

A^{to}Z

The Art and Culture iZine.

This ink is for you.

2.2



cover image inspired
by Matt Boyko

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DEAR READER:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO VIEW OUR THIRD ISSUE OF A TO Z! I WOULD LIKE REVIEW THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MADE THIS PUBLICATION POSSIBLE. AFTER UNDERGRAD, AS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE CONGEALED, I BECAME EVER MORE NOSTALGIC AND AWARE OF HOW LUCKY I WAS TO BE SURROUNDED BY SUCH AMAZINGLY ENERGETIC, CREATIVE, AND MOTIVATED PEOPLE... IN HOPES OF JOINING EFFORTS I BEGAN MAKING PLANS FOR THIS ZINE.

LIKE ALL PROJECTS, THE MANIFESTATION THAT YOU WILL READ HERE IS VERY DIFFERENT THAN THAT ORIGINAL PLAN. NEW PLACES AND NEW PEOPLE HAVE ADDED TO THE DIVERSITY AND ENERGY THAT THIS ZINE HOPED TO INSPIRE. OUR BULLETINE BOARD SITE, WWW.THE-CORPS.COM, HAS BEEN A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF EXPANDING. IT HAS ONLY BEEN A LITTLE OVER A YEAR SINCE THE FIRST ISSUE AND I AM QUITE SHOCKED AT WHERE WE ARE AT ALREADY.

THIS, BEING THE THIRD ISSUE, WILL BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY WITH ANOTHER ISSUE, 3.1.

AS EVER, WE HOPE TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO RESPOND TO THE ZINE TO GIVE US LOTS OF FEEDBACK, INITIATING AN ONGOING DIALOGUE. BEING COMPLETELY AND TOTAL ONLINE MEANS THAT THE COST TO US AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN ALMOST NIL. IT MEANS THAT THE ONLY THING REALLY BEING CONTRIBUTED IS TIME. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE FURTHER ISSUES OF A TO Z, WE ASK ONLY THAT YOU CONTRIBUTE SOME TIME INTO FEEDBACK AND/OR SUBMISSIONS.

OF COURSE, YOU MAY ALSO CONTRIBUTE BY JUST FORWARDING THIS LINK TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
SARRITA

FOR COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, COMPLAINTS, SUBMISSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, OR ANY OTHER NEEDS GO TO WWW.ATOZINE.NET.

SARRITA HUNN is the founder and editor of **A to Z**.

She is a second year MFA student at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, California.

"I like Mac Powerbooks and electronic music."

You can contact her at sarrita@the-corps.com.



CONTRIBUTORS



ADAM LETTERMAN got his start in the underground bare-knuckle boxing world of Springfield, Missouri before graduating from Southwest Missouri State with a BS in print journalism. An award winning college journalist, he is currently working as a graphic artist for The Marshfield Mail in Marshfield, Missouri. This is his first contribution to any sort of magazine, and has never had his work exhibited, because real journalists don't exhibit, but get published. He did have his car in a show once, because it is a really bitchin' 78 Lincoln Towncar. He lives alone, so any ladies that want to move to the boonies in SW Missouri are welcome to come on by.

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INORI FUKUDA TRANT came to the United States from Japan in 1993 to explore the wonder of American culture. She's stuck here since then. She used to be in the Fine Arts society in Springfield, MO, but now there's not much sign of that in her. She loves entertainment arts such as movies (more movies than films, if you know what that means), comic books, ... and movies. She is also a founder of the Unofficial San Francisco Jet Li Fan Club. She resides in San Francisco, CA with her husband and a cat.

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TAMARA STASER is currently a Bay Area resident and a graduate student in the creative writing program of the California College of Arts and Crafts. Originally from East Lansing, Michigan, she received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1996 before moving to New York City to study fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in 1998/1999. She aspires to have a style that is a combo of both Audrey Hepburn and Alice in Wonderland, with a little Cher and George Clinton of the P-Funk All Stars mixed in, as well. She likes to ponder the continued existence of human beings on this planet while watching cartoons on cable television and eating sugar cookie tube dough. Turn ons include anything shiny and/or kinetic and smaller than a breadbox. Turn offs include white plastic grocery bags, collect calls and anything brown. She accepts jewelry.

glamoura22@hotmail.com

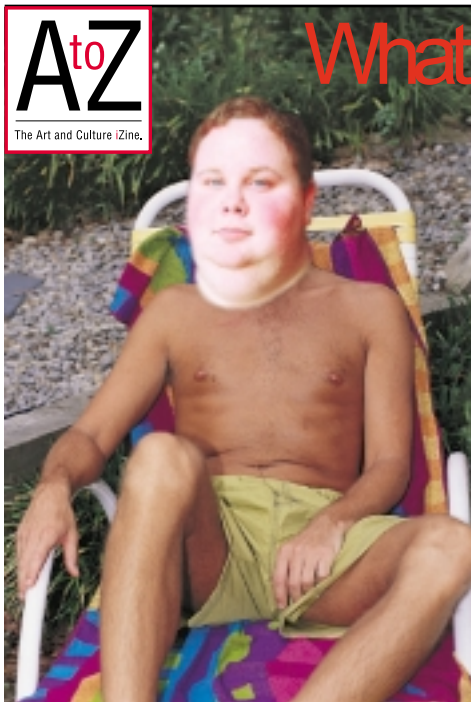
AARON THWEATT. After his heyday on the hit 70's sitcom "Whoooo's That?," Aaron decided to get a degree in Advertising at SMSU. Finding this unfulfilling, he decided that, providing his baby's mama would "quit houndin' him for the monthly check," he would finance a series of self-help books dealing with topics ranging from "Strip Club Etiquette" to "Spiritual Enlightenment Through Malt Liquor." The journals were not well received, by critics and the general audience alike. Currently waiting tables at a local country club, Aaron does not actively participate in much of anything, aside from an occasional "bout with the dark prince Gannon from Zelda" or a "really good champagne-jam session." While he hopes to one day be a successful illustrator and/or graphic designer, Aaron has to deal with the harsh realities of his trade. "I'm not really very good at art," he said in an exclusive interview with A to Z, "Plus, like, I'm not pretentious enough to say that my work is anything more than just lines on paper. Well, except for when goat feces is my medium. Then my work is just goat feces on paper."

twomanwar@yahoo.com



What I Did On My Summer Vacation

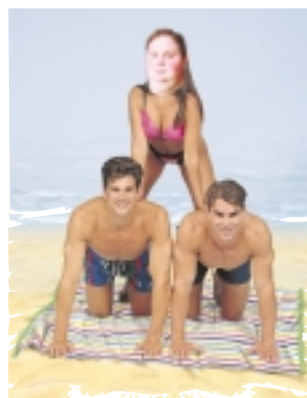
by Adam Letterman



So, yeah, I finally got my shit together. I have been trying to get in this damn magazine every single time. The first time I dreamed up this cock-a-mamie idea where I would do an article like "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Repair" but with

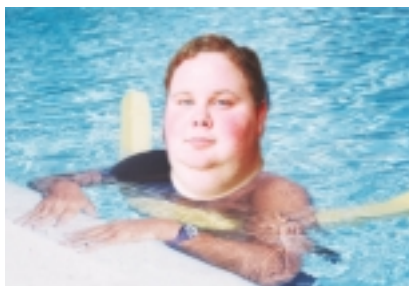


Tekken. Then I started to read "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Repair." Boy, it is duller than dirt. So I nixed that idea. That, and I had writer's block real bad. Which sucks all kinds of ass. I mean, pretty much all my friends are art people, and a lot of those are writers. And also, I am a professional writer (I have gotten paid for articles I have written, and screw you if you don't think journalism is



writing.) But ever since I got out of school I couldn't even write my name on the wall with my urine, and believe me, I tried. I even lost a lot of my deposit on my last apartment because of my diligent but eventually fruitless practice. So when Sarrita put out a second call for submissions, I thought I would be the cock-of-the-walk because I had this awesome idea. So I say, "Sarrita, I'm in."

See, the guy that wasn't elected president had just given his State of the Union address, and I was like, OK, there is a lot of parallels between our conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq and the video game "Dynasty Warriors 2." So I get all pumped up about it, and did all this research (actually reading the State of the Union, playing a lot of "Dynasty Warriors 2") and I even downloaded pictures off the Internet to illustrate my point. But what about the actual writing

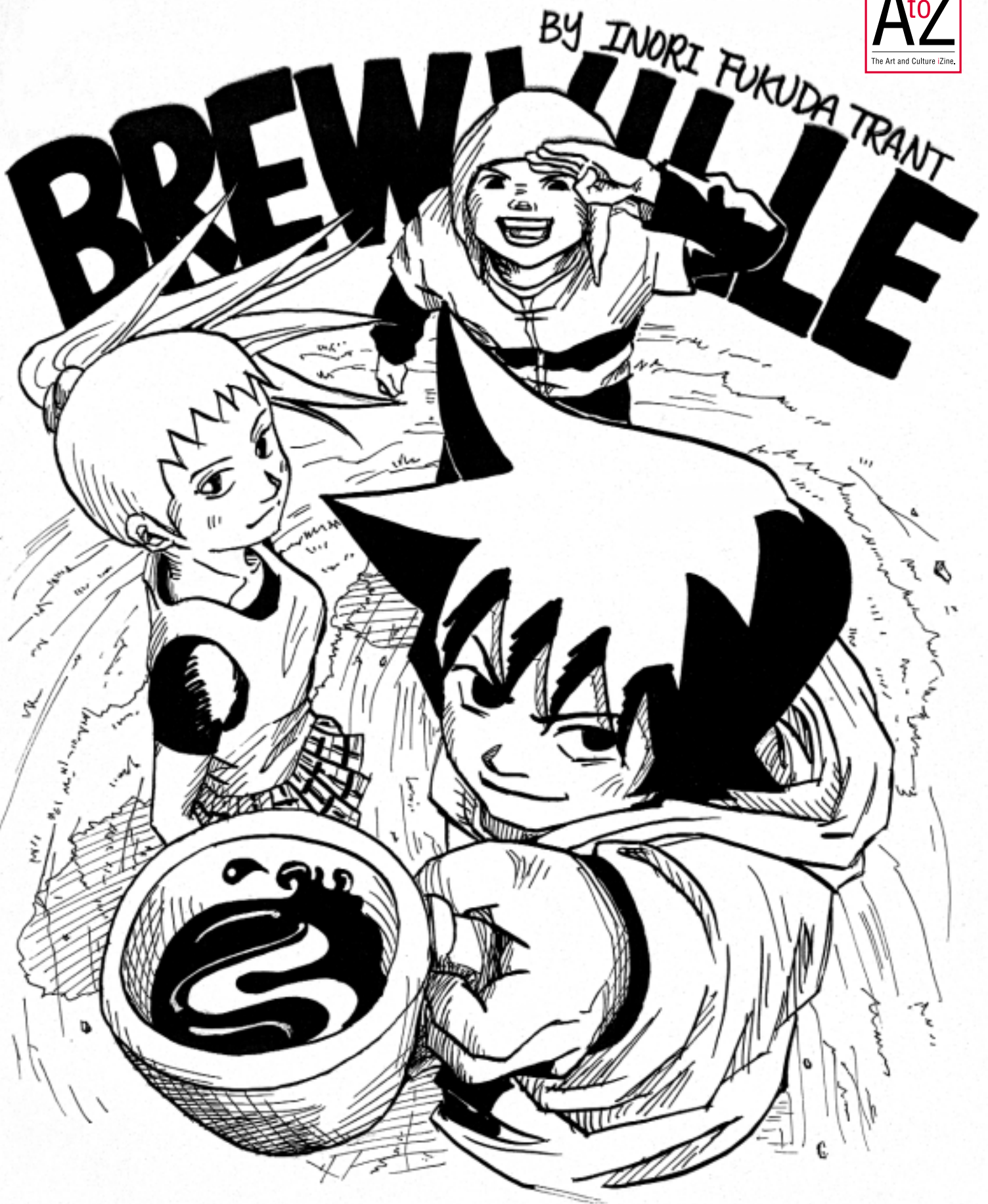


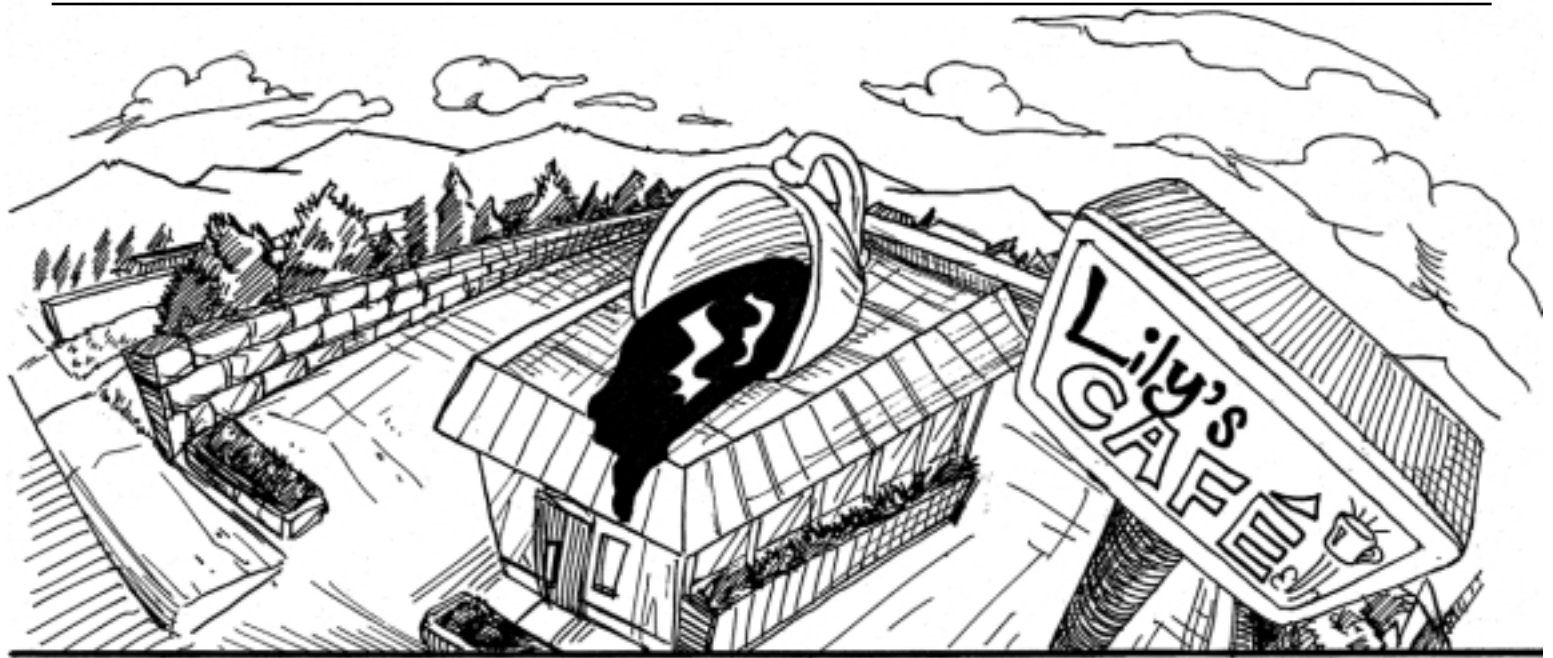
part? Not a damn thing. I couldn't find my ass with both my hands. And I even said, "Sarrita, I know it's past deadline, but give me the weekend, and I can put something together. After all, I'm a writer!"

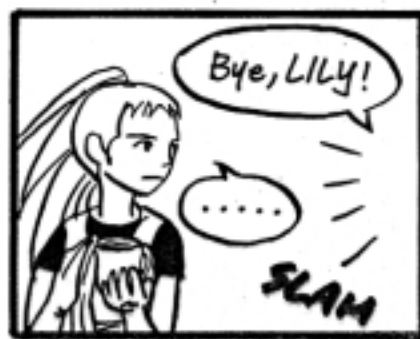
And then I didn't talk to her for like 4 months. But in that time I was thinking that I had to come up with something for the next magazine. Now, I don't know much about art. Only thing I know is that before Monet changed his name to Eddie Money, he liked some hooker and cut off his hand. So I come up with an idea for a short story. There's this guy, and he can bend the laws of physics with his mind. But the only thing he wants to do in life is own a moving company. Genius! See, if you had to get this couch down a narrow stairway with a turn in it, this guy could make the couch just bend to fit the hole. Funny, right? I laughed my ass off. So I started telling people my idea, trying to flush the story out, and turns out, I'm not funny. No one liked it, not even my mom. And moms are supposed to like the dumb things their kids come up with. But not this. So I got nothing for this entry. But then I thought, I wonder how many dirty words I can work into a piece of shit writing and get people to read it, If you got this far, I count two shits, two damns, two cocks, two asses, and one screw you, which really isn't a dirty word at all, but it's my story, so screw you. Man, I think this is funny. But I am a little disappointed by my lack of profanity. After all, I went to public school. So how about this. Damn. Hell ass shit cock damn. Hey, I feel better.

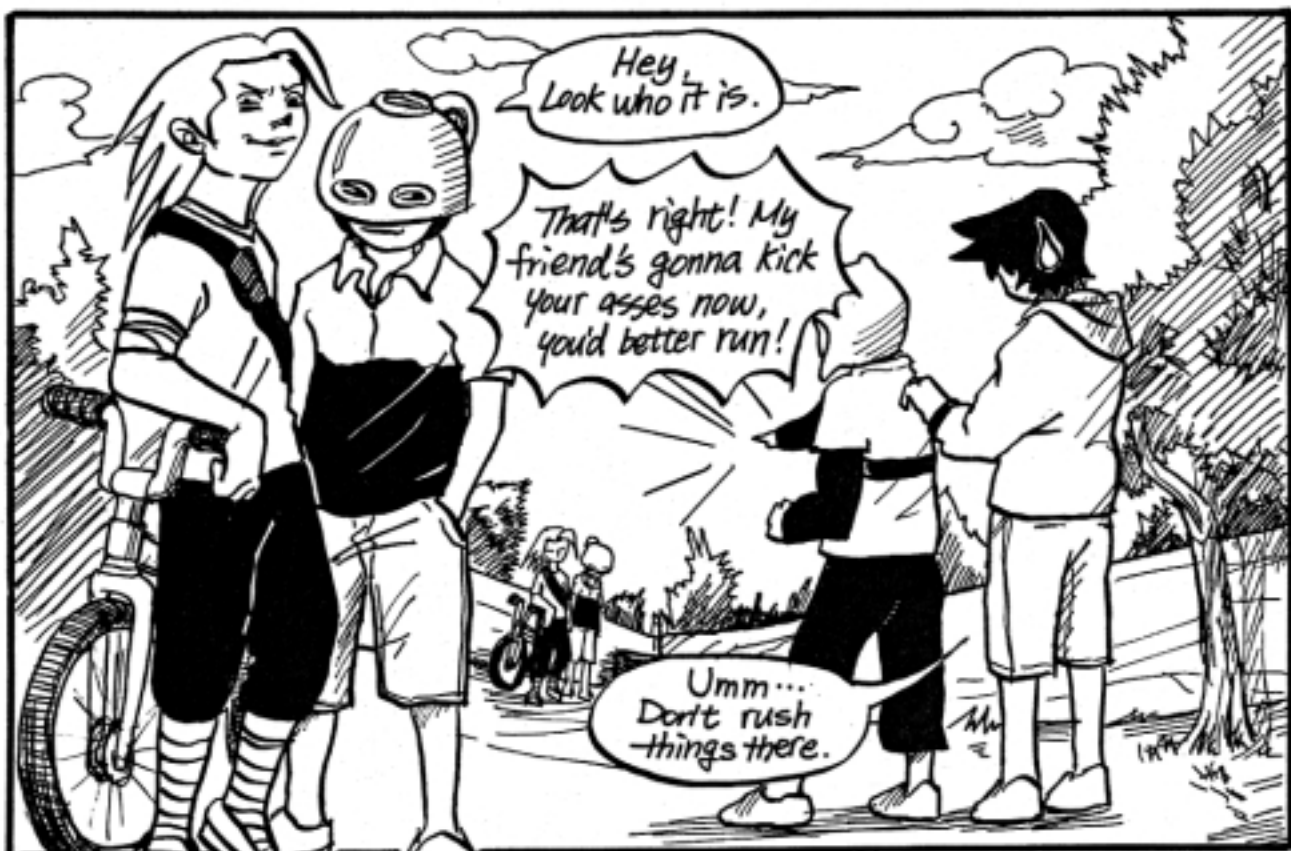


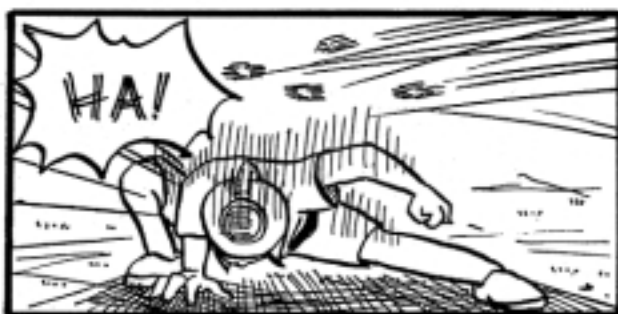
**Oh
yeah,
on my
summer
vacation
I
watched
a lot of
porn.**





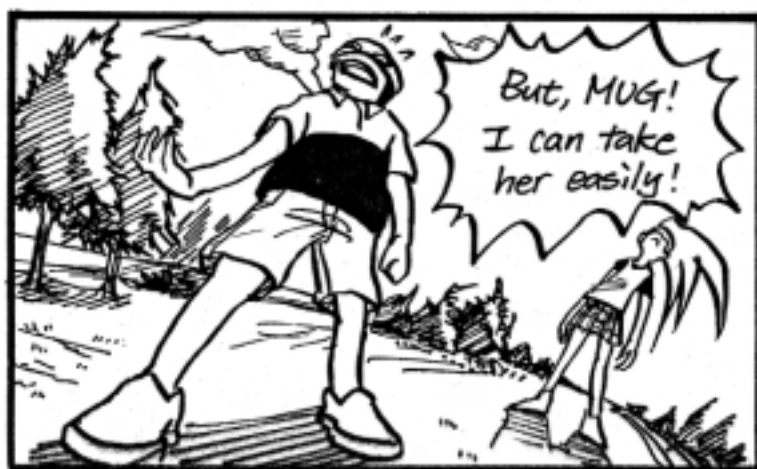




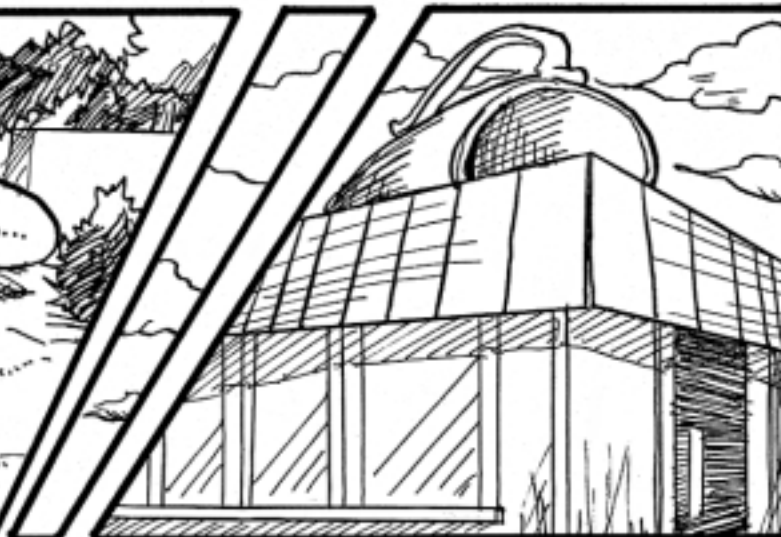














to be continued...



super furry animals
phantom power
outkast
speakerboxxx/the love below
album reviews by:
aaron thweatt

PHANTOM POWER

THE SUPER FURRY ANIMALS



Are the citizens of earth doomed to an apocalyptic end brought on by the United States in its wars for oil? Or perhaps the fall of the world will be due to our natural environment folding in on itself due to mankind's (particularly the U.S.'s) inability to support and maintain it. Most likely it will be a combination of the two—certainly acts of war come hand in hand with a diminished environment.

In the end, whatever terrible fate befalls humanity could never sound as sweet as it is envisioned in Phantom Power, the newest album by The Super Furry Animals. That is the gift of the SFA's—to sugar coat coarse satirical lyrical scenarios with fantastic, often epic pop melodies.

Politically and philosophically, one must wonder how it is that a Welsh band has a clearer grip on American foreign policy than most of the citizens of said country. They ask all the right questions: Do Americans still rally behind the ideas of Manifest Destiny; defined simply as Americans' (being the chosen people of God) right to expand geographically and ideologically? Why does everyone in the world see through the U.S. government's veil of war for "national security?" Why do American citizens choose to believe everything their corporate-owned mass-media outlets gag down their throats? Are Americans so gripped by fear of international terrorism that we cannot see through our leadership's attempts to destroy its citizens right to privacy?

These are good questions that the SFA's demand to know the answers to; and they want to know, frankly, why the typical American citizen just doesn't seem to give a shit. If, as a casual observer, you cannot challenge yourself to find an answer these questions, the SFA's will tell you straight up where America's misappropriated priorities will take them:

Politically and philosophically, one must wonder how it is that a Welsh band has a clearer grip on American foreign policy than most of the citizens of said country.

"You know you're digging to hell
Drowning in your oil wells
As the ashes fly from New York City
Past the grimy clouds above New Jersey."
--Liberty Belle

As tense as are the topics discussed in Phantom Power, the music is often as light-hearted and bouncy as pop music can be (though you will likely never hear anything by the SFA's on popular radio). This contrast between lyrical depression and musical joyfulness is noted clearly in the song "Venus and Serena." Lyrics such as "Holy bombs make holy wars/Holy holes make homeless moles" are painted on a canvass of danceable guitars riffs and electric fuzz.

However scathing and cynical the SFA's are of goings-on in the world, they offer up little in the way of solutions. Instead, they act as strict parents to American society—loving us immensely, but being not afraid to scold us when we screw up. Apparently, we should be grounded. But as any parent would, they want to help us, as stated in "The Undefeated," "So shallow the Undefeated / Step, step into my shoes / I'll try to make you understand."

Stylistically the SFA's are as potent as ever. Think Pink Floyd with a pulse or imagine Radiohead with a sense of humor. Phantom Power is a densely layered album full of production room trickery. Every song is a musical style unto itself, ranging from the modern guitar-rock of "Out of Control" to the lounge piano ballad of "Hello Sunshine" to the psychedelic folk of "Valet Parking." Of course, it wouldn't be a SFA album if it wasn't iced over with tons of electronic beats, whizzes, and whirls.

A final note to the reader: If ever the sky turns red with blood and bombs, and the forests and oceans become completely diseased and poisoned, and everyone you hold dear dies gruesome deaths; don't fret—A most righteous distraction, Phantom Power, will serve faithfully as your guide to the end of the world.

OUTKAST

SPEAKERBOXXX / THE LOVE BELOW



OutKast are the new Parliament of hip-hop music. You see, OutKast (consisting of singers/songwriters/rappers/producers/ Andre 3000 and Big Boi) are the funkier motherfuckers making music today.

Their newest double-album (Speakerboxxx / The Love Within) is to hip-hop and rap music what Miles Davis' Bitches Brew was to jazz, in that OutKast challenge the structure of modern rap and R&B: Does a rap song just have to be a series of beats and samples looped repetitively? Also, does rap music always have to have some female singer belting out the chorus? Can a rap song have a live instrument other than a beat machine and sampler--perhaps an acoustic guitar? How about a piano?

No, hell no, yes, and yes. S/TLW is the most innovative bit of American musicianship of the new century. OutKast continue to create and integrate within and outside their genre to create music that defies any sort of categorization to begin with.

As most folks know S/TLW is a double album with Big Boi and Dre each acting, more or less, as solo artists. Of course, of course, of course we all know the group hasn't broken up, but as Big Boi puts it "OutKast, Cell Therapy, to cell division / We just split it down the middle so you can see both the visions." He continues to affirm "Been spittin' it damn near ten years, why the fuck we quittin'?" Each artist contributes on the album of the other; at the same time a hand-full of other musicians ranging from Killer-Mike to Cee-Lo to Jay-Z to Norah Jones cast their talents into the net.

On The Love Within Andre 3000 takes the role of a new-age falsetto crooner. With the confidence and swagger of Dean Martin he delivers lines like "Everyone

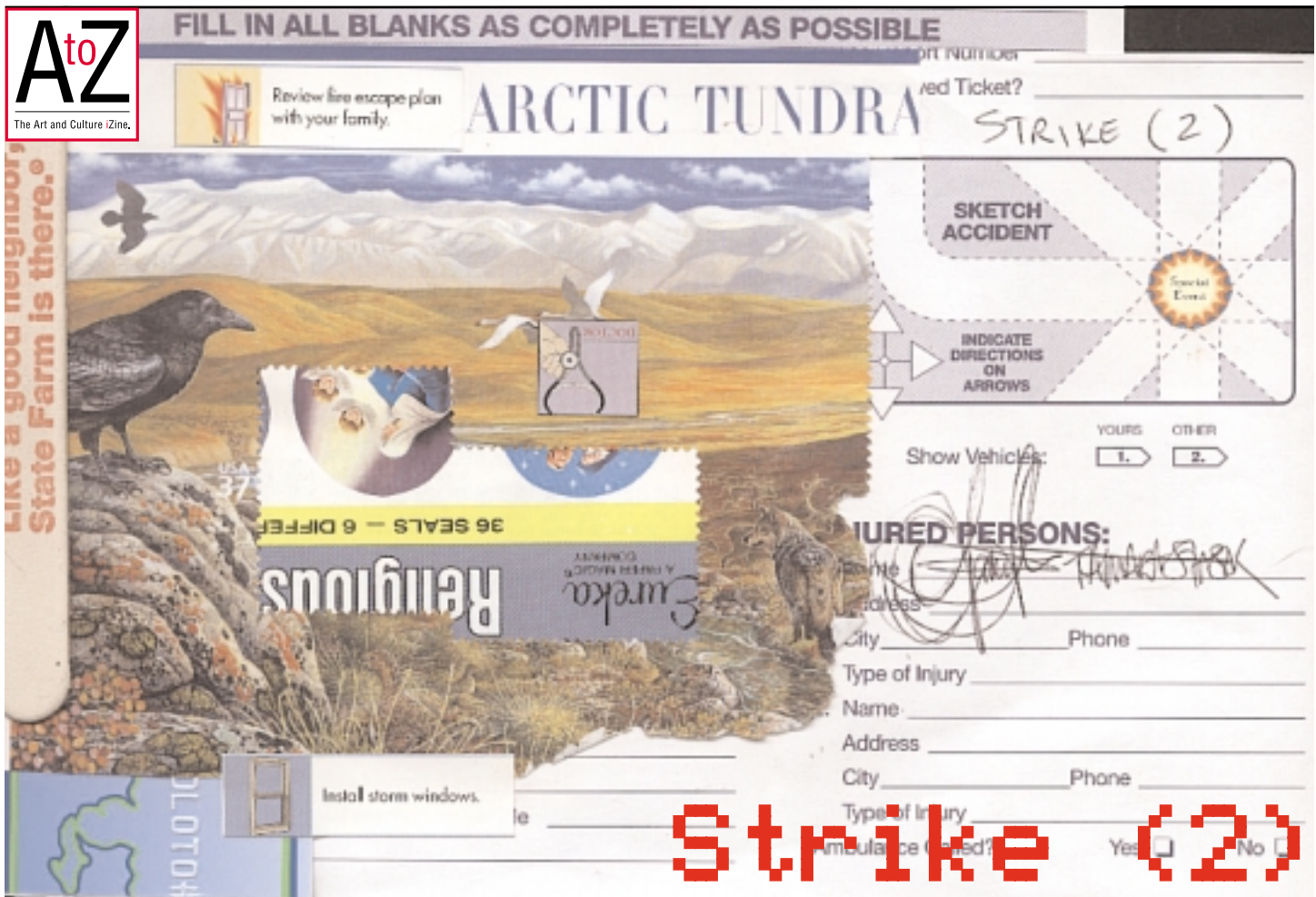
needs somebody to rub their shoulders, scratch their dandruff / And everyone needs to stop actin' hard and shit/ Before you get your ass whooped", and pretends not to understand how hilariously smooth he is. He celebrates ladies and love completely. In "Valentine's Day," Dre plays the role of a "modern day cupid" armed with updated love weaponry: "Now when arrows don't penetrate / Cupid grabs the pistol." In "Spread", he eliminates pre-coital pretenses: "So now can I borrow your timid torso / More so than your soul." While he is most certainly on a quest for lust, he lets us know love is not out of the question: "I hope you are the one / if not, you are the prototype."

Meanwhile Big-Boi tries to build mountains out of his patented brand of hardcore beats and lyrics. While he doesn't really show us anything really new, he doesn't really have to. He is still lyrically and stylistically miles ahead of any of his hip-hop competitors. Speakerboxx, as the name dutifully implies, is Big Boi's celebration of old-school beats: Tracks like "GhettoMusick" hit you like "Bombs over Baghdad"--fast and danceable with bass like a cannon. "Bowtie" and "The Way You Move" embrace a new style of pimp background music that is built around blooming horns, tinkling piano, smart beats, and low bass. More often than not, Big Boi wants to discuss deeper topics like divorce, adolescence, religion, war, politics, but he also doesn't want you to forget that he is one fly brother.

Some of the interludes throughout the album are self-serving but most are humorous and offer a different view of the OutKast thought processes. Some are dirty, certainly enough to be offensive to your parents, but within the punch-lines of their skits, OutKast deliver biting bits of satirical truths that you won't find anywhere else on the radio.







He was hooked by the image of a distant neon sign while going 90. It looked like a teardrop to him, looming in the mirage of his windshield horizon. The outline of it danced in syncopated time with the radio. For what must have been twenty minutes he watched it steadily bob and glint along the equator of the highway, blinking at him. The sign appeared to be a few hundred yards in front of a dusk-lit dark green backdrop. It incessantly taunted him like an S.O.S. signal as he drove. He pulled his left hand off of the steering wheel and tugged on his ear as he pondered its message. This highway neon had originally popped up over the hill like the cone of a teepee tip, becoming a full oval in the middle, finishing with a triangle base on the bottom. It stood before him, defiantly, shaped like a giant minnow, baited on an invisible fishing line. He drowsily removed his fingers from his earlobe and cranked open the window three inches.

Time seemed to measure itself in these little moments of impending visual clarity that played with him as he drove. There was no clock in the car. He figured it was better that way. During the trip, each rural landmark became a lit wooden match igniting his imagination, sparking up one after another in front of him. The steeples and silos along the way seemed to burn sideways as he came upon them; they snuffed themselves out in a trail of smoke as he passed. The dilapidated buildings along his route mimicked the village names sprinkled along the map that

accompanied him on the passenger seat velour. He mouthed the names of each town to himself as he passed his finger down the color-coded lines. The map had been purchased from a gas station just off of the interstate. The stop took a total of seven minutes, according to rusty clock ticking above the station door as he pumped gas into the car. It took him another five seconds, approximately, to sidestep the disheveled dog that came at him fully armed with a frothing bark, and pull the credit card slip from the pump stand before getting back in his vehicle.

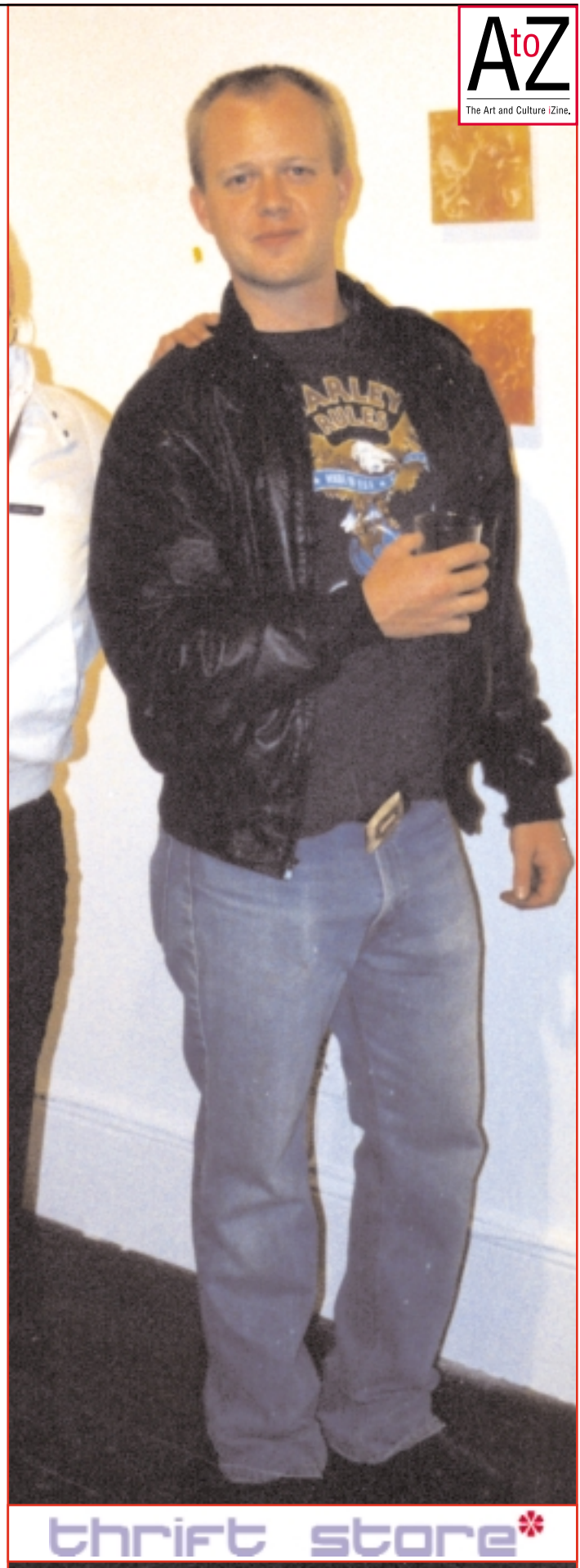
It was just after merging back onto the highway that he had first seen the sign. Two of the letters within its upcoming membrane looked to be burnt out. He squinted and pushed his glasses higher up the bridge of his nose. He then methodically replaced the hand on the steering wheel and bent forward in a crouch over it, a little tighter to the dashboard and front glass.

Sometimes the recognition of objects along his route frightened him, as if each sightline realization brought him magnetically closer to each new thing he drove over and past. In the moments when he realized what he had been straining to see, the pavement seemed to get hot and soft, threatening to cement him down forever. The passing objects seemed to hesitate momentarily upon his recognition of them, as if they were each flirting with the idea of picking up enough speed to catch him before he could really identify anything. If he were to catch a good look at a clump of pink insulation rolling on the shoulder, it would consequently disguise itself as a harmless spool of cotton candy and instantly sprout menacing, flailing arms that beaconsed to him from the rear view mirror. Passing over day old road-kill gave him the sensation of being part of a salvation, however, as if to lump him into a mass instinctual past. Road-kill fucked with his mind and made him feel like he had been tagged and numbered along with the rest of the swimming salmon school of motorists zooming over the blacktop.

Sometimes he thought about the other drivers, wondering where they were going. He envisioned them all tumbling past each other, upstream, on an unending highway fish ladder. The occasional hardened carcass in his line of vision went from looking like a mangled kid toy to looking like demonic goulash when doubled in the left and right side mirrors. The multiple angles of deceased animal contours in the rear view reflection made them appear more real to him than when he was coming up toward them. They became very clear macabre mini puppets in hindsight. He held his breath as he raced around them and followed the latitude and longitude of each one in the middle mirror. The flatness of their glassy images blurred their fur into a sort of pop up flashcard. He wrinkled his nose each time; they would shrink like shooting range targets, pulling away behind him. For all the possible identities these car struck creatures had had as he'd come up upon them, each and every passed casualty made him flinch, after the fact. Only the wetness of a recent hit would shock him into the consideration of his gawking at road-kill as slightly sick. There wasn't a whole lot else to look at out there. Each pulp of dead mammal reminded him of what he would have become if he had stayed.

"GO- -LESS AMERICA" he whispered as he finally read the remaining neon lettering, wondering who in the hell had put up this sign with two missing letters, especially in the middle of Bumblefuck Nowhereville. He imagined a can-can line of bored and uber-patriotic religious terrorists dancing alongside the car like crinolined cheerleaders as they constructed it in the middle of a cornfield. He shook himself out of his tunnel vision daze and decided to change the station. The only thing he could find on the sound dial was country. The speedometer read 96 and the daylight had begun to fade.

by Tamara Staser



A^{to}Z

The Art and Culture iZine.
