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children *churches* & daddies

the non-religious, non-family oriented literary and art magazine

volume

64

children churches & daddies

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stupid,
boring,
technical
crap:

cc+d is published bimonthly, so submit early and submit often. No racist, sexist or blatantly homophobic material is appreciated; we do accept work of almost any genre of poetry, prose or artwork. Do not send originals; include a SASE & bio with each submission. Any work sent on Macintosh disks, text format, will be given special attention (ASCII submissions also accepted). Submit as much as you want at a time; previously published work accepted. All material submitted is eligible for printing not only in Children, Churches and Daddies issues, but also in any other publishing ventures of Scars Publications. Send all submissions, praises, questions and comments to:

Children, Churches and Daddies

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chapbooks:

1993: hope chest in the attic (chapbook and book), the gallery (computer program), knife, people today, dysfunctional family greeting cards, slate and marrow, dreaming of dandelions and ice cubes, addicted, new world order, gasoline and reason, the written word, the printed gallery, right there by your heart, rendering us, gabriel, magnolia christmas, how you looked then.

1994: paper backbone, winter prayers, looking through their window, games, order now, a (fe)male behind bars, two year journey, they told me their dreams, the window (book), city, it was a perfect house, pictures from a still life.

1995: things i saw alone, proud to be a part of things, love letters, scratching, still had to breathe, wrinkles in the palm of my hand. Upcoming chapbooks: house of slavs, come into my garden, texas, new york, in these desperate times, before the storm, some things instinctively hurt, the house is a ship, circling overhead, six stories, this is what it means, louisiana poems, quiet madmen, she thinks/he thinks, singular memories.



edit editorial

A personal favor goes out to all of the readers of cc+d.

i'm looking for paper stock that is not tree-based. recycled paper is tree-based; what i'm looking for is hemp paper, or some other plant-based paper that not made from trees.

hemp paper, for example, is a crop renewable every 6 months - a tree can't grow that fast. and like soybean plants, the hemp plant actually gives nutrients back to the soil, making it possible to harvest plants in one place longer before destroying the soil. hemp paper at the same weight as tree-based paper is also stronger.

if anyone has any leads, please drop me a line and let me know...
and thanks!

think globally
act locally
change personally



children, churches & daddies

the non-religious, non-family oriented literary/art magazine published since 1993

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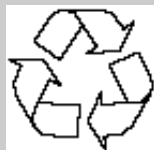
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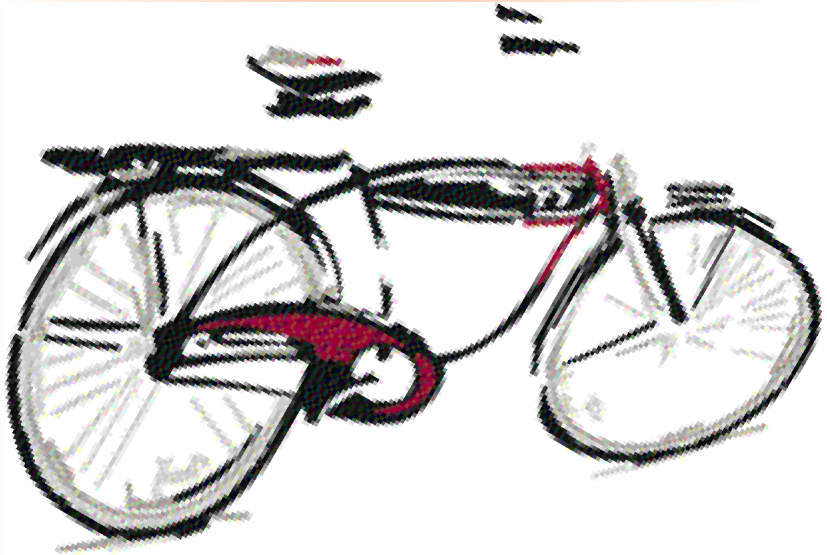
GA

by ben ohmart

We'd been driving around the runways for 40 minutes or close to it, screwing with the landing planes, or inventing some to land. It was so frustrating living in a town where the airport actually closes before your bedtime. According to the omnipotent tv, the big cities are supposed to have flights leaving at midnight and shit, but the only thing leaving Albany, GA around here at midnight is a day of the year.

Mom was up when Jenny let me in the door, and I was always glad for the year in which I live. 12 years ago, moms wouldn't let their best friend sleep over if your best friend just happens to be a girl. Now, if you ask a guy over, you're in trouble. So Jenny would sleep on the right, me on the left, and I'd still be awake hours into trying to sleep if we weren't talking up the night or anything, and I'd pretend to snuggle closer because I was asleep and didn't know any better. She told me a few years ago she knew, knew everytime. And how she was never asleep herself.

It was the next morning that was the killer. I was 15, just coming into erections in the morning, and sometimes you've got to guess if you want your best friend to see your erection, admire it, maybe do something with it if she looks good enough, or you think it's the worst sin beneath God's cloudy existence, and you wanna hurry into the bathroom, hoping mom's not up, getting ready for work, and lock the door and either piss or do something about softening yourself up.



Well, I felt pretty ashamed, and besides, Jenny wasn't going to grow up into anything special until it was too late. Until she'd forgotten all about me, had found someone's husband to marry. Her Mom, however. Well, I could've caught her in the bathroom anytime and would've been proud.

So Jenny and I would ride bikes to school, and there was a particular day when she hit a car. It was parked, and she just rode into it. Was looking straight ahead at it, but was surprised when she hit, knocking the bike's framework into lumpy shit. It couldn't be rode, the scrape of the frame kept coming up against the front wheel, like riding with a continuing break on, so she climbed on my handlebars, yeah, very unsafe for a 10 speed, and we rode it out, only 2 more streets to the high school anyway.

She was feeling uncomfortable. The way they make those 10 speed bars is like death or torture, whichever's worse, I don't know Why they do it, putting them into a curved design make doesn't make them that more wind resistant, does it? The silver breaks were cutting into her tight jeans, not ripping them, but you know how you can have a bruise through clothes? So she sat on my lap, we had 1 more street to go.

Had an instant erection, and Jenny turned as much head as she could to look at me, and gave me the knowing smile. How can you be bold when you're trying to steer and have carnal desires with what's sitting right on your lap at the same time? It was the giggling I couldn't stand. We were the type - maybe the only 2 in the school, who knows - who had friends, not dates. We made up the discrepancy of no sexual exploration with having a close knit of people we liked. I realize now friends, especially good friends, are really only people you want to bop, but ordinary things stand in the way, like protocol, preference, open-mindedness, politeness. You pick them because you have an attraction, whether you admit it or not, with likes, or looks, or admirations. You name it. But I only recently realized that I could've had all these people. My friends, who didn't know the score either. We'd been selected by the company we were. I was trying to make up for my lack of sexual deviance, by having these friends. Didn't want to be friends, then all you've got to do is walk out the circle. Tried to turn a friend into a lover, you are flirting with having the circle walk out on you.

Still, the erection was there when I chained my bike to the street sign. I always did that instead of chaining it right next to the school, under the awning, where everyone did theirs. I was afraid of people. Still am. Wanted to get out as soon as possible. When the bell rang to end the day, I didn't want to hassle with all the others unchaining theirs, just would want to get away. Jenny would chain hers to the supports holding up the awning, but then she was a girl going on woman, and girls have to learn to deal with people if they want to get what they want. What I thought, anyway.

We laughed at it. Hell, I even flapped it a couple times to show how unimportant it was. It was when Jenny decided to flap the penis that I decided it was serious. She saw my expression turn to something.. not shocked, but maybe just this side of it. I was looking sedate anyway. She turned the same. The first bell had rung so we had no witnesses, everyone long since headed to homeroom. I grabbed her arm and pulled her to the fence, the fence that ran around the school yard, since towards the end of this is a selection of trees. During the school year in Albany, GA, even if one of those couple windows at the end of the building, even if a teacher was standing there, looking straight at us, with all those shadows, she couldn't see anything. At least, couldn't tell what we were doing. And right

now, it was half-stripping.

Not for nudity but for practicality. What I did was sit on my books, books I never kept in a bookbag 'cause I could never see the point of paying for something you'd have to hold anyway, with my pants down just far enough. With my shirt tail, the only people that could tell I was showing off any part of my body would have to be someone directly behind me staring at my crack. Jenny'd whispered at the street sign she wanted to see it. I'd always wanted to show it, so I didn't think anything was my fault for thinking. If I had sin in my head, it was going to be Her fault it came out, wasn't it?

She did the same; stripped. After she touched it. I didn't expect it. The touch or the nudity, because it was the first time I'd seen 1 of what she had, and I liked the fury expression. All black, and it made her look all the more beautiful. We both watched me come. I knew what was happening because since I was 10 I'd known how to extract that bit of pleasure from my body, it was just that I hadn't expected to perform before a live audience. I couldn't take it back, even before the actual event of white spray; once it was on its way.... So I sprayed her, and she laughed, and then wanted to lick my dick, which she did for a second before being intensely disgusted. I wasn't sure about her, but offered my own finger to explore. The late bell had gone off, and I was wondering why Jenny hadn't yet. I found the right hole, I thought, and she cradled back in the half sand, half pine straw ground, hands keeping her up, waiting for it to happen. She may've enjoyed it, if she did it was news to her, but she thanked me in a minute, and I kept waiting for a return spray, always in awe of how women were able to just shoot blindly from a hole, but without becoming much enraged by passion, she

held up a hand and said that's enough.

I was disappointed, but she took 3rd lunch that day, my lunch period, even though she was supposed to have 1st. She followed me at the end of the school-days

for a while, I didn't understand it. I mean, she didn't say "hey, let's do a repeat" or anything, it was just that we were closer.

The next year I starting driving my car to school, I was old enough, didn't have to keep sneaking runway rides, but Jenny still did her new bike to school. She had a special bike seat, something like a.. a finger or something on it. I never did get a very clear look 'cause she'd take it off every morning when she got to school. Stick it back on for the ride home. She'd become a happier person in the months that followed, but I couldn't see it then. Maybe we would've made a pack for marriage or something, something silly. But we'd still spend some weekend nights together, and I'd still erect up, and she never said a word about that day. But when I went into the bathroom sometimes, beating off to make the damn thing go down for another day at school, it didn't smell the same. Smelled like.... and it was only yesterday that she admitted what she wanted at night when I had fallen asleep. And what she wanted she took.

letters from war time

Dear Jeremy—
Hello, darling.

September 20

I'm in a weird mood. Last night— after I talked to you— my friend Christine came over and we had dinner. She's the type of friend with whom I only do things like have dinner with— I don't know, she just isn't the "going-out-and-getting-really-drunk" type. So we had dinner, and talked about our love lives— you see, she's starting to go out with this man from Seattle, Washington, so we're kind of in the same boat. She's not so crazy about Bob, however, the way that I am about you. Anyway, then Christine left and I went out with my friend Tara (she used to be my next door neighbor— she's really cool, I like her a lot...) and a bunch of her friends that I didn't know. Then I saw my friends Jessica and Rachel, and I eventually left the bar at close and hung out at Jessica and Rachel's place for a while. Then they walked me home and stayed over and talked— until about FOUR IN THE MORNING. It was like they would never leave.. I was about to fall asleep while they were over. But it was neat to talk to them... I think I'm going over to Tara's place for dinner tonight. This has really been a pretty busy weekend. I thought it wouldn't be, being Labor Day weekend and all, since everybody usually goes home. Maybe I'll even get the chance to go out tonight!!!

Oh, and another thing, young man. Young, virile man. Young, sexy, strapping studly man... Sorry, I'm getting carried away again. I was just going to say that you don't have to worry about being jealous over me. I mean, it's cute when you say the things that you do over the phone, but I really hope that you not really worried that I'm cheating on you or anything. First of all, if I was going on a date with somebody else, I surely wouldn't tell you— unless you specifically asked about it, of course. So when I tell you that I'm going out with somebody who is just a friend, you don't have to worry about it. I don't want you to worry when there is nothing to worry about. Secondly, I think I like you just a bit too much to really think about looking for some other stud muffin to hang all over— maybe that will change in time, I don't know, but right now (if you don't mind me using stupid, tiring, worn-out cliches), I only have eyes for you.

And one other thing, my beefy burrito of love... I'll probably get so jealous if I even suspect that you're looking at another woman, that I'll hijack an airplane or something, come down to Arizona and teach you a thing or two about trying to cheat on me. It won't be a pretty scene...

Now that I've just succeeded in sounding really stupid, I'm going to get going. Dreamy eyes misses you. It's true. No, really. I mean it.

Dear Donna—

September 23

How are you?? Thank you very much for the very nice letter...

I want to make a little note before I go on with this letter. This letter is confidential. I don't want a word of this getting out to Jeremy, do you understand me?? As soon as you read this letter, I want you to throw this letter away... No, don't do that, because it could then be found in the garbage or something. I want you to eat the letter. No, better yet, I want you to burn this letter when you're done. Burn it, and then eat the ashes. It's that important to me. Do this favor for me.

It's weird, but I have been so busy in the past week that I really haven't had

the time to be too depressed, so during this past week I've been fine. But this weekend, as soon as I had the time to think about my life, I got mortally depressed, and for the past day and a half, if I haven't been crying, I've been wanting to cry. I've already dumped my depression on two of my friends in long talks— I probably would be bothering more of my friends if so many people weren't out of town.

Friday night I got really depressed. I was okay when I woke up Saturday morning, but then I started getting depressed. I cried. This is the way that I've been lately.

And I can't even really explain why I'm feeling this way. I've been getting along with Eric pretty well (and I do say PRETTY well for a reason... it just seems that even though we go out a lot and get along well, we're just not very close. I need closeness, I suppose...)... I guess I'm just thinking about all of the things that I think are wrong with my life, and I'm thinking about all of the things that I could like to change in my life, and I'm thinking about all of those things which I cannot change... and it just all seems so damn depressing.

I start thinking, for example, about my last relationship, and I start wondering what went wrong there. I just keep thinking that I had love once, and I let it go. I HAD to let it go... but I let it go nonetheless. I just keep remembering that I was once happy, and I keep wondering if I will ever find that kind of happiness again.

And then I start to realize that the only thing I've been doing in my spare time is getting really drunk. What the hell kind of life is that?? I remember last year when I was spending wasn't unattached... I had BETTER things to do with my spare time than getting drunk. I had nothing to escape from by drinking. Now all it seems that all I'm doing is escaping. I want to find something in my life that I won't want to escape from.

But then at the same time, I find myself sometimes pushing people away from me. I wonder if that might be because I don't want to hurt the way that I did when I lost love. Maybe I'm just starting to feel like I'll never find it anyway, so there's no point in getting myself in any sort of situation where I might feel vulnerable. I don't know.

And then I keep catching myself holding a glimmer of hope that something might work out. I catch myself thinking that Eric might actually open up to me once, or that he might show me that he cares. All of the other guys he is friends with keep calling me his girlfriend. All of his close friends keep trying to reassure me that he actually does like me. But the thing is, why do I need his friends to reassure me? I shouldn't have to be reassured by his friends that he likes me. I should be able to know. He should be able to tell me. But he doesn't. You know, come to think of it, some of Dave's friends kept telling me that HE liked me... They kept trying to reassure me... and Dave turned out to be the biggest ass-hole... I wonder if there is any sort of correlation there...

And I don't even want to think about Jeremy right now. It's not that I don't like him or anything, but... well, there are two reasons why I'm thinking this right now. The first is that he really doesn't fit into my life right now. He can't make me happy from 2,000 miles away, and there's no point in getting all depressed when there's nothing I can do about the situation. The other reason is that I don't want to get myself too close to someone that circumstance says that I can't be too close to, because then I'll only get hurt. The less I hurt, the better right now.

So here I sit, dating Jeremy from afar, while trying to salvage this miserable relationship with Eric.

Sorry that I've been babbling all of this time, but I've really needed to get this

all out, and there really is no one around here that really wants to hear all of this. I know that none of this probably makes any sense to you whatsoever, but at least I got it out— somewhat... I hope this helps out.

Anyway... Please don't tell Jeremy about ANYTHING that I've been writing. I'm probably just an insane woman babbling right now, and I'll probably change my mind in about ten minutes or so. Sorry again— and I hope that things are going a little better for you— keep in touch— thanks for everything—
ps— and how ARE things going with you, anyway?? I don't mean to sound so self-centered when I write my letters and never ask about what is going on in your life... I know that you know that I want to know all of the gory details. Keep in touch— love you—

Dear Donna—

September 24

Hi... It's 12:37 in the morning.

And here I am again, just babbling. I'm in a bad mood. I got some great news today— Eric just broke up with me. Yes, I know— I wrote you that whole letter yesterday and now we're "just friends". Aren't those words really awful? And the thing is, he says that he likes me, and this all has nothing to do with me— it's just him, and he doesn't know if he wants a relationship at this point in his life. So here I sit.

I guess I have Jeremy. But what good does that do me?

No, I haven't cried. I kind of wanted to, thinking that it might just get it out of my system. But I haven't. If anything, I've wanted to cry because I hate feeling sorry for myself, and I hate having to feel like I need someone in my life in order to feel important, and I really hate not liking myself.

I think I'm going to stay away from all men for a while. In fact, I think I'm going to stay away from all people for a while. I'm tired of this. I'm tired of the system. I'm tired of me, and maybe I should just try to get all of the work in my life in order — just devote myself for a while to doing my work, getting myself organized.

Well, I've got to go. Life goes on. Talk to you soon—

Dear Jeremy—

September 25

Hi. I just got one of my letters back that I had sent to you (all of the preceding pages, in fact). It seems that the Post Office didn't like how I put the stamp on the damn envelope or something. Don't blame me...

Anyway— I have to make this letter really short and sweet. I'm really busy— I've been really down all week. I can't help it. I have never liked myself. Not at all. I've just deduced that I don't want to hear that other people don't even like me, when I can't even like myself. It's a pretty simple theory. Pretty straight forward.

Anyway, on that pleasant note, I'm going to get going. Keep in touch, Jeremy. Dreamy eyes misses you something fierce. Just a thought... I love you—

Dear Donna—

September 25

Hi... It's 7:20 in the morning. I went to bed at about 2:30 last night and set my alarm for 5:30 in the morning.. So yes, I've been asleep for a whole three hours... Other than the fact that my eyes hurt a little, I'm really not tired. I think I have too much on my mind.

I talked to a friend of mine for a while last night— Lori— and I ended up chain smoking and eating pizza at about 11:00 last night. Not very healthy. I figure I need all of the help I can get if I'm going to try to make myself look good again. I can use

this little break-up with Eric that I now have under my belt as a sort of fuel-for-the-fire. I think people would call this a positive way to burn negative energy. I don't know what I'd call it.

I think I'd call it feeling really bad because I hate being alone and I hate hating myself that I want to get my frustrations out on something. Maybe it doesn't make too much sense, but then again, nothing I ever do makes too much sense. Such is life.

Well, I'm going to go. I look like hell. Granted, I have no one to impress... Well, enough of that. Keep in touch—

Dear Jeremy—

September 26

Hi, Honey! How are you? I'm alright— especially now that I just got a card AND a letter from you today in the mail!! I was in an okay mood, at best... So when I got back today and found that you had sent me all this neat stuff, I was really excited. Well, not that excited— I reserve those feelings for when you are in the same part of the country as I am...

I hope you like the birthday card. It was one of three (at least) that I wanted to get, but since I couldn't afford them all, I had to choose only one of them... Maybe I'll go back and get the rest of them another day. I just kept picking out the perverted cards and saying, "I want to get THIS one... and THIS one..." I really couldn't help myself.

Anyway, I just wanted to thank you for all of the attention that you have paid me. I know that sounds kind of queer, and I know that you're thinking that I don't have to thank you or anything, but I want to. There are times when I'm feeling awful, and then I'll find a card from you in my mailbox that says something like, (and let me quote from your card) "besides, I love you something fierce!", and I won't be able to help but feel better. If nothing else, those little cards and letters and phone calls keep me just a little more sane— and it seems like I need all the help I can get these days...

But it's not as if that is the only reason that I like the cards and letters and phone calls— not only do they help me feel just a little closer to you, but they also help me to believe that you really do care about me. And I need that. It's also nice, by the way, to know what's going on in your life... I just wish that I could be more of a part of it.

And I hope I can do the same for you with my letters and cards and phone calls. I hope that when you need someone to make you feel better, my letter gets dropped in your mailbox. It's the least I can do for someone I love.

Anyway, I should go. I've got so much stuff to do. Dreamy eyes misses you— especially at times like this. Keep in touch, love, and keep thinking about me—

Dear Jeremy—

September 27

Hi, honey... I miss you. I've been really down lately. I don't know why. I don't even want to spend time with other people at all anymore. It's strange, how I can make a turn around in the way I feel about everything so fast.

I just wanted to drop you a little note and tell you that I thought of you the other day.

Well, I think about you every day, but this one time stuck out in my mind. I was thinking that I wanted you to make love to me again. But I was thinking that I didn't want it to be kinky, or really horny, or very creative. I just wanted you to make love to me. I wanted to feel your love again. It didn't have to be anything special— just the fact that you were making love to me would make it special.

That's what I was thinking. Dreamy eyes misses you.

Dear Tim—

September 30, about 8:00 p.m.

I'm always doing things for other people. I'm nice. Too nice. Why am I so wonderful? No, you're not supposed to be laughing. Okay, okay, so I'm getting a little carried away, but I can't for the life of me figure out why I'm so nice to people. People just use me.

But of course... I forgot... That is the story of my life... Things just can't go well for me... that's just the way it is...

I hate people.

Oh, the guy that I'm spending time with used to like me, so now I'm worried that he wants to rekindle the flame. Oh, there's this geek on my back and I can't seem to shake him off. Oh, I like this guy, but he doesn't seem to like me, so I'll just sit here and stew in my own juices. I'm sick of this. I wish people could be open and honest with each other. I wish I could be open and honest with other people. Such is the price for living in a society such as ours.

Do you feel like you can be honest with me?? I really hope that you feel that you can. I think that people, because they are too afraid to open themselves up (for ridicule, most think), they never get the chance to really live. I think nobody lives on this planet. I think they're just going through the motions. I don't want to just go through the motions. I want to live. But I'm afraid. I feel like if I don't break out of my shell, I won't see what the rest of the world is like.

I wonder if I really want to know.

My mind strayed from the real point that I was trying to make in that last paragraph, and that point was that I hope that you feel that you can be honest with me. Openness and honesty is so important with me. You should know these things about me, but in case you've forgotten (or are just trying to forget), let me remind you. I'm not the type of person that makes fun of another, and I'm not the type of person that would cut down what another person thinks. If someone tells me what they feel, even if I don't like it (which usually isn't the case), I'm very flattered that they felt that they could say it to me, that they could share it with me, that I'm never disappointed.

I think I'm losing the point again. Honestly, at this point, I don't know what the point is. I think I'm just tired of dealing with people who won't be honest with me. Honesty is all I ask for.

I think I'm going to go. Thanks for reading my babble, and making me feel as if someone really cares about how I feel.

Dear Jeremy—

October 10

Hi, honey... how are you? I just wanted to send you a little note (it's 12:20 in the morning— it's about the only time that I ever have to write you letters...) and let you know that I still care about you. Honestly, my feelings haven't changed for you at all, and I don't want you thinking that they have. I'm still looking forward to coming to see you in November... it's just that I've been so busy lately and I've been so worried that I really haven't had the time to think about writing you letters, and all of the problems I've been having lately have made me, well... very edgy, to say the least. And I don't really want to talk about it— and there is nothing to talk about, since there are no problems— but it just had a bad effect on me because I was so worried. Please bear with me. I don't need any more complications in my life right now, that's all.

Maybe it's part of this defense mechanism that I use to make all of the hurt in my life seem a little less severe... maybe I just want to distance myself from people, because it's usually people that hurt more than anything else. You're a wonderful person, Jeremy, but it really hurts when you're 2,000 miles away, and maybe I've been acting the way I have been because I want to emotionally distance myself from you so that I hurt a little less from missing you. It's just a theory...

But I do care about you. And I don't want you to forget that. I wonder if I push you too far at times. I hope I don't. I hope you can stick with me.

p.s.— I love you. really. It might not seem like it at times, but I do love you. I miss you...

Dear Donna—

October 10

I just wanted to let you know that there is nothing to worry about concerning my health. I don't really want to get into it—I hope you're not taking offense or anything, because it has nothing to do with you— but... well, I was really scared. I just thought that there was going to be some major problem with me. Thank God that there wasn't, but I was still worried. I've never had a problem with my health before— hell, I've never had a broken bone. So I guess I've taken my health for granted, and when I thought that there was something wrong with me, I went crazy. I've really been on edge lately.

And I don't want Jeremy to think that I'm mad at him or anything. I mean, when he was on the phone with me before he was pressing things when I told him not to, and I wasn't really in the mood to battle with him on the phone. It just seems that lately we've always ended up in an argument by the time we get off the phone. I don't need that, and I don't want that.

I don't want to argue with him. I don't want us to have any problems. But I think that when there are no problems, then I just miss him a lot and feel miserable. Why feel like something that you want is just out of your grasp? I don't know... I guess that I just feel that right now I have other things to worry about instead of thinking about Jeremy and merely adding to my misery.

Anyway, I should be going. Have a good week... (couple of weeks, knowing the way YOU write)... hope that your time with your boyfriend goes well... keep in touch—

Dear Jeremy—

October 12

I know, I know... I haven't written in a while. Sue me. Honestly, though, I've been having some medical problems lately, and besides the fact that I'm in and out of the doctor's office, I've just been really preoccupied with the notion that something is wrong with me. Don't worry, honey... Nothing is wrong with me, as far as I know. It's just been the new emergency lately, and that's why I haven't written to you until today.

You know, I think I've just decided that I don't like being around people anymore. I think I've gotten really tired of it. I don't want to go out in big groups anymore. And unless I'm really in the mood, I don't think I want to even go out to crowded places (like bars). I don't feel like drinking anymore. Actually, I don't really feel like doing anything anymore. I just don't think that I like people right now. Does that make any sense?

It's just that everything is so superficial to me. I think I don't let anybody in to see me, or to actually be a real part of my life here. I talk to people, I get close to people... but I think that the only person that I can count on is me, and I think that right

now I just need something that I can count on. Most of the time, I care about what other people think of me, and I would therefore care about whether or not I was close to people. But right now I think I'm just looking for something that I can really lean on, something that will never let me down, something that will never desert me or not be there for me... and the only thing in the world that fits all of those descriptions is myself. So I think I'm going to be staying home for a while, not going out, not talking to too many people. Just listening to what I need and acting on that. It's not selfish, I don't think. It's just what I need to do right now.

Okay, Okay, I'll shut up. In fact, I'll get going— I have to check to see if my laundry is done. Dreamy eyes misses you—

Dear Tim—

October 12, 11:33 a.m.

I found a map, so now I can figure out how the hell to get to your house. That should be exiting— I'm imagining either a National Lampoon's Vacation thing here or an Ernest goes to Iowa thing. Ernest probably IS from Iowa. Whatever. It'll be good to see you and Steve again.

Dear Jeremy—

October 14

I just wanted to say 'hi' to you, because you think that i never write you letters anymore.. well, actually, I don't write you letters much, so I suppose you're right, but it just seems like there's nothing of any value going on in my life to write about.

I just had people over last night for a little get together in honor of halloween, I guess... I think I told you that I was having a 'shindig'... By the way, it was Doug's birthday yesterday, so the party last night was also kind of in Doug's honor. He just turned 20. I feel so old. It's disgusting.

Anyway— I should be going. I have to wash all the dishes from last night sitting on my desk in my apartment... It's pretty gross. It should take me a while. Miss you, honey—

p.s.— thank you for you last letter. It was sweet. I liked the poem. What would I do without you?? Dreamy eyes misses you— I can't wait to see you in November—

i love you, honey— call me, or write me a little note. love you—

Dear Tim—

October 26, 6:40 p.m.

I don't want to do anything anymore-- I'm so hyper about going to Iowa tomorrow that I can't do anything. I went out last night to the bar Gully's, and me and my friend Doug sang Happy Birthday on a mike to the entire bar for the radio station that was playing songs for the bar all night. For the embarrassment, we each got Peter Murphy's new tape. I haven't even listened to it yet. Today I went to Eddie's to meet my friend Tara-- Eddie's is a restaurant attached to a bar that will serve infants, I think. We always get ice cream drinks there. I had an Oreo shake today-- with creme de cacao in it.

Anyway, I should go—

Dear Donna—

November 14

Hi, honey!!! How are you? Oh, I'm getting by. It was really nice to have a little vacation during the year— and it was really nice to be able to see Jeremy again. It had been far too long. He just left a few days ago, and I can't wait to see him again. I know you keep asking me over and over again how I feel about Jeremy, and I know I keep pussy-footing around the subject by saying "I like him, but there's no sense

because he lives so far away, blah, blah, blah...” But now I’ll give you the whole scoop. I think the reason why I kept saying that to you is because I didn’t want to admit to anyone— especially myself— that I really liked him, because then I would only feel crappy that I never was able to see him. Well, all of that has changed. Now that I’ve seen him again, I’ve realized that there’s no way that I could ever try to lie to myself again. I’m afraid that you can probably guess what I’m about to say, honey... Yes, I’m in love. At least I think I am. I could really see a future with this man. And I could see it being a pretty damn happy future, too. Going out with Eric again was such a stupid idea—and I know you told me it was—so I broke it off with him yesterday, within three days of being home, and I don’t have the tiniest regret about it. I wear that ring Jeremy gave me all the time. I don’t know... I’m always the one that’s always so pessimistic about our relationship, but now I can’t help but think that one day everything will work out perfectly and we will be together and i can actually be happy. But today I just got a letter from Jeremy, and he was saying that he didn’t want us to get our hopes up because he might not be able to find a job near me. It was kind of depressing, especially when he’s always the optimistic one and he has to pull me out of a slump. If he begins to lose faith... what will we have?

Then the frightening part is about my friend Tim...

I went to visit him Halloween weekend, the weekend before I saw Jeremy. Just friends, friends for years. Wanted to see our friend Steve, too, who lives out in Iowa near Tim, since he is leaving with the first set of troops in January. So then we drank too much, and Tim and I fooled around. I can’t believe I did this. I could tell Tim was miserable after the fact, too— we didn’t even want to look at each other the next morning.

So now I’m wondering if I’ve lost a friend. And I had to do this just before I saw Jeremy. I hope he didn’t suspect anything.

I don’t know of this is sounding all weird or something. I can’t help it. The whole situation is pretty weird, if you think about it. Now I just think of Jeremy all the time. I can’t visit Jeremy in the end of December/ the beginning of January, the way I had originally planned (all of the flights are booked). That really depresses me, because I’m going to be sitting at home by myself for two weeks wishing I was with him. I figure that I can visit him in a weekend in January, but it’s a real shame that I have to squeeze in this short amount of time when I’ll have so much time to kill two weeks before hand.

And he doesn’t even know if— or when— he’ll be sent off for duty.

I hate war.

Everything else is all right— I’ve got most of my work out of the way. I just found out that my father is going to be in town for Thanksgiving weekend, so now my visit home will be a complete dysfunctional family gathering. It’s just yet another thing in my life that I’m not looking forward to. Like the doctor’s appointment I have in an hour and 20 minutes... I’m scared. Scared as all hell. And on that note, I’m going to go.

Dear Eric—

November 18

Hi. I’m writing this letter because I’ve been thinking a lot about you lately, and I’ve been thinking especially about the conversation we had when we broke up. I think there were some things that I wanted to say to you that I didn’t know how to say at the time. But I want them to be said.

I wanted to learn about you. I really did. I often try to act aloof and keep people at bay, I know I want to do that, and you might have had the impression that I

wasn't interested in you as a person. I'm telling you now that I wanted to know about you. A part of me still wants to know. But I suppose it's too late by now. If there are some things you still want to teach me, I would love to be your student. Just don't laugh at my ignorance, and don't be amazed at how different I am from you.

When we were going out I didn't want to stress our differences. You did that enough by breaking up with me every other week, I wanted to do everything I could to underscore our differences. Although I wanted to learn, I also didn't want to lose you. Not earlier than I had to.

I wanted to think that you were willing to spend the rest of your life with me, that you thought I was worth it. But you didn't, and I guess I wanted to blame something, or to fight it somehow. I didn't know what else to do; I was in a losing battle.

A part of me thought you thought less of me. That you didn't respect me. I started to feel alienated. I hope you don't think I blame you for it, though - I didn't, and I don't, although I think I wanted to, just so I'd have something to blame other than circumstance.

But I couldn't blame you. The things I loved about you were the things that kept us apart. If you didn't have your personality traits, you probably wouldn't be as driven, as passionate, as successful as you are. You wouldn't have the strong moral background you have. And I loved and respected all those things about you.

Oh, there was something else I wanted to say in response to that evening we talked. I had asked you if you loved me, and you ended up saying that you did, and you still did, and you always will. I wanted to hear that so much, I don't know why. Maybe because I felt the same way, and I wanted to know that I wasn't alone. I wanted to say it back to you that night, but the timing seemed wrong, or something. But I love you, and I always will.

I don't know what writing this is accomplishing for me, I don't know why I'm doing it, but for some reason I thought it had to be done. I know I didn't do all the right things when we were going out, but I guess I just wanted you to know that my intentions were good, that I really did care, that I wanted it to work out. A part of me still does want that, and always will.

Oh, great. Now I'm sounding like an idiot. I didn't want that. I hate losing face. I guess I just wanted you to know how much I value you. And if I can't have anything else, I at least that won't to change. Thanks for listening.

Dear Tim—

November 22

Hi, honey.... Thank you for writing. I understand exactly where you are coming from. I am so glad— and I mean SO glad— that you were as honest as you were with me. You know I like honesty and openness, and I am so glad that you said what you have to say. Now I feel I can be honest with you.

Obviously, I knew that it wouldn't work out. I was even surprised when you kissed me goodbye when I was in the car. I just thought of you as a friend— a good friend— cute, maybe, but just a friend.

When I came to visit you, you hugged me. When we walked down the stairs, you made a point to make sure that I didn't step on the glass that was broken in the stairwell. You picked me flowers from (I think) every flower bed that we passed by. You acted differently than I have ever seen you act, Tim. I couldn't figure out why.

I think it was just circumstances. I'm not trying to make any excuses: you're cute, smart, interesting, talented— honestly, I'd have to admit that if I were to go out with a guy, he would probably be a lot like you. I do like you, you know that, but you must realize that I like you as a friend. I feel the same way as you do, Tim. And

I'd never want to lose your friendship. Most importantly to me, you are my friend.

I never, never want to lose you as a friend. Remember that. I think we can forget about this— or even look back on it without remorse. It is just something that happened— that probably shouldn't, but did anyway— and I can live with that. I hope you can, too.

I knew that it wasn't ultimately right. That's why I stopped us before we got too far. But there is a part of me that thinks that what happened that night brought us a little closer. If nothing else, it can be a good sign, a good test to strengthen our friendship.

You're my friend. My close friend. My good friend. That's what's important to me. And more importantly, I don't want to lose that. I'm worried that I will. But I think you were worried about that, too, and we're actually worrying about nothing. I think that, if you want it to be, everything will work out fine.

I love you Tim. I love you as a person, which in my opinion is more important than any other way a person can be loved. Remember that.

I know what you mean when you say that you need a relationship. I do, too. A real one. But I also need a friendship. And that can last over the distances. So— what do you say?

Dear Donna—

December 1

Just got a letter from Tim. Said he just wanted to be friends, that what we did shouldn't have happened. What an ego boost.

I just wrote him a letter back saying "friends is good." Like I need another long distance relationship. Like I need another relationship with someone who isn't really interested in me. I've had too many of those.

p.s.: Managed to get a Christmas airline ticket to see Jeremy. Finally got something I wanted for Christmas...

p.s. again: I know what you're thinking, so... No, I didn't sleep with Tim. I wasn't that drunk...

Dear Jeremy—

December 5 2:30 p.m.

Hi, honey. I've been sitting here working for 2.5 hours, but I haven't gotten anything done. God, I love work. Really. I just love it. To pieces. Little tiny pieces, hacked up with a big knife. Love it.

I just thought I'd write you a note while I was working to tell you that i love you... and something fierce, I might add... so write back soon. I love you. I miss you.

I can't wait to talk to you again tonight. keep thinking of me— and I can't wait to see you at Christmas—

Dear Donna—

January 13

Hello, love. How are you doing? Thanks for the card— it was so nice to actually get some mail. I'm glad i got the chance to see you while i was at home for the whole four days.

Anyway... I have to tell you about how things went with Jeremy. He brought me to this apartment. He prepared a candlelight lasagna dinner, champagne— the works. It was so incredibly romantic... and then we exchanged Christmas gifts... I got him a bunch of stuff, and he got me some stuff and a RUBY HEART PENDANT AND A GOLD NECK CHAIN. I think there's about 18 rubies in this thing. He even wrote me a poem to go with it. Donna, everything is so wonderful. I want to tell you all about everything...

In person. So come and visit me—
p.s.: I'm still waiting to see if Jeremy is called for duty. They're sending the first troops there in two days, if nothing else works. I don't want to see my friends go. The government can tell me it's for the good of the whole, but they're not losing half of their friends. They're just signing their name and killing us.

Dear Jeremy—
Hello, angel. I love you.

January 17

Sorry. I just wanted to get that one out. I'm writing to tell you about a dream I had last night. I was on the phone with Donna, and you were there. She said you would call back in two minutes. It was just like when I was waiting for your call the night we went to war. You didn't call. So I waited and waited, and finally I called back. Donna answered the phone. She seemed hesitant about giving the phone to you so we could talk. She seemed like she was hiding something, and it was scaring me. I started pacing the floor, biting my nails. The middle finger on my left hand had a short fingernail, so I started biting it. She then told me that you were busy and that people were over. She gave me the impression that you were there with another woman. I started bombarding her with questions until she told me that you were there with an ex-girlfriend of yours—I think her name was Julie. I was sobbing on the phone.

I don't remember what happened next, but I remember in the dream that I never bothered talking to you on the phone. I sobbed. I remember that when I got off the phone I went to sleep.

Then I woke up, and it was about six in the morning. I was trying to remember for the life of me what was real and what was a dream. I remembered talking on the phone last night, but everything was a blur. Then I checked my left fingernail. The only way I knew that I was just dreaming was that my nail wasn't bitten.

I miss you. There better be no Julies in your life, young man. You'd be giving up a pretty wonderful thing if there were. I love you.

Dear Jeremy—

January 18

Hello, love. I just got back from work and I've got a little time to kill. We all went to C Street last night (that progressive bar that you'd probably hate), and Joe seemed to emotionally flip out while we were there. I'm sure it had something to do with me, so I think we're going to talk for a little while about it. I'll let you know how it all went.

This afternoon I'm looking at an apartment. I'm looking at a few more apartments tomorrow. I have to decide soon. If you're going to move here next year (if, by chance, the job that you end up getting enables you to do that and you decide to), I'm still going to live alone—sorry—especially when I have to sign a contract soon. Besides, it would probably be wiser if we didn't live in the same place. It's not like we wouldn't see each other enough, right???

I talked to you last night. You were so very depressed... I wish I was there to make you feel better, honey, but as I said on the phone, but when you get back it will seem as if we were never apart. I think that since I was in such a bad mood before because I've been so worried about everyone I care about and the war, I just came to the point where I had to say that I couldn't take the depression anymore and I had to get on with my life. So right now I'm just trying to be happy that I'm alive and that everyone I know is safe—at least for now. A good friend of mine—a very good friend of mine, one that you met—well, his father is a high ranking Air Force offi-

cial, and he's been briefing his son on what danger he could be in because they are related. He's been told about how he can tell when a package is a letter bomb, and he's been told that he should avoid crowded places and that he should change his route to work every day. He's scared.

And he's been told that because we have an extensive computer system in town that is directly linked to the Pentagon and has access to very privileged information, there is a good chance that if there were to be an attack (terrorist or otherwise), this town could be one of the first places hit.

So I'm hearing all this, and I should be scared, but I realized that there really is nothing I can do about it all, and if I continue worrying the way I have been, I just might fall apart. So I've decided that I'm just going to keep thinking about you. I'm just happy that I know you're out there, somewhere, and I know you'll come back safe. Just knowing you exist makes me smile.

Which is how I want you to think from now on, Jeremy Stevenson. You have two options: you could either be mortally depressed and end up only hurting yourself, or you could just keep your chin up and let our love for each other keep us strong through these tough times. These are the times that we need each other. You say that you hate not being there for me— well, you are there— you're in my heart all of the time, and I feel blessed for it. Think of things that way, Jeremy, and things won't seem so bad after all.

And just remember, I won't let you down, either. I'll never let you down. I'm always there for you, even if it's only in your thoughts. We're blessed to have what we have. Let me help you be strong when you can't be alone. Dreamy eyes misses you... And I love you.

Dear Jeremy—

January 18 1:40 p.m.

Hello, angel. I love you.

Dan is having a party tonight. I told him I'd go... but I'm not really in the mood to go out and drink. Maybe if I go, I'll only go out for a little while... I'm not even going to happy hour today.

I'm starting to get ahead on my work... I really don't even know why. I can't help but either want to watch CNN or call you on the phone at night. I haven't had my mind on work too much lately.

Dear Jeremy—

January 20 9:11 a.m.

Hello, honey... How are you? I'm getting by. I stayed home last night — I just didn't feel like going out the way I usually do... I'm going to stay home tonight, too. I've just felt like a homebody lately — I don't know why. And I'm still tired, but for some reason I decided to wake up and do my laundry now, thinking that there would be no one else there. I got the last of the washers, and I had to wait for them. I think everyone uses the same philosophy as me, and then they wait for the weekend because they have no other time for doing their laundry. That's why I'm writing this letter now — because I'm waiting for my clothes to finish washing.

I saved the newspaper from the day we went into war. I want to have the front page mounted on a black board, along with the front page of the day when I was on it. I keep thinking about how I'm going to arrange furniture and decorate the apartment I have this summer... I'm so excited about it all. I really hope you'll get back soon, and you'll be there. I can't wait to see you.

Have I told you that I miss you lately? Well, I do, honey, and I just can't wait until I see you again... I just keep thinking of how good it will be when we're togeth-

er again. I can't wait to be in your arms again... You know, I'm looking forward to when you come home and we just curl up at home and be boring and snuggle up together for the night. I think anything we do together makes me happy.

Which includes basketball. You would have been proud of me, honey— I turned on a basketball game on TV last night. I wasn't paying attention. But hey — this is a good start. Give me credit.

And I was thinking— we used to go to the theatre to go see french operas and the like, and the symphony orchestra plays there usually every other week, and so we could go to see them perform when we wanted a change of pace. Maybe, in fact, we could go to see some little performance when you came back. It would be fun.

Yes, I'm planning for when you come back from the war. Because I know everything will be perfect when you do.

Dear Jeremy—

10:00 a.m.

Hello, love... Oh— I found the perfect apartment! There's a spiral staircase, there are wood floors and oak kitchen cabinets... The furniture is nice and the apartments are totally new. It's all high security, and it even has an underground high security parking garage. It's got it's own washer and dryer, ~~2~~ baths, and the upstairs bedroom is actually the entire loft; it's about 15 feet long, and it's got a slanted roof... Oh, everything is great, and the guy said he'd even bargain it down to \$650 a month. The catch??? Well, it's basically really far away. There are also at least two bus lines that run by it. But... I've got some heavy deciding to do...

With that out of the way, I can write to you about how much I want you... You know, I really can't wait until I see you again... Until I can get you alone, take off your shirt, kiss your neck, your chest... feel your hand running over my shoulders, your tongue running along my ear... I want to be able to run my hands through your hair again, slide my nails down your back...

Should I stop there? Well, I really don't want to, but I probably should...

I love you to death, Jeremy. Can't wait to see you again. Dreamy eyes misses you...

Dear Jeremy—

January 20 5:00 p.m.

Hello, the love of my life... the light of my nights... the apple of my eye... how are you? I just thought I'd let you know that yes, once again, I'm thinking about you. I'm thinking about you in your hot tub... you in those cute denim shorts you have...

I love you, honey, and I miss you—

p.s. — I was at Dan's party Friday night, and he made a comment in a group that led me to believe that he didn't know about us (I know I've told him... he was talking about the men/women ratio, and he said "I think you're the only single woman here..." It was weird). So I told him on the phone today. I was always worried because I thought he'd be mad... I don't know, I just thought it would be a touchy subject. But it was over the phone, and it was short, so everything seems to be okay.

I mean, I wouldn't want you thinking that I was trying to HIDE you from anyone, so I'm just trying to fill you in on these things... I love, you—

Dear Jeremy—

January 20 11:45 p.m.

Just got off the phone with you. Why is this happening? I might not even get to see you for Valentine's Day. I know we've talked about this over and over again, but I don't feel any better. I know you don't want to go. I don't want you to go,

either.

So, leave. Skip the country. Go to Canada. I'll go with you. We can find jobs there.

I just don't want you to die. Not when we've just begun to live.

Dear Jeremy—

January 22 11:55 p.m.

Hello, honey. How are you? Doug came over tonight. And when he came over he brought food, and I just pigged out on chips and salsa. He bought french fries, cheese sticks and pepperoni pizza, too. And a diet Coke. Yeah, I just DARE you to understand it.

I wanted to write to you today because I just got your card — you know, the one where you say that you love all the little moments we spend together, too... I just wanted to tell you that your card made me cry. I waited until I got home from class, then I fell into my bed, pulled over the covers, and opened it up. I cried. You're so sweet, Jeremy... and it's funny, but I think we sent out similar cards on the same days, because I figure that you got the card I sent you like that just a little while ago. Maybe we're getting into the same mood swings or something... or maybe it's just that we're both growing to care about each other in the same ways.

I don't know what my problem is right now... I'm acting really strange.... I've been thinking about what I'm going to do with my life...

Who am I kidding? I know what the problem is. I don't want you to be shipped off to war. You leave the fifteenth of February, and I don't know if I can see you before then.

Will we make it?

Dear Jeremy—

January 23 5:52 p.m.

Hello, love. I want to start off this letter by telling you that I love you so much sometimes that it hurts. Really.

Let me explain. I have been feeling down lately about the fact that you're not here, that you're leaving soon. I miss you. It's my turn to be depressed about it, I guess. I even was calling Midway Airlines to see if there was a flight that could bring me out to see you Tomorrow. Well, there is, but it's \$757. No, that wasn't a typo... So I was calling around to see if I could use my Northwest Air voucher. I would have to take two different buses just to get myself home. And I'd get in Friday night (or should I say Saturday morning?) at 12:45 a.m., leaving Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. Yes, a whole day and a half. That's how much I want to see you, Jeremy. I was feverishly calling airlines and bus stations, as well as friends, just to see if I could lose a lot of sleep (and a lot of money, too) and see you for a day and a half. I just don't think I can afford it.

I've been trying to keep myself busy, but it just doesn't work. I miss you. I got your message on my machine today — I loved it — in fact, I think I'm going to tape it, just so that I can listen to it whenever I want to. I miss the sound of your voice. I just want you to hold me again. Here I am, about to cry... See what you do to me?

I mean, I've tried to sound happy to you on the phone, because I don't want you to feel all depressed about the fact that we're not together. But I can't help it any longer... Christ, it has only been 16 days since I've seen you. It feels like months.

I just want to feel you kiss me, to hold me. I don't want you to let go of me. I feel miserable. I want to fall apart, or sleep for days, or something. Since I've sworn off liquor, I can't even go out and get drunk over it.

It's just that I don't think you realize quite how much I miss you. Or quite how

much I love you. I don't think I can say it creatively. I just want to feel your cheek next to mine when you hold me. I just want to feel you squeeze all the pain out of me when I'm depressed. I just don't want to feel so alone any more, so lonely. I just don't want to feel like a piece of me is missing.

And when you go off to war I'm afraid I'll feel this hole inside of me forever, that I'll never be able to fill this void.

Dear Jeremy—

January 23 7:54 p.m.

I'm feeling a little better, got my mind off my depression. I've been drinking coffee all day. I must be at least on my fourth cup since dinner. I'm not sure. But I'm starting to shake, I think. I can't really tell. My arms feel kind of weird. So does my head. Maybe I shouldn't drink this much.

I want to see you. I want to be able to crawl into bed with you while you're laying on your back, lean my head on your shoulder, put my hand on your chest... kiss your cheek... shit. Why do I keep doing this to myself?? I'm just going to make myself feel worse. I just want to hold you. I want to watch t.v. with you, and sit on the floor with you sitting between my legs... so I can put my arms around you and unbutton your shirt, then your pants... or sit on the couch while you lay your head in my lap, so I can stroke your hair... run my fingers along your jaw... take your hand, kiss your palm, run my tongue up and down your fingers... I want to wear a negligee and come up to you while you're sitting on your bed and sit on your lap, straddling your legs, and kiss you for hours. I want to give you a face massage, so I can kiss you upside-down. I want to wrap my legs around you in a hot tub. I want to take a bath with you. I want to be able to run my hands up and down your body in the water, with a bar of soap... I want you in the shower. I want you to pick me up while we're kissing so I can wrap my legs around you. I want to grab onto the corners of the bed really tightly so you can push yourself into me over and over again, harder and harder...

I have to stop. I'm sorry. I just can't take that any longer. I should go, I have to leave in a half hour. I'll be back in time for your phone call. Take my word for it—I miss you...

Dear Jeremy—

January 24 7:11 p.m.

I have such an awful schedule... I thought I would have an easy time in planning a visit to see you later in this month, but I'm working on the weekends a lot. And everything is so well spaced out that my days feel like weeks.

Well, I'm going to keep this short, since I've sent you so many letters already... Love you...

Dear Jeremy—

February 10

I hope you get this letter before you leave. I don't know how easy it will be for us to correspond when you're stationed in a war zone.

I wanted to get you a Valentine's Day card, but I couldn't find anything that said what I wanted to say. I guess there's just too much to be said.

I wanted to card to be serious, and yet I wanted the card to be funny. I wanted to make you laugh. Because that's exactly what you do for me.

I wanted to let you know that I do notice it when you do things for me. I notice it all the time. You're so sweet, Jeremy, and I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have you to call and talk to. Hell, I'd fly across the country for you.

I think I wanted the card to be funny because we always crack jokes and act

funny around each other. But I want you to know that I value you for more than that. You mean too much to me.

I know I say it all the time, but I suppose I just want you to know it. To not have any doubts. I love you. It sounds hokey; it sounds stupid. I don't care. It's just that there are a select few things in life that I have learned to treasure. I may not say it enough, but you are one of them.

I just remember thinking when I was down that I could tell you anything. I value that. I value being able to share things with you when I feel like there is no one to turn to. That means everything to me. If I didn't have you, Jeremy, I don't know what the hell I'd do. I'd probably just fall apart at the seams or something. It would be pretty messy.

I'll put myself on the line for you. I'll hold you when you're feeling down. And maybe, every once in a while, I'll do something even when I don't owe you anything. Just because I love you.

A lot of times I feel lonely, and I get to feeling down about myself and my life. I guess those are the times when it's just good to know that you're there, somewhere.

I like being with you. You make me feel like I might actually be worth something. I need that every once in a while.

And I guess that's why I'm writing this. I want you to know this, to have this, before you leave. I don't think I ever tell you enough that you're special, and that you mean a lot to me. I realize these things every once in a while about you, and I want you to know that I care about you so incredibly much that it hurts sometimes. Maybe you don't realize it sometimes, the way I realize it. So I'll tell you. I love you.

I want you to know that I never want to lose you, and that I love you. I'll always treasure you, and value you. And I'll always be there for you. Let me know if I can ever make you feel as special as you make me feel.

I love you, Jeremy, always remember that. I'll be waiting here for you, for the minute you come home. I love you.

shannon peppers

facts that i've collected

by moby

in the past 20 years approximately 1 million species have disappeared from the world's tropical forests. • from 1960-1985 over 40% of the central american rain-forests were destroyed to create grazing land for cattle. • the united states imports over 100,000 tons of beef from central america each year. • it takes 23 gallons of water to produce a pound of tomatoes. it takes 5,214 gallons of water to produce a pound of beef. • 1 acre of land can produce 20,000 pounds of potatoes. 1 acre of land can produce 165 pounds of beef. • the u.s. cattle industry produces 158 million tons of waste each year. • livestock production is the #1 cause of water pollution in the u.s. • 22 million acres of land have become unusable due to desertification. • 85% of the topsoil loss in the u.s. is the result of livestock production. • in the u.s. 33% of ALL raw material consumption is used solely in the production of meat, egg and dairy products. • it takes 1 pound of grain to make 1 pound of bread. • it takes 20 pounds of grain to make 1 pound of beef. • 75% of the grain sent to 3rd world countries goes to livestock production. • the countries with the diets highest in animal products are also the countries with the highest rates of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, etc. • 50% of men who eat meat regularly die of heart disease. • 4% of men who eat no meat die of heart disease. • 80% of usda chicken inspectors no longer eat chicken. • if the average commuter passenger load in the u.s. were increased by just 1 person per day we would save 33 million gallons of gas each day. • americans spend over 1 billion hours stuck in traffic each year. • 30% of u.s. greenhouse gas emissions come from cars. • air is sold in mexico city for \$1.15 a minute by sidewalk vendors. • what greenpeace spends in a year general motors spends in 4 hours. • 3.5 million children under the age of 6 suffer from lead poisoning. • in europe 50% of all the cars still use leaded gas. • 2 million gallons of motor oil are dumped in american waterways each year. • over 8 million tons of oil are spilled into the world's oceans each year. • 5 billion gallons of water are flushed each day in the united states. • sewage treatment facilities in the u.s. discharge 5.9 trillion gallons of sewage wastewater into costal waters every year. • u.s. tuna fishermen are permitted to kill over 20,000 dolphins every year. • 2 million sharks die in driftnets in the north pacific every year. • only 1 in 10 baby chimpanzees survive the trip from the jungle to the zoo. • 1 billion animals are killed each year in experiments. • 17 million animals are trapped in the u.s. each year for fur. • many traps are so painful that animals chew through their own limbs to escape. • for every fur animal trapped two other animals (dogs, cats, deer, etc.) are trapped and killed. • in 1987 450,000 minks died on fur farms from heat exhaustion. • 1 ton of recycled paper saves 17 trees, 7,000 gallons of water, & enough energy to heat the average home for 6 months. • enough wood and paper is thrown away each year in america to heat 1 billion houses for 1 year. • 6 times more jobs are created by recycling as opposed to landfill operations. • the amount of money spent on trash disposal in american schools is equal to that spent

on textbooks. • out of every \$10 that americans spend on food, \$1 pays for packaging. • 65% of garbage in the u.s. is packaging. • 50% of all trash thrown away could be recycled into new products. • 500 new dumps are built each year in the united states. • over 1 billion trees are used to make disposable diapers each year. • americans throw away 20 billion disposable diapers each year. • americans dump the equivalent of 21 million shopping bags full of food into landfills each year. • 2.5 million batteries are thrown away each year by americans. • over 700,000 tons of hazardous waste is produced in the u.s. each day. • americans throw away 10 million cigarette lighters every week. • 500,000 people die of cigarette related diseases in the u.s. each year. • pesticides that are banned in the u.s. (such as ddt) are regularly sold to third world countries. • 90% of all nursing mothers who were meat eaters had ddt in their breast milk. • in 1945, before widespread pesticide use, u.s. corn growers lost 3% of their crops to insects. last year they lost over 12%. • 74 different kinds of pesticides have been found in drinking water. • over 100 chemical contaminants have been found in the breast milk of nursing mothers in the u.s. • of the 34 most widely used chemicals on lawns, 25% are widely believed to cause birth defects, genetic mutation, and cancer. • americans spend 6 billion dollars on their lawns each year. • 25% of u.s. nuclear reactors would not be able to contain a core breach meltdown. • a 1985 study predicted a 45% chance of core breach meltdown in the u.s. before 2005. • in 1992, 430,000 people in the world died from cancers resulting from nuclear testing radiation. • more money is spent in the u.s. on nuclear weaponry in one year than was spent on housing from 1980-1992. • to date, cleaning up storage facilities for nuclear debris has cost taxpayers 200 billion dollars. • in 1989 the u.s. military used 200 billion barrels of oil, enough to keep all american public transit systems running for 22 years. • 1 ton of toxic waste is produced by the u.s. military every minute.

from inside sleeve of moby's latest cd release,
reprinted with moby's permission
sources available upon request

Dusty Dog Reviews, CA (on knife)

These poems document a very complicated internal response to the feminine side of social existence. And as the book proceeds the poems become increasingly psychologically complex and, ultimately, fascinating and genuinely rewarding.

C Ra McGuirt, Editor, The Penny Dreadful

Review

(on Children, Churches and Daddies)

CC&D is obviously a labor of love ... I just have to smile when I go through it. (Janet Kuypers) uses her space and her poets to best effect, and the illos attest to her skill as a graphic artist.

Dusty Dog Reviews (on Without You)

She open with a poem of her own devising, which has that wintry atmosphere demonstrated in the movie version of Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago. The atmosphere of wintry white and cold, gloriously murderous cold, stark raging cold, numbing and brutalizing cold, appears almost as a character who announces to his audience, "Wisdom occurs only after a laboriously magnificent disappointment." Alas, that our Dusty Dog for mat cannot do justice to Ms. Kuypers' very personal layering of her poem across the page.

Debra Purdy Kong, writer, British Columbia, Canada (on Children, Churches and Daddies)

I like the magazine a lot. I like the spacious lay-out and the different coloured pages and the variety of writer's styles. Too many literary magazines read as if everyone graduated from the same course. We need to collect more voices like these and send them everywhere.

Dusty Dog Reviews

(on Right There, By Your Heart)

The whole project is hip, anti-academic, the poetry of reluctant grown-ups, picking noses in church. An enjoyable romp! Though also serious.

Children, Churches and Daddies. It speaks for itself.

Write to Scars Publications to submit poetry, prose and artwork to Children, Churches and Daddies literary magazine, or to inquire about having your own chapbook, and maybe a few reviews like these.

hitler was right

Just another politician
crazier than most
Hitler was right
if he'd won
who'd be left?

larry blazek

Carlton Press, New York, NY

HOPE CHEST IN THE ATTIC is a collection of well-fashioned, often elegant poems and short prose that deals in many instances, with the most mysterious and awesome of human experiences: love... Janet Kuypers draws from a vast range of experiences and transforms thoughts into lyrical and succinct verse... Recommended as poetic fare that will titillate the palate in its imagery and imaginative creations.

Dorrance Publishing Co., Pittsburgh, PA

"Hope Chest in the Attic" captures the complexity of human nature and reveals startling yet profound discernments about the travesties that surge through the course of life. This collection of poetry, prose and artwork reflects sensitivity toward feminist issues concerning abuse, sexism and equality. It also probes the emotional torrent that people may experience as a reaction to the delicate topics of death, love and family. "Chain Smoking" depicts the emotional distress that afflicted a friend while he struggled to clarify his sexual ambiguity. Not only does this thought-provoking profile address the plight that homosexuals face in a homophobic society, it also characterizes the essence of friendship.

"The room of the rape" is a passionate representation of the suffering rape victims experience. Vivid descriptions, rich symbolism, and candid expressions paint a shocking portrait of victory over the gripping fear that consumes the soul after a painful exploitation.

Fithian Press, Santa Barbara, CA

Indeed, there's a healthy balance here between wit and dark vision, romance and reality, just as there's a good balance between words and graphics. The work shows brave self-exploration, and serves as a reminder of mortality and the fragile beauty of friendship.

Mark Blickley, writer

The precursor to the magazine title (Children, Churches and Daddies) is very moving. "Scars" is also an excellent prose poem. I never really thought about scars as being a form of nostalgia. But in the poem it also represents courage and warmth. I look forward to finishing her book.

You Have to be

Published to be Appreciated.

Do you want to be heard? Contact Children, Churches and Daddies about book and chapbook publishing. These reviews can be yours. Scars Publications, attention J. Kuypers, 3255 West Belden, Suite 3E, Chicago, Illinois 60647. You can write for yourself or you can write for an audience. Write to us.

my

my eyes
no longer see
I close them
my hands
are numb
I no longer feel
my heart
is cold
I cannot love

the tears

the tears
burn like fire
streaming down my face
i feel the heat

the tears
cut like knives
tearing up my skin
i feel the pain

the tears
they hurt me so much
they kill me
but i have no choice

poetry by
alexandria rand

a father can never be strong enough

over the past 15 years,
to the best of my recollection disregarding,
of course, my hernia operation, I've
been sick in bed
for only one day and my son remembers
that day and reminds me of it
as if all those other days
of going to work and night school, coming
home late, missing weekends, borrowing money,
the doctors the lawyers
the accountants the banks the mortgage,
sitting-up with him when he
was sick or scared, taking him to
the emergency room when he caught his thumb
in the safe, painting the house
and other people's houses,
going to his soccer games and guitar lessons,
gymnastics meets and karate classes,
back-to-school night, mowing,
shoveling snow, fixing cars and broken toys,
playing games and ball and swimming and hiking
and jumping around like a demented baboon
with him and his sisters,
taking apart the toilets to remove
the slippers and weebles and tooth brushes
they flushed down there, replacing
broken windows, doors, tables, chairs, beds, bikes,
fixing flat tires, cleaning-up
vomit and shit, buying them a stupid
dog, and canaries, parakeets, hermit crabs, turtles,

fish, frogs, toads, lizards, snakes,
salamanders and newts,
teaching them to ride bikes and drive cars,
buying them new cars after they
crashed-up the old ones, doing Disney World,
Santa's Stupid Village, Jungle Safari,
Wild West Town, the Petting Zoo, the magicians,
the clowns, the angry neighbors
and bullies, teachers and policemen and firemen,
and all the rest, the being there all
the time and being strong all
the time simply never happened.

michael estabrook

pocket knife

I saw you there
dancing
throwing her on the floor
like another one of your toys.
I had to pull out my army knife
and slit your face;
I had to watch the
blood stream from your open wounds
at the same speed as the apologies
that parted from your lips.
It was almost hard
to keep up with your show,
but I must admit
that it was good entertainment.

You know,
I still couldn't help but notice
that your pocket knife
was bigger than the one I bought
for myself.
An extra blade or two,
a better pair of tweezers.
And you were so proud
of your little gadgets,
and you were so sure
that it was a better pocket knife.
But I can't help but think
that not only does mine
do the job,
but it does the job well,
and because you never use yours
it's all just a waste.

gabriel athens

people' s rights misunderstood

I had a dream the other night
I was walking down the street in the city
and a man came up to me
a skinny man, he lost his hair
and he walked right up to me
and told me no one cares anymore
and he took my hand
and asked me to care about him
"I'm not supposed to be like this" he said
"I'm not homeless, you know
I have AIDS"
and I wanted to tell him that
someone did care,
that he didn't have to die alone,
but you know how sometimes
you can't do things in your dream
no matter how hard you try,
well, my mouth was open, wide open,
but no words were coming out

you know, I'm afraid to go to sleep tonight
I'm afraid that a pregnant woman
will come up to me
and ask me for a hanger
and I'll tell her there has to be another way
and she'll say this is the way she chooses

I'm afraid a woman will come up to me
and tell me she doesn't want to live
because she's just been raped
and her world doesn't make sense anymore
and I'll tell her that she can make it
that one in three women are raped in their lifetime
and they all make it
and besides, the world doesn't make sense
to anyone

and she'll say that doesn't make me
feel any better

and I'm afraid that I won't be able to
walk down that city street again
without it looking like a Quentin Tarentino movie
where everyone is pointing guns at each other
ys, Mr. NRA
you are right
I feel so much safer
knowing everyone out there has a gun
that there are more gun shops than gas stations
and that everyone is so willing
to do the killing

janet kuypers

the explanation

so i figured i'd have to write out information
that our readers might want to know
in the form of a poem, since
they seldom look over the ads.

ha! i got you, you thought
you were reading a poem, when it's actually
the dreaded advertising. but wait -
you'll actually want to read this, i think.

Okay, it's this simple: send me published
or unpublished poetry, prose or art work
(do not send originals),

along with a SASE for response, to
Children, Churches and Daddies, Scars Publications,
3255 West Belden, Suite #3E, Chicago, Illinois
60647-2559. Then sit by your mailbox and wait.

Pretty soon you'll get your SASE back
with a note from the happy people at cc+d
that says (a) Your work sucks, or (b)

This is fancy crap, and we're gonna print it. It's that simple!

Now, if you're also interested, there are two
books available through scars publications:
one is called "hope chest in the attic" and
the other is called "the window."

Hope Chest in the Attic is a 200 page, perfect-
bound book of 13 years of poetry, prose and art
by Janet Kuypers. It's a really classy thing,
if you know what I mean.

The Window is about 180 pages of her newest
stuff. It's hand-bound, paperback, and she'll
even sign it if you beg her enough. Man, it's groovy.

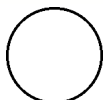
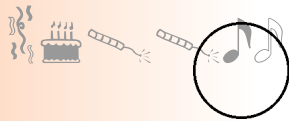
two dollars would cover the cost of printing and
shipping. oh, and four dollars would cover
back issues of cc+d or chapbooks. and make
those checks payable

to me, of course, janet kuypers. gifts are always
appreciated as well. just kidding.

and for you people out there with magazines, just
keep in mind that we here at cc+d are more than
happy to run ad pages for you, if you'll do the same
for us. seems pretty fair.

is that all? yeah, i think that's pretty much it.

now for the real poetry...



too far

When he met me
he told me
I looked like
Kim Basinger
long blonde locks
but as time
wore on I knew
I wasn't her
and I could never
be her and I was
never good enough
thin enough
pretty enough
I got a perm
straightened my
teeth
bought a wonder
bra but it wasn't
doing the trick
I bought slimfast
used the stair
stepper ate rice
cakes and wheat
germ but I wasn't
thin enough I
only dropped
twenty pounds
so I went to the
spa got my skin
peeled soaked
myself in mud
wrapped myself
in celophane
bought the amino
acid facial cremes
but I knew they
didn't really

work so I went to
the doctor got my
nose slimmed
my tummy stapled
my thighs sucked

thought about
getting a rib or two
removed
like Cher
but I figured
they've got to
be there for
something
and hey, that's
just going
too far

janet
kuypers

abuser to marry girlfriend

CINCINNATI, July 14 (Reuter) - An Ohio judge has raised the ire of the National Organisation for Women (NOW) by sentencing a man accused of domestic violence to marry the woman he allegedly attacked.

“I believe the bonds of marriage might make an abuser think a little bit more before resorting to physical force,” Hamilton County Municipal Judge Albert Mestemaker said. “I believe strongly in family values.”

Mestemaker on Thursday sentenced Scott Hancock, 26, of Addyston, Ohio, to nine months’ probation on the condition he marry his girlfriend, with whom he reportedly lives. Hancock pleaded no contest to a domestic violence charge.

The judge said he believes domestic violence is less likely to occur between married couples than between unmarried couples living together.

Mestemaker also ordered the man to support the couple’s child, seek family counselling and enter an alcohol treatment program. All but \$100 of a \$1,000 fine was suspended.

The couple could not immediately be reached for comment.

NOW President Patricia Ireland expressed disbelief and dismay on Friday at the sentence.

“The judge has just given this guy a hunting license,” Ireland said in a telephone interview.

“We’re struggling here in Washington with Congress which is threatening to cut funds for judicial training regarding violence against women,” she said, referring to the year-old Violence Against Women Act.

“What could be a more clear example of why those funds are needed?” Ireland asked. “We’ve got to teach judges that a marriage license is not an insurance policy.”

Mestemaker said he has imposed similar sentences in the past: “I’ve done it before — at least three other times in the past two years, and I married one of those couples myself.”

he's working on his career

He runs the sales
organization, lives in Chicago but
works in Boston.
He's one of the hotel/airline crowd
who feels fortunate simply
to get back home for
the week-ends, but
what can he do
about being away from his
family, really? How else can he
move-up the corporate ladder, afford
all those important things
he's always wanted?
How else can his wife
own all the things she's always
wanted? How else can they retire
in style, visit the places they've
always wanted to visit,
go boating and golfing, fishing
and sight-seeing?
He can't even fathom
that he's missing his 3 daughters
growing-up, that those
precious moments are slipping
away, and that once
they're gone,
they're gone for good.

michael estabrook

EPA's powers curbed

By Jackie Frank

WASHINGTON, July 18 (Reuter) - The Republican-led House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday voted to rein in the Environmental Protection Agency as Democrats charged that the plan would reverse two decades of pollution controls.

The panel voted to curb the EPA's powers to enforce clean air and clean water laws as part of a far-reaching bill cutting one-third from its budget. It also cut 25 percent from public housing funds and 5 percent from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, closed four agencies and reduced funds for others.

The bill provides \$60 billion for 1996, down \$10 billion from 1995 and about that amount below President Clinton's request.

"This mark reflects real cuts," said subcommittee chairman Jerry Lewis, a California Republican.

Democrat Lewis Stokes of Ohio, with a letter from Clinton's top advisers in hand, warned that the bill is headed for a veto unless housing aid is increased and pollution control enforcement is restored.

"There is no excuse to run roughshod on every protection for public health you can find," said David Obey of Wisconsin, the senior Democrat on the panel.

But a move by Stokes to restore EPA enforcement powers failed on a party line vote of 18 to 30.

"This is a deliberate attempt to dismantle environmental and public health protections that we expect of this country," EPA administrator Carol Browner told reporters at a news conference on the 33 percent funding cut for the agency. Funds for 1996 would be set at \$4.8 billion.

The bill contains 17 special provisions, known as riders, that would bar EPA funds from being used to protect wetlands, control oil refinery discharges, block residues of cancer-causing pesticide in foods, or regulate burning of toxic wastes.

Upjohn Co. won a special exemption from EPA clean water rules for its discharges from a facility in Michigan into the Kalamazoo water treatment area. Seven chemical companies, mainly located in Texas, were exempted from rules on incineration of hazardous wastes.

a sECOND sTORY

by Ben Ohmart

The ex-Nazi collected his royalties from the independent film maker and hurried to the nearest house auction. Homeless for three years, he'd found his namesake, and now topped the bid of \$45,000 for an ex-Lenscrafters' abode that for east L.A. property was a grand theft. Hehn walked up his forth hill and clipped immediately through the police scene tape and the first thing he noticed, aside from the throb of unknown ownership, the wonder of an independence that comes only from the unused to wealth that matters, was the smell. He went into the living room, saw the cracked mirrors that matched the walls completely, and moved into the kitchen, then made himself a chicken sandwich at Burger King because he knew now the suppressed vanity inside him was full for the taking again, he'd need to relearn the method of sleeping with garbage cans. He sniffed his Mr. Pibb, and loved his watch.

Cable was installed by his homecoming - he knew there'd be nothing worth stealing - so after 12.2 hours before a tube, he conquered upstairs and noticed that the threat of revulsion was even worse standing before a mysterious knob.

Still, he opened. He was a master. A master of a manor, no matter if the master was 94 and the house was 18. But a man owning a right to open anything, or nothing that would please him. There he saw the dead dogs. Piled mostly on the Craftmatic, but the rug of immobile cats left his feet to wander at the sickness of it all. He ran to the laundry room, his only sane judgment for relief of the boiling things inside him that just had to come out. But he forgot, he was always forgetting, and he misunderstood his own proximity to pain, or else he couldn't admit it to his personality. He always gave his shoes and found aspirin bottles and parts of fish meat away, but the simple fact of soul was that he couldn't stand the fact that the animals dictated where he couldn't find himself, what



rights he was denied and he would've moved gently over the laying animals, but he could secretly feel their power. Their knowledge to forbid all entries, even to the owner of this world.

By three months in, the old Nazi had quite a pile against the back door. He never went up to the top story anymore, through choice he told himself, as there were enough windows and making brown rice for the neighbors kids when they'd come to mow the wild lawn. The wild lawn never stopped, so the nice man would continue to peel from his wealth and watch the kids and try to supplement the weak cable hours this way, but when the man opened the back door, he'd forgotten the puke and stepped squarely in it. He was going to ask the Jenkins kid if he wouldn't mind a Nestea float this time because his brown rice had been hit pretty hard this week, but now rage was occupying his mind, and it was total and complete. The way he bounded up the stairs to the creak and grind of the putrid story showed a man enthralled with the passion of cleansing. He wanted his deep regret at the things lying around to be a release button, and wanted all the yellings he abused the soft furs with to wash himself away of the vices that kept creeping strongly up his nose. The loss of wind took much from the old man who needed his eyes to the "rug" for a moment to calm down, but what was it? Was it the knowledge of all these unkempt pets who could've let him live a remaining life, remaining just with wags at least and playful scratches? Or given a role to care, or was it the sight, the sight alone that let the German briefly but permanently into a animal lover's mind?

Still, the man began to collect pets, absent-mindedly, like all things, at first, but then growing in need and custom. The cats were the easiest, and every day, after the fish was laid out and he'd come home from his given time at the Community Center, there'd be the personal waiting list of felines who yelling selfishly for his attention. Checking the necks for collars or tags, he'd bring them forward and through the den to the house that smelled if no one else cared, and once all the salt and Skunk Tablets were removed for the dogs, that naturally hung around odors of that common type, there was a foreboding atmosphere of working litter and dug up front and back yards that from now on never seemed to need mowing. But still the kids would come to play, more frequently in fact, what with all the fur, and many times the weekends would be full with the watchful eyes

of mothers and visiting brothers-in-law who'd too enjoy the sights not often seen. Big boys would try to ride the St. Bernard, while bottomless girls in bell-shaped dresses would bend for a pet of kitty, and the old ex-Nazi would smile away the Saturdays that grew to be his favorite slice of the week. The weekdays were more maintenance built, but the years passed fine while the flesh above rotted.

Guardians on the whole found the place to have a petting zoo's charm, and bore the stink with the graciousness that couldn't be compromised considering the price was less than dirt. The old man made a meat order with a local butcher for

wholesale prices that ended up paying for half the feed cost, after he'd installed the first ever chunk of liver for a quarter machine. But the years usually found themselves into a routine, and the man wouldn't let his mental attitude be affected with the constant aroma of death about the place. Sometimes he'd get attached to a dog or a wandering parrot that would find itself under foot more than necessary, and the shock as he lived through his 120s of having the young friends pass would be too much to make him care anymore. He would call them Blue by the dozens, and the dogs would repay soon enough by dying young, and the cats would fall off buildings into empty concrete mixers whenever, so that shortly the love, possibly caring was strictly habit. More machines were installed and parents would find liver going sky-high, but they could never guess the hurt, the gravity of always incoming stock dying off this way, that that gravity would have in a man who found his memory returning with age, frightening the nights up, living them through the boredom that followed; a stock that passed up from one floor to the other with ease.

king for an hour

Get a gun
be King
for an hour
Can't do anything
you like?
kill anyone
you want
your gun
makes you right
until someone
comes along
with a bigger gun

larry
blazek