



Graduating
into
Unemployment

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Peter Willis: Peter Willis is an illustrator and recent graduate living in London. He runs Dead Trees and Dye zine distro and is part of the London Zine Symposium team. He is still currently unemployed.

Rosy Dorfman: I'm German and American, studying politics and sociology at Leeds Uni, but planning to go into law. I've been involved a lot with the feminist society and produced a zine called 'You mean a woman can open it?', I've also been involved in other political stuff - right now I'm really into Foucault and other critical and postmodern theory.

Ryan Humphrey: I am 22 years old. I adore drawing and moleskine sketchbooks. I draw whatever feels comfortable and strange. Plus my favourite film is Blade Runner.

Sarah Tea- Rex: Currently based in Brighton (UK) Sarah can be found queer feminist activising up the place, drinking tea, listening, impersonating dinosaurs, and being distracted by work and a social work MA. She keeps pumpin' out the zines, so stay tuned in.

Shauna Askew: I studied Graphic Design but now I mainly focus on Illustration, It's what I enjoy the most. I have also recently started writing the odd poem to clear my head. A lot of the stuff I do is quite narrative and auto-biographical, I also use humour quite a lot in my work. Turning a bad situation into art always makes it better and changes your association with the situation. I have recently had some of my work featured in OWT, a monthly zine showcasing work from up and coming creative talent in the Northwest.

Sin Futuro: Third world resident, unemployed full time with a PhD in Dropping Out
-Published Adiccion GM (2003-2007 Mexican graffiti magazine)
-Sin Futuro Zine (2007) Photography, short stories & drawings. Photocopied, hand made, limited edition of 20. Online version.
-LO-FI Company Zine (2007). Lo-Fi group Zine. Drawings.
-Inmediato y Remoto (2008) Photography. Online Zine.
-Todos los Dias son Viernes (2009) Special edition of 10, hand made on 10 by 10 cm cardboard and sticker paper. Photography and short stories. Online version.
-Animaciones (2010). Lo-Fi group DVD. Dead End flash animation.
-This is my blog and the links to the zines pdf files are there. <http://mil978.blogspot.com/>
Rod Allison: <http://pabloallison.blogspot.com>

Biographies

Anonymous: I graduated from college with a degree in communications and journalism in May. I've never been involved with a Zine before but I had a very awesome professor in college who was very into zines, so she was my inspiration for contributing! Hopefully I will get to work on more zines in the future!

Florence Grindall: I graduated with a history degree in 2008 from Lancaster University, I volunteered for a few months at the Oxfam Book Barn before taking a christmas job at Debenhams which lasted nine months. I then began my Masters Course at Leeds University in Activism and Social Change, it was here that I had my only other 'zine experience' when we produced a group effort for one of our modules on Campaigning for Social Change. I wrote about feminism, and am currently a member of the Huddersfield Feminist Collective. My Christmas temp job at The Body Shop has now ended so I resume my unemployment, I harbour dreams of making and selling clothes and other craft items.

J- Mo: I'm a displaced welsh punk now living in Leeds. I play in the hardcore band Facel Vega and run State Run Records. I wrote a zine called "Like Hell" with my friend Noel when I was sixteen.

Krystle: I'm an English Student and aspiring beekeeper.

Monika Mogi: Monika Mogi is from Tokyo, Japan and currently lives in London. She owns a webzine called baisermag.com

Mina and Chris Bird: We are involved in an art group based in London called 'Surplus Value Arts' and we are urban artists inspired by the beauty of the everyday. We identify with the hope of change and the longing for the power of imagination to overcome injustice and apathy. Mina is from Iran originally while Chris is a Londoner :) our website is www.newseda.com

Nuie: I'm completely new to zines, I was just amazed by the nerd feeling they gave me so I had to try to make a submission. I'm a 20 year old girl from Germany. I like reading books and being on tumblr. I'm in love with Lars von Trier, a little bit.

Introduction

Walking home from another week signing on at the Job Centre, I was feeling exhausted, ashamed, and faulty. "Why haven't you found a job?" Every week I had to walk in, sit down, and prove my worthiness to the grand charity of accusatory workers, defensive bureaucracy, and depersonalising budget cuts.

I was tired of feeling judged for being unemployed. I was tired of feeling like friends, family, academics, and potential employers were all looking down on me for not having found work yet. I was tired of society being so damn cruel to unemployed people that it seemed as though the unemployed had difficulty admitting even to each other what was going on for them.

That's when I decided to start this project. I want to create art as dialogue. Self-expression is one of the most powerful mediums we have to break through the isolation of shame and into the strength of resistance. I compiled this zine specifically to address adjusting from student life into unemployment, partially because that is my own experience, but also because that is so many of our experiences and I barely hear us talking about it. I want a platform to share our feelings, our struggles, our copings, our creativity, and our talents with each other. I hope this can be one piece of a continuing and challenging dialogue about unemployment and marginalisation in our society.

I'd like to give a massive thank you to everyone who has contributed towards this zine. I think you're fabulous. I'd also like to thank all those who are out there reading this. You're probably pretty fabulous, too.

With love,
Sarah Tea- Rex

If you have any feedback, comments, questions, or late night coffee induced ranting you'd like to share with me, shout me an e-mail at sarahtearex@gmail.com or check out www.sarahtearex.wordpress.com. Thanks again!

Your job search steps

I know I must take at least **three** steps each week.

What I did

Date

1 / 9 / 84

Sometimes I feel so fucking sad. I am lost and confused, stuck between wishing I could get a job, and feeling terrified about spending my life doing work I hate.

I observe my desires teetering between ultimate resistance (devotion to counterculture and an alternative lifestyle) and total submission (40hrs a week min. wage).

The middle ground is the ugliest. I'm too afraid to do either, while living day to day with an acute awareness that I'm treading water with my life in flux.

It seems the only way to get the job center off your back is to actually convince them that you really want a job, and you could do with their help.

Then expect them to swiftly ask you to sign your name and say they'll try and set you up a meeting with someone who can help in four weeks.

Until then you'll be scrutinised, dehumanised and made to feel like a parasite for claiming their allowance that barely keeps you above the breadline.

This system is a machine and it obliterates human beings.

1 / 9 / 84

1 / 9 / 84

1 / 9 / 84

It has evolved to maintain and grow a mass of unemployed whose poverty and tripled suicide risk serve a political end, along with the difficulty of mass organisation.

1 / 9 / 84

I haven't found the solutions to these problems, and I'm not expecting to any time soon.

1 / 9 / 84

Office stamp

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to live within a compass of expectation in which she or he acts by instinct and where it is imperative to be alert.
After all...

IT'S JUST ABOUT SURVIVAL!!!

It is likely that in a simultaneous manner, the one who analyzes and the one who is analyzed embark on a common process of discovery and rediscovery, a process in which they assimilate qualities and defects, situations and everything that could bring us closer to the answers of such basic questioning as in days gone by: "What? How? When? Where does it come from? Where is it going? Why? What for?"

When one is in the midst of a necessary and inevitable change, one does not think that it can inspire anyone else or that the situation may be attractive for someone to be able to create something from.

When such a conjuncture has been arrived at where there are only two soups to choose from, you can tell that the two are equally insipid. One does not arrive via a plan -it is rather a "succession of events", a "consequence of decisions" that brings us to this.

In boredom, frustration, rage... it is impossible to perceive anything. Because for anyone submerged in such a trance it becomes an idle exercise to analyze or become conscious of the moment, and so the individual is assumed



Spindle

Hail stoned, hail you beneath the satin hedgerow,
wallpapered over faces, overseas, over a life or three.
Fogged and fucked inside out over mind and matter,
broken language, broken jawn boxed and posted inwards.
Backwards bending, cleaned the shards of every fallen fatigue,
cotton windows, clotted thinking, papered faces in a pit.
Crawl inside, you're over stepped, mark the moon, wait.

"What is rubbish for some is treasure
for others"

"While I lose another gains"

...and so on successively.

What is common is also universal and it
is very easy to identify one's self with
the individual; what in that precise
moment becomes coincidence is exposed to
the sensation in the situation...

A vision with no relationship or direct
interest in appearance can, in its
impartiality, capture different
features, actions, attitudes or life in
its totality to divide up and magnify
their attributes and qualities...

Beyond cultural, economic and
ideological phenomena, entering into the
life of another person involves a
process of sensitization through which
what is lost in objectivity is gained in
substance, and things are discovered
that had never been imagined -soon
everything that attracted our attention
initially seems superfluous compared
with the new doors that open up to us,
introducing us to new possibilities.

INTRODUCTION

THE SPELL OF THE QUOTIDIAN

From the time I started to take my own decisions I became aware that the events that had occurred in my life (as a consequence of my decisions) were ordinary, just like my decisions.

(THERE'S ALWAYS A "BUT")

Nevertheless, what is ordinary for some, is extraordinary for others...

In particular, it is hard for me to assimilate that someone else would be more able to notice certain attributes that for me are invisible, that there exists in someone else the capacity to find something interesting just here, where I have been all my life.

It is probably easy to notice things in other people, because we are outside their circumstances, not therefore in the same situation; it is possible for us to process all the information in a more objective way.



"You are invited..."
to participate in our questionnaire,
'Destinations of Leavers from
Higher Education 2009/10'

I can't wait to show you how
useful my degree has been..

"Which of the following
statements best describes your
employment circumstances?"

"I am unemployed and
looking for employment,
further study or training".

Scrap the last bit and
I guess this is what I'll pick,
but quite a few of them would be a
good options for me to click;

"Looking after the home or family/
I am unable to work
or sick temporarily"

Combine this with..

"I am in unpaid work
which is voluntary"

and I'd give it a tick,
The situation is that I am
Sarah's bitch, I look after
the home, and I am sick of it.

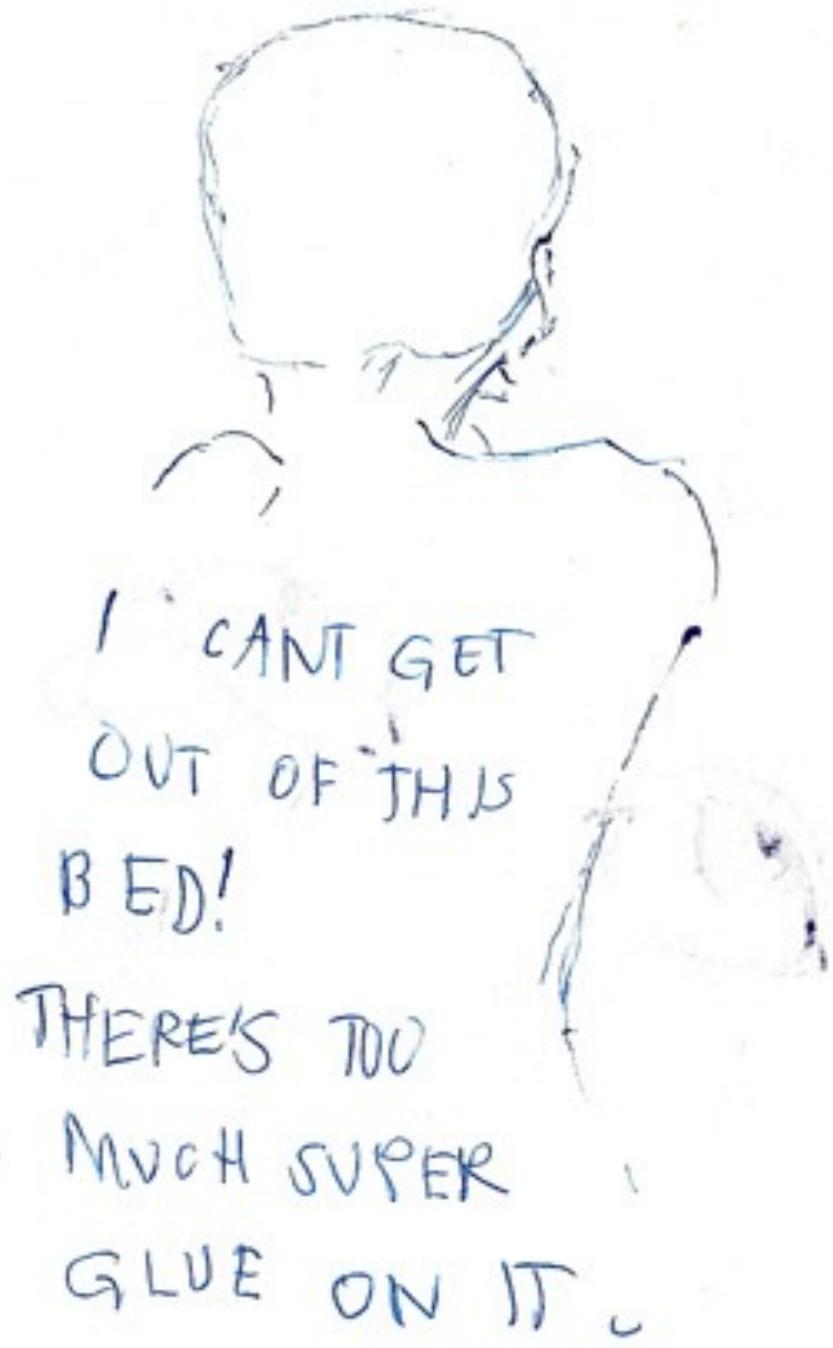
"I am permanently unable to work/retired"

is more like the reality that fits the bill,
'Retired' would be my favoured option still,
or even better simply - 'hired'.

I am permanently unable to work,
but there's nothing wrong with me,
No one will give me a job,
"Something will come along",
yeah we'll see..

I really want to
go out.

You really want to
stay inside and
sleep the light away.



I am able bodied, and of sound mind,
I'm that rare thing; a human being that's kind.
I have a degree and I'm no fool,
but the way they discriminate me is cruel,
I guarantee it would be fun
to work with me,
I would work, laugh, draw,
dance and make tea,
All I need is someone to give me a chance.
The problem is I am lacking in experience.
For each job there are 40, 80 or
100 people who apply,
They're not going to choose me,
it makes me want to cry.
I look for all sorts of jobs, and I apply
for any that I can,
I'd apply to be Santa Claus
but I'm not a man!
I have tried artist, typist, cattery assistant,
The job centre tells me just be persistent.

"I am taking time out in order to travel"

is the one I want to go for,
I want to boldly go where no
unemployed person has gone before.
No.. not Marks & Spencers..
Out into space, perhaps visit our Moon,
I asked at the job centre for Astronaut
vacancies but they think I'm a loon.

"You may be contacted in a
follow up survey in 3 years time",

Don't bother,
the same employment
circumstances will still apply.

Shauna Askew,
November 2010.



Work hard for your CV – be a Volunteer

by Rosy Dorfman (Leeds)

Employability is enhanced when you are an active community participant

The Big Society is one of providing extra hours for

Replacing the jobs that were made into redundant vacancies to be

Filled with the enthusiasts waiting to fill up their CV so that one day

They can have enough non-paid work experience to make them employable

So that they can settle down and feel like they have contributed diversely to the Big Society

Replace other people's work so that you can better compete to get one of the last jobs left.

Organisations facing cuts realise that when volunteers replace staff possibly services won't be compromised

Because the growing number of unemployed people and people dependent on welfare benefits will have nothing better to do than work for free for the job that once constituted a livelihood.

'One year mandatory community service',

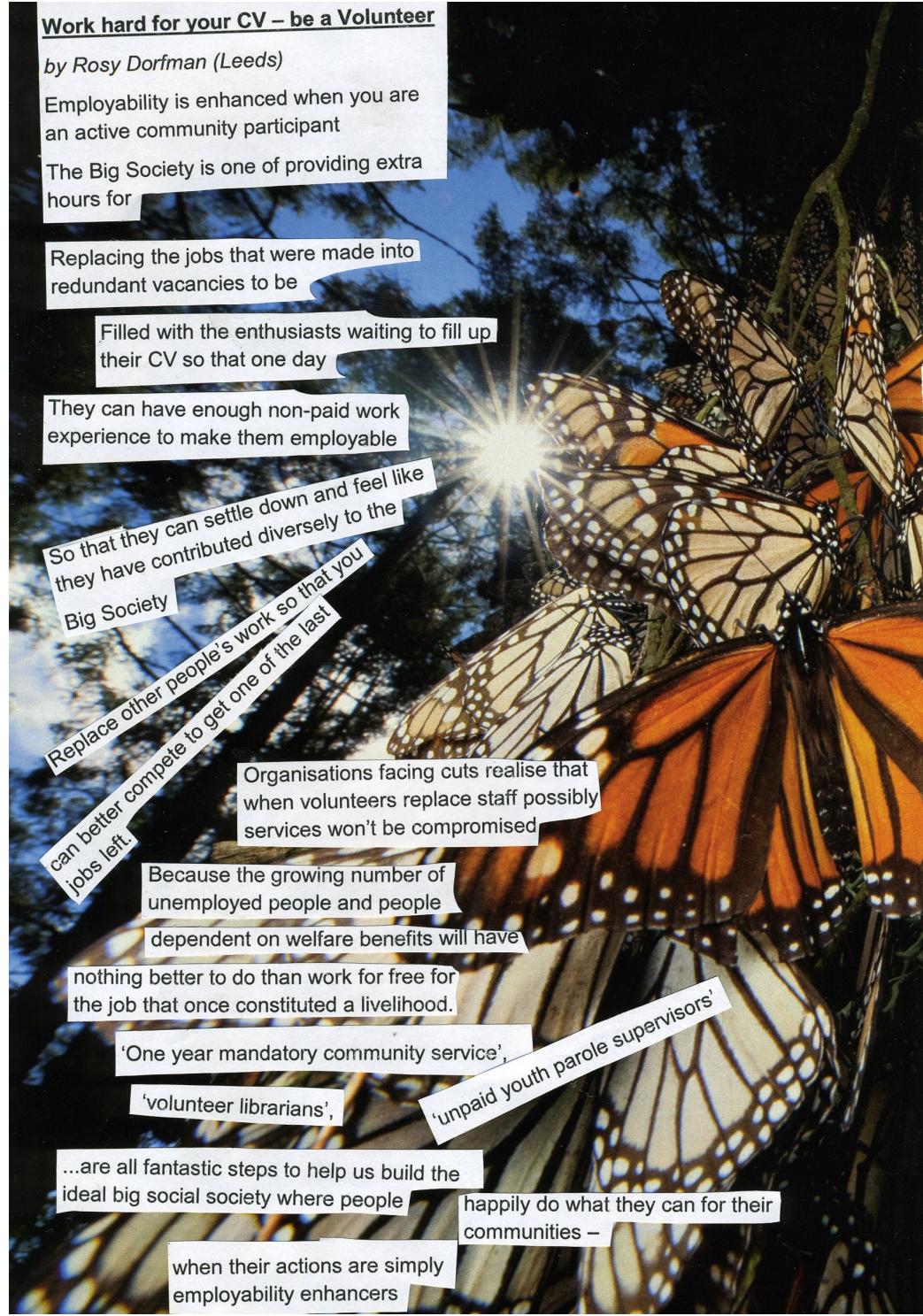
'volunteer librarians',

'unpaid youth parole supervisors'

...are all fantastic steps to help us build the ideal big social society where people

happily do what they can for their communities –

when their actions are simply employability enhancers



I also wondered about those other people who are claiming benefits, who can't find work, and for whom a university education is inappropriate or unattainable. Those working class types were unemployed long before the rest of us knew what the word meant, back when the economy was booming. Remember that? I'm middle class so unemployment is an unfortunate and undeserved diversion, but I'm entitled to benefits owing to the life taxes of my middle class parents, and thanks to my middle class house I can weigh up my options. But unemployment is no fun, and I have no taken a part time retail Christmas temp job, it's not what I want to do with my career, and I won't earn enough money to live independently but I'm off the unemployed list so that should help the figures. Maybe when all the graduates have taken part time retail work, leaving the job center to the tracksuit class the recession will finally be over?

My mother's argument was that she had worked all her life, and I was now entitled to cash this in, and claim it back in benefits- an unfortunate middle class attitude to taxation in my opinion. Friends supported my signing on, saying 'it's ok for you, you're not just gonna spend it all on drink like other people', the stigma of the benefit scrounger burns ever brighter, but not for me. My job center advisor asked me what type of work I was looking for, I said public sector but there didn't seem to be a box for that, so we settled on retail. The job center jobs have always struck me as a long list of jobs I'd never want, so I was worried she would sign me up to cleaning the call center for a fast food restaurant or something. But she informed me 'I had too much nose to be cleaner'. I wondered what nose was, and what happened to people without enough of it.

BUT AT LEAST people are now encouraged to engage in various activities

And not be fachdoof

- there is no rush to find the employment of your dreams right away

No need to settle down now, why not have some fun and explore different interests by

volunteering in a variety of roles?

Don't you feel liberated being 'unemployed' or 'underemployed'? Who needs money?

Learn practical skills and awareness of how society functions so that your

knowledge and depth of understanding can deepen

You don't have to stick with one role or career your whole life -

Be postmodern - explore different things - you only have one life - Just Live It

Why not explore the different options before settling on a distinct career path?

What is so great about being tied down to a stable job anyway?
Your future employer will love it, so you should too!

Your unemployment does not have to be cast as laziness and parasitic,

Improve your skills by taking someone else's job!

THERE ARE negatives and positives to the way that our postmodern society is

replacing employment with non-paid work experience.

In order to critically analyse the moralistic value attached to employment,

We have to critique how volunteering is being couched within the employment

framework – as an employability enhancer rather than viewing community participation

Are there limits as to what kind of volunteering is deemed CV building?

What kind of employers would be put off or turned on if they saw

How are do we shape our volunteering around how we perceive future employers

will read that action on our CV?

Who is excluded from 'volunteering' and neglected by the Big Society?

'occupied a lecture theatre'
'led a boycott against Israeli goods'
'fell in love with Foucault'
'camped in front of the RBS headquarters to fight climate change'
'learned and taught the technologies of anarchist direct action'
valuable in itself.
...included in a CV?

I believe the recent recession has been considered so very bad because it has affected us; the chattering classes who run the country and write the news. I mean if university graduates can't get a job then things really are bad, right? For the past six weeks I have claimed job seekers allowance at the job center, something I have found inconvenient but not as painful as I had imagined, but I strongly resisted for quite a while. It was in 2008 that my mother told me I should sign on, about half an hour after I graduated from my History degree. The suggestion that I forget the three years hard work, and the degree I had just achieved, to do something I could have done after leaving school at 16, was almost insulting. I changed my mind this year (after my Masters degree left me increasingly out of pocket and no more employable).

Not that I'm picking specifically on McDs, feel free to substitute any low paid, low skill job with limited career prospects. It's the 'should' and the 'I' that are the important words in the sentence, the point is that a degree carrying, university alum we feel we deserve better. As I struggle with the banal practicalities of unemployment (how much should one spend on shampoo now that one is £600 into ones overdraft, and why does my friend always want to eat lunch out when we go shopping) my mind wanders over the social implications of my predicament, seemingly inexorable from that old chestnut (a British favourite) 'class'. I am, and can never escape the fact that I am, Middle Class. My life has been made significantly easier by the affluence of my parents, who were able and willing to pay for my education, and provide a free place for me to live. And being middle class makes unemployment easier too.



I did always agree with the sentence which was something like: you only learn one thing at school: that you don't learn the important things at school. I found it in a book and it frequently went through my head when I spent the last months of my last year. There was something else that said that the schoolsystem was kind of unuseful because you get pushed to take subjects in which you already know you're going to fail, no interest, talent or what ever. So you waste your time in getting a bit of everything filled in by the teachers, but if you really want to be good at something, you shouldn't go to a school, at least not to a normal one. Yap this impressed me, and I told myself in the long vacation after school I would make the art port folio I failed to make during school time, I would go running every morning and learn Danish. I don't know why I'm always betraying myself. It starts with the food amount I consume and ends with whom I tell myself I would be in love with. Makes me kind of melancholic and I start to feel unnecessarily sorry for myself.

And that remains the spiel dealt out by the government, by schools and colleges, certainly I was told that graduates earn more than non-graduates (which is probably the case, when they have a job of course), and that I could get any job with a History degree. But right now graduate unemployment is at a 17 year high, the last time it was at the current 8.9% was 1993, an interesting time for the government to propose higher tuition fees. The high fees are something for the next crop of students to worry about, while the lack of appropriate employment opportunities is the major problem for the current. I say 'appropriate' jobs purposefully; the growing sense of frustration and resentment that recent graduates understandable have towards the system which assured them a decent employment return on their university investment, can be surmised in one sentence 'Why should I apply for a job at McDonalds?'

The Product of a Middle Class Upbringing

This is not how I thought my life would turn out; 23 with two degrees, living at home and unemployed. Living at home is harrowing in its own right; a lack of privacy and independence for someone who walk home at 2am in Leeds last year, now has to leave a note on the table when she goes to the corner shop. Equally moving back to the small town I grew up in is frustrating after living in the big city; going to the supermarket can only fill so much of your day and any trip to the cinema or shopping has the added financial implication of train fare . But in many ways the hardest part of living at home is my parent's attitude towards employment or unemployment. They definitely don't get the crushing depressing and lethargy that accompanies not working, and not being able to find work. Really it's a lack of understanding; in 'their day' a person could (supposedly) leave school at 16 and walk into unskilled work and become a Richard Branson type. And so few people went to university a degree definitely marked you out as a high flyer and made you destined to be a high earner.

So after school my parents and everyone else kept asking what my plans were. Would I go to university? Maybe medicine? Your grades were so fine, if you really wanted to be an artist, you would have dropped out of school three years earlier. The first priority should be the ability to make your own living, you know that we can't always pay for you. Studying art is an amusement that won't get you anywhere, we just want you to be happy, but you have to stop this romanticism. Gravity won't make no exception for you, you are just a normal person like everyone else, you should stop believing in this arrogant dream that you could be an artist.

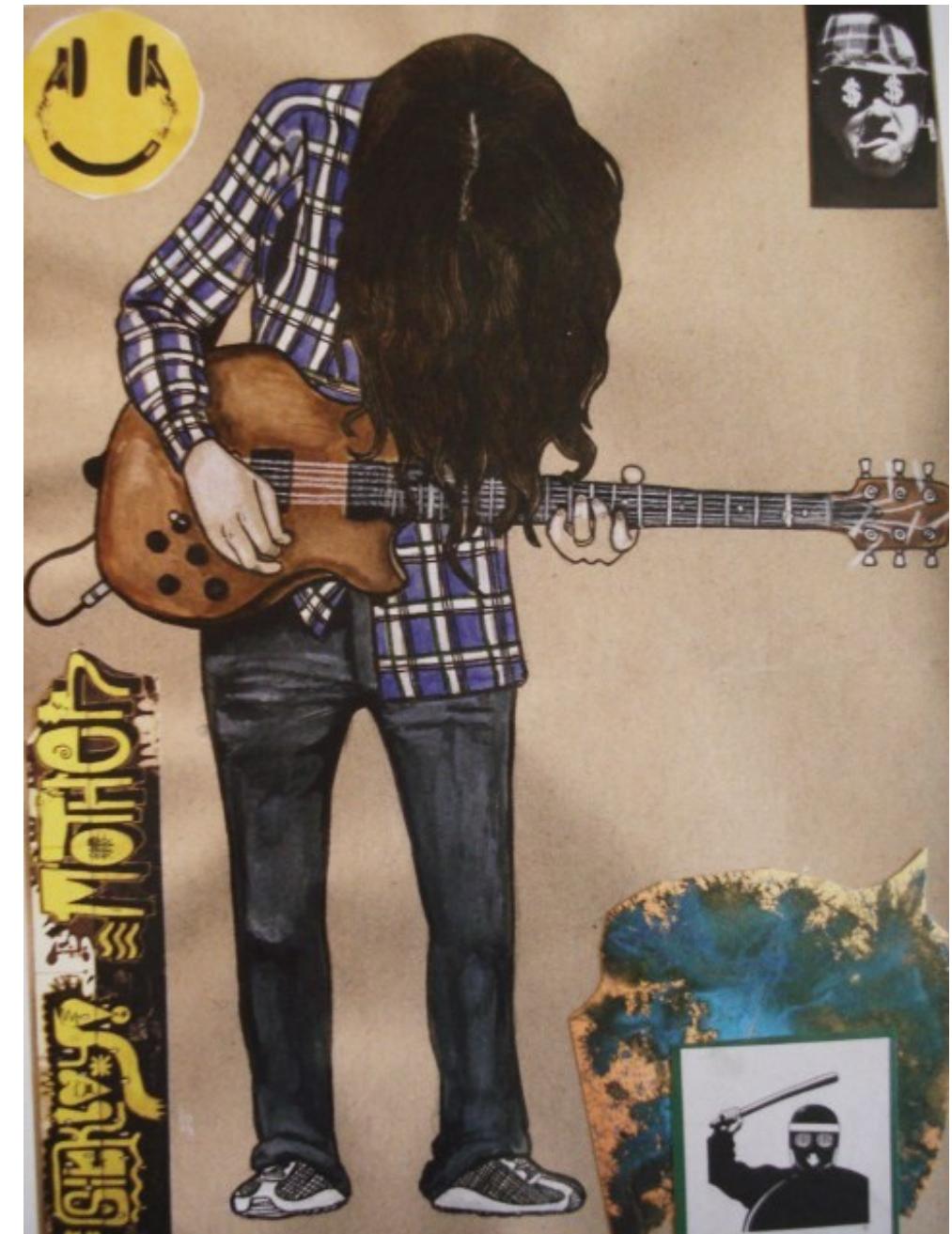
Talks like that really made me cry hard and some days when I was home alone, I just lied on the floor the whole time, doing nothing like paralysed. No running, no drawing. My friends went to universities and foreign countries, and since I had filled out the applying papers for dental medicine to stop the endless talks and arguments with my parents, I got accepted. My parents were happy but I was just like floating in an empty space, there wasn't any force that pulled me in any direction. So I just let the deadline pass and went on with doing nothing for four months by that time. And this is what I actually wanted to write

about, this feeling of wanting completely nothing, like the stranger when he stood at the beach. It's not that I hadn't been ambitious in school, but when I finished it I realized that those grades didn't mean a thing to me and that I had just followed the expectations of my parents. It is a scary feeling like there wasn't anything inside of my body or mind no goals, no passion or what else I had expected to find inside.

The time kept on passing and soon I wouldn't get any financial support by the state anymore and as you may imagine my parents rushed even more often into my room. You know, it is sad that if you have this huge amount of free time that everyone dreams of and you can't enjoy a bit.

Now I'm doing some work finally, it's kind of boring (restoration of old closets and picking apples) but I can listen to music the whole time, I like that. And I don't have to deal with people I'm not so good at that. The cool thing is, I finally started the port folio, though it's nearly too late by now I hope it'll work out.

Nuie, 20, Germany



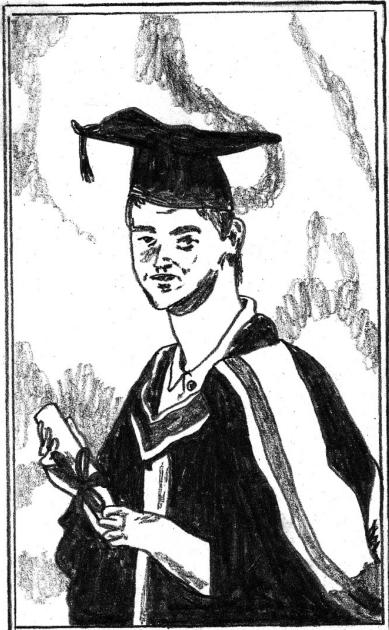




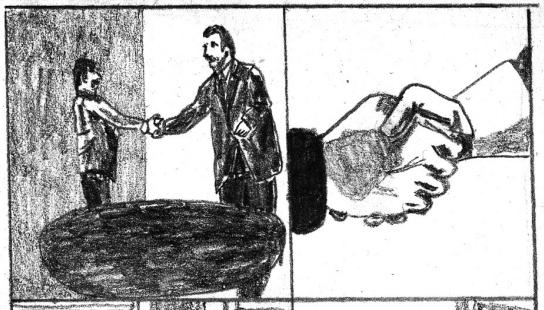
few months and fend for myself until I find a job, I sob when I think about how many people in America have felt the way I am feeling right now (worry, fear, uncertainty) for their entire life all because they did not have the luxury of a visit to the doctor without having to spend an unreasonable amount of money. I hope that I can work with others to steer our country away from funding war and destruction and towards providing it's citizens with jobs and medical coverage, because I can only cry at the thought of anyone feeling the way it feels to know you can't do something as simple as go to the doctor.

I was never that nervous about graduating into such a horrible economy. I had enough confidence in myself that I would eventually find some sort of job, even if I had to start out somewhere that wasn't my first choice for a career. I've been out of school for about two months now and had my first job interview last Thursday. However, an event as small as making an appointment with my dermatologist quickly changed my overly optimistic outlook. It's not that my confidence has been lowered or that I have less faith that I will eventually find a job, just that my perspective has suddenly been drastically changed. I wrote down the time and date for the appointment I had made with my dermatologist and left it on my kitchen counter. When my mom read it and had asked me what it was for, I told her and she said, "you better make sure you're still covered under the medical insurance." A wave of worry and fear instantly came with the thought that I may very well no longer have medical coverage and won't until I find a full-time job. Then I thought even longer about it and realized how privileged I had been for my whole life up until this point. Going to the doctor had always been such a nonchalant thing and with the realization that I could no longer do so with such ease really got to me. And while I may have to stick it out for a





Peter Willis
BA(HONS) ILLUSTRATION



I LOOKED AT YOUR SITE, AND IT LOOKS GOOD.
HOWEVER WE DO HAVE OUR REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR,
AND I'M NOT LOOKING FOR ANYONE NEW AT THIS
MOMENT. I REGRET TO INFORM YOU
Sorry
UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE UNABLE TO OFFER YOU
MORE POSITIVE NEWS. WE ARE UNABLE TO OFFER YOU
ANY WORK AT THIS TIME
YOUR APPLICATION HAS
BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL
BUT DECIDED ANOTHER CANDIDATE *best of luck* DEMONSTRATED THEIR SUITABILITY
MORE CLEARLY FOR THIS POSITION
WE'VE OFFERED THE INTERNSHIP TO SOMEONE ELSE

