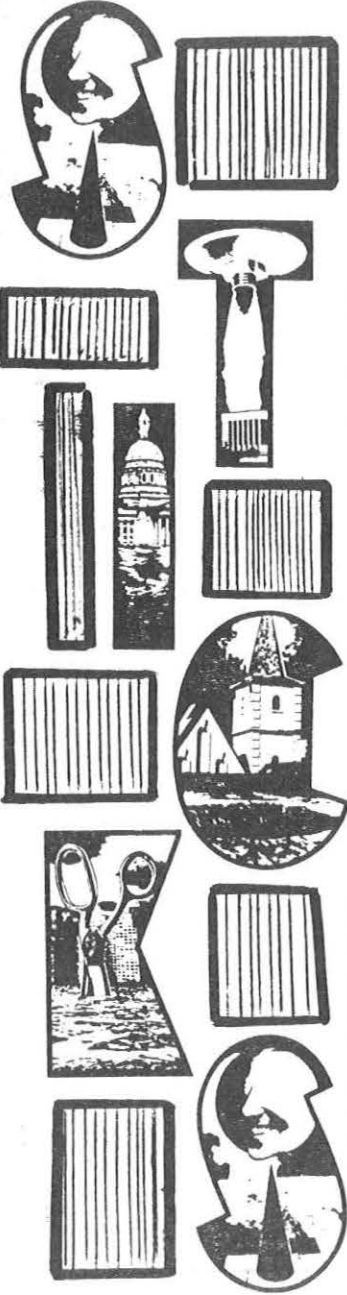
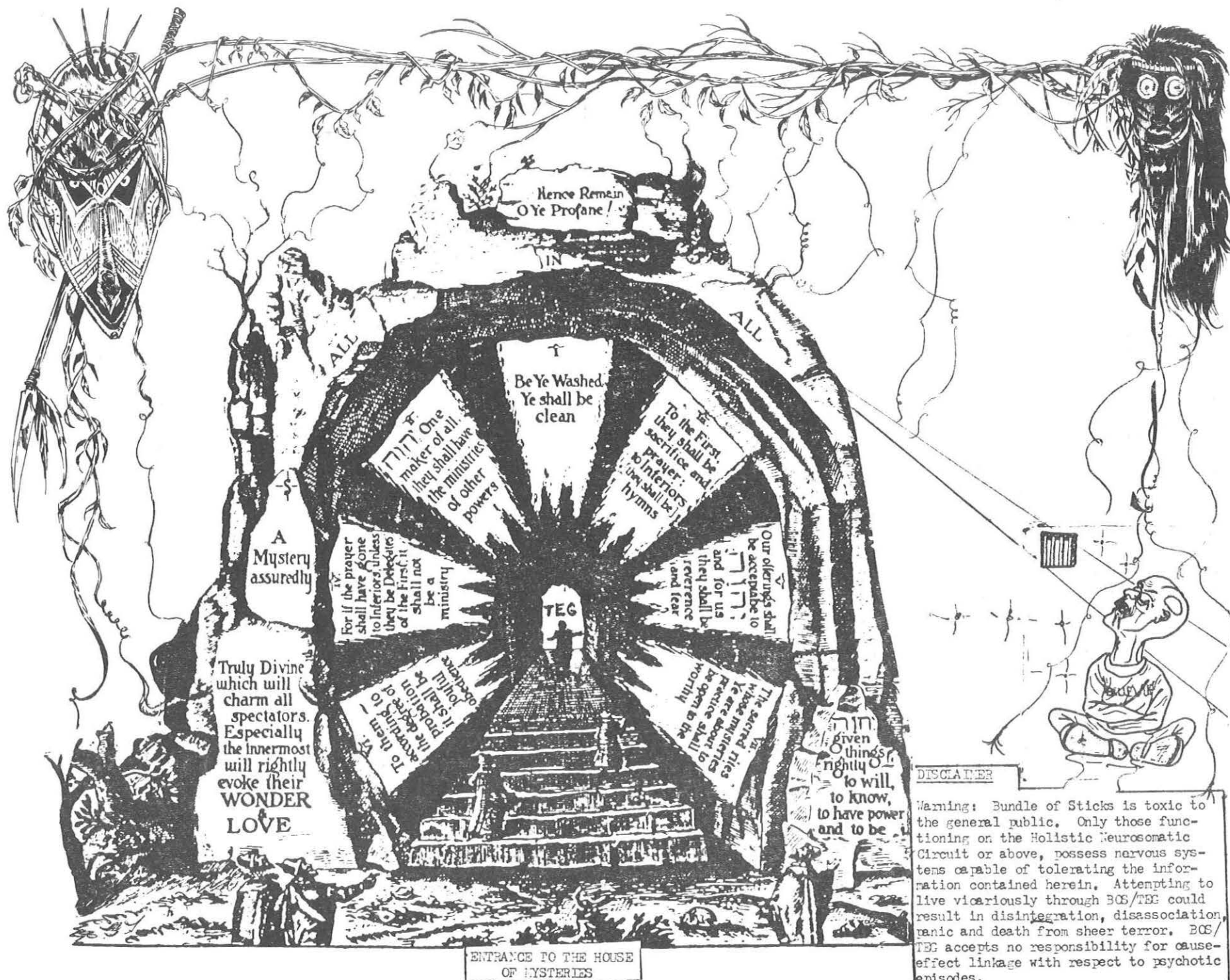


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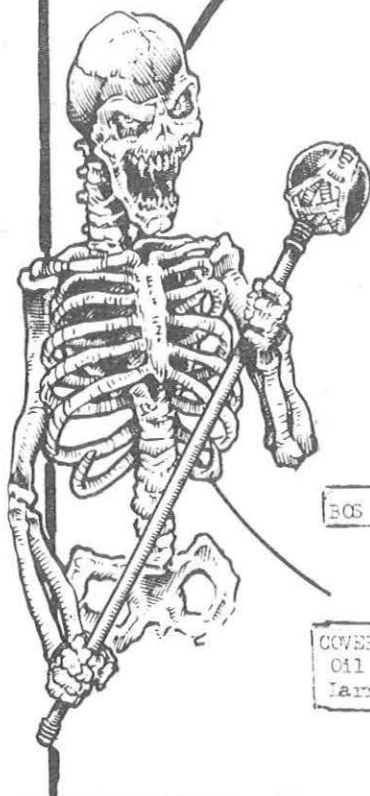


ENTRANCE TO THE HOUSE OF MYSTERIES

DISCLAIMER

Warning: Bundle of Sticks is toxic to the general public. Only those functioning on the Holistic Neurosomatic Circuit or above, possess nervous systems capable of tolerating the information contained herein. Attempting to live vicariously through BOS/TEG could result in disintegration, disassociation, panic and death from sheer terror. BOS/TEG accepts no responsibility for cause-effect linkage with respect to psychotic episodes.

I. TEG AM ALL THAT HAS BEEN, THAT IS OR SHALL BE; NO MORTAL MAN HATH EVER ME UNVEILED.



Bundle of Sticks is published everywhere at every time.

Edited & published by TEG. Unless otherwise noted, it's a safe bet I did it...

BUNDLE of STICKS
54 South 9th Street
Suite # 132
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Copies \$2.00 ppd

BOS T-Shirts are completely
SOLD-OUT!

COVER: "From the Ashes"
Oil on Canvas--1904 by
Larry Johnson.

THANK-2: Larry Johnson, Criterion, K. Platt, Rob't Kirby, L-Bob, Drew, David&Michael, Jesse, Gregorio, Luis, Francesco & ABC Boys, Harvey-A Bros Touch, Rachel Pepper & A Different Light(SF & Hollywood), Carfolk, Dayday, Quinby's Kiwi-22, N. Rights(even though they're making me bag & sticker BOS now...), D. Anger, P. Glaser, and all who continue to fuel the fire with your letters & comments...
R. Cigler, C. Duh, F. Duvivier, J. O'Barr, T. Vigil, S. Abbott

Homosexual Shaman

FRO-WARD: Welcome to issue #5. We're exactly $\frac{1}{2}$ -way there--though I've no idea where "there" is, actually (I'm committed to doing 10 issues; after that, who knows...).

What've we got in store for you this time around? Not what you expect. This is the "Whatever it is you Want Post is Exactly What You're NOT Gonna get Issue." No Nathan Lee story, no editorializing, no graphic scenes of penetration--and NO LETTERS.

You were warned. I told you all to behave, but you just wouldn't listen. You people had to keep writing about how much you love the Letters section, and how that section was what made BOS unique--that I should do an issue of nothing but letters--well here's an issue with no letters at all--nothing you've come to expect from BOS--no recognizable format.

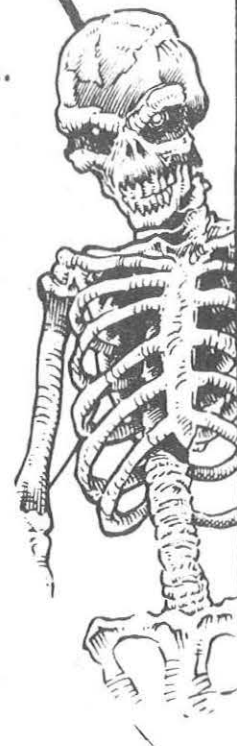
I received no less than two letters and a verbal remark made in person thanking me for not printing interviews--that they are boring and too difficult to follow at any length. Meh-heh--yeah, you right--there's an interview in this issue--a lengthy one, too. In fact, just about everything in this issue is long. You're gonna have to work at it this time--you're gonna have to read--everybody still remember how?

I've also received comments from people advising me that they could do without the story that usually wraps-up each issue--that they just don't get 'em. Hebbe that's because you don't get enuff praktise. So how 'bout a double-shot: two Teg-stories instead of one?

The two stories in this issue complete a trilogy begun last issue with "character-walking-drean-assassination--" sort of the anatomy of a relationship I've been living. Relationships are supposed to have beginnings, middles and ends--at least that's what I've heard. Mine don't. Lines of demarcation seem to bleed together and my relationships are never really over--even when I've decided for the n'th time that they are. Just for a change--in this relationship--I galvanized these time-markers in print. For once, a relationship of mine HAS a beginning, a middle and an end, if not in real-life (anyone wanna take a stab at telling me exactly what "real life" means and/or is? Good luck...), then at least on paper.

Last but not least, there was a queer-zine convention held in L.A. the final weekend in February: **SPW II**. I've read numerous accounts of the event but not one that's completely honest. Everyone is hiding behind a pet persona they've adopted like armor--or they're writing for a particular audience. So herein find the final word on Spw. With its publication, no one will dare write another word about Spw-II--there remains nothing more to be said.

Oh yeah: I'm considering going to an expanded format with the next issue--a bigger and better BOS. But stay tuned--it'll probably end up on microfilm...



VOLUME TWO · IRONY & DESPAIR

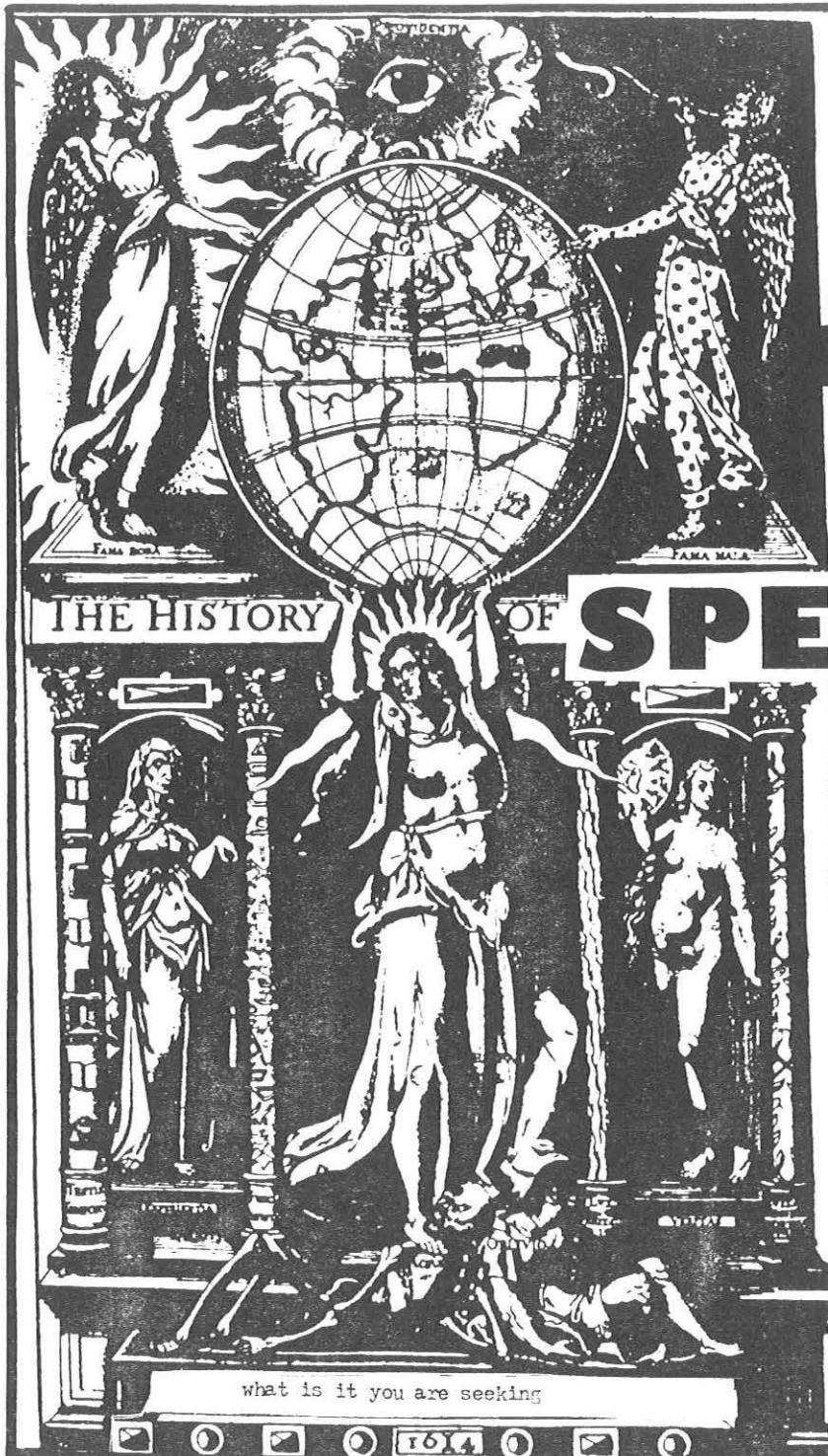
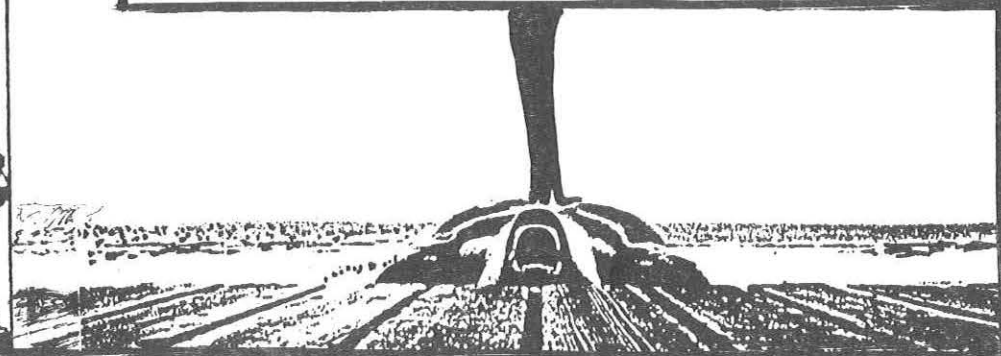
BOOK THREE IRONY

So. You wanna know about SPEW, do you? Mebbe yer better off not knowin' like you were better off not goin,' know what I'm sayin'? Or mebbe you shoulda gone and seen for yourself and not having gone, you don't deserve to know. But if I was playin' that tune, you know I wouldn't waste my time and yours by bringin' you this far and then leavin' both of us hangin'--I mean you can see this thing goes on for pages--so you know I'm gonna say something about the second annual "Homographic Convergence" (ain't that just the biggest crock of shit you've ever seen in print--homographic convergence--I mean they should have held the thing in Sedona or something--come to think of it, mebbe they did...).



So settle back you slumming shits and sadistic voyeurs. Re-live SPEW vicariously through me. But know this right up-front: SPEW II did NOT take place at the Park Plaza Ballroom or at LACE or for that matter, anywhere else it was purported to have taken place according to circulated programs; SPEW II existed wherever I roamed during those three days in L.A. Wherever I was, there was SPEW. So this is Spew as it really happened. This is the truth. Anything else you may read or hear is pure, unadulterated bullshit written by someone wanting so desperately to belong to ANYTHING that he/she'd bite off his/her own sense of personal identity and self worth and swallow it whole in order to tell you how wonderful it all was--how we were like a family or a tribe or a movement (mebbe bowel...) or a community or who knows what other social label someone might want to apply to the wretched flea market called Spew. Trust me. It wasn't like that.

Fasten your seatbelts, cretins: it's travel-logue time--and we're not talkin' Steinbeck or Larry-Bob, here--know what I'm sayin'?



I flew into LAX on Thursday night. I don't remember if I made use of a plane or if I came in under my own power--I was so amped on adrenaline the plane wasn't necessarily a given, see? FAGAZINE people were gonna pick me up only the letter with my flight information was sitting in their P.O. box when I arrived, so they weren't there. Fine. No problem. I called and they acted genuinely surprised I was in town a day early and they offered to come and get me--but you know, I hate to have people go out of their way for me--like I can give 'til it's fuckin' killin' me, yet whenever anybody offers to do anything nice for me, I say no, don't worry about me; I'll be fine--and yet when the pity parties begin, I always cry about the fact that nobody ever takes care of me but how can I blame anybody for not being there for me when I'm always telling them I don't need anybody--know what I'm sayin'? Like they'd already said I could kick-it at their crib for the weekend, so how am I gonna say, yeah, come out here and get me right now, right? So of course I said no, don't worry; I'll find a way in--just gimme your address.

So they did and I took the cheapest shuttle bound for Hollyweird--some AAAA Shuttle Service or something like that which said \$7.00 to Hollywood which isn't bad considering the cab fare would have been like \$40. So this shuttle (station wagon) picks me up "under the little green sign," and I embark upon the Shuttle Ride From Hell.

The driver speaks like mebbe 50 words of English max--and during the course of our journey together, I get to hear all 50 of those words

like mebbe six times each. He starts out by making the loop of the airport like 25 times, trying to pick up other passengers so that he isn't just taking me to Hollywood for \$7.00--he'd like to make it mebbe 10 people for \$70.00--it's a volume thangg--quantity not quality, right? Finally I ask him how many times you gonna go 'round 'cause it don't look like nobody else is goin' to Hollyweird at 10:30 on a Thursday night. He points to this funny little sign on the dashboard that says he makes three loops around the airport before departing and I say dude, I can count to three and he curses 'me out in some Middle Eastern dialect but at least we get on the freeway and get the fuck out'a the airport as I breathe a sigh of relief (altogether too soon, I'm afraid...).

He asks me where in Hollywood I'm going and I tell him Yucca & Cherokee and he says, "You gotta rap?" And I reply, "You gotta be joking. You're the fucking shuttle driver with the dome-sign that says Hollywood on it. Aren't you supposed to know these things?" He mutters an Islamic curse and says he knows where it is, but when we get to Hollywood, he drives around for an hour and a half with no luck and in frustration erupts, "I don't drive you all night around. I don't think this place there is!" I convince him to allow me to use the phone to call FAGAZINE for further directions, but of course, the phone is out of order. When I inform him of these mechanical difficulties, he throws me one mean curve out of left field by inviting me to stay at his house. Huh? (Yeah, I know--he knows exactly where Yucca & Cherokee is at and has had this invitation planned all along--he's been playin' me for this out-of-town-fool-to-fuck...). I don't think so, pal. Just drive me to the cheapest hotel you know of and let me out.

Hollywood Bowl here I come. Rooms \$22.00. Locks on doors, extra... He lets me out and I give him \$9.00 (\$7 fare & \$2 tip--I think I'm being generous...). He says \$15.00. I show him the card I picked up at the airport that says it's \$7. He shows me an asterisk on the back that says North Hollywood is \$15.00. I pick up my bag and put it back in the wagon. He says what are you doing. I say he's taking me back to the airport 'cause I don't have \$15. He says he'll take \$9. I suppress the urge to sneer, "How do you suppose I'm gonna pay for a hotel room if I can't pay you an extra \$6, you fucking rocket-scientist?" But I guess I'm already pushing my luck, right?

By this time it's like one A.M. and I go up to the window and ring a doorbell and this little Asian person slides me a key beneath the plexi-glass in exchange for my money. Number seven. Lucky seven, right? Uh huh. Yeah. Right. So I tote my bags down the drive to door number seven. Can you say Let's Make a Deal? I knew you could. A group of brothers (of the African-American variety...) gathered around a BMW size me up as I go to put the key into the lock. Hmmm. Don't have to put the key in the lock 'cause the door's already open about two inches and I just know somebody's asleep in the bed or someone on the other side of that door has got a Glock or an Uzi and they're just sittin' in the dark waitin' for someone (not me) to open that door and I'm gonna get splattered all over the Hollywood (Toilet)Bowl parking lot and I'm gonna wind up a John Doe in L.A. Nah, I'm not TOO paranoid, ya think?!

So I swing the door open with an arm only as I've positioned my body out of range around the corner and the bruthas are findin' this real amusing. To my delight, this bed must not have been "just right," or Goldilocks simply couldn't make it--like there's nobody home--and I cross

the threshold and settle down for a good night's sleep. Not. To make calls on the house phone I would have needed to make a deposit when I registered. Between the hours of 12 and 8, no disturbances of the managing couple is permitted other than for registering and checking-out. Catch 23. I could go and argue the point--I could check-out and then check back in, demanding a room that hasn't been left open to transients. Fuck it. The phone call will wait 'til the next morning.

What next? Bed smells. Carpet smells. Flip mattress over. Still smells. Sleep on jacket, use carry-on bag as a pillow. Cover with extra clothes. Pass the time shooting cockroaches off the wall with a rubber-band. Get real good at this as there is no wanting for targets--qualify as a marksman--maybe even a sharpshooter. Cars continuously pulling in and out all night long visiting New Jacks across the drive. Dealing out of the room. Entrepreneurs. Mebbe I should start hawking my zines... Am reassured in noticing I have no door frame 'cause it's been kicked out so many times it's gone and half the wall with it. Have wonderful time imagining the hows and whys for door getting kicked in. Prop chair under door knob (like it's gonna make a difference...). TV sound is broken--only one volume setting--LOUD. Mebbe not a good idea to get my new neighbors pissed. No TV tonight. Actually sleep. Hey--this is fun.

I set up before the sun does and set out to find a.) a phone b.) just exactly where Yucca & Cherokee really is. I decide to take everything of value with me, leaving zines and T-shirts behind, though I hide them in the shower. No sense in making it too easy for anybody. I walk across the street to the Best Western where I could have stayed for \$45. What? And missed out on all the free entertainment?! Ask the desk clerks at Best Western if they've ever heard of Yucca & Cherokee. Nope. They've lived in Hollywood for 25 years and never heard of either street. Now I'm beginning to wonder. "Ever heard of Rodney King?"

"Is that a street?"

No--just seeing if you ever get out--or if the extent of your horizon begins and ends at Best Western. "Huh?" Never mind. So I buy a rap. Locate Yucca & Cherokee in less than five minutes. It's six blocks away. I laugh--I can see the humor in this situation. I'm actually surprised Yucca & Cherokee isn't the address of the Hollywood Bowl and FAGAZINE isn't located next door in room #8. Now that would be some real irony...

After I pick myself up off the floor from laughing so hard, I eat breakfast in Best Western's Coffee Shop, go back across the street and shower before checking out and continuing onto FAGAZINE HQ. This performance of morning ablutions turns out to be a good move on my part as this will be the last shower I get for three days (Yeah--I took my zines & stuff out of the shower first--what kind of a moron you think I am...).

I think about calling first but have had it up to my eyeballs with US West pay phones and decide I'm gonna make an unannounced entrance at the FAGAZINE domicile. So I walk the six blocks, noticing that as I cross Highland, the neighborhood changes drastically and I'm in the barrio and feeling very snow-white and we're not talkin' dwarves or Prince Charming here, know what I'm sayin'? I arrive at the address and this apartment building that looks more like a fortress than any living quarters with a 10 foot high fence surrounding it topped with razor wire--

not barbed wire--wire with sickle-shaped razor edges about an inch long adorning it. There's a security system outside and I'm punching in the apartment number over and over again--like either they're still asleep or not at home or sitting up there laughing at me, having had no intention of allowing me to stay with them to begin with. Wrong. This Cholo walks up to me and informs me that in keepin with every other electronic device I've encountered in my short stay so far, the security system is broken too. I mean of course it is. How could I have even expected it to be in operating order? OK then, what window looks like 203? Time to start throwin pebbles to get their attention like people do in movies--I mean this is Hollywood, right--at least I think it still is--but in this neighborhood maybe a brick would be more appropriate...

"You wanna get in?"

"Uh Uh, I wanna stay out. I hear that using the broken security system is the only way to ensure that I won't be forced through that gate."

"Que?"

"Si. Quiero entrar."

"Venga aqui." Aye aye captain. He shows me a spot in the fence where the bars have been forced apart in order to permit the passing of bodies (presumably living ones...).

"Gracias."

"No problem." I squeeze through, pulling my bags after me, enter the building and make my way to apartment 203. My knock brings an answering bark. Barnabas--the dog I remember reading about in letters. I knock again. The door opens a crack.

"Teg?"

No, I'm doing a follow-up for the census--no, I'm the Avon man--"Yeah, it's me."

"Oh my God! It's really you. You're here. I mean you're OK. I mean you made it. I mean what happened to you? We were worried sick. We thought you got mugged--or worse! I mean I called Brad at L.A.C.E. and told him you were lost. They're going to report you as a missing person. There's probably an APB out on you." The door opens displaying Riff Raff in total nakedness, a sight I am totally unprepared for. "OH come in, come in. This is hardly the way for fellow zine editors to meet." You're telling me? He grabs me in this warm embrace while Barnabas, the Akita with satyromania has grabbed my leg with his front paws and is attempting to fuck my knee-cap. "Get down Barnaby! (not a typo--its nickname is Barnaby...) He does that with every new person. Just tell him no and he'll stop."

So I try it: "No Barnabas. No!" You think he stops? Yeah, you right. No fucking way. And he never stops trying to hump my leg the whole while I'm there. Like how long does it take before I'm no longer considered company to you dog?!

I tell them my story, apologies are exchanged--their's for not picking the letter up on time in order to know when to pick me up--mine for not phoning to let them know I was OK. Then we called L.A.C.E. and told them to call

off the search party (like they were really worried...).

Next thing I know we're cruising down Santa Monica Boulevard in the Fagazine Mobile, top down, sans dog, Riff Raff and Zipper--alias David and Michael--my tour guides for the morning's excursion.

First Stop: 1428 McCadden Place, where Buster Keaton used to make silent movies, but in 1992, Jamie Something-or-another winds Morris Kight each day so that His Eminence might receive various members of his flock and bestow his blessing. Morris Kight is the Gay Pope of L.A. If you don't believe me, just ask him; he'll tell you. And anything he leaves out, Jamie will fill in just for good measure--they are like an old vaudeville team, only it's difficult to determine just who is playing straight for whom. You don't talk with Morris. You are granted an audience. "Come sit with me my boy. Tell us about your publication." Bless me father for I have sinned--your prodigal son has returned--he is father confessor. He will ask you your sins. He will tell you what he thinks your bruised psyche needs to hear. He will confer absolution--your only penance a mandatory tour of the art collection displayed throughout the residence and two buildings out back.



Riff & Zipper sell-out...er...out-sell...(new Soundgarden tune)...

(R)-(L)

"This is OUR history," he repeatedly intones--OUR--WE--US--inclusively, drawing me in. But my cheeks go hot, my jaw sets, my eyes steel as an affirmation--a white-hot bar of angry iron skewers my awareness--as this is not MY history--these are no kin of mine--these are no pioneers I recognize. They have not gone before me on any path I travel--they have not paved my way nor lightened my load nor eased my burden. I am not part of this WE or this OUR or this US. I want no part of this. These two men are remnants of a time that has passed. This "art" is nothing more than debris and detritus of that bygone era. I find myself wishing for gasoline and a match--I want to burn it all down so that we are separated by flames and blood and smoke and not just words and empty rhetoric. The years have blinded these two. They are set in their ways. They refuse to acknowledge kindling for its essence and its nature. They are eyeless to the fire in their collective future. Until the flames surround them, leaping skyward and licking their cancer-ridden corpses, they will mistake declaration for disagreement, conflagration for conflict, war for continuing dialogue. They are doomed to consumptive combustion and I will be purified in the heat and the light.

I want to get the fuck out of there. I feel like I'm out of the loop--that something is going on somewhere in the city and I'm Missing out. I'm afraid of where Dave and Mike might take me next. I am suffocating. I have been with Riff Raff and Zipper only for a couple of hours now, and I already know more than I'd care to know. I have to escape, to get free of the oppressiveness of the situation.

We stop at A Different Light Bookstore and I make arrangements with them to take whatever zines and shirts I have leftover after the convention on Saturday, and then I announce to my hosts that when I travel, I like to just "get lost" in cities by myself, and if they don't mind, I just wanna take off and I'll see everyone later. I can tell they're a little disappointed, but they can deal with it and I'm a guest and everything, right? So I'm off and it's good to be unencumbered--to breathe again.

I wander in and out of comic book shops and record stores, stopping in a tattoo parlor on Hollywood Blvd. where I convince a Chinese woman tattooist

to do some calligraphy on me for nothing. She works deep and the pain is sharp, grounding me again, providing a center. It puts me back in possession of myself and I am ready for anyone and anything (I am rubbing the character for the Tao as I write this--tonguing it--the veins in my forearm pulsing beneath it. I jack-off and cum on it--fuck bacitracin--A&D ointment--conjuring up images of Damien and Mark Ewart and Pigpen and ink is Mojo, you got that? And if not that, how 'bout this: Spew taught me that zine editors suffer from a mutated strain of Ink Disease which has nothing to do with tattoos. The symptomology of this malady is easily diagnosed: We relate better to people on paper than we do in the flesh. Got that? No? Then I'll repeat it 'cause you're gonna hear this if I have to rip off your head and scream down your throat: WE RELATE TO PEOPLE BETTER ON PAPER THAN WE DO IN THE FLESH. So fucking run to your journals or your typewriters and weep bitter tears over either or both 'cause you're not so far-gone you can't recognize truth...and I haven't even started yet...

Next thing I remember is I'm on Highland somewhere between Selma and Melrose and I'm hungry so I walk into a Sizzler Steakhouse and scrape off a dirty plate at the table of a party just leaving and gorge myself at the best all-you-can-eat salad-bar-buffet I've done in a long time with hot food and desserts included and it tastes so much better knowing that it's free and after three heaping plate loads I can't eat another bite and I leave feeling everything is right with the world again--everything in my world any way--and I lumber down to Santa Monica Blvd. in search of D. Causalle, the hustler who wrote me about giving AIDS to Magic Johnson. I don't find him of course, but I find scores of young men who swear they know him or knew him or know somebody just like him--can I just front them some lunch money or spare a little change. And they all have their own stories, just as good as D. Causalle's if not better and it's like reading an issue of Fertile Latoyah Jackson as they drop names of clients and marks and conquests: Magic Johnson, Mike Tyson, Burt Reynolds, Christian Slater, Keanu Reeves, and so forth and so on and I don't care what's real and what's bullshit 'cause I'm having such a good time just hangin'-out with them and even though they're all liars and are imparting tales of fantasy and illusion, there's a certain candidness and honesty and genuineness to them that is notable by its absence when later I meet the legends in their own minds at Spew and I am both pleased and disturbed at how easy it is for me to lapse into and long for a life I thought I'd left behind a decade ago--and if you think I'm romanticizing a meat-grinder existence that chews you up and spits you out, I'm here to tell you that if you survive and come out the other side, you gain a unique perspective on the value of human life.

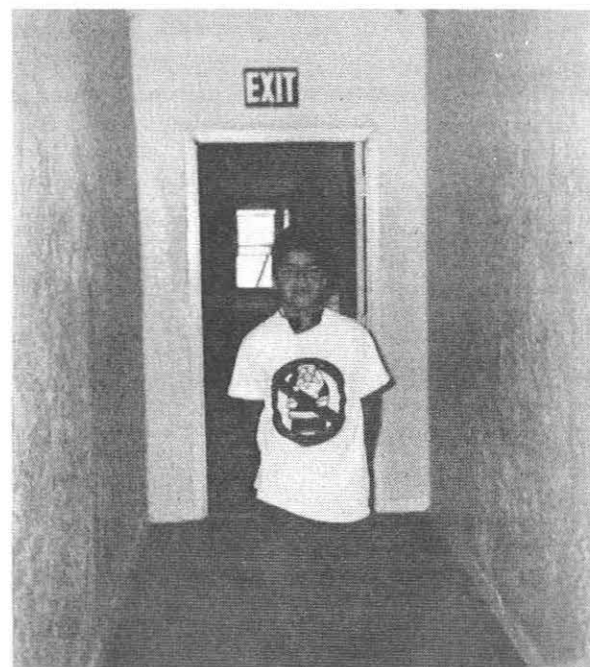
Reluctantly, I part company with my new "friends," and make my way back to Ragazine's tilt. I'm light-hearted and happy as I bound up the stairs and rap on the apartment door. To my astonishment, the door is opened by a beautiful Chicano boy who smiles at me with beautiful white teeth and bids me enter a room filled with four equally beautiful boys. Dazed and confused I start to comply, taking one step forward then two steps back out the door dialectically, to check the number--I gotta be at the wrong door--maybe the wrong building. They're all laughing and I've confirmed that I've got the right apartment--but what the fuck is going on here. David makes his appearance from the kitchen where he's been stapling Ragazines and introduces: "Teg, this is Gregorio, Luis (aka: Angel), Paul, Francesco and Jessie, he being the boy who had answered the door. OK. So I know their names--now what's up?

You're not going to believe this 'cause I didn't believe it but these newly made acquaintances turn out to be the ABC Boys. You know how you thought Fagazine was a joke--maybe even a really sick and twisted one--or maybe you thought it was a really naive and innocent "wouldn't it be nice if..." sort of fantasy in a perfect world or what ever--well forget it 'cause it's real and the ABC Boys are for real and they were all dying to meet me and I was just dyin' 'cause they wanted to initiate me into the club as a full-fledged warrior and tribal elder which sounds really cute doesn't it--until you find out that the initiation culminates with the "white shower" or the "white fountain" (I don't remember which) which translates into them all cumming on me and they range in age from Luis who's ten to Jessie who's sixteen. Uh, gee guys I'm touched, but let's not and say we did. I can't tell if they're putting me on or not, but the glint in their eyes tells me they're totally serious even though they're laughing and I'm not gonna call their bluff and pretty soon I'm laughing too--so hard my sides hurt.

Turns out they're all fans of BCS even though two of them can barely read a word of it and everyone wants back issues and T-shirts--and check it out--we end up playing Monopoly on the living room floor and I can't take my eyes off Jessie who can't keep his eyes off of me and thirteen year old Gregorio has fallen in love with my leather jacket and insists on wearing it despite the warmth of eight bodies in an efficiency apartment just like he insists on crawling into my lap and remaining there for the duration of the game and Luis falls asleep curled up against my shoulder and the language barrier turns out to be no barrier at all and I'm hoping this night never ends but Spew rears its ugly head and says it's time for the opening party so the game is over and Dave and Michael start to get ready and each ABC boy except Jessie has to have a hug and I gotta promise to come back tomorrow as they leave one by one and Jessie takes me out the door down to the window at the end of the hallway, out onto the fire escape and together we watch the street coming to life beneath us: Chicano boys standing on corners under street lights waiting to be picked up by a passing car, and then a group of Cholos runs up to a black man and shoots him and then they casually walk away leaving him bleeding in the alley and my senses have witnessed the event but it takes seconds before it registers and I am jolted in delayed reaction like an electric current passes through me and I fall back against the building's wall for support and feel Jessie pressed against me and I look down at him as he looks up at me and I see fear and excitement smouldering in his bright eyes as he takes hold of my hands and I kiss him, gently at first, then ferociously as we fence with tongues and swap spit because we are both still alive and need to affirm that fact, grinding crotch against wood-hard crotch, hands attempting to feel every inch of the other's body in berserker braille as if we are running out of time and we have to squeeze as much living into what remains before we too are dropped and left bleeding on the pavement. We are interrupted by giggling as Angel is peeking around a corner and the spell is broken and Jessie and I blink dumbly back and forth and grin sheepishly and he wants me to go up onto the roof with him to see the pigeon coop and I apologize and tell him I must leave and ask for a rain-check for tomorrow--and anger clouds those fierce eyes in a face registering disappointment and rejection--the eyes fighting back tears, he no longer looks like an innocent but is transformed into the streetwise Frogtown Boy he claims to be as he sputters something in Spanish and stalks away pissed, Luis giggling and me knowing I fucked-up bigtime, 'cause Spew means nothing and I messed up here and

now for a there and then and maybe never--there are no rain-checks for young boys not given to opening themselves to being hurt and what the fuck's wrong with me anyway, I must be getting old.

I turn to Luis and make like Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster--like I'm after him to throw him in the lake like a flower and he squeals with delight. He tries to rush past me ducking under my arm and I pick him up and throw him as high into the air as I can manage, catch him and set him back down, his legs churning like a wind-up toy so he hits the ground running and laughing and pokes his tongue out at me before he runs down the staircase. I go back into the apartment, throw on a clean shirt and rinse my face off. I think about brushing my teeth but don't because I can still taste Jessie and want to hang on to that piece as long as I can like at home when I sleep with Brook on a Saturday night I won't shower all day Sunday because I smell like him and want to hold onto that scent for the rest of the day. Anyway, it's time. I hear destiny calling. OK, I'm ready for all of you. Let's do it.



Gregorio of ABC boys

Opening night. Park Plaza Ballroom. Admission \$10.00, \$5.00 to Spew participants. You gotta be joking. Fine. Stop me if you can mother-fuckers. Damn. That was easy. I'm on a roll. Free ink, free lunch, free admission, free Leonard Feltier. Huh? Never mind.

Whose idea of a good time was this? Is this supposed to piss us off or what? Get a group of faggots and dykes together for a party and it's just gotta look like a fucking disco, doesn't it? I SAID... fuck it! It's too loud to talk. It's too dark to see. If I'd have wanted fucking attitude like these people are throwing-up, I could have stayed at home and gone to the Saloon. This is hopeless!

Somhow I do manage to meet Deke Nihilson, Tom Jennings, Bruce LaBruce, Drew Blood, Clay, and there's Larry-Bob: "Seem like Minneapolis to you, home-boy?" Uh-huh. Too late we retreat to the hotel lobby where we can actually hear ourselves think and connections begin to get made.

Whew, you're thinking: finally. Enough of all that personal bullshit, right? He's finally gonna spew--he's finally gonna dish some dirt, baby. So whatcha wanna hear? About the zine editor I stumble across giving a blow job to San Diego-boy-larty in an out of the way corner? Or how about editors of the two most incendiary zines in print who discover they really don't hate each other but actually have a weird mutual attraction? Mebbe you wanna hear about the drag queen who gets dumped out of her wheelchair onto her head by another drag queen in a classic battle for position in the drag hierarchy of royal ascendancy. Well sorry to disappoint you (apologies are meaningless, aren't they?). I'm gonna continue with the personal stuff 'cause that other shit was about as poignant as a toilet flushing. (Don't believe everything I write: DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING I WRITE...) Get it? Didn't think so...

Talk into wee hours of the morning. Crash at Fagazine. Wake up with dog licking my face. Was hoping it was Jessie. Wake up Riff Raff and help him finish zines. Intermittant knocks on door admit ABC boys alone and in pairs. Jessie doesn't show. Gee. I wonder why...

They wanna take me someplace secret to show me something. Red flag goes up--warning warning, danger danger Dr. Smith, Will Robinson--don't stray too far from the Jupiter II. Do I trust these nubile satyr-nymphs? Not

completely. Do I go with them? Of course. First we fill a garbage bag with cream cheese and jelly sandwiches on two loaves worth of white bread. Are we going on some weird picnic brunch or what? Close. Riff drives us 2Hollywood Blvd.-Highway 101 underpass: shanty-town of cave-like depressions and tunnels and cardboard boxes--Troll Town. Populated by self-proclaimed trolls: 35-40 homeless kids: filthy, rotten-teethed, staph-dripping, lice-infested, scabbed, pale, stinking kids, some in various stages of mental illness or autism, self-stimming, thumb-sucking, enuretic-encopretic (they piss and shit themselves for all you know-it-all-about-nothings out there...), intoxicated, hung-over, slow-to-waken, comatose--a tribe of true misfits. They are both wary and glad of company. They try and maintain dignity--an order and a structure--their own hierarchy--until the sandwiches come out. Then everything falls apart and there's a mad scramble to make sure they get theirs--the bigger and stronger taking from the slower and less alert. Most shove the bread into their mouths as fast as they are able. This is about sustenance and surviving and has nothing to do with dining. I attempt to feed a boy rocking himself back and forth, arms wrapped around knees drawn-up against his chest--dull, lifeless eyes looking far, far into the distance--at nothing. He is completely unresponsive. I look around me and I start to cry, resonating with the misery and the hopelessness, sniffing at first, tears rolling down my cheeks. I get up and make straight for the car before I totally lose it.

Things seem more connected back at the car, other cars whizzing by on the overpass, but the sky is as overcast as I am and I feel about as much like Playing Let's Make a Deal with the zine crowd as I feel like licking Morris Night's sutures. You sensitive about your appearance Morris? Get over it already; I am willing to bet vanity has always been your fatal flaw...



Troll-Boy

I wait for Riff and Zipper and the boys to return and they wonder why I jettied and I don't answer and I think this reticence spooks them--or else they realize I've sensed that this feeding ritual buoys them up--makes them feel good--not out of any idealistic, humanitarian philanthropy or anything--but because they need someone worse off than them to make them feel good. They need to step on the faces and heads of these troll-children to climb out of the hopelessness of their own situations--a desperation that threatens to swallow them at every moment.

During the ride back, I hear of Los Lobos, T.J.'s, the 13th Street Posse and the Frogtown Boys, just a few of the gangs that occupy territory adjacent to where these boys live. I learn Jessie is no shorty--no wanna-be, but a full-fledged, jumped-in member two years standing as well as a regular mule for drugs and firearms--that the black man I saw get shot was dealing where he "had no business being" and that he was a DOA.

So. Festive enough for you? Let's go sell some zines and stuff at L.A.C.E. It'll be terrific. A regular carnival. Can I help you? Lemme show you something in our large economy edition...

L.A.C.E.--Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. It's an art gallery. My second in two days. Mebbe I am an art-phag after all... What did I think of LACE? Lemme just share the ONLY graffiti in the Men's Room at LACE. I mean you would expect some really choice, urgent stuff on the wall of the bathroom at an underground/alternative art gallery, wouldn't you? Here it is:

Society is held together by a shared sense of beauty. Artists work at the frontiers of the senses. LACE is thus a frontier outpost of the greatest importance to society!

06/12/91

I kid you not. Great place for a mission statement, huh? I'll pause and let you wipe the puke off your shoes.

I'm telling you though: that little jewel says it all about LACE--except that Dennis Cooper has sweaty palms, seems very uncomfortable with his surroundings and inside his own body--and I don't have a clue as to what Mark Ewart sees in him. Care to come clean on that one, Mark?

We arrive at about 11--thing's supposed to start about 12. I grab a table and start setting out zines and T-Shirts when somebody from Drag-a-zine informs me, "You can't use that table."

"Scuse me? What--you need two tables? I can see where you'd need two chairs--but why two tables?"

"Don't you think it's a little too early to start with attitude, girl? It's not for me. It's for Sin Brothers. It's reserved."

Wrong answer to the wrong person: "It says in the shit I got, first come, first served. I'm here first, I get the table. They snooze they lose."

"But you don't understand, hon. They're BIG names in the zine (pronounced zyne) thing."

Wrong WRONG answer to the wrong WRONG person. "You don't get it do you? There are no 'big names.' Only big asses like yours. There ain't no celebrities. No stars. No rank and file. Sin Bros. can drag their asses out of bed like everybody else and get here to grab their own table and I don't care if they end up selling out on the street cause there's no table left and if you got a problem with it you're gonna end up out there with them with a size 10 boot print on your fat-ass."

"Well. I never!"

"I can believe that and I'm betting your luck doesn't change..."

"...If you have to be such a bitch about it, take the table then."

Do we wanna delve into the politics of that last epithet hurled our way? Nah. This is a lost cause. "I don't want this table anyway. I'm gonna take that one down there. It's in a better neighborhood, know what I'm sayin'?"

"Whatever."

One zine down, 53 more to go. An auspicious debut, Tegster. Most auspicious. You oughta win most popular hands down by the time this thing's through...

Finish setting up table. Just zines and T-shirts. No flashing sign with moving parts, no balloons, no free condoms, no complimentary hors

d'oeuvres or bucket-of-blood-punch. No special offers or come-ons, no blow jobs free with every purchase. Maybe I should just pack it in now and spare myself this ordeal. Unless people know what it is they're looking for, I'm not gonna sell a thing.

Oh well, time to trade. You show me yours and I'll show you mine. (I've got over 50 zines sitting on my desk as I write this and I haven't even so much as looked at them yet--except for Riot Gear, Double Bill and Enough Rope. Don't know when I will. Don't care...). So yours is \$5 and mine is \$2. You say you want 2 1/2 BGS's so we trade for equal value? Well my price just went up. It's \$6 an issue but I'm willing to give you a discount. OK? Great. Pleasure doing business with you... Jesus! And speaking of Johnny Noxzema, where is he when we need him most? After all his talk of boycotting Spew, I hear rumors he's coming down from Toronto to throw these money changers out of the temple--tipping tables, kicking ass--the whole nine-yards (whatever that worn expression means...). I also hear he's gonna sucker-punch me just for laughs. I can hardly wait... He's right spot on about bypassing this part of the whole affair, though. It's all-wrong. I can't help but thinking that the L.A. Marathon is being run today. All told, the energy expenditure put forth by peacocks preening for one another here at Spew greatly exceeds that put forth by all the marathon runners combined.

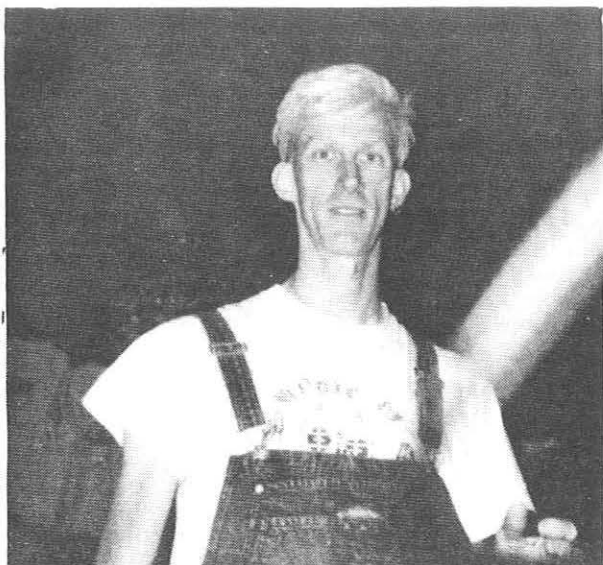
The doors open on time, I think. I'm wedged in between Larry-Bob on my right, Fagazine to my left. I manage to spiel at the first three or so "customers" window-shopping at my table and convince them to make a purchase. This sucks. Who am I trying to kid? I don't give a fuck if they buy it or not. Who am I competing with? Is there a prize to the person who sells the most? (sure there is you idiot: \$!) By the time the fourth person wanders up to taste my wares, I've got my nose buried in a local fag-paper and I bark out from behind its pages: "If you want something lenne know. If you don't, keep your mouth shut because I don't give a flying-fuck what you think about any subject on the face of the planet," and this misplaced aggression sends him scurrying away from me at warp speed, looking back over his shoulder, eyes as big as Sin Bros. zine, making sure I'm not in pursuit.

I can't do this. Don't have the stomach for it. I turn to Fagazine. Hey--you guys do me a huge favor? Anybody wants anything, take the money? Thanx a million. I gotta get outta here. So I spend the afternoon people watching, sitting at other people's tables--it's fun to sell THEIR stuff! Taking pictures. Talking. Fucking with people (not literally). Things I LIKE doing.

Tom Jennings is the best. I feel like I've known him my whole life. Unaffected. No bullshit or pretense. Talking with him is like talking to an old friend. The trip is worth it just to meet him. We'll be friends for life, I think. Find out we share similar allergic responses to among other things, cats and modern life in general...

Bruce LaBruce: the antithesis to Tom Jennings. Charming, even when I confront him about some unfinished business between us. Too busy being BRUCE LA BRUCE to do any serious talking. Some other time...

Fluffy-Boy: Attempted reconciliation between us after some things I wrote and a letter of his I published. He said what he had planned to



Tom Jennings making a fashion statement...

say--and I do mean planned--even rehearsed. I'd heard it all from Robert Kirby (in Minneapolis), who keeps in contact with Fluffy so it was funny to hear the identical words coming out of the horse's mouth. Neither of us budges an inch and he refuses to acknowledge my existence during the remainder of the proceedings. Oh well. Don't carry it to the grave, Fluffy. He seems most upset by my not reviewing Homoture in issue #3 of BCB--of my merely printing the address. Tell him I only review each new issue once--no repeats. He isn't buying it--thinks I'm dissing him. "Do you have an opinion of Homoture," he asks. He lives and dies by what people think about his rag. Fax-out, Fluffy. It'll be alright. Don't worry so much about what people think. But I've thought a lot about your question since you asked me and here's what I think about Homoture: It's not a zine. It never was. It's ready to go mainstream. In fact, it's been flowing towards the sea since its inception. Take it and run with it. Goodbye and good luck.

Deke Nilhson: Deep Breath. This is hard to do. Swallow. One of the main reasons I went to Spew was to meet Deke. We'd had this thannng going via the mail and our respective publications, and when we met, sparks were supposed to fly, rockets red glare bombs bursting in air and all like that. Well, it didn't happen. Not even a sparkler. The whole thing came grinding to a halt. If we'd had a month or lived in the same city, mebbe. But in this setting--nothing. No chemistry. Only tension and frustration. It had to be there. This person wrote that shit to which I responded immediately and without reservation. Where was that person? Who was this person claiming to be that author?

It was like this whole Deke-Teg thing had a momentum all its own--a rhythm--was moved by forces beyond our control and we were helpless bystanders rather than willing, active participants. We just stood outside ourselves and watched it run its course, powerless to lift a finger to alter things. Even when we kissed in farewell, sharing tongues and spit, it was like watching two other people kissing. Mark my words: given two additional days and we would have had sex together, neither of us sure as to why. It would have been just something else that had to happen. So what was goin on? I've got some ideas--none of which fit completely. You figure it out. I can't.

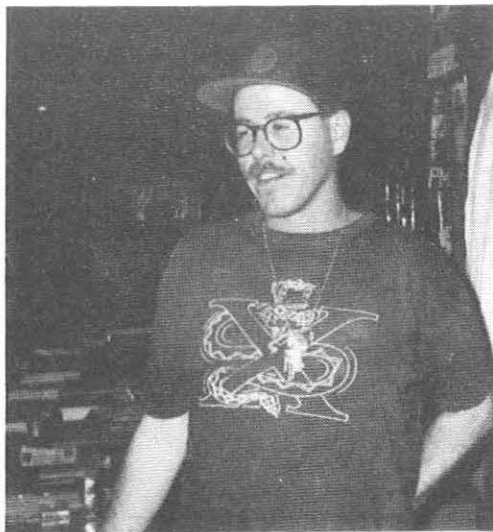
Deke is (are you ready for this my brother--yeah, we're still brothers--estranged & exiled for sure--but there will be a re-union and a communion. Bet on it.) kinetic--hot-wired--perpetually in motion. He bounces off walls--everywhere and all the time, many of these barriers, these walls--if not all of them--are of his own making. Deke is not plugged into the/a power source. He is portable--battery operated (no reference to his height or lack thereof, which, I understand, he is needlessly sensitive about. Hey Deke--you more than measured up--though when you sit on a curb, your feet dangle: CHEAP SHOT CHEAP SHOT!). Like the Ever ready commercial with that stupid, fucking drum-beating rabbit, Deke keeps going and going (playing and playing?). But unless he finds a means by which to recharge--unless he can become connected with a/the source--unless he can find a way to at least slow down his inner processes--to silence his internal dialogue which for him is no dialogue but an internal war of words--a lingual holocaust--he will experience melt down--he will burn out. Like a string of China Town firecrackers, snapping and popping along his way, leaving a papertrail of debris in his wake, he will provide nothing but spark without fire, and noise without light.



Bruce LaBruce & Klaus Van Brucker pose for this year's Xmas Card...

That was no earthquake you felt out by the Bay--even though it measured a seven on the Richter scale. You hear me, don't you brudda-mahn? Jah, eye taught so. Others may look. Some may see. But this is for your ears only--Love, Teg...

Drew Blood: The sweetest person you could ever want to meet--one of the un-sung heroes of the whole zine thing--another person who received an acceptable rating from my bullshit meter--would do anything for a friend. Another friend-fer-life--and you've got many years in front of you yet, my friend--suffers from a little low self-esteem now and again?! Lemme tell you this, D.B. (Dude-Brother?): Your poetry is anything but meaningless. Sure, you may have a few throw-aways. But when you're on like in S.T.H., you're right spot-on. And as a human being, you're miles ahead of the egos and star-struck bottom feeders in search of fame and fortune populating queer zinedom. They are pathetic and you are a star of the highest magnitude in your own right.



Drew Blood has bout of Marcolepsy a la R. Phoenix in Private Idaho...

It's about time I head back and see how sales are, don't you think? 25 zines sold, all but six shirts gone. Not bad I guess. Nobody made a killing which is too bad because some people had dollar signs in their eyes and were planning on financing their trips with sales and ended up stranded in L.A. which is also funny because it serves them right. I sold a guitar and some records so I'm operating in the black. A Different Light in S.F. (thank, Rachel) and in Hollywood took the rest of what I had, so I ended up better off than most which I suppose I really didn't have to include in this account--but as long as the knife's in, I might as well twist it some, know what I'm sayin'? In other words, felch and die you hucksters and marketing engineers with your merchandising tactics and displays--you purveyors of packaging and insubstantial filler--you flin-flam men & wymyn--selling your traveling medicine show snake oil and ink tonic with money back guarantees. Go jump on some other band wagon cause this one moves too fast for you to keep up with...

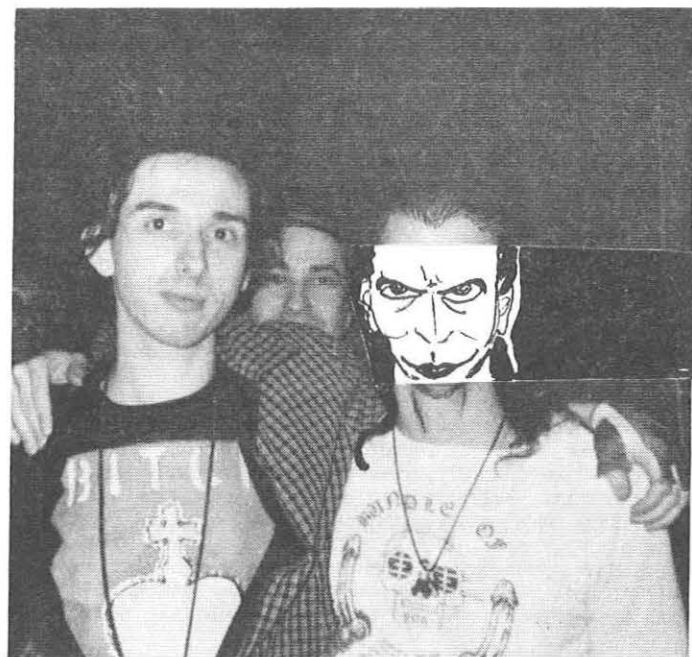
Oh yeah: The dykes had a better time than the fag-boys. They checked their egos at the door and meshed instantly. But for all the talk about queer being non-separatist with respect to gender--it seemed like public restrooms to me. There were separate itineraries for fags and dykes when it came to unscheduled gatherings. I'm afraid you gotta long way to go on this one, gang--yeah, I said you, not we...

So I'm sitting counting cash and thinking about leaving when this skin-head with a backwards-turned baseball cap and a noticeable limp ambles over to my table and starts leafing through a zine and looks at the BOS T-shirt I'm wearing. "Hey Johnny--come here." The person he's yelling at obliges and walks over to see what is so urgent that he has to break off a conversation to come when called. "Look," the skin points to my shirt.

A Robert-Cure-Smith-Edward Scissorhands-look-a-like stares where the finger points: "I've seen that shirt."

But where have I seen that face before. Think-think...fuck-it's him. It's them. Johnny Noxzema and Rex. Fuck. I'm a sitting duck if they want to start shit. I jump out of my chair like I'm shot out of a cannon. There, I'm on my feet--only one's in front of me --one's in back. Fuck, fuck, fuck--this isn't going at all well. "You must be Johnny Noxzema."

"And you must be Teg." He takes a step forward. Shoot out at OK Corral? I take a step back--not a good idea--Rex is going to pin my arms so Johnny can take his best shot, right? So I move back towards Johnny--I'll take my chances with him--and he wraps me up in this bear hug like we're friends who haven't seen each other in years and I'm waiting for Rex to hit me over the head but the blow never comes and I'm hugging back and laughing and he's laughing as we both realize neither is the crazed lunatic we'd perhaps imagined--that we probably even like each other and now that we've met, maybe more...nuff said... and Rex squashes Johnny's face, holding it still, and tells me I have to look into his eyes like I wrote I would so I'd "know," but I already have like I already do. So we pose for pictures as lenses crack and film over-exposes and flash units go off seemingly of their own accord as the two of us together is more than any mechanical device can record and off in the distance, I can hear a pack of wild dogs howling as our union produces a high-pitched noise at a frequency human ears cannot detect.



Vanity meets Insanity:
Johnny Noxzema & Teg
You decide which is
which...

The convention is winding down so I take my last remaining T-shirt and swap with M.A.S.K., Mothers Against Serial Killers. Not because I want their shirt. I don't. (I get the Jeffrey Dahmer special...) I don't get what they're about; if it's a joke, I don't get it. If it's supposed to be shocking, it isn't. I don't even know if they know what they're doing. What I want isn't about a what--it's a who. I've got it bad for Fig-Pen whom I met the night before at the opening bash and have watched off and on throughout the day. Exchanging shirts is just a way to get close--an excuse to talk. Check that smile out: you understand now? Hey Fig-Pen: Abyssinia. Count on it...

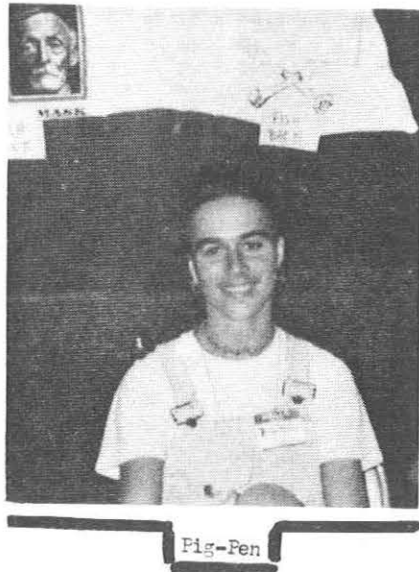


Fig-Pen

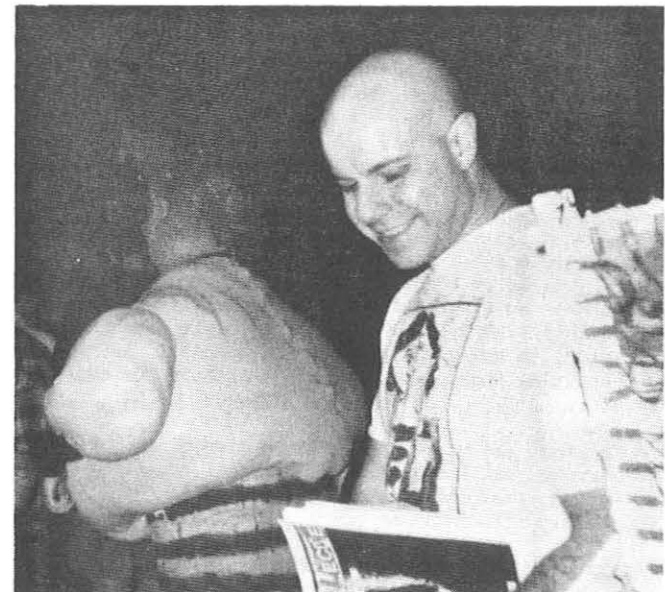
Time to close up shop. I head back with Riff and Zipper who, truth be told, outsold everyone as far as individual copies go. They're pretty pleased. I'm happy they're happy. Just time to eat, kick back a bit and get ready for the evening's performances. Cooch la la... Oh yeah--ABC boys stop by to play--still no Jessie. 13 year old Gregorio has a crush on me, I think. He wants to go with us--is disappointed in a major way when Riff says no--expresses his displeasure by shoving wad of gum into keyhole when he leaves.

We get to Lace about 9:00. Not many here yet. I've yet to have anybody ask me for a pass or any money to gain admittance to any of these happenings. I must look like somebody or something...

I make the momentous decision to take some trip I scored from the Hollywood hustlers I met on Friday--two hits of blotter--and inside of an hour I'm tripping my tits off and everything becomes pregnant with meaning so I'll spare you the boring details--except to tell you that Tribe 8 rules. They are the band of the 90's. They are the band I've been waiting my whole life to see and hear. One of the projects I've had on the back burner is a male equivalent. What an inspiration to see these pissed-hot-angry wymyn blazing the trail. If you get an opportunity to see them and you miss-out, you will be missing the musical phenomenon of the decade. You think I liked 'em some or what?

Oh yeah. Almost forgot. There's this beautiful pierced and tattooed boy named Damien. Love at first sight. Met him during the afternoon. Connected immediately. Now, push him (and everyone else) away as am not able to connect emotionally right then--can only conduct sensory input lysergically, right? I know he's confused that I suddenly seem cold to him--he's got this guy from Wisconsin on hold--Boofy (No lie--that's what he calls himself) from Agony, the one with the five credit cards and the five vintage automobiles (one of which has bowling trophies for hood ornaments, I kid you not...), who earlier in the day had served me all sorts of attitude when we were introduced: "Bundle of Sticks--yeah, didn't you send me a copy of your zine once or something?" Like he didn't remember or it escapes his mind for the moment--and it is so transparent he's peeved because of the review I gave his generic, wanna-be zine that I actually laugh out loud and tell him, "You're a funny guy, you know that?"

So Damien's got Boofy and his stuffed wallet on a line, but gives me the first opportunity and I send him back to Boofy and this weird tennis match ensues until the two of them are wrapped in each others' arms making-out in a corner. Later, as they leave, Boofy takes great pains to walk by me, hand-in-hand with his 'trophy' making sure I know he's 'won.' This strikes me as being so ridiculous, I had to sit down I was laughing so hard I thought I was going to fall over. I think Larry-Bob or Drew figured out I was on something and it was kind of touching how they'd come by every once in a while to make sure I was OK and not freaking out. Thanx guys. But it wasn't necessary. I needed separation from this crowd--to gain some distance. The trip allowed me to do this for awhile without leaving. I had my cake and ate it too, you know what I'm sayin'?



Tin Campbell puts in a surprise appearance along-side
Jala Leche editor: Alavio Leta from Chicago.....



Tribe-8

The rest of that night is a blur. I ended up in Riverside talking until 5:30 in the morning at which point everyone else had passed out and I came down for another hour or so before I followed suit. The next waking brought a farewell to Drew and a ride back into the city with Larry-Bob. This ride turned out to be one of the most emotionally charged interludes of the trip. Larry-Bob and I lived in the same town for years and never really connected. We knew each other casually. We talked on the phone occasionally. We said hi in public--but it was always zine bullshit. What it took was for him to move to S.F. and me to travel half-way across the country to meet him in L.A. for us to finally get to know one another. That car-ride was intense in a big way. Life is weird that way, ain't it? And if I do say so myself, L.B., we do all right for a couple of boys from the midwest vs. that California crowd armed with their bottles and vials of choline and niacin (the holistic sect), piracetam, vasopressin, and deprenyl (for the designer set), in order to outsmart one another. And while they're all busy out-smarting themselves, we more than hold our own just by being ourselves...

When we get to Lace, the screening of the movies is in progress and we head upstairs to join the audience. It takes my eyes $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before they adjust to the blackness of that room. I don't move the whole time--I can feel people all around me but I can't see them, it was that dark.

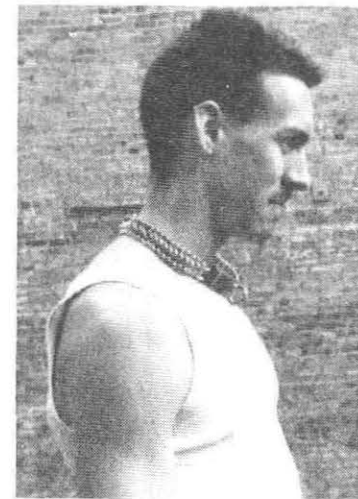
I won't comment on the celluloid--not even on Deke's performance of zine editor as porn star--I was experiencing morning after in a big way and didn't give a fuck about what I was watching--or anything else for that matter. Lights come up. Gregorio has come with Dave and Michael. He's grinning from ear to ear as he can see I'm amazed to see him here. He risks a hug in public. I rough up his hair. (He

claims he's gonna do his own zine with his friends. If he does, I wanna see it. What will it be like? Totally hot and without pretensions [now what kind of queer-zine is that? The ONLY one of its kind!!!])

People are pressing 'round personalities connected with the films--I need some air. I go outside and sit along the front wall. Damien joins me, no Boofy in sight. Damien is a smart boy--despite a penchant for running in front of moving vehicles. He invites me to hike to Arizona with him and a friend--knows we'd make great traveling companions (Slam Dunk...Came, set and match Boofy--go back to curdsville, Cheese-head...). If I didn't have commitments and responsibilities... So we make the most of the moment and that's twice now I've blown it and how many missed opportunities are we allowed in a lifetime--how long before we run out of chances? If anyone out there knows Damien--he of the close-cropped blue hair, pierced eyebrows, tattoos and ambiguous national origin, give him this and tell him for me that I think about him and want one last chance, alright?



Goddess Bunny rolls along her own private rabbit trail..



Party from San Diego...

Eat. Put on cleanest dirty shirt. Go to Amok Books. Nothing I just gotta own. A Different Light in Silverlake--glad to hear they're closing...Supposed to go to a closing party on Spring Street. Everybody's had enough of being herded around like bleating sheep from place to place. Vag organizes her own party--Pyewacket (sic?) the cat's party actually--at Hunter's on Melrose. We invade the place, scare away most of the regulars and this is what should have been going on all along. Barriers are down. Everyone is too tired, too hungry, too dirty, too spewed-out to care about making impressions anymore--and are actually conversing and emoting and bonding. Deke and I finally sit down and talk like human beings instead of robots glitched out at 76rpm. We finally find out who our friends are--who we gravitate toward--who we don't. This gathering breaks up at 2:00 a.m., some going to check out the club scene, others of us continuing onto Spring Street in search of the perfect goodbye.

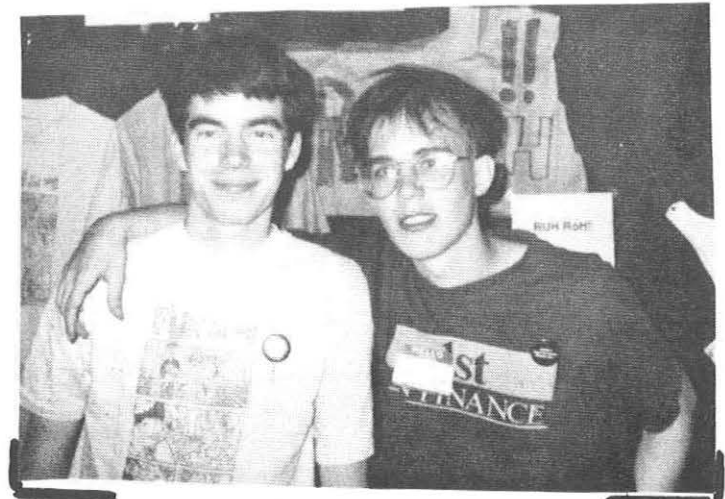


Wag holds court



Dennis Cooper doing his Stan Laurel impression

ished yet either, you and me. Dennis writes about it. I'm the genuine article.



Mark Ewart w/arm & friend (NOT D. Cooper)

It is there I take a look, for the first time, at Mark "Ruh Roh" Ewart, erstwhile Bimbox contributor, wiley-nimble-minded, sychophantic chameleon bed-warmer to the literary set and NAIBIA poster child--without his spectacles. We talk and this vulnerable, searching lover of beauty doesn't resemble the worldly "sex object for Gus Van Sant" in any shape, manner or form. I'm intrigued. I'm bowled-over--I'm knocked-out--I wanna get famous so I stand a snowball's chance in hell.

And somewhere out on Spring Street, a cock crows--or maybe a geeker like the woman in her 20's with prematurely grey hair weighing all of 60 pounds rubbing against me mewling like a cat--offering herself for \$10 then \$5 then a dollar--then begging for a place to sleep, preventing me from gaining direct access to the party's entrance--maybe it was no bird at all but some soul needing to hit the pipe crying out in that need as I deny my own need for the third time. So Mark--do you follow the weather--charting a sort of diurnal course--or do you forecast it as well? Do you know where the lightening's gonna strike and that's how you're there to capture it in a bottle? Lemme know. But Hey--there's some serious storm clouds gathering overhead. Can you see them? Could you see them even then? Which Mark are you--the one in print or the one you revealed to me? Both? Neither? We're not fin-



Cock Crows on Spring Street

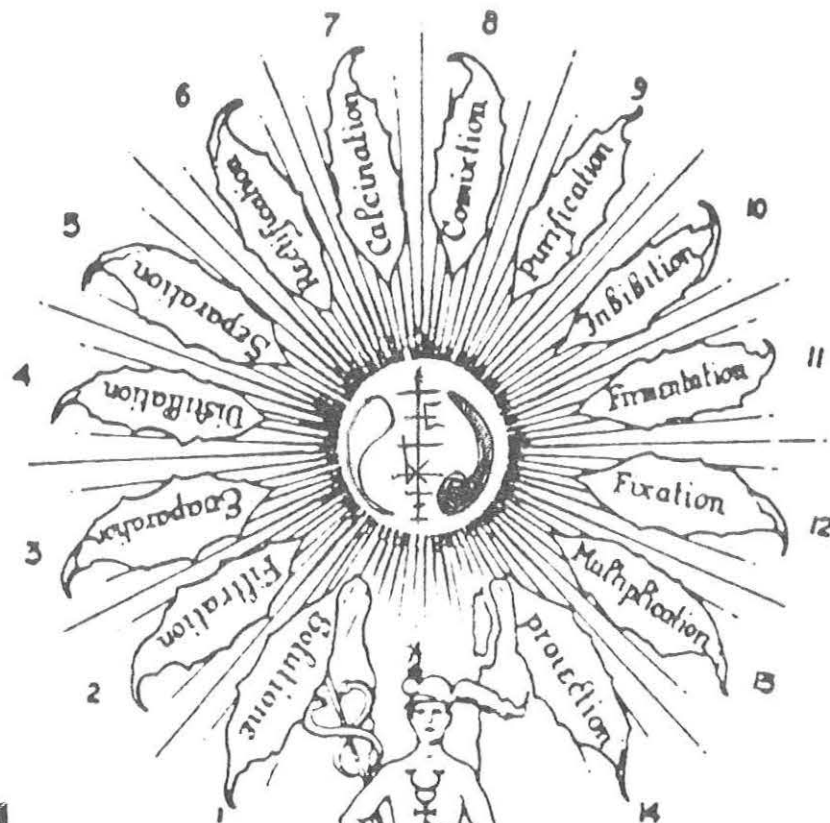
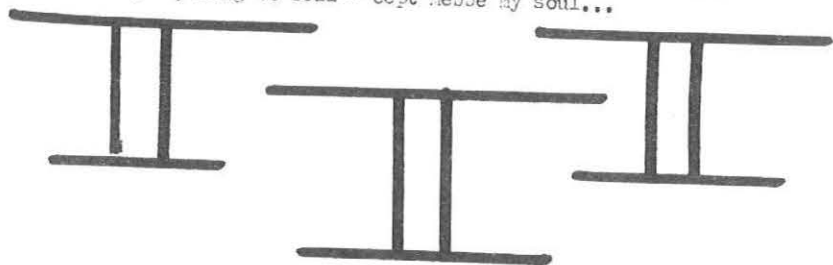
Don Baird, S.F. free-lance writer holding nose in place while glue dries



Tattoo of the Month

What's left to tell? Not much. Went to Denny's. Sat and talked. Thomas played his bells and his recorder until some dizzy queen who parroted every platitude he'd ever heard in his life and never had an original thought couldn't keep still and interrupted once too often causing Thomas to quit prematurely. Made my way back to Magazine Central. Confronted by an angry security guard. Rescued by a woman who'd seen me on a previous occasion. Slept for two hours. Said goodbye to ABC Boys and Zipper. On my way to the car, feel pair of eyes on the back of my neck. Turn around and look up. It's Jessie on the fire escape. Ask Dave to wait. Drop my Bag. Run back inside, upstairs to window. He's gone. Was I really gonna ask him to come with me? Never know. Leave, drop off zines at A Different Light. Get to airport. Don't feel like leaving--don't feel like crying--don't feel. Get on plane. Actually sleep, $\frac{1}{2}$ hoping plane crashes. Drifting off, don't know if move west is imminent or not. Maybe last year in Minnesota? Who knows. Too many loose ends right now. But it disturbs me that the number of people I found interesting enough to pursue further in 3 days at Spew exceeds number found in 6 years time Minnesota-wise.

I hear next SPEN is in Toronto. Yeah. I'm going--but I'm not gonna bring anything to sell--'cept mebbe my soul...



BLUE NEON

The title "Blue Neon" comes from a blue, neon-light a friend kept in his living room. Whenever the light was on, we noticed that it had a definite effect on those present. Conversations would cease, people would become withdrawn, introspective--even depressed.

You might think the story derivative which is funny because I lived it.

But--but... I thought it was fiction...

Yeah, you right--this IS fiction. Truer than life...

Remember, art used to imitate life. But somewhere along the way--maybe during the Romantic Period--art became elevated to the status of Peak Experience--and perhaps the greatest tragedy ever to affect the human condition occurred: life began to imitate art--people began to live their lives according to the tenets gleaned from the medium of choice: Imaginings and fantasy replaced experience. David Anger and Peter Glaser found vocations--excuses for living--and things have never been the same...

In this story, the names have not been changed because there's no one innocent to protect...



"Do you want to have sex with me?"

"What?!"

"Do you want to have sex with me--no--don't think about it--it's a simple yes or no--and I know you do. I know you want me. I can feel it."

"If you already know, then why do I have to answer? I already told you I'm attracted to you. But I know how you are about sex--if having sex with you adds me to your list of conquests to get tossed away when you're tired of me, then forget it. I don't want to lose you as a friend before we've even had a chance to become friends. I don't want sex to spoil things."

"But what if it makes things more...I don't know...interesting?"

"Yeah, it could do that. But is it worth the risk? I don't need another sex partner. I can have anyone I want--and so can you. I need a friend--not a fuck. What brought this up anyway?"

"It probably doesn't help that I'm drunk and really horny--actually, it probably does help--but I'm so attracted to you--intellectually and emotionally that...that--"

"--and physically?"

"That's what's so weird--you're not even my type!"

"I know that. So how do you account for this sudden...impulse?"

"You're just the most interesting person I've ever met in my life and I think I should just go with it. I mean where do you suppose this is going to end up anyway--you know what I mean?"

"Sounds like a drunken birthday fuck to me."

"Don't be so cynical. Come here."

They embraced in the neon-lit smoke and burned harder than the neon, oblivious to the bank of eyes looking on in envy, thinking they had just witnessed the pledging of love. And if you would have at that moment asked either of them, entwined in each other's arms, what it was that they were feeling, they might have termed it love, though later they would retreat behind walls of "affection" and "closeness" and "like," both of them refusing to even consider the word love before, perhaps coming to the realization that they had acquired the power to crush hope and leave gaping wounds in one another. And by then wouldn't it be too late, anyway?

Whatever the case, it felt good, it felt close, it felt intimate and it brought tears to Teg's eyes, reawakening feelings in him long dormant through years of meaningless interactions, discourse and intercourse. Like dying embers rescued from a pile of ashes, fanned by currents of desire, these feelings warmed him and surprised him at the same time.

Brook's eyes were also glazed--both he and Teg using their states of intoxication and the smoke to excuse the moisture--but the feelings were stranger to Brook. He was used to separate categories of attraction: physical and non-physical. He was having difficulty with the overlap--how could the latter lead to the former--and besides, he was attracted to young boys and Teg was 28. Like he was good-looking but he had five o'clock shadow for Christ sake! And anyway, would the introduction of sex to the mix literally fuck things up between them--they got along so well--and did it really matter cause all of it was talk and idle speculation and the erection contained by his jeans was real and urgent--and it mattered.

"I think you put a spell on me with my hair."

"What?!"

"I said I think you put a spell on me. I mean you had to, right? I mean how else do you explain it?"

"Maybe we don't need to explain it." After considering for a moment, Teg added, "You really don't think I put a spell on you, do you?"

"Well?"

"Fuck. All right. Number one, I'd never do that to anybody and number two, I'd sure never do it to you--I mean what would be the point--like how fucking hollow, you know? Fuck, I can't believe you'd think I'd do that. Look--all I wanted with the hair was to put it in my medicine bag so you'd always be with me even when you're gone--I mean it's not like you're the only person in there, you know?!"

"You're so fucking beautifully weird. But I know. I was just giving you shit. I'm just really confused."

"Yeah, me too. But I think you're at least partially serious--you know, like behind every joke--"

"--is a smidgeon of truth? Yeah, I know. But like if you're totally responsible for this mess because you put a hex on me--then I'm absolved from any responsibility for my actions--like it's not my fault. I'm just an innocent victim of circumstances."

"You're not an innocent victim of anything and you never will be."

Their reverie was interrupted as the bright house lights came on and a bouncer politely informed them it was time to leave. They complied and headed for the door, pushing through bodies into the cold outside air. Once outside, they exchanged pleasantries with those already outside and then with others still exiting the club. The separation cooled things between them for the moment and Teg noted with amusement and anger the appraising, assuming-knowing looks the two of them were getting and he wanted to yell at everyone--no one in particular--you people don't have a clue what's going on here--fucking get lives of your own, would you!?

But just then Brook grabbed his arm and rescued him, "You wanna get out a here?"

"No doubt!"

"Let's go then."

They made their way across the street to the parking lot and Teg's car, and as fate decreed, they timed all the traffic lights, pulling up in front of Brook's house in a matter of minutes. "Are you just dropping me off?"

"Are you inviting me in?"

"Yes."

"I'll let you out and find a place to park."

"All right, see you in a minute," as he got out of the car, locked and shut the door, and made his way to his front entrance.

As fate would also have it, there wasn't a parking spot to be seen and Teg wound up parking two streets east of Brook's house and walked back to the double bungalow. He climbed the stairs to the porch, knocked, and heard Brook tell him to come in.

Brook was sitting on the floor smoking a cigarette, sprawled across pillows propped up against the sofa. Teg removed his jacket and shoes and took a seat next to Brook, a safe three feet away.

"I didn't think you were coming--I thought you just went home."

"Yeah, I figured you'd think that. I had to park way over on Pillsbury."

"Really?"

"Yeah really," he laughed nervously--and snapped back at the sound of his laugh, recognizing the anxiety. He never was nervous at the prospect of sex. It was just something he did. Sometimes, by the time he got some of his partners into bed, they just didn't excite him anymore and he had trouble sustaining an erection--and he didn't care

what they thought. But this was evidently different. He was nervous like the first time he'd ever had sex--and it made him think--maybe you can recapture your innocence, when Brook extinguished his cigarette and closed the distance between them.

"Here--I know you like to cuddle--" as he pulled Teg down onto the pillows and threw a leg over the older man's stomach, placed an arm under and one on top, resting his head on Teg's shoulder, sliding his top hand under Teg's shirt.

"And how do you know I like to cuddle?"

"

"I just do--am I wrong?"

"No, you're right--as usual."

"You're tense."

"Nah--it's just tonus."

"It's what?"

"Tonus? That's muscletension--it's like what's necessary to support your weight."

"Oh bullshit. You're tense."

Teg just laughed in response this time, hoping the laughter allowed for ambiguity. But of course Brook was on target--again--he was tense. And felt awkward. It was like he forgot what to do with a man's body, so he tried to buy time by stroking the back of Brook's neck, hoping he would return to himself shortly, hoping that if it was going to happen that it would be good. But after a few moments, Brook's breathing became slow and even, punctuated occasionally by snuffling sounds. He had fallen asleep in Teg's arms for the second night in a row, and remained there until morning, putting Teg through a night of ecstatic hell with limbs falling asleep, muscles tiring and cramping, drifting in and out of a restless sleep--but he was determined to endure and savor every minute of it, calculating that opportunity had passed them and this was as close as it was going to get.

When the light began to come through the partially opened blinds and Brook awakened, he rolled off Teg and turned away to consider what had happened during the night and what hadn't happened. Teg seized the opportunity to stretch and realign muscles and to crack his joints and vertebrae. Brook got up to light a cigarette and Teg rolled over in order to avoid facing the smoking Brook, now seated on a dining room chair. Brook finished his cigarette and rejoined Teg on the floor, pressing the front of his body into Teg's back, wrapping his right arm under Teg's right arm across his torso. Teg grabbed Brook's arm and hand and pulled it close to his body.

"You have ahairy chest."

"Not really."

"Yeah you do."

"I got about eight here, eight here and eight here. That hardly constitutes a hairy chest."

"Well I think I just felt all 24."

"So that's what changed your mind."

"What?"

Never mind."

They readjusted themselves, all planes and contours interlocking like the pieces of a puzzle and dozed for another two hours. When they next awoke, it was nearly noon.

"Let's go get some coffee."

Let's go get something."

"What does that mean?"

"It means let's go get some coffee."

They dressed and stumbled out the door, Brook locking it behind him, and together they began the trek to Teg's car.

"Where's your car?"

"Way up on Pillsbury--remember? I told you I couldn't find a parking spot--I mean I seriously could not find a parking spot any closer."

"Damn. We could have just as well walked to Muddy Waters."

"Sorry."

"Oh, I'm not complaining."

They walked the rest of the way in silence, Brook just behind Teg. Brook studied Teg's walk--shoulders pulled back and rolling--animal-like, predatory--a ghetto swagger: ethnic, masculine. But did he want all that? Did he want to see it naked? He had not even unconsciously checked-out Teg's frontal equipment--never even glanced at the rise in his jeans. This was probably not a good sign. Or then again, maybe it was good because it might mean that with Teg, pornographic images and dick size didn't matter anymore. Maybe he was moving beyond "type" and considering an individual on his own merits for once. Yeah, and maybe not. It was so clear when he was drunk, but now he just didn't know.

He also recalled that he and not Teg had been the first to initiate touch between them. He remembered hugging Teg and Teg reacting like he was startled and cornered by the touch. Maybe Teg was the first to

understand the blurred attractions between them. He also recalled the tension in Teg's body when he had pulled him near the night before, fully intending to bust a nut. What HAD made him stop? What if Teg really didn't want him sexually? Wouldn't that be a trip?

They arrived at Teg's car, clambered in and drove the eight blocks to Muddy Waters, one of several pretentious bohemian coffee shops in the pretentious bohemian area.

Teg considered how he never went into coffee shops unless he was with Brook--how he never danced at fag bars--but had the previous night when Brook asked him. What other concessions was he willing to make? Yeah, he'd probably follow him to hell--all Brook would have to do was ask. Oh well--it was good to break routine. He was becoming predictable--almost set in his ways. The experience would do him some good. He was also aware of the effects two consecutive nights of near sleeplessness combined with two days with nothing to eat but a couple of pieces of cornbread were having on him. He was looking at things through a haze and he felt like he did when he was just coming onto some good trip. He was definitely experiencing an altered state of consciousness--should make for some really good conversation. How many things would he say in his condition that he'd end up regretting--that he'd want to take back but couldn't. Ahhh fuck it. He was too tired to worry. "By--about what you said last night--anything you wanna take back?"

Brook's face twisted into a smile that for all the world looked like a smirk. "I was wondering when you were going to ask that."

"Well, I just did. So what's your answer?"

"let me think about it for awhile."

"All right. OK. Take your time."

They parked the car and staggered out into the street, crossing in the middle rather than in the crosswalk, climbed over a curbside snowbank and ambled the rest of the way to the coffee shop.

Brook bought a pack of cigarettes and ordered a cup of coffee. Teg, eschewing caffeine of any sort, ordered a ginger beer. They sat down at a table and looked at one another. Teg felt frazzled and was sure he looked it. Brook looked the same as he had when Teg had picked him up the previous night to begin their bar-hopping excursion through downtown Minneapolis in celebration of Brook's 21st birthday. That's the difference between being 21 and 28, thought Teg--Nah--fuck it--that's the difference between getting a good night's sleep and not getting sleep for two nights.

"You know, you're just about the only person I remember dreaming about last night."

"Yeah? That's proximity control. When you're on top of someone like that, who else are you gonna dream about?"

"You know, I really planned to have sex with you last night." Here it comes, Teg thought. "I wasn't even going to talk to you about it. I was just going to do it. I don't know--I was so fucking horny last night. It's like my hormones are at this peak right now. I mean usually with sex I can take it or leave it, but last night--"

"--you left it anyway."

"No listen--I was talking to my room mate about it and he joked about a birthday fuck and I really went out planning to get laid last night. And you obviously seemed like the most logical choice--I mean it seemed inevitable anyway."



Muddy-Waters Paranoia: All Eyes on Brook & Teg--or is somebody's broker B.P. Hutton...

"Predetermined? Fate? Destiny?"

"Yeah--like only a matter of time. And then I was thinking that it really wasn't that I wanted to have sex with you--I just wanted to have sex."

"So it wasn't a 'who--' it was a 'what,' "

"Exactly--and I didn't want to wreck it, you know?"

"You didn't think I'd respect you in the morning?"

"Fuck off. I'm serious. I've told you--you are the most interesting person I've ever met--and I hardly know you--I mean it's like I'm still at the crust and not even to the center yet."

"So now I'm a fucking pie..."

"Will you shut up--I'm trying to be serious here--I mean I tend to get real intense with people and then when the intensity wears off I tend to drift away."

"...burn out on them."

"Exactly. I don't want to burn out on you--it's like you said about a carousel and passengers along for a ride discarded when I'm finished with them, you know--so I guess what I'm saying is that at least for the time being, let's be friends--at least until I figure out what I want and what I need."

"Yeah--I figured it was something like that. Yeah, I can respect your decision. I don't know if I could stand to be someone else's sex object again--even your sex object for a night. But do me a favor will you--well--two favors actually."

"Sure--I mean if I can--what?"

"Had to warn that 'if I can' in there, just in case--didn't you?"

"What are the favors--I'll do them--unconditionally--all right?"

"OK--having said what you just did--about being friends for the time being--don't pull back, all right? Stay close--and when and if my ride comes to an end, let me know, ok? Don't let me overstay my welcome. Let me get on with my life--"

"You've got it all wrong--it's not like we're breaking u...--" he broke it off before finishing the word 'up--'not believing he'd used those words, then quickly plunged ahead, hoping Teg hadn't heard, knowing though, that he had but maybe he'd let him off the hook and pretend he hadn't. "We've got a long time together--I mean--" he seemed intent on digging himself deeper so he switched directions--"I mean if you sense me pulling back, don't let me pull back, ok?"

Teg watched him agonize and wanted to reach out and let him know it was all right. As he took it all in, he knew the words 'don't let me pull back,' signalled a pulling back which would probably commence when they parted company later that day. They would never be so close, so naked again. From now on they'd be dumb as boys paying no attention to one another's genitals snapping towels in locker rooms--if that. The male bond: everything but desire.

But there were other things besides passion--which only frazzled nerves and left you vacant for days after--look at his condition now--the nice thing about being friends was being able to leave intact. Tender was better than carnal. It was all turning out to be very post-modern--like dating after an apocalypse. Still, his own body felt as though a portion had been carved out when they untangled on the living room floor. He felt the absence of Brook's body like the phantom limb of an amputee.

"How do you want me to stop you from pulling back. You're gonna do what you wanna do anyway."

"That's a good point. Just let me know--call it to my attention. You know, I don't talk to anyone else this way--these conversations are like intense, you know?"

"Yeah, I don't talk to anybody like this either. I don't talk much to people period. I can't do small-talk anymore."

"Really?"

"No--I just said it to freak you out--Yes, really."

"Sorry."

"Really' is small-talk--I thought you were baiting me."

"No, I'm just surprised you say you don't talk--you seem good at it."

"Maybe I haven't talked for so long that all this talking's just erupting out of me like some dam's burst or something, know what I'm saying?"

"Yeah, I feel like a dam burst in me, too. Can I ask you a question?"

"Sure--and I'll probably even answer it. Ask me anything."

"What can I do for you--I mean you can teach me so much and help me in a lot of ways--what are you getting out of it?"

"Maybe I'm seeing if I can be somebody's friend for a change--Maybe I'm trying to do things right--if I can control my desires. You know after Gandhi took his vow of celibacy--when he decided he'd fathered enough children--he'd sleep with beautiful naked women just to tempt himself and prove to himself he'd conquered his desires. Maybe I'm trying to prove I've conquered my desires by sleeping with you. Maybe you're like an experiment or a test for me, you know? Like just possibly the best thing I could do for you is to like love you unconditionally--give you everything you ask for and more--bring you as far as I can take you and then leave you to go on with your life. Anyway, talking to you forces me to consider things I put off thinking about--like changing. You're gonna be a catalyst for some huge change in my life--I can feel it."

By this time, Brook was shaking noticeably, deep into a coffee buzz, totally absorbed in the conversation. He still didn't know what to make of that strange person sitting across from him. He sounded so sincere, yet what he said sounded like bullshit sometimes. Could anybody construct such an elaborate web just to get into his pants? If it was a conjob, it was a pretty amazing one; if it wasn't, then it was even more dangerous because he was investing time and emotion into this flim-flam man. Where in the fuck was this relationship going to lead?

"You wanna float?"

"Yeah, I've got to get ready for work. I'm probably one of the only people you know who actually like work; of course, it helps that I get paid for the quality of my work like immediately with tips and everything."

"Being a waiter is a great job for people who can't delay gratification."

"What?"

"That's the big advantage of being a waiter--you always have money in your pocket. Let's get out 'a here."

"Yeah--I'm sort of at an impasse--all talked out, you know? I've got nothing else to say right now."

"And I'm going to do something I haven't done for two days--eat."

"You haven't eaten in two days? I have to eat like every four hours."

"Keep that blood sugar up. Fasting is good for the soul--produces altered states of consciousness--I feel like I'm tripping my tits off right now."

They left Muddy Waters and drove back to Brook's house and Teg waited while Brook showered, intending to give him a lift to work. He laughed out loud at what he supposed was supposed to pass for singing emanating from the shower--Brook croaking along to some '60's rock tune--and lapsed into a meditative state to pass the time. Before long, Brook whizzed by him on the way to the laundry room in the basement to retrieve a clean work shirt from the dryer. They again exited the house and climbed into Teg's car, the past three days for Teg a blur of entrances and exits from that house and a seemingly endless series of car rides.

"When are we going to do the kava kava?"

"As soon as you can abstain from sex--ejaculating--for four days--I figure maybe by 1999."

"Very funny."

"No--seriously--you gotta do that to prepare for it. Dream work's done primarily with sexual energy."

"Well, last time I had sex was yesterday--I mean I didn't get laid --I just beat off--"

"Spare me the grisly details--"

"--shut up--so that'll make it Monday--how about Monday?"

"That's not really good for me. I gotta go back to school on Monday. Christmas break's over."

"What about Monday night--wouldn't that work?"

"I guess I really don't want to spend Monday night doing kava kava and then going into class Tuesday morning unable to tell what's a dream and what's not--though lately I seem to be having that trouble anyways..."

"It takes a lot out of you?"

"Not as much as trip--but enough."

"Well, let's wait until the weekend then."

"Yeah, that'd work out best for me."

"Okay--cause I'm really excited to do it."

"I think it's gonna phreak you--we're talking genuine trauma here."

"Why's that?"

"Cause there's a point where you're gonna lose your boundaries--your personal space--your sense of self. You're not gonna be able to tell where you end and I begin. We're gonna merge and you're gonna phreak

and say to yourself--what the fuck has he done to me."

"You might be right, but I'm excited about it--I'm not afraid."

"Maybe you should be."

"How's that?"

"If you think things are confusing now, wait until you feel like we're one in the same--we'll have sex and you'll think you're masturbating."

"Very funny."

"You won't think so."

Teg pulled the car over to the curb in front of the restaurant. Brook started to get out then thought better of it and turned instead to hug Teg. It was a long hug and to Teg it didn't seem like an 'I'll see you soon' hug. It felt like goodbye.

"Talk to you soon Teg," Brook called to him. Teg wondered how he decided to call him Teg or his given name: John--if there was some system he used or if it just came out. "Yeah--Later."

He watched Brook bound from the car and disappear through the doorway before pulling away. There'd be no kava-kava this weekend--or any weekend for that matter. If he was from Sedona he'd say he was burning some heavy karma with this one. It felt good to be exercising some emotional muscles he'd allowed to atrophy--peak experience all the way, this was--just like when he was Brook's age--when all there was for him was one peak experience after another--a seemingly endless series of adrenaline rushes. That's probably what Brook had seen in him. A peak experience of his own. Teg laughed to himself. You'd think with all the experiences he'd accumulated he'd have had what it took to keep things flowing a little longer. Yeah, well--Brook would find out about peak experiences--how they're all variations on a theme--the same core in a different wrapper--or to borrow a metaphor from Brook, the same pie in a different crust--Jesus, wasn't that just rich? Yeah, he'd learn all right--or crash and burn like all the other adrenaline junkies Teg had hung with when he was 21. Maybe that's what getting old was about--learning that the higher the peaks, the deeper the low spots--and right now he felt old--or at least tired and hungry. Things would probably look a lot better after a meal and a nap. He swung a U-turn right in the middle of traffic, ignoring the horns and irritated gestures and pointed the Buick home.

II

Brook got off work at 11:00 but stayed to have a couple of drinks at the bar, taking advantage of being newly 21--it wasn't so much that he wanted to drink--but that he could--thenovelty of it wouldn't wear thin for some time. So he sat talking and drinking with two waitresses who had punched out the same time as he had. Only the more he talked

and the more he drank, the more he thought of Teg until he could think of nothing else and couldn't figure out why he was there talking and drinking when he could be with Teg instead of thinking about him. He excused himself and went to use the phone. He dialed the number from memory and after the forth ring, connected with the answering machine and Teg's Cal-boy-surfer message: 'Hey--feel free to leave a message,' seemingly out of place in the Minnesota winter unless you knew Teg and his free spirit. "Damn, I hate answering machines," he muttered, unable to think of what to say by the time the tone sounded, so he just paused in silence before hanging up. Must be asleep--or out somewhere. Oh well, it was a stupid idea anyway. What was he going to say to him -- excuse me for calling this late, but I'm drunk and would really like to see you--can I come over? Get a grip, Brook--you're losing it in a big way. You've got enough older brothers without adding this one to the list. He laughed to himself. Jesus, can you imagine how my family would react to him? Mom, this is Teg. He goes into my dreams at night for kicks. No, I don't mean I dream about him--I mean he GOES INTO MY DREAMS--like on purpose--God, I don't even want to think about it...

He returned to the table shaking his head and as it was closing time, accepted the ride offer~~ed~~him by one of the waitresses. They made comfortable small talk on the way to his house, exchanged polite kisses at parting and Brook waved as she drove away in the fog rolling in due to the unusually warm January days followed by cooler nights. It's probably just as well Teg hadn't taken his call--he realized he was tired--they'd have most likely sat up all night talking, probing--revealing--He could use a good night's sleep.

He went in, locking the door behind him, performed his ritual drinking of four large glasses of water to ward off dehydration and hangover, and was undressing as he made his way down the hallway to his room. He didn't even bother turning the light on, so intent was he in flopping down into bed, a course of action he regretted--he should have turned on that light--as a voice coring from his bed sent him three feet into the air as he turned, getting his feet tangled in a pile of clothes, to confront the source: "It's about time bitch. Where were you? I've been waiting here for two hours girl. I thought you got off at 11:00."

"God damn it Sean. You scared the shit out of me. What are you doing here? How did you get in here?"

"I'm glad to see you too, Hon. Joe let me in. In fact, I was going to wait about ten more minutes and then I was going to crawl into bed with him."

"I thought you left already."

"I decided to stay one more day--now hurry up and get in here--it's almost three o'clock. I've got the Vaseline Intensive Care all warmed up and ready to go."

Fuck, you scared me. Don't ever do that again."

"Ok daddy, I pwahmiss--so come here and spank me. I've been a beaad boy."

He couldn't help but grin at Sean's campiness. Maybe he wasn't so tired after all. Sean was good sex. It looked as though the night wasn't going to be a total loss. And the erection aching to be freed from the confines of his pants seemed to be telling him that this was exactly what he needed. He finished undressing and slid in next to Sean,

"So were you with John?"

"Now why would you say that?"

"I saw the way you two were looking at each other last night. The whole bar did. Everyone says you're an item."

"We are not an item. We haven't had sex. We aren't going to have sex--but if we do I'll make sure you're the first to know--and who is everyone?"

"Puhleeze--everyone saw you two all over each other in the corner. And Rob and Cord dropped you both off at your house the night before and here you are two hours late from work without an excuse--and you expect anyone to believe something isn't going on? Joe even said you were probably at his house. Roommates know even if no one else does."

"Sean--shut the fuck up. You sound like my mother or a jealous wife or something. It's none of yours or anyone else's fucking business--It's just so ludicrous--preposterous--so fucking hysterically funny because we're just good friends and that's all there is to it. And I stayed after with some friends at work and had a couple of cocktails. That's it. Period. Are you happy now?"

"Whatever girl!"

"Sean--did you know you're much more attractive when you don't open your mouth? Are we gonna fuck or are you going to bitch all night?"

Apparently Sean had said all he had to say as not another word passed his lips and he filled his mouth with Brook's lips and tongue instead.

Brook hadn't thought about what his friends were thinking. Of course they'd think exactly like Sean. What else could he expect--And he knew any denials on his part would only serve to confirm their suspicions. Maybe it was time to move to another city.

He didn't pursue these thoughts long, however, as Sean's mouth had proceeded in a southerly direction and was now sliding up and down on his blood engorged cock.

Now this was more like it. Sean was definitely his type: smooth, total absence of body hair, angelic. And as he approached his first orgasm, one hand gripping the back of Sean's head, the other clutching at the bed sheet, pulling the fitted corners off the mattress, he felt free--liberated from Teg's spell--and he wanted to yell: 'You see this John--I don't need you--I don't need anyone.'

By the time they settled into a slow, steady fuck, and Sean had intoned, 'Whatever girl' for the fifth time, Brook was again feeling the gathering of cum in the pit of his stomach and at the base of his perineum. But he was also growing tired of Sean's exhortations of, 'Fuck me bitch.' His second orgasm left him feeling hollow and emptied, inviting the inevitable comparison with Teg who always left him feeling full to the point of bursting. Brook wondered what magical sex tricks Teg knew and made use of--there must be some reason people had sex with Teg once and didn't want to give him up.

As Sean nestled into him like a sleeping puppy, Brook sighed long and hard--a sigh of dissatisfaction--that's what Teg had done to him--showed him that he was dissatisfied with his life. He'd held up a mirror and forced Brook to take a good hard look at himself. And he didn't like all that he saw--like what was he doing with Sean--using him for what he wanted--for fulfillment of sexual cravings--but wasn't that what all relationships boiled down to--using people for what you thought you needed--either by mutual agreement or with one person holding all the cards? Was there any other way? Fucking Teg--I don't know whether to thank you or kill you...

Brook woke up before Sean and carefully slid his arm out so as not to disturb the sleeping boy. He went out to the living room and lit up the morning's first cigarette. 10:00--he should be home--why not. He picked up the receiver and dialed the number--come on--no answering machine, no answering machine--

After two rings, Teg picked up: "Yeah?"

"Hey, what's up?"

"How are you?"

"Good, good--'n' you?"

"A little gloomy, but all right."

"Well the reason I'm calling is I was wondering if you'd like to have dinner with me tonight?"

"Wow--dinner, huh--you know Brook, I'd love to, but I really can't--I've got some things I've got to do..."

"Ok--well how about getting together later for some coffee and you know--talking--or something?"

"No offense, Brook--but I'm better off by myself right now. It's got nothing to do with you. I get in these black moods--I just have to sit with it, know what I'm sayin'?" I'll be fine in a couple of days--maybe we can get together then, all right?"

Brook just nodded gravely, not knowing what to say, not wanting to say the wrong thing--annoyed at the stinging welling-up in his eyes. Who was pulling back now? "Ok, well, call me when you're feeling better

and...well..let me know if there's anything I can do, ok?"

"All right, thanks--I'll be in touch."

"Okay. Bye."

"Later."

Damn. It was happening. He was bailing. Before he could decide how to feel or what to do about it, Sean chose that moment to put in an appearance and plant a sloppy kiss on Brook's mouth. "Morning baby. Who was that--John?"

"Sean--just leave it alone, will you?"

"It was John, wasn't it? Why are you being so weird about it? You know you like him. Just go for it."

"I never said I didn't like him. I do like him. I might even love him. I'm just not in love--you know? He's not even my type."

"Why not? I'd do it--I mean that jaw of his just won't quit and he's so butch."

"He's not my type--he's too old--you know I like young boys like you."

"Chicken-hawk--a 21 year old pedophile. What are you going to do when you're 28?"

"Give it a rest. When are you leaving?"

"Whatever girl. Brook, why are you doing this?"

"Doing what? I just want to know how long I'm going to have to put up with your bullshit, that's all."

"Am I supposed to be ashamed that we fucked? You spend all the time you're not drunk pulling away from people. Maybe you have more hatred for your sexuality than you realize--did you ever think of that?"

"Maybe I'm sick of 18 year old queens prying into my life and telling me what I feel and don't feel. You ever think of that?"

"Whatever."

"Look Sean--we're good sex, you and me. Don't expect anything more. I don't know if I can give anything else to anybody."

"I really do have to get back home--but if you want my advice and I know you don't but I'm going to give it to you anyway bitch--I think you and John should get married and have muscular children--I mean if you love him, the sex should be the easy part."

"It's more complicated than that Sean--it's not that simple."

"Whatever--Brook, I just want to see you happy. I think you're a special person and you deserve a little happiness. And if that doesn't mean me, then I only hope you find it some where. Now give me a kiss before I get out of here."

"Just a kiss?"

"Whatever! Come on back to bed girl."

III

Brook tried calling once more when three days passed without any contact from Teg. Answering machine. He might have made one last attempt on Thursday--even considered doing the unthinkable by walking over and dropping in unannounced--but things kept coming up allowing him to procrastinate--allowing him not to place the call--diverting his attention--allowing him to convince himself that pride had nothing to do with it. But the weekend came and went making seven days since they'd last spoken, and Brook saw the proverbial writing on the wall. He didn't need to be beaten over the head with the tail to recognize a dead animal.

As he readied himself for a visit to his aunt's for dinner, he was resigned not so much to the fact that it was over, but to the notion that there was really nothing to begin with so there was nothing to grieve. He almost had himself convinced that he actually believed this notion.

His aunt was his mother's older sister--in her late sixties--remarried just that summer after 15 years of widowhood. She had quite the reputation as having been a hellraiser--a sort of black sheep--which was one of the reasons Brook was so fond of her--he could identify with her rebellious spirit--and she was so liberal in her thinking, she never ceased to amaze Brook with her candor and insight. She had been the first family member he had come out to and she had made it so easy on him--had helped make it such a liberating, empowering experience, it had given him the strength to handle later, tougher episodes with other less tolerant relatives and still emerge from these episodes intact. She was always able to lift his spirits, so this visit couldn't have come at a better time. If anyone could get him back on track, it would be his aunt Margaret.

Aunt Margaret's husband was out of town on business, making it just the two of them for dinner, an arrangement Brook preferred. Whereas he didn't dislike the man, he never seemed to know what to say to him, and his absence ensured his having Aunt Maggie all to himself for the evening.

They made it through the meal without a hitch, catching up on news and gossip about various family members neither of them had much regard for--but while he was helping her clear the dishes, she ambushed him.

"Do you have somebody yet Brook?" Women's intuition--or did she just know her nephew...?"

"You mean a lover?"

"Someone...special--" either uncomfortable with the idiom or making a necessary distinction, Brook couldn't tell for sure.

"No--I don't think I'm the bonding type."

"Dear me, boy, what do you do--sleep around? I hope you're careful for goodness sakes!"

"More or less I'm afraid--But don't worry. I'm careful--" then sheepishly--"most of the time."

"Oh Brook!"

"Well actually, there is somebody--a friend anyway--it's not like I'm alone--I've got friends."

"Do you love him?"

A strange prickle of shyness like a dry sweat crept across his shoulders. He guessed he was blushing, a sensation unfamiliar to him and totally unappealing. "I guess. But not like YOU mean."

The woman turned to look at Breck--not judgementally--not even ironic, just curious to know how many meanings love could have. Brook shrugged and sighed. "The problem is, I think he's in love with me. I think I hurt him."

"But that's exactly what happened with Carl and me. He loved me first. I wasn't looking at all. It was never going to happen to me again. But Carl, he just wouldn't let go, thank god. So why don't you listen to him dear--what's his name?"

"Teg...John--It won't work. I'm not all that physically attracted to him."

His aunt made an impatient waving motion, determined not to let him off the hook. "How old is he? Is he your age?"

"Uh-uh--he's 28."

"Ah. Then he knows," retorted Aunt Margaret, beaming with satisfaction.

"Knows what?" Brook bit the question off--not quite sure what he was becoming angry at.

"That's all there is, somebody to love. It doesn't matter for how long. Two years, three years, six months--that's all there is so you'll take even a little. Everything else is shit."

Brook's jaw dropped. "Aunt Maggie, I think that's great. Carl is a good person--"

"--but that's what I'm telling you. I didn't look twice at Carl. If a man didn't look like your Uncle Frank, I didn't even see him. The old alarm clock wouldn't even begin to tick--you got that problem?"

"Old alarm clock? ...No--no, that's not it--it's just--"

"Look Brook, Carl took his time," she continued, unaware in the spell of her own story that Brook was fairly gaping at these intimate details. "We built up to it real slow. Sometimes you have to trust the other person." Brook, if you don't take a chance, you will reach a point where you'll spend the rest of your days regretting it, wondering what might have been. Trust your old Aunt Margaret on this one. Don't push John away. Let him in. I can tell you love him. It's written all over your face."

"I'm afraid I've already pushed him away. He doesn't want to see me anymore."

"Oh you men. I swear you're all alike sometimes. That pig-headed pride! If he won't see you, then go see him. Kick in his door if you have to--but don't let him go with out a fight."

The sight of her standing there, fists clenched, waving at an imaginary foe made him laugh and lifted him out of his dark mood. She'd done it again. Teg would love her. He could picture the two of them sitting practicing their own peculiar brands of magick together. The next mornings headlines would announce some stunning development: 'World agrees to get rid of all nuclear weapons...', Ozone layer restores itself--' who knows what the two of them together might be capable of.

They spent the remainder of the evening laughing and basking in each other's presence--as usual--and Brook was sorry that it had to come to an end. But he heard the horn outside honking--his friend Jeff come to pick him up and take him home. As he and aunt Margaret hugged and kissed goodbye, his aunt scolded, "Now when you get home I want you to call him. I'd make you use my phone but I'd probably grab it from you and give him a piece of my mind as well. Honestly."

"Don't worry aunt Maggie. I will. First thing."

"Good boy."

A light snow was falling as he got into Jeff's truck. The white cover made everything look cleaner than it was on the ride out. He felt cleaner, lighter, renewed. Like a man with a mission--he knew at last what he had to do.

"Hey Brook, you wanna hit the Saloon? It'd be about 11:30 when we got there. Prime time..."

"No thanks Jeff. If it's ok, I really want to get home."

"Fine with me. But if you don't mind me saying so, you've been a little anti-social lately. Everything OK?"

"Yeah, everything's fine--thanks for asking. I'm just really tired. I'll definitely take a rain check though."

"Suits me fine."

Jeff was right though. He had been ignoring his friends lately. All the thinking he'd been doing lately had really sapped his energy. As soon as he got things settled with Teg, maybe things would revert back to some semblance of normalcy.

He hit the door and the phone in nearly the same instant and was shocked into a seated position when a strange adolescent voice answered, loud music playing in the background.

"Is Teg there?"

"No, he's at the store--he'll be back in a minute--you wanna leave a message or what?"

"Who is this?"

"Who's this?"

"This is Brook."

"Oh--so this is Brook. Are you sleeping with Teg?"

"Excuse me?"

"Are you fucking him?"

"Who is this?"

"Hey--I'm only asking cause I've seen the Christmas card you sent him and I've heard him talk about you. I know he's seeing somebody. I can tell cause when he's here, he tries to be with me but he's thinking about somebody else and I'm betting it's you. So am I right or what?"

"You know, it's really none of your business."

"Yeah--well take this to the bank pretty-boy--and collect interest on it. I'll fight you for him. And if you hurt him, I'll kill you--know what I'm sayin'?"

"Somebody should teach you some manners--know what I'm saying?"

"Yeah--well get a life; later fag-boy." Click.

Who--what--the fuck was that?! How could somebody have moved in so fast--or was somebody already in place--just another of Teg's many secrets that Brook hadn't discovered yet?

It didn't seem to matter that he was finally able to admit that he loved Teg because he had lost him. Driven him away just as he'd told Aunt Margaret; nothing to do but put up the wall. Right now he felt older than Teg--no options left--no second chance. He ought to be glad he could finally admit to being in love, but now all that mattered was putting up that front. Nobody would know. You would have to have known him better than he allowed to see how he felt--too old and too

young at the same time--sadder than he could even feel--but damned if anyone would see--especially Teg.

IV

Nearly two weeks had elapsed since Brook's visit with his aunt and the ill-fated phone call to Teg. He was back in circulation and managing nicely. It would take some time before he was completely over it but he was fine as long as he saw to it that the interludes he spent alone were few and far between.

And so it was that he found himself at a weekend party given by a friend of a friend--nothing out of the ordinary--the usual crowd was there and Brook was enjoying the socializing. One AM came and went, closing all bars, heralding the second wave of party-goers--the bar rush. What had started out as a fairly intimate gathering rapidly mutated into a standing-room-only crowd. Brook was planning to invite a smaller group of people back to his place when he was stopped dead in his tracks. Teg. All Brook's buoyancy quickly dissipated, his resolve crumbled. He felt the thickness in his throat, the stinging in his eyes. But he decided to remain--he was not going to give Teg the satisfaction of thinking he had provoked flight. Teg also immediately spotted Brook. Had he not been certain that Brook had spotted him, he would have turned around and walked, but he stayed for virtually the same reason as Brook. They spent the next half hour circling each other warily like combatants, each knowing exactly where the other was at all times, careful not to get within striking range. Finally, it happened--circumstances conspired to bring them together as, involved with separate conversations, they momentarily lost sight of one another only to find themselves back to back, within arm's length.

Sufficiently amped by too many beers, Brook couldn't resist applying the needle: "Where's your boyfriend?"

"Boyfriend? What're you talking about?"

"You know--you're little houseboy--the one with no manners who answers your phone--what's the matter--past his bedtime?"

"Oh that--that was Jason--you know--the little suburban punk-queer boy--I thought I told you he was staying with me for a couple of days."

"Couple of days--sounded to me like he was planning on spending a lifetime."

"Yeah, well I guess I'm the first adult whose ever treated him right in his life. He's mistaken his gratitude for love. You know how attached kids can get. Come on Brook--get a grip. If I didn't know better, I'd swear you were jealous. Excuse me--I've got to piss." With that, he moved away from Brook towards the bathroom, just vacated by a pair of occupants.

Brook waited just an instant, taking a deep breath to steady himself. He then followed the same path, pushed the bathroom door open, slipped

inside, shut the door behind him, only to encounter Teg, dick in hand, pissing a steady stream into the porcelain bowl.

"I love you."

Teg laughed, the sound stinging Brook's ears, turning them a bright red. "Uh-Huh--and I love you too--see, I've got my dick out for you and everything. Fuck'n' Brook--how about some privacy--couldn't you have waited until I was finished?"

"No. I'm serious, John. I really love you."

It was Teg's turn to blush. "Look--I don't think this is the time--it's sure the fuck not the place--" he circled his head indicating the bathroom as he zipped himself.

"Sure it is. An hour ago I thought you were taken. Now I know you're not. I think my timing's perfect."

There was a bare three feet between them, yet Brook seemed to take a great stride forward as he moved to grasp Teg by the shoulders. Even as he tilted back his head and planted his open mouth on Teg's lips, Teg was thinking--this isn't happening. He stayed with it tongue to tongue as much as anything to give himself time to think. But he didn't think. He just kissed--until the bathroom door banged open pulling them apart at last. They both stared at the tall black queen whose eyes were wide with discovery at the hot bit of gossip he had just uncovered and could now run back and titillate the other partygoers with.

"Can you two finish this scenario somewhere else? This girl's got to pee."

"We were just leaving."

"Sure you were girl--I think 'just coming's' more like it."

As they made their exit, Teg turned on Brook: "Why are you doing this?"

"Doing what?" I'm finally acting normal. What's the problem? You've been in love with me for months."

"It wasn't like that."

"That's bullshit and you know it. Look--you put up a good fight. Now come down off your mountain and admit you're human. I release you from your vows of sainthood. I want you. I NEED you."

This too loud exchange had made them the focus of attention. Whereas they were both used to this as individuals, together they had no time nor use for it.

"You wanna get out 'a here?" recommended Brook.

"No doubt."

"Your place or mine?"

"Did you have to put it that way?" Teg winced.

"What--you wanna use a snowbank or the back seat of your car? Let's just go before one of us changes his mind again." He pulled Teg close and bit playfully at his neck.

They left the party, arms around each other's shoulders. Teg slipped his hands under Brook's turtle-neck, riding up the bare flesh to his chest where he took a firm pinch of both nipples.

Coupled like this, they both nearly lost their footing on the ice, looking like two characters in a silent movie, both of them laughing at the comic poignancy of the moment.

"Hey--no blue neon tonight, all right? Let's not take any chances," grinned Teg.

"Fuck you and the blue neon. Am I ever gonna be able to say anything to you that you won't throw back in my face you perverted human tape recorder, you?"

"Maybe if we have long enough and you keep talking there'll be so much that the whole mechanism'll just break down from overload or something."

"Was that supposed to be romantic or what?"

"A kodak moment, fer sure..."

"You are absolutely insane."

They walked the rest of the way to the car in silence, content with holding onto one another--content in the warmth and the closeness. Brook always thought Teg drove like an old man--slow and deliberate--but there was nothing slow or cautious about this ride. Once at Brook's house, they were undressing each other as Brook turned the deadbolt into the door frame. Leaving a trail of clothing on the way to the bedroom, they were both naked before Brook turned off the light.

They slapped against one another like an electrical storm. Teeth, tongues and fingers kneaded flesh, thrusting Brook into landscapes he'd never felt before--savage, fiery landscapes of prehistory when dinosaurs roamed the earth. His second brain--the brain in his tail became activated then and he shuddered spasmodically--crying--but in pain and pleasure as they carried each other to new heights. They slammed together again, hands exploring like lightening and thunder.

For a few seconds, Teg let him catch his breath--no touch at all--then gently massaged the back of his neck and fluttered his fingers lightly over Brook's chest. His right finger ripped down Brook's side as wrecklessly as a crackhead on a skateboard.

Back and forth--from motherly tenderness to ero-magnon fury 'til Brook is utterly addled and comes at Teg with the fury of a thunder lizard. His cock finds Teg's mouth, stabbing at it wildly until Teg guides him inside, hands activating a sequence of erogenous zones and nerve plexuses like the launch sequence of a guided missile--override no longer possible--fully armed and activated--bent on detonation, fast approaching ground zero. They finished in a tidal wave of cumming until it hurt to continue and Brook cried out in ecstatic agony.

They both lay still for a moment, utterly spent, the quiet broken only by the sounds of small kisses and breathing coming back under control.

"What the fuck did you do to me? Was that Tantric or what?"

"That my friend was sex--pure and simple. And sex is magical all by itself. Don't ever forget that and don't let it ever become anything but. And when you release it from the chore of making you feel better, whether through pleasureable distraction, stress-discharge, neurotic sublimation or romantic delusion--it can be seen--felt--lived in full-bodied resonance--a celebration of wholeness--a mutual intensification of intimacy--an unstressed being-to-being meeting and greeting asking only for unrestrained nakedness and empathetic joy--you getting all this down?"

"Who is that--Master's and Johnson or something?"

"Nope. John Tomars: Post Coitus Extemporeneous Rambling, Chapter I, January 26, 1992. It's gonna be a very long book, I'm afraid."

"Good--now let's get to work on the next chapter."

"So you wanna co-author this book or something?"

"Page by page."

"And word for word, I suppose."

"Yeah--letter by letter--now quit before I throw up and this becomes a romance novel..."



ZINE Reviews

ADVERSARY #4 (\$2) c/o Orland Outland, 3955 17th St. #4, S.F., CA 94114--Ugly little zine guaranteed to ruin your day. Whereas focus tends 2-3 a little mainstream 4-me, very readable & poignant bleakness.

ATMAHAI-EMTOIE #12 (\$2) P.O. Box 5233, Ellsworth, ME 04605
Thelonic Magick for gays; extremely subversive except for unfortunate saturation with commercial pornography.

BETTER HOMES & GARDENS #1 (\$2) 8283 1/2 E, Santa Monica Blvd., W. Hollywood, CA 90046--Dark, cynical, biting: Guide to Dry-cleaning in West Hollywood, Kitty's Butthole, free pkg. of real flower seeds--water them with your tears...

BEAT ATTACK #2 (\$3) P.O. Box 40754, S.F., CA 94141
Dyke-wise SAM stylin' with sense of humor intact. I'm thinkin' of gettin' a subscription 4-tod of P(c)E; portrait of editors on back cover with flowers shoved-up their assholes: fragrant...

DOUBLE-BILL (\$3?) P.O. Box 55, 3TA "E" Toronto M6H 4B1 Canada
A collective including minds that brought you JaneFrankie's, Binkex and J.D.'s releases first zine to function as a virus: Reading about Williams: Conrad & Burroughs results in exposure; cogitation & musing about text-incubation; wake up in a cold-sweat screaming in the middle of the night and wonder why: you've got a full-blown case--no vaccination, no known cure...



FANTASTIC FANZINE #2 (\$2) 850 N. Edison St., Arlington, VA 22205
A Jewel in the Bikini-Kill, Girl-Gerns camp which is a good place to be. #2 has central focus on abuse.

GAYBEE #2 (\$1) P.O. Box 343 Portland, ME 04112
My proudest moment as a queer-zine reviewer: this is the third zine in this month's BOS that Larry-Bob's overlooked (c'mon Larry--you're slippin'). From the ffolkes at Bushwacker comes this charmingly refreshing and upbeat entry. Like Cometbus only snaller & queer which is not to say it's derivative, but to proclaim loudly: GET IT!

HOMOCURE #4 (\$4) P.O. Box 191781 S.F., CA 94119
"Desire determines aesthetics" issue; I guess we don't share desires and therefore aesthetics; Ice-blue, negative-image cover a nice touch; "How to Seduce a Young Boy," by unrepentant child-molestor: very warped; Has its place--don't know where--nebbe on guppie coffee-tables?

Mala Leche #1 (\$3) 3712 N. Broadway #334, Chicago, IL 60613
Mala Leche=Bad Milk: Es una nueva revista latina para hombres que se acuestan con hombres y mujeres que se acuestan con mujeres; Fotos, columnas, consejos del psicólogo, consejos nutritivos, Tetas postizas, Gringo's corner, Noticias, Anuncios de clasificados--y mucho mas...

OUBLIETTE (\$5) Dolo Blue Graphics P.O. Box 80023 Mpls., MN 55408
Conix from the end of the world to your town. Karen Platt & I are going to have children together someday. Karen doesn't know this yet & is going to howl when shi reads this--conception will undoubtedly take place in a test tube--but you're all invited to the raring--stay tuned...



PROFANE EXISTENCE

NUMBER 14 MAKING PUNK A THREAT AGAIN! (ABOUT THE ONLY THING FREE IN THE TWIN CITIES)



P.C. CASUALTIES #2 (\$2) P.O.Box 7505 Ann Arbor, MI 48107
Zine with few pretensions--same as editor: Mark Freitas. Lacking in a strong identity as yet: strength or short-coming? I dunno...

PROFANE EXISTENCE #14 (\$2) (Free in Twin Cities!) P.O.Box 8722 Wpls., MI 55408-- Thoughtful article by Criterion on zines; Roundtable discussion on queer-zines with Criterion, Karen Platt & yours truly; How-to-do-body-piercing by Lisa Chester.

PUSSY GRAZER c/o S.O.P. P.O.Box 20553 Tompkins Square STN, NY, NY 10009 (\$?) Leave it to Bruce LaBruce: hidden-microphone recorded, disappointingly boring conversations at Limelight's New Festival; Assimilationist Scum Hit-List; Free condom with staple holes through it...

Q.T. (Queer-Terrorist or Queer Tapette [Tapette=Faggo]) #3 (\$4) C.P. 423 Succursale C Montreal, Quebec H2L 4K3 Canada--This is what zines are SUPPOSED to be like: Kiwi's travels in Thailand & Amsterdam; Mobilizing rants, Newspaper clippings you're sure to have missed; Cathartic dart-board; Grisly story about cross-dresser you'd think you'd find in BOS...

QUEER TERRORIST & QUEER TAPETTE



RIOT GEAR #3 P.O. Box 190176 S.F., CA 94119 (\$3)
Latest incarnation of Deke Nihilson & Clay Cadic--no virgin birth--breaking water like a 3-DE--crowning like queer-anarchy; apply vascular clamps: it's time to cut the umbilical...

SALT & SAGE #3 (\$1+2 stamps) P.O.Box 252 Salt Lake City, Utah 84110
"A sacred Faerie Circle Magazine," Queer-Wicca as mild as metanucil...

SIN BROS. #6 (\$5!!) 1629 N. Norton Av L.A., CA 90026
Over-sized, over-priced, over-hyped, too-slick, too-chic, too-cool zine for club-crowds convinced that punk is a costumed fashion statement that replaced izods and polcs--that zines are a trend to be exploited. Packaged like a political campaign: sound bytes, slogans, posters, advertising; Flip through someone's copy & you'll catch it all in 30 secs...

STRANGE LOOKING EXILE #3 (\$2) Rob't Kirby, P.O.Box 300061 Wpls., MI 55403
Robert & contributors do it again in the Queer comic zine that succeeds in making love to you. Test how "enlightened you truly are w/Quetzal's "Dirty Old Men"--Are you titillated or repulsed...

TOUGH'S FABRASH-"Black Girl" (cassette tape-\$5)
From: Bine Kleine Totennusik, P.O.Box 10410 Arlington, VA 22210--Music to beat-off to; From the opening of side one when he announces, "My name is Paul Bonono and I'm a fag!" there is no doubt where Fabrash stands. Totta influences & musical styles in here: Lou Reed-V. Underground, Tom Waits, Ramones, Pistols, Clash, Pans, Iggy, JCS, Basil Adkins--but for some reason I keep being reminded of early Devo! 10 songs recorded on a 4-Trac to serve as a soundtrack for hot, young, queer, sexually-frustrated, funky masturbatory boyholes everywhere--raw & in yer face... Hey Paul: I'm bidexterous; I trust both my hands.



THE QUEER COMMUNITY ZINE THAT WE WANT TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU! \$2



RIOT GEAR



Dance of the black sun

On Saturday, November 3, 1990, Bloodrose presented The Dance of the Black Sun, a Samhain ritual to heal and transform fear surrounding AIDS, as a benefit for the Kuan Yin Clinic, and including a Ball Dance under the supervision of Fakir Musafar. This does not pretend to be an objective or descriptive account of that rite, but rather is this writer's personal experience of it.

The ritual opened with a grounding that began and ended with the words "People once believed that their bodily fluids could heal; some still do." A circle was cast, "By the Earth that is Her body, the the Air that is Her breath, by the Fire that is Her spirit, by the Water that is Her womb," the quarters were invoked, and seven priests of the Dead in white robes and skull masks escorted a skull shaped palanquin with burning red eyes to its place in the West. The dead of AIDS were invoked, and mild and honey offered to them, and the Lady and Lord of Death were called into the bodies of a priest and priestess. "Long of Nail, Bony-Fingered, Jar of Seed, Scent that Lingers, Night has swallowed up the Day, As we all shall be some day." Then the ball dance began.

I did the ball dance, six one-pound weights sutured into my skin with surgical needles and careful sterile procedure in a sort of necklace. The stitching hurt, (I sung a soft power chant as I was sewn) as did the balls once they were tied on. But when we came downstairs and made our entrance, drums throbbing, didjeridus wailing, maybe 200 people clapping in frantic rhythm with the drums, we were already dancing, shaking our shoulders side to side making the balls swing, jumping up and down, and Brian my friend running NRG with me to link us through the dance, the pain faded and wave after wave of wild exultation just filled me. Over the drumming and the clapping and the singing of the "audience" we one by one offered our dance, our pain, our blood, and our joy to the Lord of Death, the Lord of the Dance, and received the blessing of the Dark Lady.

Then the dance started. At first holding hands, dancing in a circle around the Lord and Lady of Death together invoking the Star Goddess whose body encircles the universe, at the enter of all the room's NRG, shaking our torsos from side to side to make the balls swing in a hypnotic rhythm while the stitches tugged at our flesh, pain transcended, the dance and the drums going faster and faster, then suddenly we broke and I lost consciousness of everything except myself, spinning in a mad dervish while, balls tugging our, dimly seeing other dancers careening about like mad gods, crashing into other dancers without stopping,

spinning myself to the beat of the drums, waves of dizziness and new pain until I thought I would fall but pushed on through it and suddenly was in and out of my body at once, no pain at all, whirling in total stillness, shaking my torso back and forth in a shoulder shimmy as I whirled timeless and pure, higher maybe than I've ever been in my life, spiralling up and up on waves of sound that I more felt than heard, then the drumming stopped and I let myself collapse to the floor. I still had most of my balls, so in a few moments I got up, and when a new round of dancing started invoking the joyous sexual gods of spring into the hears of darkness, and the room erupted in a frenzy of dancing, in a corner with Brian, my guardian/assistant for the evening, I shook off the remaining balls, popping my sutures one by one just by moving my body. I was so high, so full of power... The ritual ended with a spontaneous spiral dance, everyone singing "We are opening to the sweet surrender of the luminous lovelight of the world." When the ritual was done, went home with Brian, listened to the music, made love riding the NRG of the dance. Much joy.

The ball dance was such an incredible ecstatic releasing, whirling and dancing there, between the worlds, my heart torn out, my eyes black blind pits, my feet pounding rhythms of light on the floor. I kept some of my sutures. After the ritual, I thanked Fakir, and he smiled softly thanking me in return, "after all, it is a great thing, to offer you own body." It is the frenzy of ecstasy, offering my body in pleasure to my friends and lovers, offering my flesh, my blood to the Powers, to the piercers' needle and sutures.

I suckle at the breast of all life; my eyes are the eyes of an old wise child.

Letting go, always letting go, letting go of what has been to admit what is and what will be, letting go and flowing with the movement of the Dance... a moment like a certain time in the desert that remains burning in my heart, secret seed of flame, I was afraid of the pain, dreaded it all day, growing more nervous as the time approached; flesh shrinks from the needle and thread. But there was nothing to do but pass through it. A metaphor for much of what I have been through. Like being born.

It has been a hard two years of learning and growing, passing through my own fires, watching while my body is chopped up and devoured, consumed to embers, and born again out of the ashes.

I am so full I could burst.

Gabriel of Bloodrose
750 La Playa #716
San Francisco, CA 94121

ORGASMIC COMMUNION

An Immodest Proposal

Have you ever thought, "I wonder how many people are having sex at this particular moment?" I know I have. And what I'm now proposing consecrates this simple idea. I suggest that on June 21, 1992 we set aside the hour between 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. GMT to celebrate an Orgasmic Communion. Now, 2:00 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time, if I've got this right, translates to 9:00 p.m. June 20, 1992 in New York, 8:00 p.m. in New Orleans, 7:00 p.m. in Denver, and 6:00 p.m. in Los Angeles.

Say What!

During this hour of Orgasmic Communion, all those so inclined will indulge in their favorite non-coercive sexual activity with or without a partner (or partners), knowing that they do so in conjunction with a multitude of others.

Why?

I feel, in this age of AIDS and the repression of sexual liberty, that it is important that we affirm the healthful and connective powers of our capacity for sexual pleasure in all its guises and acknowledge that the pleasure we find in our bodies is a thread that runs through the lives of all the peoples of the earth, transcending race, religious creeds, national boundaries, and physical attributes. There is an ecological aspect as well, because sex, as part of the natural rhythm of life, can awaken in us a sense of our responsibility to each other and to the earth, our home. You could even have sex outdoors during the event to affirm our connection with the earth. This Orgasmic Communion might also, in some small way, combat the guilt and fear that attends too many of us in the acting out of our sexual natures.

Although it's called an Orgasmic Communion, please don't feel that an orgasm is required. You're quite welcome to simply sit and sip your tea, beer, or expensive champagne and try to grok the notion of so many people throughout the world enjoying themselves.

It's also up to you whom you tell about your participation. It can be done without telling anyone or you can announce your intention to join in the Orgasmic Communion on national television.

And What About AIDS?

The reality of AIDS should make us just that much more aware of the need to be responsible in our interactions with each other. If you do participate in the Orgasmic Communion, please do so responsibly.

How Is Everyone Going To Find Out About This Event?

The Orgasmic Communion will be generated on a grassroots level; there's no big organization behind it. In fact, as I write this, there's only me, and I certainly don't have the resources to promote it by myself. So,

either enough people will be turned on by the idea of an Orgasmic Communion to make it happen on the scale that I envision or it'll only take place in a limited way.

NEURON FIRE LIKE MACHINE GUN

What Can I Do?

- 1.) Make copies of this flyer and distribute it to anyone you think might be interested. Talk it up.
- 2.) Contact any local media that you think would be willing to publish or broadcast the information contained in this flyer.
- 3.) Send all appropriate national, foreign, or international publications copies of this information. Don't worry about duplication, the more people they hear from the better.
- 4.) If you have the personality and the courage for it, try going on radio and television.
- 5.) Use your noggin and think of even better ways to get the word out.

Okay. We Have An Orgasmic Communion. Then What?

Well, I like the idea of producing a not-for-profit book which will contain the stories of what different people did for the Orgasmic Communion, as well as a not-for-profit video or videos compiled from tapes sent in by participants. How these would come into being is still uncharted territory, but I figure that if enough people express interest in submitting material and working on the projects the means will be found.

It's been suggested since I first made this proposal over a month ago that a portion of the sale price of the book and video(s) be donated to worthy causes. Greenpeace and the Sierra Club were put forth as possibilities. Wouldn't this be a great way to help heal the earth with our sexuality?!

If This One Is A Success, Why Not Another One?

Sure, why not?

Theme song:

"Come Together" by the Beatles

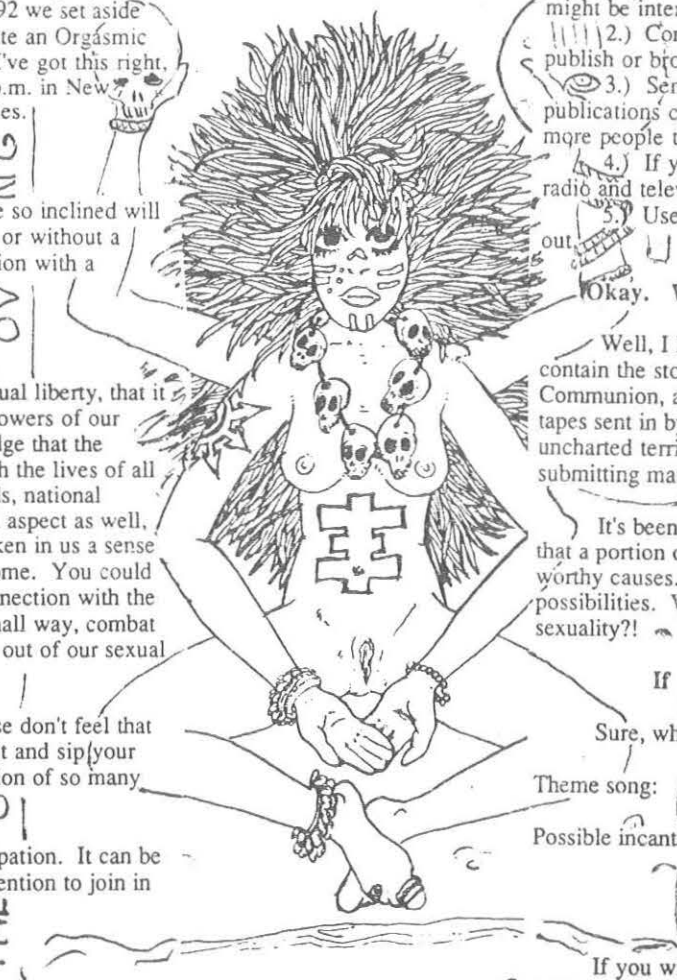
Possible incantation:

With juice and jism
bridge the chasm.
All draw strength
from this communion.

If you wish to contribute to either a book or video, volunteer your skills and time, or be put on the Orgasmic Communion mailing list, write to: (PLEASE INCLUDE A SASE):

Stan Major
P.O. Box 408
Chloride, AZ 86431

I hope you'll join us.



NG

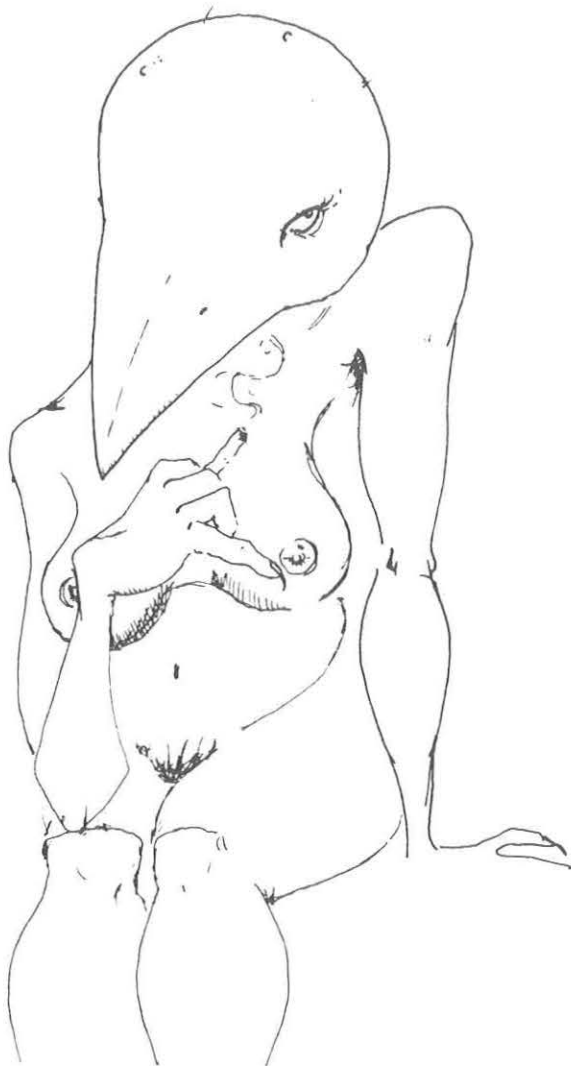
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THE

ONLY HELL IS INERT

THE WORD NOT-SPOKEN; THE THING UNSAID...



Can we talk? ...



Never before has BOS had an interview within its pages. Here is the first, the only, and perhaps the last BOS interview--BOS UNMASKS LAWRENCE ROBERTS, editor of Holy Titclamps and former Minneapolis resident.

But why Larry-Bob?! You'd think BOS would want to blitz Bruce LaBruce or besiege Johnny Noxzema or lay waste to Dennis Cooper--but Larry-Bob? What on earth for?!

Larry-Bob holds the title of Most Popular. He is the best-liked--universally--editor in queer-zinedom. He has no enemies. And yet when you consider queer-zines and the people who edit them, what zine comes to mind if I ask you--which editor's personality is most hidden and submerged? In which zine do you get the LEAST clear impression of whom is in charge? About whom did you start-out knowing nothing and after nine issues continue to know next to nothing?

Ahh!! The haze begins to clear--intention teases at realization--you're beginning to get it. It's Groundhog Day. It's time for Larry-Bob to come out of hiding to face the naked light of day. So here he is as you've never seen him before--and probably will never see him again (he saw his shadow and beat a hasty retreat, burrowing even deeper into the amorphous obscurity of Holy Titclamps...)--the self-styled sovereign of nerdcore--Mr. "Information Slut" himself--the one, the only: LARRY-BOB:

Lawrence Roberts aka Larry-Bob

6' 1"

163 lbs.

3 1/2" soft

5 3/4" erect

Handspan=to his father's only fingers are thinner

Has had 4 boyfriends (cheated on 2--don't worry, Nick--not you...)

Has had 6 other partners (sex)

Only person to have slept in the same bed with Vaginal Davis and nothing happened...

Admits to being overly-concerned about what people think & adopting nerdcore image partly as over-compensating--to give the impression that he doesn't give a fuck what people think

Has a scar on his chin the result of biting his grandmother's daschund in the tail and having said animal bite him back in face...

BOB: EVEN YOUR NAME--LARRY-BOB--HAS A QUAINTESS TO IT--A WALTONESQUE QUALITY. IS THIS INTENTIONAL--DO YOU THINK IT MAKES YOU SEEM MORE ACCESSIBLE--LESS THREATENING--MORE HOMESPUN--OR IS IT JUST A NICK-NAME(No pun intended...)--AND IF SO, IS THERE A STORY TO ITS ACQUISITION?

L-B: I didn't give myself the name. Somebody called me Larry-Bob--it derives from my first name Lawrence and my last name Roberts, so it's a contraction that way. It does seem to fit in some kind of way, I mean it's kind of folksy (laughs). And then you know, as far as using it in the zine, I guess I initially I might have had some paranoia in terms of using it. I've always put my real name on the zine in the copyright section--a lot of people into zines seem to use some sort of pseudonym and I'm sure they all have their different reasons--a lot of people say that "everybody knows me by this name," so it's not really a pseudonym--everybody I know

knows that I occasionally go by the name Larry-Bob--people call me that--it's not like a big secret or something--like my secret identity (laughing).

BOB: THEN WHAT'S WITH THE MIDWESTERN, SMALL-TOWN, RURAL FLAVOR TO IT--AT LEAST UNTIL THIS ISSUE (#9)? WAS THIS BEEN INTENTIONAL? OR DID IT JUST EVOLVE ORGANICALLY--AND DOES A PERCEIVED DEFERENCE FROM THAT RURAL QUALITY PRE-CEDE THE MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO--HOW IS THE MOVE GOING TO AFFECT IT--YOU STILL GOING TO DO IT?

L-B: It's difficult in the magazine to steer it one way or another. I've always had this policy of printing something by everybody that sends something in--and there were a few issues somewhere around issues 5&6 where there was like very little of my writing in it besides the reviews. I mean I didn't really do any original fictional or nonfictional pieces in it. But in the stories that I've done--the story I did in issue #8--the Summer of Jim story--that's a small town story. And I've written about those characters before, you know, about three queers in a small town and stuff and which is--it's sort of--the characters aren't based on particular people but it's somewhat based on my experiences living in Northfield when I was in college--well actually the summers between college when most of the people I'd hang-out with would be townies--you know, the kids in the town--and there was this one townie who was a dyke who dated a couple of friends of mine and really screwed their lives up (laughs). Anyway, you know that's kind of what the Azalea character in there is based on--but I think I'm getting off the question--what was the question--oh yeah, this last issue. Well I think I had the Tracy Chapman piece--(laughing)--the only things I have control over in the magazine are the pieces I write, and one of them was this Tracy Chapman piece which is about this small town existence kind of thing I think. You know, it's this young woman who's writing a fan letter to Tracy Chapman because Tracy Chapman is the only visible dyke that she can see on MTV or whatever and then the other piece that I did was this attempt at a pastiche of E.K. Forrester's Maurice and you know, a lot of people didn't seem to get that (laughs), but anyway--what did you think was "urban?"

BOB: SPECIFICALLY? THE LIZARD CLUB.

L-B: Oh--The Lizard Club. Yeah, well, that's Steve's (Abbott) writing, you know--I publish stuff by so many people and stuff I think it's sort of amazing that the magazine has any consistency at all considering what a rotating cast of characters pass through it--that the same people don't write for it all the time or whatever.

BOB: DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER EDITORIAL POLICY BESIDES "PRINT SOMETHING BY EVERYONE WHO SUBMITS?"

L-B: The original policy was I was going to publish EVERYTHING. Now you know when I get a whole pile of poetry or something, I'm not going to publish the whole pile of poetry. But I'll try and publish something. And recently I have--or the magazine has really reached its size limit and you know there were a couple things I rejected. There was one thing like from somebody who sent in a piece without having seen the magazine before which is a pet peeve of mine--and also he was like this straight guy and I just couldn't see any way the piece fit into the magazine so I rejected that. The policy is evolving and I think between every issue I sit down and say to myself--okay, is this going to be the last issue with any poetry in it? Because I personally quit writing poetry five years ago--I occasionally write it now--but I've decided I'm not going to foist it upon the world because most people are really bored by it. You know, there are friends of mine who I think write really great poetry and I go to readings and stuff, but it's just I don't know--I guess it would just be too snobbish to get rid of it. So there will be poetry for the foreseeable future--at least the next issue.

BOB: SO THE MOVE'S NOT GOING TO AFFECT IT?

L-B: The money situation--since I don't have a job--is pretty tight and I've been increasing the number of issues I print and so it might be difficult if I don't have any money. I would like to have one done by the end of February in time for Spew II--what I might do is just print up a limited run and then sell them there (at Spew) and try and make back that money and then print more after that--but the future is a little vague. (What Larry ended up doing is printing up a supplement: a sort of Queer Fact-Sheet Five listing queer zines and distributing them at Spew--Teg) There's my own writing which I've been doing more of now, probably more than I could print in a magazine, but the magazine is like my big source of mail and stuff. It'd be sort of stupid of me to quit.

BOB: ARE YOU DESERTING THE MIDWEST AND THOSE OF US LEFT TO CARRY ON AFTER YOU'RE GONE?

Holy Titlance (S2)
New Address: Box 591275
S.F., CA 94159-1275

L-B: If anyone has a responsibility to the Midwest it's sort of a responsibility they're putting on themselves. I don't know what's going to happen to me personally when I'm out there in terms of my feelings about the Midwest. My writing will probably continue to focus on small towns and stuff--you know I'm not writing about people who are in complete isolation and despair. The fact of the matter is you don't have to be in complete isolation and despair--that there's always somebody that you can reach out to. These people have community. It's not like--like the secret to writing good writing about kids--is not to be real condescending--because like, I've known some really incredible people who've been like 15-16 years old; being condescending about them is really bad--it doesn't make good convincing writing--God, I'm really rambling today!!

REMINDED OF QUESTION...

L-B: There's like this thing of what I personally need to do and what might be best for everybody else. I think for a lot of people, as long as you have a good landing-spot, leaving is a good idea. But for other people, things are going to be worse if they run away or whatever. And I won't know if it's a mistake or not

until I'm out there and established. Some people have said that there aren't that many really good zines out in San Francisco because it's a big city and there's so much other stuff to do and only people locked in their bedroom in the Midwest can produce a decent zine because there's nothing else for them to do on cold winter nights. So, we'll see if that's true.

BOB: YOU & I HAVE DISCUSSED OUR THEORY THAT PEOPLE DO ZINES OUT OF SEXUAL FRUSTRATION. WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR DOING HE?

L-B: At the time I started it I had seen a few queer zines and I kind of realized that it wasn't that hard to do and I could try doing it. I don't know if my motivations were exactly about meeting people. I guess I expected an immediate flood of mail. I guess until recently I haven't met that many people locally who've been in a queer-punk vein--but I've gotten a lot of contacts with people nationally. I don't know if the zine's directly responsible for it, but I do find out there are people who've been around for awhile and stuff--that it is sort of an isolated thing and that people have this fear of getting together and hanging-out--and it is such a small community that half the people who have met each other have discovered they hate each other or something has happened between them--or so and so hates so and so or this group of people hates this group of people--or this person can't go to this city or they'll get beat-up when they get there. The queer-punk thing is this subculture of a subculture in both senses. My theory on queer-punk is that people who figured out they were different and whose first response to that was to go into a punk thing and then there were other punks they could hang-out with that way--and then they discovered they were gay but they couldn't fit in with the mainstream, sweater-gays and so they were kind of stuck that way. If only they discovered that they needed to be shopping at Dayton's and going to the Saloon first, they'd be much happier. At least for people in this generation--there was another generation who were into Bowie and then gradually got punker--the first wave of people, especially in San Francisco and L.A.--people who were aware of their gayness and punk happened and they jumped on that bandwagon. But nowadays I just think that the possibilities of someone who's a real sweater-Dayton's-shopping-type going punk are a little lower.

BOB: I HAD THIS CONVERSATION WITH TOM JENNINGS--HE SAID HE NEVER DID AS A RESULT OF HOMOCRE--HAVE YOU BEEN LAID BECAUSE OF HE?

L-B: : My boyfriend and I--it was indirectly because of Holy Titclamps. I met him at a Fairy Gathering. At that point I'd only done one issue of my zine but I had copies of My Comrade around--he said that he had some back issues of My Comrade that were kind of hard to get and I was like, Oh--we should get together--I should get copies of those. So you could say zines were indirectly responsible for Nick and me meeting. I know it has worked for some people. G.B. Jones and Gena Von Brucker got together as a result of G.B. publishing J.D.'s and Gena writing fan mail. So it has worked and if somebody wanted to start a zine for that reason I wouldn't stop them--but it's not 100% guaranteed or anything. I was also expecting the whole zine thing to spark more musical results and that hasn't happened too much. There's a few bands: there's 5'th Column and there's Vaginal Creme Davis and Glen Meadmore: Pedro, Muriel and Esther--Tribe 8, which isn't directly done by zine people but it's part of that whole scene in San Francisco--but it hasn't been that big. I don't know; music is less important to me now than it used to be. I'm completely tired of straight white-boy music and I don't make any effort to see it. I'm still interested in stuff that is done (by bands) who are mixed-gendered and queer bands--I mean if something happened it'd be great--but I haven't found the queer band that I really love yet. Kitchens of Distinction--their lyrics are a little too oblique for me--they still pull tricks like having mixed-gender names like having the lead singer refer to "she" when he's really talking about himself. And musically they're not that challenging. They do a really incredible Cocoteau Twins style wall-of-noise but I would really like a queer Big Black--that would be really ideal.

BOB: YOU HAVE MENTIONED YOUR "PUNK" ROOTS--WHAT ARE AND HAVE BEEN YOUR CONNECTIONS WITH THE PUNK SCENE?

L-B: In high school I was this total geek--like I was a computer nerd--that was the stereo-type I fit into there. I had a few friends in high school who had funny haircuts and stuff but nobody really bothered to introduce me to music. One friend lent me a Kraftwerk tape once and somebody was into Romeo Void or Flipper or the D. K.'s --I'd heard some of the stuff a little. I was never into rock music in general. It wasn't until college that I discovered that people could make intelligent loud music. I had several friends at that point who were into that sort of thing; I started listening to their records and stuff and I got into it and we were down in Northfield which as you know is an hour south of the Twin Cities. It was isolated enough that we sort of had to create our own scene and these friends of mine had a band and I would go to every practice and stuff and we'd drive up to shows. The first show I ever saw was Naked Raygun at the (w)Hole, I think, in January of '85--and I went through a period of cutting my hair funny--at some point I decided to return to my former geeky-looks--I always kind of felt like a poser when I had a funny haircut. I mean like I started out listening to the music my friends were listening to as they had been into it a lot longer than I had and then I started discovering stuff for myself. There started to be a lot of stuff I decided I liked that they didn't like--the MRR radio show --I heard "I wanna Destroy You" by Robyn Hitchcock and I got into Robyn Hitchcock and my friends were like--Oh, this is terrible--and these were people who liked T-Rex! I still occasionally go to punk rock shows but there's not that much punk content in the

magazine. There's just not that much music I consider worth mentioning. I don't know--the whole MRR thing where people have the Exploited or the Subhumans on their jackets--I was never into that. How can people say that they're such fans of bands that were broken-up before they ever got into punk? You might as well have the Beatles written on your jacket. I do think that there's something to the theory that MRR has held stuff back. I'm much more into the K-Records ethic--that seems much more "true to the spirit of punk"--that everybody should be able to have their own band and you don't have to be able to play your instruments--you can switch around instruments--you don't have to have a bass again--I was in a band for a short time when I was in college--I was the singer--I didn't write too many of the lyrics--I didn't do openly queer kinds of songs--but if I was to be in a band again I would want it to be a K-Records type of band. But it would definitely have to be a queer band with queer lyrics. There are enough bands doing the other thing--there really ISN'T enough queer in punk. I really do think it's cool that there are more zines that do like a little queer article or a queer column like you know Butt Ugly has their queer column--that there's acknowledgement of this big queer zine-thing happening. And there's always been the few queer punk musicians: Biscuit from the Big Boys, or Cary Floyd--there's a guy in King Missile who wears his BEAR hat and stuff--there've always been visible figures--Darby Crash...

BOS: WHERE DOES THE NAME "HOLY TITCLAMS" COME FROM?

L-B: I was going to do this zine and had to think of a name--I was riding around St. Paul on my bike the summer after I graduated from college and I wanted to start something and it was sort of this name that popped into my head and I was like, I don't know, "is that too shocking to put on a zine?!" The thing is, it's kind of poserish in an S&M sense because punk has had a history of stealing stuff from bondage without really being into the whole Vivian Westwood thing. I personally don't have any first hand experience with that, but it's sort of an eye-catching name--it's sort of Dadaistic.

BOS: HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY EXPERIENCES OR MOMENTS THAT HAVE CHANGED YOUR LIFE FOREVER?

L-B: One of the things that's helped me as a person is my schooling. Like in the first and second and third grade I went to this Montessori school. It was very small--there was like one person at each grade level--you know it was a very small peer group so there wasn't the pressure to conform--there weren't any bullies or anything. It was a real chance to explore learning in a non-threatening environment. And then I also went for 4th, 5th and 6th grade to Webster Magnet school--there was a chance to do more things--there was a media center where you could do video stuff; I took a creative writing course there and so on. Then in high school I was in writing classes. So I think my education, even though most of it was in public schools--I was able to do enough outside the regular curriculum that it really helped shape me. And also I was somewhat sheltered and was never really into rock & roll stuff--I wasn't corrupted by pop culture. I know the phrase came up the other day that I "saved pop culture for dessert." I didn't get into it until later. As far as turning points--

coming-out--that was a turning point. Things were just so screwed-up and I was having such difficulty being honest about things that it was really time to tell somebody and I told this friend of mine--I knew she had this friend who was widely rumored to be a lesbian and this turned out to be true--and that was real important to get that honestly out in the open--and I came out to several of my friends after that. But I think that I had a relatively painless coming-out because I had these friends who were not these mainstream people, I had a much easier time than people

whose friends were like jocks. I think they would have had a hard time coming-out. I think because my friends were kind of this punk rock thing, they were much more open to me about being queer--although that's not the word we used at the time as that was back in the days when it was OK to be gay. I think seeing these other queer-zines like J.D.'s and Homocore and My Comrade and Boysville USA which were like the first four I saw--Aqua was another one I'd seen before I did my first issue--that was like a real revelation--that there were other people like this. It had occurred to me that I'm sort of isolated being a queer punk--that the boyfriends I'd had before had been people who'd gone to the little bands around like the college town--but they weren't into it--the real scene that I was. This was like proof that there were other people like that out there. I'm somebody who hasn't made a lot of big radical changes in his life. I've kind of gone along one path and made a couple of sharp turns--I think this move is another one of those sharp turns in the road of life--we'll see what happens...



Harry-Bob presents his best side toward the camera

BOB: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE META-COMMUNITY THAT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN QUEER ZINE EDITORS? IS IT REAL OR IS IT FILLING A VOID IN LONELY PEOPLE'S LIVES WITH RELATIONSHIPS THAT EXIST ONLY ON PAPER?

L-B: There's a certain clique-ishness to it--everybody always mention each other in their zines. But because I've met so many of these people it doesn't seem like it exists just on paper. There's some people I've just met in passing but there's some people I've maintained correspondence with as well as I can with. When people are so isolated--well what are you going to do--I mean if it's fake I guess I shouldn't write to you anymore if you live more than a day's travel I can't write to you?! I mean it would be kind of stupid to say that.

BOB: AFTER CORRESPONDING WITH SOMEONE, DID THEY EVER NOT MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS? HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DISAPPOINTED?

L-B: Maybe Donna Dresch of Chainsaw. I really love Chainsaw and when I met her I kind of expected this big, soul-mate thing to happen and it didn't. Maybe the reverse has happened. I'm a little insecure. I worry--are people going to think I'm not punk enough or what ever--these paranoid fantasies that I'm not getting any mail because people don't like me. It's kind of silly to worry about that. And I've thought that here's this person who lives 1000 miles away making my life miserable. Don't be ridiculous--you're making your own life miserable. You can get into wonderful delusional fantasies about that and it really doesn't matter.

BOB: DO ZINE EDITORS TREAT EACH OTHER TOO DEFERENTIALLY? IS IT HARD TO SAY SOMETHING NEGATIVE ABOUT ANOTHER QUEER ZINE? ARE QUEER ZINE EDITORS TOO SENSITIVE TO CRITICISM?

L-B: I don't think that's the way it HAS to be. I mean heaven knows I've seen plenty of slams in people's zines. It's just not my style to do that. I do like to think of myself as a NICE person (laughs). Roxie (of Girl Jock) and I were talkin when I was in San Francisco a few months ago: "We're such NICE people--but so and so..." (laughs) There is an additional audience besides zine editors to these zines--believe it or not--and I don't think they really need to hear about so and so. Everybody who does a zine seems to have this persona that's represented in their zine and then their own personality might be similar, but there are differences. Just because I think so and so is immature or silly or pretentious isn't a good reason for people not to read their zine. I'm a firm believer in a broad band of communication. That's why I have a listing of all these zines in the back of my magazine. And the reviews aren't real reviews. They're just sort of vague summaries of why people might want to look at them and that's why I have this editorial policy where I publish virtually anything. I believe if I have this filter that says, "this is the good stuff," that might not be the filter that other people want applied to that material. They might have other criteria for deciding what's the good stuff to read. So I better put it all out there if I can. It's hard to find the stuff, otherwise.

BOB: LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T RUIN YOUR REPUTATION AS "MR. NICE-GUY." I'LL FEED YOU A NAME OR THE NAME OF A ZINE AND YOU DO YOUR VERY BEST TO TRASH IT/THEM IN A WAY THAT'LL MAKE PEOPLE SAY: "I DON'T BELIEVE LARRY-BOB WOULD SAY A THING LIKE THAT;" READY? TOM JENNINGS AND HOMOCORE:

L-B: I don't know if I can do this...oh well...Homocore was one of the first I saw. It was sort of MRR-ish in a way with all the letters and I guess I can understand why Tom would want to quit doing it. It was too much of an institution. But I remember when he first started it, him saying that he'd seen J.D.'s and he wanted to do it right--by "right" he meant the right distribution in getting it out there. And it really did manage to get things out there. But I think it served its purpose. I'm really glad Tom's doing something personal--Boy with Gun--I think he felt out of control with Homocore. He's involved with an amazing number of things--Fido-Net--Homocore--he strikes me as somebody who's really politically committed in a way that I wish I could be.

BOB: J.D.'S:

L-B: That zine was so necessary for the whole thing to happen. It had its focus each issue like the skateboard issue and Bruce's stories would kind of hold the whole thing together--his stories about Butch--that was something you could count on having each issue with consistency. And you'd always have G.B. Jones' Tom-girl drawings; zines have this certain consistency from each issue to each. It's sort of legendary--you know, I sent away six months months ago and I was so mad that they hadn't sent it--but now I've I've got it and I'm really happy--the whole J.D.'s mystique.

BOB: BRUCE LA BRUCE:

L-B: Well youknow, now he's a big-name movie-maker and I haven't been in touch with him at all since Spew I and I don't know anybody that has--even there--well, I think I may have joked around with him--but even there he seemed real distant or something. People say Bruce LaBruce has a swelled head or whatever, but I don't know. I certainly think that people have to draw their own conclusions.

BOB: DID YOU DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSION?

L-B: I don't know. I sort of thought so; but I don't think he's really sucked in by the big celebrity thing. I think he's really playing around with it. A recent thing I heard is that they wanted to have him on this talk show and rather than going himself, he sent this lesbian friend of his to say that SHE was Bruce LaBruce and that she was a gay-male-identified-lesbian or whatever and that's like so great to fuck-up the idiotic talk-shows that way. I still think that's a very "punk" thing to do.

BOS: G.B.JONES:

L-B: She's always been the one from J.D.'s that's always written to me and stuff--and she was encouraging about me starting my zine and she put me up when I was in Toronto. Bruce has always been better at the self-promotion thing and she hasn't been as much into doing that. She really deserves more attention, partly because of the male-biased Advocate-thing--where they always gave more attention to Bruce LaBruce--and that's like what caused the whole friction between them--that she just felt she wasn't getting her due--and I think that's true. And I mean there's always been this thing, like, "dykes don't have as much money," and it's still happening. On the other hand, she IS somebody who sleeps until three in the afternoon--so she could work at it a little harder--but so could we all, I'm sure.

DEKE NIMILSON & THREE DOLLAR-BILL:

L-B: The thing with 3-DB is that the magazine was originally touted as the successor to Homocore and I think that was a mistake for that to happen because the magazine has to grow on its own--I think the second issue's...growing?

JOHNNY NOXZEMA:

L-B: Well Johnny's just an enigma. You get these sweet letters from Johnny and He'll send you tapes or videos and then there's this side that comes out in the magazine--the gay and lesbian bashing side. And I think that it's much easier to tear something down than to present something new and I think Johnny does too much of the tearing down and not enough of the presenting of a new alternative. He's trying to tear down gay and lesbian culture but he's really not presenting them much of a new queer culture.

VAGINAL CREME DAVIS:

L-B: Vag is just incredible! I know when I first heard of Fertile Latoyah Jackson magazine I was really amazed because like, yeah, this is something that should happen! Because the whole queer-punk thing that I was familiar with up to that time was a really lily-white kind of thing. And here was somebody who was being this really outrageous black drag-queen--of course, it advertised itself as the TEENAGE black drag-queen magazine--and Vaginal is no teenager. But everybody sort of has that pose--you know, the people at J.D.'s are a few months older than they claim to be. The whole youth-obsession--that everybody still wants to be a teenager when they're all pushing thirty is sort of ridiculous. I think that Vaginal Creme Davis is somebody who ought to be a big mainstream star--she should be a guest on people's TV shows, like variety and comedy shows--she should be performing in art museums and be getting as much attention as somebody like Karen Finley.

HOMOTURE:

L-B: It's the best designed magazine. My magazine has like this really funky eclectic design where I use like every type face in the book which is something your design teachers tell you that you're not supposed to do. Homoture is done the way your design teachers tell you it's supposed to be done.

FLUFFY-BOY:

L-B: Edward--Fluffy--he's a nice guy--he's a little strange. He's really aware of the clique-ishness and he's...he's...(Long pause)...what am I trying to say about this...(longer pause)...I don't know..uh...I don't know what I want to say about him. Oh well...

AGONY?

L-B: It strikes me that there was something in there that I liked but I can't remember what it was (laughs). I'd have to go look at it again to remember what it was. There was like a piece in there--I think...

TEG & BUNDLE OF STICKS?

L-B: I really can't think of anything nice to say about him or the magazine. I hate the letters section, I hate the tantric-sex re-hash, I hate his fiction, I detest the graphics, the layout and design nauseate me--have I left anything out (laughs)? Oh yeah, and I think the guy should go out and get a typewriter-cleaner.

BOS: IS THERE A STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL GOING ON WITHIN HOMOSEXUALITY AND IF SO, DO YOU SEE THE LINES DRAWN ACCORDING TO POLITICS OR BETWEEN GENERATIONS, OR WHAT? ARE WE IN THE MIST OF A SORT OF CIVIL WAR?

L-B: I participate in some ageist politics myself--the never-trust-anybody-over-thirty-thing. There's a lot of people over thirty who are not upwardly-mobile sorts of people who are taking the rap for their generation. They don't fall into the category of money-grubbing gays and lesbians--nobody likes to admit they're a yuppie...I have lots of friends over thirty--I wish I had more friends my own age. I think especially in this town that there's this thing where people tend to have this group of ten-fifteen friends and you're never going to meet them because they just hang-out with these friends and never try to meet people outside their group. Maybe if you could meet one of them, then you could meet their friends and find this whole other little cell of people. Ageism is sort of a double-edged sword: There are people who view cute=young--older and younger people both believe that--like, younger people go like, "Oh. Well. I'd NEVER sleep with that old troll." And older people who just view young people as sex-objects who don't have a brain. I don't know. I think both groups need to get over it.

BOS: I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT WITH RESPECT TO YOUR ZINE, NEXT TO NOTHING OF YOU COMES THROUGH--THAT OF ALL THE ZINE PERSONAE, YOURS IS THE LEAST ACCESSIBLE--THE LEAST DISCERNABLE--THAT YOU REVEAL LITTLE OF WHO YOU ARE IN WHAT YOU WRITE--CAME TO RESPOND TO THAT?

L-B: The reason I don't tell more things about myself is that I'd also be revealing stuff about other people, namely my boyfriend or boy-friends at the time. Is that what people want to hear? More things about Larry-Bob's personal sex-life? They must be pretty boring if that's what they want to hear about. I guess I don't take very many stands in my zine. I mean there are things I could take a stand about. Like I've thought about writing articles on a sensible straight-edge mentality. I don't use any chemicals--not for any particular reason, just because it's there. I mean other people have done it and I'm not judgemental or anything--it's just something I don't need. I don't know. If by comparison--if you're saying other zine editors do reveal a lot about their personal life--everybody sort of has this persona that they hide behind. In terms of accessibility--that makes me sound like I'm Queen Elizabeth or something--you have to get an audience with me--I don't know what context that could be in--who's more revelatory? I don't know who that person would be--I mean I'll hug people if they want... Look, a lot of people make themselves the center of their zine--I'm the big-celebrity thing--and there are some people who are pretty remarkable and should be the center of attention--I think Vaginal Creme Davis should be. I don't make myself the center of the zine and I don't know--is that a fault?! I know I'm defending it like it was, aren't I?

BOS: I REALIZE THAT I'M TREADING ON SENSITIVE GROUND WITH THIS NEXT QUESTION, SO I'LL PHRASE IT AS DELICATELY AS I CAN; YOUR BOY-FRIEND, NICK, IS QUITE HEAVY AND YOU'RE NOT. WHAT'S THE ATTRAC-TION. AND WHY DOES HE FIGURE SO PROMINENTLY IN THE ZINE--IS IT SIMPLY A CASE OF NEPOTISM--HE'S YOUR BOYFRIEND AND THEREBY EN-TITLED TO BE IN YOUR ZINE--OR DO YOU REALLY THINK HE ADDS SOME-THING TO HI?

L-B: It's not like a girth and mirth kind of thing! When I met Nick he had a mohawk and the other boyfriends I've had in the past have tended to be skinny guys. I don't think size is a big issue (is it a S'ALL one, then? Ed.) or ever was. What I find sexy in general is a short hair sort of thing...

BOS: WHEN I MET HIM, HE HAD A SHAVED HEAD--DID YOU MAKE HIM SHAVE HIS HEAD, THEN?

L-B: I didn't MAKE him shave his head, NO! He asked me if it would like be OK if he shaved his head and I said go ahead! I think it's a case of you know, the football-player-jock--I kind of hate the kind of person that that person usually is, but there's some-thing kind of sexy about a big guy. Nick is nobody's stereotype of anything. People who don't know him may think he's kind of different--and he is, you know. He is very shy and it's hard for many people to get to know him. He has a really wicked sense of humor--he's a real punster. There are times when he won't let me finish anything I'm saying because he's interrupting with a misin-terpretation of it.



Darby Crash? Nope. Waddy? Nope. Ian? Uh-uh. Dave Sralley? Not. Jello? Wrong! Stabb? Not even close. It's Larry-Bob knocking 'em dead at the Mason Jar with his #1--hit single: "I gotta SEXSIE straight-edge."

BOS: WHAT'S THE WORST EXPERIENCE YOU'VE HAD BECAUSE OF THE ZINE?

L-B: I took my magazine to Border's Bookstore and they rejected it. I was really upset by that--and this is a store where I've seen ads like it's an anti-censorship ad. That's caused some psychic confusion there.

BOS: WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT DOING HI?

L-B: The zine itself--getting all this mail and being in touch with all these people and being a part of this thing that helps define a generation. It's really rewarding.

BOS: WE COULD PROBABLY GO ON LIKE THIS FOR ANOTHER 90 MINUTES, BUT I CAN SEE THAT THE TAPE'S ABOUT READY TO RUN-OUT--ANYTHING YOU WAINA ADD OR GET OFF YOUR CHEST TO WIND THIS UP?

L-B: I think that everybody in the world should do a zine!

BOS: (Having to get the last word in...) GOD HELP US...



BOOK FOUR: DESPAIR

Upon Gazing at a Photo of
Teg in Equal Time

TEG:
Haiku Voodoo
Would-U
Me Tú

L. Hendel

He is industrial noise
He is factory smoke
Naked and invisible.

Soapstone skin
Red plum mouth
Shards of eyes
bleeding
Real blood-tears
Lattice-work of tears
breathes and tans like flesh
White eyes filled with fate.

At night he practices sepuiku
in the mirror
chanting
First lightening, then big sound
That's all. That's all.



In his dreams
tallow flesh melts
Shadows lose their source
Green tea flows
from wooden lips
Jaws clack
Paper lanterns drop
softly
into ponds of night.

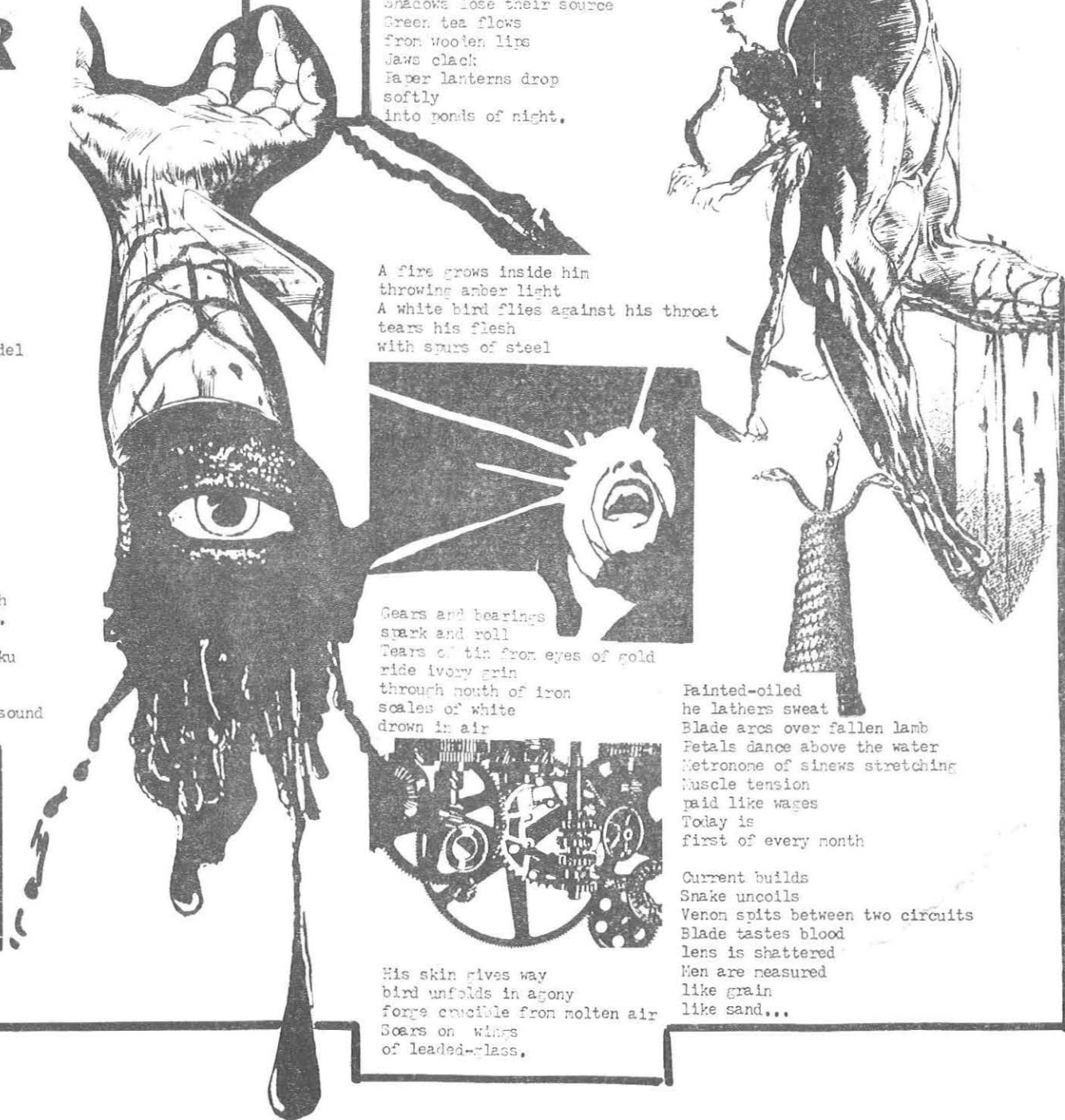
A fire grows inside him
throwing amber light
A white bird flies against his throat
tears his flesh
with spurs of steel

Gears and bearings
spark and roll
Tears of tin from eyes of gold
ride ivory grin
through mouth of iron
scales of white
drown in air

His skin gives way
bird unfolds in agony
forge crucible from molten air
Soars on wings
of leaded-glass.

Painted-oiled
he lathers sweat
Blade arcs over fallen lamb
Petals dance above the water
Metronome of sinews stretching
Muscle tension
paid like wages
Today is
first of every month

Current builds
Snake uncoils
Venom spits between two circuits
Blade tastes blood
lens is shattered
Men are measured
like grain
like sand...





never had a friend like you before

"never had a friend like you before" is the Dismissal Hymn for this week's Mass. It too, is a true story. Does that mean I've committed murder? Death, like virtue has its degrees; and I've but come to kneel and worship. This is just another altar in the Church of Pain...

I will inlay your ribs with mercury
and thread your skin with seashell spirals of copper.
I will microtome your shoulders
and spread them into angel wings...

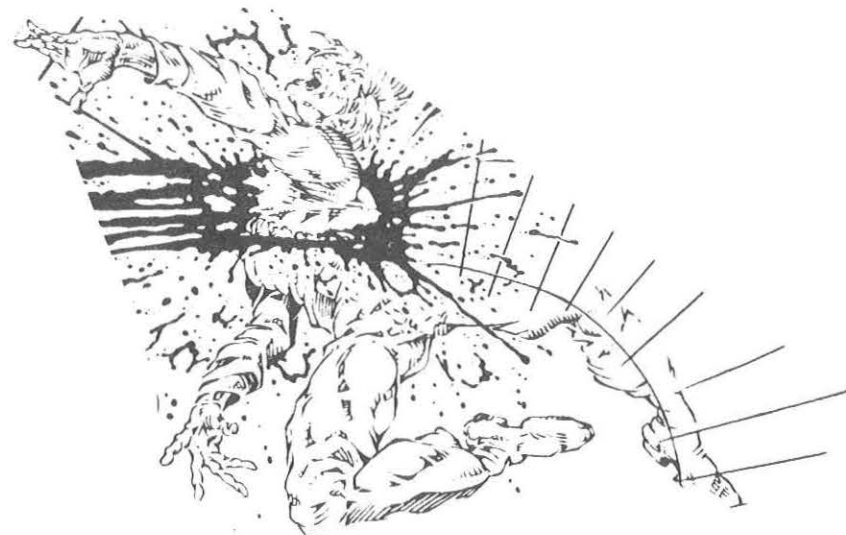
I gave you all the chances you needed. All you had to do was have sex with me. Once. But you knew what you were doing--you didn't want to ruin things between us with sex--once you have sex with someone, you don't want anything more to do with them, you said--and you wanted us to stay friends for a long time. Forever.

You even had the gall to sleep with me--to hold me, kiss me, interlock like pieces of the same puzzle--only we never put the whole thing together--never got to see the whole picture--there was always that missing piece.

And then you fucked Jeff. And lied about it. And Jeff was someone you would have to continue to confront and deal with--someone with whom you would have to continue some sort of association --either that or move. Two nights later you were out with his boyfriend and him--so your reasoning was all shit--your alibis--your excuses--all shit--all of it lies. And what was the reason you never wanted to become sexually involved with me--what fucking game were you playing? What did you want from me--what did you expect? And who did you think you were dealing with, anyway? Now you know.

If you'd have just loved me, I'd be composing sonnets now and you'd be here to read them. But you knew what you were doing and in the course of you knowing and doing, I discovered the scope of your worthlessness, your sickness, your profound self-loathing--your ugliness.

Your forehead was far too large, too prominent, your cheeks too wide. Your ears stuck out, your nose was a crooked mass of cartilage ending in a point. You had no lips to speak of--only penciled lines like a caricature or cartoon. Your eyes looked like little blinking clam shells and it was no wonder you made use of shadow, liner and mascara to allow you to present them in public. At twenty-one you had more than the beginning of a double chin--I spared you the inevitable conclusion to that beginning --and when you slept, your neck rolled into sharp folds that made me want to pick you up by the scruff of your puppy-dog neck and hurl you against the wall and watch you slide down onto the floor in a bone-cracked heap.



And that birth-mark sty-e-thing under your left eye like a zit that never healed--after I finished binding you hand and foot and securing you between bedposts--I began with that little red bee sting--that mosquito bite-thing that used to drive me to distraction as you lay sleeping and I would sit and watch your face--teeth dream-grinding, jaws flexing--that pock mark along the jaw-line, an ululating extra nostril, blowhole to nowhere, a gill held in reserve in the event you ever considered taking up residence in a fish tank--there he is folks, Aqua-boy in the flesh--that little red mark a syringe hole, permanent aperture through which you received regular injections of silicone to fill-out the sunken hollows of your skull.

That is why after savoring the look of trust on your face that said you thought--no, that said you knew--that I was playing and would soon release

you--I don't know which I relished more--that look, or when in an instant it turned to shock, to recognition, to pleading as you realized your fate--that is why I began with that mark, making the scalpel-like incisions underneath the eye and down the cheek so I could peel back the skin--I wanted to see how deep that mark went--did it exist beneath the skin--did anything you possessed exist beneath the skin.

As I watched the blood well-up in droplets and small puddles on the surface of the exposed ribbons of cheek muscle, that mark seemed to taunt me--it announced, yeah, I'm still here; what are you going to do about it--that polyp of tumorous flesh spiralling against the grain--subdermal planter-wart-of-the-face--so I took the blade and dug until I scraped the bone--fighting to keep your head still, you struggled so--raking quite sure that the mark didn't reside osseously as well. By now the blood was everywhere and I sat back intending to watch you bleed to death. But it takes quite a long time for a person to bleed to death, and your muffled cries and sobs and whimpers were distracting me. I considered altering your face even further--but your eyes were beginning to annoy me--and I flipped you over so I wouldn't have to look at them.

I must say that I always found your black briefs obnoxious--pretentious--that is why I removed them, then, shredding them in one admittedly violent motion. And yes, that felt good, exerting that kind of control over you--knowing I could have done anything to you and there wasn't a single thing you could do about it.

I considered fucking you then--your ass looked inviting enough, though I'd never noticed how large it actually was--the tremendous distance between the small of your back and the rounded promontories of the cheeks--it was the guitar-box-ass of a woman, really, and I didn't find that appealing. Oh, I was aroused, all right--my erection was so hard it was painful--the tumescence seemed to extend throughout my body so that I couldn't tell if that uncertain feeling in the pit of my stomach was nausea or approaching orgasm--I couldn't tell if I was going to come or if my head was going to explode.

Had you offered yourself freely I would have accepted the gift of that oft-violated sphincter. But you hadn't offered--I was taking--so no ordinary rectum was going to suffice. I was going to carve-out a fresh hole--one that nobody'd ever used before--one that nobody'd use again after me.

I'm not exactly sure what it was--perhaps the scar on your upper back and shoulder--or maybe it was just a whim--nonetheless, I pursued the fish motif, taking the blade of the knife and running it along the ridge of your spine, from the tailbone all the way up to the base of your skull--then sliding the flat of the blade across the spinal column all the way back down to the coccyx again--filleting you like some huge pike, cutting in just such a fashion that the entire backbone could be removed at once. You barely moved during this procedure, surrendering in resignation or completely in a state of shock--I don't recall you even flinching.

Anyway, I didn't remove your spine but pulled back the skin, exposing the vertebrae, the meninges and connective tissue, spindles of fibers like a telephone cable carrying messages of pain through your dying body. That was when I fucked you, thrusting my cock into fissures along your spine--the slickness, the blood, the warmth keyboarding me into fractals of desire



and longing I can't express in words--but when I came I felt compelled to stab your back, the blade plunging in its entire length--many times, fascinated by the release of air through the wounds as I punctured your lungs--"ooph" actually bubbling and gurgling to the surface--the bed then the room filling with a rank, noxious odor as your bowels perforated--and I realized why you never smelled of body odor--why even your feet didn't smell--the odor had been suppressed, contained inside so that when I opened your peritoneum, the bottled-up stench of twenty-one years was released and I vomited and wretched until my crotch and groin ached.



By then you were quite dead and I rolled you over onto your back so I could look at your face again. The area of peeled-back skin under your eye had already purpled--was turning to black--the flesh surrounding it a yellow-gray, waxen hue--and I bent in an unsuccessful attempt at closing your mouth, gaping mindlessly. For some reason I was completely taken by the glazing of your eyes and I kept returning at intermittent intervals to watch the moisture drying on the pupils until the glassiness began to pucker and wither and the surface began to cave-in upon itself so that the metamorphosis was complete and you resembled nothing so much as a fish kept on a stringer too long with dull lifeless fisheyes--more scales than eyes--and I almost wanted you back alive, your two hands covering mine, saying in a drunken reverie you'd never had a friend like me before--but when you kill somebody, I don't know if there's any room left for tenderness--any chance for intimacy. There's only room for more blood, more killing--nothing else will do anymore. Once you kill somebody, what else is there? I mean you can't go backwards to necking and petting in the back seat of a car. Besides, I made you more interesting than you really were; you had life only in my mind--in my words. Maybe in death you realized your potential and became...

Will that be to go?

Last meals of condemned prisoners

The following are some of the terminal meals ordered by condemned prisoners before they walked the last mile. Dawn M. Weyrich compiled this list.

Aubrey Adams Jr.: One pound popcorn shrimp, one pound medium-size shrimp, one pound jumbo shrimp, one loaf garlic bread, French fries, pecan pie, pecan ice cream, iced tea. (Executed May 1989 in Florida by electrocution.)

James D. Autrey: Hamburger, French fries, Dr. Pepper. (Executed May 1989 in Florida by electrocution.)

Thomas Andy Barefoot: Soup, crackers, chili with beans, steamed rice, seasoned pinto beans, corn, seasoned mustard greens, hot spiced beets, iced tea. (Executed October 1984 in Texas by lethal injection.)

Margie Velma Barfield: Cheez Doodles, Coca-Cola. (Executed

November 1984 in North Carolina by lethal injection.)

Arthur Lee Jones Jr.: Pink salmon, cole slaw, candied yams, chilled peaches, grape drink. (Executed October 1984 in Louisiana by electrocution.)

Timothy Wesley McCorquodale: Shrimp, crab legs, tossed salad with Thousand Island dressing, apple pie a la mode. (Executed September 1987 in Georgia by electrocution.)

William Mitchell: Half-gallon of black cherry ice cream. (Executed September 1987 in Georgia by electrocution.)

Stephan Peter Morin: Steak, refried beans, tortillas, salad, ice cream, chocolate cake. (Executed July 1985 in Texas by lethal injection.)

Chester Lee Wicker: Lettuce, tomatoes, two cartons of milk. (Executed August 1986 in Texas by lethal injection.)



to Mike R. from matt

WHERE'S WALDO?
FORGET WALDO.
WHERE'S TEG?
FIND ME IF YOU CAN...

