

Oi Boy!

No. 7

Sex

AND

Plugs

AND

Rock

AND

Role

50¢ or
ONE KISS





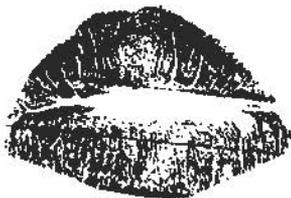
DISCLAIMERS

1. **TO THOSE OF YOU WHO FOUND THIS ZINE IN MAXIMUMROCKNROLL:** I think it's only fair to warn you that *Oi Boy!* may not be your idea of a "punk" zine. I do consider myself a punk, it's true, but I don't generally cover bands or shows or records here. If that's more what you're looking for, write me and I'll send you something punker. (No hard feelings, I promise). In the meantime, why not give this a whirl? C'mon, nobody's looking...
2. **TO THOSE OF YOU WHO FOUND THIS ZINE IN QUEER ZINE EXPLOSION:** I'm not sure what anyone has a right to expect from a "queer" zine either, other than an editor of some such persuasion. Although I do sometimes discuss queer experiences and identity, those are not the focus of *Oi Boy!* Also, naked pictures don't photocopy very well, so I generally don't use 'em.
3. **TO THOSE OF YOU WHO FOUND THIS ZINE IN FACTSHEET FIVE, OR YOUR LOCAL COMIC STORE, OR JUST HAD IT HANDED TO YOU ON THE BUS:** Congratulations. You are the new blood feeding the zine revolution. Never seen a zine before? Welcome to the underground! Don't ask yourself "what is this" or "what is it supposed to be," just figure out if you like it. If you do, write to me and I'll send more. If you don't, well, let's just see you do better. Are you catching on?

**This zine is not
ENTIRELY
about me**

not that you could tell from the
stuff in it. when i started this
i wanted it to be a forum for
discussion for boys and boy
issues, yet due to my
own self-absorpti-on
and laziness it's
it's- en ded
up more like my own
sick little manifesto. it's
hard to get people to
write for you, but try i
must or risk irrelevance so
hey, boys, send me your stuff...
hey, ...

**me is not
ENTIRELY
about This zine**



malebox

Dear Judge,

Re: that particular article you caught me reading earlier today, let me assure you that there is a female equivalent to the puzzlement that writer faced.

Back in my terribly innocent adolescence when I had nothing but book learning available to help me make sense of certain mysteries of life, I was utterly puzzled by the frequent references to the unexplained concept of the "erection."

Clearly it was some kind of change-of-state, like water changing to ice, but HOW did this take place in mortal flesh... and more to the point, WHY on earth would such a peculiar process be necessary???

Please feel free to reprint this— anonymously, of course—but do be discreet in printing this out on the local printer!

Sugar, Honey Honey

Dear Sugar,

Fair enough. I'll pass the note on to Blue Persuasion. Say, Aaron, are you reading this?

Dearest Smudge,

Oh, you goofy little affectionoso you! What the fuck, "Bassism Is!?"

Let me say I know that individuals' wimpy disregard for the vital whole-system's added dimension *the bass* gives to music and LIFE ITSELF is blathersome bollocks knockers but dig my refutations:

1) Bass stimulates the pituitary. Bass is more sex than guitar.

1a) All cool songs have one thing in common: the bass is alive and distinct.

2) No one ever smashed a bass!?! Check it: 1986, Beefeater's last show. Most beloved Dug Birdzell totally whalloped his bass into a splintering thrashedness in a blind frustrated rage, **JUST BEFORE ALL US D.C. PUNKERS WENT TO RIOT AT a McDonald's in a rich mall.**

3) Guitarists are a dime a dozen, but a good bassist is not only pure joy, but an easier in to a band.

Basses elude the fools who not only *don't* but *do* like Primus (not to mention Pac-Man), lending haven to the enlightened elite like ME.

True bassists let it flow for real and don't *want* others' guileful false hero worship.

BASS—FREEDOM!

BASS—SEX!

BASS—WAR!

Love,
Gozarissimo

P.S. Tell your readers, anyone who mentions *Oi Boy!* in a genuinely loving or hateful way gets a free copy of *Gozar My Love* (a \$305.00 value!!) from P.O. Box 15071, Berkeley, CA 94701-6071.

Dear Gozarissimo,

Uh, thanks, dude. Well, umm, yeah, whatever... thanks.

Hey Judge,

Hello! I'm not sure if I sent you a response yet? Well, if I did, ignore this letter, OK?

Thanx for the zine! I fully enjoyed it. Also, you did a good job in the production—it's legible and neat, etc. God, I sound like a teacher!

50¢ or a kiss, huh? Well, here's 3 kisses! (Use your imagination —Ed.) That's how impressed I was. Actually, since I'm female, the affection stuff can be used to my advantage!

The Joey story was quite interesting. Oh, and even though I'm female, I fully understand your attitude on masturbation. It's a fact of life that guys get curious and jack off, but it's a well-kept secret about girls poking off (!), masturbating, etc. Fuck, basically, girls lie a lot, that's all!

I think everyone gets sexually frustrated as a pre-teen. Shit, I could never degrade myself and masturbate to *Playgirl*! Ick... that's just so... blah!

Oh, please send 3 copies of your next zine out to me! If you need cash, drop me a line & I'll send ya \$1.50 or whatever. Also, I got some sick shit to contribute if you like. Let me know what you're into.

You sent a really vague letter! Get descriptive! I demand a 200-word self essay! Seriously now, get in touch.

From the bowels of Clevo,
Suree-Ann Hughes

P.S. You are silly.

Dear Suree,

Aw, shucks. It's not every day that I get three kisses in one envelope! How can you expect me to "ignore" correspondence like that?

Although I didn't write the masturbation article, I'm sure Aaron didn't mean to suggest that the ladies don't play with themselves. In fact, he footnotes the article with a handwritten note: "GIRLS: I'll explain how next issue. In the meantime RUB IT!" Still, thanks for the feedback.

As for any "sick shit" you may have to contribute, I'm sure my readers and I would love to hear all about it. (Back off, though, boys—Suree thinks GG Allin is God, and anyway, she's got a boyfriend. 'Course, he's way over here in California, and GG's in jail...).

Just for the record: am I misreading your handwriting, or did you really say "poking off?"

Silly.

Yeah, well...

I'm sick of writing letters requesting fanzines, but if I want to keep getting them I suppose that I have to write the damn letters.

I'm really sorry to begin this letter by complaining, but it gets difficult to think of new things to write after so many letters. You can tell me that I could just make a general form letter; I probably should, but...

OK, my name is DANIELLE and I live in OHIO! I hate OHIO, but I'm stuck in this pit until I finish school. There is NEVER anything fun to do here. I have to drive an hour to get a copy of MRR. That's depressing.

Anyway... I would be really happy & excited if you sent me a copy of *Oi Boy*! The review made it sound interesting enough for me to want to read it.

Please don't delay in sending me a copy! I really want to hear from you SOON!!!

Fare Thee Well,
Danielle Woodings

Dear Danielle,

God, what's up with Ohio this month? Seems like every other person in the state is writing me letters! Not that I mind, of course, but do you suppose it's something in their water? Really, someone with a free airline pass should investigate this.

Danielle, your letter is just fine. I hope you like my zine. Really, I do. The next time I'm in Amherst, remind me to buy you an ice cream cone.



We, as men, want to take back our full humanity. We no longer want to strain and compete to live up to an impossible oppressive masculine image—strong, silent, cool, handsome, unemotional, successful, master of women, leader of men, wealthy, brilliant, athletic, and “heavy.” We no longer want to feel the need to perform sexually, socially, or in any way to live up to an imposed male role, from a traditional American society or a “counterculture.”

We want to love ourselves. We want to feel good about and experience our sensuality, emotions, intellect, and daily lives in an integrated way. We want to express our feelings completely and not bottle them up or repress them in order to be “controlled” or “respected.” We believe it requires strength to let go and be “weak.” We want to enjoy masturbating without feeling guilty or that masturbation is a poor substitute for interpersonal sex. We want to make love with those who share our love, male or female, and feel it should not be a revolutionary demand to be either gay, heterosexual, or bisexual. We want to relate to our own personal changes, motivated not by a guilt reaction to women, but by our growth as men.

We want to relate to both women and men in more human ways—with warmth, sensitivity, emotion, and honesty. We want to share our feelings with one another to break down the walls and grow closer. We want to be equal with women and end destructive competitive relationships between men. We don’t want to engage in ego battles with anyone.

We are oppressed by conditioning which makes us only half-human. This conditioning serves to create a mutual dependence of male (abstract, aggressive, strong, unemotional) and female (nurturing, passive, weak, emotional) roles. We are oppressed by this dependence on women for support, nurturing, love, and warm feelings. We want to love, nurture, and support ourselves and other men, as well as women. We want to affirm our strengths as men and at the same time encourage the creation of new space for men in areas such as childcare, cooking, sewing, and other "feminine" aspects of life.

We believe that this half-humanization will only change when our competitive, male-dominated, individualistic society becomes cooperative, based on sharing of resources and skills. We are oppressed by working in alienating jobs, as "breadwinners." We want to use our creative energy to serve our common needs and not to make profits for our employers.

We believe that Human Liberation does not stem from individual or social needs alone, but that these needs are part of the same process. We feel that all liberation movements are equally important; there is no hierarchy of oppression. Every group must speak its own language, assume its own form, take its own action; and when each of these groups learns to express itself in harmony with the rest, this will create the basis for an all embracing social change.

As we put our ideas into practice, we will work to form a more concrete analysis of our oppression as men, and clarify what needs to be done in a socially and personally political way to free ourselves. We want men to share their lives and experiences with each other in order to understand who we are, how we got this way, and what we must do to be free.

Berkeley Men's Center, quoted in Franklin, Clyde W. *Men in Society*
Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1988.

There, you read it. I feel better. If it makes you want to laugh, then laugh. If it makes you want to cry, then cry. If it makes you want to puke, then by all means puke. This isn't my bible. I don't have one. But please read it.

excerpts from

ALC I O

by Phobek Hei

"I'm never coming down here again!" blurted Sasha. When we got off the bus, we confusedly meandered throughout the district, eventually finding our bearings and heading for California Street. We all felt safer among the familiarity of the corporate logos: Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Rand McNally, Federal Express, Pitney Bowes. I looked up at the skyscrapers with bewilderment, as some of them would waver as if they were standing under water. Still, there was some fear to be had; one bedraggled guy walked by us, babbling incoherently, banging his fist against the wall. At one intersection, I decided not to tell the others about the poodle-sized rat I'd seen running around the corner.

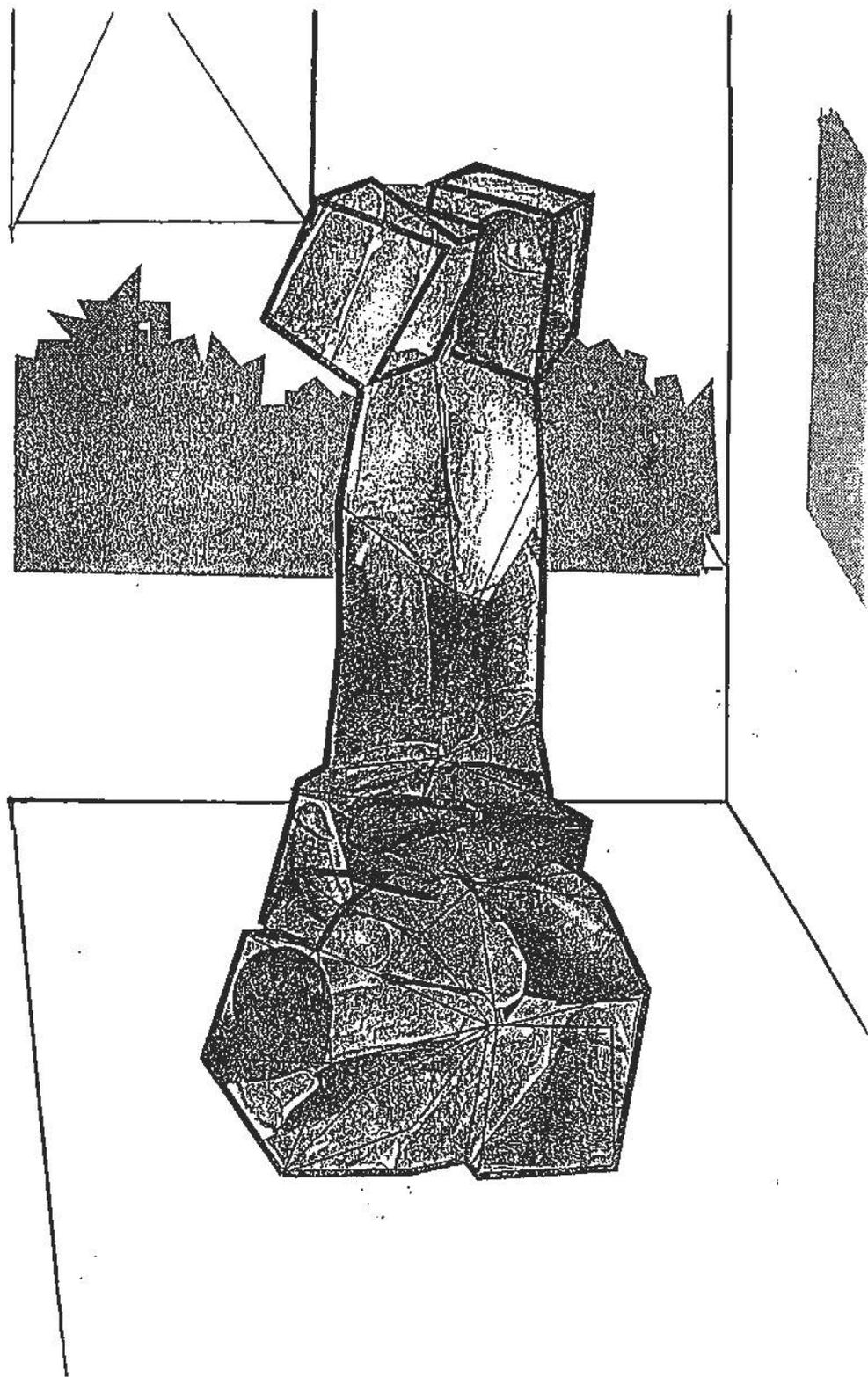
But our moods were now considerably lighter. Raphi and I confessed to Sasha that our lives had been in complete danger before, that yes, we were in the projects and that things were as bad as they had probably seemed. Sasha was amazed, as he'd thought his terrified perspective of our situation had been mainly drug-induced.

At this, Sasha seemed
conveniently uninterested. Walking

up California, we came to a complex that featured buildings surrounding a courtyard, which he said housed a statue a friend of his brother's had made. We walked up to the yard to see if it was there. It was.

On seeing it I laughed with astonishment. It was a rocky-looking abstract phallic symbol. As we walked toward it, I noticed the ground looked like a shower's stall floor, with tiny shiny tiles and occasional drains. I approached the phallus and called it such, and the others found great amusement in my perspective, especially with my being bisexual and all. Perhaps they figured I would worship it. It was actually made of soft metal, and it had been systematically scratched in random patterns ("My brother had to do that," said Sasha). On one side of it light was being filtered through some plants' leaves, forming quickly morphing faces on its surface. I was fascinated by that, but not nearly so much as I was by the whole statue. The title was "Guardian," and I thought, "the gall!" I rapped on it, found it hollow and thought, "figures."

Slowly I began making



realizations. As Sasha went rambling on about the Greeks, art conspiracies, architecture and such—he was now quite in his element—I was undergoing some semi-conscious changes. I walked off to the other side of a nearby bench, away from the others, when I realized I was crying. I was unsure as to why at the time, but I knew I hated that statue and wanted to destroy it. Some male artist had built this huge penis in the middle of a courtyard and called it “Guardian.” I wanted to break it in half, to topple it, to do something to it. That it was hollow was ironic, for to me that accurately symbolized the male’s insubstantial power.

About this time, too, I started thinking about my own womanhood. Tonight I had dressed very femme, and I felt somewhat stupid about it, because my face was so male. My body from the neck down had been so classically feminine that night, yet it seemed somewhat cheap, unreal; sadly imitative. At that point, I was startled to find Sasha telling me the exact same thing, though without the judgement: that I had been a woman from the neck down all night. Our perspectives had been so telepathically accurate of each other’s.

* * *

I guess I then momentarily decided to attempt a self-distraction. I stood on the bench and was held in wonder at the sensation. The shower tile floor now seemed to be under water, as barely visible waves glided over it. My bench was floating with the tide. The fact that the bench really was a bit wobbly helped the illusion along. I attempted to get Raphi, who seemed bored, into the

miracle. But he was ready to leave the place, to continue up the hill toward home. Poor Raphi had been without a complex. Sasha had given serious thought to the comparison of himself to a 57-year-old man, and then to his whole art conspiracy which I’d mostly missed. I had suddenly come to grips with the idea of being a woman. But Raphi seemed pretty straight, pretty sober.

So he tried leading us out of the courtyard, unsuccessfully. I had been busy thinking of myself as a woman, and Sasha was scared to leave. He had picked up a small computer disk-sized metal plate as a souvenir and as a minor rebellion against the powers that be; now he found that he couldn’t put it down.

I had walked half the distance to leave when Sasha demanded that I deal with my “issue.” He was right. I stopped, looked at that stupid statue, thought of why I’d cried. I’d had a revelatory flash at that moment, though what was being revealed seemed slow in coming. And then I knew: my tears spoke of sorrow I felt for women; my fellow women.

“Look at your hair!” cried Sasha. “Your hair’s turned red!”

“I am a woman,” I said finally, and felt it. I realized the power of myself, which had migrated from the cathartic point of my penis up higher to my breasts. I felt myself to be a woman—a dyke, actually—perhaps forty years old, full of life, adventure, experience, maturity, sexual and otherly wisdom. I felt so full, so happy. Sasha, astonished, walked back to the bench and began choking. He would have puked had I not walked over and suddenly distracted him with my chatter, though later Sasha denied that this was the case.

But I think he may well not have remembered this, for the entire dynamic of tripping relies on how distracted you are from realization, from reality. This is why he always needed someone talking with him.

Raphi was again urging us to leave, but Sasha informed me that I had to say "goodbye" to the phallus. I agreed, though I was ignorant of how to do just that. I approached it, shook my head in vague rejection, and turned to leave. Sasha would not accept this, though, and made me return to it. I did, and less vaguely. I shook my head at its hollow power, its pathetic posture. I left, and realized that the best way to say goodbye to it was to walk away from it, ignore it, belittle its limp ability; with each step I smiled a bit more, until my face was aglow.

"How did you do that?!" asked Sasha, who walked after us, but then stopped short of emerging onto the sidewalk. He was sincerely frightened of the building's security guard catching him in the act of stealing the little metal plate he was grasping so tightly. I had to coax him out of his courtyard like a scolding mother, and I felt like one. As we walked up the hill, I felt as a woman, wholeheartedly; I beamed as I inwardly contemplated the issue. In that moment in which I had shed tears, I had actually received a brief flash of feminist perspective. Those tears were for my sisters—if I may use so corny a term—for I realized that this pervasive demeanor surrounded them every moment of their lives. Men inserting their penises everywhere, staking out their territory in every empty void; making the woman feel a foreigner in her own land. A second-class citizen, and other clichés; but I saw beyond those



Passionate Intellect
Interesting, down-to-earth WM, 34, handsome, 6'1", 170, professional with balance, Midwest roots, eclectic interests, music, theater, film, art, travel, reading, sports, skiing, seeks intelligent warm, attractive woman for serious commitment. Guardian Box #1553F. #23

Crossdresser
You saw me in Macy's lingerie department and wondered if I was shopping for myself or my girlfriend. You wanted to ask but were afraid to approach. Until now we've only dreamt of meeting. We're both attractive, slim, under 35 and normal! #1957F

Handsome, devilish Black male, 40, seeks intelligent, attractive woman with a whole lot of soul. POB 860953, S.F. 94189. #1477F

Tall, physically fit, handsome, professional Latino, early 30's, seeks a lady friend for non-time jobs through the financial district, dinners in the City and an end to boring weekends. #1422F

Superdude Seeks A Superman
Widower parent of a much loved active 13-year-old boy looking for female counterpart. I'm 44, 5'9", 150lbs., blond and easy to look at. Financially stable. Nonsmoker. My strengths are my sensitivity, generosity and patience. Our children are our greatest asset and you feel the same. Let's talk, write, trade photos. Guardian Box #2325F. #53F

Love is all there is. Love and only love — single WM, 30's, wants woman to play guitar and sing to — raised on Beatles, Dylan, Stones — what's your favorite song? #1837F

Phototropic
Attractive blue-eyed WM, 42. Nifty body, magic hands, happy fit. Looking to trip Light Fantastic with colorful, captivating WF, 32-42, with lovely legs, light heart, and livingroom eyes. #2047F

Slim, sensual, and sane writer/artist producer, 39, seeks strong, sex-positive self-aware woman, for transgressive cultural and passionate pursuits. #1480F

Single JM, 34, 5'7", 140lbs., professional, musical, creative, likes jazz, classical music, bicycling, hiking, museums, Italian food. Tired of eating dinner alone. Looking to meet sweet, semi-athletic, nonsmoking woman with similar interests. If you bring over the garlic, I'll make the pasta. #1520F

and politician, loving and open sensual pleasure seeks intelligent twentysomething female for mutual soothing, stimulation, conversation, and adventure. #1783F

Attractive, professional, mildly-eccentric single WM, 37, seeks warm, sincere, unpretentious, emotionally available single WF, 23-35. Physical appearance important, but inner qualities far more desirable. Communication skills, affection a must! #2284F

Forget the other ads. This one is all you need: smart, sensitive, passionate, romantic, humble?, humorous male, 33 years old, seeking intelligent, dynamic, attractive female, interested in love and fun. #1542F

Good-looking Asian male, 29, 5'7", self-employed, wants to meet an attractive female for friendship and more. Race and age not important. #2114F

International Girl
You're a cute young globetrotter who would love to extend your stay in San Francisco. I'm a successful artist and would love to meet you. Call me! #1768F

Good listener seeks good talker? Non-traditional, non-smoker, not clammed in emotionally, spectator sports, not r seeks vivacious, uncork woman, not abhorring night life. State: 29, cholesterol 83. #2296F

Native San Franciscan go 31, 5'9", medium built, eyes, compassionate, romantic. Enjoys dancing. Seeks relationship/ marriage. St. Box 774, SF 9412

Tall, dark, and handsome, creative, slightly 'lost' single WM of 27 seeks intelligent woman of Scot Lebanese descent. Must thick black hair, beautiful Tabby cat eyes. Most of a Boyfriend! #1881F

Small, passionate brunette soul, by handsome, bearded, French born successful professional, nonsmoker, 42, 6'10", powerfully built. We are artistic, creative, romantic. We've sought each other — let's meet at last! #1847F

Beautiful, warm, intelligent woman (21-35) who likes Mexican food, abstract art, and lofty conversation wanted for club, movie, drink dates. No drugs, but maybe hugs. #1823F

Happy endings begin with Bay Guardian Relationship ads.

Single fun WF sexy usual person
Concise or clear
T
S
N
A

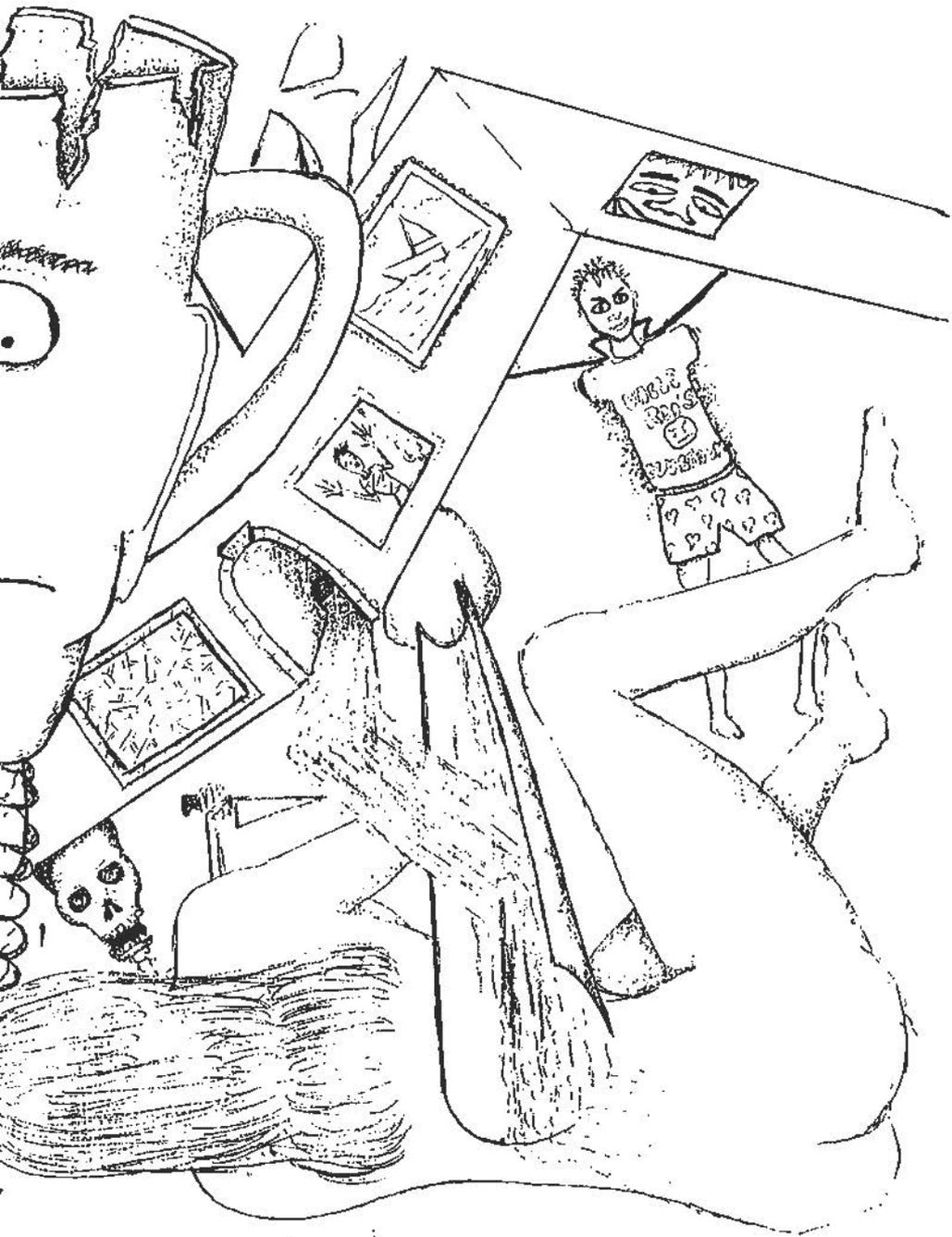
Male
Both
You
earthy blues, Mendocino #1581F

Intelligent female who enjoys a personal challenge, interesting ideas, year-old professional, while hiking, hiking, etc. #1749F

Healthy vegan lover — nourishment food

P
left
into
book,
140lb
growth
warm
soup





by Rick Popko & Judge

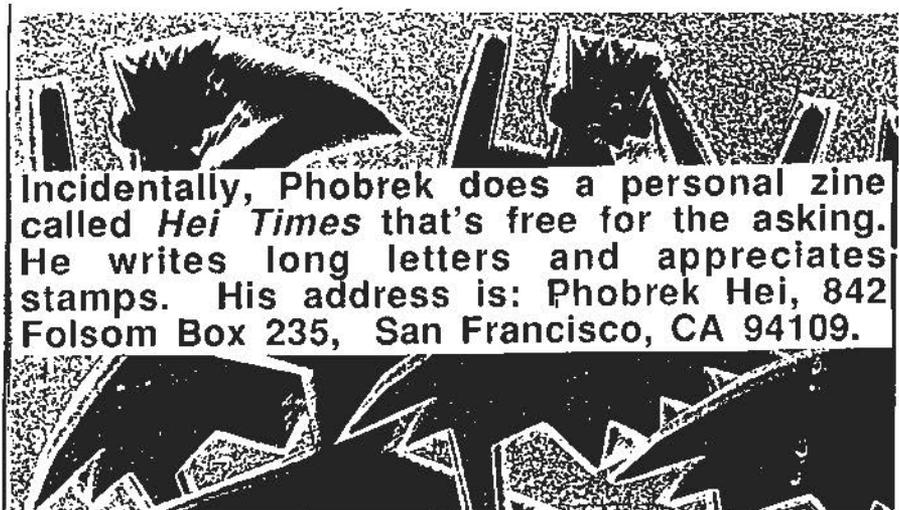
words, I—for a moment—felt that oppression, understood that perspective. And for that I was forced to cry. But inwardly I smirked; like that statue, the power was a hollow one, used to satisfy the insecurities of male fear. The male had to erect something in the intimidating void of open space.

* * *

Anyway, Raphi, kid that he is, ran on into the park, with us oldsters lagging behind. He called us up to see something. It was a statue in a circular pool, of three little kids holding hands and running in a circle. I think they were all girls, but one in particular had hair falling all about her, and was pulling the trio's circle out of shape. It was decided that this was me, though the others were harder to figure out, not so easily pigeonholed. We remarked on the number three as we walked in circles about the statue: the dynamics of three people as opposed

to two; how different the night would have been with one less person, or one more. Back at the courtyard we'd also been aware of fate: how so many miracles had allowed us to get through the night; how our adventure had landed us at the specific and meaningful point of the phallus.

We headed for home, though we decided as we approached that it would be better to go to Raphi's house a few blocks away. The atmosphere of ours was unpleasant at best, as Sasha and I had little control over our environment. The place reeked of Hobart. But I wanted to go in briefly to piss. At this, Raphi asked why I didn't just piss out in the street. Sasha explained that I was a lady; I explained that I was piss shy. But this made me think; I had trouble pissing in a men's room, with all those other guys there. But sometimes I had trouble pissing all by myself. And then I thought: ah, but I'm a guy too. I briefly experienced wild thoughts of castration.



Incidentally, Phobrek does a personal zine called *Hei Times* that's free for the asking. He writes long letters and appreciates stamps. His address is: Phobrek Hei, 842 Folsom Box 235, San Francisco, CA 94109.

there is a disease among us
you and I have it

it will tell you to fear your father
and your brother
and some day your son

it will demand that you AVENGE the bad names
that the other guy calls you

it will tell you that you are nothing
without the hand of the woman
who shrinks from your touch
and just won't fucking LISTEN

it will tell you to follow the flag
to stick your hand into the flame
and leave it there

it will ask for your life one day
and you will freely give it

and then it will cart you away

call it what you will but
LOOK IT IN THE EYE

BE AUREGARDEN
(this is not a poem) by BE



GRR! BOY RIOT ★

"This guy" was caught jacking off by his man last month, "this guy" couldn't get hard the first time a female stopped to service him, and in my favorite anecdote, "this guy had his finger so far up a girl's butt that when he pulled it out it sounded like this" (audio accompaniment: "pop" sound made with his mouth and a finger that was once deep in some unlucky rectum).

This kind of denial is cheaplaughable, but so common it's depressing. You have to feel sorry for "this guy". He spends all his ("quality") time around other males; only around the beefcake set does he truly come alive and feel at ease. They get drunk together, they watch pornography together, they go to sporting events together (the most comfortable manifestation of all-male pornography). They bond alot. And they talk about women, women they want to fuck, how they want to fuck them, and how to get away from these women afterwards so they can spend more time being male.

As sepulchers of semen, women hold a place of contempt in the common male psyche just below the hand-capped. Imagine Average Joe's

intense jealousy and resentment, then, towards a homosexual. In Joe's eyes, being a queer is, well, unfair. And weak. Only a faggot would surrender to the convenience of fucking his best friend up the ass. Only a homo would acknowledge his loathing and fear of women. Only an evil cocksucker would be so logical as to not get involved with women, who are crazy and you can't live with 'em and are only good for one thing.

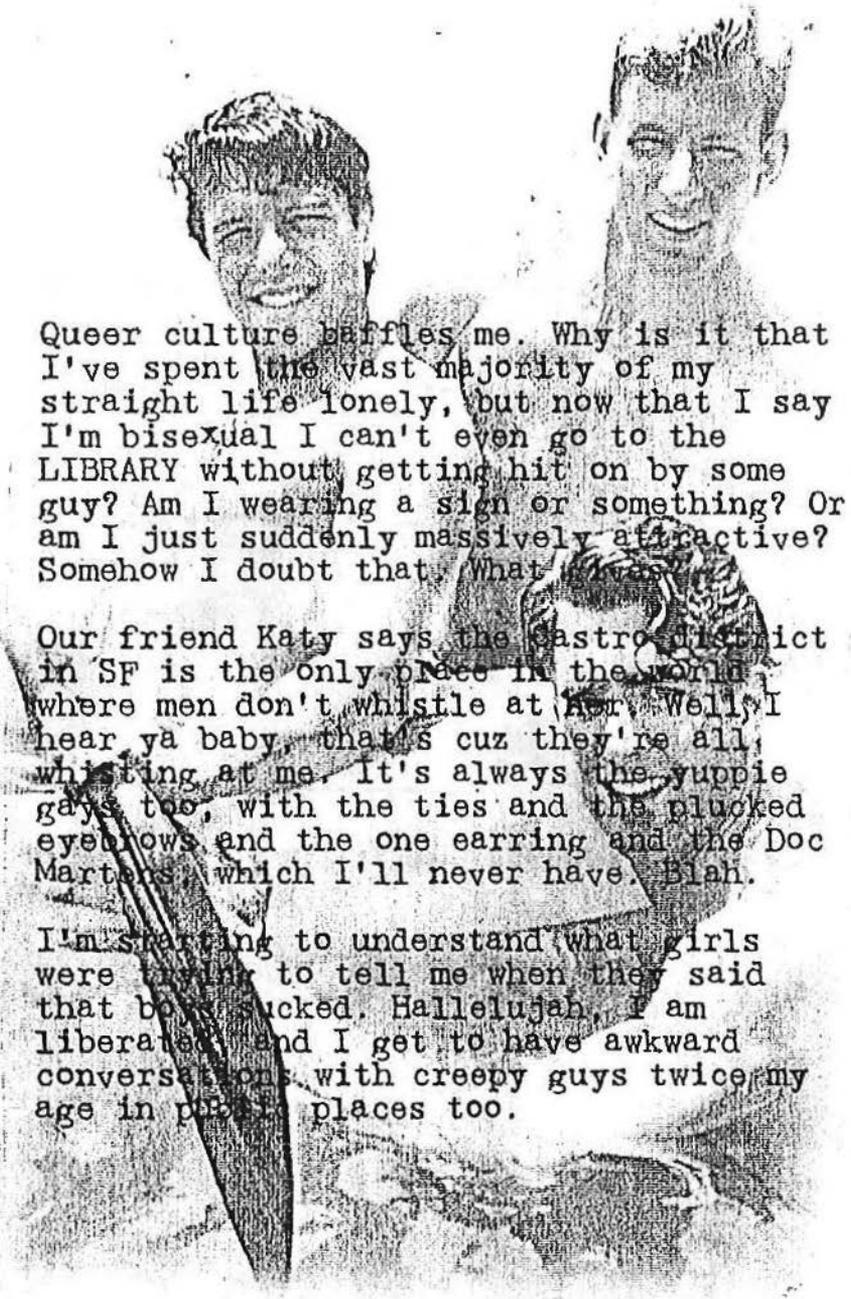
Pity frustrated, confused Joe. He probably wouldn't be able to get it up at all if it weren't for degrading some bitch who was asking for it. She was asking for punishment. She was not male.

Can you blame this twisted ball of

nerves when he goes to see a sweaty action film with all his buddies, and gets whipped into a hollering frenzy watching muscular men stroke their guns, and he just wants to fuck, fuck somebody up, and he grabs the biggest baseball bat he can find and drives it into some fucking homo's skull over and over and over?

Of course not. Boys will be boys.

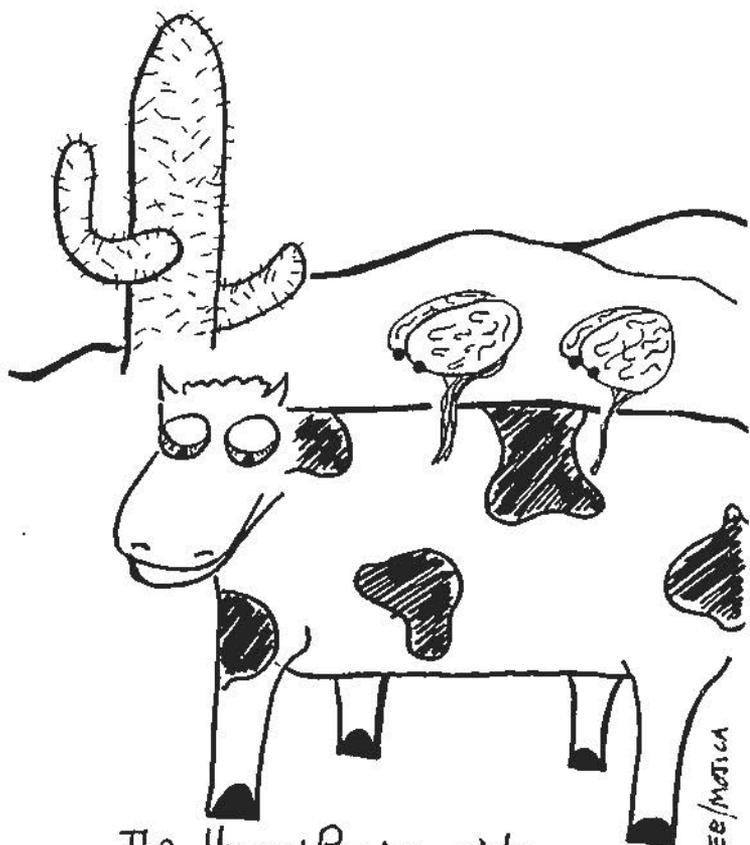




Queer culture baffles me. Why is it that I've spent the vast majority of my straight life lonely, but now that I say I'm bisexual I can't even go to the LIBRARY without getting hit on by some guy? Am I wearing a sign or something? Or am I just suddenly massively attractive? Somehow I doubt that. What was

Our friend Katy says the Castro district in SF is the only place in the world where men don't whistle at her. Well, I hear ya baby, that's cuz they're all whistling at me. It's always the yuppie gays too, with the ties and the plucked eyebrows and the one earring and the Doc Martens which I'll never have. Blah.

I'm starting to understand what girls were trying to tell me when they said that boys sucked. Hallelujah. I am liberated, and I get to have awkward conversations with creepy guys twice my age in public places too.



The Homosexual Brains ride
through the desert on a
cow with no name.

McKee/Mosca

St. Ignatius

88

Wildcats

high school jacket curse

It's 8:39. I have literally seconds to catch the morning BART. Shit, it's freezing in here. Gotta splash some water on my face, stuff my hair up into a hat and make sure I don't look like a train wreck. Shirt. Shoes. Socks. Where the hell are my socks?

Finally dressed, I rustle through my hamper for some type of outerwear. My black sweater smells of other people's cigarettes. My coat has a blood stain in it. Everything else is OK, except that it's all been laying beneath the coat and the sweater.

AAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHH! I say.

There, there, it says. Look at me! I'm clean. I'm warm. Why not take **ME** out once in a while?

My high school jacket. Still wrapped in plastic from the dry cleaners. I brought it with me when I moved out and haven't touched it since. Now it's calling to me from the back of my closet. Too flustered to argue, I yank it out of the plastic, swing it over my shoulder and head for the door.

In the doorway I pause. Deep in my subconscious, unseen forces grapple over my soul. Don't leave the house like that! screams my ego. Nonsense, counters the jacket. I'm only a piece of clothing. You aren't one of those materialistic types, are you?

Yes, I know. Lots of urban bohemian types wear high school jackets. Just not **THEIR** high school jackets. It's OK, even campy to pick one up at a thrift store, provided you have no idea where it came from, but wearing your own as an adult is most uncool. Especially if you still live in your home town, as I do, and nature has gifted you with a youthful demeanor and face. If you're not careful, you'll slip into a timewarp and suffer the High School Jacket Curse. Before you know it, you'll find yourself thinking, breathing and zit-popping like the teen mongrel you once were.

I'd figured I was immune, since I never visit my high school, and none of my current friends know where it is. The change was subtle at first. I became self-conscious about my wool hat, so I stuck it in my backpack. I started walking with my hands in my

pockets. I bought a Snickers at the corner store. At work, I kept my jacket on, suddenly self-conscious about not wearing a tie.

Later, as the day progressed, the virus grew malignant. I felt the urge to eat pepperoni, play video games, drive my parents' car and listen to Pink Floyd. I gave serious thought to buying the used Volvo advertised on the company e-mail.

Worst of all, my testosterone shot up from a comfortable early-twenties level back to that of a teenage virgin. I couldn't even talk on the phone with a woman without getting an erection, and my voice kept cracking. Which would be fine for phone sex, but disastrous for doing customer service for computer magazines.

The phone would ring. "Circulation," I'd stammered, sounding suspiciously like Peter from *The Brady Bunch*.

"Hi, this is Gladys Spitwad from Crypto-Fascist Communications..."

"OHHH, GLADYS... I'll need your federal tax ID number *RIGHT NOW* ...say, what are you wearing?"

Click.

This had to stop. On my way home, I became frightened walking home in my own neighborhood. When panhandlers approached me, I looked at the ground and paid before they asked. I made a mental note to discuss this with my school counselor in the morning.

Suddenly, I heard a familiar male voice from across the street call out, "Hey, Jason!" I ignored the greeting, my usual policy when people address



me by my birth name.

From the corner of my eye, I watched a slim figure in a blue suit approach me, whom I recognized as an acquaintance from high school. Usually I avoid such people like the plague, and my frumpy clothes and hair tend to conceal my identity, but this time I was trapped. *Because of the jacket!* This guy couldn't help but notice me, as I was wearing exactly the same thing he'd last seen me in, as if I hadn't changed my clothes in five years. I clenched my teeth and cursed the day I bought the leather-sleeved flannel monstrosity.

"Hey, Jason, what's up?"

"Ohhh... nothing... just... coming from work..." I grunted. The jacket had me rooted to the spot.

"Whatcha been up to, dude?"

Dude? "Ummph... not much... just, umm... uhh, workin.' Y'know," I paused, then added, "dude." Ugh!

"Really? I work at B of A now. Majored in accounting. How about you? Are you OK?"

"Urrrrrrggggggghhh..."

"Oh, I see. Well, here's my business card. See you around, dude!"

Moments later, the jacket released its grip. I yanked it off my body, crumpled it into a ball and stuffed it in my pack, muttering something about poltergeists.

Say, any of you urban bohemian types out there in the market for campy outerwear?

—Judge



Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

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P.O. Box 77281
San Francisco, CA 94107-7281