

A BEAR SHOULD KNOW BETTER ... AND I DO, #6



Acting Press

MR. MOON TRENT OF TIMMI-KAT RECORDS - THE FIRST NUDE TO APPEAR ON THE PUBLICATION'S COVER, AND THE FIRST DOG (ACE)...HOW COULD A TIMMYBEAR *NOT* PLUG A TIMMIKAT (AS IT WERE)?

Spring 2011

A BEAR SHOULD KNOW BETTER . . . AND I DO, #6

An “all timmy-bear, all the time” production, except the cover photo, sent me by Mr. Moon Trent –as usual, love to he-who-should-not-be-unsnuggled, *Michael*)

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR BEIJING, BUT TRIPOLI, CAIRO, TUNIS AND MADISON – AND DON'T STOP THERE . . .

GRACE FURY AND THE ALIENS IN POLYESTER (A WORK IN PROGRESS)

RANDOM OBSERVATIONS FROM AN UNSHAVED INTERNATIONALIST

TAKING OUT A POLICY FOR LOVE AND DESTRUCTION

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES

SOME DUSTY OLD ART/SOME DUSTY OLD ARTIST AND HIS MUSE

SOME GAY SUNSHINE BOYS (AND ONE INSENSIBLY SHOED GIRL)

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**NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR BEIJING, BUT TRIPOLI, CAIRO, TUNIS
AND MADISON – AND DON'T STOP THERE ...**



IF THIS IS THE RESULT OF HALLUCINOGENIC DRUGS, I HEREBY DROP MY STRAIGHT-EDGE POSITION AND ADVOCATE THE HEAVY USE OF SAME, WORLDWIDE...THE FIRST PICTURE IS IN LIBYA – THE SECOND IS IN TUCSON, ARIZONA (NOW, IF ONLY THE SOLIDARITY EXTENDED TO not BOMBING THE REBELLION OUT OF THE COUNTRY – AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, RESIDENTS OF ARIZONA, PLEASE RECOGNIZE THAT ILLEGALS ARE NOT YOUR ENEMIES – THE SYSTEM THAT RESULTS IN PEOPLE HAVING TO CROSS BORDERS IS THE RESULT OF HOW **CAPITALISM** CROSSES BORDERS AND DESTROYS LIVES ELSEWHERE and HERE...)

**NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR BEIJING, BUT TRIPOLI, CAIRO, TUNIS
AND MADISON – AND DON'T STOP THERE ...**



OH, NO – IT'S AN EVIL CONSPIRACY AGAINST SELF-INTEREST AND ISOLATIONISM –
TERRORISM MUST BE BEHIND IT – IT COULD NEVER BE AN EXAMPLE OF WORKERS OF THE
WORLD UNITING, NOW, COULD IT?

**NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR BEIJING, BUT TRIPOLI, CAIRO, TUNIS
AND MADISON – AND DON'T STOP THERE ...**



REBEL GRRRLS – REBEL GRRRLS – REBEL GRRRLS, YOU ARE THE QUEENS OF MY WORLD
(TUNISIA)

**NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR BEIJING, BUT TRIPOLI, CAIRO, TUNIS
AND MADISON – AND DON'T STOP THERE ...**



**NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR BEIJING, BUT TRIPOLI, CAIRO, TUNIS
AND MADISON – AND DON'T STOP THERE ...**



HELLO, *MR WALKER* – YOU KNOW, WHEN YOUR OWN POLICE DON'T SUPPORT YOU, AND WHEN YOUR IDEA OF CONCERN FOR PUBLIC SAFETY IS TO PREVENT FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL FROM RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY CALL IN THE CAPITOL BUILDING, IT'S TIME TO CONSIDER THAT YOU AREN'T POPULAR OR RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF YOUR CONSTITUENTS (NEWSFLASH – PUBLIC SERVANTS PAY TAXES – UNLIKE THE KOCHES OR MANY CORPORATIONS IN WISCONSIN). THIS CAKE CELEBRATES THE REBIRTH OF THE GRASSROOTS LABOUR MOVEMENT – HAVE A BITTER SLICE. MAKE IT A SMALL ONE, THOUGH, BECAUSE IT HAS TO GO AROUND OHIO, MICHIGAN AND HOPEFULLY NEW YORK TOO. AND FELLOW WORKING-CLASS MEMBERS? COURT DECISIONS ARE GOOD TO START WITH, BUT DON'T COUNT ON THE MASTER'S TOOLS TO DISMANTLE THE HOUSE.

GRACE FURY AND THE ALIENS IN POLYESTER

CHAPTER ONE

Grace Fury leaned forward through the haze of cigarette smoke and the carefully arranged, scarf-draped indirect lighting provided by the lamps scattered around the living room and proved that either time or installment plans had been quite kind to the cheekbones, nose and lips that had made countless young men and several older women sigh with ecstasy.

Bob Adderly was immune to the charms of the fairer sex, even those components of it closer to his own age, so he was thinking uncharitable thoughts about surgery, the cancerous fog produced by Grace's ultra-camp cigarette holder and the spoiled-rotten bichon frises, Clark and Montgomery, which were currently chewing his shoelaces without subtlety or shame.

"So I imagine you're here to ask me about the aliens?" Grace purred with the remnants of the husky voice that had secured her coach passage on the train of fame. "Young people are rarely interested in my films or my still adequate and, in case you were going to ask, NON-expensive charms." She paused, and Bob realized in a moment of terror that she was hinting or begging for fascination with something beyond her current claim to notoriety.

"Well," he said, trying to ease his metaphorical feet around the very real landmines of indulging her desperation, "my readers probably want to know SOMETHING about the woman who saved the world, so why don't we..."

Before he could say another word or throw himself from the over-stuffed loveseat, she had gone to a murky corner and pulled out an old projector which he noticed was threaded with a film reel. With a deft push of a button and the subsequent lowering of the screen, he was trapped. Why could he not be the misogynist pig so many gay men were? Why must he be polite? As with so many things, he blamed his mother.

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Though it was probably a side effect of the nicotine, the heat and the puffy eyes and stuffiness produced by the doggy divas, Bob could have sworn the air rippled as though in a dissolve shot.

Bob imagined the set was to resemble a Southern plantation's main house, though the glimpse he caught of a 1950s Studebaker through the large front windows of the dwelling undercut the realism.

A much younger Grace Fury turned dramatically from her place near that window, wig shifting almost imperceptibly - but Bob had the eye for fashion often attributed to his tribe, though he rarely applied it to his own wardrobe of Bermuda shorts and Hawaiian shirts. The camera switched over to a man in Confederate uniform, in a spot where he had not been visible a moment before, despite the fact that the camera had lingered there. He had an expression on his face of either smoldering passion or the vapours, and was swaying on his mark.

“Oh, Het,” Grace chirped in perhaps the worse Southern accent ever heard – a dialect that, had the actual inhabitants of Georgia had access to it, they might have won the War for using it as a weapon, “whatever shall we do? The Yankees are nearly upon us.”

“Well, Miss Red,” the presumed suitor said, in a more authentic turn of tongue, though the places he put emphasis suggested he had either not learned his lines or had memorized them with the aid of corn whiskey, “I don't rightly know. What I do know is that I would like to be upon you.” Here he twirled his moustache, and it was evident that the money saved on set, wigs, script and rehab had been sunk into the spirit gum holding the unconvincing monstrosity in place.

“Why, Mr. Rutter!” his foil gasped, producing a fan from some mysterious, best- not-dwelled-upon location. “How can you think so crudely at a time like this?”

Het had the gassy expression again. “They say that Caesar fiddled while Rome burned. We might as well do the same, Red, as the Yankees are sure to defeat us any day now.”

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(Bob rolled his eyes. My God, was there NO script assistant, director, teacher to the children in the cast or cafeteria worker near the set to leap up and say: ‘Nero, you lush – not Caesar!’ Apparently not...)

The slightly cracked Southern belle giggled coquettishly. “Oh, Het. You know I am eager to make wild passionate love with you, but we must fight. We must fight until we lose, because, after all, tomor...”

With a twang and a thwhipping sound, the film broke. Bob said a silent prayer to the God who hated him but loathed bad cinema even more.

“Oh, dear,” Grace said. “I have a copy out being transferred to DVD, but this is the only one here. I’m so sorry!”

“Oh, there’s no need to apologize,” Bob said, and meant every word, if not in the way that Grace thought he did.

“That was DEPARTED WITH THE BREEZE,” Grace said with a frightening level of pride. “My last big picture in North America, from 1969. Well, I thought it was big, but the minds of the critics were small. They said it plagiarized some film whose name is escaping me right now. I helped write that script, so I know it was all original. Those inverters were just envious I got to kiss Birmingham Steppe, my co-star. Gays can be such bitches sometimes – oh, no offense, dear!”

“How could I take offense at that?” Bob deadpanned, suspecting she would never notice the sarcasm that was acidic enough to eat through her silk wallpaper. “Besides, they clearly missed the comedic elements of the piece.”

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Grace looked as though she had swallowed some of the tobacco in the cigarette at the end of the ivory appliance. “It was NOT a comedy! That was what THEY said, but they were wrong! It was a serious period drama, Mr. Adderly.”

“But the male lead’s character was named Het Rutter!” Bob sputtered, realizing an instant too late that he may have just struck one of those landmines.

“What’s your point?” Grace said, blinking furiously. “I knew a boy named Het growing up, and Rutter is a perfectly acceptable Germanic name.”

“Of course,” Bob said, glad for his moustache’s ability to conceal the amused twitch of his lips. “I’m not a film critic, though, Miss Fury, so I shouldn’t be commenting on such things.”

“Neither were most of the gentlemen who held those jobs,” Grace deadpanned grimly. “But, as I said earlier, you’re not here to indulge a silly old woman’s nostalgia. You want to hear about the aliens.”

“You’re not old!” Bob lied. “But that is the reason *The National Voyeur* sent me to you, so we should get down to business.”

“Oh, Bob,” Grace said with grotesque flirtatiousness. “If I had a nickel for every time some young man said that to me – oh, wait, I DO!”

The reporter sipped at his rapidly cooling coffee and used that as an excuse for the shudder that passed through his body.

“Are you cold, dear?” Grace said with a slightly saccharine chirp, revealing that her concerned mother act was almost more terrifying than her seductress mode. “I could turn up the heat a little.”

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“God, no!” Bob nearly yelped, then edited with, “I’m fine, Miss Fury. I just let this get a bit too cool.”

“Do call me Grace,” she cooed. “I get so few visitors these days. Most of my old friends from the business are dead, in nursing homes or jealous of my comfortable old age and success.”

Bob looked around at the comparatively small apartment and decided he would refrain from comment. To be fair, her possessions spoke of considerable investment, if very little taste.

“Well...Grace – why don’t we start with the day you first met the aliens? Most of the news accounts tended to focus on the final days, which is understandable, since they were more dramatic and, dare I say it, filmic?”

“You may indeed say it, Bob,” Grace said with another dose of pride. “Why, I have been fielding offers from directors for the past few months. I see myself as played by Miss Hilary Swank or perhaps Paris Hilton. Mr. Spielberg, Miss Coppola and even Mr. Waters have all expressed interest in my life story – well, perhaps more accurately, my nearing-end-of-life story.”

“So, as I understand it, it all began about six months ago here in Los Angeles,” Bob prompted, being careful not to mention either Hollywood or Rodeo Drive for fear of MORE delusional movie industry rambling.

“Yes, Bob, you are correct,” Grace began. “I had just woken up from a glorious sleep, and a dream in which I was back on top – no, you needn’t protest, Bob – I’m well aware that my star has faded, as all such things must someday – it’s entropy. In any case, I went to my darling little kitchenette and had a cup of coffee and read my fan mail. I had just received an invitation to the Sausalito Unmarried Gentlemen’s Convention, where they were going to have a retrospective of those vaguely dirty Italian films I made in the early 70s. I suppose it takes all kinds. Well, my dear, if I’m going to be among my

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fabulous people, I would simply HAVE to have a fabulous new outfit. Therefore, I decided I would hit my favourite boutique on Rodeo Drive in search of something stunning yet dignified. In any case, I had an appointment every Tuesday at that time anyway.”

Bob decided to refrain from commenting on the gold lame pantsuit she was currently sporting. After all, he knew some trashy drag queens whose fashion sense was even worse- not very much so, but still inferior.

“In any case, as usually happens, I couldn’t get a parking space near my favourite boutique, so I had to walk some distance down Rodeo Drive, which meant I had to take in the horrible, tacky tourists who seem to flock there, despite the fact that, even if they could afford the fashions, they could never credibly wear them, darling. Well, just up the street from me was a group of four particularly gruesome examples of that class.”

“That was...”, Bob began, only to be interrupted by the wagging finger and the tutting sounds of his host.

“Patience, Mr. Adderly, patience,” she chided. “All in good time. You’ll have to allow an old woman her way.”

Bob was aware that Miss Fury had essentially paraphrased Divine from *Pink Flamingos*, and was reasonably sure this had been done on purpose as some attempt to appeal to the demographics of her audience of one, but was not going to give her the satisfaction of acknowledging the theft. He was determined not to provide her with any more ammo for digressions or tiresome slide-show memories.

“They had on Bermuda shorts, Hawaiian shirts, big faux-pearl necklaces, floppy sunhats and gigantic Polaroid Instamatic cameras. I mean, where does someone even GET those anymore? They had blue-rinse hair and tacky red plastic sunglasses – at the very least, they could have gone for blue

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sunglasses to match SOMETHING in their ensemble. In fact, in some cases the PRICE TAGS were still on their clothes! They were quite tall and stocky, too, bordering on Dame Edna proportions, and they had TERRIBLE complexions! All told, perfect examples of their type, Bob – so complete, in fact, that I was actually briefly thrown, and ended up catching one of my heels in a crack on the sidewalk that I’m sure was not there before their big clunky feet hit it. I nearly fell, and twisted my ankle enough to force me to sit down on the curb for a moment to avoid going into shock. When I looked up from having my head near my knees, they were nowhere to be seen.”

Bob prompted gently, “So then you went on to the boutique, and that would be where you encountered...”

Grace sighed. “I can see you are bound to determine the shape of my story here, Mr. Adderly. Very well – I shall refrain from saying how I had to limp on a wobbly heel down the sidewalk, passing several other nouveau riche or even toujours pauvre persons who did not even bother to ask if I was all right, despite the fact they would have had to have seen my unfortunate misstep. So I arrived at Mercure, my favourite store. Paul there always gives me his employee discount in exchange for my giving him permission to wear the same outfit. It somewhat miffs me that he actually shares my size, but these things happen as a girl gets older.”

(From Bob’s research, Paul actually was a fairly petite man, so he could have offered Grace a compliment here. He was not going to give her that satisfaction. There might be no hope in actually shortening the length of this digressive journey, but he was not going to provide any excuses to head down shallows or scenic routes either.)

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“It took me ten minutes to get there on my wounded ankle, and it disturbed me to see the door open, since Mercure is only open by invitation or appointment. You have to press the buzzer a certain number of times in a given pattern to verify your identity. Besides, it was not only OPEN, but off the hinges! This is not typical, even before the Oscars or during one of the rare sales Mercure holds, once a year, in which it is open to the general public – the sort of people who might just break the door in a frenzy of consumerism. With some trepidation, I stepped over the threshold.”

“And that’s when you saw the bodies?” Bob nearly squeaked, unable to contain his journalistic curiosity any longer.

Grace sighed, in what was probably a genuine display of emotion. “Yes, Mr. Adderly, that is when I saw the bodies – a sight that still haunts my nightmares, which I hope to someday be able to bury to at least the extent they did to the portions left behind. But here I will provide you with a scoop. ONE clerk was still left alive, which I have never revealed until now.”

Bob leaned forward eagerly, though the lighting and smoke showed skin pale from leaning over a computer and eyes bloodshot from too much coffee, in his case.

“Sadly,” Grace said, her voice briefly catching, “it was Paul. He was lying in a pile of broken glass, shredded expensive gowns and, well, himself – but he was still breathing. He motioned for me to bend down and…”

Here she actually flung her hand against her forehead like a silent movie actress. “Oh, I shall never forget it. He said: ‘Those old women – they weren’t women at all!’”

Bob couldn’t resist. “Well, given the description you gave of them, I shouldn’t have thought so either.”

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Grace's mouth formed into a disapproving moue. "That was quite uncalled for, Mr. Adderly. I should hope that when you have been ripped to shreds and are lying on the floor of an expensive boutique, your friends and family would not be standing around making cheap jokes at your expense."

Bob said, "I suspect that that situation would never come up, to be honest, Miss Fury, but I do apologize."

Grace said, "No, from your wardrobe I would suspect the most expensive place you have been is The Gap. In any case, just as he said that and..."

Here her lip trembled for a moment. "Well, those were his last words, but not the last sound I heard in the store. At that precise moment, I heard the emergency exit over by the changing rooms being kicked open. There is a sort of alcove where the change rooms are, around a corner, so I couldn't actually see, but I went over as quickly as I could, picking my way through the glass and favouring my other ankle, just in time to see..."

Here Grace paused. "But I think I've told enough for one evening. I know you have a week to put together this story, Mr. Adderly, and I'm a little tired and sad now. You are welcome to come back tomorrow evening. In three days, another party you will want to speak to will also be here."

Bob was disappointed, but hardly surprised. It WAS getting a bit late, and his allergy medication was wearing off.

"Very well," he said. "I shall see you tomorrow evening then, Miss Fury – Grace."

"Indeed," she said. "That means you will have to let me live."

"What?" Bob said, somewhat startled.

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“Scheherazade, Mr. Adderly,” she said with an amused twinkle. “What – you didn’t think I read? *The Arabian Nights*, for goodness sakes. Hardly as obscure as, oh, Thomas Pynchon’s *AGAINST THE DAY* or Jasper Fforde’s *SHADES OF GREY*.”

“Um – yes,” Bob said, now eager to leave before his impression of her was further improved. “Good night, Grace.”

“Good night, Bob,” Grace said. “Sweet dreams. I suspect mine will be rather sour.”

CHAPTER TWO

Bob had not slept well, since, though he DID have a week in which to produce his story, his publishers were fonder of the quickly-penned and poorly-researched likes of “Debbie Gibson pregnant with Bigfoot’s baby” and “Lassie and Elvis had a leading affair”, and had not been happy about more expenses and time devoted to this article.

Grace, on the other hand, looked radiant enough to be in a permanent state of afterglow, an image on which Bob preferred not to dwell. He suspected that attention and a certain measure of appreciation were like aphrodisiacs or drugs to her.

“Where were we?” Grace said disingenuously, since Bob was sure she had the script memorized by now, with little room for improvisation or rewrites. “Ah, yes. I emerged from the store and immediately stumbled over something, once again wrenching my ankle. It turned out, upon inspection, to strongly resemble the clothes the four women aforementioned were wearing. A few steps further along were several hangers with Mercure insignia on them. In other words, those bitches had stolen fashionable garments and forced them upon their hideous bodies! I started to tremble, which I initially thought was due to rage over that blasphemy or shock at my friend Paul’s death, but then I saw the saucer which was taking off from a nearby field and shaking the earth with its engines.”

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“In broad daylight, and no-one nearby saw anything?” Bob said with the incredulity he was finding hard to repress, even armed with the knowledge that there had indeed been aliens on Earth.

“Well, darling,” Grace drawled, “this IS Hollywood. I suppose people might have thought it was a movie prop of some sort. In any case, for some odd reason there was hardly a soul around out back, other than Edmund, whom you’ll meet in a couple of days.”

Bob rapidly jotted down this name, as it was not on his list of people known to be involved in the story.

“You will be pleased to know,” Grace said, her lip trembling with slight amusement at his frantic notation, “that Edmund is a scoop. He has not spoken to the media before now about his role in the earth’s salvation, as he is somewhat shy and retiring, but he has agreed to speak to you as a favour for me.”

Bob arched one eyebrow at this.

“And, yes, Mr. Adderly,” Grace said, “given some of the more incredible elements of the story, I suppose I prevailed upon Edmund to confirm that I am not the next Frances Farmer.”

“I was thinking nothing of the sort, Miss Fury,” Bob blustered with slightly more acting skill than the romantic lead of DEPARTED WITH THE BREEZE.

“Of course you weren’t, darling,” Grace said, eyes rolling slightly as she lit up her cigarette. “How could I ever have doubted your complete faith in my sanity and trustworthiness? By the way, is that a pistol in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?”

“It’s a pistol,” Bob said. “I live in a rather rough neighbourhood.”

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“I’m sure you do, Mr. Adderly,” Grace purred. “And I’m also certain you have seen SUNSET BOULEVARD and wanted to protect yourself against any Gloria Swanson scenarios that might develop in your overly imaginative little mind. Ah, well – I suppose I should be flattered that someone still conceives of my potentially being a bad girl. However, I suspect I would be more of a poisoner than a gun moll – just extrapolating from my basic personality, you understand – nothing to which I have given much premeditation.”

Bob looked briefly at the cookie he had been nibbling, and then dismissed the thought entirely.

“In any case,” Grace continued, “I saw the UFO taking off and walked along as quickly as I could, trying not to take my eyes off it as I did.”

“Why?” Bob asked. “Were you trying to follow a vessel that could cross the cosmos within the lifetime of its crew? Didn’t that strike you as a little improbable?”

Grace paused, closed her mouth, and then snapped it open again with a nearly audible click, making an aggressive stabbing gesture with the cigarette holder now yanked from between her teeth. “Oh, forgive me! I had just seen my best friend die amid the debris of my favourite store. I might perhaps be allowed a bit of irrationality. In any case, it was my distracted state that led to what happened next.”

“Which would be?” Bob inquired, with an unconvincing attempt at contrition. *Mother was right when she said I should be a demolitions expert or a chartered accountant*, he mused darkly to himself.

“Well, before I knew it, Mr. Adderly, I was on my back. In case you were going to be catty, no, I am not in the habit of being on my back outdoors with a man above me or, for that matter, below me, in the event you were going to carry on from there.”

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“May I ask how this happened?” Bob said, lip briefly quivering from the effort of repressing remarks much along the line of Grace’s speculation. He did not like to be thought of as predictably sleazy, despite being a tabloid reporter, so he did have a twinge of both guilt and annoyance over being read so easily.

“Well, Bob,” Grace continued, “that is when I ran into Edmund. Quite literally, in this case. He had also noticed the UFO and had stopped dead in his tracks to observe it. It was only due to this that we had some idea later where it landed, though my collision with him meant his line of sight was momentarily blocked, so our detective work was cut out for us.”

“So you met this Edmund as a result of pratfall and slapstick?” Bob asked. “Isn’t that ironic!”

“Not really,” Grace said, “but I hardly expect an accurate notion of what constitutes irony from your generation, due to that irritating Alanis Morrissette song. Ten thousand spoons when all you need is a knife is a sign you need to buy more cutlery, not of irony. But I digress, and I promised myself I would stay on topic, and thus I shall. So we picked ourselves up from our little tangle, apologized for the mishap, exchanged a few brief words about what we had just witnessed and headed over to my car.”

“You led a total stranger to your car? In Los Angeles?” Bob said with some incredulity. “Weren’t you afraid?”

“Mr. Adderly, we had just witnessed a UFO in broad daylight in the middle of an urban neighbourhood, as opposed to the usual rural setting late at night on a deserted road. I believe that was a little more intimidating and shocking than allowing a handsome young gentleman to share my car. In any case, you are not the only one who carries a gun.”

“So this Edmund is handsome, is he?” Bob asked with a combination of the desire to add some descriptive elements to this dialogue-heavy tale and a certain measure of intrigue and horniness.

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“Oh, settle, Mr. Adderly,” Grace said with a hint of amusement. “He is almost certainly not your type, being heterosexual and well-dressed, and his looks have very little to do with his role in the events that followed.”

“Fair enough,” Bob muttered, then added at a normal conversational pitch, “I just thought my readers would want to know, that’s all.”

“Of course,” Grace deadpanned. “Let us attempt to stay on-topic, Mr. Adderly, doomed as that effort would seem by this point. In any case, Edmund indicated the general direction in which he had seen the UFO take off and start to descend, as it had not travelled very far. He then proceeded to program the GPS system I had forgotten I had in my vehicle. I so rarely go anywhere these days.”

Bob made a note of this. Perhaps, despite Thomas Pynchon defining a recluse as someone who did NOT speak to the media, he could find of some way of spinning the story as being that of an eccentric shut-in who manages to muster the courage and determination to save the world. Perhaps then Meryl Streep would not have died in vain...but he was getting ahead of the story, if behind history.

“As it happens,” Grace noted, with a slight volume swell that suggested she had noticed his far-away, contemplative and scheming look, “the craft had touched down not very far from the Hollywood sign, so we had to park and walk some distance...another reason I was glad to have a strong young man with me on whom I could lean. As we approached the craft, the hatch opened and the alien I would later designate Ugly #1 emerged. It is probably best I had not eaten heavily, as it was the most repulsive sight I had ever seen.”

“More than *Heaven’s Gate* or that lady who had the surgery to look like a lion?” Bob deadpanned.

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“Perhaps it is best that I stick to the humour, or that we avoid it altogether. The situation does not really call for it and, in any case, you have no obvious aptitude for it,” Grace said severely, though with a minute twinkle in her eye.

“Imagine my surprise at what came next,” Grace said. “Though their vaguely serpentine form, albeit with arms and vestigial legs, made it look a bit awkward, the creature seemed to bow to me.”

“To YOU!?” Bob said with poorly concealed incredulity.

“Is it really quite THAT incredible?” Grace responded somewhat testily.

“And then I heard a voice in my head,” she continued. “And don’t bother, Mr. Adderly. I have a cigarette in this holder, and I’m not afraid to use it on your chubby cheeks – either ones, I might add.”

“I was thinking nothing of the sort,” Bob lied.

“‘Oh, empress of the universe, we salute you,’ a surprisingly pleasant, BBC-English female voice proclaimed,” Grace said with an air of relishing.

“Empress of the universe?” Bob inquired.

“Well, I suppose I could say they recognized my air of superiority,” Grace cracked, “but I’m afraid there is a slightly more mundane and vaguely sordid explanation. Just after *Departed With The Breeze*, I signed up as the token Western actress in a Japanese made-for-television sci-fi movie, in which I played the titular character. I need hardly explain that TV and radio signals radiate outwards from Earth at the speed of light and sound respectively, I presume? One certainly hopes that rudimentary physics is still being taught in the educational system today.”

RANDOM OBSERVATIONS FROM AN UNSHAVED

INTERNATIONALIST

- (1) To the assholes who posted twits (yes, I know it's tweets, but this seems better) about how the tsunami in Japan was God's revenge against the Pearl Harbour thing...if I recall my mythology correctly, and god knows the insipid little songs foisted upon me as a baby cub, Jesus (and therefore presumably God) loves everyone and views us all as precious in his sight. And *Supernanny* makes it clear that discipline for children is only effective if delivered promptly, proportionately and lovingly. This seems to fail on every possible level. And you know, obnoxious Americans, you have a little bit on your consciences too, like Vietnam, deliberate infection of people with syphilis as part of a series of monstrous tests, and, well, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Don't be so damned smug – I'm sure God has you on his smite agenda somewhere down the line...I suggest stripping the Phelps clan of its citizenship quickly to reduce the impact

- (2) In reaction to those clearly life-respecting individuals who are trying in various states to either have abortion declared murder or to declare the murder of abortionists 'justified', it is important to note that somewhere between 15 and 30 percent, and possibly as high as 60 percent (the figures vary depending on research), of pregnancies end spontaneously in miscarriage within 12 weeks (so within the first trimester). Therefore, the courts and WalMart will be kept busy with charges and pistol purchases to punish those evil women since, if abortion is murder, surely miscarriage is at least manslaughter. Of course, it should be borne in mind that many states have a death penalty, so you'd best hope for the justified homicide decision, as otherwise you're doomed (and, of course, so are your executioners, who will have committed murder in plain sight and will have signed documents attesting to their crime).

TAKING OUT A POLICY FOR LOVE AND DESTRUCTION



(title from 'Copped It' by **The Fall** on *The Wonderful And Frightening World Of The Fall* lp (1985))

Let us agree that we should insure our love

For loss, theft, destruction and fire

Though the dry cloth of formal fabric may call for the flames.

Let us compact for the terms of a date of maturity

Though many would say this would never come.

Let us agree that there should be no deductible

For love is irreducible, a premium on its own.

Let us freely admit to the factors of risk

For deception and oblivion are both to be shunned.

Let us have a joint policy and sign on the line

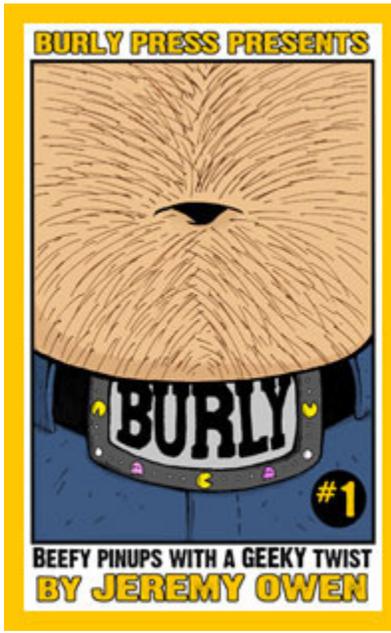
And the costs and the benefits shall balance, I pray.

Let us agree that we should insure our love

To the best of our ability against a hostile world.

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES

BIG BOYS IN BOOK FORM



BURLY #1, drawn by Jeremy Owen (Burly Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico (yes, it's a real place, as we Bugs Bunny fans from childhood learned to our surprise, if only because of how he pronounced it (may be down to only a few, if any), \$4 US plus shipping)

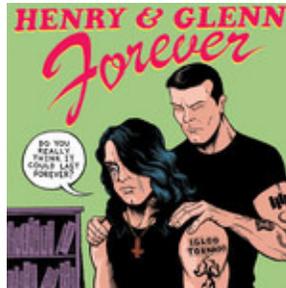
Super-furry and pudgy goodness at every turn of the page. Not an awful lot of distracting text, which is not an excuse for you to use this book for something else (unless, of course, you want to).

There's a little bit of everything in these drawings, from jock-strapped monster lads destroying small cities to Star Trek geeks to mechanics...all the average nerdy Bear could want.

Mr. Owen is also working on another comic book, hopefully to see the light of day soon, and if you must have live visual input, watch for him in *Paul*, in which you will see him (briefly) as the Comic-Con guy trying to sell *Nick Frost* a sword. Yes, I actually sat through the credits to figure out who the yummy Bear was...colour me crass...

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES

BIG BOYS IN BOOK FORM



HENRY AND GLENN FOREVER, drawn by **Igloo Tornado Collective** (Cantankerous Titles, P.O. Box 14332, Portland, OR, 97293, distributed by Microcosm Publishing , 222 S Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404, \$6 US plus shipping)

Bonus cartoon!!

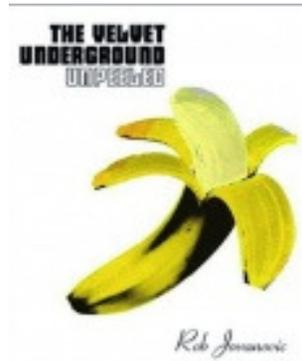
This collective apparently includes one Tom Neely, and the representations of them in the above animated feature suggest 2/3rds woofiness – but I suppose that’s neither here nor there...

The little book has as its premise that *Henry Rollins* (of *Black Flag* and spoken word/acting fame) and *Glenn Danzig* (of *Misfits*, *Samhain* and solo renown) are a couple, and that their neighbours are *Hall and Oates*, who are Satanists (it is unclear as to whether they’re a couple, though their inclusion may be a reference to the 70s/80s rumours to that effect – in one of the first cartoons, their reaction to a ‘down with Prop 8’ sign being put up by their neighbours is ‘I can’t go for that – no can do’ – but Satanists might be opposed to marriage in general)).

Henry finds the book funny – Glenn is less enthused. Because it is a collective, drawing style and theme vary throughout, ranging from anime cuteness to thick ink sketches. There’s no linear story, but it’s a morbid giggle, and will appeal to the muscle/chub/behf fan on your reading list. ☺

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES

SING YOUR LIFE



THE VELVET UNDERGROUND PEELED, by Rob Jovanovic (Aurum, 7 Greenland Street, London, NW1 OND, 2010, \$24.95 CAN)

The author of this book compiled a collection of other people's writings on the Velvets from 1966, and now has tried his own hand at it.

The book itself is nicely enthusiastic and detailed, and has the advantage over all previous books that I've seen that it actually DISCUSSES the post-Lou Velvets period, including the unfortunate and maligned album SQUEEZE, in some detail. Most other books tend, if they mention it at all, to have a 'yes, this happened, as did Hiroshima, slavery and MY MOTHER THE CAR. Let us never speak of it again' attitude.

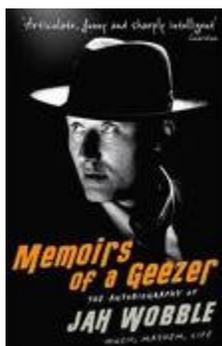
The grammar queen in me cringes at typos, poorly constructed sentences and the occasional reversal of word order, and the fact-checker in me points out that Nico was a natural blonde, 'Street Hassle' was probably NOT about Eric Emerson and that 'Wrong Way Up' was not a Cale album of the 70s or 80s, among a few other goofs.

It is an interesting volume, with many insights not shared in other books, and even interviews Sterling's widow, Martha, for what I THINK is the first time.

It has a place among the other Velvets books, though it takes a lot to dethrone UPTIGHT or Richie Unterberger's meticulous DAY BY DAY volume.

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES

SING YOUR LIFE



MEMOIRS OF A GEEZER, by Jah Wobble (Serpents Tail, 3A Exmouth House, Pine Street, London, EC1R OJH, 2010, \$17.50 CAN)

In which we learn about the life story of one of post-punk's best bassists, born John Wardle in 1958 (the nickname apparently comes from Sid Vicious' drunken mispronunciation of the author's name – I'd always figured it was due to the reggae-tinged dubbiness of his playing...live and learn...).

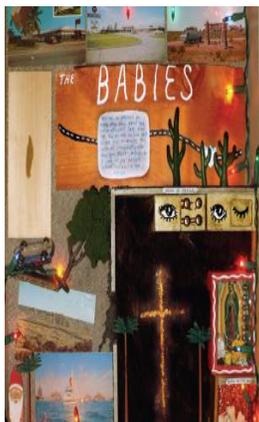
Much like his former boss, *Mr. John Lydon*, Jah doesn't spare his former associates from critical analysis. Unlike *Lydon* (unless we count that gentleman's inclusion of alternate/dissenting views in his autobiography), he does not spare himself either, and does not seem to be avoiding any embarrassing moments, such as passing out from excessive drink or playing immature pranks on legends of music.

As it is one of my favourite albums, I was glad he went into some detail about the *METAL BOX* sessions, in which we learn the mystery of who really played drums on what (he played on at least two tracks, *Keith Levene* on one, and even future-PiLster *Martin Atkins*).

The stories about his life outside of music, such as as a driver of both the Underground and delivery trucks, are also interesting, if only because they flow from the somewhat twisted economics of the music business.

I shall refrain from commenting too deeply on the somewhat unfortunate meditations towards the book's end about multiculturalism, except to say he hardly seems like a National Front member, though not exactly very progressive either. It is a complex issue, admittedly, but it is also a fine line to tread and can give far too much room to move for Tory anti-immigration/'England for the English' creeps. Still, this can at least be weighted less heavily than his deep pulsing bass line contributions to music of the 70s to today...definitely worth reading...

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES



BABIES, s/t cassette (Shrimper Records)

Yes, a cassette. Learn to deal with it. I just could not resist when I noticed that the label was issuing this in cd, mc, lp and download, if only because Shrimper pretty much STARTED its life years ago as a tape label. It's possible this format is sold out, if only because my copy is 184/200, but I doubt they are sold sequentially.

This is basically a spin-off from Vivian Girls, as that band's Cassie Ramone sings and plays guitar, accompanied by Kevin Morby, as co-vocalist, from Woods, Justin Sullivan (who was in a band called Bossy with Ramone) on drums and Nathan Stark, from a band called Bent Outta Shape, on bass.

It's edgy but catchy garage pop, in a Velvets mode, not as loud or fast as Vivian Girls (though their new record sounds a fair bit more polished), with maybe just a hint of X, though Morby's voice is more akin to Johnny Thunders or Richard Hell's, blending well with Cassie's Patti Smith/Exene moments.

I suppose you may want to get it in one of the other formats, and there is the disadvantage that the song titles are literally unreadable on the cassette (I finally went to the website to find the song titles, if only to find out that the highlights to me were named "Run Me Over", "Meet Me In The City", "Sunset" and "Personality"), though the tape itself is a nice bright red colour .

If only my cassette Walkman were still working properly – I enjoy seeing people stare at my CD walkman (a little kid on the bus LITERALLY was looking bug-eyed at this monstrously large thing), and a cassette player would probably freak even MORE people out. Oh, well...

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES



MIND THE GAP, by Big Ass Superstar (Download, for which you'll need a bit-torrent client (example provided))

This download-only album (yes, I so went there) is a one-man project of covers by a gentleman named *Scott Simpson* from Nova Scotia, mostly made up of *Ween* songs, with a trio of *cub*, a *Diesel Boy*, a *Nick Cave* and even a classic from early *Sesame Street* that I remember with alarming clarity. There is also a hidden bonus track of *Baby Got Back*, which I cannot fail to admire, even if it is about girl butts (ewwww! 😊).

I first encountered his work through a cover of *cub's* "New York City", which he kept refining the video and audio of over a fair bit of time – it's a sweet and touching tribute to the city and his wife-to-be. As I have bittersweet memories of the city, since it was the last big fling of my previous relationship, the song and video both bring up mixed, but mostly happy, memories. The final take has some nice crunchy guitars, cheesy keyboards, a nice solid beat and catchy, nasal vocals. He also does "Ticket To Spain" and "Your Bed", two of my fave songs by the sadly missed Vancouver grrrl trio.

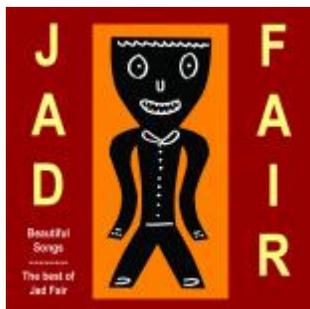
I don't really know *Ween* well enough to comment meaningfully on his covers, though I do like the spaghetti Western "Buenas Tardes Amigo" and "Sorry Charlie" a lot. I only really know the 'hits'.

Nick Cave's "The Ship Song" is, to my mind, a song that cannot be done poorly, and this take is no exception, with some of the guy's best singing, even if he wishes he could have done it more. I know that feeling, though in my case it's more instrumentation I often wish I could do all over again.

As to "The Ladybugs' Picnic", it is deeply disturbing that I can remember a song from when I was about six in such detail. It's a very faithful take, I might add. 😊

All told, an entertaining collection that reveals how far home recording and technology has progressed.

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES



BEAUTIFUL SONGS: THE BEST OF JAD FAIR, by Jad Fair, 3xcd (Fire Records)

The lovely and talented *Mr. Fair* has been making music and art since at least the mid-70s, and was well overdue for an extensive career overview (there was a *Half Japanese* greatest hits package some years ago now (which I have on blue vinyl – record geeks UNITE!!), and I believe I once saw a, surprise, Japanese import best-of, but this is domestic and up-to-date...well, British – close enough...). Three compact discs, containing 109 songs of shambly goodness, and there are missing numbers (not to mention entire albums omitted, which was a tad puzzling) that would have made it perfect for me – but perfection is not attainable on earth (not that I think there's anything BUT earth).

Having said this, there is more than enough here to make the average *Jad* virgin squeal with delight, and even most of us, um, non-virgins. Anyone who has collaborated with *Kramer* (no, not the guy from *Seinfeld*, and not the 70s rock producer, and not Larry either – the mainman of *Bongwater*, who also remastered the selections marvelously), *Daniel Johnston*, *Yo La Tengo* and *R Stevie Moore* is going to have made SOMETHING you might like, and the wide array here is just staggering. For us old snuggle-bears, numbers like *Silver and Katherine*, *This Could Be The Night* and *Miracles Happen Every Day* (confession: put the latter on a mix CD for the Cub) will bring a tear of joy to our eyes, while those who prefer a little more steel wool with their cheese would probably prefer the noisy likes of *Tarzan Escapes* or, god knows, the most abrasive version of *Twist and Shout* ever committed to tape. Along the way, one can also bask in the should-be-used-in-a-tourism-ad *Daytona Beach* or the oddly sexy *Put Some Sugar On It*. I suppose I should warn those who think words like 'pitchy' are meaningful that *Jad* has a rather special voice – but I happen to like special voices.

After you hear this, you will never be able to enjoy *Mariah Carey* again. It seems a small price to pay...

In case you were wondering, my own personal 'why isn't that here?' selection would be "Ventriloquism Made Easy" from *The Band That Would Be King*. But I have that on vinyl, so I can always pull it out and listen to it anytime I want*... ☺

*well, not while on the bus, of course...

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES



TALK ABOUT BODY, by MEN, 2xlp (I Am Sound Records)

JD Samson's post/side **Le Tigre** project, with the assistance of her former colleague *Johanna Fateman* (who now runs a hair salon) and the active participation of *Ginger Brooks Takahashi* and *Michael O'Neill*, as well as lyrical contributions from *Emily Roysdon*, continues the tradition of making dance music for your brain, though the guitars are more live than sampled and show obvious debts to the likes of *The Cure*, *Joy Division*, *Gang of Four* and maybe *Au Pairs*, so perhaps a touch more 'retro' than *Le Tigre* (whatever that even means).

Having seen this band live twice and having picked up their demo and remix ep's, and even their 'zine (sort of a lesbian version of *Cruising*), not to mention getting *JD* to sign my copy of **Feminist Sweepstakes**, I was ready to shake my furry Bear thing to some NEW tunes. I loved those three songs from the demo, and the remixes, and I enjoyed the brief set at Toronto Pride in 2010 with the tantalizing new selections, but I wanted some nice vinyl to rub my hands on (deep down, I'm not well).

It was great to hear 'Credit Card Babies', 'Simultaneously' and 'Off Our Backs' fleshed out a bit more, and made even funkier. However, I loved 'Boom Boom Boom', with its anti-war groove, and it was nice to hear the lyrics of 'Who Am I To Feel So Free', as the echoey space at Pride made it hard to discern them. And continuing the inexplicable tradition (yes, sarcasm), there is a Joan Armatrading cover (yes, another lesbian ensemble, joining the likes of *Two Nice Girls* and the *Lesbians on Ecstasy* spinoff that opened for MEN in Kingston a couple of years back – name is escaping me...), though going way back to the first album she did with Pam Nestor, 'My Family'. Though it does say additional lyrics by the band, and I haven't heard that song in a long time, it is a presciently queer or at least family-redefining number, and fits in nicely with the subverting-reproductive-models theme of 'Credit Card Babies'.

An album full of bass, boogie and Bolshevism (okay, maybe not the latter – but I like me some alliteration...), and worth getting for that lesbian disco fan on your gift list (oh, Lisa, where are you these days?). I suppose straight boys could like it too – but must they have EVERYTHING!?! ☺

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES

A FEW SHORT RECOMMENDATIONS

ROCKABILLY GIRLS

WANDA JACKSON, *THE PARTY AIN'T OVER* lp on *Third Man Records*

ROSIE FLORES, WITH JON LANGFORD AND THE PINE VALLEY COSMONAUTS, *GIRL OF THE CENTURY* lp on *Bloodshot Records*

RIOT GIRLS AND TWEE FOR TWO

CORIN TUCKER BAND, *1000 YEARS* lp on *Kill Rock Stars*

DUM DUM GIRLS, *HE GETS ME HIGH* ep on *Sub Pop*

BRAVE IRENE, *s/t* ep on *Slumberland*

BEARSUIT, *PLEASE DON'T TAKE HIM BACK 7"* on *Fortuna Pop*

BOOKY-WOOKIES AND SPINNY-WINNIES

A FEW SHORT RECOMMENDATIONS

PUNK ROCK BOYS

Black Lungs, "Valley of the Dolls" on Deranged

Chixdiggit, "Safeways Here We Come 12" ep on Fat Wreck Chords

YES, IT'S SUPPOSED TO SOUND LIKE THAT

Sonic Youth, "SIMON WERNER A DISPARU" lp on SYR

Akron/Family, "S/T II: THE COSMIC BIRITH AND JOURNEY OF SHINJU TNT 2xlp on Dead Oceans

The Residents, "NOT AVAILABLE" lp (expanded version) on MVD Audio

Death, "SPIRITUAL/MENTAL/PHYSICAL" lp on Drag City

SOME DUSTY OLD ART/SOME DUSTY OLD ARTIST AND HIS MUSE



DONE BY TIMMYCUB IN GRADE 9 ART (the last time he studied or made any serious effort at visual art – and the first time he read *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE* (this is a copy of the cover of the edition in which he read it) – later, he dated someone who could draw and execute the ideas found in your friendly artist's furry head... ☺ (a year later, he accessed his inner bitch on a flight to British Columbia, when he snapped at a flight attendant who kept asking him if he wanted pillows, pretzels, headphones, magazines: 'Leave me alone!' while he was reading the book AGAIN...in his own copy...). Below, l to r, Michael the Muse and Murphy the Molar. ☺



SOME GAY SUNSHINE BOYS (AND ONE INSENSIBLY SHOED SUNSHINE GIRL)

(note: the 'gay sunshine' reference is an allusion to the early 70s queer magazine, and not, overwhelmingly and sadly, to the orientation of any of the pinups. And it is remotely possible the latter may have sensible shoes, though I think it is a bit of a stretch to base this speculation on the existence of one book of poetry about *Dusty Springfield* as penned by her...and I have a certain degree of evidence that she's probably not exclusively same-sex-oriented, if at all... ☺)



GEORGE PETTIT FROM *ALEXISONFIRE*, Canadian band

JUST ONE WOOFIE FROM THE GROUP (*WADE* AND *DALLASHAVE* BEARTENTIAL TOO), BUT THE MOST INTRIGUING. HE HAS A TENDENCY TO PICK UP GUYS FROM THE MOSH PIT (NOT LIKE THAT, SAD TO SAY...AS FAR AS I KNOW...) AND THEN GENTLY TOSS THEM BACK INTO THE CROWD. THE BOY AND I WERE TEMPTED TO FIGHT OUR WAY TO THE FRONT AND SEE IF HE COULD PICK US UP, BUT WE CONSIDERED HOW SAD IT WOULD BE TO GIVE HIM A HERNIA AND SIDELINE THE BAND...SO WE JUST ADMIRED AND ENVIED THE HANDSOME LADS HE MANHANDLED INSTEAD...

SOME GAY SUNSHINE BOYS (AND ONE INSENSIBLY SHOED SUNSHINE GIRL)



CASEY ABRAMS FROM *AMERICAN IDOL*

YES, WE ARE AWARE HE IS NOT TWENTY YET – THAT’S LEGAL (UNTIL CINDY BIRDSONG AND THE SUPREMES COURT DECIDE NO –ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO AN ABORTION, A RELATIONSHIP OR THE ABILITY TO THINK – AND WE IN THE FROZEN NORTH OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT (NO, NOT THE ‘HARPER GOVERNMENT’ – HE IS NOT A DICTATOR...YET) ARE NOT AFRAID OF THOSE EVENING-GOWN-WEARING CREEPS...). YOU MAY THINK I AM NOT READING THE ABOVE PICTURE THROUGH A FREUDIAN FILTER – YOU ARE WRONG. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT CASEY HAS POINTED AT A NICE BLACK BEAR IN THE AUDIENCE AS HE SANG THE WORD ‘HONEY’ ON A MOTOWN COVER, AND THAT WHEN HE WAS ASKED WHO A MYSTERIOUS GIRL IN THE AUDIENCE WAS, HE REPLIED: “JUST A FRIEND”. SURELY THE PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT ON THAT SHOW WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A DIFFERENT LIE... 😊

SOME GAY SUNSHINE BOYS (AND ONE INSENSIBLY SHOED SUNSHINE GIRL)



DAN O'CONNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS BAND *FOUR YEAR STRONG*

THEY WERE ON THE BILL WITH *ALEXISONFIRE* THAT SAME NIGHT. BOTH GUITARISTS ARE CUTE (AND TALENTED), BUT MY BIASES LEAN TOWARDS THE BOY SHOWING OFF HIS HANDSOME LEG, ETC., HERE. 😊 I COULD BE WRONG, DUE TO FAULTY MEMORY AND TIREDNESS, BUT I SEEM TO RECALL HE DE-SHIRTED AT THE SHOW TOO (HUBBA HUBBA!)

SOME GAY SUNSHINE BOYS (AND ONE INSENSIBLY SHOED SUNSHINE GIRL)



TOMMY LARKINS, *JONATHAN RICHMAN'S* DRUMMER

YES, ANOTHER PERCUSSIONIST CRUSH. ANYONE WHO'S MANAGED TO WORK WITH JONATHAN RICHMAN FOR FIFTEEN YEARS (PARTICULARLY A DRUMMER, AS JONATHAN CAN DRIVE THEM NUTS – *DAVID ROBINSON* FINALLY LEFT THE *MODERN LOVERS*' EMPLOY WHEN JONATHAN THOUGHT EVEN HIS SMACKING A NEWSPAPER INTO HIS HAND WAS TOO LOUD) DESERVES SOME CREDIT FOR HIS ENDURANCE AND, ER, STAYING POWER. THOUGH HIS BOSS IS SEXY IN PERFORMANCE AND HAS A CHEST PELT FOR WHICH TO DIE, *TOMMY* MANAGES TO PERCUSS TO JONATHAN'S LIKING (HE NEVER ASKED TOMMY TO PLAY QUIETER WHEN I SAW THEM) AND THUS GETS BONUS POINTS FOR CLEARLY BEING LOYAL AND LIKEABLE. 😊

SOME GAY SUNSHINE BOYS (AND ONE INSENSIBLY SHOED SUNSHINE GIRL)



JEANETTE LYNES, POET FROM NOVA SCOTIA

YES, A GIRL. DEAL WITH IT. FABULOUS HAIR (WHICH ONE WOULD EXPECT FROM A WOMAN WHO WROTE A BOOK OF POETRY INSPIRED BY *DUSTY SPRINGFIELD* (*IT'S HARD BEING QUEEN*, FREEHAND, 2008)). I SAW HER READ ON MARCH 30, 2011, FROM A WORK IN PROGRESS INSPIRED BY THE 19TH CENTURY POET *JOHN CLAIRE*, WHICH WAS BRILLIANT STUFF. THE BEARDYKE IN ME APPROVES... 😊