian necklace made of big animal teeth. My hair was then very long, still a rarity at that time, and most observers found me threatening as I approached them. I questioned the bystanders, challenging their fearful indifference to (or perhaps tacit support of) such brutality.

But men and women still hurried by, scared of the demonstrators, the soldiers, me. I was sure that, under the circumstances, I was untouchable, and I felt possessed by a holy wrath. In truth, no one would have known what to make of this strange apparition amid the upheaval, the confrontation between the students and soldiers. Anyone listening to me listened out of fear, willing to endure any outrage in order to escape. And outrage is what they heard. The soldiers barely paid me any mind: I was moving against the flow of the students, my course a tangent, in fact, to the eye of the storm, and I did not appear to be one of the demonstrators. I yelled furiously, but no soldier ever came close enough to hear what I was saying. I ended up returning home, still scolding passersby as everyone dispersed and the tanks collected their prisoners. When I read those commentaries alleging the narcissism of the protests in France that May—that the demonstrators were more theatrical than political—it occurred to me I had been right after all to accept Guilherme's invitation to make a song out of "it is forbidden to forbid." Now amid this strange descent into the streets, I was conscious of having enacted something—a serious



The image from the cover of the 1968 record-manifesto *Tropicalia, ou Panis et circensis*. Veloso is in the second row, holding the large framed photograph.

and extravagant performance by the light of the sun, an improvisation of political theater, a poem in action. I was a *tropicalista*, free of ties to traditional politics, and therefore I could react against oppression and narrowness according to my own creativity. Narcissus? I did feel myself at that moment above Chico Buarque or Edu Lobo, or any of my colleagues thought to be great and profound.

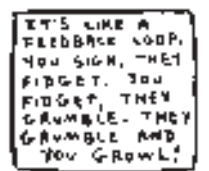
It was in this climate of delusional exaltation and conflagrations in the

street that *auasca*, the hallucinogenic drink Carlos Marques had brought back from the Amazon, made its appearance. Following his own experience with it on the flight from Rio to São Paulo, Gil proposed we "trip" together. (At the time it was already common among musicians and becoming the fashion among followers of rock and *tropicalismo*, as well as the growing ranks of dropouts.) He came over to my apartment with a bottle and poured us each the amount that Marques ("Marx") had recommended: a little over half a glass. My first experience with a drug other than alcohol or tobacco had been a catastrophe. At fourteen, during the first Carnival I spent in Santo Amaro after coming back from my first year in Rio, Luís César, a friend from high school, suggested that we get high together using an atomizer of what was known as Carnival perfume. The atomizer was synonymous with happiness for me: the perfume was sold in little golden vials or small glass jars, and when it was sprayed on the skin it felt ice-cold and vanished within seconds; we could aim it at girls and hint at amorous passions—it held the aromatic suggestion of a dream. My father used to buy a little bottle for each

of us (how he respected Carnival!), but many times I had heard him condemn the practice of using it as a narcotic and warn of the danger of cardiac arrest. Nevertheless, I would hear some of my older acquaintances (including my brothers) praising the marvelous "high." So when Luís César proposed the experiment, I resisted for a long while, but there came a point when my intense curiosity overcame my fear.

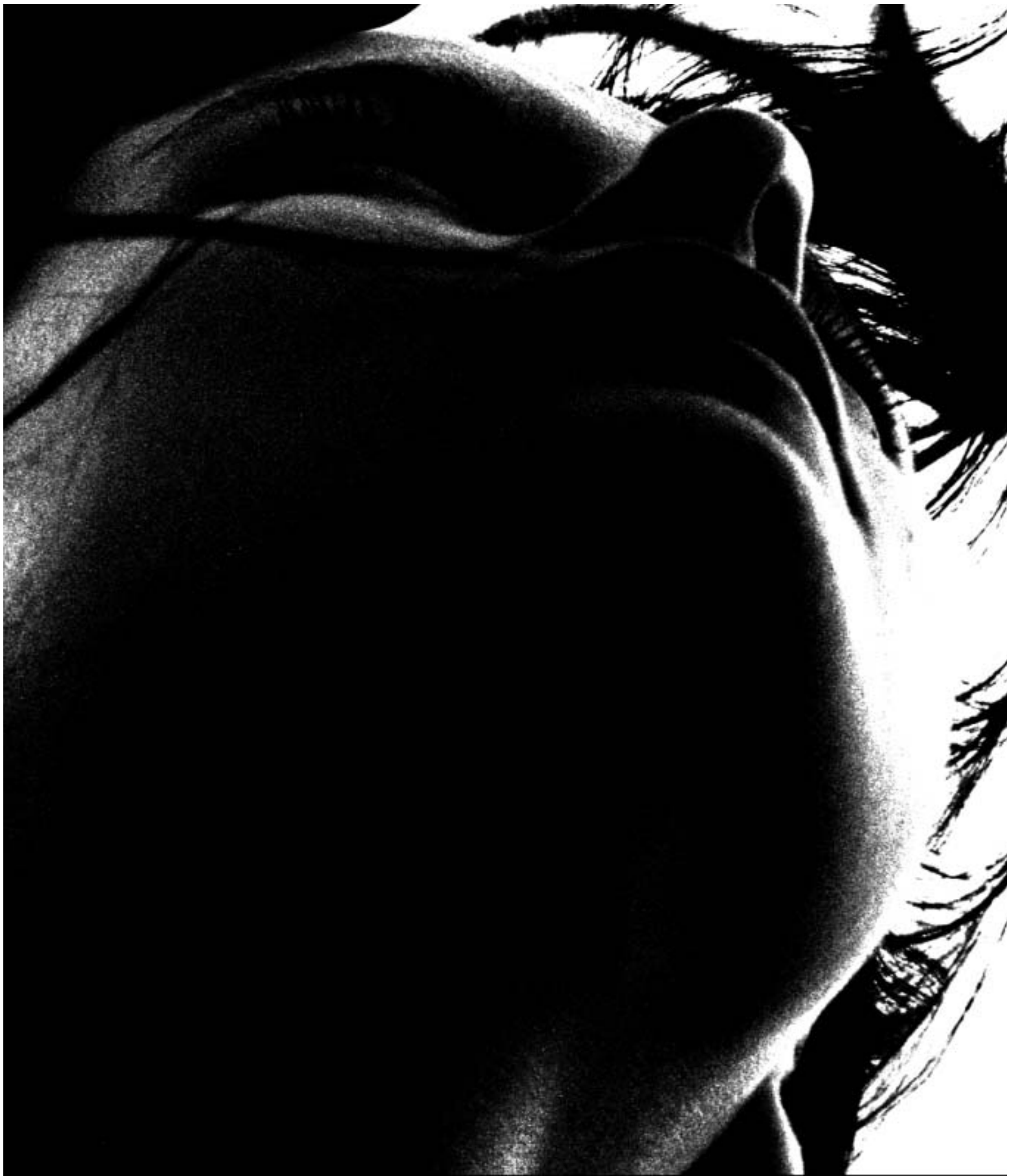
I inhaled a handkerchief drenched in the liquid, and in a second became the unhappiest person on earth. The whole illuminated night of the square in Santo Amaro was plunged into a darkness that seemed to be emanating from me, and a buzz in my ears, which oscillated but also seemed to grow steadily more intense, made me feel I was losing the world—and losing myself to the world. The most ferocious and childish fear of ceasing to be took possession of me in those seconds that seemed to last an eternity. An incommensurate happiness would take hold of me as I felt myself returning to life, but it was not enough to prevent me from falling into a kind of depression immediately following the high, spoiling both my Carnival of 1957 and the following days. I had visited a hell in which the unbearable absurdity of a disembodied spirit—a consciousness without a purpose—was in horrible evidence: I had always hated the idea that we continue to feel after death. So today whenever I hear someone tell of the spirits of deceased parents communicating with the living, I feel a solitary torment.

Gil, Dedé, Sandra, Péricles Cavalcanti, Rosa Maria Dias (then Péricles's wife), Waly, Duda, and I each had a dose of *auasca*. Everyone drank it immediately, while I hesitated: years after that experience with the atomizer, and a little over a year before that night, I had known an equally infernal suffering on account of marijuana, into which I was initiated along with some of my Bahian friends by a black American woman who had come to live in Salvador, a very interesting person, whose activities in the city we could never quite fathom. She had large quantities of weed of the highest quality, and she gave each of us a joint. Not knowing that it was too much, I smoked the whole thing, dragging on it and holding the smoke in as she instructed. When



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I finished the joint, still saying that I did not feel a thing, I got up to go to the window. In one blow, the light disappeared (it was daytime), my heart raced, my mouth dried up, and my body went numb—especially my legs. At the window the cobblestones below appeared to be glued to our third (or fourth) floor windowsill. I understood that this was just the beginning. None of my friends—like me, all first-timers—had a similar reaction. Understanding my desperation they started to concentrate on taking care of me. I felt very far away, longing intensely for the very people who were right there with me. I felt a desperate longing for Bahia, for myself, for Dedé, for life. They gave me sweets, milk, orange juice. Nothing made me feel better. I suffered like a madman for about five hours. When I began to notice I was coming down, an intense love, there is no other word for it, began to take hold of me, toward the people who were there—each and every one of them—as well as the walls, the furniture, the floor of the house, and then for the neighborhood of Barra, and the world. But the interminable hours of anguish—the altered sense of time made them seem like millennia—left me traumatized, so that I promised myself I would never smoke that stuff again.

So now here I was, before the only glass of *auasca* that had not been emptied. I had listened to Gil's arguments as he tried to convince me: unlike marijuana, *auasca* did not cause a failure of light perception, numbness, drunkenness, or tachycardia. You would remain clear-headed and slowly begin to perceive things with greater intensity: lights, colors, textures, relations between forms, and sometimes things that were not "real," although they could be seen clearly. Wanting to free myself from fear, out of curiosity and the need to share, I raised the glass and drank it. At first it simply seemed to me that the Pink Floyd record Gil had put on was funny. Then the nylon rug in the sound room began to show its peculiar way of being: each neutral tone—straw, sand,



Both performances of "Prohibiting Is Prohibited" at the FIC were scandalous. "I said, 'So you're the young people who say they want to the power. If you're the same in politics as you are in music, we're done for!'" Gil joined Caetano onstage, where they were pelted with paper, plastic cups and a chunk of wood that left Gil with a bloody ankle. "Perhaps we had touched certain deep structures in Brazilian life at great risk to ourselves. Nevertheless, I felt proud."

ice, ash, and a thousand off-whites—said so much: the speed of vibrations that produced the neutral tone's appearance, the foolishness of man's pretense of imitating beauty, or the unity of the moment in which we found ourselves facing each other. I lingered over each object and marveled at how deeply I could understand it. I knew everything about that piece of wood appearing beneath the rug, as if understanding the history of every bit of matter. I was moved by the drama of all inanimate things: it wasn't as though they had a consciousness, but rather as though I were a consciousness that could pierce everything, including the deep consciousness of unconscious entities. Sometimes it seemed possible to perceive how molecules came together to form this or that perceptible effect: cloth, plastic, paper. I followed the workings of atoms, of chance and convention in the creation of recognizable forms.

The others started to move about in a

way that attracted my attention. Sandra went in and out of the room with a serious expression on her face; her eyes were hard and she was frightened. I thought she looked like an Indian. Gil had tears in his eyes and was saying something about dying, or having died, I don't know which. Dedé circled the room saying that she saw herself in a different place. It made me very happy to see that the others were so clearly themselves. I closed my eyes. Colored points of light appeared in the unlimited darkness, organizing themselves in pleasant patterns. The points were more and more richly organized. The way they fell into place seemed both inevitable and chosen freely by me. I wished for this or that movement and it was immediately, fatally so. Circular forms composed themselves of beautiful luminous points dancing. And little by little I knew who each one was. They were many, of both sexes, all of them naked, and they looked like Hindus.

To say that those figures were dancing around in circles is to try to translate into ordinary language the sensation of absolute harmony those forms produced. I instantaneously alternated—opening and closing my eyes—between the observation of the exterior world and the experience of that world of images as it became each time more dense. In fact, gradually I could recognize things seen with my eyes closed as indubitably more real than my friends who were physically present in the sound room, *more real* than the walls or the rugs. The conception of space itself—the room in the apartment, the city, the world; the distance between people, the dimensions of the furniture—all was sustained at the price of an ironic recognition of its precarious conventionality.

Dedé called me over to the small carpeted veranda adjacent to the living room. She wanted to show me something amazing: São Paulo by night, seen from the window of our twentieth floor, under the influence of *auasca*. I don't know what she saw. It's obvious that we were expressing similar reactions without much explanation. What impressed me most was the sensation that the city was dead. Not that it was sad—much less ugly. It was immense, metallic, brilliant even though dark (everything seemed dark) but, unlike Dedé, our friends, the apartment—even the nylon rug—and above all the Hindu angels I could see behind my eyelashes, it seemed to have no life. I returned to the sound room and to the celestial experience with my closed eyes.

Years later, when I read Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, I quickly understood his observations on the role of color in the mind's validation of the reality of what it perceives. Black-and-white—or some monochrome—is the very sign of the representation, the abstraction, of irreality. Color, rather than seeming to us a mere attribute (as some of my friends who took issue with Huxley would have it), has the feel of reality as vision captures it. No doubt we automatically use color as proof of reali-

ty, among the other indicators that distinguish the real from hallucinations, illusions, and dreams. We come to an intuition of the evidence of reality. In the case of visions caused by *auasca*, especially because of color—and in spite of the fact of there being no verification through sound, touch, or smell—it was obvious to me that what I saw with my eyes closed was *more real* than what I saw with them open. But what does more real mean? I could see myself seeing what I was seeing and though I knew that it was all illusion, I was able to tell what came closer to absolute truth. There was no discounting of everyday reality: I knew myself, and mine, and the world, and my capacity to love was much enhanced in this respect. Rather, I had come into contact with a deeper and more intense level of reality. And the fact that I could love more what was thus represented contributed to the intensity of my love for common reality. I felt happy. But this happiness, though sweepingly felt, was nonetheless seen from afar, a mere aspect of that other world, less real than the one of the Hindu angels.

These were also recognized as my ancestors: *all* the people who ever existed, who might ever exist. These were also the people who actually existed. Unlike us, they had existed always and forever, the unending circle of their dance (this was a circle, though its limits could not be seen, and though it was not two-dimensional, nor was it a sphere) was a movement that brought the absolute closer. We were contingent, they were essential.

The dance of the Hindus described how the center of everything was formed: and without ceasing to be a multitude of naked dancers, it was also a face and a fountain. I knew that I was coming closer to the ultimate meaning of all things, as if I were literally seeing the face or source of God. Everything emanated perennially from that face. That fountain looked and knew. The angels were not simply lending their naked bodies that the pattern might come into being: their kind appearance, that quality of the color of their skin, the style of their movements, everything communicated the idea of face and fountain. They brought in their glances and gestures (it's important to remember that I felt I knew each one individually) the message of power, knowledge, inevitability, and the greatness of the face of the person-fountain.

There before that representation of the idea of God, I felt that shrinking of one who apprehends that the face of the Creator cannot be contemplated. The fact is, at that moment, I thought that perhaps I had gone too far. But my memory permits another interpretation of that moment when the effect of the *auasca* began to fade: I did not wish to stop seeing things; rather I wanted, all of a sudden, never to have seen what I just saw, never to have felt what I had been feeling. An overwhelming sense of exhaustion, combined with a great excitement, brought me to a state of despair. I decided to open my eyes and leave the sound room, where I had been nearly the whole time, and to go to the dining room. But the infinitude of complex mental processes this action implied paralyzed me. Then I was afraid of being mentally incapable of deciding to take ten steps. I understood, with the same clearheadedness with which I had come to understand everything I had seen under the influence of the drug, that I was mad. In short: I was no longer able to return whole—as when I had seen the angels and atoms—without losing the world, nor was I able to reintegrate myself into this world whose reality had been challenged. In any event, my mind was exhausted by the aesthetic, logical, and affective operations so spontaneously acted out. I felt the same longing for people and things I had felt from the perfume and marijuana, only this time I felt like a ghost in the shadowy periphery of life, I felt alive, all too alive, full of active nerves and in a state of uncontrollable disorder.

I yanked myself violently out of immobility, but realized to my dismay that this act of will did not return me entirely to



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myself. The suddenness with which I moved and the screams with which I tried to communicate what I was feeling worried my friends who, from that moment on—as they were all now coming down from their own trips—tried to calm me with caresses and reproofs. I remember Duda talking to me very seriously as if to ascribe to my capacity for self-control a moral responsibility. And Dedé saying little, making herself invisible, trying to find a moment when she might be truly helpful. In retrospect, I see them both being so characteristically themselves! I knew that I no longer knew who or what I was. I then asked Dedé to take me to the bathroom mirror. Seeing myself, I thought, would bring me back. But what I saw in the mirror—though in my recollection I know it to have been exactly my face, no more, no less—seemed an indecipherable image. For some hours I walked around the apartment, the intensity of the pain multiplying with the prospect of its continuation and the awareness of its already interminable duration.

Strangely enough, of all the friends present that day, only one comes to mind as being in some way connected—as agent or mere spectator—to the first moments of the hope of improvement. Waly Salomão, with his wide face, his genuine modesty belied by a meretricious egocentricity, his sweetness checked by his brightness and sometimes arbitrary reactions—all seem to have qualified him to welcome me back to life.

Waly had been introduced to me in the same way João Gilberto had: a classmate from college, Wanderlino, told me that since I liked crazy stuff, I should meet this marvelous fellow from his hometown (the city of Jequié, in the Bahian hinterland) who was a lot like me. He told me he would bring him to Severino Vieira (Waly went to Central School) to introduce us. Wanderlino had also spoken to him about me. After two false starts, we finally met. Waly was no disappointment, but while he appeared to find me pleasant, he betrayed no particular enthusiasm. Wanderlino, however, knew better: soon Waly and I had become friends, and we remain so to this day. His ability to surprise with unsuspected and revealing associations of ideas, his genuinely anarchic humor, his scary intelligence, and finally his immense energy, as destructive as it is enriching—all this I relish.

On the day of the *auasca* trip I understood clearly what I had always intuited: it was not to be an easy return. Seated with Waly Salomão on the small carpeted veranda, the sun already streaming in through the windows, I groped my way with the expectation of resigning myself to a provisional and precarious alliance with reality. I think the others, Dedé included, had gone to bed, reassured by the outward signs of my return to normalcy. Waly's face and its aura of sweet seriousness (the exact opposite of his usual persona) became associated for me with the moments in which a fragile happiness seems possible. Yet the quiet elation of returning to life was spoiled by the certainty that this recent experience would always represent a threat. In fact, for over a month I felt as though I were living a few inches above all creation. And for more than a year I suffered vivid flashbacks. In fact, something essential changed in me that night.

Of the four Bahians, only Gal had not yet attained stardom, in spite of her prestige among musicians and bossa nova fans. One afternoon I accompanied her to a rehearsal for an important program for TV Record—the sort of opportunity that at that time did not often come her way—and we discovered that her appearance had been canceled. I was incensed by the disrespectful treatment and made my own appearance contingent on hers. The producers were unmoved and so ended my relationship with the station.

I detested the cynicism of the star system, and bet everything on Gal's extraordinary singing. There was also an unresolved background issue—that of having our own weekly program on prime time. It was something that would have normally been expected to follow a success like ours. Elis, Nara, Chico, and the pre-tropicalista Gil himself had each moved into a prime-time slot, but the network's



Caetano and Gil's program at TV Tupi, *Divino, Maravilhoso*, was received more warmly than their performances at the FIC and regularly featured Os Mutantes, Gal and Tom Zé.

heads apparently didn't know what to do with the tropicalistas, although in the hallways there was talk of a program to be led by me. In a few conversations with Paulinho Machado de Carvalho, I noticed his uneasiness with the proposals I sketched out. They liked us, but that did not mean they were willing to put themselves at risk for our cause.

Gil finally decided to break with TV Record, and soon we received an invitation from TV Tupi to do our program there.

Guilherme's formula for expressing his highest praise was the expression "*divino, maravilhoso*," divine, marvelous, which he not infrequently complemented with "*Internacional!*" when his enthusiasm warranted it. We decided to adopt this phrase as the refrain to a song Gil and I were preparing for Gal to sing at TV Record's next festival—a gesture by which we also meant to pay homage to the grander aspects of Guilherme's personality. I should explain that at the time, participation in the festival did not obligate a performer to sign with the network. Gal could sing a song of ours and, even if it became a hit, she did not need to sign with Record and could instead come with us to Tupi. The song suggested the climate of student resistance to the dictatorship, and almost prefigured armed conflict in its violent imagery. The melody was, deliberately, pop at its sweetest, but the words were something else: They summoned a "girl" ("quantos anos você tem?"—"how old are you?") to participate in something left unsaid but that required her to "a atenção para as janelas no alto / Atenção, ao pisar no asfalto, o manguê / Atenção para o sangue sobre o chão" ("watch out for the windows up above / Watch out, when you cross the street, the mud / watch out for the blood on the ground"), everything converging toward the refrain (which was explicitly announced in the lines: "Atenção, tudo é perigoso / Tudo é divino, maravilhoso / Atenção para o refrão"—"Watch out, everything is dangerous, / everything's divine, marvelous, / Watch out for the refrain"), which says: "É preciso estar atento e forte / Não temos tempo para temer a morte" ("You have to be strong and watch out / There is no time to be afraid to die").

Gal's vibrant interpretation marked a turning point in her style, incorporating new vocal sounds that included both Janis Joplin's grunts and the cries of James Brown. *Divine, Marvellous* would be the name for our program on TV Tupi, the oldest network in Brazil, as highly regarded as Record, but with no tradition of musical programming. At the time, TV in Brazil was not so big a thing as it is today. Few homes had TV sets, and there were almost none among the poor or lower middle classes. Early programming included high-quality theater with the best actors doing Shakespeare, Pirandello, Chekhov, and Nelson Rodrigues (the last of these being Brazilian). Even larger audiences were an elite: those who could afford a TV set. And that only in São Paulo and Rio.

Gil and I lined up Os Mutantes, Gal, and Tom Zé as regulars. Among our guests would be Jorge Ben, Juca Chaves (a satirical singer-songwriter who was initially confused with the bossa nova

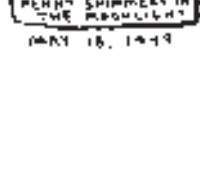
period, although he was actually the anti-bossanovista par excellence), and Paulinho da Viola (also not identified with bossa nova). It was with a certain detachment that I took part in the creative meetings, the rehearsals, and even the programs themselves: I knew the worth of each idea, of each decision, but was emotionally removed from it: *auasca* had delivered me to a kind of parallel universe. Here my customary interests and reactions obtained—the same inspiration, the same hard-on, the same insomnia—but somehow I was outside it all. Paradoxically, I felt very sad about this—a serene, stable sadness that could scarcely warm my existence. At times I rebelled, although I mostly maintained my composure, against the *auasca* and its visions. I regretted having taken the stuff. Sometimes I pondered, but not enthusiastically, the religious meaning of the experience. I remembered Rogério's theological quips—"I don't believe in God, but I saw him!" Above all I thought how ironic it was that I of all people should have coined the cry "God is on the loose!" joining it to a mystical Sebastianist poem by Pessoa. It was only as I became able truly to reintegrate

myself in life that I could weigh the mystical value of what I had experienced, and of mysticism in general, against my genuine attachment to reality and my faith in laws of the material world. While the world of visions could be dazzling, and even beneficial, the daily world, however relegated to an inferior plane of reality, was to be cherished and protected; if the visions woven by my own brain imposed themselves as more real than the world itself, I was essentially losing both worlds. Even as I readapted myself to the world of common sense, I was able to recover what was of interest and dear in the "marvelous" world that had taken form within me, but I did not yet feel calmly reinstalled in life. Indian illustrations, until then virtually ignored (the closest thing to my visions then was the cover to Jimi Hendrix's *Axis: Bold as Love*), were just coming into fashion with the rise of the Hare Krishna movement. Reproductions of mandalas (the rose windows of cathedrals, scenes from Esther Williams's films directed by Busby Berkeley) and other images were popular, yet I felt a sense of revulsion toward them. More than a year later, already in my London exile, I was unable to look for long at one of those images of Krishna without feeling hypnotized or on the verge of hallucination. The fact that my mother looked Indian was, and is, something to take into consideration. (When we were little, Rodrigo, my older brother, used to say that she was the spitting image of the actor Sabu.) In fact, I realized in London that many older Indian men looked like my father (who was obviously a mulatto). I myself was often taken for a Pakistani (which made me fear the skinheads).

While drugs such as *auasca* may perhaps enhance our capacities to create decorative patterns, that creation may not be accompanied by any heightening of our gifts for loving, understanding, discerning. No one knows how extensive a repertoire of forms, structures, themes, and operations we carry in our brains. I had read in Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs that Sartre spent a year haunted by the lobsters and crabs that were the residue of his mescaline trip. These crus-



MARCH 16, 1949



MARCH 16, 1949



taceans had not the least symbolic value for him; nevertheless, they filled him with anguish, particularly because they represented to him the loss of reason.

Yelling on television that "God is on the loose" while singing "Prohibiting Is Prohibited" was a gesture inspired by the discovery that religion was just as repressed as sex. I myself had a Catholic upbringing. I attended public schools (the religious ones were all private), but the director of my high school was a priest, Father Antenor. The inspector was Father Fenelon. And the director of the philosophy department at the University of Bahia was Father Pinheiro. When I took my first communion, I was frightened to receive the host. I had heard that God would enter into my body, that a great peace would inundate me, that I would be enveloped in the purest light. I wondered what those sensations would be like. They were described in a calm, friendly tone, but I escaped panic only by watching others go before me. Still, I would tremble as I received the host, but I felt no less disillusioned then to notice that nothing had happened to me. Why was I so afraid of God? I don't know. The fact is that I broke with religion too soon, without overcoming that fear.

Sunday mass, even if I chafed at the obligation, was neither uninteresting nor disagreeable. The Catholic liturgy is beautiful and exuberant—even more so when no microphones were used and the priest officiated with his back to us, speaking in Latin. And in Bahia *candomblé* was always present. People commonly said things like "my saint doesn't agree with his," or "I have a strong saint." We knew the names of Iemanjá, the goddess of the sea, the great Mother; Xangô, the god of fire and justice, the master of thunder; Oxum, the goddess of the brooks and wells, lakes and waterfalls, the vain and cruel queen of gold; and Oxóssi, my own orisha, the hunter, god of the forests. We heard those names in Caymmi's songs, but also in conversations with friends and relatives. And we would go

to parties given in the Orixá's honor at the house of Edite, Nicinha's sister. I remember the first time I saw Edite possessed. I was still a boy and not allowed to stay to the end of the party. After the *samba de roda* something happened that I was not supposed to see. As I passed through the hallway on my way out, I ran into Edite dressed as an Indian, her eyes closed, being virtually dragged by two other women whose eyes were open. It was she, beyond any doubt, but her face had an expression I had never seen before: her lower lip protruded, her brow was deeply furrowed, her nostrils flared. She looked like an angry man. I was frightened by the evidence that Edite was and was not herself, and was concerned to know whether or not she was awake, what she could possibly be feeling. I was scared of finding myself before the unexplainable, scared to imagine myself in the same situation. This fear never quite left me. It figured in the anxiety sur-

July 2, the day commemorating Bahian independence. This is the type of *candomblé* predominant in the smaller towns of Bahia, while in Salvador the African liturgy characterizes the great terreiros, where it has been preserved nearly intact. When I moved to Salvador, I was hesitant to accompany the few friends who, out of cultural curiosity, sometimes went to Mrs. Olga at the Alakêtu's *terreiro*, to Opô Afonjá, or to the Gantois. Here too the fear of possession would prevent me from enjoying the ritual that so fascinated me: as a rule, I would run away from the place a few minutes after arriving, supposing myself to feel faint and interrogating every one of my nerves to reassure myself that I remained lucid and awake.

I don't remember whether I chose the title *Divine, Marvelous* before or after taking *auasca*. I suppose it was before. To have adopted a mainly (though not exclusively) intellectual atheism before

entirely. When I finished, the gentleman looked at me with an exultant expression, and, even as Roberto winked at me conspiratorially, the man produced the most unlikely interpretation of "Tropicália" I had ever heard.

Everything in the lyrics was taken literally and interpreted positively. "I lead the movement," for example, meant that not "I" but some force that was able to say "I" through me was organizing something; and "I unveil the monument in my homeland's central plain" was a clear reference to Brasília as the concrete manifestation of a prophecy of St. João Bosco. And that was it. There was no trace of irony, no desire to denounce the horror we were then living. I don't know whether I had emphasized the passage that says "a child, smiling, ugly, dead, stretches out her hand" when I tried to explain that my motive for composing the song had been the opposite of vainglory, but I do know I tried to discuss the topic with him. But he, at first unable to conceive any reason for me to write such a song other than the happy certainty of Brazil's grandiose destiny, seemed not at all surprised when I protested; laughing at Roberto and saying repeatedly, "I know, I know," he concluded: "What do mothers ever

know about their children?" I understood then that he was sure he knew better than I what my intentions had been. That was no news: I had already realized by then that songs have a life of their own, and others can find in them meanings unsuspected by the author himself. Nor was I surprised to hear that the song seemed to represent Brazil in a positive light. Above all, I was not unaware that every parody of patriotism is nevertheless a form of patriotism in itself—not I, the *tropicalista*, who would first love what he satirizes, and would not glibly satirize what he hates. But the fact that this man refused to consider that in my song I was describing a monster—a monster that had confirmed its monstrosity by turning its aggression toward me—this simply fascinated more than it irritated me.

I was not ignorant of the connection

AT FIRST IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE PINK FLOYD RECORD WAS FUNNY. THEN THE NYLON RUG IN THE SOUND ROOM BEGAN TO SHOW ITS PECULIAR WAY OF BEING.

rounding my first communion, as well as in my first experiences with drugs.

The cult I had inadvertently witnessed at Sultão das Matas, in Edite's house, was and still is an example of the so-called Caboclo's *candomblé*, a variant in which the Yoruba pantheon appears mixed with indigenous figures. The Indian that appears does not issue directly from the original cultures of Brazil—although Tupi-Guarani words are used and there are some vestiges of the local. The *caboclo* is in fact closer to the persona first idealized by the Arcadian poets and then by the romantics, the generic and heroic Indian who came to symbolize the homeland in the struggles for independence and the fantasies of national affirmation. When Edite appeared before me, she was dressed like the clay figure of the cabocla carried in processions every year on

facing up to my fear of God, while pursuing a public project that channeled the courage to take up religiosity—these were the ideal conditions for turning a single psychedelic experiment into a rich source of anguish.

When we left Brazil a year later headed for our London exile, our first stop was Portugal. My friend Roberto Pinho asked me to go with him to Sesimbra, where he was supposed to meet a Portuguese gentleman, the caretaker of a medieval castle perched on a hill, who was thought to be an alchemist. I recall some sheep with twisted horns nuzzling the old man as though they were pets, and a deep blue sea surrounding the stone ramparts. At one point Roberto asked me to sing "Tropicália" for the alchemist. I don't remember whether I sang or simply recited the words. I am sure that I imparted the lyrics in their



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bull tongue

exploring the voids of all known undergrounds

by byron coley and thurston moore

We open this time with an essay by Thurston Moore entitled, "My Summer Beats My Winter." If you didn't catch the *Metal Machine* reference, look it up.

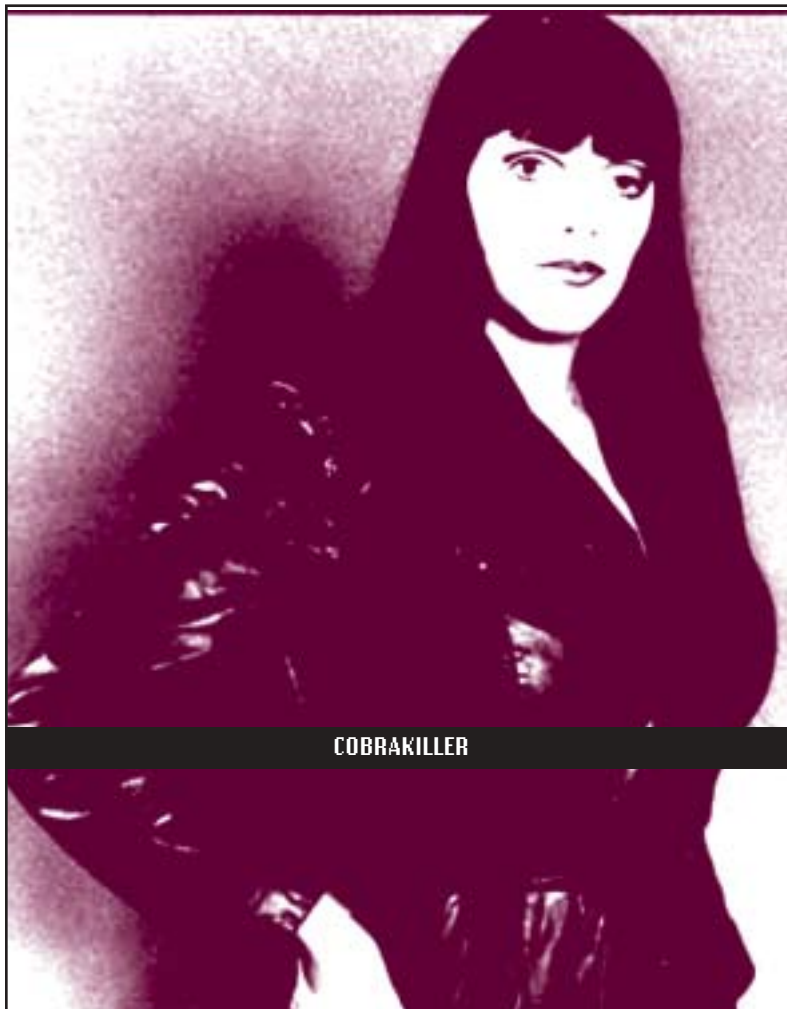
Touring around the USA, Europe, Japan, Oz etc. is like staying home: same dynamics of same-ism and same familial interaction complex. But there's one thing that gives it ROCK distinction: seeing old n new chumsters and seeing old n new bands. With fam-man responsibilities these are things not readily available on the homefront scene (which, in case you think you're groovy, I ain't jonesing to trade for nut). So fuck this, dig the bands that were kicking my ROCK ass in the summer of 02:

Lyon France 19 June:

MARTEAU ROUGE is a french band featuring legendary free-rock guitarist Jean-François Pavros (along with Jean-Marc Foussat, Masahiko Sato and Yuko Kametani). We had Pavros play once before with us in Paris as a solo artist where he came out and laid flat the room with howling amp buzz. It was not so much noise-violence but a more in-tune and curious new-birth wonder. Pavros, a tall long-haired 40-something cat has an illustrious history. In the 70s, with formidable avant-garde legend Jac Berrocal, he was a member of Catalogue. And, with Gilbert Artman, he played in Lard Free and Urban Sax. Through the intervening years he has recorded with such disparate freaks as Blurt, Arto Lindsay and Keiji Haino. Marteau Rouge is his newest new-thing. Gone are the spiked edges of youthful blunder. What has evolved is the fascinating sounds of players moving into high-adult dimensions. This evokes a focused creative enterprise sweet to the collective soul of the listening audience. Pavros and Marteau Rouge reportedly have a CD coming out on HatHut with American saxophonist Joe McPhee which could be excellent. But HatHut is mum on this news.

Bristol, UK 24 June:

LIARS had the potential to annoy. Musical annoyance is one of the finer attitudes in rock, but it either takes a needlepoint intellect (Steve Albini) or a battering ram cementhead (GG Allin) to pull it off with any true swing. If it's annoyance for the sake of annoyance (*a la* mid-period Bunnybrains, The Rachels) then it is



COBRAKILLER

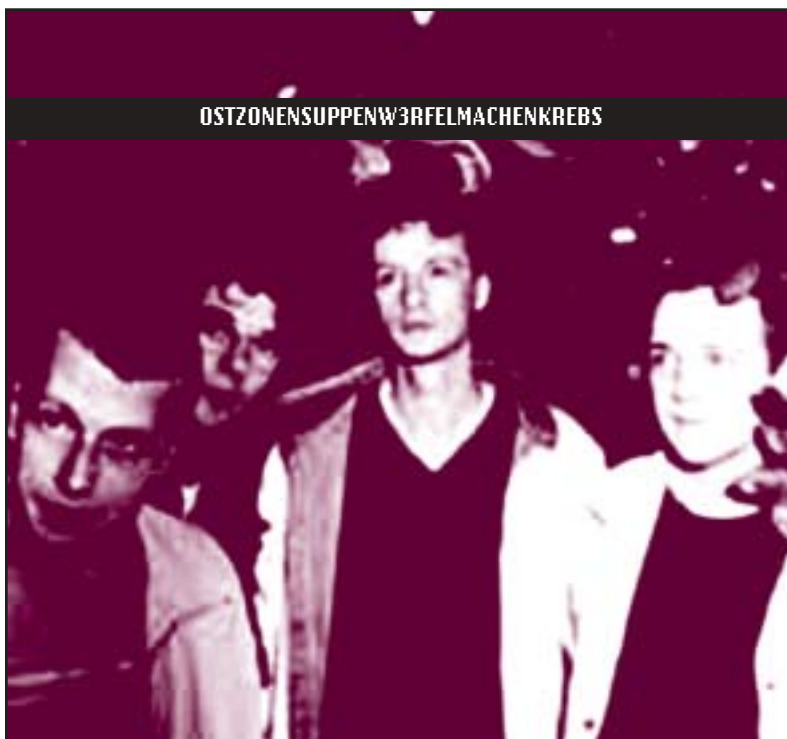
nought but disingenuous time-death. Liars had one small label 12" available for one minute and then a deal with Blast First. They were part of the HOT new New York rock scene of 2002. They might even be the Stones to the Strokes' *Wildlife*-period Wings.

The singer cats it with Karen O, the party-splitting snake charm spitter of Yeah Yeah Yeahs. Wild ass stuff but, like cheese, it's a stink that can be either dick-thickening or no more fun than a phone call from Nedelkoff. I've seen some of the new new new

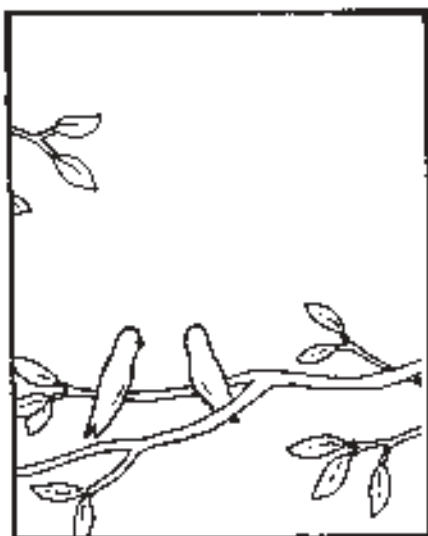
new new new new New York City rockers and I must concur with Deborah Harry: What was once a surreal vision (1975 Johnny Thunders, Richard Hell) is now a MTV/Levis-sponsored giveaway. The songs are OK here and there, but here (in the Berkshire foothills) is as good as there (in the Williamsburg high-res rubble). But, fuck, everyone knows that anyway and the only reason to live and rock in NYC is for kicks—that much has not and will not, I suspect, ever change. LIARS are from California, Nebraska and Australia and maybe some other geogs, but the generally impressive reek they give off is of a fantastic spiced-earth stew. The best thing is they ain't looking to pop, they're looking to sizzle. The first hits will make any geek scream "Pop Group!" or "Birthday Party!" (Come to think of it, I remember screaming "Pop Group!" after first hearing Birthday Party(!)), but these buff young nice-niks are employing some fresh diaper liberation. Guitars seek fine slices of feedback sonance whilst the rhythm roots/toots like Nick Cave's lips on acid nips. Sexy boy romp without the schmoe-pose even when the ten-foot-tall Oz dream singer pelves the aghast UK sickheads into blankminded judgement lapse. All atonal skid mark flail and then the whomp and buttock kick of some weirdo Turbo-Rat setting. Pretty nice and wonderfully annoying to the point of cloying—the only B-Party comparison I'd deem to make. Cute as hell and, thankfully, the real deal. (www.liarsliarsliars.com)

Turino, Italy 06 July:

MY CAT IS AN ALIEN do not jibe with the indie-rock establishment in Italy. At least that's the impression I get when the twin brothers Maurizio and Roberto Opalio confront booking agents and gig promoters with the knowledge that My Cat Is An Alien exist to promote "alien love." Maybe I'm missing something in the translation, but the professionals ain't buying it; the only time these displaced wizards seem to get a decent gig is when we or Blonde Redhead blow through the boot. Which is a shame because MCIAA let loose a chance bafflement of free-rock ideas always set on upsetting conscious rock-realization. The first time I heard them was when they sent us CDRs entangled in wired cages. We saw they were from Italy, we were heading there soon enough, we loaded the



OSTZONENSUPPENW3RFELMACHENKREBS



bull tongue

CDR in and were caught off-guard by the voidoid cosmo pleasures in emittance. So we asked them to play. They rocked in the most non-rock way: guitars tuned to God-knows-what pubic tensity, drums possibly interacting with crashed electronic skittle and vocals calling all alien pets to keep watching the skies. Next time around the lads knelt with guitars raised to the electric maximus and delivered a mass of heatball fuzz. This evening they soundchecked for two hours in front of the incoming audience (outdoor gig), pissing off the already uptight promoters and crew with super-indeterminant blasts of synth-shards and drum smacks to awaken the behemoth god Prometheus. It sounded nutso and awesome—"this should be their gig" we'd mutter every 15 minutes or so. Then they stopped and got ready to play. They returned to the stage and played one 12 minute rock n drop and then split. Huh? Go fig—when something like this happens I know the wannabe controllers of rock n roll surprise have a continuing uphill nightmare to contend with. Which of course makes it all a stone gas. I released a double-LP of MCIAA earlier this year on Ecstatic Peace called *Landscapes Of An Electric City/Hypnotic Spaces*—available through our own mill outlet in Florence, Mass. if you're wanting to dig. (www.mycatisanalien.com; www.yod.com)

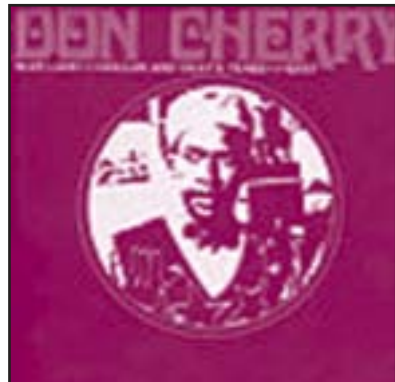
Dresden, Germany 08 July: COBRA KILLER are from Berlin. Two women: WILDEST GINA V. D'ORIO and KWIKEST ANNIKA TROST. They come out of the Digital Hardcore camp. And they come out swinging! Wine bottles, high heels, long leather pimp coats, glitter dust flaking off eyelashes to adhere to tear streaked cheeks. This ain't no let's-destroy-the-scene vibe, this is destruction in all its celebrated collapse. Try pushing the right button on your machine whilst your red wine-in-paper-cup topples, maybe use your nose or your stockinged toe or your ass which just happens to be slipping peekaboo out of your ballet warmup—the one you wear anytime and all the time. Who created this noise hump? We were nailed by Cobra Killer. This is performance that only the full-blooded German lustlords n ladies can exhibit. Semi-drunken loop dancing and singing/chanting and hula-hoop mastery by a rather bountiful busted goddess of peace and deliverance. This is a right-on band and they rock like absolutely no other. They have ingest-

ed the finest elements of Elvis, James Brown, Ari Up, Lydia Lunch, Sly Stone and Whitehouse and spend an amazing 35 minutes unleashing it in a personalized ritual of possession and exorcism. Theatrical concepts are utilized to keep it all on stage and within some sane atmosphere for the highly amused, if not aroused, audience. Any band that bids adieu to their audience by attempting to kiss them

MACHENKREBS played with us. I thought I had heard of every band in Deutschland but I never heard of these cats. Something is amiss, a page ripped and slipped from the library. The encyclopedia in misfile mishap. Jim (O'Rourke) suggested Ostzonensuppenw_rfelmachenkrebs. He said they'd been around for years and were rock-hep. Not full-blown experimental noisedrone or squelch

stem. Genuine Hamburger pop and bloody gut. I recommend checking em out next time they hit your burg. The name translates maybe as: East Zone Soup Cube Making Cancer. They have a CD called *Leichte Teile, kleiner Rock* on L'Age D'Or/Rough Trade. And that's about all I can tell you.

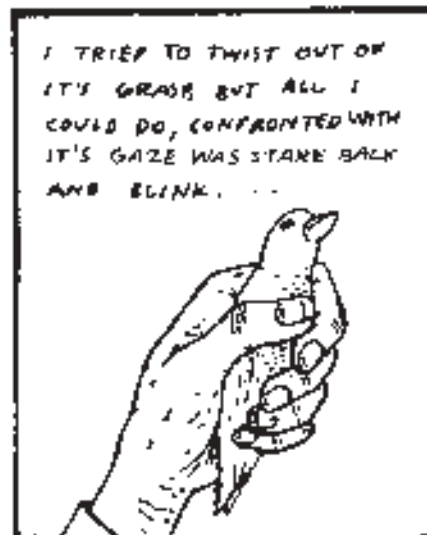
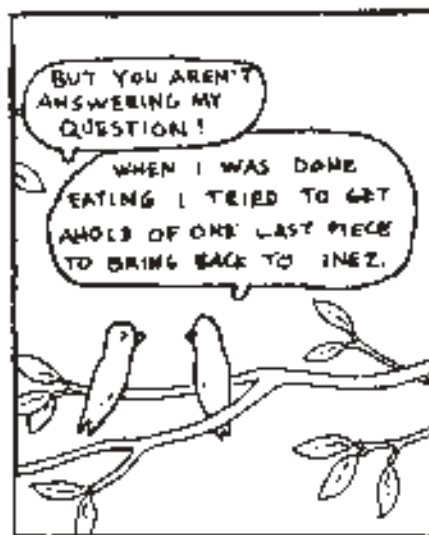
Dallas, Texas 01 August: MARY TIMONY met us here, as her new band was to spend the next few days/nights on the road with us. This was extremely exciting since Mary's most recent LP, *The Golden Dove* (Matador), melted my mind when it entered my input system. Broken guitar string lead-dots and folk-mystic melody-trips seduce each other in a strangely harmonious manner throughout. Mary's fortes strike the aether-sense of music's heart in ways that I hear from no other circle. A lot of it is Mary's voice, one whose song is informed by mistral dharmia birds. The other is the plainsong rhythm of her compositions, which dance away to experimental experience. Her song-writing and execution thereof doth rock in righteous fashion. So yeh, I wanted to see what was going to go down on stage with her merry band but alas I couldn't get to the stage from where I had sequestered myself. The dressing room was a makeshift hothouse with a bare bulb layering new heat onto the already 100+ degree summer blast. I went outside to go around the front or to the side of the club to get a front-of-house perspective, but there were too many kids who wanted to debate, negotiate, relate and palpitate with me, assuring me a no-listen situation. Fuck it—I'd have to see them the next night or the next night. So back to the devil's lair and all I could hear was the drums hammering as they were right next to the dressing room wall. At night's end I went back out to my rental car to pack up and drive to Austin (3 hours thereabouts). A bunch of kids were hanging and we were speling. Tom and Christina from Charalambides had come and we toasted the southern night. One couple was full on psycho-inebriated and were in full-slobber-mode, extolling pronouncements of devotion which was okay, fun, a little embarrassing. But the other kids figured they were on a nutso tip and dealt with it. The girl had disappeared and returned with the t-shirt I had worn on stage. She wanted me to sign it. It was a sweat soaked rag but it was one I had had for years. It had come from one of the most amazing Chelsea gay clubs in NYC called Splash. A helluva place, where men danced beneath crystal waterfalls and



all and hold them to their sweet maiden breast is already better than the Beatles or Nirvana any day of the millennium. Dresden was flooded a week later to extraordinary levels. (www.cobra-killer.org)

Hamburg, Germany 10 July: OSTZONENSUPPENW_RFEL-

but sharpened rockists with a Fall-like Ex-like edge and possibly even better than that may infer. Their instrumentation was trad yet rad—real axes and skins though painted anew and freed from retail stunk. The songs were cranked and heady and not too cool to surprise your jaded



bull tongue

good times never seemed so good. I told the panting maiden I would like to hold on to that particular article. Earlier she had asked me to sign her chest and I declined but she insisted and I told her to keep her top on and I'll sign just below her neckline. Now I'm looking at her forlorned and confused state with my name emblazoned in black magic marker from wingbone to wingbone and her boyfriend pops over with his backwards baseball cap (always a sure sign of disaster) and remarks: "hey she loves you man! she idolizes you! let her have the shirt man! we love you man!" and on and on and I said, "no not this shirt dude, sorry" and I took it from her realizing she had walked into our dressing room and had snatched it. Most inappropriate. This whole exchange had become wearisome and it was definitely time to hit the highway and as I was opening the car door saying final farewells to the last few kids I hear the dude again coming up behind me: "hey thurston—guess what? you suck!" and he grabs the shirt and tears ass across the parking lot. The other kids are immediately embarrassed and I accept the fact that this bonehead has robbed me of my groovy little t-shirt from the best gay club I ever partied at. But he was acting in chivalry for his bonked-out girlfriend and a love like that knows no bounds. He arced at the parking lot's perimeter and headed toward the girlfriend who was on the other side of our equipment truck still being loaded into. The truck driver and our monitor guy/stage manager saw this kid rabbiting towards them knowing he had done something weird by our car and clotheslined him, making him flip like a turkey-sausage into the air where they caught him in hyper squirm. Amidst the slipperiness of it all the kid casually tossed the wet shirt to the girl who was standing idly by stoned and jittery and she just as casually walked around the club into the dark. They had to let the kid go as he was to squirrely and at this point obviously empty handed. And he booked. I really think she did have love in her heart for us and I really think he had love in his heart for her and the conflict of immaturity, psychotropic nosecandy and rock n roll once again made the Texas stars wink out in heaven.

There we end our assay of SY tour events, and return to the regular review portion of Bull Tongue.

In terms of concept records, probably the best one this time around is DEG's eponymous LP (Firework Edition:

www.algonet.se~tankred/fer.html). DEG is a trio comprising guitarist Kevin Drumm, electronics-and-what-sis-guy Leif Ellgren, and saxophonist Mats Gustafsson. So, their initials are DEG, right? Right. "Deg" is also the Swedish word for "dough." And the cover art for this album is a mix of flour, salt and water in a little packet-dough. See? And the music is a reverie about the genesis of the Homunculus, the Golem of Prague, who was made from dough, too: the

There's an assload of '60s coverage, including the first part of the definitive history of an amazing California-to-England combo called The Misunderstood, a band whose Yardbirds' rip ("Children of the Sun") is one of the '60s' top five psych singles. There's also lotsa '70s punk coverage: Metal Urbain, Eater, Kugelberg's continuing DIY rants, the Shangrilas' gig at CBGBs, etc. Plus a decent Roy Harper primer, great Yardbirds pics, more reviews of

Scion, Damo Suzuki and others are great. Many of these artists also have otherwise unreleased tracks featured on a CD that is cunningly enclosed with the issue. Neither of these mags are something that you can afford to miss. So don't.

LEE RANALDO's solo music is not usually thought of as being appropriate, but his new LP, *Outside My Window the City Is Never Silent: A Bestiary* (Hell's Half Halo, PO Box 633, Ferndale WA 98248) is almost entirely so. The album-length piece was assembled for a Belgian radio broadcast, and is a collage of various spoken and musical elements lifted from different places in Lee's catalogue and/or history. The idea is to create something akin to a sound palimpsest in the Burroughs/Gysin tradition, forging a new (although not necessarily false) narrative using only shards of memory. One side's smooth, the other's as choppy as a shortwave broadcast of Moroccan street musicians. Nice. Also extremely nice, and not incongruent is the 2LP set, *Wave Train*, by DAVID BEHRMAN (Alga Marghen c/o Emanuele Carcano, via Frapolli 40, 20133 Milano, Italy). This set collects a virtual pantload of Behrman's early work, recorded between '59 and '68. The earliest two pieces are keyboard-based—one for piano and percussion, the other for prepared piano. But things really start to explode with "Wave Train" and "Players with Circuits" (pieces more or less for feedbacking amps and the resonance of a grand piano). And they reach their apotheosis with "Runthrough." This piece, recorded by the Sonic Arts Union (Behrman, Gordon Mumma, Robert Ashley and Alvin Lucier) is great, crude, live electronic music, similar in feel to Europe's MEV. It's a wonderful vault-clearing effort, typical of the fine stuff that this label has unveiled.

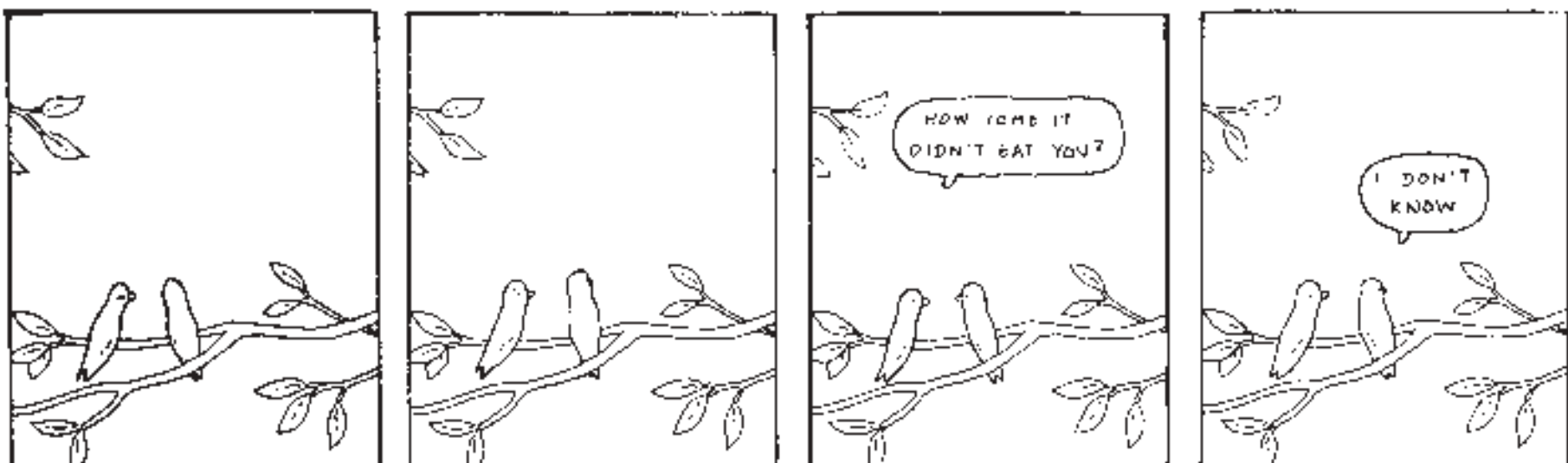
In the real world, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers have been dammed and re-routed to such a degree that the legendary marshes of Mesopotamia (the Fertile Crescent, from which we all sprang) have been turned into barren salt wastes. Presumably, this fate was not much on the minds of the members of either California's SUBARACHNOID SPACE or Pennsylvania's BARDO POND when they cut the respective sides for their new split LP, *Tigris - Euphrates* (Camera Obscura, PO Box 5069, Burnley VIC 3121, Australia). SubArachnoid navigate the former as though it were a tributary of Pink Floyd's Nile. And although they can be punishingly bass-heavy live, their



concept being that three elements can come together to form life. From a listener's point of view, what you get is a noisy set of very tough-to-tag trio dynamics, recorded in real time. It sounds a bit like a team of field-doctors taking apart Tiger Mountain. By surgery. Trying to pick instruments (or even specific musicians) out of the mix is a fool's errand, but as a passive listening experience DEG is pretty great—it combines elements of electro-acoustic mystery with free improvisation and strange post-industrial tactics for some real sweet sonic slurry.

The new issue of *UGLY THINGS* (3707 5th Ave. #145, San Diego CA 92103) is out. It's #20 and is nothing short of a doozy, all 194 pages of it.

unfindable records than you can shake a bowel at and on and on and on. As always, it's an absolute joy to file on the bathroom shelf for serious perusal. In a parallel track runs *PTOLEMAIC TERRASCOPE* (PO Box 2152, Melksham, Wilts. SN12 7UQ, UK), which has just had its 32nd issue released. *PT* combines coverage (and uncoverage) of classic '60s psych characters (the Ultimate Spinach and Forest, this time) with extensive investigations of current underground rumblings. Editor Phil McMullen's reviews column is one of the essential checklists for those investigating contemporary rock action, and the pieces on Charalambides, The Iditarod, Peter



bull tongue

music here is a relatively reflective and percussion-soaked push through thick atmosphere. Bardo's evocation of the latter river makes it appear as a huge, stunned and smoking hoop-snake, baking in the hot Iraqi sun, shedding various layers of skin with wahs and bongos of eloquent pleasure. Why was there no American label

NECK BLUES BAND is an LP that appears to be of counterfeit origins. The boot is called *Re: "Mr. A Fan"*

School of Charm show at the Track 16 Gallery in Santa Monica. Even if you couldn't attend the event, you

well as the legendary Poison 13) and TSD/DAC take that band's unique approach to total energy music even deeper into the bush. The elements all wrangled up here start from a sorta power-garage base, but there's an aggressive edge to both the vocals and the instrumental approach that gives things a mean-amphetamine



GEORGANNE DEEN

visionary enough to release this record? As we stand on the verge of war in this region of the world, surely it would behoove us to intimately understand the parched valleys that will soon teem with our youth. Doesn't this album represent a kind of first step? I think it might.

Two of the albums traditionally presenting the greatest collecting challenge to DON CHERRY fans have been *Orient* and *Blue Lake*, a pair of 2LP sets issued only in Japan by the BYG label. Free jazz types have been known to dribble in the presence of these records, but they need to soil themselves no longer. The Italian label Get Back (via Runt, PO Box 2947, San Francisco CA 94126) has reissued them in their full glory. Recorded in 1971, these sets display Cherry at the beginning of his emergence into avant world music improv primacy. *Orient* is from two trio sessions. The first features a great mix of tone dissonance and percussion, recorded with the ICP's immortal Han Bennink and Don's wife Moqui on tamboura; the other is more like trance-splat-improv with South African bassist Johnny Dyani and Turkish percussionist Okay Temiz. *Blue Lake* has further work by the Dyani/Temiz trio, and both albums are deep, stone explorations of world's molten core—where everything that is (and was) comes together.

The latest actualized project by NO

(Trade Mark of Quality) and sounds much like the band did during the period in which they were utilizing John Fell Ryan as a lead singer. Supposedly recorded on the 4th of July, 1999, in Detroit, this catches No Neck at their most rockist nexus, making a weird patchwork of moves that seem to specifically reference a dreamland-only version of the Mad River Blues Band, (at least as it might have been imagined by trolls). Ryan blabbers like a red turtle and the rest of them keep trying to start every available engine. It's a rather fine thing, and the sonics are not bad. Ask around.

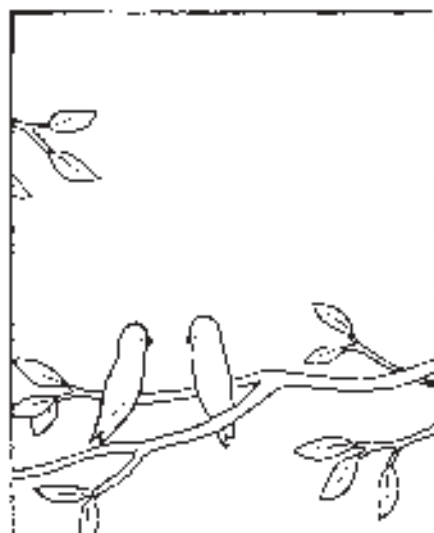
GEORGANNE DEEN has been one of the West Coast's secret art weapons for a while. We first heard of her around the time of the emergence of the Western Exterminators group, a style-explosion which also introduced people like Robert Williams, Gary Panter and Raymond Pettibon to a larger audience. Anyway, Georganne seems to be the one behind recent Godfrey Daniels

should still get an eyeful of the catalogue (Smart Art Press, 2525 Michigan Ave., Bldg C1, Santa Monica CA 90404) because it's fantastic. The artists represented (Parker Pine, Johanna Went, Liz Young, Annalisa, Samantha Harrison, Christine Shields, Alison Elizabeth Taylor and Mackie Osborne, along with Georganne) are real destroyers. Trapped in this fine little paperback are images of sex war, wooden clothes, hip-hop plates, PMS cartoons, and much more that will make your very eyeballs wiggle with pleasure. Smart Art has done a lot of other great little books as well, so ask for a list.

Austin, Texas' Lord High Fixers recently went to the boneyard for good, but it appears that their spirit has taken new root in TOTAL SOUND GROUP/DIRECT ACTION COMMITTEE, whose first album is called, *Party Platform... Our Schedule Is Change!* (Estrus, PO box 2125, Bellingham WA 98227). Guitarist Tim Kerr and vocalist Mike Carroll were both in the Fixers (as

edge. Add Memphis soul organ motion (as interpolated by English freakbeat bands), the sound of "little instrument" aggregations (akin to those heard on the most spiritual sides by Pharoah Sanders), plus raw bursts of radical liberation theology, and you start to get an idea of what's floating around here. It is potent mix of crazy shit, some parts of it palatable to 'most any tongue, other parts too blasted for mere words. An LP this open, this insistent about the unreality of genre tagging, really has the potential to change a few young heads for the better. Let's hope it reaches some ripe targets.

Dual Anarchism by MASAYOSHI URABE AND CHIE MUKAI (Siwa, 66950 Brooks Rd., Imbler, OR 97841) is probably the prettiest LP you'll see this season. As with all previous Siwa records, the cover is beautifully, subtly silkscreened by Alan Sherry, in a way that makes actually getting to the vinyl seem like opening a present. Urabe (on many instruments here, although primarily known as a saxophonist) and Mukai (on voice, piano and percussives) have performed together often over the years, but this is their first released collaboration. Very different from the dips into the pool of universal subconscious that mark her work with Che-Shizu, Mukai's work here is more in line with the experiments she began when she worked with Takehisa



bull tongue

Kosugi, back in the East Bionic Symphony days. She combines long-held tones with organic tumbles of bells, toys and whatnot in a way that recalls the slowly unspooling moves of Butoh. Urabe's work is somewhat in counterpoint, although it is mostly complimentary rather than disruptive. Recorded at various shows over the course of eleven years, assembled in the studio, the album moves through a many moods and climates of improvisation. Urabe sometimes screams into the frame with frenzied gusts of Haino-styled electric guitar, forcing Mukai's vocals into dark corners, but you're more likely to hear an unearthly blend of bamboo flute and late night vocals floating through dark air. The spatial and moving nature of their collaboration can be seen on the fiddle-heavy performance video that accompanies the limited edition boxed version of the LP. The vid may be available autonomously as well. And would be good too for you to see.

MATT VALENTINE was one of the many tusslers to have emerged from the corpse of Tower Recordings, a Hudson Valley ensemble who explored the cracks that exist where folk, smoke, free improv and psych meet. His latest release is *Tonight! One Night Only! MV & EE in Heaven* (Time-Lag Recordings, 135 Marginal Way, PO Box 9715-162, Portland ME 04104-5015), and actually the LP is a reissue of a CDR, but who's counting? Matt has turned himself into a real fine acoustic guitar picker in the American *volk*-blues/primitive idiom, and *Tonight!* is a wonderful exploration of the semiotic string textures of a post-Fahey, post-Skip James universe. Accompanied by Erika Elder, Matt creates instrumental music—both straight and spaced—with a timeless quality that only sounds contemporary if you've really been listening. Beautifully packaged by Time-Lag in a gatefold cover with bound-in booklet, paste-on color work, and interior silkscreening, this album looks as splendid as it sounds.

One of the great vocal pieces of all times is KURT SCHWITTERS' "Ur Sonata" which the composer described as a "sonata in primal sounds." There have been a few recordings of the piece, but it's a nice thing to look at as well. And you can look at it as long as you like in *PPPPPP* by Schwitters, edited and translated by Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris (Exact Change, 5 Brewster St., Cambridge MA 02138). There has never been a decent English language Schwitters compendium available before, and this one captures the six p's (poems, performance pieces, proses, plays, poet-ics) in high style, drawing from the five volume Friedhelm Lach collection of Schwitters' writing. A contemporary of the dadaists, surrealists, futur-

ists, constructivists and other important movement-artists of Europe's early 20th Century, Schwitters' own art concept was called Merz—a kind of all-encompassing collage approach to the detritus of life, recasting swine as pearls and building figurative temples of the culture's leftovers.

PPPPPP collects a stunning array of Schwitters' written work in a variety of disciplines, much of it never before translated, most just about as funny and wild as anything your likely to read. So do.

BOBB TRIMBLE is a fellow who has been kicking around the Worcester, MA scene for a long time. He cut a couple of albums in the '70s whose combined bizarreness and rarity have made them favorites with a certain breed of collector. Now, a follow-up LP has emerged from the old country, *Life Beyond the Doghouse* (Orpheus, www.orpheusrecords.dk), and it's as odd as its predecessors. The first side was recorded in '86,

and balances itself between Bobb's gauzily-layered, strangely-concocted singer-songwriterism, and some very bitchen Christian-lounge goosh. The second side was recorded live in '83 with the Crippled Dog Band (which was formed after outraged parents broke up his previous group—you'll have to read the notes for more info). This stuff is a pansy boy/raunchy rock garage mix, with an Amerindian-themed centerpiece, and it really has to be heard to be explained. It doesn't come much "realer" than this.

TEMPLE OF BON MATIN are the Philadelphia-based lovechild of Ed Wilcox. It's not entirely clear who else plays on the new Temple LP, *Cabin in the Sky* (Bulb, PO Box 3468, Olneyville RI 02909, www.bulbrecords.com), but that's certainly Ed there, all but naked, flailing at a variety of instruments, trying to integrate the ideas of free jazz (he also plays with Arthur Doyle, amongst others) and hillbilly blues. Sometimes these seemingly irreconcilable approaches merge head-on, at others they're dealt

with discretely. Either way, the clattery results are very flavorful, and would, we're sure, upset the systems of anyone who's unable to breathe with all their holes open. Certain non-valid similarities might be drawn to the SUN CITY GIRLS, whose own legendary '96 set, *330,003 Crossdressers from Beyond the Rig Veda* (originally a double CD on Abduction) has been reissued as in 3LP format by Locust Music (PO Box 220426, Chicago IL 60622, www.locustmusic.com). *Crossdressers* is almost like an impossibly excessive version of *Torch of the Mystics*, with every impulse chased to its highly illogical conclusion. This set has some of the SCGs' most fearless improvisational strategies, aided by even more false ethnicity than usual. Listening to this is almost like what riding the hamster tube through Pol Pot's colon must have been like.

For the last twenty years or so, JOHN SINCLAIR has been working on a suite of poems detailing the history of the blues. Bits and pieces have emerged in different places over the yrs, but the *magnum opus* is finally completed and available. It is called *Fattening Frogs for Snakes: Delta Sound Suite* (Surregional Press, 903 Independence St., New Orleans LA 70117) and it kicks ass. Anyone who has heard Sinclair read or rail knows that he has the power. And that power comes blaring from the pages of *Frogs*. Sinclair's personal taste in the music runs toward the electric, but he traces its developments and shifts and history through Charlie Patton, Robert and Tommy Johnson, and everyone, right up through the greats of post-war Chicago. *Frogs* is a massive, beautiful work appended with a discography and bibliography, introduced in brutal style by Amiri Baraka (including a really nice dig at Stanley Crouch). It is one the best, strongest, most wildly successful books of American poetry since Ed Sander's *1968*.

Seattle's A FRAME had a couple of

singles, but we missed them. Thankfully, it was possible to connect with their self-titled debut LP (SS Records, 1114-21st St., Sacramento CA 95814), because this is the shit. Using a classic, early Rough Trade template, crossed with the thick-bottomed thug riffing of Australia's X, perhaps leavened by the guitar-heavy wave-throb of very early Devo (ca. those Ryko CDs), these guys come up with a great new scuzz-punk hump. It's one of the few great new American rock recs to not reference no wave. What's up with that? Well, actually another great US record that doesn't refer to no wave is *The Great Golden Hive of the Invisible* by THE MCMS (Eclipse, 2172 Sierra Santiago, Bullhead City AZ 86442). This double lathe-cut LP documents the sound of young Nebraska as well as it's likely to be done in a while. And that sound is a lovely droney thing, more rock-based (and perhaps VU-indebted) than most drone work seems to have been of late, interlaced with electronic flup and ready for portage. We have tendency to think of Nebraska as a dry state, but it must be said that the MCMS give all of their music enough of an underwater feel, that it's possible we have been wrong about our aridity assessment of their scene. Sorry about that.

RICHIE UNTERBERGER, former editor of *Option*, author of a couple of prior books about '60s fringe musicians, has a new one for your shelf. *Turn! Turn! Turn!: The '60s Folk-Rock Revolution* (Backbeat: www.backbeat-books.com) represents a massive amount of information gathering. Indeed, it is so dense with facts in places that it's probably best approached piecemeal. But, as in his other books, Unterberger proves himself to be a fine researcher, interviewer and interpolator. It's impossible to care equally about everything he covers here (he's trying to be inclusive, after all), but there're tons of great anecdotes, and the discography of recommended and available recordings is excellent. We could've stood for a few more Fugs/Rounders stories, but then, we always say that. As should you.

again

Should you have anything interesting for us to see/review (especially LPs, books, mags, vids) please send two (2) copies to: Bull Tongue, PO Box 627, Northampton MA 01061.

Correction

Last time we failed to give an accurate listings for two books. The full title of the Darby Crash biography is *Lexicon Devil: The Fast Times and Short Life of Darby Crash and the Germs*; it's authored by Brendan Mullen with Don Bolles and Adam Parfrey. Also, Steven Blush (not Blish) is the author of a book whose complete title is *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*. Both books are published by Feral House and may be ordered direct from the publisher at www.feralhouse.com. ARTHUR regrets the errors. ☹



LUNCH IS AN EXCERPT FROM ANDERS NILSEN'S WORK-IN-PROGRESS BIG QUESTIONS WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF 2003. HE RECEIVED A GRANT FROM THE XERIC FOUNDATION IN 1997 FOR HIS BOOK THE BALLAD OF THE TWO HEADED BOY. HE LIVES IN CHICAGO. TO ORDER HIS BOOKS GO TO WWW.THEHOLYCONSUMPTION.COM

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12 Rods

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Friends Forever by Ben Wallenstein, Shyle Wars by Tony Silver & Henry Chalfant, I Am Trying to Break Your Heart: A Film about Wilco by Sam Jones, Hell House by George Ratliff, Dutch Harbor by Braden King & Laura Moys and Mala Noche by Gus Van Sant.



001 EDIE SEDGWICK in CIAO! MANHATTAN

by John Palmer & David Weintraub
 The final screen appearance of famed Andy Warhol Factory muse Edie Sedgwick. The experimental plot parallels Edie's glory days and her inevitable downfall. 20th Anniversary DVD includes never-before-seen bonus footage of Edie and New York in the Silver Stakes. "The Queen Knew of the Drug Generation." - Village Voice



002 FRUIT OF THE VINE

by Curt Richter & Pico Cherrett
 Groundbreaking superb pool skating film blurs the line between the art and the sport of skateboarding. Includes bonus pool footage and interviews. "A seminal work of scraped knees, bruised elbows and leg air." - Rolling Stone



003 BENJAMIN SMOKE

by Jim Cohen & Peter Sifan
 An intimate portrait following the crooked path of musician, speed freak, occasional drag-queen and all-around neigade "Benjamin". Includes a special appearance by Pats Smith. The DVD features 45 minutes of extra footage and new performances by Cat Power and Yo Chernutt. "A film as ethereal, moving and uncompromising as its subject." - Village Voice



004 MYSTERIOUS OBJECT AT NOON

by Apichatpong Weerasethakul
 Inspired by the Surrealist storytelling technique Exquisite Corpse, Weerasethakul interviews people throughout Thailand who each contribute to a collective story. An effortlessly complex collision between documentary and fiction. "It's a film unlike any other... and may be the beginning of a new art form." - Village Voice
 "A new art form." - New York Times

plexifilm.com

(photography by lauren klain)

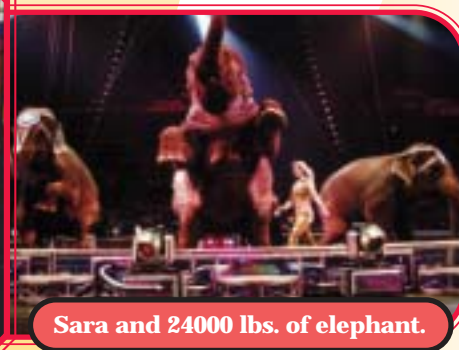
...and then i joined the circus



Clown toolbox.



The author prepares to play the fool.



Sara and 24000 lbs. of elephant.

continued from page 7 not yoga. OK. Let's get into the splits."

Easy for him to say. I've been a long-distance runner since the age of 12. I've got thighs to rival an Olympic speed skater, but I give it a shot. While I'm straining to do this, two girls are upside down in perfect handstands, chatting about boys as if they were sitting in a cafe sipping coffee.

One of them is Jade Eclipse. A 25-year-old sex worker with a shock of green hair and a dragon tattoo, she has a thing for handstands. "Once I got up, I just never wanted to come down," she tells me.

Hand balancing is a traditionally male stunt since it requires a ton of upper body strength, but Jade has it down. She makes balancing her entire body weight on one arm while doing the splits look easy.

When I try them, I can only come within six inches of the floor. This is where I end the class. As much as I'd like to whip my leg up over my shoulder, to continue would mean I'd need a stretcher. The rest of the students finish up with "the rack," a bar they hang over backwards so the trainer can push their shoulders inward while a fellow student pushes their ankles into their faces. I can barely watch. They are screaming with pain.

Backstage at Ringling Brothers is far more upbeat. I'm at the Richmond Coliseum in Virginia, where the circus is performing 11 times in four days. Running around behind the scenes are

clowns, midgets and girls in silver lame Cossack wear. And elephants, horses and tigers—many of which not only perform with, but are trained by, the show's three female stars. It is the first time in Ringling's 132-year history that it has featured so many women, two of them doing traditionally male acts: training tigers and hand balancing on a motorcycle.

I had wanted to add my name to that list and perform as a human cannonball during the two days I spent with them, but my contact there said it was too dangerous. The best she could do was let me try out the lira (a trapeze-like contraption), ride an ele-

phant and eventually perform as a guest clown.

Being a clown is pretty much the only way an outsider like me can get in to a circus like Ringling, where all the performers come from generations of circus families. Sara Houcke, the 25-year-old Amazon goddess and "tiger whisperer," is seventh generation. Her father worked with animals. Her mother was a dancer. Born in England and raised all over Europe, she started performing at age two. By 11, she was riding camels bareback. At 17, she struck out on her own with a one-woman animal act that involved horses, zebras and camels. She's been

with Ringling three years.

Women have worked with horses for a while, but tigers are traditionally handled by men because of the danger factor. Sara says she's never scared, but "A lot of men can't believe a woman will go into the cage with tigers because there's not many men that would do it," she tells me, her accent thick with German. "They always say, 'You've got bigger balls than I do.'"

When I meet her seven tigers, they look like overgrown stuffed animals, even though they've got all their teeth and claws. They are furry, cuddly and snuggling in pairs. When Sara goes up to a cage and pets a snow white, he licks her hand, then purrs, making a loud, engine-ish noise akin to an idling 18-wheeler.

"They're so cute," she says.

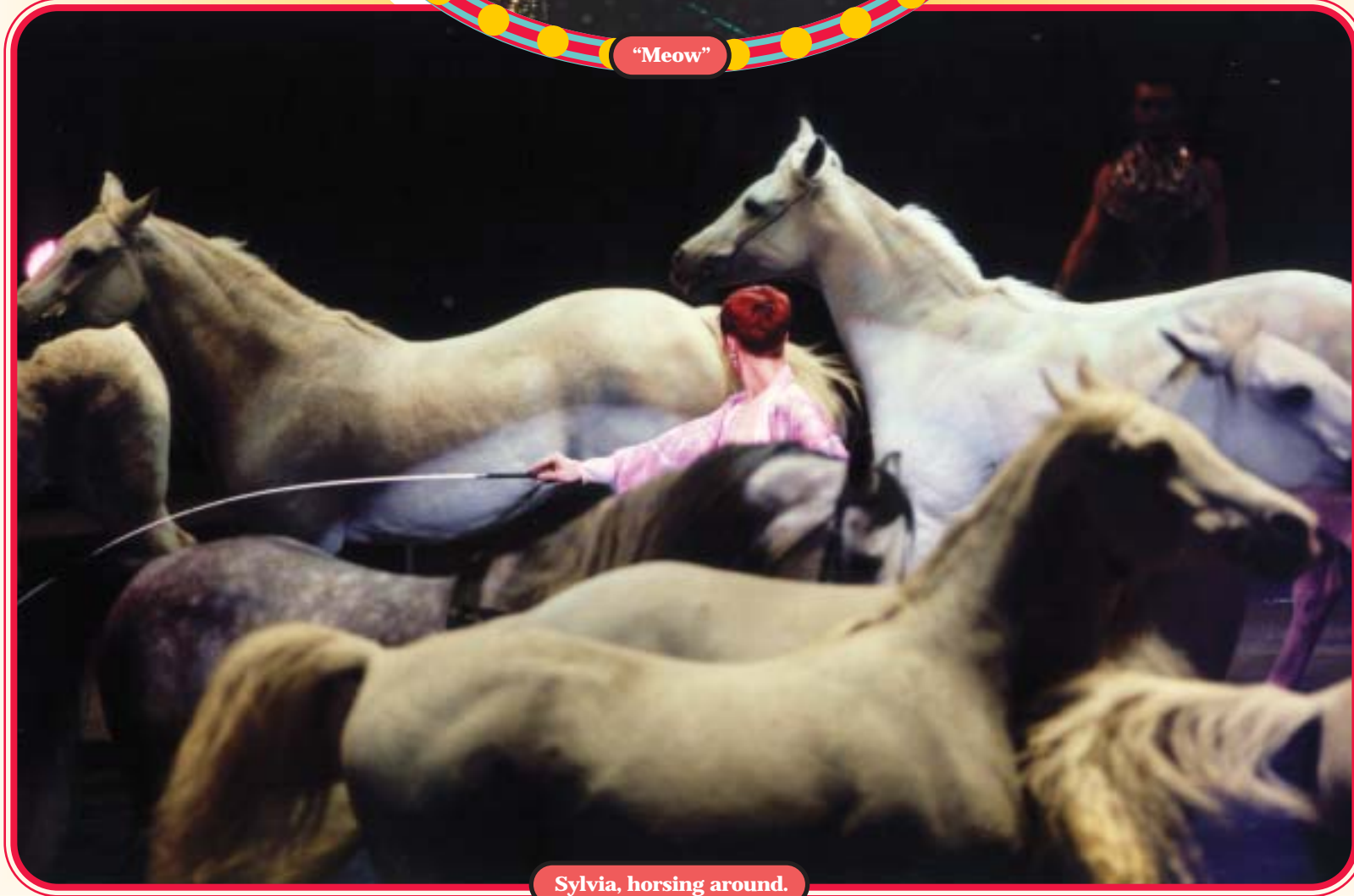
Sara won't let me get too close to the cage or touch them because she thinks they'll mistake my fingers for snacks. Still, she says, "You're lucky you're a girl." Her "cats," as she calls them, "go crazy and ballistic" around men, even when they're twice as far away as I am. "My cats hate males. I've trained 'em well."

Sara also performs with elephants. She introduces me to Karen, a lumbering 8,000-pound lady who eats more than my body weight every day. We feed her a snack—eight loaves of bread—then Karen takes me for a ride. I'm instructed to grab on to her ear and step on her leg—that she'll hoist me up. I hesitate, thinking it will hurt her, but Karen doesn't mind. She

"A LOT OF MEN CAN'T BELIEVE A WOMAN WILL GO INTO THE CAGE WITH TIGERS... THEY ALWAYS SAY, 'YOU'VE GOT BIGGER BALLS THAN I DO.'"



"Meow"

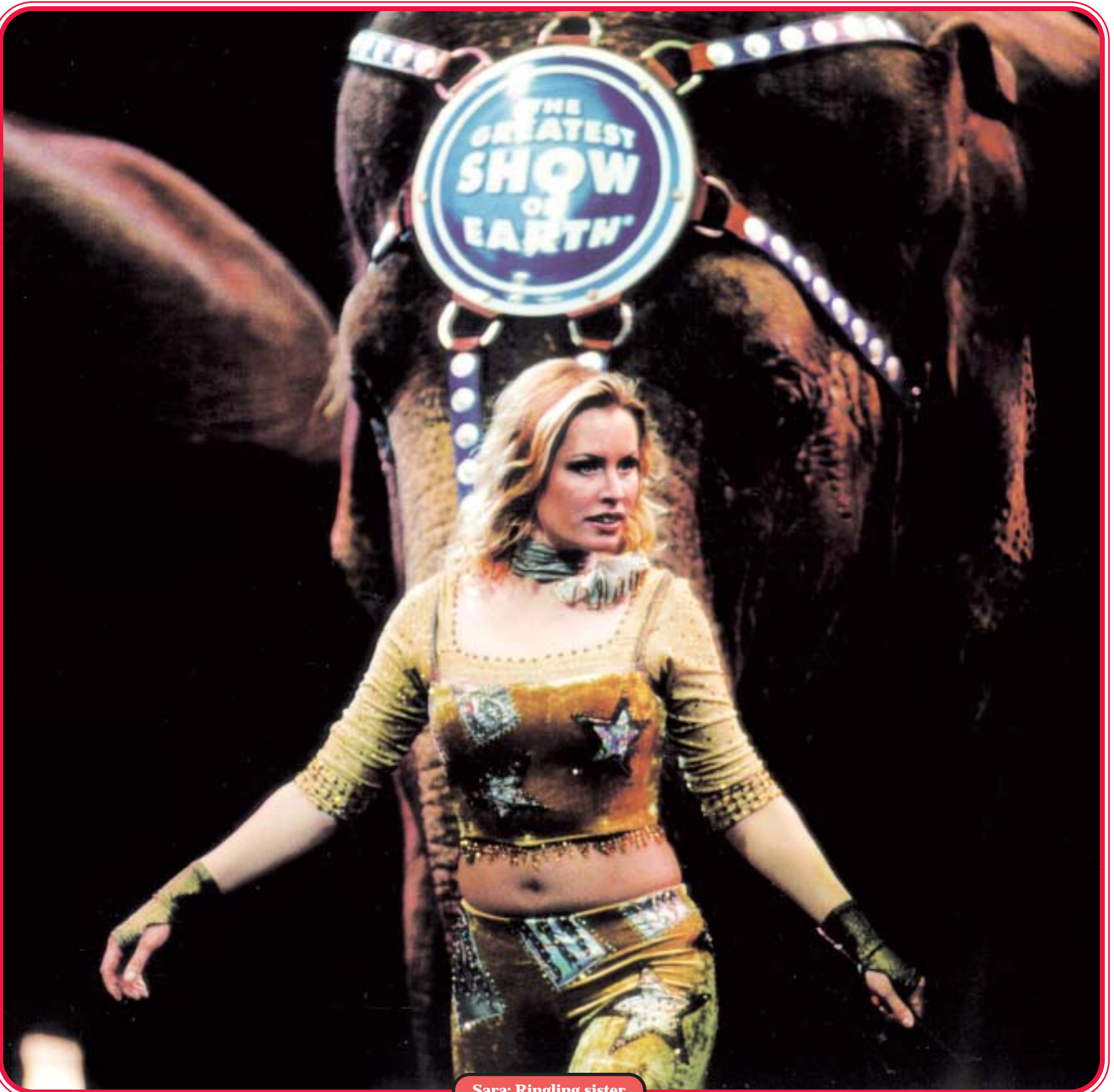


Sylvia, horsing around.

(photography by lauren klain)



"There's great satisfaction in sending your husband flying at 65 miles per hour," Laura says.



Sara: Ringling sister.



throws me on her back and walks me around the ring. I feel her shoulder muscles pumping up and down and need to hold on. When Sara performs with the elephants, she just sits on their foreheads while they walk around, crossing her legs and leaning back as if she were on a La-Z-Boy.

Everything in the circus looks far easier than it really is. I guess that's to be expected when you start training at age three. When Sylvia Zerbin, a ninth generation aerialist, glides through the air, it looks effortless. But when Sue Carpenter, office-bound journalist, attempts it, she nearly crashes to the ground.

Sylvia is petite with short red hair that makes her a dead ringer for Peter Pan. She is letting me try her lira—a metal hoop that swings back and forth like a trapeze but can also spin in circles. During shows, she performs an eight-minute routine on it swinging around at high speeds and dangling 30 feet above the floor from her ankles, among other things. Before I so much as touch the hoop, she gives me some powdered resin so my hands won't slip. She never uses lotion because it makes her skin too slick and could make her fall. Sylvia is one of the only female trapeze artists in the world to perform without a net.

She's fallen only once. It was 1999, an opening night in Irvine, California, and Sylvia was doing her solo act high above the ring. Missing a move that required her to catch the trapeze with her heel, she fell headfirst before the crowd. The show kept going.

"It's live entertainment. It's not TV. I know we make it look easy, but it takes a split second for something to go wrong," she says. "Everything you do has got to be 100%—not 95% or 99%. I was very lucky."

Sylvia was back in the air in three months, even though she suffered a concussion and tore all her shoulder ligaments. I don't like knowing this before I begin. Sylvia instructs me to pull myself onto the lira and sit in it. You'd think I sit around eating marshmallows all day from how little upper body strength I have. I can barely hoist my ass onto the bar. When I do, it digs into my backside. I ask Sylvia if she ever gets bruised. She shows me the permanent black-and-blue line across her thighs, butt and back; then she shows me the calluses on the backs of her knees and heels and tops of her feet.

"I hate wearing swimsuits," she tells me. It's a shame because she has a beautiful, lithe body, practically devoid of any fat.

Sylvia is so thin because she rarely eats. Performing two or three shows a day, there isn't time, she says. When she does eat during the day, it's usually carrots she's stolen from her eight Arabian horses, which she trains herself and with which she also performs.

Sylvia instructs her assistant to lift

MISSING A MOVE THAT REQUIRED HER TO CATCH THE TRAPEZE WITH HER HEEL, SYLVIA FELL HEADFIRST BEFORE THE CROWD. THE SHOW KEPT GOING.

me up 30 feet in the air so I can sense the height at which she works. My head is practically in the rafters, and I am clinging to the hoop for life. She begins to slowly spin me around. It isn't long before I want to heave. She drops me back down and asks me to get off, instructing me to "walk away gracefully and bow." I drop clumsily from the hoop, stumble like a bum and almost fall.

I guess I really am best suited to be a clown. The people at Ringling have arranged for me to suit up and perform as part of something called "Adventure," the hour before the circus begins when audience members can come onto the floor and meet the performers. Like the other clowns, I will meet and greet kids, sign autographs and do a gag routine for the crowd.

Only three of Ringling's dozen clowns are female. "It's hard to find funny women," one of them tells me. She's right, especially when it comes to the physical humor that is necessary to clown around.

Marni, my new clown friend, doesn't have that problem. She looks like some sort of Renaissance Faire reject with gravity-defying red braids and a bulbous nose. Marni is working with Greg, another veteran clown, to get my face in order and pick out some clothes. I choose a hideous purple and green dress with stripes and polka dots, lemon yellow bloomers and a blue wig. I am, by far, the ugliest clown I have ever seen. I'm sure no children will want to talk to me, so I change into a pair of enormous purple pants with suspenders. I'm still

hideous, but then I remind myself: clowning is not a glamour contest. Besides, it's time to get started.

I'm nervous, but Marni and Greg give me only one piece of advice: "Be yourself." We head out to the floor as a trio. Kids are flocking to Marni and asking to be photographed with Greg. When they're too busy, a few brave souls ask the ugly one for an autograph. Their disappointment is palpable, but I just pull on my suspenders, smile and adjust my nose, which keeps slipping off.

I'm not enjoying myself, but it's preferable to what I'm asked to do next: assist a far cuter, Ronald McDonald-like clown in a skit. I don't even know what the skit's about when I'm pushed into a circle ringed with laughing, screaming children. Ron takes the lead. He picks up a cardboard box, hands me a teddy bear, then walks away. Miming at me from across the ring, he asks me to throw the bear into the box. I miss. The kids laugh, even though this isn't funny. I try again. This time the bear makes it into the box, but the bottom isn't sealed so it falls through to the floor. The kids laugh harder. OK. I see. The new clown on the block plays the fool. Very funny. Now get me outta here.

The moment I leave the stage, I retire backstage to wash off my makeup (it takes four applications of baby shampoo) and head out to the audience where I belong.

Show time. Sylvia swings into action, opening the night on her trapeze. She touches down in the center ring, then climbs a rope 30 feet up to the lira to


begin the next part of her routine. I can see the muscles in her back, even though I'm about 100 feet away. When she begins spinning around at high speeds, I'm glad to be sitting in the bleachers nibbling on my snow cone.

After various routines that include the clowns, an alligator wrestler and a Kenyan tumbling troupe, Sara takes the stage with her tigers. It's after intermission, so the stagehands can rig a cage around the center ring. If there was any question as to the tigers' ferocity, it is quelled when one of them roars and swipes a paw at someone walking by.

Sara calls the tigers out one by one and instructs them to sit on their perches. One disobedient feline jumps off. It leaps back onto the perch after Sara pets it and gives it a kiss. Sara is constantly smooching with her cats, so much so that her assistant complains about the lipstick in their fur. Sara is dressed to the nines, wearing beaded gold pants, a matching chiffon blouse—and a meat pouch around her waist that is filled with three-inch cubes of raw steak which she feeds the tigers by hand during her show. It isn't just the tigers who love her. The crowd is eating it up, too.

A two-and-a-half hour extravaganza, Ringling's finale kicks off with the husband-and-wife team, Jon and Laura Weiss—the former being a human cannonball, and the latter lighting the fuse. "There's great satisfaction in sending your husband flying at 65 miles per hour," Laura says.

The show ends in sensory overload, with nearly every performer and animal on the floor, pyrotechnics and confetti flying. The Greatest Show on Earth? I can certainly understand where Ringling got the name. It's an amazing spectacle. But there's something more to it, too. Under the big top, beyond the excitement, glitz and glamour, is a unique profession in an insular world, one that allows adult performers to indulge their youthful spirits amidst an extended family and one that is finally allowing women the opportunity to express themselves in ways that surpass the norm.

That's what happens when a closed community opens its eyes to what's happening outside the circus world. At San Francisco's Circus Center, where students are experimenting with fire and various aspects of performance art, it seems women are up to the challenge of bringing traditional circus acts in closer alignment with the modern world. Add in Ringling Brothers, where a female tiger whisperer and hand balancer are among the most popular stunts, and the possibilities begin to seem endless. I can only wonder what's next. A musclebound female lifting slabs of concrete with her teeth? A femme fatale in a fur bikini wrestling pythons? Some modern-day Xena catching bullets with her bare hands? Only time will tell. 

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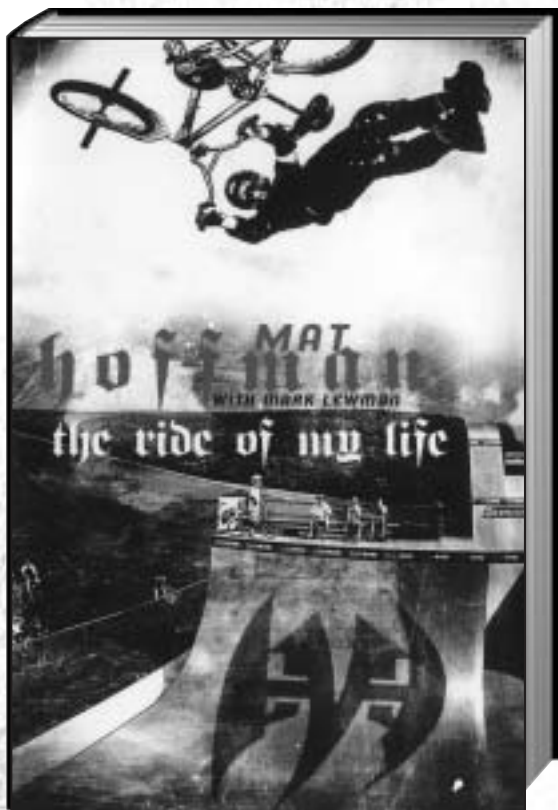
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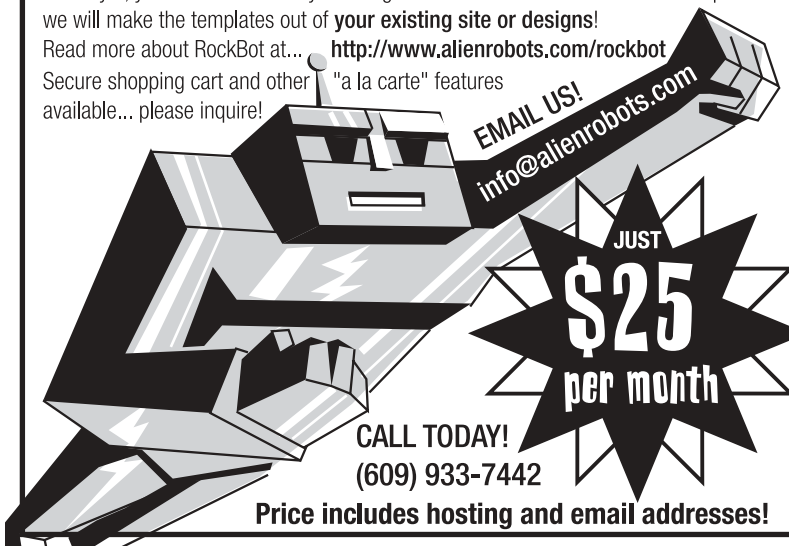
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the turntables might wobble but they won't fall down

a jam master jay fan remembers

by peter "piper" relic

a few minutes before four o'clock on Halloween afternoon 2002, I realized I'd better do the crosstown hustle in grandma's Nissan if I was gonna bumrush rush hour to Beachwood Place Mall. Cooped up in the lab all day, I ran outside—foliage in full flame and wind whipcracking off Lake Erie—Cleveland represent!—and drove east past the granite gryphons lording over Carnegie-Lorain Bridge.

Fiddling the radio dial of the broken cassette deck, I struck immediate jackpot as the "blazin' hip hop and R&B" station spun Missy Elliot's new single, giving me my fix of elephant trunk calls, backmask raps, and well, that chubby cheeked happy feeling Missy's voice always gives me. Thing is, my favorite bit in "Work It" is the part at the end when Missy shouts out "to muh lay-deez!" and

Timbaland's track flips into the beat from Run DMC's "Peter Piper." Woomp! Damn if radio plays anything anymore that hits as hard as Jam Master Jay's cuts—you know that sound, like carpet needles cutting through a bituminous bite plate? Of course, that sheer fierceness may be the reason the ending is usually chopped and faded by some dumb-eared radio bungler to make way for a Liberty Ford commercial.

Eff 'em. Hearing that snatch of "Peter Piper" got me hyped. I snapped off the radio and busted the verse imbedded in a shell-toed part of my memory bank:

"Doctor Seuss and Mother Goose both did their thing but Jam Master's getting loose and DMC's the King, Adult entertainer, child educator, Jam Master Jay king of the cross fader, He's the better of the best Best believe he's the baddest

**Perfect timing when I'm climbing on my rhyming apparatus
When he cuts
girls move their butts
His name is Jay,
here to play,
he must be nuts
On the mix real quick
and I'd like to say
He's not last but he's fast
and his name is Jay!**

Maybe those aren't the letter-perfect lyrics, but hey. I also doubt that my Run DMC experience was wildly different than that of many other kids lucky enough to tune in during the salad days of Hollis, Queens finest, but here goes:

It was the fall of 1985. I was a freshman at a suburban Connecticut public high school. Out of nowhere one day a way-beyond-me junior girl came up to my locker and without saying anything just handed me a tape. It was not Huey Lewis & the News. This 60-minute Memorex piece of black plastic included Beastie Boys' "She's On It," Original Concept's "Knowledge Me," Skinny Boys' "Jock Box" and Run DMC's "Sucka MCs"—all songs that crunched. I listened to it on my Walkman while delivering the New Britain Herald (pumped me up to break my fastest time record on my route), on a D-battery powered Tandy tape recorder while playing driveway hockey against my brother (it made my slapshot nastier). I listened to it endlessly, and when *Run DMC Raising Hell* came out the following year, I bought the cassette at Strawberry's. It took me forever to get through the entire album because I kept rewinding "It's Tricky" and

"My Adidas." (I remember the look on my mom's face when I told her "You be illin'.") The first time was the last.) But finally I made it to the awesome closing track, "Proud To Be Black." Jam Master Jay's slashing stab-scratches cut like brass tacks through a whitewashed history text as Run proclaimed "George Washington Carver made the peanut great, showed any man with a mind could create!" I loved peanut butter and I loved funky beats, just like Run DMC! They became the first heroes I ever had who weren't pro athletes.

Thinking about it now, Jam Master Jay's beats and cuts were essential for Run DMC to get their message across. Heck, Run and DMC knew

that said I'VE GONE TO FIND MYSELF—IF I GET BACK BEFORE I RETURN KEEP ME HERE.

At the video store, I did what I'd come to do: buy *Donnie Darko* on DVD. I asked the girl ringing it up, "Are you a hip hop fan?" She looked at me. I went on: "Can you believe...Jam Master Jay?" She gave me a sorrowful, sympathetic smile and said, "He brought a lot to the game."

He brought a lot to the game. I drove home, flipped the stereo on and got into the shower. The *Chronic 2001* disc I'd left in the player started up and I heard Dr. Dre's voice: "I moved out of the hood for good, you blame me? Niggas can't hit niggas they can't see, I'm out of they sight now I'm out of they dang reach. How would you feel if niggas wanted you killed? You'd probably move to a new house on a new hill and choose a new spot if niggas wanted you shot...I ain't a thug—how much Tupac in ya you got?"

That's when I cried. Bad meaning bad not bad meaning good. Jam Master Jay, not being a gangsta, must have felt safe staying in the hood with his wife and kids. When Tupac and Biggie died, it wasn't a shock like this, and didn't hurt the same. I guess because with Jam Master Jay, it hurt the 14-year-old inside me. And that 14-year-old who fell in love with hip hop (and the girl who gave me that tape; thanks Mary) is still fundamentally me. I feel Run DMC's records like I feel my younger self: dated but never played out.

Watching *Donnie Darko* that night, I noticed that at one point in the movie Donnie—a suburban kid living in the mid '80s—is rocking shell toes. I can only assume Donnie also agrees with the on-record unison appraisal of Jam Master Jay by Run and DMC: "Goddamn that DJ made my day!"

For my friend Jeff Seifert.
Rest In Peace.

HE BROUGHT A LOT TO THE GAME.



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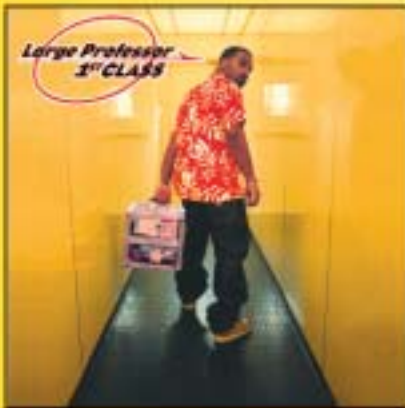
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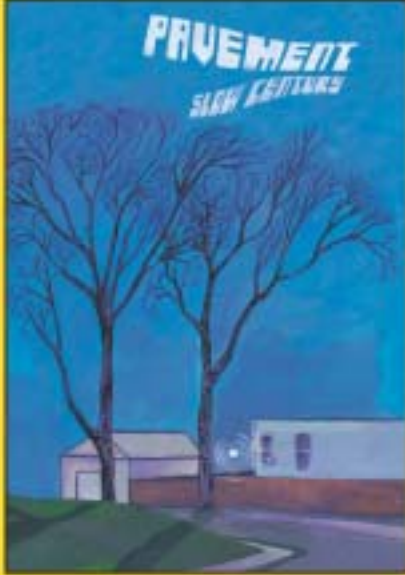
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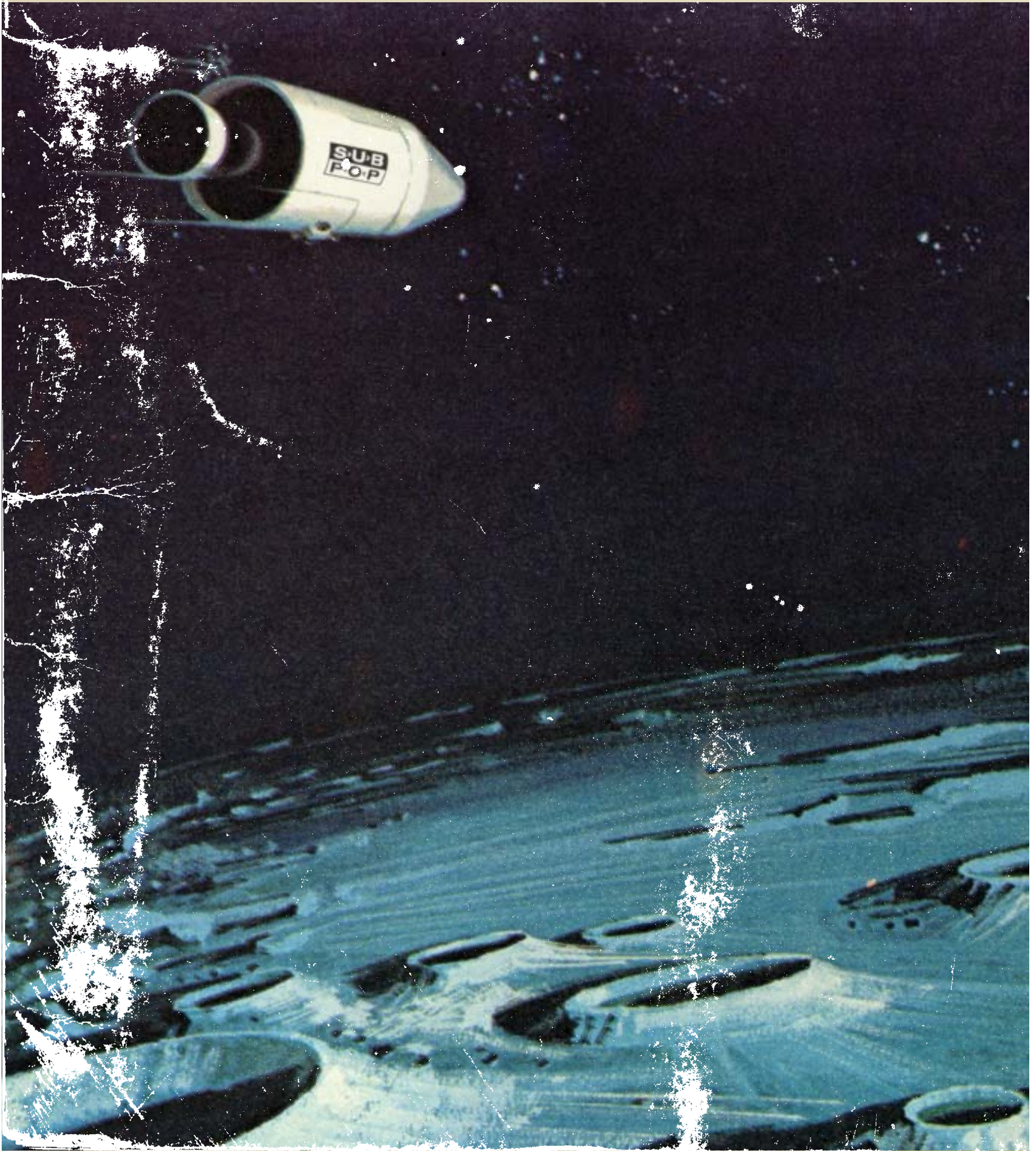
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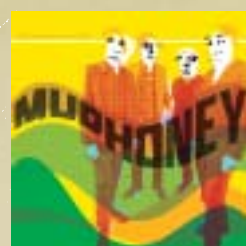
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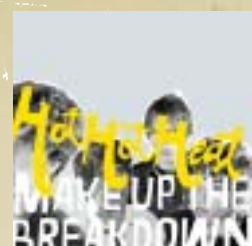
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