

Poeks's Blog 2000-2008

Idle Brain

2000-11-25
Hamburg, Germany

I still find it somewhat bizarre that I am sitting here in this hotel room. Just kind of sitting here in this cold room, smoking a cigarette. Scratch that -- this is the first time I find it bizarre.

Being alone is nothing new, granted, but I guess being alone sans computer is creating the bizarre effect. I think (I know) I was attributing my intermitant loneliness to Liebeskummer (Note: if I ever write about Amsterdam, that will clarify things a bit), but now I think it may have more to do with the lack of computers in my life. Always a person-un-related answer, there is. My idle brain is a scary thought indeed. I think I have developed the need to be constantly occupied, and without my computer crutch, I am at a loss to find things to do. Arg, there is a psychology term for this, but I can't remember it.

So this idleness is illiciting disapproval from my brain. I feel like I should be *doing something*, although I am hard-pressed to determine exactly what. Meeting people, or some such thing.

I have no plan -- that's for sure. Perhaps I need a plan.

Yesterday I bought a pack of cigarettes. I'm not exactly sure why. Right now they are sitting in the garbage can in my hotel room, though I keep taking them out and smoking them, one by one.

Idle brain.

Dumbass me

2000-12-04
Berlin, Germany

Today was a sad day indeed. On this morning I awake to find that during the previous night of intense revelry, I had managed to lose my backpack. This in of itself was no huge loss; it was a nice bag, granted, and with it I lost some books (my precious TimeOut Berlin), stamps, pocketknife, etc. But the one fatal, unforgivable mistake I made that night (other than getting too drunk to keep track of my stuff, of course) was to put my pride and joy, the meticulous catalog of the last two months of my life, my JOURNAL in that burgundy pack. That stupid little notebook, frayed and battered, lost forever to the throbbing Berlin night. Page after page of witty reparte and insight gone, gone I say! Had I lost the New Orleans section alone, I would have been rather depressed, but this was numbing. [insert dramatic sigh]

By the time I had made the trek over to Nate's hostel, I was already folding up into myself, but he proved a sympathetic shoulder to cry on. We left a note at the scene of the crime and went on with our lives. We indulged in one of my favorite past-times: browsing through bookstores. Nothing can envelope me so warmly, so securely, as a good bookstore with a cafe and ample seating. Later that night we topped the evening off with a viewing of Charlie's Angels (English version). I felt a bit silly seeing the stupid movie *again*, but the crowd was fun and we cheered for Lucy, which was fun. Lucy, by the way, is apparently a tremendous bitch in real life, but how can you not love someone who describes herself as a "serious accordion player."

Nathan and I said our teary goodbyes on the U-Bahn. He is off to Amsterdam, but I refuse to go back there for another round of decadence just yet. I walked home from Alexanderplatz recalling Winona Ryder's heart-wrenching lines in Beetlejuice: "I am alone. I am utterly alone." Wishing I were not quite so moronic and irresponsible, I fell asleep in my off-white hostel sleep sack.

Grammar woes

2000-12-05
Berlin, Germany

Today was a fairly mopey day. After finally giving up on my old backpack and journal, I set out to the Kaufhof for a replacement. Bought me one of those oh-so-trendy shoulder sling packs and a small wallet. It was at this point I realized not all of Germany's paper money is the same size, as some of it fit in my wallet, while some bills did not. Dumb. Bought a new German-English dictionary, which put me at ease. Then took the U-Bahn down to Ku'damm to bask in the warmth of the Hugendubel bookstore.

I've taken to buying one ride passes for the U-Bahn instead of the more expensive day passes. The one ride ones are valid for two hours, after stamped in a machine that prints the date and time, but I usually don't stamp it until my last (or second to last) ride of the day. I figure if checked I can always play the dumb American who didn't know any better. Nathan has told me this is effective.

Read some of David Sedaris's new book, *Me Talk Pretty Some Day* (okay, for the second time), which details the time he spent living in France. I related to the language issues, and was particularly move by the discussions between French-as-a-foreign-language students.

Like Sedaris, my most poignant struggle with my foreign language of choice may well be with the gender of nouns (German has three genders: feminine, masculine, and neuter). Certainly the most sinister branch of German grammar is the way nouns, adjectives, and definite articles change according to German's four cases: nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive (all of which I have likely spelled wrong). Imagine having eight different version of the word "the" and having to switch them, on the fly, depending on where each noun resided in the sentence. This is about half the struggle (the other half having to do with almost equally gnarly adjective endings).

I am proud to say that after having had all these convoluted rules pounded into my brain by my zealous high school German teacher, I am actually able to correctly assemble the proper order of the evil phrases. The problem lies, however, in the fact that I can never remember what gender a given noun is in the first place. Everytime I get to a noun in a sentence, I have to mentally sound out each specific "the" until I get to one that sounds right ("Hmm. das Tag? die Tag? der Tag? Yes, der Tag") before I can carry on with the sentence. As a result, in rushed situations I am often forced to just assign random genders to nouns and hope for the best. It's unfortunate that such a simple and trivial mistake can so quickly label you as a non-native. Sigh.

Paying the bill

2000-12-18

Berlin, Germany

the germans strike me as more systematic that efficient (which is of course, a major stereotype about germans). efficiency seems to be an occasional, inadvertant side effect of this systematic approach to everything.

there are few ways to help cashiers out in germany, other than paying exact change: 2 coins is the maximum you'll ever get back for any dollar (or coin) amount (as opposed to the US's 4), due to the 2dm coin and the 2p coin. my favorite lazy technique of paying, say, 21dm for a 16dm bill is scarcely less irritating than 20dm (as 4dm can be paid out in two coins).

saw muppets weihnachtsgeschichte. "it's a children's movie," the man at the counter warned. i nodded, sagely. for 2 bucks i got the theater to myself. this movie choice turned out to be a less than wise one, as the squeaky german muppet voices were difficult to understand.

ever wonder why 7 is two syllables? all the other single digits are one.

How are you?

2000-12-18

Berlin, Germany

i never really felt as though i fit in with the whole backpacker culture, but now i feel even more removed. i can hardly participate in the where-have-you-been/going conversations. it's like someone asking "how are you?" and being the one who launches into the grim details of their upper resperatory infection: there is no graceful, brief way to tell my story.

in german i have a new curtness to my interactions with the service industry. where i was previously always fumbling and twisting and winding to find politeness, i am now very to-the-point. it's a nice change, bit i feel it often accidentally comes off as rudeness.

open flames abound in european restaurants - never in the US.

chivalry doesn't really exist in germany, unlike spain, whose public transportation is a constant game of musical chairs. standing and sitting, young and old, male and female.

Daylight Savings

2000-12-18

Berlin, Germany

starting to reassess my opinions of daylight savings. having a whole nation do something as arbitrary and trivial as set their clocks back an hour is kind of silly while you are a participant, but it would sure be nice not to have complete darkness at 4 pm.

i can usually tell when something doesn't sound right in german, which is a nice bit of intuition to possess. the hard part, of course, is knowing how to correct it. too often i find myself saying something i *know* is wrong, because my verbal brain can't move fast enough to correct it. this drives me insane. after almost every conversation with a german, i find myself mumbling, replaying the conversation with the things i should have said. prepositional phrases really get me. they are so idiomatic.

Stagnation

2000-12-20

Berlin, Germany

i am getting so frustrated with myself. everyday i have this choice to make: whether to do serious job/apt hunting or to do something cool, like go to nuernberg or potsdam. everyday i resolve to do some *serious* job hunting. and yet everyday i manage to do absolutely nothing. my most productive day consists of reading, futzing about on the internet, and maybe seeing a film (and if i'm really feeling industrious, it might even be auf deutsch).

i have options. there are tons of apartments to call about. some people have even emailed me back. several companies have emailed me about my resume, asking me to call. tomorrow.

it's this german thing - i am more than a little insecure about my speaking ability. there is no situation in which my incompetence would be more apparent, i muse.

Validated ticket

2000-12-20

Berlin, Germany

ambulance drivers must have to wear earplugs - their sirens are so damn loud.

sometimes i practice sounds while walking down the street, assessing how my mouth and tongue change with similar constructions. occasionally, i will catch myself in the middle of a string of practice "ch" sounds on the ubahn. "hhhhyyyyy hhhkkk," as other passengers attempt to avoid eye contact.

making primal noises in a language is an important part of feigning being a native. you can't say "oh," you have to say "achso." not "um," but "em." there are many more that i don't know, and this makes me uncomfortable.

sometimes when i am sitting on the subway or something, i look down at myself and my knuckles are white, holding a deathgrip on my backpack, my teeth are clenched, and my muscles are tense.

i am constantly hallucinating green-clad patrol men with their berets on the ubahn. i rarely ride with a validated ticket, and consequently guilt follows me always on the ubahn. evidently, i am the *sole* person in berlin (and perhaps the rest of germany as well) taking advantage of their naive subway system. even other travelers apparently don't: they'll mention how they "really forgot" to stamp their ticket and got caught, but i am the only one who willingly and knowingly cheats the system. it's too expensive anyway.

went back to the hostel. chatted with michelle and two germans from berlin whose reason from being at the hostel was not

entirely obvious. michelle has been increasingly more nice to me, in her manic little way. i am not entirely sure how to interpret this, but mu subconscious cynic says it's neediness. michelle is also in berlin for the long haul. she confided in me about her crappy day and how she is having a hard time adjusting, which was a nice gesture.

i bullshitted with the two germans, an older looking andy and young and wholesome kyle, before heading off to bed.

kathi sent me an email saying she chose someone else for the room. crushing.

Anatomy of the Berlin sidewalk

2000-12-23

Berlin, Germany

the anatomy of the berlin tourist sidewalk. there are five different types:

1. completely oblivious: obviously not looking where they are going and frequently bump into others to prove it (most common)
2. slow-pokes: walk painfully slow, either old or admiring scenery or some asinine thing
3. pushy bastards: people who cannot bear to be deviated from their speed and path, which results often in the #1 type phenomenon of raining into people (usually not tourists)
4. weavers: usually old folk, who as they drive: all over the road. they are impossible to pass, as they seem to *know* you are behind them - every step you take is mimicked by the weaver in front of you.
5. chain gang: this is when a group of tourists (sadly, usually slow poeks, or obvious, or both) forms a sort of horizontal chorus line (sometimes going so far as to link hands a la red rover). they are virtually impenetrable. one should be allowed to shove one of the end members into the rest of them, thus creating a domino effect and saving other innocent pedestrians from persecution.

Bitte schoen

2000-12-23

Berlin, Germany

saw a guy taking a leak at zoo station, steps away from full view of tourists meandering by.

i hate it when servers say "bitte schoen" (you're welcome) before i say "danke." i feel as if i should initiate any exchanging of thanks.

lots of unnecessary announcements are made on berlin transport: "exit left/right" (as if it would be far too difficult to figure out which door to exit from on our own), "careful, a train is passing through." hmm.

Snowball ambush

2000-12-24

Berlin, Germany

Today I had planned on going to potsdam and experiencing some quaintness. At breakfast, however, I was ambushed by Marc, the "actor who moves" from New York. I acquiesced to his demand that i join the group gallivanting around the city for the day. A glance outside revealed an unlikely early Xmas present: snow. I can't even remember the last time I saw snow at Christmas - it almost never happens in New Jersey. Hmm, and certainly not in San Francisco. I met two guys from Orlando at breakfast, Alex and Brian. Also: Fiona from Australia, who is a kindergarten teacher. Some women from Argentina.

So out we went, into the snow. Between snowball fights, we walked along the Berlin Wall at the East Side Gallery (didn't realize it was four blocks from the hostel), went to a pub in mitte (some nice heisse Schokolade mit Bailey's and Berliner Weisse mit Schuss). The evening was low-key - went to bed at 12.

Had a snowball fight with a group of young berlin boys. They ambushed us coming out of the pub: I survived only being hit in the leg, but Dave suffered a direct hit to the face (he said he deserved it - I don't doubt it).

Alex told me about how he worked at [Disney World](#) for a year (now i have the opportunity to ride the teacups for free!). He told me all sorts of interesting tidbits about the park:

- Mickey and co. characters can be no taller than 5'.
- the characters are only out there for 15 min shifts, due to the danger of heat exhaustion
- before starting there, one has to attend classes at "[Disney University](#)"
- there is a tunnel system that runs under the whole of the park, presumably populated by dwarf miners

A Milton Bradley game

2000-12-25

Berlin, Germany

Today was a decadent, lazy day. I sat around in the hostel until 5 with the gang, waiting for our dinner date at this Irish pub ([Emerald Isle](#)) that does Xmas dinner for those away from home.

Last night: met guy from New Orleans, Harold. Sarcastic frat boy type in Berlin for a few days before going to Grenoble to study for six months.

At last the time came, and I went on a wild goose chase to rustle up the address of the pub (which no one seemed to know). The meal was indeed a decadent one: turkey, ham, stuffing, sprouts, carrots, soup, roast potatoes, brandy pudding, wine, and beer. The snow continued to fall outside while we stayed snuggled up in the pub for 10 hours, drinking and playing [Jenga](#). People are easily sucked into that game and get strangely serious about it (even - or perhaps especially - when drunk). The only problem is that you really can only get to 20 rows; after that, one row has to stand on a single piece (disaster ensues). After we got bored playing, we switched to building structures out of the blocks.

Michelle (another Australian) was too hungover to come to dinner. She told me the day before that she was leaving for Italy to snow board for a few months.

Berlin seems to have a relaxed position on open marijuana use: I've smelled it often on the streets and even in the pub last night. I've read there's much lobbying to legalize it here.

Neo in a cage

2000-12-26

Berlin, Germany

Went to Potsdam with the gang, which was nice, but very unproductive. Spoke to a woman from Chile, Rosaria. She told me all sorts of tales about South America from the political situation to the insanely competitive beauty contest in Venezuela. She lived in England when she was young, which explained a lot, as she spoke flawless, colloquial English. (She related to me how her english tutor used to call her a cheeky little child, because she used to always try to kick him in the balls.) Went to a cafe in Potsdam. Dave appears to be wearing on everyone's nerver a bit - every comment out of his mouth is either boastful or extremely negative. He has this thing about details: grilling me on exactly what i had for breakfast, telling me the train is going to leave in **20 minutes**, as if that statement should elicit some rash response.

Went to a club called the Matrix underneath Warschauer Strasse Ubahn station by the hostel. The place itself was pretty cool-looking, very raw, etc. It was packed, and the music was crap. Never before have I seen punks dancing in metal cages to madonna oldies. I basically only went with the anticipation of drug acquisition. Eventually I built up enough courage to ask someone if he knew where one could purchase some Ecstasy (not that that's what I wanted). He said no, but then I got wrapped into an hour-long conversation with him.

As it turned out (we switched to English after a while), he was originally from Poland, but studying in Berlin. He hated the Matrix, even though he appeared to be there alone. He told me people here were only drunk and angry; this was not an atmosphere to find any narcotic substances. I immediately felt the urge to leave, but held it back, as mike seemed an interesting chap. He told me about various *good* clubs in Berlin, among them the infamous gay/mixed [SO36](#) in [Kreuzberg](#). He wasn't gay, he insisted to me. This made me instantly pity him as a. my gaydar was going off like crazy and b. he appeared to instantly be in love with me, a phenomenon that occurs mainly in gay, bi, or later-to-be-de-closeted fellows. After 4 or so he walked me, like a gentleman, all the way back to the hostel, where we parted. I promised to call after I got back from Sweden.

Forgetful thief

2000-12-27

Berlin, Germany

back to the "real world" today. emailing a billion companies. each company that emails me back always adds the disclaimer that my qualifications were good, but they just didn't have a position, or they're looking for someone long-term. their throwaway lines all sound like they are breaking up with me: "it's not you, jen, it's me."

everyone is slowly trickling away.

this evening i returned home to find out from dave (who delivered the information, naturally, with a dramatic flourish) that my locker had been broken into (harold's - from new orleans - as well). for some reason i cannot fathom, none of our stuff was stolen. it was clear someone had rifled through my backpack, but evidently they didn't find my \$1000 of camera equipment worthy of stealing. harold had all his credit cards in there, but none of them were taken. seems like a lot of work to prove a point.

Excursion of Decadence 2001

2001-01-18

Berlin, Germany

Liebe GruÃfÃ...Ã,e aus [EasyEverything](#) Berlin, where some of Europe's most irritating youth congregate to pay to check their email and listen to cheesy, American, pop mp3s!

You know, I was thinking. And when I get to thinking, trouble often ensues. So let this be your fair warning: if'n you don't like trouble, it would be in your best interests to delete this email immediately. Possibly, although you may consider this extreme, you might also take a shower. Those not faint of heart can meet me on the other side of the asterisks...

And here I thought nobody loved me! Right, the thinking. About a month ago I sat musing about the weekend of drinking and debauchery I spent last June with twenty-odd pals in Las Vegas, an extended toast to my 21st birthday. Granted, the debauchery could have been a bit more fervent, but setting out to drink heavily and possibly get married, we all achieved at least one of our goals. Hell, [Mandy](#) Moore was even there, and she won three grand at Harrah's blackjack table. And while I personally still bear no band of gold, I feel confident we all partook in fine enactments of the classic sins of sloth and gluttony. So what if no one got arrested?

Anyway, as I was saying: I sat there waxing nostalgic, probably in a [Turkish kebab shop](#) serving bad falafel, when it hit me. (An idea, not the falafel - *rimshot*!) What could really stop me from organizing a decadent trip to Vegas *every year*?? Besides Germany's ubiquitous Mad Cow disease? Furthermore, why limit ourselves to just Las Vegas when there are myriad other famous cities of sin around the globe?

So then and there I made a pact with myself (ahehehehem): I will organize an Excursion of Decadence every summer until the number of participants becomes too large and unwieldy. Then I will be forced to hire someone to do it for me. (Hopefully DIGI will have gone back up to 60 by then.) That was the point of this email, for those who missed it:

EXCURSION OF DECADENCE AUGUST 10, 2001: NEW ORLEANS!!!

Okay, I snuck in the New Orleans part without telling anyone, but you see what I mean. So yeah, New Orleans. I see that gleam in your eye; there is no sense in denying yourself this yearly indulgence. I will be accepting none of the following excuses:

- I live too far (where too far >= 3000 miles (or less than, for that matter...))
- I am too poor (see website soon for details on the... E.O.D. fund!)
- I am a parent now (an especially invalid excuse for my parents)
- other

After the ups and downs of last year's trip, this one promises to be the ultimate in calculated splurging. It will (hopefully) involve:

- an actual loose agenda
- bayou tours and possibly vicious alligators
- voodoo priestesses
- [grenades](#)
- tour guides who bear a striking resemblance to Kara C
- a free disposable camera with which you can wistfully catch me at my worst moments
- food better than anywhere in Europe
- guys asking you to show them your tits

Feel free to send this email on to your partner, your mom, your dog, or anyone I may have inadvertently (or purposely) forgotten. For your convenience, I have done a bit of research on flight prices from various areas of departure. (Note, I didn't try very hard on the int'l ones, so expect me to find better ones in the future. If your city isn't listed below, let me know, and I'll ferret out some flight details for you. Also, if you are a student, rates will be about 50 bucks cheaper.)

- Berlin \$575.00
- Boston \$201.00
- Frankfurt \$575.00
- Honolulu \$613.80
- London \$758.00
- New York \$170.00
- Philadelphia \$213.00
- San Francisco \$295.00
- Stockholm \$669.00
- Tokyo \$2141.00
- Toronto \$418.00

AH, did I forget to mention that I will be doing all of the legwork (well, that which I don't shuck off onto an underling, at least) short of paying for the trip for you??? What a bargain, what a bargain! Expect hotel rooms to cost between \$30 and \$150 per night, depending on how cheap you are and how many people you can tolerate in your room. How many nights you spend in New Orleans depends on how much a part of the working world you are and how much you do or do not live in Germany, where one gets approximately 57 weeks of vacation per year. Most people, I suspect, will be arriving on Friday, August 10th, and leaving on Sunday, August 12th. I myself will most likely be arriving on Thursday, August 9th, and leaving on Monday, August 13th.

[Council Travel: http://www.counciltravel.com](http://www.counciltravel.com)

[Hotwire: http://www.hotwire.com](http://www.hotwire.com)

[Tiss: http://www.tiss.com](http://www.tiss.com)

Eventually, *inevitably*, one might say, an [Evite](#) will follow.

Until then (ÃfÃÃ,Ã°ÃfÃÃ,Ã°ÃfÃÃ,Ã°before you forgetÃfÃÃ,Ã°ÃfÃÃ,Ã°ÃfÃÃ,Ã°) I need you to do two things:

1. MARK AUGUST 10TH ON YOUR CALENDAR. Right. Now.
2. SEND ME AN EMAIL telling me whether or not you think you'd be interested in joining us.

A few months from now you will be (unless you threaten legal action)

receiving another Excursion of Decadence email detailing the exciting events that have transpired in the interim. Until then...

Spider on the Wall

2001-07-17

Westfield, New Jersey

this morning i feel all woozy again when i smoked. yesterday morning was particularly strange in that respect. i attempted several times to smoke (yes, i am one of those people who smoke even when their body clearly wants no part of such actions), but found that i couldn't because it made me feel so dizzy and numb. i mean, sure, when you first start smoking there's that slight buzzed feeling (and of course i am past that period in my smoking career), but this was like being on drugs or something. very strange. Hildi is telling me smoking is not helping my circulation.

so i went to the doctor today for a physical last weekend, because i had what i would describe as "decreased sensitivity" in my left forearm and lower leg. at first i kind of just thought it might have to do with my lack of eating - i figured i was just malnourished and had poor circulation or something. but then i started to think about my whole left eye twitch issue, which has been like a daily ongoing thing for months. still, i felt like it was probably just paranoia, as we all know i have the tendency towards such compulsive thoughts (further reference: the berlin gum incident). so i went to the doctor. he did some reflex tests and stuff and told me to go see a neurologist. so the whole day i was freaking out, unable to concentrate on anything but why, oh why, can i not feel what my pinky is touching. i wepted the dramatic, self-pitying tears of ben stiller in there's something about mary for longer than i would personally like to admit. i feel nauseous and weird all the time, not really too sure on my feet, and i haven't had a good (sober, that is) night's sleep since i got home. so now i feel like getting drunk all the time, just so i don't have to feel weird and nauseous.

generally speaking, i don't really like to do things so much with my left hand. typing, eating, and writing all feel kind of weird and disconcerting, although fairly negligible. the stuff that makes feel really nauseous is when i carry stuff with my left hand, because it feels like i will at any moment drop said item. even so, i sometimes just do it anyway. to prove something? trottely.

jeez, i feel like i used to not be so paranoid. drugs are bad. in my room in berlin there were all these pegs in the wall and ceiling. occasionally, when i was sitting in my room doing nothing, i would look up at the pegs and be absolutely, 100 percent certain that one of them was a spider. i would stare at it and think, you know jen, that is not a spider, and furthermore, it is not crawling towards you. usually i could convince myself that it was the same peg that had always been there, but occasionally i couldn't mentally accept that and had to leave the room. one time (and, to my credit, this was during one of those drug taking months) i was so convinced that the damn thing was indeed a spider ambling towards me that i got a broom from the kitchen and gave it a few good whacks. after a while i realized that the spider was really a nail embedded in the wall and was certainly not going anywhere. i felt pretty ridiculous.

Dude

2001-07-18

Westfield, New Jersey

Hildi has somehow developed the incredibly irritating habit of prefacing every statement with "dude", and i, ever susceptible to picking up on other people's mannerisms have started using it as well. even the mannerisms that people associate with _moi_ are usually grafted from other sources. the don't-cry-for-me-argentina argument-punctuator gesticulation, for instance: pilfered from mandy in san francisco. who i suspect got it from Big Red, although i know Patsy Cline is want to use it as well. i wonder if they all still do that or just me.

Paranoia, the destroyer

2001-07-19

Westfield, New Jersey

blood tests on saturday and neurologist appointment the following thursday. i am hoping the blood tests reveal whatever it is that's wrong with me, as i have no particular desire to go to a brain doctor (although i think it would be kind of cool to get an mri). brain is a weird word. i feel like i am going to have to give him an itemized list of all the bad things i do to my body. hate going to the doctor. i am thinking medical doctors don't have the need to maintain the objective perspective on patients' actions that psychologists do. to me it seems more that, in the realm of physical woes, one becomes sick

because of one's actions, not one acts in ways harmful to oneself or society due to one's sickness. at least, that seems to be the way it goes for me...

i have been trying to transfer my poeks.com domain to a different isp the past couple days, and my sanity level is quickly depleting. paypal keeps telling me i can't send money, because i am over my spending limit. hmm, perhaps this has to do with one recent transaction to a certain tall, lanky san franciscan. the other day my credit card company called up and asked me if i wanted to pay my balance over the phone via my checking account. i said sure and gave them my number. after i hung up, my dad starting going on about how that could have been a hacker and i just lost all the money in my account. he seemed so convinced and made me so paranoid that i paypal-ed Ignatious most of the money in my account. eventually got through to my credit card company, who verified that, yes, they *do* do checking account transfers over the phone. lawd.

At Your Own Risk

2001-07-20

Westfield, New Jersey

i decided to do a mindless entry right now to calm myself down. was having bad panic attack just now. was so afraid i felt like i couldn't breathe. hands still shaking. yesterday was pretty good, for the most part, but today is back to bad. i intellectually know that i really, really should not do things like smoke and take ephedra, as they obviously are effecting my health in a very negative way, but i just can't discipline myself. a few minutes ago i was seriously considering getting drunk (current time of day: 12:07 pm), because it seems to be the only sure inducer of oblivion at my disposal.

at night, when i go to the lengths of actually talking to another human being in person, i feel so much more at ease in body/mind. left to its own devices, my mind spins out of control during the day. jen, you are going to die. jen, you need to just accept this and get over it, because, man, you are just gonna die. i almost feel like my paranoia has assumed its own identity: my brain has formed a new partition. there is me, and there is some-bad-thing, and i almost wish for the oblivion of non-existence, so i won't have to listen to myself. so i won't have to feel like shit, listless, wanting to do *something*, but not able to get started, physically as well as mentally. suicide is something i can say, with certainty, that i haven't thought about for a good three years, but this some-bad-thing is not good either.

it makes me mad, because depression, which enveloped me so completely in high school, is something i really thought i eliminated from my life.

Terabyte hard drive

2001-07-22

Westfield, New Jersey

in the past two months Hildi and i have become a lot closer than i ever would have expected. it seems like no matter where i am or what phase of my life i'm in, i can never manage more than one really close friendship. talking to Hildi makes me realize how little about myself i usually divulge to people i consider close friends. that i have issues with selfishness and arrogance in conversation is my usual rationale. hm.

i once told my friend Mary Magdaline that if i could invent anything cool, it would be a thought recorder. it always seem as though when i'm walking or just sitting smoking a cigarette outside, i come up with these wonderful soliloquies which i forget in entirety as soon as i sit down to the computer. ray kurzweil said that in the next one hundred years we will be able to implant memory enhancers right into our brains. i will be the first one to sign up for that particular procedure...

It's toasted

2001-08-01

New Brunswick, New Jersey

i was running low on cigarettes on the way back from chinese cinema last night, so we stopped at a raceway gas station to get some mo. i left Hildi in the car, that trottely song that goes "will i ever faaaall in love? and if i do will it beee with yooou?" blaring out the open windows, a song which is customarily stuck in my head about 23 hours out of any given day. i bought a pack of lucky strikes, and although the package appeared to be unusually small, i let it go and got back in the car. it wasn't until i got home that i realized that jerk sold me *unfiltered* lucky strikes. i mean, i didn't even think they *sold* unfiltered cigarettes at gas stations; how could that man have possibly thought purchasing such a thing was the objective of

a 22 year old female? well, it was only four bucks, so i guess i can't really complain, even though i constantly find myself spitting out pieces of tobacco. the real problem lies in the fact that i just know those errant bits of tobacco are ending up all over my face, because i am just like that really tall guy from patrol squad who had a whole chunk of banana stuck to his face. i just don't notice those things, and nobody ever tells me, either, because evidently it's more amusing not to.

Break on Thru

2001-08-02

New Brunswick, New Jersey

on tuesday Hildi and i made the laborious journey once again to new brunswick for her class. on the way over, she told me a tale of woe about how the sociology dept advisor told her she, a person who desperately wants to leave penn state university and never come back, that she couldn't graduate this fall. evidently, her advisor is a moron who neglected to alert her to the fact that she was missing a "cap-stone" sociology course that would prevent her from being able to receive her diploma. this is depressing mostly for selfish reasons: Hildi will *again* spend a whole year in a place far, far away from where i am, and we were planning on going to korea this winter... don't know how that will work out. another depressing factor is that she will just look at me with this dramatic desperation in her eyes, and i feel so helpless and impotent for not being able to make that go away.

we saw chunking express at chinese cinema, and while it doesn't have gong li in it, it does have faye wong. Hildi suspected the movie was a bootleg copy, as the subtitles were white and unreadable, not to mention grammatically incorrect to a comical extent. are they really allowed to use "thru" in english subtitles?

a note to Hildi during class: i think i would go insane if i were a teacher, if only because when you erase things from the board it leaves all this chalkdust. the satisfying contrast of white on a completely black background would be a maddeningly elusive goal. i guess if i had a wet sponge ever waiting in the wings it would be okay, but then you would always be waiting for certain areas to dry. to which Hildi replied: what's with that asian girl w/ folds of skin on her neck?

afterwards we ate at noodle gourmet, and i decided i don't like chinese food that much. i feel like i always need to douse it in 10 pounds of hot sauce in order to make it taste like something that isn't bland and glucosey.

we stopped by liz's and mary ellen's (two friends from the olden days of rutgers) apartment, as we saw their roommate, gwen, outside the asian studies building earlier. unfortunately, they were smoking, so conversation oft turned to discussions of childhood toys and cartoons. otherwise, i would have to mention that liz is perhaps the most amusing person out of bergen county, new jersey. her marked jersey accent alone is worth several pages. more on that particular character later...

last night i asked The Incredible Hulk if she wanted to have dinner with Hildi and i on sunday, because the elusive, tanned lifeguard is leaving for her first year of college next week. she shrugged and said, "i'll probably forget."

The tightest pants

2001-08-04

New Brunswick, New Jersey

man, i am getting so behind.

thursday i flaked on going out for drinks with Kermit and friends to go out to dinner with Charlotte (who i never, ever see), Hildi, and Hildi's friend from school, jane. amusingly enough, Hildi managed to convince both Charlotte and jane that they wanted to come with us to chinese cinema class, so we all sat there and watched "in the mood for love." after the movie, the professor (who bears an uncanny resemblance to this girl from my class in high school, yan li) decided to deviate from the normal q&a session and made us break into groups. this woman is so forcible, that when she told jane, "you, you, you, and you," jane just looked at us sheepishly and slid her desk in the direction of the three complete strangers she had been assigned to. the rest of us culled together our group with two others to form a very ragged semicircle. i shot Hildi the evil eye as often as possible. five minutes later, after we had finished our twenty minute discussion, yan li came over and chastised us for not being more of a team. "if i ask you question, will you be able to answer?!" we shirked in shame.

an hour and a half, and many, many unisightful comments by stupid white people later, we were at our old haunt of noodle gourmet, consuming our chinese food with gusto. after we left, Hildi noticed Charlotte had somehow gotten a noodle stuck to her ass. we theorized the staff, which is in a perpetual state of meanness, somehow flung it at her while serving our food. "how did they know to put the noodle on the ass of the most insecure one among us?" Hildi marveled. "because she's the one with the tightest pants," jane shot back.

Hildi desperately wanted to get a drink, even though jane doesn't drink and Charlotte had severe indigestion. somehow her innate sense of direction managed to get us lost for forty minutes, although marita's is about two blocks from where we were in scott hall. finally we managed to get there, but upon entering it became clear that jane and i had an utter lack of ids. i could not believe my shortsightedness; Hildi was very boese indeed.

once i went into a store to buy cigarettes, and the guy at the counter, an ancient indian man, carded me. he looks at my passport, and goes, "ah, you look very young." "yeah, it's my tragic flaw." "do you have a boyfriend?" "haha." the point is, Hildi got all annoyed and threatened to recall my mannequin arm.

being that it was still only almost eleven, Hildi made Charlotte and jane come into my house. jane looked so uncomfortable i thought she would spontaneously combust. we sat around for a while and chatted, but only when Hildi announced they were "about to leave" did jane manage to get her bearings. she had some amusing things to say about sassy Satchmo, who is from pittsburgh. "she's always telling me, 'yo jane, remember freshman year when everyone thought i was from new york?'"

after a while they left, and Hildi drank warm white wine with her reluctant brother, paul.

Stupid people must die

2001-08-05

Westfield, New Jersey

i ran out of cigarettes this morning, so i had to make the forty minute trek down to drug fair to buy some more. since it's irritating to have to buy a pack everyday, especially when they cost muthafuckin' four dollars a pack, i thought i might buy a carton. i brought thirty dollars, which i later found out was not enough (damn americans). i dragged myself into the store and out of the one hundred million degree heat, got in line behind some lady at the film/cigarette counter. the guy behind the counter was so slow. soooo slow. he seemed to be moving through molasses: droopy eyes, dulled senses, slow movements that would put the continental shift to shame.

the woman ahead of me was apparently only there to exchange her D size batteries for the 9 volt variety. first of all, who on earth could get these two mixed up? one is cynlindrical and the other rectangular. people who have such profound disabilities in depth perception and spacial relations should be institutionalized from birth. second, what kind of psycho would go through the trouble, which shall be detailed later, of exchanging batteries. *batteries*.

clearly, this task was too much to ask of trilodyte boy. he kind of fumbled around for a few minutes, thinking hard about what he should do next. "ummm... ummm..." then he made a call over the PA for assistance. someone called back, and it took a full three rings before he deemed it necessary to walk back over to when the phone was and pick up. maybe he didn't realize it was ringing until then. at any rate, some manager had to come over and had this lady fill out a *form* to exchange her goddam, trivial, thtoopid batteries that she could have just kept until their need arose. they had her go over to the battery rack and pick out the proper ones, as she evidently hadn't realized they wouldn't have them on hand, ever ready, at the film/cigarette counter. finally, they were ready to make the exchange, but since the manager was also birthed of the not-so-sharp clan, he first gave her her money back, then made her pay the full price of the new batteries.

i was seething with anger. my lips were pursed, my eyes were slits, as i bought my one pack of marlboro reds. the jerk didn't even give me the right kind. i didn't realize until i got outside since he felt the need to put my one pack of cigarettes in a huge, plastic drug fair bag. stupid people must die.

Iron Foot Santo-Tomas

2001-08-06

Westfield, New Jersey

The Incredible Hulk decided to have dinner with us after all, so last night we and The Incredible Hulk's friend, jill, went out to mongolian magic grill. as is usually the case when we go to restaurants in westfield, The Incredible Hulk knew at least 70% of the people eating there. sometimes she even knows the staff. as she gets older, she will eventually know all the owners of all the restaurants in westfield, and i will get to eat for free whenever i come back.

sometimes The Incredible Hulk can throw out these fairly racist statements, apparently without realizing it. i guess i should count my blessings that she isn't one of those people who will be nice to "other" people to their face, then talk about said "other" people behind closed doors. the fact that The Incredible Hulk can make such comments in an asian restaurant, while eating with an asian person, to that asian person's face is pretty sure sign she doesn't know what she's doing. Hildi said not to worry: The Incredible Hulk's going off to school in the middle of rural pennsylvania at a college filled with four

thousand white people will surely open her mind.

afterwards, jill left, and Hildi and i attempted to drag The Incredible Hulk, against her will, to the office. unfortunately, The Incredible Hulk got pissed off to the point of utilizing the silent treatment (the most dangerous weapon in her massive arsenal right after yelling really loud), so Hildi decided to bring her home first. we had a few drinks and went back to my house, because Hildi had to take a crap.

on the way home, we rented crouching tiger, hidden dragon, which i had already seen twice in deutschland. i didn't cry this time, but probably only because The Incredible Hulk came bounding in at the pivotal moment when michelle yeoh is about to kill zhang ziyi. "what are you watching guys!" "shah up!" "what is this! what are you doing? what are you watching?" "SHAH UP!!!" it must be pretty cool to be zhang ziyi: you always get to kick everyone's ass. i bet even in dramas ziyi gets to kick at least one unsuspecting beefy man's ass. probably someone with a name like "iron arm li."

Hildi (10:11:07 AM): do you think i have a vertical reach of at least 82 inches?
auto response from poeks (10:11:07 AM): no

No more Noodle Gourmet

2001-08-08
Westfield, New Jersey

Went to class and saw Eat Drink Man Woman by Ang Lee. None of my favorite actresses, but fun nonetheless. Noodle Gourmet afterwards, even though Hildi said we could have Korean food: *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä...â€œJen*, clearly that was a lie. *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä* □ Drinks at Marita *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄcs*. I didn't *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄct* have any money, so Hildi had to buy me stuff all night.

Hildi commented on how she would beat up the racist jerks at the next table over if she were Zhang ZiYi. Said this black homeless person came up to the table and one yelled *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä...â€œget out of here!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä* □ Later a white homeless person came up, and they invited him to sit down.

At another table the conversation of two trottely women became too much to bear, so we left. Hildi had indigestion, so she was fairly quiet. She bought me cigarettes at 7/11 on the way home. Was talking about one Soc class she took that was interesting. How they would put them in groups and just let them talk. Later the profs would talk about the dynamics of the groups: who the leaders were, who never spoke, which person spoke, how often, to whom. Said whenever one person expressed the slightest doubt, everyone immediately followed suit.

Hildi drove me home to drop me off, but I gave her sad puppy dog eyes, so she stayed. We drank whisky and watched *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä...â€œCharadesÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä* □ with Audrey Hepburn with The Incredible Hulk. I love Audrey and all, but really, how can a woman be *that* vulnerable? Gong Li would have beat her ass.

I had my second therapy session today. I thought Hildi was going to drive me, so I didn't *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄct* call her until 3:30. She didn't *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄct* pick up, so I had to walk to S. Euclid St, which is forty some minutes away by foot. I ran the last leg, as more than 10 minutes late seemed excessive to me. My behavior provoked an interesting response to My Therapitht. She told me what her expectations were, and that they didn't *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄct* involve running to her office on a heat advisory warning day. I was soaked to the bone in sweat and drank paper cup after paper cup of water, cupped in my hand, simian-like, as my hands were shaking too much to drink normally.

We had an interesting session regardless of the fact I could hardly concentrate enough to focus my eyes. She linked my running to get there to my pervasive fear of intimacy, which was interesting. She said I give myself such high expectations, because that way I never have to rely on anyone else. Said I had grit, the upside of this, which made me smile. She often mentions that I have led an *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä...â€œextraordinaryÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä* □ life for someone my age, but it never seems anything special to me. I mean, I am aware of things I achieve, but the vast number of things I don't *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄct* leaves me always with a subtle taste of failure in my mouth.

Hungry like a wolf

2001-08-22
Westfield, New Jersey

i was in the backyard just now, chewing the fat with my mom while she walked around the yard, picking up errant sticks. along her search she found this nasty, dead garden snake and suggested that d, the family dog, might have killed it. i expressed a prudent amount of skepticism, as the snake was easily equal to d in length, d being a petite west highland

white terrier whose main goal in life is to be pet by strangers. we continued chatting while d snuffled around the grass in the backyard. "she must be hunting," i said snidely. suddenly, a high-pitched "squuuueek! squeek!" emanated from d's vicinity. we walked over, and sure enough, d had ended an innocent mole's life. her mouth black with soil, she pranced around grandly, savoring her victory. we all had a moment of silence, after which my mom ceremoniously threw the ex-mole into the woods.

Back in the USSR

2001-08-22

Westfield, New Jersey

what am i doing awake?

yesterday evening julie dropped me off at the airport at 7:30 and i bid her and orlando a fond adieu. my flight was at 9:20; i don't know why i insist on always getting to the airport so early. i just sit around in the waiting area all annoyed that i have to wait so long. have this extreme paranoia issue with missing my flight. we actually got to board on time, which seems to be a rare occasion in this country.

i was pretty nervous about the whole ordeal, due to my congestion issues, and had been taking decongestants all day long. i stupidly had a beer with julie right before we got to the airport, which only made things worse, thus increasing my anxiety tenfold. when they closed the door and pressurized the cabin, i had my armrests in a death grip. the woman next to me was trying to make pleasant conversation, but all i could think was "breathe in... breathe out... breathe in..." take off was fairly unpleasant, but my eardrums somehow remained intact.

halfway through the flight, we passed by this crazy electrical storm. it seemed so close to the plane, tentacles of lightning whipping through the air inches away from the wing. perhaps not that close. it was pretty cool to watch.

i didn't have a watch on (since i had lost mine to the atlantic ocean a few days ago), so i can't verify this, but it seemed as though we were taking *forever* to land. we would dip down, appear to get closer to land, then even out and drift back up. dip, then drift, dip, then drift. as you can imagine, i was not enjoying this at all.

eventually, we landed, and i stormed off the plane in a huff. down at the baggage claim, i met Hildi, who promptly ripped me a new asshole for "making her come to the airport yesterday." i cannot give any credence to her claims, mostly because i refuse to go back into my yahoo sent mail and see that she's probably right, but she said i emailed her saying to pick her up on monday night. she was here wildly peering about the baggage claim while sassy Satchmo circled newark international airport endlessly, avoiding the annoying airport cops who tirelessly repeat their mantra of "please move on" when you park. ah well. i was finally back, and we drove off into the new jersey night, taking quite possibly the most winding, laborious route home. the Hildi Santo-Tomas shortcut, as i like to think of it.

back at my house, we celebrated my return with the utterly nouveau activity of getting all drunk. i actually wasn't *that* bad (all things considered), but ms. Santo-Tomas was just falling-down shnocked. pretty amusing. back in westfield with Hildi, and all is right in the world. except for that being back in westfield part. i wish that i had a mini Hildi who i could just put in my backpack and take with me wherever i go. she would make mean, sarcastic remarks, and punch annoying people in the shins for me.

as it turns out, Hildi is going on a retreat from thursday to sunday, so my being back here so early is fairly pointless. i was going to give that girl a good bitch slap, but somehow i just ended up conceding to the concept of going to penn state with her next week.

eventually i got too tired to stay up any longer, so i kicked the sassy koreans out. Satchmo dragged Hildi out to the car and drove them back to forest ave. i fell into four hours of drunken slumber.

for reasons i cannot divine, i got up at 7 this morning. somehow i magically lost ten pounds over the last two weeks, to complement the ten years of my life also gone. will try to go back to sleep.

You got to pray just to make it today

2001-08-23

Berkeley Heights, New Jersey

Last night I had a dream that I was dating faye wong. Do you think faye wong would date me? I just started using Word to write my entries, so now all my sentences are getting somewhat properly capitalized. Don't want you to think I suddenly

stopped being lazy.

Yesterday I was really depressed. I always manage to get all depressed when I come home. Feel as though I could be doing a lot of things that would make me feel like a productive, contributing member of society, but this just isn't one of them. Feel pretty useless.

Hildi called yesterday at 8:30, saying she and Satchmo were picking me up. Although it was a bit earlier than usual, I paid no mind. Only when I got into the car did I realize that we were going to her church's women's group meeting, which I had unwittingly agreed to the night before, while drunk. I sat in mild paralysis in the backseat, while Hildi attempted to locate the place in her signature, getting-lost-then-finally-arriving fashion. After arrival, I numbly climbed the stairs to a fancy townhouse, fearing for my life and my atheism, when a round, jolly woman named grace opened the front door. We stepped inside, and I was introduced to nakyung, jeannie, and esther, three more devout korean christians. I seated myself at the dining room table with the others, and proceeded to sweat profusely due to my nervousness.

Grace and naki had been the subject of many a Hildi story in the past, so I had an idea of what I was dealing with. Grace was supposedly this very to the point, controlling woman who will stop talking to you if you don't get to the point fast enough. Naki, along with her very similar sister, yuky, was positioned to me as a somewhat prissy, new york jewess in a korean woman's body. The evening started off with some light banter and the korean tradition of trying to get you to eat lots and lots of food. Soon, however, nakyung could not hold back any longer, and took center stage, not relinquishing the spotlight for more than a few moments for the rest of the night.

Nakyung has this very amusing, morphing accent. She'll be speaking like anyone else for ages and then suddenly break out with something dredged out of the depths of new yawk. She recently got engaged, so she launched immediately into the story of how her fiancée proposed to her in intricate detail. She spoke about how considerate in the kitchen he is, letting her perform the tasks women are supposed to do without too much intervention. He being the first son in the family, she has to deal with a lot of pressure, although since she is the eldest daughter in her family it's not so bad. After a somewhat modest presentation of the ring, discussion turned to naki's wedding dress.

Well, I was thinking about a strapless dress, but I don't know. I don't want it to be ya-hae or anything. Oh, jen, ya-hae means, like, [fingers form cat claws]

rraaaarr! Satchmo corrected.

Once you find your dress, everything else will just fall into place. When you see it, you'll just know, esther added, dramatically.

Talk meandered on to other topics such as grace's new relationship and making fun of various people from church.

oh, so who told you about my boyfriend? Who told you! grace demanded of Hildi.

Hildi held out for a while, but eventually they wrenched it out of her. It was benny, the guy with the huge black mole on his nose.

no! that's not a mole, that's a pimple! naki cried. well, it used to be a pimple, but in high school he just kept squeezing it and squeezing it. He squeezed it for years. Eventually it just turned black.

Grace was in korea recently, so we looked through some of her pictures. Everyone had something to add about korea, whether it be the corruption of the government, the rudeness of the people living there, or the old fashioned squat toilets that are merely holes in the floor.

yeah, once my dad almost fell into one of those ditches, Satchmo said.

he just spread out his arms, and that saved him. You can die if you fall in one of those.

oh, my cousin once fell into a pile of dung. He got tb from it, but now it's pretty much under control, esther solemnly stated.

in korea they have these etiquette flushers. It's a recording of a flush that you can activate when you're making indiscrete noises. Isn't that a good idea? nakyung butted in, reclaiming the spotlight.

They spoke about the common practice of aborting girls during pregnancy. Supposedly the koreans are almost as bad as the chinese.

at the orphanages, it's like all girls, naki said.

this family I know adopted from an orphanage in china, added esther.

They were all girls, and I mean, how can you choose? So they decided to pick a girl with a disability. They have this wonderful club-footed girl.

the other intoned, while the less devout among us attempted to

stifle our laughter.

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œyeah, there was one boy there, but he was an albino, so he was like a freak, you know?ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã esther confided.

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œa chinese albino? Was he a true albino?ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã naki said appalled.

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œwhat does a chinese albino look like? I didn'tÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃct know asians could be albino.ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œwell, this swedish couple adopted him, and with his light hair, he just fit right in with them.ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œawwwwww.ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

We stayed and chatted until Hildi started to get antsy. Grace was trying to get everyone to pray for some girl. I didn'tÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃct want to be rude, but I wasn'tÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃct about to sit in a circle, holding hands, and praying. Christianity scares me. After leaving grace's house, we drove off to Satchmo's and Hildi's friend dave's house. He recently moved to basking ridge to escape the hustle and bustle of jersey city. We spent about fifteen minutes trying to find the place in a maze of identical houses, but eventually he came to the door, and we went inside. The experience is not really noteworthy, as dave was in what Satchmo described a "gloomy mood." His place was this huge series of open spaces with hardwooden floors. In the middle of the living room was a tiny leather couch. We all sat in a row and watched "poetic justice" while Satchmo and dave chatted about house bills and other interesting topics. I was in my private world of self-pity and dissatisfaction, oblivious to all around me. The place made me feel uncomfortable, and I was happy to take off.

We eventually got back to my place, where Hildi scanned her remaining berlin photos and Satchmo talked to her ex-boyfriend on im. We drank the last of the gin, and they went home.

This wheel shall explode

2001-08-25

Westfield, New Jersey

note to self: do not use hot sauce on food and later wipe eyes with hands. will cause one to spend fifteen minutes frantically washing eye in sink. will hurt for long period thereafter, regards of efforts to mitigate said pain.

i was going to write about thursday night today, but i am too lazy. very unproductive day. all the images on this site are scattered across the four corners of the earth, yet i have been unable to anything all day but download pictures of my favorite chinese actresses.

yesterday was my grandfather's birthday, so after a healthy meal at wendy's my parents, d, and i headed over to rahway for the party. i usually find it rather upsetting to visit my grandparents, as my grandmother hasn't been doing well these past months. when i left for europe last fall, she was fine, walking around, conversing normally and all. after i got back, however, she was wheelchair-bound, sometimes unable to bend her legs at all. conversation would be tense: we would be chatting about germany or what have you, and then suddenly my grandma would break off into a string of statements that not only had nothing to do with the topic on hand, but basically did not make any sense whatsoever. "well, now what i have to do is get dressed," she would say. "ma, you're already dressed," my dad would reply, irritated. then she would get all upset and confused. i would usually visit with just my dad, and being the not-so-outgoing person i am, it often got kind of difficult to keep the conversation flowing. my dad has told me i haven't seen a fraction of how wacky grandma has been. well, she's doing a lot better lately, but still, i sometimes leave making valiant efforts to fight back tears.

today she was doing well, and since there were a bunch of relatives over, there was plenty of entertainment to take the attention off me. i spoke for a while to my recently married cousin dave (to a "jen", no less! the horror.) about computers and his job. he works in qa for a computer company, which is, from a developer's perspective, the most odious of all positions. essentially, the entire life's purpose of a quality assurance engineer is to find mistake's in others' work. i consider myself a fairly easy-going person, but i can remember many a situation when a qa person would come over to me, causing me to cringe from the unpleasant taste of criticism on my tongue. since he is a pretty charismatic person, dave probably doesn't elicit the kind of hatred most qa engineer's do, and i'm sure he doesn't take the same sadistic glee in ruining someone's day that i've imagined in others before.

anyway. also spoke to aunt paulette about new orleans, and her experiences being harassed by a drunken, balloon animal wielding clown. we had cake, went home.

watched when harry met sally and absolutely fabulous with Hildi until 5 am. did not consume a drop of alcohol. a record if there ever was one. i love that jane horrocks. wouldn'tÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃct it be cool to have such a bizarre accent? i read that her wacky enunciations aren'tÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃct affected at all; sheÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃcs from this random hick village somewhere in scotland where they all talk like that.

Legend of a girl child Hildi

2001-08-26

Westfield, New Jersey

Hildi's last day. We bought some alcohol at the wine & liquor store on north ave, and then headed over to kotobuki for dinner. It was supposed to be my treat, since she's going back to penn state and all, but I conveniently forgot to bring my wallet. We ate a ton of sushi, and Hildi went back home to finish packing.

Later that evening, Hildi returned, and we commenced the consumption of mass quantities of alcohol. After a couple drinks, Satchmo called. She had been staying at the Santo-Tomas residence for the past three weeks, and went to new york this weekend to visit a friend. She managed to get wendy's cousin, a mutual friend of hers and Hildi's, to drive her back, but he would only go as far as clark, for (reasons I cannot comprehend). Hildi and I hopped into the camry and drove over to barnes and noble to pick up sassy Satchmo. I'm not entirely clear on why her stuff was biding its time at kitty's place, but Satchmo packed a ton of possessions into Hildi's car, including a gaudily colored hula hoop.

Back to my house. More drinking. Unfortunately, since I drank inhumanly large quantities of alcohol, I can't really remember much of what was said that evening. All I remember is Satchmo lamenting the fact that she isn't allowed to date black people and being scrunched together uncomfortably with Hildi on one lounge chair.

Hildi was sprawled all over the place, unable to walk or stand up, thus signifying it was time to go home. Satchmo and I helped her to the car, and off they went.

Tomorrow Hildi will become a u.s. citizen, pick up her belongings, and drive off into the pennsylvanian sunset towards state college.

There are ways to make you talk

2001-08-28

New York, New York

ugh, still have to write about Friday and Sunday. So lazy.

today I had an interview at 2 with a company called [...]. I didn't get to sleep the night before until 5:30, so I was hitting the snooze button with a vengeance this morning. Eventually I got up at 10, in a mild panic, as I had to finish researching the company, come up with my interview game plan, and walk to westfield train station by 12:30. I managed to get everything together in time, although I had to run to catch the train. Actually, I was seven minutes early for the train, but the thought of being less than five minutes early for anything makes me crazy. In high school, I used to go to volleyball practice fifteen or twenty minutes early.

I frantically wrote some stuff about my accomplishments on the train ride over, switched trains at newark, and walked down 7th ave to 27th street from penn station. I was a half hour early, so I just kind of wandered around for a while, marveling at all the korean businesses in the area (such as luk-kki toys). F.i.t. was a block away, so I ambled over to watch the artistes go by.

Eventually, the time came, and up I went into building 121. The tiles on the floor were this groddy looking checkerboard pattern, but it was charming in it's own way. The office itself was a series of about four or five rooms, cubicles and desks stationed haphazardly around. I waited in the...board room for my interviewer, a developer named Mathias.

Now, developers aren't the most charismatic and outgoing folk, so that didn't really help to make me more at ease. It was kind of hard to warm up to him, but I think I got some serious bonus points for liking techno and o'creilly technical manuals. My credentials seem to be a good fit for the job, and the place seems pleasantly laid-back, a sort of 1999-era DI.

They're supposed to call back tonight. I may very well have a job tomorrow. Back to the real world. Strange.

Along the course of the interviews, I also spoke to the vp of sales and one of the co-founders; both were jovial fellows I was able to joke around with. The co-founder has this sort of permanent mischievous look on his face. He walked into the room in a sweaty gray t-shirt and we talked about the price of beer in prague. I think I could fit in well here.

Lazy bones

2001-08-30

Westfield, New Jersey

This section has been edited, but since I haven't written the edit feature software yet, you can read the unedited version.

Two things of interest to report, though I've spoiled them both already in other sections.

1. I'm going to San Francisco for the weekend.
2. I got that job. I will be coming back on Wednesday morning at 8:17, and then going straight to work from the airport. Fun.

Too lazy to write any more.

The C-5

2001-09-05

Westfield, New Jersey

Hildi told me to follow in her ex-boyfriend's footsteps and create a list of the top 10 Korean personalities. Since I know of approximately one Korean personality (and not a very good one at that), I decided to do Chinese actresses instead. Without further ado, I give thee the C-5.

1. [GONG LI](#) in Farewell My Concubine

Hotness: +10

Bitchiness: No one can top Gong Li's bitchiness. +10

Cuteness: +5

Other factors: *Being Gong Li*. The woman was in practically every Chinese film since 1989. She's Gong Li, for cryin out loud. +10

Total: +35

2. [FAYE WONG](#) in Chungking Express

Hotness: +8

Bitchiness: Well, going into Tony Leung's character's house and rearranging all his stuff is kinda bitchy, isn't it? +4

Cuteness: Awww. Faye Wooong +10

Other factors: *Bjorkness*. Faye Wong's character had this wonderful spritelyness to her that made me wonder (as I did in Bjork's *Dancer in the Dark*) if that wasn't just her real personality. All the more reason to love her. +10

Total: +32

3. [ZHANG ZIYI](#) in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Hotness: +7

Bitchiness: Although Zhang Ziyi is getting pretty close... +8

Cuteness: Too bitchy to be really cute, but she has her moments. +6

Other factors: *Being the next gong li*. Although Zhang Ziyi can never fill Gong Li's shoes, the fact remains that Zhang Yimou, famed director of aforementioned superstar, is now putting Ziyi in all his new films. +7

Total: +28

4. [MICHELLE YEOH](#) in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Hotness: +7

Bitchiness: By definition, Michelle Yeoh really isn't a bitch, but what about that part where she almost took Jen's life at the end of *Crouching Tiger*? +3

Cuteness: +4

Other factors: *Asskickiness*. No one kicks Michelle Yeoh's ass. +8

Total: +22

5. [MAGGIE CHEUNG](#) in In the Mood for Love

Hotness: +5

Bitchiness: +1

Cuteness: +6

Other factors: *Grace*. Those high necked dresses and slow-motion cinematography certainly didn't hurt.

Total: +12

Like candy

2001-09-06

New York, New York

Tired. I don't know when I'm ever going to catch up on my lost sleep: it's my first week at work, and they already want me to work this weekend.

My first real commute. Had to get up at 6:30 to get to the city around 8. This doesn't seem like a scalable model to me. I had just such a commute to DI before I got a car, but now it just seems as though it will be unbearable in a few weeks. I imagine it has more than a little to do with the volume of people on the trains at all times of day. 8:30 PM and people were still rushing down the escalators, en masse, to try to get a seat. The couple weeks it'll take me to cobble together a few grand will be more than enough motivation to move out, I'm sure.

I spoke to Mathias, the guy who interviewed me, a bit today. Last night he went to an Elle party, because one of his friends was performing. Open bar and teenyboppers. Who could ask for more? He mentioned he saw Mandy Moore there, at which point I naturally had to interject that I actually *know* a Mandy Moore. I'm sure he was secretly jealous.

You don't see a lot of gay developers. I might almost venture to suggest they are rarer than woman developers.

Saw Alena L while switching this morning in Newark. Didn't say hello. I wonder if that will be a frequent occurrence: seeing random people I went to high school with on the train.

Got carded buying cigarettes again. Do I really look 17?

Very spicy

2001-09-07

New York, New York

Work was better. Mathias is my new smoking buddy; we go down to the first floor and watch big, hulky movers move stuff around. I find the street itself to be pretty charming. As I mentioned, a thousand and one Korean wholesale stores abound; trucks are constantly coming and going with boxes and boxes of junk. People of all walks of life and cultural background work in our twelve-story building. I love it.

I didn't get out of work until 7:30, due to the aforementioned deadline. Kermit came over from Hoboken, and we walked to a Korean restaurant downtown. I had kimchee bokum, which was listed as *very spicy*, although it was of course not spicy at all. Kermit's *very spicy* dish was way hotter than mine. It's rough being a white person.

We chatted about astrology, which is a popular topic with Kermit. She said she hated how Geminis are so wishy-washy. Why can't you just *make plans*? I wondered aloud how Ignatius could possibly be a Taurus, and Kermit said she thought he actually had some very Taurus qualities. Once my sister told me over the phone that the difference between Geminis and Tauri is that Geminis are constantly trying not to be classified, whereas Tauri are always on the search for a nice box to sit in. Don't you think Ignatius does all the stuff he does because he's looking for his niche? Interesting.

After dinner and a few drinks, we took the subway to Bar East on 1st & 90th, where the weird girl I met on the flight back from SF said she worked. She wasn't there when we arrived, so I inquired about her, learning that she was supposed to show up later. We never saw her, but managed (well, at least I did) to get pretty wasted anyway. I told Kermit I've never seen her really drunk, but I suppose the reason for that is I'm just always drunker than her. You miss out on how funny people are when you're always the drunkest.

We watched the crowd drink the night away and pondered the reason there wasn't one attractive person in the whole bar. It's a very casual crowd over at Bar East: lots of t-shirts and shorts. And

bad dancers.

At some point this guy named Rob (who was wearing a Jets t-shirt) came over and sat at our table. He had just gotten back from the Yankee game, he said. He's a financial analyst, but he doesn't like it. He lives on the Upper East Side. He like Ben Folds Five and Oasis. He bought us drinks and continued talking to me, even though Kermit clearly was not interested in his presence. After a while he went away, but not before slipping me his phone number. Trottels.

I had a relapse into saying silly things when drunk.

"Kermit, give me a hug!"

"Why?"

"Because I looooooove yooooou!"

Ridiculous.

Eventually we went back to Kermit's place in Hoboken. I was completely sloshed and kept leaning out the window on the cab ride home. The driver chatted with Kermit in Spanish, and I insisted on leaning through the glass divider into his side of the cab. I'm sure they love that.

The next morning I woke up still drunk, and stumbled blindly onto the street after saying goodbye to Kermit and her roommates. Had a pastrami reuben sandwich at a diner to sober up a bit. It became very apparent to me that I shouldn't eat french fries anymore, as I really hate them, even while drunk. I don't understand why American food is so bad. Why must it reflect its European origins? Jeez.

Took the train to Summit, where my mom picked me up. Now procrastinating work. Must do stuff for HC site, even though involves extreme drudgery. Sigh.

Take the key and lock it up

2001-09-11

New York, New York

Read the previous entry first...

Presently, we noticed Jo-El was not with us. I turned around; about a hundred yards back she was exchanging a bear hug with a tall man in a dress shirt. They ran to catch up with us.

Oh my God! I can't believe it! Guys, this is Nate, the friend I was freaking out about because he worked in WTC.

We stared, bewildered at this statistically impossible, random reuniting. After exchanging greetings, we continued on our way. Nate said he had been working in the South Tower, ten floors below where the plane hit. They had been evacuated pretty quickly; he couldn't believe the calm flow of people down the stairs. Outside, he made his way through burned pieces of plane and errant body parts. Still clearly in shock, he somehow got up around our office; he didn't know what to do but look for Jo-El.

Sixty blocks later we were at Jo-El's apartment. We met ChiChi, one of Jo-El's roommates, who was glued to the TV in the living room. We exchanged stories while the phone rang off the hook, inquiring about the whereabouts of the apartment's inhabitants. Sir Lancelot poured us tall glasses of vodka, and we sat and watched the news.

Hours later, Nate, having left to contact friends and family, the four of us decided to go to the nearest hospital branch to try to give blood. There was a swarm of people outside the building, waiting. An officious-looking woman announced that here was the place you needed to sign in to volunteer. Do you have type O- blood? If so, please report immediately to the front of the line. All others had a five hour wait in front of them. I couldn't believe it: 170 hospitals in the city, and at this random branch we would have to wait all day to be able to help. I was amazed by the goodwill of those the rest of the US defines as the meanest people in the country.

We got some food and went back to Jo-El's apartment on 78th, where we met another roommate, Shoko, glued to the TV. Cell phones rang, people were assured that others were okay. Watching the news, I found that the only video that really shocked me was the one where the second plane hit the building. It was quite possibly the only video that has ever shocked me in my whole life. I sat there with the others, watching bleary-eyed for hours. We knew it was pure exploitation, but we watched it anyway. I felt so cheap and evil for sitting there, people dying a hundred blocks away, *watching* them die, practically, but I ate it right up. We all did.

ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä...ÄœAnd then Mary called, sheÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄcs okayÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä
 ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä...ÄœWhen it hit, I wasÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Ä,Ä

Didn't get to bed until three. Can't imagine many people got much sleep last night.

ĀfĀcĀcāēšĀ-Ā...āēœJeen. Jeen. Hello. The WTC was just hit by a plane. Do you care?ĀfĀcĀcāēšĀ-Ā,Ā
 ĀfĀcĀcāēšĀ-Ā...āēœWhaĀfĀcĀcāēšĀ-Ā.Ā!?ĀfĀcĀcāēšĀ-Ā.Ā

Schadenfreude that had brought me out there, I went back inside. IMAfAcAcâ€šA~Acâ€žAcs blinked, emails arrived. ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œAre you okay?ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œYeah, are you okay?ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä Okay.

ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œThe pentagon is on fire!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä Lei told me. ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œOne of the towers just collapsed!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä Kermit chimed in. Various people came into the room to announce, ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œI am freaking out here!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œThe phones are down!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œI canÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žÄct call my parents!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œWe need to get out of here!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä It felt like we were witnessing the first, stumbling steps of WWII. Everyone was anxious and afraid. Mathias stated that one of the planes was headed toward the Empire State Building, but got chased away and settled for the South Tower. The Empire State Building that is a mere three or four blocks from this building. Jon had had enough. ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œAlright, weÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žÄcre getting out of here.ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä

People were disjointedly attempting to decide where to go. Adam wanted to go to Long Island: he and Jon were supposed to go to AdamÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žAcs grandfatherÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žAcs funeral today. No one was interested in this idea.

ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œThe subway is the first place theyÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žÄcl hit,ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä Jon theorized. ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œAll the bridges are closed anyway.ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œArenÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žÄct the subways closed?ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä Sir Lancelot inquired. ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œIÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žÄcm not getting on the subway.ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä

No one was into the subway idea. Mathias disappeared. Adam was going for it. We said goodbye to him; everyone had a look on their face that said, oh so clearly, ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œgoodbye, this could very well be the last time I see you.ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä The rest of us were waiting for Melissa, who was saving her PowerPoint presentation. Sir Lancelot, Jo-El, and I decided to head up the residential Upper East Side, a decidedly safer location. On the street, we parted ways with John, noting duly the utter absence of one of the towers down 6th Ave. With more than a little urgency, we walked over to 3rd Ave. Skyscraper-high smoke was now visible from any of the Avenues.

People were everywhere, streaming up and down the Avenue. Traffic inched along in both directions. Every cab and bus was packed. Unknown to us, the second tower collapsed like a deck of cards. Sir Lancelot and I exchanged nervous banter as we hastily made our way uptown.

ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œI just cannot process any disaster that doesnÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Äcâ€žÄct involve a major action star.ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä he confided, ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œWhere is Harrison Ford?!ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œWhy are all these people going *downtown*? Are they insane?ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä...â€œShit, I bet Fashion Week is cancelled now.ÄfÄcÄcâ€šA~Ä,Ä

End Part I.

Precognition

2001-09-11

New York, New York

The rest of the weekend and today were pretty uneventful, except that I got exactly two hours of sleep Sunday night. Couldn't fall asleep. After procrastinating work all weekend, I got about 6 hours put away on the HC site. Tedious work, though I wrote some automation for it. Have plans for a site HTMLizer so I never have to do crap like that again. Fortunately, Jon told me I won't be doing much more HTML in the future - he seemed impressed with my program. I love non-technical people: they are so easy to please.

Got my B&W roll back, which has some great mannequin arm pictures with The Incredible Hulk, Hildi, and I. Spent a good part of the day/night scanning them others from Orlando, DI, Westfield. Z4u is down now. Richard is switching ISPs. I lost a couple hundred clicks and some of the shorter entries which were in the DB.

Was completely exhausted at work. Could barely keep me eyes open. I ended up having a 15 min IM conversation with Mathias thinking he was Shera. Embarrassing.

The train sucks. A part of me dies every morning and night when I have to shove my way through the crowds, shuffle glacially towards one-person-wide escalators, and squeeze between two obese, middle-aged men to a seat.

The best part of my day by far (and there are a lot of good parts) is stepping out of Penn Station onto 7th Ave and seeing Manhattan stretching out in all directions before me. The gravity of the buildings unraveling endlessly up and the mass of people swarming around me fill me with such an indescribable sense of humanity and satisfaction. New York instills one

New York subverts all premeditation by being itself an essentially organic entity. Staring up at these ancient facades, I get the sense that they do not just solely exist, mired in their own indifference, but that they are waiting for something.

2001-09-14
New York, New York

My parents are going to a friend's house for a drink. I'm left here with the dog and the candles burning outside.

2001-09-17

New York, New York

People are different. Rich people are different from poor people. Black people are different from white people. Christians are different from Muslims. Gay people are different from straight people. People with PhDs are different from those without high school degrees. Conservatives are different from liberals. People with Southern accents are different from those with Jersey accents. People from San Francisco are different from people from LA. People who walk fast are different from people who walk slowly. People who wear black and navy are different from those who wear colors that match.


I don't mean to trivialize differences: I myself wore navy pants with a black coat today.

Today, as I walked down 7th Ave in my fashion disaster outfit, I thought about differences. People need differences. They need them to categorize, to define, to rationalize away things that aren't just like them. They need to ball things up and store them away in cubbyholes for safekeeping. They cordon things off, and they draw chalk lines. Doing these things makes us feel as though we understand the world, and that everything isn't just a whole big mish-mosh of stuff we can't control. We see differences for comfort, for consolation, for reassurance.

Differences are there when you say something stupid, when you act inappropriately, when you can't find your niche. They are underlined in bright yellow highlighter, so you can refer back to them later.

We need differences. I do. I poke through my own cubbyholes daily, looking for me in the delta left over when I poke through. I don't usually find me, but I often find those who end up as my friends. Occasionally, when I'm particularly fastidious, I can almost see a vague outline of me in the mirror.

People, in turn, decide which differences are important, are which are not.

Some people need differences to define their friends and enemies. Some need them to define their friends and acquaintances. I consider myself of the latter group, but I'm not writing to tell you how great my philosophy of life is. Quite the contrary: today I came to understand one of my...  greater flaws.

I can't say that my hesitant definitions have barred me from a wealth of friends. I have friends. I do. My mom told me. The problem is, when you need difference to define who is in Column A and who is in Column almost A, you often end up playing no one's favorite game: cognitive dissonance. When I listen to people who tell me that all Muslims are terrorists, cognitive dissonance peeks its little, dirty snout out from the depths of my consciousness. It looks around. The essential problem with needing differences only to differentiate between good and gooder means that no differences can be *that* important.

Cognitive dissonance looks at this person, and it smiles a weak, twisty smile. It nods. Yes, you can think that. Yes, you have the right to be ignorant. That's okay. And it is okay, cognitive dissonance tells me, because these people are the people around me. These people are my friends, my family, my neighbors. They are everywhere, and they are okay.

There have been situations in the past where I let cognitive dissonance make me cry. I pushed it away and shunned it. I told it to go and never come back. But much like the battered girlfriend, I always let it come crawling its weak ass home. I shuffle the world back into ones and zeroes until it feels better.

I'm not so naïve as to think I'm the only one with this affliction: everyone is. It's simply a matter of where you choose to draw your lines of distinct demarcation. I know this because when I peer into my cubbyholes, I notice that they themselves stay essentially static. I know this because I am writing this entry.

In my world of worlds, everyone would be okay. I wouldn't need to fall back on cognitive dissonance every day. I wouldn't need my little filing cabinets. But I do. And I hate it.

Hee!

2001-09-18

New York, New York

oh that Big Red...

Big Red: Hello, poor Jersey pokey. How are you doing?

poeks: i am doin fine...

Big Red: I'm sure Berlin is looking better and better...

poeks: yeah, i guess this wasn't exactly the best time to come back to the homeland

Big Red: I suspect that you may actually have done it.

poeks: yeah, well we don't really want to be discussing that over im, now do we?

Big Red: You know what I think is funny? The way they keep talking about what a complex operation this must have been

Big Red: Because it's hard to justify military action against a bunch of shmoe who didn't even think to have a friend drop them off so their rental car with their Arabic flight manual wouldn't be left behind.

poeks: i was just about to comment on the same...

Big Red: They used their real names on their tickets, for godsake

Big Red: All I know is that Bush is an idiot, and I wouldn't follow him to dinner

Rainy day crowd

2001-09-20

New York, New York

Right now there is a queue of about thirty people on the street outside the office. I walked out to have a cigarette, and the rowdy group was standing there in the rain, arguing and waiting impatiently. A man who appeared to be in charge barked at the group to calm down: "If you don't like it, just get out the line, just get out the fucking line." A few minutes passed, and a sedan pulled up to the curb. The man in the passenger seat had a box full of folded American flags. He sat there, slowly taking them out of the box, one by one, and stacking them in his lap. Occasionally someone would come from the back of the line to inquire as to whether or not there was enough of them for all. The people at the front of the line suggested they not attempt to cut.

Charlotte-chan

2001-09-21

Cranford, New Jersey

To my surprise, Charlotte called me back when I phoned her at home. Given the lack of options in the area, we decided to go to the Office in Cranford, a bar I loathe, but still the only bar in the area. It was packed, and Charlotte, her boyfriend Steve, and I had to sit in the restaurant area, since there weren't any spots left near the bar.

Hildi and I have always shared the opinion that Charlotte is one of the most amusing people we know, although her subtle weirdness is often lost on people who can't get past the fact that she is undeniably, irrevocably, tragically cute. Charlotte has the kind of cuteness that allows her to do basically anything she wants without consequence. I have witnessed Charlotte insult a person, point blank, only to see said individual smile brightly, lost in the permanent smile on her face. Charlotte can use a smile...â€œhee hee! like a weapon, wielding it artfully in ways most people would never consider possible.

Of the many guises her cuteness has allowed her to create, obliviousness has always been one of her most cultivated. In high school I was pretty convinced that Charlotte's obliviousness was at least mostly real. It wasn't until much later, after I had put the cuteness aside, that I came to believe Charlotte's selective memory had a genesis in self-protection. Charlotte is afforded the luxury of accepting what she wants, and rejecting or ignoring everything else. Sometimes it's frustrating, but mostly it's amusing. Occasionally, Hildi or I can expose facets of Charlotte's true Charlotte-esqueness to others, although most of the time it's a members-only type of thing. Which, of course, makes it even more amusing.

Now, I don't want to make it seem like I have the inside tip on Charlotte's personality, nor do I want to make her seem unworthy of the advantages she can, by being Charlotte, pull out of her bag of tricks. If you ever meet Charlotte, aside from thinking she is adorable, you will find her charming, endearing, and more honest and vulnerable than she probably thinks she is. She's just Charlotte, and that's the beauty of it.

Currently, Charlotte works the graveyard shift at the Sheraton NY as a night auditor and front desk maven. The jobs no one wants to take. Although one would never expect a Charlotte to see the things she does, from her dealings with Japanese business men, drunks, drug addicts, and hookers, it became clear to me Thursday night that this unassuming girl has a wealth of stories just dying to be told. Talking to her almost makes me want to create an Charlotte-Stories section to my

website, on the basis that even though my life may be extremely boring, there are people in the world who get to see crazy shit all the time. More on that later.

So Steve and I drank our beers and basked in the Charlotte-ether for the rest of the night. I gleaned a fair amount of amusement off the fact that Charlotte has adopted Steve's tough-guy New York accent to a certain extent (although I think he's from Pennsylvania). After my three whiskeys, we drove home, and I fell into a satisfied, drunken slumber. It was a good night.

Too bad I had to wake up at 6:30 the next morning.

Procession

2001-09-21

New York, New York

Walking back to Penn Station Thursday evening, I saw no less than six people selling flags on 6th Ave. I ask myself how on earth there can be such demand to support between one and ten flag-sellers per street corner, but then every morning I see the woman with the American flag sequin hat. Ah, that's how.

I got to the train station a bit early, so I mulled around out front for a few minutes. Looking up the street, I noticed a flat bed eighteen wheeler ambling slowly down 7th Ave., porting huge construction tools. Following it was another eighteen wheeler on a similar mission. After the fifth truck passed by, people stopped what they were doing. Everyone stared as all ten of them passed somberly down the street. They carried tractor treads, great maws of back hoes - presumably all replacement equipment for the cleanup crews at the site of the World Trade Center. No one spoke. It looked like a funeral procession, these massive remains of machinery silently moving downtown to their graves. It was eerie.

Hackers

2001-09-24

New York, New York

Did I register poeks.org? I don't remember ever having done that, but a couple weeks ago, after having consumed a few drinks, I do recall having registered a few poeks-related domains. I've been sitting on poeks.com for about two years now, and I still haven't posted anything. At first I had it with Verio, which is expensive and provides virtually no features or space whatsoever. Basically, I was paying \$70 a year for my email account. So I decided to drop them. I've attempted to transfer a thousand times, but for one reason or another it never came to fruition. The latest problem was that the email I had it registered under no longer exists. Sigh. So about a week ago, I dropped it. I signed up for space with another provider, but still, my name lingers on whois.org under poeks.com. I ping and ping, but 209.239.9.85 refuses to die. So I registered poeks.de. Little did I know, but the domain I registered with can't do international domains. Thanks for letting me know ahead of time. I'm sure the error-checking for that was just too difficult to implement. So there's \$150 of unused space. I know I also registered poeks.net - god only knows why - with some rinky-dink, cheap-ass provider, but I haven't seen anything come out of that either. So basically I've spent no less than six hundred dollars on domains I haven't used.

I left work early and went to the doctor today, as I've been experiencing an especially unpleasant hacking cough this last week. I didn't really want to go, as I feel I'm getting better, but my boss made me feel as though not going would endanger the livelihood of all my coworkers. The doctor gave me a prescription for cough syrup. Who, exactly, gets prescriptions for cough syrup?

I suspect that my illness is related to the unfathomable quantities of dust, glass, and other substances ill advised for breathing purposes. I spent most of last week sneezing, snorting, and hacking a lung all over the office. Now Mathias is sick. Hmm hmm hmm.

Differently alike

2001-09-26

New York, New York

I met Lei, a friend from DI who has likewise jumped ship and moved to the East Coast, for dinner at Kum Gang San in Koreatown. While waiting, I saw this girl walking down the street and thought, "...That girl kind of looks

like Hildi. *As she got closer, I took a better gander and decided, no, that girl looks like Paul (Hildi's younger brother). In fact, with the glasses and all, she looks exactly like Paul. Hildi later suggested it might have been Paul in drag. You never know "he does go to school at Rutgers, after all, which is just a short hour train ride away.*

I hadn't seen Lei in over a year, but Lei is the kind of person who will just always be Lei. I gave him an awkward hug, awkward due to the fact that he is six-foot-two and I am five-foot-four, and we went inside. Hildi told me Kum Gang San is a popular restaurant with non-Koreans; though there were a fair number of non-Asian clientele (compared to everywhere else I've been in Koreatown, which have mostly been Korean-only venues), the waiters insisted on speaking to Lei in Korean. Lei is Chinese. He found this amusing.

Lei has been here, like me, for three months, and also, like me, lives at his parents' house. Three months ago, I probably would have no sympathy for him, but now I was all ears as he lamented the expensive and sparse apartments in Manhattan. He has to commute an hour to work from the Bronx. *Yeah, that sucks.* I said, downing another shot of Soju before launching into my own sob story.

We bitched about programming, about work, and about how we ain't got no respect. Lei is as insolent and obnoxious as I am about work-related things, which makes me feel at home. *No one will pay me \$100/hr here, Lei dead-panned (at least, I think he dead-panned). If things went accordingly to the whims of Lei and Jen, we would be recognized as the most intelligent, efficient, and creative developers in the world. That this is not accepted as gospel is what keeps us awake at night.*

After dinner we decided to have a drink, so we headed down the street to Baden Baden. Two factors to keep in mind here are 1) it was a Wednesday night and 2) the entrance to this bar is this ghetto-ass storefront, completely unrecognizable to the uninformed. We got in there, and the place was packed to the gills. Koreans drinking, Koreans eating, Koreans waiting in line for the bathroom. We spoke to the maitre d' briefly (he addressed Lei in Korean), who nonchalantly mentioned that there could be a wait.

Well, the line for a table is quite long, but the one for the bar isn't bad.

How long is not bad?

Um, let me see. Ah, about a half hour.

Neither of us was too interested in the idea of waiting thirty minutes to sit crammed elbow-to-elbow with the people adjacent to us, so we went to the one other Koreatown bar I've been to, Zen-X. The crowd was appreciably mellow and not too crowded, so we sat ourselves down at a table.

Needless to say, we had more than one drink. Although drinks were supposed to be my treat, Lei had to chip in, as I only had twenty-some dollars with me. After we were through, we quickly made our escape out the front door: Lei was also short on cash, so our waitress got a ridiculously low tip. She wasn't exactly the most attentive server, anyway. *Do you think she's a junior waitress?* Lei asked, mimicking the kind of geek joke I usually only hear uttered from the lips of my dad.

Lei, he alleged, had been to Seoul for four days, so we got to talking about Chinese versus Koreans. Chinese women, he said, are better looking. They're taller. They, due to the vast expanse of China's geography, are more diverse in looks. *Chinese women are much better looking in China than they are here. All the Chinese women here are computer geeks.* I asked if he knew Faye Wong, who's face, according to Hildi, is plastered on every billboard in Shanghai, and *he had never heard of her.*

After recovering from the initial shock of this admission, I listened as Lei told me some stuff about Chinese culture. He said China wasn't as patriotic a country as Korea or Japan, because it's hard to get a billion people to all think the same way. We spoke about the night-life in China, which, he said, is only decent in the cities. *Yeah, it's not as diverse as the United States, though, because everyone just follows whatever the current fad is. When I last went to China I asked a girl where some good clubs were, but when she told me, she added that "no one is doing that right now."* Hmm.

Lei walked me the two blocks back to Penn Station and bid me adieu. Checking the schedule, I noted I had a full half hour before the train left, so I went up outside for a cigarette. A man came up to me and asked if I had any change. I said no, sorry, which for once was actually true: I had just spent my bottom dollar on the measly tip we left at Zen-X. We started talking a bit; his name was Timothy. He was from Newark. I told him where I was from and that I had to catch the train back to Jersey soon.

How old are you? he asked.

Eighteen?

Mmmm, twenty-two.

Really? My God, you are a pretty thing. Why you laughing?

Somehow I managed to get so wrapped up in my conversation with Timothy that I, surprise!, missed my train. Since I had another hour to burn, I conceded to having a drink with him. He bought us some beers downstairs, and we went back up to drink them outside. Keep in mind this was after having consumed half a bottle of Soju and two Crowns on the rocks.

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œSo can I call you?ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã he asked. ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œI really like you.

YouÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc are a good person.ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œHow on earth do you know if IÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc am a good person or not?ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œSo can I call you?ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œYeah,ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã I replied knowing full well I would not normally consider this a good idea, ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œhere is it.ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

We chatted a while longer before going back downstairs to wait for my train.

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œI think we could really be something,ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã he said as he looked deeply into my eyes.

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œUh, yeah.ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

Somehow I managed to get myself into a situation wherein I was agreeing to meet him. Eight

oÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc clock here on Friday. Yessir, IÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc I'll be here.

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œI hope youÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc are not one of those women who disappoint menÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã:ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œNoÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã:ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã I said, knowing full well that this is exactly what I am.

Aside from maybe Dr. Evil, I canÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc think of a person who is even *vaguely* as flakey as me.

The time came for me to get on the night train to Newark, and he repeated for the twentieth time that he thanks God for this day, because he got to meet me. Right. Bye, Timothy, I said.

I got home at twelve, and went to sleep feeling as though I had committed a crime. Whether it was the crime of talking to trottely people I don'tÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc know or making promises I knew, even while drunk, I would never keep, I canÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc really say.

I'm tawkin tah you

2001-09-26

New York, New York

Jersey accents are insidious little bastards. Everything is going fine when suddenly someone asks you if you want to go out for drinks sometime. ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œYeah, IÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc I'll cawl you,ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã you say, without realizing anything is amiss. Soon, you are making plans for next Awgust, and in the morning you are ordering a large cawfee from the guy selling bagels on the street. It starts with the ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œawÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃcs,ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã the cornerstone of any respectable Jersey accent.

Next thing you know, your previously strong mental grasp of the consonant ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œerÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã begins to fade like a fond memory. No, you canÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc go out to lunch, because you have to go to the bank telluh. You bettuh hurry up, the pawkin metuh outside is runnin.

In advanced stages of Jerseyitis, you are likely to experience a newfound ability to pronounce

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œerÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃcsÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã, although granted not in a way embraced by most with a firm handle on the English language. From that point on, words that end in

ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã...â€œaÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ã,Ã are no longer acceptable to you. YouÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃc wonder aloud how Linder is doing at school.

Thankfully, IÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ-Ãcâ€žÃcve only reached Stage One of Jerseyitis, and I intend to keep it that way. That said, if you see me on the street on a rainy day, trying to buy an umbreller, just give me a good smack in da head.

To stop, detain, or hinder for a time

2001-09-28

New York, New York

Friday went fabulously: a low-stress day at work, and I got to leave at 4:45 to get my hair cut. Someone, who will remain anonymous because of the fact I can't decide if it's Charlotte or Hildi, scheduled my hair appointment with the wrong person. Granted, it may seem a bit on the presumptuous side to criticize those that do favours for me, but preventing me from meeting Mathias's hairdresser, another Charlotte (which is an incomprehensible concept as it is), is hardly forgivable. Then again, just going to get my hair cut is stressful enough for me; having to deal with some cute Japanese girl probably would have been more than I could have handled. At any rate, my hairdresser was a fabulous, flaming Frenchman by the name of Michael. In describing to me how great my haircut will be, "It will be *à la française*," how do you *à la française*? I can't find the word in English."

So I got to the train station before six, a feat in of itself, and deftly trotted downstairs to Track 3. We were nearly arriving at Newark Penn Station when one of the conductors announced, "Due to police activity, there will be a slight delay." As anyone in this area can tell you, the words "police activity" can strike fear in the hearts of grown men, not because of fear for one's safety, but because one can then safely assume he will be prevented from going on his merry way for as long as humanly possible. About a half hour later, we got into the station, where we learned, via the very irritated announcer over the PA, that all trains were delayed and that we should just shut the fuck up and wait, dammit.

"Delayed" is a funny word. According to m-w.com, it means "1 : put off, postpone 2 : to stop, detain, or hinder for a time." For a time. I've often been delayed on the train, although usually it's because a train is passing by in the opposite direction. Usually, "delay" means to hinder me only for several minutes. "We apologize for the delay," the conductor will say when the offending train is out of our path. I feel as though situations wherein one must wait an hour for mysterious "police activity" to come to pass should be defined by a word other than "delay." An announcement over the PA such as "We apologize for making your Friday shorter, for making you stand ass-to-ass with fifteen strangers in the train vestibule in four-inch heels, and for basically ruining your day" would be a bit more comforting. I finally got home after eight, very, very annoyed.

Do you know?

2001-09-28

New York, New York

At work. Sir Lancelot is talking about bin Laden.

à la française... Bin Laden's father had fifty-four kids, and each of them got \$300 million. Most of his siblings went going to top schools in America, but they had to leave when all this shit went down. They all had huge investments in America. \$300 million. If you *à la française* the 17th kid of 54, you probably just don't get enough attention. I wonder if this was just a, like, fuck my father type of thing. *à la française*.

à la française... What did all the wives get? *à la française*. Serge asks.

à la française... Well, they probably just got acid in the face. *à la française*.

So beautiful and intelligent

2001-10-05

New York, New York

I left work early on Friday, and walked down to the Lower East Side to have dinner with Lei, Kermit, and Kermit's boyfriend Jay. I was extremely early, so I sat on a stoop next to the Indian restaurant we were to meet at with an iced coffee, exhausted and generally miserable due to the decadence of the night before. A drunken old man stumbled by a few times, trying unsuccessfully to make eye contact with me. He eventually came over to ask me if I was alright. I wearily nodded affirmatively, too uninterested to speak. *à la française*... You sure? You need anything? *à la française*, he asked. I didn't need anything, except maybe to be asleep in my bed.

Lei arrived first, and we sat and chatted for a while while Kermit attempted to find a parking space. They eventually found one, and we made our way inside.

Jay was a nice boy, funny and somewhat goofy-looking, although still unforgivably white. I don't know why Kermit always goes for the white guys. I don't understand why a cute Tongan woman would settle for a pasty Brooklyn boy, but going into that subject would be to open a can of worms I don't feel like getting into. After I got over my initial pangs of jealousy, I warmed up to him, and the night went on famously from there.

After dinner we went down to Orchard St and, interestingly enough, ended up at the same bar I went to the night before. It

was packed and noisy; characters and scenseters flooding the place at a steady clip. Outside, the bouncer chatted us up, weaving an elaborate story about how women always fart in the bathtub.

Around eleven, Lisa called to tell me that she, my cousins Holly and Julie, and Julie's boyfriend Angel had made it into La Guardia and were on their way over. The four of them, nut jobs all, were burnt out from the flight from Orlando and ready to get their drink on. Evidently, Angel, a wacky, latino boy with unquenchable ADD, was nervous getting on the plane, and found he could only find solace in the liter of Crown Royal he brought on the plane.

They got to the bar, and Angel was completely ridiculous, wasted out of his mind. What's up girl! I can't believe we're here. We're in New York, yo! Conyooo! Lisa, on the other hand, was about to wring Angel's neck, muttering explicatives to him in Spanish under her breath. We sat around, drinking and yelling over the din of other bar-goers. Kermit and Jay took off at 12, offering the excuse of having to get up early Saturday morning for a wedding. Kermit really needs to learn to run with the big dogs, we lamented. But Kermit is just so beautiful, Holly added. And so intelligent, Lisa chimed in. Ever since they met her in New Orleans in August, the three of them have been the biggest fans of Kermit other than her parents. They never miss a chance to tell me how beautiful and smart Kermit is, no matter how unrelated to the conversation at hand. So have you spoken to M recently? I would ask Lisa. [M, a former roommate from San Francisco, also went to New Orleans with us.] Yeah, he emailed me. New Orleans was so awesome. Your friend Kermit she is just so beautiful and intelligent.

A while later the trio were ready to move on, so we walked around the Lower East Side a bit, looking for someplace cool. By this point I was pretty wasted, so I can't really remember exactly where we went. I remember asking some random guys sitting outside where a cool bar was, but what they replied to me is a mystery. I do remember being at this bar decked out in 50's regalia. We found a table, and Holly, a weird-person-magnet like any Manchester worth her salt, immediately started chatting up this guy from South America with a ridiculous, mopyy Beatles haircut.

To find I'm king of the hill

2001-10-06

New York, New York

Read the previous entry first...

I woke up at 7 to find myself in the fetal position at the foot of Holly's bed. People started getting ready for dinner as I frantically attempted to coordinate the people that were going to show up for dinner at this Indonesian place in Chinatown. I gave up on any straggling friends and concentrated on the people that were actually coming to see Holly and Julie. My parents were driving into the city with family friend Mike Feldman, and when I called were in a typical argument about how to get there. Dad, driving, Ask her how to get there! Mom, navigating, How do you get there! Me, exasperated that they are so exasperated, I'll take them to Doyers Street! Mom, I'll take them to Bowers Street!

Somehow, probably through the calm influence of family friend Mike Feldman, who was also coming along for dinner, they managed to find a parking space. We were about ready to leave, although it was already twenty after seven and reservations were at 7:30. We took the subway down to Canal Street, which I knew would drop us off blocks and blocks away from Chinatown. I paced like a trapped animal in the subway station, my anxiety increasing exponentially with every passing minute. We flagged down two cabs at Canal and drove over to Mott Street. My dad called. They were at a *different* restaurant, because the one I picked didn't look inviting enough. What! Chinese! AHFFF! I called Hildi, all ready to position my story so that she couldn't say no. But I won't get to see you until Thanksgiving. I would say, although we would both know that's not true. I argued for a while, trying to concentrate at the task at hand while at the same time being completely exasperated about being late and having to eat Chinese food. I finally won her over with a slightly un-called-for you are making me so angry. Holly, who was in the cab with me, must have thought me mentally unbalanced.

When we got to Mott Street, I leapt out of the car and ran down the street towards the restaurant. There it is doesn't look appetizing. Failing to mention to the group that no one else was there, I let them go downstairs and claim our table, now thirty minutes late. I ran down the street to the restaurant the

others were at. AfAcAcâ€šA-A...â€œI hate Chinese food! AfAcAcâ€šA-A, A□ I pouted at my dad, who was waiting outside. He explained they had already ordered. Great.

Back at the Indonesian restaurant, the rest of the crew were enjoying some tea when I dropped the news. They were clearly not pleased, but what could I do? I was ready to eat here by myself, if necessary. We decided to leave the waitress a tip and go down the street to the Chinese place.

I'm too lazy to write the rest, so read Hildi's 10/7 entry instead: <http://geocities.com/linisnice/roight.html>

I want to wake up in the city...

2001-10-06

New York, New York

My day started out in a hotel room closet. I was rather discombobulated and didn't get much sleep. From the looks of the room, it must have been about five in the morning. I didn't care; I just had to get up. So I walked the five flights back down to the lobby, where I noticed a Korean restaurant. It was just like Munchen! I thought to myself. It wasn't until I walked outside that I realized where I was: I was standing in front of the Stanford Hotel in the very heart of Koreatown. In the madness of the previous night, I could barely remember getting into the cab, never mind where it dropped us off. I also noticed that it was midmorning, meaning our hotel room probably didn't have any windows. What a strange situation: waking up from the closet of a hotel room in which my insane cousins from Florida were staying, along with Lisa, Angel (who I cannot mentally picture outside of Florida), and Lei. Lei. And now I'm standing outside their hotel, and on the freaking corner of 32nd and Broadway.

I had a cigarette, and the doorman told me not to sit on the stoop outside the hotel. Like I wasn't a guest or something. Okay, so maybe I wasn't a guest. Still. I went back inside, past the cute receptionist and the clock that said the time in Seoul.

The troops gradually got themselves out of bed, all confused that it wasn't really 5 AM. We went around the corner to some diner for breakfast. I was a bit hungover, and my eggs over-easy were not sitting too well.

We bid Lei adieu and went over to the Express across the street for some compulsive shopping. I hadn't been home for three days, so I felt as though it might be a good idea to buy some clothes to wear. Angel left several times to take a dump, because he couldn't bear to do so in a public bathroom.

Our two tourist goals of the day were to go to the top of the Empire State Building and to see the Ground Zero area around the former World Trade Center. Thwarting death and indulging in the more morbid allures of the city. We started walking down Broadway, and since I didn't really feel like going to the Empire State Building, I didn't mention it was in the other direction. So we ended up walking all the way downtown, which was actually pretty nice. It was a beautiful, cloudless day, warm in the sun and not too windy.

We walked all the way down West Broadway to the WTC Subway stop, where everything was roped off. We couldn't see a thing, although there was a sizable crowd clustered there, gawking at nothing. The Subway stop had a chain draped across it with an "Out of Service" sign hanging bleakly from it. It was kind of surreal. One of the guards told us to walk east to Broadway and go south from there. A huge crowd had amassed across the street from (I think) St. Paul's church. It was the cemetery everyone has seen in a thousand September 11 pictures, littered with papers and debris. We didn't go any further south, but even at this distance one could smell a distinctly odd odor in the air. Everyone walking down the street blinking feverishly, shocked that, a month after the attacks, there was still debris in the air.

Since we still couldn't see anything, we decided to head back uptown. We took a subway to the NYU area, where Holly desperately wanted to buy tickets for the Blue Man show. You know, those Intel guys. The tickets turned out to be too expensive, so we went to a bar instead.

We sat there a while, exhausted, Holly, Julie, and I sharing a pitcher of beer at 4 PM. We stumbled out a while later, stopped in a memorabilia store (where I saw a bartender working there who I recognized from this place near where I work), and took the subway back to the hotel.

Pro-sku-toh

2001-10-07

New York, New York

Oh ma god, it is so cold today. Waiting for the train outside at Westfield station, I wished that the cold had some sort of anthropomorphic personification, so I could beat it up. Cold makes me so mad.

Yesterday was pretty low-key. I got up around 10, I guess, on the floor, in the closet of Julie, Holly, Lisa, and Angel's hotel room at the Stanford hotel in Koreatown. Hildi had left a few hours earlier, somehow able to wake up early the morning after she was convinced she would die of alcohol poisoning. Holly, the other major drinking player of the previous night, woke up still drunk, bumbling around, and attempting to apply makeup to her face with a shaky hand.

A few hours later we had checked out of the hotel and were taking the subway over to the East Village to meet their friend Tara, a displaced Floridian herself. We ate at Tiffany's diner. I had mozzarella and prosciutto on focaccia bread, which I pronounced *pro-sku-toh*, thus preventing the waiter from having any idea as to what I was talking about.

After we ate, they went on to Empire State, and I wandered over to Penn Station. Giving me a hug, Julie finally parted with the mirror she and Holly bought for our Aunt Susie, which she had not permitted me to carry up to this point. Outside the hotel a few hours earlier: "...Jen, okay, here's the mirror" "don't break it, okay? Here, why don't you let me carry it?"

I got back home and took a nap.

Hildi came over later that night, and we did not drink any alcohol.

I went to sleep at 12.

Now I'm at work. It's damn cold in this room. I feel like my fingers are developing frostbite.

Deep breath

2001-10-08

New York, New York

Yesterday I left work ten minutes late to meet Charlotte at the train station. As we had different concepts of exactly where Dunkin' Donuts at Penn Station is, exactly, it took a while to find each other. I don't understand how people ever found one another before cell phones. I guess they actually had to plan things out fully. Well, not anymore. We finally met at Houlihan's downstairs, where I spotted Charlotte with a box of cupcakes, wrapped in a scarf all Japanese-like. They're for her co-workers, she explained. We walked over to catch the E, which I knew would not get us remotely close to Chinatown, where we were meeting Hildi and Wendy for dinner.

When we got off the train, I already felt completely frazzled; now we got to walk five blocks over to Mott Street. Charlotte nonchalantly explained that we were supposed to meet Hildi at 7, which is of course would not have been humanly possible even if we had left on schedule.

We finally caught up with Wendy and Hildi, who were standing on the corner of Mott and Canal with friend-from-school, Kitty, creator of the infamous Kitty Phi dance. Now we're going to get Chinese, which everyone and their mom knows I am not a fan of, and I feel like I am about to go completely insane.

I am getting steadily more upset, and the fact that I'm getting upset over something so trivial is making me more upset. My anxiety is snowballing into something I can just barely contain, and I feel like if I even speak I'll just break down in tears.

So when we get to the restaurant to wait for a table, I'm standing outside, smoking as many cigarettes as my lungs can handle. I'm trying to analyze the situation, but my brain will not let go of this spiral of self-indulgence. This is so ridiculous, I think to myself, why am I being like this? What is wrong with me? Why do I get upset all the time now? Okay, breathe in. Hold five seconds. Breathe out. Hold five seconds. We are okay. Okay. Okay.

Eventually, I go back inside, and my hands are shaking like I have Parkinson's disease. Wendy asks me what I want, and I can't even answer her; I can't even look at her.

I can only look at Charlotte, Charlotte who had to come all the way down here to eat for an hour before going to work.

Hours later, after dinner, I finally able to get a hold of myself. Charlotte, Hildi, and I go on the subway back to 34th Street, taking the scenic route through Brooklyn. Hildi and I take the path to Jersey City, so she can drop off a huge bag of rice at Jane's apartment. And on the way home I can even talk to her.

I consider myself a fairly laid back person, in general. I am willing to admit there's a part of me that is a complete compulsive perfectionist, but I think that I can keep that part of me at work and go with the flow in the rest of my life. I feel like everything I learned in Europe about how I want to live my life has just evaporated in the past few months. Maybe I'm just having a hard time making the transition to being a working girl again. At any rate, I am very depressed about how this past month or two have been going.

V. v. bad day.

You spin me right round

2001-10-12

New York, New York

This morning I think I passed one of the New York mayorial candidates while dodging flyer-passer-outers in Penn Station. In my infinite knowledge, I of course have no idea who exactly it was, but he grasped the hand of the woman next to me and asked her how she was.

The office is all in a tizzy about Anthrax today. Jo-El dropped the news that someone at NBC had contracted it, and within minutes Jon (ever the calm purveyor of leadership) was on the phone with his doctor.

From Lei:

Lei (12:20:34 PM): <http://www.cnn.com/>

poeks (12:21:01 PM): yeah

Lei (12:21:15 PM): I think you should go back to NJ where its safe

poeks (12:21:20 PM): hmm

Lei (12:21:23 PM): That the bus instead of the train

poeks (12:21:34 PM): a little paranoid are we?

Lei (12:21:41 PM): yes

Lei (12:22:02 PM): I am more paranoid about something than most other people. Don't you know me?

Right now I'm just kind of sitting here doing nothing. Not too focused today. Friday.
Can't concentrate.

Will the world end tomorrow? Will HC ever launch so I don't have to look at product names like Glitter Dip Lipstick anymore? These are the important questions in life.

Better safe than sorry

2001-10-13

Clark, New Jersey

This afternoon my mom and I went over to my Aunt's house to bring her her belated birthday present. Her son, Scott, was working on his car in the driveway, and their dog, a massive Labrador retriever, was running around the yard, maniacally wagging its tail. We went upstairs to the kitchen and sat chatting for a while. My mom asked Susie, who used to work for Elizabeth Town Water ("tallest water tower in the world!"), if they were taking any precautions against possible water supply contamination. "Yeah," she said, "they are. They replaced the door to the president's office with a stronger one." Comforting.

Let's Go Yan-kees

2001-10-17

New York, New York

So yesterday I told Mathias that I was going to quit, along with my rationale and all. As it turns out, I misunderstood their

offer, so it *wasn't* as bad as I had thought. I decided I had nothing to lose at this point, and told Mathias I was seriously considering going back to school fulltime in the winter. Mathias relayed my message to Jon, and it seems like they want to keep me on as a contractor for the next three months, which is fine with me. Haven't talked about the \$\$ yet, so we'll see how that goes.

I left work early to meet Charlotte at the ESPN2 bar on 42nd and Broadway. Windy and cold today. As I was wondering what on earth brought Charlotte to a bar called *ESPN2*, I noticed a crowd of people, cameras, and very bright lights outside the door. It was governor Pataki, who made some statement to a film crew before being whisked inside.

Charlotte came out to meet me and explained that she had been here since 3:30 watching the Yankees game. She and a coworker went to a job fair earlier in the day, but weren't even let through the front door, as the place was already filled to capacity.

We had to call up to Charlotte's *party* to get inside ESPN2 due to security reasons, although the guy eventually let us in when Charlotte couldn't get through on her cell phone. The place was packed with screaming frat boys, drunk and spilling beer everywhere. Whoop! There it is! yelled one fervently drunk business man.

I met Charlotte's friends and chatted a while with Steve. The Yankees won. Everyone chanted *Let's go Yank-ees*. [Clap clap clapclapclap] After showing me the bathroom (Look! Each stall has a TV! Isn't this the nicest bathroom you've ever been in?), Charlotte and I parted from the group and took the subway to K-town.

Charlotte clearly did not want to go to a Korean bar, so we stopped in this place called *O'Reilly's* instead. Why are Koreans so proud? she asked me, exasperated.

Once inside we immediately began to pound, and our time of departure silently moved further and further into the future. We talked about all manner of things while I worked on my *Maker's Mark* and Charlotte on her *Fuzzy Navels*.

And for my next trick

2001-10-22
Westfield, New Jersey

On the way home from work my dad went through the usual motions of asking me what I was working on. "Same stuff," I said. "Do you like the people?" "Yep." "What exactly is involved in the project you're working on?" "Well, it automates steps of the project life cycle." "What is the project life cycle?"

At this point I just about ran out of energy. The last thing I wanted to talk about, aside from my godforsaken job, was the damn software project life cycle. "Well, there's documentation and there's the stuff the designers have to do and the stuff the developers have to do and... stuff."

There was a brief moment of silence before my dad screamed at the top of his lungs, "I pick you up from work every fucking day and you can't even make polite conversation!!!" I sat there in silence for the rest of the ride, because what can you really say to someone who is screaming at the top of their lungs at you? Do you scream louder? Overreact more maniacally?

I reacted, I now realize without burden of welling, trottely tears, as I have hundreds, thousands of times before. I sat there in bratty silence and thought to myself, *don't do me any favors*. Not why are you yelling at me? Or I'm sorry, I'll try to make polite conversation in the future, but I need to extricate myself from this situation as soon as humanly possible. I'll walk home next time. I'm on the next train out of Dodge.

It occurred to me later that maybe that's the reason self-sufficiency is so important to me. A sort of *look at me -- I made it and didn't need any of your help after all*. And that's fine. This sort of insolent, snotty life interpretation hasn't done me much

harm, I think. I can spend my whole life setting up dominoes, only to knock them down for my own benefit, and I don't think that will prevent me from being a participating member of society. One couldn't call it biting the hand that feeds - more like just ignoring it. An indignant, "You are the weakest link. Goodbye."

The thing I found especially disquieting was the way I didn't react. In that respect, The Incredible Hulk has always been the rebel in the family. She can scream and slam doors with the best of them. I'm just the one who appeases by strategic omission of information. It almost makes me wonder if I am even open-minded at all. Is it so unrealistic to suppose 22 years of words unsaid, of slackened features and dead-panned expressions has caused me, too, to accept them at face value? What happens to people whose life's work is making themselves disappear?

I need to stop reading too much Psych.

Cover the hurt with a show of gladness

2001-11-02

New York, New York

poeks: i went to a psychic on friday
 poeks: this flyer-hander-outer on the street pulled me aside and told me she needed to tell me why i was so confused
 Hildi: hahahaha
 poeks: and of course i went, because i am sucker
 poeks: so like we're talking and stuff upstairs and she's all like "i sense a lot of negateeveety"
 poeks: she must have said that fifty times
 poeks: that was like her one hook
 poeks: and then she was all like
 Hildi: what was her name?
 poeks: "i think your parents have problem with the gay"
 poeks: i dont know
 Hildi: HAHAHAHA
 Hildi: what was she?
 poeks: "yes, your dad has problem with the gay"
 Hildi: caribbean?
 poeks: i dunno. latina or something
 Hildi: hahahaha
 poeks: and then she was going to tell me all about my negateeveety
 poeks: however
 poeks: that was another \$200 us dollars
 poeks: "ees it the money or you just don't want to face your problem?"
 poeks: "it's the money"
 poeks: "no, i think you have block against figuring out problem"
 poeks: so i just left
 poeks: her kids were cute
 Hildi: 200!!!
 poeks: they were all playing in the living room
 Hildi: that's mad expensive!
 poeks: i know
 Hildi: i can tell you that you have negativity
 poeks: seriously
 Hildi: and that your dad has problem with the gay
 poeks: she did not say one think that a semi-intuitive person could have figured out
 Hildi: hmm
 poeks: "you smile on outside, but inside you are sad"
 poeks: mmhmm
 poeks: and then that song "tears of a clown" came into my head, and i could no longer take her seriously
 Hildi: i hate tears of a clown
 Hildi: that's such a ridiculous song

 poeks: i saw kristen z again at the train station
 Hildi: your brain is like swiss cheese
 poeks: it is
 Hildi: kristen is going to have 4 children and scream at them all day
 poeks: you should be a psychic healer
 poeks: i think that is your niche
 Hildi: but i'll only say things they don't want to hear... the truths they don't want to face

poeks: egzactly
 Hildi: oh, i'd be soo good
 poeks: you would
 poeks: you just need an apartment on 7th ave
 poeks: and a neon sign
 poeks: and you're set
 Hildi: yeah, a glowing neon hand kind of cupped together
 poeks: that's good
 Hildi: palm reading and everything
 poeks: do you have big, ugly earrings?
 Hildi: and i can say "jesus is in a gucci robe now"

Remember that time?

2001-11-05

New York, New York

At work. Sir Lancelot is talking about this Australian psychic healer he met over the weekend. "She was a little too intense for me. She was all like, 'How is your fahther?' He's dead. 'Would you like to speak with your fahther'? And I was like, listen, just give me my scotch." He went on to talk about how he doesn't really buy all that speaking with the dead business. "I mean, I can't accept that when you die, you just wait around for relatives to contact you. You've got the history of mankind -- all the answers of life -- at your fingertips, and all you can talk about is 'Oh, I remember the doily on the bureau in the living room.' This woman asked me if I wanted to talk to my dad, and I said 'Not if he doesn't put out.' I don't want to hear about 'Oh I remember that day when we went fishing.' I want to hear 'Jesus is now in a Gucci robe.'"

WWGW

2001-11-19

Westfield, New Jersey

So I didn't go to work on Friday. I wish I had some sort of creative or somewhat valid excuse for this, such as I was hungover, sick, or still completely wasted. But no. I just didn't go. I feel justified by the immutable fact of my slave wages, but for some reason they still seem to care when I don't show up for work, which is, oh, once every other week. Maybe I will get fired, so I won't have to drag my ass out of bed at 6:30 for a whole nother month. I doubt it, though.

Instead of pretending to do complicated, you-wouldn't-understand programming at work, I stayed home and made macaroni and cheese. As fate would have it, macaroni and cheese evidently comes only in family-sized boxes; I guess Kraft did not see the market niche of single serving macaroni and cheese eaters that is me. So I had to make four cups of said starch-based consumable, three and a half cups of which is sitting moresly in the fridge. I considered feeding the uneaten portion to the dog, which would have been utterly successful had our dog been of the big slobbery breed. Unfortunately, our dog is the approximate size of an obese cat, so I felt deep in my heart that it wouldn't work out without the sacrifice of my scaping congealed macaroni and cheese dog puke off the carpet all day.

Lately, I have been having enormous problems keeping up with my journal. It's not as though nothing ever happens (well, nothing terribly *interesting* happens, but that's still something.) -- I have no fewer than five drunken debauchery stories to relate -- I just can't seem to get started. I'm at one of those enviable points in my life where I am incapable of doing anything at all besides reading online journals and telling myself tomorrow, yes, tomorrow, is the day I will resume penning my own.

Yesterday my mom cornered me while on one of my I-have-nothing-better-to-do-so-why-don't-I-go-for-a-walk walks, and forced me against my will to Lord & Taylor to purchase a winter coat. I was in possession of a fair amount of skepticism, as Lord & Taylor is the primary location where my sister and I used to play the ever entertaining game of *What Would Grandma Wear* when we were younger. I did, in fact, find something nice, and also succumbed to the temptation of two new pairs of shoes, which a very, very reluctant saleswoman assisted me in the acquisition of (read: she brought them, ever so spitefully, out of the stock room, just for me).

In other news, The Incredible Hulk and Hildi are coming home on Wednesday. V. v. exciting, although Hildi will inevitably make me see Harry Potter. Since it will be Thanksgiving in three days, I am confidant that I will get to see my sister for more than the requisite five seconds this holiday.

Petrificus Totalus

*2001-11-21**Westfield, New Jersey*

So the leaves have all fallen off the trees. We know what that means: more cold. I am not very pleased about this transgression. I don't really get the whole leaves falling thing. You'd think trees, having been around for so long, would have gotten with the program and realized that getting naked in winter is not exactly the smartest thing to do. If I were a tree, I would grow fur or Polartec or something in the winter.

I was fortunate enough to leave work after one today, and yet somehow half the population of New York was still commuting out to New Jersey at this time of day. People with those big, rolly suitcases should be fined. They are a crime against nature and cause everything to move just a little bit more slowly. It should be legal for the more pragmatic among us to push the rolly people down the stairs, because that's the price these people have to pay for being so slow. An alternative to this could be to just take their luggage and throw it down the stairs, as surely in New York these people would scamper down as quickly as possibly to reclaim their belongings, lest some thug deftly sweep them away while they weren't looking.

Hildi is home! We did, as I predicted, have to see Harry Potter and all. The very well thought-out plan entailed picking me up around 8:30, retrieving Wendy from her home in Edison or something, snagging tickets at the Loews theater in New Brunswick, picking up a random boy, Tim, wherever he lived, having a drink at Rutgers, and then arriving back at the theater in the nick of time to see the movie at 9:50. As you might imagine, I had my doubts. Hildi's brother, Paul, claims that one can get to Wendy's house in ten minutes if one is clever and cunning, but alas, we were neither clever nor cunning. Needless to say, we ended up getting tickets for the 11 show, which pleased me, since it meant there was more time for the consumption of alcohol.

We had a few (well, *I* had a few) at Marita's downtown on the Rutgers New Brunswick campus, while we listened to Michael's new hit (guilty pleasure, I must admit) and watched a fat man get his groove thang on. We left after Hildi had gone past her limit of .25 beers and whisked off to Tim's house, who I was instructed to call "Tim Chi". Tim Chi had his Sorcerer's Stone book handy, ready to highlight important passages as they transpired.

We got to the theater with moments to spare, and we all hustled into the theater to find seats. Oh except for me, who hustled to smoke a cigarette outside. And Hildi, who hustled to relieve her bladder in the women's room (presumably).

The movie. Although it didn't seem long, I can't imagine how small children could sit still for that long. I certainly couldn't, especially not with that ridiculous chess scene at the end. The chess scene that was written by 20,000 typing monkeys. Yes, that one. Whatever. I guess the director was too busy worrying about being faithful to the book to be concerned with trivial things like relationships between characters and such.

Everyone went their separate ways, and Hildi drove me back to the warm embrace that is my parents' house. Completely unexpected (It was 2:30 AM! On a Wednesday!), Ms Santo-Tomas decided to come inside for a while, to get out of the cold, you see. We said hello to The Incredible Hulk, who, to our delight, materialized for the obligatory five minutes, and had a few glasses of wine. Unfortunately, I cannot be bothered to fire up the roaring Yugo engine that is my brain to attempt to remember what we spoke about. I assure you it was all very inspiring and intellectual. That is all.

A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving

*2001-11-22**Clark, New Jersey*

Clank. Clank. Clank. These were the sonorous and soothing sounds to which I awoke on Thanksgiving morning. Clank clank clank, I later found out, was the sound of my father beating the oven into submission. The oven, bastion of all that is evil, decided, much to my mother's chagrin, that today it would cease to function.

And so, with only a lonely, unbaked pie and a sweet potatoe [sic] dish to gain admittance to the family hijinks, we arrived at the door of Aunt Susie's abode in pleasant and tolerant Clark, NJ. Shameful, I'm sure my mother thought, although the rest of us were concerned with more important troubles: my sister, on how quickly she could make her escape, my father, on how late he could arrive at the party, and me, on how I would be able to quell my anxiety due to having to speak to other actual human beings.

Susie is the tenth of twelve Manchester children. Yes, twelve. 12. For the Romans among us: XII. My mom is the third. It is reasonable to assume one cannot survive a childhood with eleven siblings without being a might insane, and for this reason, I have always enjoyed the somewhat raucous get-togethers of my mother's side. The mass amounts of people packed into a reluctant host's home. The good natured (or otherwise) ribbing of the younger siblings. The scarcely believable (yet undoubtedly true -- I mean, twelve) anecdotes from a childhood without boundaries. The hundred nameless cousins racing about without regard to traditional obstructions such as furniture and aging relatives. All can be had for the low, low price of your mortal soul at a Manchester party.

We settled in, my sister strategically locating herself between the deviled eggs and cocktail shrimp and me within easy access of the eggnog. While attempting to reach the precise balance between intoxication and appearing not to be intoxicated, my cousin Scott (Susie's son) revealed to us that he had a new motorcycle. A real fast one, with lots of horses, I understand. No sooner did Scott finish his sentence than was my sister perched astride the hog in the garage. Robbed of my shield of outgoing personality, I had no choice but to follow.

As I stepped outside, my sister was donning a ridiculously large leather jacket with entirely too many zippers and padded shoulders to boot. As she pulled the too-big safety helmet over her head, Aunt Janey snapped pictures to commemorate the event. It was amusing. She settled in behind Scott on the bike, and they sped off into the suburban sunset.

While patiently waiting for disaster to strike, Aunt Janey and I chatted a while. Janey is one of the middle children in the Manchester clan, and hence spent the better part of her younger years a garrulous troublemaker. Janey has since put away her bad child persona, but her loquacious nature is still in full force. The woman talks as though her next breath may be her last -- she might as well make the most out of this one. Only Janey can ask you a question, in passing, and in verbally exploring the options of what your answer might be, eventually wind her way to the correct one, leaving you with the sole option of nodding vigorously. Where she might go overboard with the sheer magnitude of her outputted speech, Janey makes up with a wonderful, self-deprecating humor, which I can only imagine arose from the intense desire for somebody, anybody to dole out some attention.

Needless to say, it was Janey who convinced me to take a walk on the wildside and ride around the block on Scott's motorcycle when he and The Incredible Hulk returned. Having survived the harrowing experience of riding on the back of my cousin Julie's boyfriend's scooter in Florida, recklessly speeding down a side street at Cocoa Beach at the insane clip of thirty miles per hour, I was reluctant. I had cheated death once, and I wasn't going to tempt fate again. But Janey. Who can argue with logic at the speed of sound?

Normally, I would think that a fear of riding on the back of objects moving a speed usually reserved for birds of prey involved a healthy dollop of the fear of a loss of control. I don't deny that, as I plotted my escape route in the inevitable event of catastrophe, I considered this fear. More to the fore of my consciousness, however, was my fear that I would accidentally let go. No, really.

I didn't accidentally let go. I survived.

After my adventure, I went inside to join my mom, her sister April, and a few cousins making crafts. April, another middle child, is also one of my favorites. She has the flavor of biting, sarcastic wit that only comes with spending one's formative years participating in self-affirming initiation rites such as standing in closets for hours with a dirty sock lodged firmly in one's mouth. Her children, like many of my other cousins, effortlessly exert the combination of inhuman beauty and precocious intelligence that has organically grown through the most recent Manchester generation, yet unceremoniously skipped over me. They, it should be noted, are also insane, brandishing a charming obnoxiousness that is amusing, yet leaves the observer with the subtle gratitude that they are not his children.

Jessie and Chris futzed around with their festive scarecrow crafts, trading adolescent insults with ease, while Whitney, Janey's curiously subdued child, quietly chatted with April about a story she was writing with her friend. I always feel for Whitney, because adults feel the need to humor her as they do all children, even though this eleven-year-old speaks with the eloquence of a thirty-five-year-old PhD candidate.

After Susie's, we went over to my dad's sister (also Susie, as fate would have it), and ate even more. The Incredible Hulk made a quick escape after dinner, and catching a ride on her coattails, I made it back to the insulating goodness that is Thanksgiving Day TV.

And that is how I spent my Thanksgiving. The end.

It's my party

*2001-12-07
New York, New York*

Today will forever be known as The Day Miss Thang Cried.

This morning I had to write a BS admin tool for a client that was paying us close to nothing, and Miss Thang, as fate would have it, was to do the HTML front-end of the project. Usually, I'll do the backend for a project and then hand it over to the HTML developer entirely, so we don't end up writing over each other's files. We don't have source control here: we are ghetto-fabulous. Working with Miss Thang, it would seem, takes a bit more hand-holding, although unfortunately not in the literal sense. There's a lot of, "How do you do this? I don't want to break it." "Oh, okay, I'll do it." The end result was of

course that we were constantly writing over each other's work, which was a bit on the frustrating side.

Neither hell nor highwater could make me care about this client, so I wasn't terribly irritated by the whole process. Sure, it was kind of annoying, but that was only one of many other things I had to deal with. Miss Thang, on the other hand, was having issues. Things were *fucked up*. This was *ridiculous*. Harsh words were thrown and tantrums were had. Eventually, we finished our shit around 2:30, and stole out to Whole Foods to pick up some food.

By this point Miss Thang could no longer contain her wrath. The drama unleashed itself in full force, and she told me, in painstaking detail, every single thing that was wrong with the company. She can't live like this, she said, loud enough for everyone within a twelve mile radius to clearly overhear. She can't take Jon freaking out every time she checks her email or makes a phone call. We work ten grueling hours a day and are forced to work under "Nazi concentration camp conditions."

"Oh no, now I'm going to cry." And cry she did. Granted, I did feel bad for the girl, and at this point I had not yet mentally diagnosed her with Borderline Personality Disorder, so I did my best to comfort her. I'm sure you can imagine how effective that was.

We got to Whole Foods, her ranting and me nodding feverishly. While waiting in the checkout line, I noticed what an amusing setup Whole Foods had. There were about five lines of people and maybe fifteen cashiers in two rows. There was a guy at the head of the lines of customers, letting them know when a cashier was ready for them. "Ten is yours!" "You're at five!" He sounded like Marc Summers on Double Dare. I was briefly distracted from sympathizing with Miss Thang by the intense desire for Mathias or Sir Lancelot or Hildi or *anybody* to be here to appreciate this abomination of humanity. How on earth could one be *that* enthusiastic about ushering people off to their respective cashiers? It was the most amusing thing I had seen all week, and unable to contain myself any longer, I turned to Miss Thang and said, "Well, if it doesn't work out with ID, you can always do what that guy does."

"You're twelve!" Miss Thang gave me the look of death and sashayed off to her personal checkout counter. When we got back to the office, I left Miss Thang, now consoled, and went to buy cigarettes. I came back up to the Super Duper Secret Smoking Hallway on our floor to find a weeping Miss Thang pouring her heart out to Mathias. At first I felt bad, because here she was, saying all these personal things to him, all these painful things that (although I had just been doled out the exact same version of what she was now saying) were meant to be heard only by Mathias. I quickly realized, however, that she wanted an audience, and with any random person who wandered into the stairwell, her fervency would only increase.

"My makeup," she lamented. "I must looked all fucked up."

"Oh, Miss Thang, you could never look fucked up," Mathias deadpanned.

After her crying jag, Miss Thang did what any respectable drama queen would: she went back in the office and told everyone how upset she was.

Queer as folk

2001-12-18

New York, New York

I had been waiting for Tuesday night for many moons, and now that the day had finally arrived, I knew that disaster was imminent. Tonight was to be the night when not only would I get to drink with Miss Thang, I would get to drink with Miss Thang, Mathias, Sir Lancelot, and Hildi. Two worlds would unite as Hildi would get first-hand experience on what it's like to work with the more interesting characters in my office. Sarcastic remarks would be thrown, drama would hurtle through the air with a vengeful wrath, and wine would flow, as it were, like water.

Preparations for the evening had begun at least a month beforehand, in the form of me badgering Hildi that she must, she simply must, meet these strange people. Mathias was prepped several weeks in advance -- he and I had been working on how to get Miss Thang to go out with us nonstop. Finally, the Friday before the big day, I walked out of the office with Miss Thang after work, and she suggested we go out for a drink next week before she went off to grand San Fran. Everything was in perfect working order.

Then Tuesday came. Everyone was stressed out, because the holidays were nearing, and much work still needed to be completed. I barrelled through my stuff, finishing around seven. Sir Lancelot was reticent: he was old, he said, and couldn't be out drinking every night, especially when the highly lauded ID Holiday Party was the next day. Mathias possibly had to hang out with an old friend in town. Miss Thang had to pack, and eavesdropping on a conversation between her and a project manager, she could very well be at the office all night, prostrating herself to the evil daemon that is Hard Candy (right). Hildi, the only party involved who was actually certainly attending, was on a train from Jersey, still an hour away.

So there I was in the office, feeling helpless and pathetic, as everyone there clearly knew the only reason I could ever stay past seven would have to do with a certain hot drama queen. King, the project manager, was still there, shooting the shit

with Miss Thang, who clearly had more important things to attend to. After what seemed an eternity, King finally left, and the three of us hijacked Miss Thang and told her she was leaving. Now.

We filed out the door, and I ran down the stairs to find Hildi, who was wandering the dank corners of seedy 27th Street, doubtless all hoochied out in an attempt to upstage Thang. I found her, and the four of us converged in an awkward parallelogram. Introductions unfolded, and we made our ungainly way toward the F train to find a suitable bar/restaurant. No one seemed to want to take the lead, so we wandered pointlessly past bar after bar, restaurant after restaurant. Finally, now that we had been in transit for an easy half hour, Miss Thang expressed some mild dissatisfaction, and we all frantically scanned the streets of the Lower East Side for a place to ease our loads. "Orchard Street has tons of restaurants!" Mathias chirped, looking to Miss Thang for validation.

Eagle-eyed Sir Lancelot spotted a promising locale, and the five of us shuffled into a kitschy, Middle Eastern-flavored cafe. Conversation was on the subdued side, as all and sundry were rather tired. It was, after all, a Tuesday night. Much of our chatter circled around Work-Topics, which I'm sure were of pique interest to student/Nordstrom handbag salesperson Hildi.

Ms ICON announced that she now had to undertake the laborious packing situation necessary before she could embark on her journey to San Francisco. So the five of us parted ways, Hildi somehow procuring a kiss on the cheek from Miss Thang (bitch!). No sooner did Miss Thang and Sir Lancelot cross the street towards the F train, than was I on the phone with Mathias, begging him to grace us with one more drink.

Naturally, the lush who goes by the name of Mathias came out, and naturally, it was not just one drink. Things started to get a bit hazy at this point, as I was already three drinks in the hole when the bottle of red wine was brought around by the waitress (who Mathias and I had met at a bar the week before, incidently) at another cafe. Conversation revolved mostly around discussions of how hots Asians are, led by Mathias, who is for some ungodly reason obsessed with Korean bois. Hildi scored some insight into the logistics of inner working of the gay male mind, while I concentrated mostly on the bottle of wine. Photographic evidence would suggest from there on most of our time was spent wandering drunkenly along the streets of the Lower East Side and helping down-and-out women get up on their feet and off to the homeless shelter. Supposedly we went on to another bar from there, but the only recollection I have of this event was slurring my way through the purchase of a pack of cigarettes from the bartender.

After our revelry, we somehow made it back to Mathias's apartment, where Hildi and I immediately passed out on Mathias's futon. I woke up the next morning, and duly noting the fact that I was still alive, got up and went to work.

Nothing but a hound dog

2001-12-18

Westfield, New Jersey

About a week ago, I came home to a message from my sister saying that I should call her back immediately. The Incredible Hulk never calls me. Never. What could possibly necessitate that I call back at all, never mind post haste? Anthrax? Pregnancy? The heartbreak of psoriasis? All the gruesome things that could have happened to my little sister swirled through my head as I laid my head upon my pillow, not having called back. I called a couple days later, while I walking home rather tipsy from the train station.

"Hi The Incredible Hulk, it's me. I'm kind of drunk."

"Haha. [to her hovering entourage] My sister is drunk! [five minutes of mumbling in the background] Ha ha. Yeah. [to me] So Poeks, we are going to buy mom and dad a dog for Christmas."

"Um, what?"

"Yeah, okay, I have to go, but I'll talk to you later."

Admittedly, although the idea sounded highly implausible, it didn't sound all that bad. I wouldn't mind a new puppy, and I have oft heard my mom express her secret desires of aforementioned animal acquisition. So, I was thinking about it. Maybe.

The Incredible Hulk came home a week later, and I offhandedly inquired as to her plan. "Yeah, we have to get it this weekend," she advised as she walked out the door to greet the honking horn of one of her fans' cars.

The Incredible Hulk, it would seem, did not have any plan -- she figured we would just kind of waltz into a pet store and buy one. Probably a rottweiler, even though it would be able to eat D, my parents' little, old Westie in one or two bites. Who does she think she is, I thought bitterly, as I am supposed to be the one who just kind of does stuff without thinking about it at all beforehand.

I was forced, against my will, to research dogs online. My sister and I sat in the computer room, oohing and aaahing at various options from Animal Shelters in the area. "No, too old," my sister said, as I clicked randomly. "No, pugs!" I squealed

as she swooned over a smushed-faced untouchable. My dad sat working at his computer, in the same room, as we, convinced of our cunning, browsed on.

We started out on Saturday, a bit more knowledgeable for our trouble, but otherwise still plan-less. "Do you have a phonebook?" I implored, stepping in the car with The Incredible Hulk and tall, skinny, blonde friend Terry. "No! Why didn't you bring it!" The Incredible Hulk demanded, raising her voice several octaves. And thus our adventure began. We went to one pet shop, even though every dog book in existence says not to, under any circumstances, buy a dog at a pet shop. They are evil, you see. We saw a bunch of cute puppies and left empty-handed. We spent the remainder of the day stuck in traffic, The Incredible Hulk cursing, Terry and I cracking wise and complaining.

Sunday. Sunday was the day. We went to a couple pet shops and one Animal Shelter, but nothing doing. It was getting later and later, so finally, we had to settle on Shaking Paw Puppies on Route 22. I'm not proud of this, but desperate times call for desperate measures. After luring The Incredible Hulk away from the puppies weighing fifty pounds and over, I maneuvered her into a room with a wee Scottie who promptly peed on the floor. It was magic. After mumbling a few stock questions about worming, I signed on the dotted line, and we were speeding happily down Route 22, pup snugly in my arms.

Reality didn't hit until we arrived home to two stony faces. Mom was trying to appear detached and uninterested, while Dad wore an expression usually reserved for those who had just undergone a root canal without anesthesia. Hmm, I thought warily, as my three family members swept out the door to a holiday party. On the way out the door, my father asked me what on earth I was thinking. Not really having an answer for that, I stayed behind, basking in the glow of new-puppy-cuteness. They may be taking him right back from whence he came, but for now I would suck up all the puppy love goodness I could handle.

When they got back from the party, my mom took me aside and told me she had almost convinced my dad to keep Max. Max, I thought, now that's a good sign.

So anyway, it's Tuesday, and little Max is still running around, eating rocks and peeing on the floor. My dad and D, however, are still pissed. To be continued...

All I want for Xmas is you

2001-12-25

Westfield, New Jersey

Now I feel like a horrendous person, because a certain Hildi Santo-Tomas has beaten me to writing about the events of last Tuesday. Oh, woe is me -- I am so behind in my journal. See, the thing is, since Tuesday I have been either drunk or sick about 99% of the time. Therefore, nary a journal entry could be written. Yes.

Anyway, tis now Christmas morning, and I'm sitting here in the computer room with D and my dad. Max, who has wormed his way into the hearts of all Oslislo family members (to varying degrees), is sullenly complaining in the kitchen. My sister and mom are still adrift in slumberland.

I nearly forgot all about Christmas this year, only to be reminded by mom yesterday, who slyly mentioned that she didn't have time to put up decorations this year. I myself could not have cared less about said festive routine, but The Incredible Hulk, on the other hand, was all about trimming the tree. All about trimming the tree, that is, until she realized what a tremendous pain in the ass it is. I lent a hand to the futile endeavour (futile, least of all because today was already Christmas Eve, thus leaving a single, solitary day of decorated glory) until The Incredible Hulk threw on Mariah's Xmas Album, at which point I could take no more. My head hurt. I could not take all this Christmas kitsch.

After deciding that the jumbled bunch of knots she referred to as "the lights" was too much of a tangled mess to deal with, The Incredible Hulk took me by the arm and led me to the car to pick up some new ones. It being Christmas Eve, we didn't find any (other than some outdoor Icicle-style white lights, complete with white (as opposed to green) cords, which I don't have to tell you didn't work out), and furthermore, didn't find a suitable gift for Charlotte at Barnes & Noble either. So we bought some apple cider at the A & P in Clark, cut our losses, and went home.

I ended up setting up the little, intricate village of wintery folk that goes in the bay window every year, although this year in a decidedly more haphazard fashion. It was just as well, as Max kept stealing the Village People and chewing on them in a corner.

Later that morning my mom confronted me about a suspiciously missing piece of her sculpture that used to reside on a gothic pedestal by the door. "I was waiting for you to say something," she said, "I mean, I did notice it was missing."

It's funny that she should have noticed, since I clearly did not. In fact, I had so completely forgotten about having tripped the

previous night in a drunken rage (spilling both myself and the pedestal/clay fish combination to the floor, destroying the clay, giving myself a concussion), that it necessitated The Incredible Hulk taking me aside and jogging my memory.

"Remember last night... when you ripped the flag off the balcony and threw it on the ground? Yeah, I came outside and you were stuck in a bush. And then you broke mom's sculpture..." "What?!" "Yeah, you totally broke it." Now, as I was standing guiltily before my mother, it slowly started coming back to me: being sprawled on the floor, a million tiny white pieces of alabaster and clay scattered on the floor. I remember it being rather beautiful. Except for the broken part. That would never do.

So I apologized for my ridiculousness, sat through a lecture about ruining my life through the bottle, and went on my way, clutching my aching noggin.

Back to school

2002-02-15

New Brunswick, New Jersey

My day can be summed up in four words: read, work, sleep, and gawk. Aside from core biological processes such as breathing and blood circulation, hours are passed pawing through Bennett and Hollister, bitterly rewriting backend for Crown Royal.com, and appearing disinterested as yet another slim, well-dressed, innocent young lady saunters by.

I wake up each day, still, at that ungodly hour between six and seven anti-meridian. I stumble into a pair of jeans and whatever else fits the criteria of
a) protection against biting New Jersey cold and
b) malodorous to a bearable extent

Mom and I step into the still-frigid forest green Camry and speed down Route 22 towards our ultimate goal of Rutgers University. This hour is usually passed in relative silence, which I would attribute to the fact that in the morning I am 70% asleep, in the evening somewhere in the outer stratosphere.

I like school. There is a certain pride with which I apply yellow highlighter to battered, used textbook. In lecture I take notes until my hand aches and is smudged liberally with blue ink. I do my homework, I read my assignments, and most shockingly, I go to class.

Silent disdain for egotistical professors, arrogance towards unchallenging material, and existential boredom yield to redefined purpose and a logistical lack of time in my schedule. Occasionally, I consider pencilling them into my daily planner (\$7.95, RiteAid), but I am usually able to push their allure into the nether-regions of my cerebral cortex (see Biology for the Mentally Handicapped 119:100).

Granted, it hasn't been long enough for me to forget Cooper Dining Hall, the EE bus, Alexander Library (3.5 years, to be exact); certainly not long enough for me to walk down College Ave with nostalgia gleaming in my eye and not disdain for the frat bois who just passed me on the sidewalk. Still, I look around at the swarming masses of unbridled youth around me, and I have to smile. I can stand waiting for the bus and pick out every archetype of the teenage landscape: baseball capped frat boy; morose, gothic outcast; awkward, uncertain bookworm; harlequin-painted popular girl.

If I didn't look like I was 22 going on 16, I'm sure I would feel rather out of place, but the crush of shouting, stomping, invincible bodies whisking to and from class can sometimes catch me off-guard and sweep me up into the romanticism of divine irresponsibility. Here I am, lab coat-bedecked, peering sagely into a microscope or adjusting my wire-frame spectacles before launching into a stimulating and insightful argument with a professor.

So yeah, I like school.

The exam will be cumulative

2002-02-19

New York, New York

"It's now about five of; you have fifteen minutes," drones your bio professor as you leap from your seat, exam in hand. You stuff your papers in the round man's hand, a laconic "thanks" on your lips, as you rush out the door like Cinderella late for the ball.

You are outside Hickman Hall. Students talk idly in small groups, gossiping and tittering nervously, as students are wont to

do. You look at your watch: two hours until your appointment with your *stylist*, Michael, the French diva of hair.

Do you...

- A) Leisurely make your way over to the busstop, as you have plenty of time
- B) Sprint madly down the street, backpack wagging in the wind, because you are an anxiety-wrought freak.

B.

The fates are on your side today, and you miraculously get to the EE just as it's about to pull away down George Street. You find a seat next and lurch into it gratefully, heart racing, moments from keeling over dead.

Ping! goes the please-stop-the-bus indicator, and you thank your lucky stars someone else is taking the train to New York today, so you didn't have to reach your sweaty arm across the boy sitting next to you to press the indicator yourself. You get off the bus.

Every step an agony of weak lung capacity and groaning knees, you somehow make it up the stairs to the platform. Watch says there is a half hour before the next train. Freak.

Eventually, the train chugs into the station; you swish inside and find a nice window seat.

Do you...

- A) Use your time wisely and read St. Francis of Assisi, like a good student would
- B) Stare out the window, periodically waking from your daze with a start: "Where am I! Where am I going! Did I miss my stop!"

B.

You arrive at New York Penn Station an hour later and meld into the herd of commuters filing up the narrow stairwell to the lobby. People on their way home to Jersey rush past you, arm crooked, noting time on wristwatch. Some lead rolly suitcases like seeing-eye dogs in reverse, and you silently curse them, because you know they will be all slow going down the stairs. The day's failing light peeks out from behind the mass of bodies hopping purposefully down the stairs toward their comfortable beds in the suburbs.

You take the escalator up into the gaping maw of 7th Avenue. You have more than a half hour until your hair appointment, goddammit.

After much pacing up and down 26th Street, you finally open the door to your destiny at Benisty. Two women greet you at the front desk, tight smiles ready to go home for the day.

Michael hovers over a cursing man in a business suit, snipping impishly at the man's few hairs.

One of the women takes your coat and stuffs your hat into the sleeve, while you stand awkwardly and worry your hat-head hair.

Eventually, Michael is finished, and woman #2 brings you over to have your hair washed.

Anxiety mounting, you attempt to relax as woman #2 douses your scraggly-haired head with cold, cold water. You didn't recall hairwashing to be quite such a close contact sport before. Hmm, you wonder.

Michael takes over, and you discuss your new head-to-be. Since you always err on the side of too long ("I want it short, but not *too* short."), you tell Michael you to just hack that shit off. "I'm thinking something sophisticated and elegant, yet still feminine," he purrs.

If Michael's English were better, he would have said:

- A) I'm thinking something sophisticated and elegant, yet still feminine.
- B) I'm thinking something dykey, yet not too butch. Think Anne Heche, not Ellen.

B.

Michael snips away and makes idle small talk with you, although you are too nervous to reply with answers requiring multiple syllables. You ponder your inevitable haircut anxiety, and muse briefly that maybe not everyone sweats bullets while sitting in the barber's chair, leaving them in a pool of perspiration afterwards. Pushing the thought away, you go back to attempting the ever-elusive goal of a less-than-completely-rigid posture. Michael doesn't seem to mind.

At length, the door rattles, and you crane your eyes to the left to see one *Miss Thang* in character, per usual, clad in an outfit that can be described only with the word "tight." Miss Thang's hair now ends at her ass, where it used to just below

Do you *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ã,Ã!*

A) Lick your lips enticingly and sidle up next to her, because clearly she wants your sexy bod.
B) Sit next to Miss Thang, observing the universally known rule of 18 inches of personal space, playing aloof and coy, because you are an imbecile.

B.

You are an imbecile. You while the night away buying drinks and rambling on about such interesting topics as work, the various people at work of less-than-par intelligence, who at work is gay, how we all really just want to marry Sir Lancelot, threesomes and their relative pros and cons, and Miss Thang *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ãcâ€žÃcs* bizarre obsession with the co-founders. At one point someone actually *calls* Adam on his cell phone and hands the phone to you. Fortunately, he doesn't *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ãcâ€žÃct* pick up, but that doesn't *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ãcâ€žÃct* stop you from proclaiming your undying love to his voicemail.

Miss Thang then goes on this insane tack, demanding whether or not you thought Adam would think she was the one who left the message. Somewhat disappointed you had not thought to start off your voicemail with *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ã...â€œHi Adam, this is Miss Thang, ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ã,Ã* ☐ you play into her game with, *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ã...â€œOf course*, he thought it was you. *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ã,Ã* ☐ You spend entirely too much time on this subject, time that is now gone, your life being forever shorter because of it.

You and Mathias dig your heels into drunkenness, while Miss Thang demurely opts to stop after the two drink mark. Whatevas.

Eventually, as all fairytales do, this one ends, and you say your goodbyes, marching off down your respective paths.

At the end of the night you

A) Learn that Miss Thang is not just a *web* dominatrix while bound to her bedpost with silk underclothes.
B) Teach Mathias what it is to a *real man*.
C) Fall asleep all drunk on Mathias *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ãcâ€žÃcs* futon.

C.

The queens we use would not excite you

2002-02-26

New Brunswick, New Jersey

Flight: Eva Airways flight 31 (Stops: 1) Flight Details
Depart: Newark, NJ (EWR) - TERMINAL B Fri, Mar 15 at 10:55pm
Arrive: Taipei, Taiwan (TPE) - TERMINAL 2 Sun, Mar 17 at 7:45am

Flight: Eva Airways flight 211 (Non-Stop) Flight Details
Depart: Taipei, Taiwan (TPE) - TERMINAL 2 Sun, Mar 17 at 8:30am
Arrive: Bangkok, Thailand (BKK) - TERMINAL 2 Sun, Mar 17 at 11:15am

Flight: Eva Airways flight 212 (Non-Stop) Flight Details
Depart: Bangkok, Thailand (BKK) - TERMINAL 2 Sun, Mar 24 at 12:30pm
Arrive: Taipei, Taiwan (TPE) - TERMINAL 2 Sun, Mar 24 at 4:55pm

Flight: Eva Airways flight 32 (Stops: 1) Flight Details
Depart: Taipei, Taiwan (TPE) - TERMINAL 2 Sun, Mar 24 at 6:20pm
Arrive: Newark, NJ (EWR) - TERMINAL B Sun, Mar 24 at 9:25pm

Initially, I had planned on going to San Francisco for Spring Break *ÃfÃcÃcâ~Ã¼Ã,Ãc*, being that I got there so infrequently these days and feel a somewhat stinging pang of obligation whenever I think about the fair city. Unfortunately, unorganized person that I am, mid-February rolled around and still I had neither

A) booked a ticket
B) told anyone I was coming

Creep of Procrastination Guilt looming over my head, I thought maybe I would go to Europe instead, and visit Swedish Fish in Paris/Sweden (her exact location is always a mystery) or Richard and Co. in Berlin. Or maybe I would go to Hawaii and visit Ms The Monkey before she makes her move to the Big Apple. Spring Break *ÃfÃcÃcâ~Ã¼Ã,Ãc* inches closer, Poeks,

glamorous Westfield Diner. Having graduated Bryn Mawr last spring with a degree, I believe, in English, Mary Magdaline has since moved to the town of Ewing in southern NJ and drudges her days - ridiculously so - in a servatile position at Dow's Trenton office. We slipped back into non-contact after this brief encounter at the hub of Westfield social interaction of the Senior kind, and aside from the occasional email, I hadn't head much of her daily life in glorious U.S. of A.

Such was my luck, however, that I opened the front door this Friday eve to reveal Mary Magdaline and Miss Chang, a study of light and dark; tall and thin, short and round. After spirited greetings, I bid them entrance to the Oslislo abode and exchanged banter about this and that.

Max, the newest member of our clan, took an immediate shine to the Girl from Ghana and promptly peed on her shoe. Although Mary Magdaline herself ranks with those elite examples of humanity positioned, statue-like, on the The Incredible Hulk Pedestal (untouchable, untaintable in my mind and hence free from my usual urge for friends to be loved universally by all), it's worth mentioning that Max found Mary Magdaline to be pretty much the Cat's Meow (heh). He went nuts jumping all over her the whole time she was in the house, and when I got home later that night, he instantly ran from his jail cell of the kitchen to the couch where she sat, frantically searching for her.

Having experienced more puppy love than we could collectively bear, we set out for the denizen Mecca of 70's kitsch and nationwide symbol of New Jersey, the diner. The Westfield Diner, no less. Settling into the squeaky, plastic seats of our booth, we ordered our greasy fare from the stereotypically Latino staff. Miss Chang told me about her job of Math teacher of sullen youths, about responding to adolescent voices chirping "Miss Chang!" at the mall, about uncovering a secret enclave of WHS alumni at an obscure bar in nearby Scotch Plains. Even though Miss Chang was a liability to like in high school, having been firmly implanted into the ostracized Dorky Smart People group, I must say I think Miss Chang is really damn funny. Miss Chang has this sort of manic fervency to her speech which is unleashed at key points during a monologue: she'll be disinterestedly relating her techniques for enforcing her authoritay in the classroom one minute and suddenly, without warning, pounding the table because I ordered the chicken salad pita the next. The colorful Miss Chang, however, is not the subject of this diatribe.

Conversation shifted to the plight of Ms Magdaline in her struggle to find an American man to wed. Mary Magdaline is here in the US on borrowed time, which is to say, on a student Visa. Basically, come May of this year, if she doesn't find somebody to love, somebody with an American passport that is, she'll be going all the way back to the brotherland. Although Hildi and I have the tendency to make light of such situations rife with potential for comedy ("She could marry... Dave Reif!" "Well, how about your brother!"), it was rather sobering to get all the hairy details directly from the source. Stuck in a low paying job because no one wants to hire shiftless foreigners, Mary Magdaline still sends money to her family in Africa every month, can barely make rent on her apartment, would like to go to grad school but can't get loans, and is confronted with having to go back from whence she came.

The contrast between our lives is almost farcical: Mary Magdaline, an amazingly intelligent and gifted person, forever thrust into the grips of drama by circumstance, and me, in comparison, the world's luckiest SOB, forever just falling into enviable positions. Being the product of a middle class union, I may have dropped out of school, but I *just happened* to find a job in Silicon Valley that paid many times more than a wee 19-year-old could expect. I ended up quitting out of dissatisfaction, but the company I worked for *just happened* to be successful enough for me to afford to go to Europe for a year and do nothing. When I came back, my mother *just happened* to work for Rutgers, allowing me to attend for free. In a way, Mary Magdaline represents for me that which I aspire to have been. If, as they say, GodÅfÅcÅcâ,-Å¼Å,Åc only burdens you with as much as you can take, Mary Magdaline is a portrait of potential sainthood, while I am... Well, I guess that means I can't take very much, eh?

After dinner, Miss Chang had to leave to meet her boyfriend who reminds me vaguely of Eminem, so Mary Magdaline and I decided to go see a movie at the monstrous eyesore on Route 22, the Loews theater. Inching hesitantly off of the highway in her beat up jalopy ("You have to wait for me to come round ÅfÅcÅcâ€šÅ-Åcâ,-Å“ your door doesn't open from the inside"), we considered the array of quality films displayed before us in neon bravado. We eventually decided on Queen of the Damned, which might appear blatantly masochistic at first glance, but when coupled with my companion's abhorrent movie etiquette, seemed like the best choice. Mary Magdaline is the person that laughs jovially at all the jokes, who screams with terror when the monster attacks after a swell of ominous background music, who shouts "Don't go in there!" to the heroine clutching the doorknob of the basement door. In short, Mary Magdaline is the person you want to strike down, quickly and efficiently, with a venomous whip of your Twizzler. She is, in effect, the worst movie companion one could ever aspire to have. So basically, that factor ruled out any movie I might actually *want* to see, and also, it turned out, Mary Magdaline was a closet Anne Rice fan.

At this point you may be asking yourself how I can hold so close to my heart a person who both cannot control herself in a public setting *and* indulges in cheesy McNovels (which I, of course, would never do).

First of all, Saint Mary Magdaline is clearly blessed with a superior mathematical mind and the creativity necessary to apply it to many different venues. That is to say, the girl is damn smart and good at everything. While I do very much admire these gifts of hers and eagerly await the day when the world at large will do the same, the main quality of Mary Magdaline's that inspires me is her People Sense. People Sense, to me, is this sort of innate ability to judge others without, um, really judging them. It's being able to sense how people feel, what they're like, and predict how they'll interact with others. To me,

a person utterly bereft of this divine gift, it appears as though some people can kind of just look at you and be able to tell you all about yourself. Sure, I know plenty of people with covetous coffers of People Sense: my sister, Patsy Cline, Hildi. But Mary Magdaline is different.

Now I've been told by many in the past that I'm what's officially known as "difficult to read." Whenever there's a situation that calls for emotion, I can wipe the slate of my face clean of any discernable reaction without even thinking about it. Most people are not so great at being able to tell how I'm feeling or what I'm thinking, but goshdarnit if Mary Magdaline doesn't make me feel like there's a little cartoon thought balloon above my head at all times, hovering there for easy interpretation. Not only that, but Mary Magdaline has offered, on countless occasions, off-hand, throwaway advice that was so on the money it makes me wonder if she's an undercover agent for the CIA, complete with unlimited access to all my email, phone conversations, and journals.

For me, figuring people out is an exercise in detailed analysis of behavior and overt personality traits, so the idea that someone can just *know* these things without giving the subject conscious thought is completely perplexing to me. Consequently, those who are able to do this amaze me, and I envy that talent with all my black, sinful heart.

Mary Magdaline, wise Mary Magdaline, who appears sometimes to be a living, breathing mass of enigmatic genius. Such is my deification of this person that if she weren't so graciously humble, I wonder if I would be able to consider her a human being at all.

I woke from my reverie, startled by a writhing, charred Queen Akasha on the big screen in front of us meeting her untimely demise in a way I would consider eerily similar to that of the young diva who played her. Except without the vampires biting her. I don't have to tell you the movie sucked. You already know that. We left the theater discussing the one scene of any value: Aaliyah's faux-Egyptian dance scene (almost worth 8 bucks!).

Mary Magdaline drove me home after the movie, and we spoke about the late pop star as Mary Magdaline's car sputtered up the hill of my street, making its toil known to all within a two-block radius. What would she have to show for her life, should she die tomorrow? she asked. I had to smile, because not everyone has the luxury of being able to lament the fact that they, at 22, have not yet conquered the world. We rolled to a stop in front of Chateaux Oslislo, and I hugged tight my beacon of the future before saying adieu.

Along my meandering path in Europe, I've had the opportunity to meet a number of Africans (men and women). I dare you to find a single African woman in all of Europe). I discovered, to my non-surprise, they are not all brilliant, open, genuine, humble creatures of divine proportions. Presumably, there is no factory in Africa that mass-produces Mary Magdalines, packaging them with neat little bows, to be sent around the world. I think I can safely say that I belong in Africa no more than I belong in San Francisco, New York, or Berlin. I am capable of using my powers of logic and reason to determine that not all Africans are perfection in human form. Not any, really. Someday, I reckon, I might even meet an African I do not like. Until then, unfortunately, I remain obsessed with Africa.

Dinosaucers

2002-03-08

New Brunswick, New Jersey

The Incredible Hulk says I have aerodynamic hair.

Suggestions for the Improvement of RUCS

2002-03-11

New Brunswick, New Jersey

My qualms with Rutgers University Computing CenterS are many, but I think that if the university were to consult an expert such as myself, these issues could be quickly and efficiently resolved. Below is my list of suggested improvements...

Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?

Some days I just come in to check my email, because some days are meant for procrastination. Other days, they are frantic, anxious days, days when all I need to do is submit my Bio homework and rush off to lab, purposely striding to the bus. On those days I hate RUCS the most, because logging onto and launching IE takes roughly eight years. This leads me to question the ostensible Rutgers policy of housing proxy servers in rural Siberian villages. I, personally, do not believe

making the connection to a proxy server should take these computers as long as the average trip through Med School. Hence, I propose proxy servers be moved to the greater Tri-State area, or at least North America.

Nosy People

Before being allowed admittance to a Rutgers Computer Lab, students should be made to take a brief questionnaire with questions such as "Which is more interesting, the contents of your screen or the contents of the screen of the person sitting next to you?" Borderline personalities (aka, the people who chose the latter selection of the above question) should have to wear iron, Medieval-style shame masks which prevent them from glancing over at my monitor at five second intervals.

Musical Chairs

Since there is, in theory, a chair in front each computer here, one would think it logical to assume that chair is *associated with* the computer in front of it. Unfortunately, the more logic-impaired students here do not seem to grasp this connection and are wont to drag their chairs from the computer *associated with* it to the nether reaches of the universe. These students find no problem with scuttling seats from a perfectly usable computer station to the station of a friend, often times located on another campus. The only solution to this problem is to place electric fields in a three foot radius around the computer station. Thus, when the logic-impaired individual attempts to drag the chair away from the scene of the crime to the computer of the more interesting monitor of their friend Mary, the perpetrator will be issued a mild electrical shock.

Sticky Fingers

Computer lab users should be barred from the concurrent activities of keyboard usage and consumption of any substances that leave yucky food-residue on the fingers. Also, pouring juice-based liquids directly onto the keyboard should be prohibited.

Coming and Going

Any person who leaves his computer station to collect a print-out from an adjacent room should be subjected to the Finders Keepers clause. Computer users in wait would then be allowed to rush over and guiltily steal aforementioned print-out-getter of their precious station. Any roshambo announced with witness of a Rutgers Computing Center staff member would nullify said Finders Keepers clause, however.

Waiting for Tonight

I hate waiting. Each computer center should keep a separate machine for my use alone, preferably cordoned off from the commoners with easy-to-recognize police tape.

Zip it, zip it good

2002-03-12

New Brunswick, New Jersey

I've been having tremendous problems with my jacket zipper today. This whole two zipper deal has me rather perplexed. What, exactly, is the purpose of two zippers, rather than the traditional and more user-friendly one?

That's me in the spotlight

2002-03-14

New Brunswick, New Jersey

SCENE I

FADE IN:

ON BACK OF JEN'S HEAD. He hair looks kind of weird today. It is clear she has not been diligent in keeping up the responsibilities of a high-maintenance haircut.

INT. LOREE COMPUTER CENTER, DOUGLASS COLLEGE, RUTGERS UNIV. "DAY"

The Computer Center bustles with STUDENTS. Various STUDENTS hurry in and out, RUSTLING PAPERS and typing frantically. A BIG, BURLY FRAT BOY sits down next to JEN. His TIMID GIRLFRIEND stands dotingly behind him.

His CHAIR SQUEAKS LOUDLY, causing several STUDENTS to turn and glare.

BIG, BURLY FRAT BOY: (SQUEAKING CHAIR BACK AND FORTH) This chair needs some WD40.

JEN CLACKS away at keyboard.

JEN (V.O.): (typing) I've decided there is no way to write this without sounding silly, cheesy, naïve, and arrogant, and delusional, however, I ask that you allow me the indulgence of saying it anyway.

JEN stops typing and stares at GLOWING MONITOR. The CURSOR blinks menacingly at her while she waits for divine inspiration to continue.

FADE OUT.

SCENE II

FADE IN:

ON JEN ASLEEP IN HER BED.

INT. OSLISLO HOUSEHOLD, JEN'S ROOM NIGHT

The WIND HOWLS DRAMATICALLY outside the windows while JEN turns fitfully in her sleep.

JEN: (snores)

INT. JEN'S DREAM, LECTURE HALL DAY

A POMPOUS PROFESSOR is speaking to a huge hall filled with STUDENTS. Among them, we recognize many from ID Society, including MATHIAS, Sir Lancelot, and MISS THANG.

POMPOUS PROFESSOR: (droning) and Christ, the Son of God, suffered so that we might live!

JEN AND CO-WORKERS tsk patronizingly.

MATHIAS: Such BS.

The lecture ends and the students file out of the hall.

MISS THANG: (throws back hair extensions out of face) I don't understand how he honestly expects us to buy that shit.

JEN AND CO-WORKERS murmur agreement.

EXT. JEN'S DREAM, A ROOM DAY

JEN sits and watches a documentary film of events that are to take place in the future.

NARRATOR WITH SONOROUS VOICE (V.O.): Five Christian martyrs died in a struggle to save human lives!

The TV SCREEN shows a photo of the martyrs. Among them are MISS THANG and PETER KRAUSE.

PAN OUT to show JEN'S SHOCKED EXPRESSION.

JEN (to faceless companion): I can't believe Miss Thang is going to die so soon. That's so sad. I'll have to devote myself to spending as much time as I can with her in the next few months!

On the TV, the FIVE MARTYRS are standing before a row of ARMED GUNMEN.

MISS THANG raises an empty packet of Clorets to her eye as an act of mock defiance.

ARMED GUNMAN I raises his rifle to eye level and shoots her.

MISS THANG falls to the ground on her back, next to the grill of a car. BLOOD STREAMS from the back of her head and mixes indistinguishably with the red of her HAIR EXTENSIONS.

BACK TO SCENE.

JEN: (visibly moved): It's so beautiful! It's so beautiful!

EXT. JEN'S DREAM, THE OCEAN " DAY

PETER KRAUSE swims through the water, a WOUND IN HIS SIDE bleeds into the clear, blue water. He dives beneath the surface.

PAN quickly behind PETER KRAUSE.

EXT. JEN'S DREAM, AN UNDERWATER CAVE " NIGHT

A group of WORKERS help to save people trapped beneath the ocean. They light their way with flashlights, LONG ROPES stretch everywhere through the cave, links to the surface.

PETER KRAUSE is dying, but in his last moment he preaches to the WORKERS.

PETER KRAUSE: (preaching) The US is one of the richest countries in the world. How can we live so luxuriously when others live in such abject poverty? How can we sleep at night when we send our soldiers off to kill innocent women and children in Afghanistan?

INT. OSLISLO HOUSEHOLD, JEN'S ROOM " MORNING

JEN'S ALARM has gone off. It is tuned to 96.3, the Classical station, which on Sunday mornings is the Christian Propaganda Sermon station.

NARRATOR WITH SONOROUS VOICE: It is because others have suffered that we are able to enjoy these material comforts!

JEN leaps up from bed and SNAPS OFF RADIO.

INT. LOREE COMPUTER CENTER, DOUGLASS COLLEGE, RUTGERS UNIV. " DAY

JEN (V.O.): (typing) When I woke up I was filled with such a profound sadness over the death of Miss Thang. In my half-awake stupor, he thought suddenly occurred to me that I can never commit suicide, because people love me and would miss me. This thought had never occurred to me before. If I could be so profoundly affected by the death of someone I barely knew, I can only imagine what it must be like to lose someone close to you!

FADE OUT.

SCENE III

FADE IN:

ON Ed Harris sitting at dinner table with JEN and Little Orphan Annie.

INT. OSLISLO HOUSEHOLD, KITCHEN " EVENING

Ed Harris (to JEN): How is Biology going? What are you doing in lab?

JEN: (pauses to spear tomato; looks up) I don't know.

Ed Harris: What do you mean you don't know?

JEN: I don't know because I didn't go.

Ed Harris: What?! Why didn't you go!

JEN: I dunno. I just didn't feel like it.

Ed Harris: (taking new tack) Well how is Math?

JEN: I dropped it.

Ed Harris: (drops fork in dramatic frustration) You DROPPED it? (pauses) Why. Did you drop it?

JEN: (somehow relieved) I dunno. (confides) I don't know if I can get through that class.

Ed Harris: (exasperated) Why? What exactly is the problem?

JEN: (strangely teary-eyed) I just. I just can't sit in a classroom and listen to that guy talk for 80 minutes about how to graph a LINE. I can't sit and 50 identical problems a night on ABSOLUTE VALUES. I can't take quizzes every week on the SLOPE INTERCEPT FORMULA! (pounds table) I. Just. Do it.

The family falls into silence. FORKS CLINK AGAINST PLATES as food is shuffled into mouths.

Ed Harris: Well, what is your plan? You must have a plan, right? Are you thinking about leaving school again?

JEN: (unsure of what direction to take) Well, (long pause) Well, I was thinking about leaving.

Ed Harris: (quick on the draw) Leaving staying here or leaving going?

JEN: Leaving going. I was thinking of maybe volunteering for a while.

Ed Harris: (deadpans) Volunteering where?

JEN: Volunteering in Africa.

SILENCE is palpable. MAX THE SMALL, EVIL PUPPY scampers in to jump on D THE OLD DOG.

D THE OLD DOG: (obviously irritated): BARK!

FADE OUT.

SCENE IV

FADE IN:

ON BACK OF JEN'S HEAD.

INT. LOREE COMPUTER CENTER, DOUGLASS COLLEGE, RUTGERS UNIV. "DAY"

JEN (V.O.): (typing) I was undergoing an intensive regime of depression and self-pity. I wasn't sure college was for me, after all.

INT. JEN'S FANTASY WORLD, THE OFFICE OF JEN'S IMAGINARY THERAPIST "DAY"

JEN walks in and sits across from THERAPIST.

JEN: What, no sympathy?!

THERAPIST: (adjusts glasses): What makes you think school isn't right for you?

JEN: I just don't think Biology is right for me. I mean, first of all, I am sure I don't have the discipline it takes to major in a science. I can't imagine toiling through all this crap for eight years.

THERAPIST: Why did you think you wanted to major in Biology?

JEN: Well, I like Biology and Genetics, and I feel like I need to do something in my life that will make some sort of

difference. Like, I can't study art, or pursue writing as a vocation, because that is just so selfish, you know?

THERAPIST does not take the bait and remains sitting stoically, waiting for JEN to continue.

JEN: So I wanted to do something that would, like, make a difference, or whatever.

THERAPIST: Your expectations for yourself do not seem to be very in synch with what other people expect of you.

JEN: People will just make these offhand comments, and I will just take them so seriously.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL AT ID SOCIETY "DAY"

JEN sits smoking on the stairwell with MELISSA.

MELISSA: So what do you want to study in school?

JEN: Eh, well, I was thinking about Genetics.

MELISSA: (flicks cigarette) Genetics? That's awesome. You're going to like find the cure to cancer.

JEN looks down and laughs nervously.

MELISSA: No! you are.

JEN glances at MELISSA uneasily, because now SHE MUST find the cure to cancer.

BACK TO SCENE

JEN: Yeah, I guess! But it occurred to me that goals like that are ultimately driven by arrogance and not the actual desire to help people. Like if I studied Psychology or something "I could only help a small handful of people. That's not good enough. (becomes excited) And what if I DIDN'T find the cure to cancer! What if I tried my whole life and came up empty-handed! My whole life would be a failure!

THERAPIST: Maybe your fear of failure is really linked to your fear of death. That if you don't live up to these imagined, impossible to attain, expectations your life will have had no meaning!

FADE OUT.

SCENE V

FADE IN:

ON Little Orphan Annie and JEN in green Camry.

EXT. ROUTE 22 EAST, RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC "DAY"

Little Orphan Annie and JEN ride home from Rutgers for the day. The stoplight in the b.g. turns red. Little Orphan Annie decelerates abruptly behind a LARGE, METALLIC BLUE PICKUP TRUCK. JEN fake-brakes from passenger side and clenches the edges of her seat.

JEN: (recovering) So you should read this book we're covering in Medieval Civ.

Little Orphan Annie: Yeah? What book is that?

JEN: It's a biography of the life of St. Francis of Assisi.

Little Orphan Annie: What miracles did he do?

JEN: Well, he did some miraculous healing and stuff. Ah, he was also had the first recorded case of stigmata in history. He founded this new religious order, the Franciscans. He was born to a fairly well-off family and then one day he received

(makes quotey gesture with fingers) message from God and gave up all his possessions to the poor. He lived his life from then on in extreme poverty, roaming the country, helping the poor and preaching.

Little Orphan Annie swerves suddenly into fast lane.

Little Orphan Annie: That sounds interesting

JEN: But I thought the most interesting part was how he was so charismatic, so dedicated, that thousands and thousands of people just FOLLOWED him. They just gave away all their stuff, left their old lives and followed him.

Little Orphan Annie: Hmm

FADE OUT.

SCENE VI

FADE IN:

ON THERAPIST ADJUSTING HER GLASSES.

INT. JEN'S FANTASY WORLD, THERAPIST'S OFFICE
" DAY

JEN: Yeah, so I just read this book, Francis of Assisi. There was this one part about how evidently there is this cancer treatment center that helps people by teaching them how to pray. They're supposed to think of a pleasant memory and focus that throughout their whole body, concentrating on the tumor.

THERAPIST: And how does that make you feel?

JEN: (glances up quizzically) Um, well, I don't really believe in God. I don't like the idea of relinquishing control of my life and just kind of coasting through "not having to make my own decisions.

THERAPIST: How do you feel about having to depend on me? Don't you feel out of control, since you are dependent on me to help you?

JEN: (taken aback) I never thought about it that way. I didn't rationalize it like that, especially since our interactions now exist only in my mind.

THERAPIST: (grinning) You wouldn't have, would you?

JEN: (ignoring THERAPIST) I also hate the idea of just living my life WELL and being a good person so I can get into heaven. And that whole Jesus thing " I can rationalize worshipping just some guy.

THERAPIST: Well, you don't have to believe in Christian doctrine to believe in God, do you?

JEN: I guess not. I just can't accept the concept that there is a good and a bad. That there are good thoughts and bad thoughts, good actions and bad actions. It doesn't make sense to me to deny myself the elements of my personality that are part of what makes me human. Part of what makes me me.

THERAPIST: (rolls eyes) Then why do you have to live up to such grandios expectations? What do you have to do something so GREAT?

JEN: (strokes chin thoughtfully) Hmm! When I was reading the part about the cancer prayer thing, I thought, I can't even think of any pleasant experience that I would use to focus my meditation. Like my life is so mired in misery and unmet goals and guilt that I can't even draw any good out of it. I spend so much time thinking about these things I have to do that I am never, ever THERE. And even when I get SOMEWHERE, accomplish SOMETHING!

THERAPIST: You think about how you could have done it better.

JEN: (pauses, point emphasizing finger mid-air) Exactly.

THERAPIST: (continuing) You are so paralyzed by your self-expectations that you feel you can't do

anything. You are so afraid you won't utilize your material and mental dowry that rather than risk nor curing cancer, you can't even pass Intermediate Algebra.

JEN: Listen, this is my monologue.

THERAPIST purses her lips.

JEN: So I sat on that a few days. I thought about Francis and how he was just walking along, minding his own business and POW! He finds a direction. Everything changes and he knows what to do " he has meaning, a purpose.

THERAPIST: You are waiting for divine inspiration.

JEN: (irritated) Tsk. I want, I dunno. SOMETHING. I thought, I have this feeling, this gut inertia that is just sitting there, raring to go. I just wish I knew where to put it, you know?

THERAPIST: Did you eat today? Do you have body image issues?

JEN: Anyway, it suddenly occurred to me, after reading my journals from Europe, that I DO have moments when I am here on Earth. I DO sometimes exist in the present moment. I realized some of the greatest moments of my life have been these mundane occurrences, like waiting for the U Bahn at midnight, just smiling maniacally, because my life is so beautiful. And I would look at each person, in turn, who was standing there with me, and I would just be OVERCOME with how much I LOVED these people. These people I didn't even know! I have never spoken to them, but I had tears in my eyes because I just LOVED them.

THERAPIST: Right!

JEN: These random people would come up to me and talk to me, because I was all smiling like a fool.

INT. A CAFÉ IN BERLIN " NIGHT

FADI, a random street man, has coerced JEN into having coffee. They sit across from each other.

FADI: (stirs coffee) Warum laechelst du so!

JEN: (beaming): Weil ich dich LIEBE!

FADI: (now serious) Ich suche "ne feste Freundin!

JEN attempts to flag waitress, who is actively avoiding eye contact.

JEN: Bezahlen, bitte!

BACK TO SCENE.

THERAPIST: Let's talk about your fear of intimacy.

JEN: (gazing out into distance) Or in San Francisco, when I would take the bus to the CalTrain for work!

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BUS 49 " DAY

JEN sits on bus next to GRUBBY-LOOKING MAN, who is MUMBLING TO HIMSELF.

JEN (V.O.): I would sit on the bus, just minding my own business, and I would suddenly just feel so close to this random strange I was sitting next to. It was almost unbearable to contain the intense connection I felt with this person, just because I SAT NEXT TO HIM ON THE BUS!

GRUBBY-LOOKING MAN: (mumbles) Damn. Capitalist. Motherfucking. Bastards.

BACK TO SCENE.

JEN: So I was thinking about St. Francis and his troubadours. How I so vehemently disagree with the concept of forcing your religion down other people's throats. All... if you listen you can still save your soul.

THERAPIST: You don't want to take orders from an authority figure!

JEN: And I thought about how much he loved people, how through his love he could dedicate his whole life to just running around and spreading the word of God and all. And I thought maybe, just maybe, that is the most important thing. Maybe that's what this gut feeling is.

THERAPIST: (distractedly) I have pastries outside if you want one.

JEN: No, thanks. I thought, for a moment, perhaps that's what levels the playing field through people's disparate talents and economic backgrounds and IQs and stuff, that's the one thing everyone has and the one thing that matters. I thought if I could just express and feel, in a sort of visceral way, this love of all humanity, all the time, that I could find meaning in life. That maybe that undercurrent, that enigmatic feeling is what God is.

THERAPIST: You are so not St. Francis.

JEN: And what's worse, I almost feel like that goal is within my grasp!

THERAPIST: Looks like our time's up for this week. Here's your receipt.

JEN: (outraged) 200 bucks! What the fuck!

THERAPIST: Soprano references cost extra. You know that.

JEN: Whatever. So anyway, aren't we done here?

THERAPIST: 220.

Furious, JEN leaps from her seat and upends the circular glass table between them. The table SHATTERS and GLASS scatters everywhere.

FADE OUT.

SCENE VII

FADE IN:

ON THE BACK OF JEN'S HEAD.

INT. LOREE COMPUTER CENTER, DOUGLASS COLLEGE, RUTGERS UNIV. "DAY"

JEN continues typing. A monotone rendering of the first bars of GENIE IN A BOTTLE sounds repeatedly. An ANNOYING GIRL digs into her bag to unearth the offending NOKIA CELL PHONE.

ANNOYING GIRL: Hello? (a beat) Hi, Sweeeetiiiiie!!! Come pick me up right outside, kay!

JEN (V.O.): (typing) And they all lived happily ever after, because Jen loved them.

PAN to face JEN, who is smiling manically.

FADE TO BLACK.

[Exit Music](#)

Gooooogle

2002-03-14
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Did you know that google.com has reserved two close misspellings of its name, gogle.com and gooogole.com? Betcha dint.

Vacashun

2002-03-15
Westfield, New Jersey

Thailand today!

Cleanup on Aisle #9

2002-03-16
Newark, New Jersey

There is a certain zen to packing, a sort of minimalistic bliss that goes with bringing along the fewest number of possessions one might possibly need for travel. The smaller the bag, the better. For my eight month trip to Europe I brought six outfits, (which I wore, mostly dirty, occasionally clean on my journeys), my camera equipment, a journal, a couple books, and some film. I was pretty proud about this, although I can't wear any of those clothes again, since the smell they have permanently taken on is not one appropriate in American culture.

For this one week trip to Bangkok, I pushed the limits a bit more, although in some ways a one week trip requires the same amount of stuff as an eight month one. I brought three shirts, a pair of pants, and an ample amount of underwear and socks. A ratty notebook and my brandy new digital camera rounded out the package, which fit, conveniently so, into the backpack I use at Rutgers. Yes siree, as I got into the car with my dad to leave for Newark International Airport I was feeling mighty fine. Hell, I didn't even bring a toothbrush. Man, I was living on the edge, a loner, a rebel, Dotty.

This elation suddenly evaporated as I got into line at EVA and noticed a hastily scrawled note: "Flight Newark to Bangkok delayed until 12:30 AM." Motherfucker! I muttered, under my breath, as I surveyed my surroundings, which were peopled solely by Chinese travelers and their mountains of suitcases. Motherfucker indeed: it was 9:30 PM.

So I went outside to have a cigarette, where I met Wes the baggage porter who does nights on international flights. We small-talked while I waited, about Newark, about his job (he was about to leave since my flight had no wheelchairs), and about his lucrative night in tips. I finally got on the damn plane, and I learned there would be another delay at Seattle. Funny, since I didn't even know we were stopping there. Toilets were broken, resulting in two or three hour delay. I was half-conscious by that point, so I didn't even notice.

On the plane I sat next to a smiling, middle-aged Chinese couple. I'd like to stop here to say that I hate, with a burning passion that cannot be expressed in words, sitting in a non-aisle seat. And me, I always get the non-aisle seats. You see, I have this issue, on flights of a duration longer than two hours, about using the restroom. Whenever I sit in the aisle I rarely have to pee, because I can just get up and waltz over to the cramped restroom, free as a bird. When I have to sit in a window seat or, God forbid, a middle seat, I find I have the urge to relieve my bladder upwards of twelve or thirteen times an hour. This becomes particularly bad on nighttime flights, when I harbor the constant fear that my aisle-mates will fall asleep, thus leaving me with no choice but to hurdle over them, pole vaulter-like, into the aisle. It's bad. So bad, in fact, that I needed to arrange a sort of silent agreement with aforementioned smiling, middle-aged couple. Every once in a while, one of them would get up to go, and I would quickly skirt out after they were down the aisle. Then man would wait, smiling, standing in the aisle until I returned. It was all very polite.

In other ten hour flight woes, I was surprised at how easy it was to go without smoking for 24 hours. Thought maybe I should quit now that I've been forced not to smoke for a full day. All in all, it wasn't so bad. I did wish I had Patsy Cline's enviable ability to fall asleep anywhere, within minutes, as I sat half-conscious, half-sane, the whole way through the flight to Taipei. To chop up our time, we got fed almost constantly. As I sat chewing yet another buttered roll, I mused

- a) that I've never been to Asia and that's ridiculous and
- b) I've never been anywhere I was utterly clueless about the language to the point where I can't compare two words and know if they are the same or different. Can't read signs, don't understand the logical pauses in speech. Basically have no idea what's going on at any moment.

In short, it'll be just like home.

Arrival at BKK

2002-03-17
Bangkok, Thailand

After a speedy two hour flight we finally landed in Bangkok. Met up with photography girl, who introduced herself as Danielle. Danielle is from Seattle and is planning on bumming around Thailand for a month with her boyfriend Jeff. We breezed through customs, exchanged some dollars for Baht, and met a waiting Jeff by the baggage claim. Chatted a bit

while waiting for the airport shuttle. Muggy and cloudy, but heat thankfully was not oppressive. Danielle is supposed to meet her Thai friend Mod (since I don't know the correct spelling of his name, he will henceforth be known as "Maude"). Maude is all excited Danielle's here, and is itching for her to go to his hometown to meet his family.

After a short wait, we got onto an Airport Bus packed with Aussies to the nth power. Was surprised how dilapidated buildings are here in this capitol city. Most seem to be in varying stages of decay. Very charming and earthy. Apartment buildings all have balconies that face the streets, each lined with dozens of huge fans and air conditioners. Above each street run insane bundles of tangled telephone wires. On some corners it looks like a pile of Xmas lights that got all knotted up in storage, which someone just left hanging, as is, out of frustration. Every few blocks there are these transformer contraptions right above the sidewalk. Also saw my first image of the king, a huge billboard on the side of a highway featuring him standing in traditional garb, gazing paternally on his subjects driving home from work.

It was already dark by the time we alighted from the bus. Instantly smitten with the chaotic hustle and bustle of streets, I stood and watched the ubiquitous street vendors, hawking every imaginable consumable and wearable. Stray, feral dogs abound, either owned by the vendors or just hanging out -- it's hard to tell. Cars drive on the left -- wasn't aware anyplace other than England, Australian, and Japan did that. Tons of Aussie and Japanese tourists trudge down the busy streets with their huge backpacks (and really, how much stuff do you need? How long could they possibly be traveling that they need such a mountain of possessions with them?), tuk tuks (three-wheeled bicycle like contraptions run by a tuk tuk-ing little motor) swoop in, out, and around with admirable skill.

Walked to Danielle's and Jeff's hotel, a bit off the beatenest path. They didn't have any vacancies, so I set off on a wild goose chase to track down a place to stay. Lodging in Bangkok is laughably cheap: rooms range from 60B (\$1.50) for a dorm bed to 500B (\$12) for a double with private bath and air con. The first opening I found was at the New Siam Guesthouse, where Danielle was initially to stay (Jeff, who arrived earlier in the day from New Zealand, couldn't find it and settled on somewhere else). They had a bare single with fan for 180B (I'd been going to leave all prices in Baht -- you're just going to have to remember that 43 Baht = 1 US Dollar). The man at the check-in counter instructed me to follow him to see the room.

He dumped the keys into the hands of a teenaged Thai girl who could not have possibly looked less interested in showing me the room. We walked a minimum of 500 kilometers away from the guesthouse, down this alley and that, through doorways, under awnings, Thai girl marching along purposefully up ahead and me fighting to keep up and remain awake. We arrived at a housing complex several blocks away, and I tripped my way through the doorway into a small yard full of other Thai teenagers floating, jeery-faced before me as though in a dream.

After barking at me to take off my shoes, Thai teen led me up several dark stairwells (lights weren't working, it seemed) to a sparse room packed tightly with one twin bed and one fan. I should have taken it, but the sullen teens, the Oz-far distance from the actual guesthouse, and the apparent lack of electricity commanded I keep searching.

I eventually wound up in Backpackerhell, aka the main tourist drag, aka Th Khao San, and walked blindly from guesthouse to guesthouse, cognizant only of various shades of the phrase "...no room." I ended up taking a very pricey 470B room in a dingy guesthouse on a side street, cornered by the cute, cheerful girl at the front desk and my ever-waning consciousness.

The room was dirty, the air conditioner belched dust into the room, and the cabinet in the bathroom appeared to house more than just pipes, but I was too exhausted to care. I walked back out to the street, intent on keeping my promise to meet Danielle and Jeff after I found a room, but discovered that I was experiencing reality only in short, narcoleptic bursts. I decided to go to bed.

Di dar

2002-03-17

Hong Kong, Hong Kong

I watched the wing as we landed in HKG, as I couldn't see much else. Always gets the good seats, me. The airport tram system is not unlike the mass herds of humans shuffling in and out of Penn Station daily. Trams were packed with people, and I must admit I was surprised at the diversity. I even saw a few African men. As we ascended into the terminal, a dozen cell phones with computery rings went off simultaneously on the escalator. Ah, Asia. I am home.

On high alert for Faye -- after all Hong Kong is the land of Faye Wong. I was a bit disappointed to see neither funky Faye herself, nor a single billboard plastered with her visage.

I immediately made a beeline for the smoking lounge, boon of international airports. After sitting a spell, I noticed two Japanese surfer dude-like blokes had rolled in. They were so tan they looked as though they had just been dipped in iodine.

One old white guy was sitting all close to this skinny, young Asian boy on a three-seater. I figured they must be together (sugar daddy?), since skinny, young boi was practically sitting on old guy's hand. But they left separately. Hmm. The woman cleaning out cigarette ashtrays had on bowling shirt that had "LoÃfÃcÃcÃsÃ-ÃcÃzÃcs Group" embroidered on the back.

A friend from Starbucks once expressed his disillusionment with Chinese culture after experiencing the hustle and bustle of SF's Chinatown. People always unapologetically pushing to the front of the line to the bus and such. Like Chinese women are supposed to sit around on mats and drink tea all day, looking up at people who enter the room only to smile shyly and look away. Have to say I've seen nothing but courtesy so far. Lots of "you go first, no *you* go first" Or else, that's what I imagine they're saying, since I don't speak Chinese and all. Every exchange between staff and patron is greeted with a thank you, resulting in conversations comprised almost completely of thank yous. Thank yous for thank yous.

Walked around HKG a while. The airport must look pretty damn cool when it's sunny. Huge hangar-like walls minimilistically made of glass and strips of metal. Big mallish stretches filled with shoppers, everyone leading around small, modern looking carts. These held everything from overpriced purchases, to small children, to sullen youths playing cards while they waited.

I boarded the plane on Cathay Airways to Bangkok around 3:30 PM. Saw commercial photography girl briefly before we took off. She said those behind me in line at Taipei got bumped to a later flight because they were taking so long. Oops. Still, were it the US, you can bet no one would've been standing around shooing people along to their next destination. Whenever I've missed connections in the US, I was pretty much on my own to work out the details of catching a later flight. Spoke briefly with Chinese man who told me of celebrations in Thailand next month involving a lot of throwing of water.

Made in Taiwan

2002-03-17

Taipei, Taiwan

As midmorning came upon us, our aspirin-shaped plane flew over colorful rooftops in Taipei. EVA flight attendants in their bright green suits and orange bow ties with matching green eye shadow (allowed?) promptly shucked us off into a waiting room with all the others going to Bangkok. A chaotic mass of EVA staff clustered together speaking rapid Chinese. No one had any idea what was going on.

There I met a gentle, soft-spoken man from Ottawa, who, due to his gentle, soft-spoken demeanor, I immediately deemed shady. Ottawa man, it turns out, is going to Thailand for a project with Habitat for Humanity with his son. Sounded pretty cool. Maybe he wasn't shady, after all. Immediately all white people in the room gravitated toward us like magnets to the north pole. I guess the white folk feel safe in numbers.

The staff were very polite, if frantic, with their charming, fobbier than thou broken English. Eventually we ascertained there were two flights to BKK. One early economy that arrives around 5 PM and routes through Hong Kong, the other business class direct, but doesn't get in until midnight. I opted for former, after a bit of deliberation. Was about 10:30 AM, thirteen hours ahead of EST. Exhausted.

In the whitey congregation, I met a girl from Seattle who's going to Thailand for a month. Commercial photographer. We all got on the same flight. Us unholy masses were herded in one direction while the others went off to shmooze in the VIP lounge.

We were led down endless corridors to a basement, covert check-in area that reminded me vaguely of the DMV. Lots of lifesize, cardboard cutouts of cheerful flight attendants greeted us at the door, ready to serve our every whim.

At the DMV counter, a Gong Li-esque bitchy woman checked me in. Something seemed to be wrong and she had to call about thirty different people to yell at in gruff Chinese. I bet she should have yelled at me, too, had she thought I knew more Chinese than "Ni hao." Hildi and I have argued before about who could be bitchier, Chinese or Korean women, but man Chinese can sound so mean.

Gong-Li-wannabe finally checked me in and I was whisked upstairs to gate B6 on Cathay Airlines. Passed the smoking lounge and popped in, figuring I had a good five minutes until we had to board. I took one drag and my feet were no longer certain of the location of the floor. A disembodied voice announced that those Hong Kong-bound should proceed to B6 immediately. I literally weaved my way through crowds of people to the gate, comically dizzy. People must have thought I was drunk.

Boarded the plane, now sitting in shitty E seat, mid-aisle, wondering if photographer girl made it. My knees were killing me.

Turning Japanese

2002-03-18

Bangkok, Thailand

Woke up at eight and got the hell out of that place. Bought some toiletries at a Seven-Eleven (heell): shampoo, toothpaste/brush, toilet paper (very BYOTP, Bangkok is) Wandered down a side street, past a massage palour to the Marco Polo hostel, where I was greeted at the front desk by the most cracked-out looking Thai guy I've ever seen. I slapped down 300B, whisked up to my room, which was astonishingly clean compared to my last, and headed over to Danielle's and Jeff's hotel.

Luck was a lady today, and I found them in the courtyard restaurant. Together we broke the fast and chewed the fat awhile. Danielle and Jeff have been living together for two years, although Jeff has been in the Navy and only home four of the past eighteen months. Danielle is rather bitter about all this, she said, but have found solace in her new German Shepherd-Doberman mix, her surrogate boyfriend. Before the Navy, Jeff worked at a nuclear power plant. Just like Homer Simpson! Danielle beamed.

Amidst talk of Nintendo, gyroscopic lenses and the like, Danielle announced that tonight they were heading down to the Red Light district to take in some amazing anatomical feats. Clearly, the trouble it took to walk the couple blocks over here was paying off in spades.

Went back to the hostel to write and promptly fell asleep until four. When I woke up, I walked over to the hotel of D+J and had a beer in the hopes of catching them coming in. Raiders of the Lost Ark unfolded on the small TV before me (wonder if Thais think that movie is ridiculous), but alas no Danielle and Jeff.

Never in my life have I seen so many Japanese people in one place. What is with the lack of concentrations of Japanese in the US? There are like five Japanese people in the entire country. I am convinced Japantown in SF would be called Koreatown if not for all those pesky maps to change.

Didn't find D + J so I went to eat. Gulliver's Tavern or something. Lonely Planet listed it, so I figured it couldn't be that bad. Had like two Thai dishes on the whole menu, but food was impressively spicy for being billed as "sweet." Packed with all manner of white people. Hard Rock Cafe... kitsch. Will have to find someplace actually patronized by Thai people tomorrow.

Haven't been struck by all out diarrhea, but have been pooing entirely too much for my taste. Very disconcerting for someone who is not so regular at home. Ambivalent about eating. On the one hand, Thai food is so so gut, but on the other, there is poo.

Very paranoid about mosquitoes since I wisely decided not to get any vaccinations before leaving. Every mosquito I see has a case of malaria with my name on it. Had another Singha beer with dinner. Went back to around to D + J hotel to check if they were there "no dice." Went to bar called Susie pub next to my hostel, which was patronized by some actual Thais. Got pretty drunk so I could fall asleep later.

It must be rough to be a Thai woman in Bangkok. All those Western guys leering at you with beady, lustful eyes, like a size of beef. Man, Asian women are so tiny. Average size could not be more than zero to negative numbers. Must think Westerners are fat cows, lumbering around like big, hairy water buffalo.

Buddha and the chocolate box

2002-03-19

Bangkok, Thailand

Woke up at 4 AM and couldn't get back to sleep. Took a Tylenol PM a few hours before leaving the hotel for the day. Still couldn't sleep but thoroughly foggy when I got up. Had banana lassi for breakfast, which I'm sure I'll soon regret. Who tries to fight poo with banana lassi?

Tuk tuk drivers are forever trying to goad you into a ride. "Ping pong show?" one helpful driver offered. Do I really look that gay? Speaking of which, those Thais are extremely androgynous. They put Japanese and Korean bois to shame.

Th Khao San is rather serene in the early morning. All other times of day it's chock full of people,

practically a promenade, although cars defy logic by attempting to pass up and down the street at night. Tons of motorcycles, which drive down impossibly narrow alleys.

I find I am always paying with wrong amount. "This is 20," says a waiter, pointing to an indecipherable squiggle.

Today I experienced a whole new level of tuk tuk persuasiveness. One guy had this whole yarn about how he was in LA two months and now taught primary school English. Today, he said, he was off because of a government holiday. Then he went on to write down all the places I should go see (this is a popular thing with those tuk tuk drivers, the writing down). "Just 20 Baht with this driver here."

Much to the chagrin of my tuk tuk driver-to-be, I decided to go attempt to find the Grand Palace and surrounding Wats and such with my very unhelpful Lonely Planet map that has like five streets on it. Didn't really matter, as I got lost almost immediately. Happened upon a little market area along one of the brownish canals of the Chao Prahya. Seemed to be a Thai-only affair, but the locals were amused enough with my taking pictures and staring off into space. Blankets laid down on the ground lined with trinkets and junk. Tarps overhead, shielding people from the elements. Dingy, dusty yards that could have been straight out of the Grapes of Wrath, but for the telltale Camry parked out back.

Seven-Eleven seems to be the biggest chain here. Seven-Eleven and Japanese tourists Bangkok has in droves. Kept on walking. I came upon a more industrial area with insanely wide streets that people would just run across at intersections. Pedestrians here are quite brash. At one point I was walking across street/highway behind a boy leading his lame grandmother. I was nervous that I wasn't going to make the light without jogging, but that lady just hobbled along, indifferent.

Kind of disappointed with how little I've seen of the infamous images of king although I have caught glimpses on countless calendars.

Seems Buddha wanted me to see him today; I suddenly saw the Grand Palace rising on the horizon, spires gleaming. Along the stretch of sidewalk before you reach the palace are several bus stops (Thais waiting in the shade) and twelve trillion tuk tuk drivers all grappling for your attentions. I am probably the least effective tuk tuk deterrent, as I imagine I must look as though I'm in a constant state of being lost. Something will catch my eye, and I'll stop and stare a few minutes, meanwhile the drivers are falling over each other trying to sell my soul to the devil. Furthermore, once they get going I don't have the heart to stop them, which I realize is inherently evil. After they've spent 20 minutes telling me their life stories, ascertained that I am not, in fact, from England, and have outlined every Wat in Bangkok for me, I just tell them, with my shit-eating grin, "Well, I just go walking."

My English gets all broken and silly talking to people. Always afraid they'll think I'm making fun of them, but I swear it just happens. It's kind of nice in a sense: since people assume I am not a native speaker (whether due to how I look or how I speak, I can't say), I don't have to feel self-conscious about the fact that, after 22 years, I am still not very fluent in my native language.

Made it by chance over to Wat Pho, that of reclining Buddha fame, a bit more run down from the blazing sun (endlich scheint die Sonne!) and had a cigarette by the side of the road, watching the tourist buses roll by, air-conned human incubators.

Some European woman walked up to me looking for the entrance to one of the nameless walled enclosures. I said I didn't know, and that I was wondering the same, which I kind of was, although I was just sort of wandering around. If I found the entrance eventually, all the better, if not, no hard feelings. She told me about how everyone had a different answer to her question, and I nodded sympathetically. She looked at me with such skepticism I almost laughed. Like some 16 year-old-looking white girl is going to try to sell her a tuk tuk ride. Jeez louise.

Went inside the Wat, which was very pretty but rather confusing and mazelike. Saw about a trillion Buddhas: big Buddhas, small Buddhas, sitting, standing, and finally, reclining. Unfortunately, the massive reclining Buddha was undergoing repairs and was almost entirely obscured by scaffolding. Still, reams of tourists and Thai worshippers filed in and out of the temple, rubbing the do-not-touch, mother of pearl feet of Buddha and milling about. I learned that you actually put the gold leaf on the gold lame Buddhas yourself -- they're not just made that way. As a sort of offering, I guess.

In one of the temples I caught a glimpse of a monk in the middle of a cell phone call. Hee! Monks need cell phones too, you know. Could only take so much before I succumbed to Buddha overload and/or heatstroke, so I walked back to the hotel and collapsed.

Went to dinner down by Chao Prahya River (actual Thai patrons). Waiters here give you a menu and just kind of hover over you while you decide, which I certainly prefer to German waiter-indifference, although it did give me a touch of performance anxiety. Got chopsticks for the first time since I arrived in Asia. Although they're not my native eating implement, I, like ever other American I have ever met, Asian or otherwise, am pretty chopsticks-adept. Who are these Westerners giving us all a bad name? After sitting on the street awhile, watching people go by, I went to bed. This jet lag thing is really cramping my style. Having trouble with sleeping patterns, which is not helped by the disco directly beneath my room.

Note to self: no smoking in Bangkok parks.

Just cause she dances the go-go

2002-03-20

Bangkok, Thailand

Later that evening, I decided to screw my courage to the sticking place and go see a sex show. I walked down to an area I'd heard was constantly populated by many Taxi-Meters, which was mistake #1. "Do you know how to get to Patpong?" I asked the first guy I came up to. "Patpong?" he asked me. And then to a colleague, "Patpong?" I asked. "Patpong?" he answered, and passed the message down the line. Uh oh.

A tiny man with about three teeth had the answer to the Patpong question. Patpong I & II are two parallel streets in Eastern Central Bangkok that make up the city's Red Light district. "You want to see show?" he asked. I wanted to see show. "Take you good show, 1000B," I grimaced. "800B, good show for you." Fine, I answered.

I had no idea how much a sex show should cost, only that it would be far and away the most expensive endeavor on my trip. "200 Baht to get to show," he said, and I for some reason just nodded without even attempting to bargain. I guess 200 sounded like a lot less than 800.

Over the river and through the woods, to projectile ping pong balls we went. Three tooth man prattled on about his friend from Florida who was studying in Seoul, or so I gathered; although he, like so many other Thais I met in Bangkok, had quite a good command of the English language, his accent was just a killer. "Do you smoke?" he asked. I answered in the affirmative. "I know where you buy smoke. Is safe for you." Oops, I thought he said cigarettes, but I guess he meant, eh, something else. "No, no smoke," I insisted. He told me again about the show, and I suggested he just drop me off at Patpong and find someplace nice. "Oh no," he said, "too dangerous for woman alone. Some people, they take your money. Raping? You know raping?" Fair enough, I thought, Red Light districts aren't usually the friendliest places.

We arrived at our destination, a small building on a somewhat desolate street. Taxi drivers and lonely men stood around outside. A man opened my door and bid me good evening. I felt pretty sleazy and more than a little silly as I stepped out onto the curb. "For you 600 and for your friend 600," the man told me. I guess they figured I wouldn't want to go in alone. I didn't want to shell out the dough, so in I went with smiling sex show proprietor, into the belly of the dragon.

We trudged up the stairs and into the lobby where a woman sat behind what looked like a hotel's front desk. She tapped 800 out on her calculator, and I settled up. "You like something to drink?" charming proprietor told me, guiding me over to coat closet-cum-bar. I ordered my one free drink and went into the darkest pit of hell, passing a waiting room, where a man sat reading the paper.

Inside was a small stage surrounded by rows of chairs on three sides. It was pretty full: mostly Asian men, a few with girlfriends, and a couple white guys sitting on the long bench that wrapped around the perimeter of the room, tucked into corners with their new, scantily-clad Thai friends. Immediately an older, portly staff member took my hand. "Miss. You are alone? Come sit with me." Grateful, I followed her and sat on a plastic chair facing the stage at an angle, where I peered through the haze at skinny Thai girls shifting their weight from side to side to the beat.

I was immediately struck by how utterly unerotic the whole scene was. "The girls on stage danced distractedly in their g-strings, some chewing gum, occasionally shouting comments to friends offstage who collapsed in fits of laughter." "Would you like a friend?" the motherly figure inquired. No, I would definitely not like a friend, I thought, and politely declined. "Something to drink?" she asked, and I reiterated what I had selected at the coat check, figuring she would expedite my order. Off she went, out of the room. Onstage one of the girls stuck ping pong balls in her vagina and squeezed them out in the general direction of a cup placed on the floor. The other girls stood and watched, giggling when she missed. I could do that, I thought, drop ping pong balls into a cup.

A waiter came up to me with a metal tray, offering my drink. I took a gulp of watered down whisky coke and moved to a

chair closer to the stage. Shortly thereafter, Maternal Figure returned, drink in hand.

“Oh, I said, clearly embarrassed, and reached for the drink. Instead of handing it to me, she clinked my glass and walked back to the group in the corner, laughing. I thought that was nice.

The lights dimmed and a cardboard cake was brought onto the stage. The girls began to light the candles, and the first bars of “Happy Birthday” rang out, replacing Christina Aguilera’s cover of “Lady Marmelade.” “Happy birthday to yooo!” voices from all corners of the room sang, as one of the girls stuck a tube in her vagina, shooting out bursts of air and extinguishing the candles, one by one. The others cheered after the last candle went out.

At length a group of about twenty Japanese men, having seen this trick already, got up and left the room. Maternal Figure came over and took me by the hand, “You can sit up here,” she said, leading me up to the bench behind me. On stage, a girl was lying on her back, emptying a bottle of coke into her uterus. Man, that can be good for you, I mused, lighting a cigarette. That stuff is like Drano. She maneuvered to a standing position, her finger acting as a makeshift plug, and squatted over the bottle. Out came the coke, back into the bottle. I had to ask myself, is that sexy to sleazy old men? Because to me it’s just disturbing.

Suddenly, a scantily-clad woman came up to me and introduced herself as Lucy. She sat down beside me and asked where I was from. We chatted as a girl onstage pulled a string of origami birds out of her vagina, strung together by what looked like paper clips. Ouch. Yes, I was alone, in Bangkok for a week. Yes, I was a student. No, I didn’t have a friend in America. “How old you?” she asked. I answered, and she exclaimed, “Oh me too!” “That girl, she looks so young,” I said, pointing to the girl onstage pulling ribbon out of naughty bits. “Apparently, everyone here was 22!” “Do you think that is hard to do?” “No, I not in show,” she said, putting her hand on my leg. Lucy said she was from outside Bangkok originally and that her brother worked here, which is how she got in.

In the corner, a half-naked Thai girl sat straddling a horny, fat, white guy, who buried his face in her breasts. She turned and pulled a face for one of her friends, a classic Kodak moment. I found I really didn’t find the whole situation to be sad or pitious; all the girls laughed and joked, goofing on each other and waving to others across the room. They all looked as though they were having plenty of fun.

Presently another friend came up and sat on the other side of me. Michelle, she said, and shook my hand. How did I suddenly go from no-friends-please to two friends? I hadn’t envisioned this friend aspect before I came “I thought it would be a more passive sort of affair.

Lucy said something to Michelle in Thai, and Michelle flipped her the bird. Michelle, while not as pretty as Lucy, spoke English quite a lot better, entirely too well for your stereotypical woman of the night. She wasn’t a showgirl, she said, and she didn’t think the tricks the girls were doing were all that hard to pull off.

I envisioned a kind of La Mas-like training class, a row of girls sitting on mats, their partners behind them for support, while an older, more experienced 22-year-old lead them in “Hee hee hoo” s.

“Pop!” said a glass bottle of coke, and a Thai girl answered the question on all our minds by yelling “OWWWW!” and limping offstage. I wonder if the emergency room gets a lot of cases where girls have things stuck in their vaginas. Ping pong balls, I bet, are no unfamiliar sight to doctors in the ER. Can you imagine getting a piece of banana stuck in your womb? Ladies, take a second and just imagine that.

I was about to ask Michelle about it, but before I could she asked, “Jennifer, would you like to go with me and Lucy?” “Just friends,” Lucy added. No, I had had enough friends for the evening, and having chatted with these girls for a half hour about such mundane things, I could scarcely picture having sex with them. It was as though we were talking over coffee, except with less clothes.

Alas, as soon as Michelle realized there would be no Baht from me this eve, she was off like a shot. We were back to the ping pong balls, and Lucy, too, excused herself, leaving me once again friendless.

I left, thinking about what other things one could stick in one’s vagina in a Thai sex show. Other foodstuffs, such as sausage links would be popular with the boys, I bet. Perhaps something more practical, such as a broom handle, which could double as janitorial duty. Babies, now that’s something I bet no one tried.

Crosstown Traffic

2002-03-20

Bangkok, Thailand

Finally, finally got a full night's sleep and now I feel fabulous. The poo has slowed substantially and though I may have several mosquito bites, I have put my dengue fever fears behind me.

If they served porridge in US restaurants, I would eat breakfast everyday. I could so live in Bangkok. I could even live here in backpacker hell, amongst the Japanese and Aussies. As if there could be any question, I would have to be a tuk tuk driver -- that looks like so much fun.

Osama bin Laden T-Shirts hawked on the street. Saw a swastika on the helmet of one motorbiker as he whisked by.

Up until now I had thought that Jenny Shimizu, car mechanic, model extraordinaire, was the sole Asian lesbian in existence. To my astonishment, I just saw my first Asian lesbian couple: butch, too big button-down dress shirt with short spikey hair and scowl on face dragging along timid, kerchiefed girlfriend. Oh Bangkok, I love you so.

While waiting for my porridge to come, I noticed a lame man sitting on the sidewalk, occasionally wheeling himself along on what appeared to be a dolly. It was interesting to watch how people would either bestow 20 Baht bills graciously to said man ("Here, this \$.50 will fix up that bum leg of yours," their eyes seem to say) or avoid eye-contact altogether... Not that I was any better, leaning back against the wall, out of sight, out of mind.

Headed out east attempting to reach Erawan Shrine, where it's said there is traditional Thai dancing to be had. I trudged through the heat until I was accosted by yet another helpful tuk tuk salesman. We chatted for a while before I alerted him to the fact that I was interested. Which way to Siam Square, I asked. He promptly ushered me off in the wrong direction, which I did not realize until I had walked farther than I had come. Already a bit tuckered out from the heat, I knew what I needed was exactly that which I had been avoiding. I hailed a tuk tuk.

Tuk tuks are actually a legitimate form of transport in Bangkok, but you have to bargain on the price before you set out, which means most Westerners get ripped off. Also, it's nearly impossible to get anywhere straight-away -- "you really need to insist that you want to go directly to your destination without stopping at any stores where the tuk tuk driver gets a commission. Most central Bangkok locations should be 50-75B, I read, which is around \$1.50.

We settled on 80. Whatever, I can't bargain for shit. So I hopped into the back of the little three wheeler and off we went. The first notable element of a tuk tuk, other than its small stature, is the complete lack of anything resembling a seatbelt. Unfortunately, one typically doesn't notice this minor omission until one is bearing down oncoming traffic, swooping back onto the... side of the street moments before a seemingly imminent collision. Evidently, tuk tuks are not expected to heed traditional traffic advisories such as the lines on the street that tell you the side on which to drive. Lane dividers in general seem to also be only for show.

Although tuk tuks are themselves a brazen breed, weaving in and out of traffic, packing two or three to a lane and making death-defying dashes into opposing traffic, motorbikes are by far the most ostentatious motor-powered vehicle on the road. Their driving habits are insane -- they pay almost no attention whatever to traffic laws, zipping through traffic stopped for a light and rushing right out into intersections as if puttering through a school zone.

Indeed, Bangkok traffic is not for those with weak stomachs; near collisions don't even merit a honk of the horn, as motorbikers and tuk tuk drivers rarely check for clearance before merging.

And my are those Bangkok streets a packed with autos. Black smoke belches ceaselessly into the sky, cough cough, as you scream down the street. It must be rather hazardous to your health to be a tuk tuk driver, which would explain why they all look to be exactly 83 years of age.

The most amazing traffic sight, however, are the people who ride on the backs of the insane motorbikes (which is also a bargaining-based form of transport, I learned). I saw everything from people carrying clownish stacks of unwieldy boxes, to the elderly, to pregnant women, helmets, of course, optional. Hell, they don't even hold on.

Twas quite a rush whooshing down the streets when we weren't stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic, and as long as I didn't let my eyes linger too long on any of the scattered market places lining the streets, my chauffeur limited the frequency of his chirping... Chopping?

Cry me a river

2002-03-21

Bangkok, Thailand

I was intent on going to the floating market today and set out after my requisite porridge with banana breakfast. Found a taxi driver who knew what I was talking about and off we went. He *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā...āĒlearnsĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā,Ā* while he drives the taxi, he told me, which I at first took to mean he is learning to drive the taxi but later realized he probably meant he is studying at university while doing the taxi thang part-time. After a while he revealed his secret agenda, which was of course not to take me to the floating market at all but to someplace he could score a commission.

*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā...āĒ*You like boat? Boat. Chao Praya. Boat on canal.*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā,Ā*
*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā...āĒ*like floating market.*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā,Ā*
*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā...āĒ*Closed. Only early morning.*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā,Ā*

Sigh. Granted, I wasn't *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc* sure if I would even be able to get a taxi driver to take me there, since it *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*s way outside the city. But still: sigh. So about two minutes later we stopped under an overpass near the Chao Praya river. I would have to either find a different taxi (and probably suffer through the same predicament later) or go on a boat ride. Which didn't *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc* seem like such a bad idea.

*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā...āĒ*For you, 1000 Baht. One hour. Private boat.*ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-Ā,Ā*

Overall, I have been extremely impressed with the Thais *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc* hold on English in Bangkok (the average Tuk Tuk driver speaks far better than any of the staff I encountered at Hong Kong airport), but this guy was pretty difficult to understand. Did he just say 1000 Baht? Half humoring him, I walked over to the dock, where a Boat Guy greeted me. We haggled. 600 Baht. Whatever. I am but a big, white ATM machine.

Passed through a small cruise boat into my rickety private boat and set out, slap, slap, slap, across the choppy green waters of the Chao Praya.

The first thing that struck me were all the rattletrap, dilapidated houses sitting on stilts right on the waters of the canals. There, I thought, is where I *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*ll stay when I live in Bangkok. Passed various wats, huge sitting Buddhas looking like monsters overseeing Candy Land. Boats chockfull of Chinese tourists. Drifted past other whiteys in their own private boats, sheepishly making eye contact as they had met the same fate. All the beautiful little Thai children wave as we put put by, hanging from bridges and docks. Monks reading the newspaper, pools of catfish nipping eagerly at bread tossed by tourists for 20 Baht, underwater gardens. Sharp bends, shops, grandiose houses, museums, sky scrapers, and tourists, tourists, tourists.

The houses on the water sometimes have these slightly submerged concrete walkways surrounding them (part of the foundation?). An old woman stood at the edge of one with a wooden pole, fishing a drowned dog out of the water. Could see people *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*s lives through the planks of their homes, some sitting, eating, others working, weaving, waving. It must be annoying to always have to put up with the putputput of the motors as tourists sweep through their canals and peer into their lives from their brightly colored boats, Singha beer in one hand, camera ready in the other. Eventually my one hour was up and we again docked under the overpass.

Do you have any final requests

2002-03-23

Bangkok, Thailand

Started raining as dusk came. Was determined to find a gay bar. Unfortunately, since Thai culture is so laid back and tolerant, there *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*s not really any overwhelmingly gay concentration. There *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*s no gay movement, as there *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*s nothing to move against.

So I made this cab driver go way the hell out east in the rain to find this lesbian owned bar I read about. The driver didn't *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc* think I would find anything but buildings. Drove forever, passing Japanese karaoke places abundant, until we finally found it. And it was a restaurant. An empty one, at that. Motherfucker. I went in anyway and had a drink, chatting with the gay as pink host as a cheesy lounge act played at the front of the dining area. Left after that, hoping to find another bar I *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*d read about. Walked for ages along dark, foreboding streets, eventually settling on the only bar I had seen in the past half hour, a cheesy faux American affair called Witch *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc*s Tavern. Had a few drinks, as I had to break a large bill before I could get a taxi ride home. Band was actually quite good and there were real, live Koreans there. I wasn't *ĀfĀcĀcāĒšĀ-ĀcāĒžĀc* aware Koreans existed outside of New Jersey, Queens, Torrance, and, well, Korea.

Went to touristy Hole in the Wall bar on Khao San, pretty tired. Chatted with the waitress, Oel [Not her real name, although I believe it started with an O-sound. She thought I was Swedish, she worked in a bar, hence Oel she is], again, who amazingly remembered my name from a few nights before. She's only 17, working here at this bar before she goes off to Uni in England next year. Cute little girls came in to sell flowers to tourists around midnight. Whoever thought of that idea is a genius I advised Oel. Except for the part where little kids are in bars at midnight, I suppose. Bought a rose from the cutest little Thai girl. Not really having any use for a rose, I gave it to Oel, who gracefully accepted it as she must every night at midnight. Found it cute how she seemed to just desperately wanted to talk to the English speakers of the room, asking me what various phrases in English meant. Such a change from Europe, where people seem reluctant to speak English, regardless of whether or not they can. Except Sweden, where they speak English better than you do, of course.

After a few nasty Gin Slings, went to bed, as I had to get up early the next day to catch a ride to the airport.

Dude looks like a lady

2002-03-23

Bangkok, Thailand

Nevas in my life have I seen so many left-handed people. Thought left-handedness was sign of abject evil in most cultures... Thus far I had been somewhat disappointed at the dearth of the infamous lady-boys. While I was walking along Khao San this morning, a deep voice beside me said something in Thai, causing me to crane my head in his direction. Mein Gott im Himmel! A lady-boy! All this time the elusive lady-boys have been moseying around, camouflaged. They blend in so well, you would never even notice if you didn't hear their voices.

After my morning ritual, I flagged down a Tuk Tuk, and after several attempts, found someone willing to take me all the way up to Chatachuket Market by the Northern Bus Terminal. Wonderful ride all the way up there, although I felt kind of bad I was making him go so far out of his way. It takes forever to get through Central Bangkok because of traffic -- at least an hour to get across downtown. Passed a stalled train, passengers hanging listlessly out of pane-less windows. Amazing sprawl of market in all directions. Row after row after row of stalls, covered overhead by tarps. Sold everything imaginable: clothes, furniture, pets, huge stones of every kind (mused for a moment on the possibility of lugging a big chunk of cheap marble back for my mom to sculpt), knickknacks, art, antiques (illegal to export), metal art, Sanrio kitsch, cloth, and food as far as the eye could see. Every imaginable animal from fish to chickens to dogs. Witnessed a pair of little kids peering anxiously into a bucket full of writhing scorpions, while Japanese business men stood by, laughing like bowls full of jelly. Vats of cute little toads. Walked around a few hours and took a cab out to Chinatown.

My first real metered taxi ride "the excitement never ends. The cab driver was the first person I had met who really didn't speak any English at all. Must be hard to travel if you don't speak English. Anglophones are so spoiled. Chinatown looked a lot less, well, Chinese than I expected nothing like the prolific cheese of many of the US-based Chinatowns. Like Bangkok except more so. And, well, Chinese people. Everywhere. The market packed with people, inching slowly through narrow walkways, occasionally having to squish together to let a motorcycle pass. The group had instantly grown a foot "they be some tall Chinese people.

Randomly passed a film crew. Thai and Chinese crowded around a group of five Gong-Li-calibur-bitchy teenagers on a flatbed truck. They must be famous. Watched that for a while, how group of kids would be sullenly standing around one minute and then dancing gleefully, plastic smiles plastered on their faces, the next.

Went back and ate at my restaurant for the last time. Before I left, the waitress with sexy British accent smiled and said "I see you later. Alas, she would not. Guy w/ very convincing American accent singing and playing songs from the 60s. Quite accurate, except he would get some lines wrong. The sight of sound to the tune of "The sound of silence. Very cute.

The world is your oyster

2002-03-24

Bangkok, Thailand

I went to Thailand for a week, and here's what I have to show for it.

Back in the U.S.S.R.

2002-03-25

Westfield, New Jersey

Someone needs to get on that whole teleportation thing. 22 hours of transit is more than the mortal soul is meant to bear. So anyway, I made it back. It is entirely too cold in this country.

Where the grass is green

2002-03-31

Westfield, New Jersey

The Easter Bunny came this year. Having seen neither hide nor hare of the elusive character for the past three years, I was surprised to find a basket of various cavity-inducing treats sitting on the kitchen table this morning.

Except for a brief stint in Junior High, when my sister's and my godless asses were forced to attend Sunday School at the Second Pres in Rahway, the Oslislo family has never been very religious. We have, however, celebrated the major Christian holidays involving gifts, and consequently I do still retain several snippets of Easters past from my largely forgotten childhood. Every year, The Incredible Hulk and I would drag out our gaudily colored plastic Easter baskets from the closet and place them, bare and lonely, on the kitchen table. The next morning we would awaken around 5 AM, not bothering to change out of our matching leopard print pajamas, and trample down the stairs to find our baskets o'erflowing.

Aside from having to sit through tedious Easter Sunday sermons at church, I have nothing but pleasant memories of this holiday. Except on one point: plastic Easter basket grass. In its essence, Easter grass is kind of intriguing. It has several glass-like properties: it's springy, it's green, and it kind of, if you look at it quickly and then away, looks like grass. And yet, it's plastic. Fascinating.

The problem with Easter grass is that it is ostensibly just one long, thin strip of plastic, a quality surely a boon in parental Easter cleanup, but a definite burden to the Easter goody consuming. As any devout Christian among us will attest, retrieving said treats from the chaotic faux gras is a nightmare. After all the candy on top has been depleted, one is forced to root around the plastic mess in an attempt to obtain, at best, one or two jelly beans, invariably licorice ones at that. And every year, out of utter frustration, one will attempt to unearth a fistful of candy, thrusting one's hand wrist-deep in Easter grass, resulting in the upheaval of all sorts of Easter mayhem. The whole green mass comes out of the basket, spilling jellybeans and foil covered chocolates everywhere.

Yes, as I was saying, I've always hated Easter.

Red is stop and green's for going

2002-04-17

Santa Cruz, California

You know what? I feel okay today. So okay, in fact, that I just may be capable of penning an actual journal entry. Today is a miraculous day. It shall go down in the annals of alright days. I shall steel my courage and will the molasses that is my brain to congeal, if just for today.

Today is not a day without obligation, which certainly must have something to do with my uncharacteristic appearance on my own website. See, I went to Santa Cruz last weekend to visit Nathan, and I told him I would brave the inevitable why-didn't-you-come-to-San-Franciscoes to scribble down some thoughts on my excursion to the west coast.

"Who is Nathan?" you inquire.

"I'm so glad you asked," I reply, donning my teal bathrobe of exposition.

Nathan, you see, is from Digital Impact, which many of you recognize, since it is the premier eMarketing rebel in the land of Silicon Valley. Oh wait, no, I mean you recognize it because you, too, worked there. Right, so Nathan and I were acquaintances at DI, and when I got to London, Patsy Cline, who was there for the week at the DI_UK office, told me that he was, like myself, also bumming around Europe aimlessly.

We met in Paris. Together we learned to love the Marais, and pinky-sweared that we would someday get a flat together right there on Rue Du Temple. We went to Berlin. To Kreuzberg. We got falafel. We saw the cranes with Christmas trees in the cabs. I called him *Nayten* in my very best Meryl Streep Polish accent. Basically, we bonded.

Having been mentally ensconced in what the professionals like to wistfully term "really, really sucky depression," I was shocked to learn, on the day of my flight, that getting out of bed was extremely difficult. Given that meta-leaving is perhaps my one true calling in life, I found this odd. I don't have trouble leaving. I was born to go. I'll just get up and... but oh how these three-weeks-unwashed sheets are so comfortable. And oh I haven't packed and need to get in the New Brunswick bound Camry in fifteen minutes. Oh I do not know if I can do this. Crazy, right?

It was the getting there that was tough. I sat clenching the armrests while our 757 clunk, clunk, clunked down the runway for takeoff, even though flying usually doesn't phase me. I held my breath while we landed, clunk, clunk, clunk at O'Hare. I dawdled and nearly missed my flight, doing the antsy dance while in line for Security Check in Chicago. I sprinted full speed for my connecting flight. I almost didn't run. I almost said fuck it and went home.

Prozac Nation

Westfield, New Jersey

ItÄfÄcÄcâešÄ-ÄcâežÄcs conceivable that youÄfÄcÄcâešÄ-ÄcâežÄcd like to know where IÄfÄcÄcâešÄ-ÄcâežÄcve been all this time. Maybe. Sorta. A little. Well, IÄfÄcÄcâešÄ-ÄcâežÄcd tell you, but it would unfortunately be just about as interesting as watching paint dry. See, thatÄfÄcÄcâešÄ-ÄcâežÄcs exactly what depression is: itÄfÄcÄcâešÄ-ÄcâežÄcs like watching paint dry, except without the stalwart hope the paint will at some future point become, in fact, dry. Depression is like watching wet paint *be*.

Sailing the seas of cheese

Westfield, New Jersey

We will be crossing the Atlantic with Ren Faire denizen Aunt Mabel (my mom's youngest sister) and Grandma Anne and spending three days together in glorious olde England.

But before I go, I thought I would clear something up: Dr. Evil asked Hildi if she would rather sweat cheese or smell like sulfur when she smiled. Hildi chose the latter.

Personally, I don't think it would be all that bad to sweat cheese, provided you lived in a rather cool climate. Maybe it would just be dandruff-like Parmesan in your armpits. You could rubber-band little sandwich baggies under your shirt and you'd be set. Granted, the cheese situation would preclude all rigorous physical activity, but since I lead a rather sedentary lifestyle anyway, I don't think it would be such a big deal.

Smelling like sulfur, *ever*, on the other hand, would be a greater hardship. I mean, what if you're on a date, being all accommodating, laughing at all their jokes, etc. Sulfur-smell is not really something you can cover up with a little perfume.

So cheese it is.

Say ah! Now spit

2002-07-31

Millburn, New Jersey

Today I got a juicy item of spam that started out, "Hello Jen! Have you ever seen Real RUSSIAN INCEST?" The fact these people have my name makes me somewhat uncomfortable. Maybe I shouldn't have filled out that "Join our mailing list!" card at the Thai sex club.

Anyway. I'm just popping in to let you all know I am not, in fact, deceased. I have a month of so of photos to put up from the UK and the Swedish Invasion. Yes, Swedish Fish has gone back to the motherland. Now the Oslo household is cold and empty. Even Ed Harris walks around the house wistfully, aimlessly, even, wondering what is missing. It's the Swede. She's in Sweeden. More about all things Swedish another time.

Also, I've decided to start using pseudonyms for the people I talk about, because that's apparently what all the cool kids do.

I went to the dentist today for a root canal. My parents insisted I get a referral, as my native dentist sucks. Referral dentist was all in Millburn. A thirty minute drive for me is a nightmare. I'm the kind of breed who will make four right turns to avoid making a left at a busy intersection. So I get there, and there are two huge sweat stains under my arms, even though I am wearing a tank top. I wander around, looking for the place, find it, trudge up the stairs, wait in the lobby for 40 minutes while the easy listening station, which I might add was somewhat out of range and all fuzzy, blares away. I finally get in, sit down. X-rays. The dentist walks in, gracing me with his presence, a pensive look on his face.

"Hmm," he says.

"Hmm," I respond.

"Has your dentist ever taken x-rays of this tooth?"

"What?"

"It obviously needs to be extracted. I'm sure you're not surprised. Has your dentist even looked at this tooth before? With his eyes open? Sober?"

Okay, I added that last part. You get the point. My dentist is a crack whore. I am about to break out a pair of rusty pliers and pull the thing out myself.

Martha Stewart Living

2002-08-02

Westfield, New Jersey



Today marked my foray into the wide world of poor cooking. That's right, folks, Jen Oslo actually cooked something. Perhaps it would be more amusing to simply imagine what all came to pass, but I think I'll share anyway.

So, lacking any interesting culinary experience and materials (such as, say, quail), decided to go with [Martha](#)

[Stewart's PERFECT spaghetti](#). I'm sure Hildi is cackling with delight at the very thought of my fall from innocence. You see, occasionally Hildi and I, while entertaining severe drunkenness, watch Martha Stewart Living at 2 AM. Lately, I've found myself thinking such things as, "Yeah, those golden brown crab cakes with pickle tartar sauce look goood. I could do dat." Dude, I don't even like crab cakes. I'm just sayin. It's the siren song of Martha.

Anyway, there I am in the kitchen, feverishly fumbling with the recipe as my water quickly rises to a boil. The key to PERFECT spaghetti is getting all the sauce ingredients and cooking equipment ready before you start cooking. Uh ohs. Fervently I chop the garlic cloves into 1/8 inch pieces. How big is 1/8 of an inch, I wonder to Max. Who wants these big ass chunks of garlic in their food? So I decided to just dice 'em. Where dice means I mush together with a dull knife.

We didn't have any baby pear tomatoes lying around, so I just used diced canned tomatoes. And we also didn't have 28 ounces, so I used the available 14.5. Somewhere along the way it should have occurred to me that maybe I should use less oil in the sauce, since I was only using half the required tomatoes. Not until way, way too late did I realize the error of my ways.

The net result: really, really greasy perfect spaghetti with tomato sauce. Oh yeah, and in my blind panic I forgot to add the parsley. I'll tell ya though it wasn't half bad. Perfectly edible. Of course now I have enough fat in my body to hibernate for several weeks, but that's okay.

If you'll excuse me, I need to lie down. I have a stomach ache.

Barrel Fever

2002-08-05

Westfield, New Jersey


Big Red: I sent you a present!
 poeks: yes, i got it. it is so fabulous!
 poeks: that is seriously the best present i
 poeks: ve ever received through the usps
 Big Red: To make it even better...
 Big Red: I inadvertently discovered that the belly pops out
 Big Red: You can roll the fetus around
 poeks: nice!
 Big Red: Maybe shoot marbles with it
 poeks: how do you get it out? unscrew it or something? or it just pops on out?
 Big Red: It just pops out
 Big Red: I was on a two-week kick of making soap
 poeks: soap?
 poeks: like the kind that looks like jello with fruit in it?
 Big Red: You can get a big block of glycerine soap and melt down pieces and pour it into molds with exciting things inside
 Big Red: like nails and little fake snakes
 poeks: ha
 Big Red: Anyhoo, I used the front of the key chain as a mold
 Big Red: and when I took it out of the soap the belly popped out
 Big Red: I thought about leaving it in the soap, but it was too big
 Big Red: Damn big fetus
 poeks: i hope i dont lose the fetus. that would suck if i'm walkin down seventh ave and it pops out and lands in someone's coffee
 Big Red: So if you wet your keychain you might be able to get a little lather
 Big Red: That would NOT suck
 Big Red: It would be so cool
 poeks: yeah, but not if i didn't notice. and just walked on, oblivious that my fetus is now being slurped down by a starbucks customer
 Big Red: I'd send you a new one
 poeks: aw
 poeks: i need to find a job now
 Big Red: Oh... Um, what's up with school?
 poeks: oh
 poeks: well

poeks: yeah, i dont know if school is for me
poeks: i just cant seem to get through this undergrad thing
Big Red: And yet a college degree looks so good on the resume
Big Red: Even from the lamest institution
poeks: why cant they just let people get into grad school straight away?
Big Red: Well... because they make more money if they make you get an undergrad degree first
Big Red: I wonder if you could use a good GRE score and life experience to get into someplace progressive, like The New School?
poeks: hmmm
poeks: that's an interesting idea
Big Red: Although I think you'd still be better advised to just buckle down and knock out an undergrad degree as fast as you can
poeks: ugh
poeks: it's so tedious
Big Red: Perhaps if you were to write a wildly popular novel....
poeks: i had to drop four courses last semester because i got all depressed
Big Red: I think you could get into grad school without a degree then
poeks: there you go
Big Red: What were you depressed about?
poeks: school and such
Big Red: Hm.
poeks: i dunno
poeks: it wasn't a good scene
poeks: i dont think one course a semester really falls under the category of "fast"
Big Red: I'm thinking it's just that Rutgers really isn't the school for you
poeks: but the thing is, my gpa is so low that i can't really get in anywhere else at this point
Big Red: Well, unless you just ignored that and started afresh
poeks: hmm
Big Red: For instance, if you were to go to art school, or whatever
poeks: true
Big Red: How are your parents handling all this?
poeks: they are pretty chill. they just want me to do what makes me happy, etc
Big Red: Well, that's good
Big Red: I don't know... David Sedaris doesn't have a college degree
Big Red: And he's doing just fine
poeks: he doesnt? what about all that crystal meth he did in college? you'd think he'd have just zipped right through
Big Red: My reading of it was that he didn't really finish
Big Red: He could have, and maybe just doesn't want to brag
poeks: hmm
Big Red: Doesn't want to lose his street cred
Big Red: Oh, how funny
Big Red: I just remembered a dream I had
Big Red: That I called him up and had a conversation with him, under the ruse of not knowing it was his number
Big Red: (I have his home number)
Big Red: Anyway, although it IS good to have a college degree, depression is definitely your mind's way of suggesting a change in course
Big Red: Why do you think you would like grad school, if you don't like undergrad?
poeks: oh you should prank call david sedaris
Big Red: Well, we called him once when we were drunk
poeks: nice
poeks: did he answer?
Big Red: We had just been reading "Santaland Diaries" and got all excited at the part when he says he could put a fellow elf in his pocket because he's so cute
Big Red: This happened to be a pet phrase of my friend Liz
Big Red: So we called him, and he answered (or maybe it was Hughie, who knows)
Big Red: And my friend Cliff said, "David, you are so cute that I want to put YOU in my pocket!!!!!"
poeks: hee
poeks: haha
Big Red: And then he hung up and we all giggled madly
poeks: oh, you have to give me his number
Big Red: Okay
Big Red: 212-334-xxxx
poeks: oh i am so calling him drunk
poeks: i just walked outside and there was a guitar and an amp sitting outside on the lounge chairs
poeks: i think i need to drink less
Big Red: So you sat down and played?

Big Red: It's only noon... are you drunk?
poeks: i'm in the still drunk/hangover phase
Big Red: Ah
Big Red: Yes, I realized when I was about 25 that I had become a sodden loser
Big Red: I kicked the booze for a year-- not a drop
Big Red: After that I had lost the taste for it
Big Red: I still get hammered, but only when the occasion calls for it
poeks: hmm, i should try that
Big Red: It's difficult if your buddies are still in a drinky phase
Big Red: I seriously thought about going to AA just so I could talk to someone who could understand why one wouldn't want to be drunk each night
poeks: i hear that
Big Red: But that was the summer I traveled and then went to business school, and the change of scene helped
Big Red: Here's another fun number:
Big Red: 212-832-xxxx
poeks: i should request 666 next time i get a cell phone
Big Red: There's a house near where Ted and I play tennis that has the address 666
Big Red: Okay, I just called the number I gave you (not David's, the other) to see if it still works
poeks: heh
Big Red: They answer the phone very fast... you may have to say, "I'm sorry... where did I call?"
poeks: hahaha
Big Red: If you still can't get it then I'll tell you whose number it is
Big Red: And here is another:
poeks: oh just tell me
Big Red: 212-691-xxxx
Big Red: Okay, the first one I gave you is Ivana Trump
poeks: nice!
Big Red: The second one is Spalding Gray
poeks: heh. i just read swimming to cambodia
Big Red: Actually, Spalding is the reason I have Sedaris's number..
poeks: why do you have all these numbers?
poeks: spalding *gave* you his number?
Big Red: I read an interview with Spalding Gray in which he said that he never bothered to unlist his number because no one really knows who he is
Big Red: So I got it from 411
poeks: sweet
Big Red: Then after I read Barrel Fever I wondered if Sedaris had bothered to unlist his number
Big Red: He hadn't.
poeks: amy sedaris was just on sex and the city
Big Red: Really?
poeks: although i have to add the caveat that i would not actually watch sex and the city if my friend Hildi didn't force me to at gunpoint
poeks: yeah, she was a book publisher
Big Red: Ivana's number came from the job I had selling extra long twin sheets to college students... her son Donald Jr. went to Penn. He ordered green sheets, I think
poeks: good lord
Big Red: Actually, she didn't mark the color on the order form
Big Red: So I got to call her to ask
poeks: so you actually talked to her
Big Red: No, one of her minions
poeks: shucks
Big Red: Yes.
Big Red: But it was still so fun
poeks: i can imagine
Big Red: Wow. What a tiny little life I have
Big Red: But whatever
poeks: oh Big Red, people who make soap in the shape of pregnant women dont have tiny lives
Big Red: Well, it didn't really end up having the shape of a pregnant woman
Big Red: it was an experiment that failed.
Big Red: It's a soap with a peach blob that has a baby in it
Big Red: But it's my husband's favorite
Big Red: We're using it right now, and the baby's head is just starting to poke through
Big Red: I made my nephew a soap with a \$20 bill trapped inside
poeks: the nails ones must get uncomfortable rather fast
Big Red: He'll have to use it for weeks before he can get the money

2002-08-08
Westfield, New Jersey

Anyway, Iâ€™m walking along, and who drives past but my friend the Dorky Mailman. Dorky Mailman parks at the side of the road and walks over to chat. Thatâ€™s fine I donâ€™t mind the dorky mailman: heâ€™s nice and let me ride in the back of his mail truck once.

On the brighter side, perhaps all these shenanigans will deter Dorky Mailman from hitting on me. Instead of interrupting his route and chatting with me for twenty minutes about how I should go to the beach with him, he'll just drive by, beeping and waving.  Hi, Seizure Girl!

2002-08-21
Westfield, New Jersey

5/31/09 7:26 PM

poeks: oh i saw a special on this somewhere. can't remember where...

poeks: not this explicit of course

Big Red: Remember _____, the red headed ___ guy?

Big Red: I think he was into this kind of thing

poeks: hahaha! no!

poeks: that's awesome

Big Red: yep

poeks: i could picture it

Big Red: He would always tell me he was feeling "yiffy today."

Big Red: I asked him what "yiffy" meant, and he said it's the sound a fox makes... Yiff! Yiff!

poeks: that guy in the clips kind of looks like one of my roommates from berlin

Big Red: Maybe it IS your roommate from Berlin

Big Red: However, when I was reading an article about the subculture, it said that "yiffy" is lingo for "horny."

poeks: ahaaa

poeks: that's kind of gross in the work context

Big Red: Well, it wasn't at the time because I had no idea

Big Red: He did also mention that he felt that special way about some of his stuffed animals.

poeks: teehee!

Big Red: Now that I think about it, most people don't confide things like that in me, because I scare them

poeks: wow, he must have felt comfortable with you

poeks: maybe it was the hair

Big Red: Yes, I guess so

Anatomy of the Tongue in Cheek

2002-08-30

Westfield, New Jersey

Dr Evil returned at the end of July to the warm embrace of New Jersey for Medical School. She started classes a few days ago. You know, stuff like cell biochemihistology. Pretty dry. However, there is one class I was dying to hear about: anatomy. Those first-years just dive right in there and start cutting up them cadavers. Dr Evil gives Hildi and I the inside scoop:

Dr Evil (2:22:25 AM): can i tell you girls how gross 'nasty body ' is?

Dr Evil (2:22:43 AM): nasty body = anatomy

Hildi (2:22:59 AM): tell me all the details

poeks (2:23:08 AM): so what exactly did you have to do?

Dr Evil (2:23:13 AM): first of all, my group has one of the most obese cadavers

poeks (2:23:22 AM): we need to vicariously go to med school, remember

Dr Evil (2:23:27 AM): it's this old lady and she had pink fingernail polish on

Dr Evil (2:23:47 AM): you walk into this big room with all these metal tables

Dr Evil (2:24:02 AM): and on each table is a cadaver face down covered in plastic

poeks (2:24:17 AM): i think i would get distressed by the pink fingernail polish

Dr Evil (2:24:17 AM): the smell is overwhelmingly disgusting, almost vomit inducing

Hildi (2:24:36 AM): wow

Hildi (2:24:38 AM): more more

Dr Evil (2:24:43 AM): yeah, the polish really freaked me out

Hildi (2:24:54 AM): i think that would make me pass out

Hildi (2:24:59 AM): the nail polish

Hildi (2:25:04 AM): do you think she got it done at a korean nail salon?

Dr Evil (2:25:24 AM): so we unwrapped the bodies and put this big block of wood underneath the chest to prop up the back and let the neck hang down loose

Dr Evil (2:25:51 AM): after the embalming process, the face looks all asian for some reason

poeks (2:25:58 AM): how obese are we talking?

Dr Evil (2:26:11 AM): she's a small lady height wise, but she was fat

Dr Evil (2:26:45 AM): it took 3 people to hold her up while someone slid the wood underneath

Dr Evil (2:26:53 AM): we call her mabel by the way

Dr Evil (2:26:56 AM): or just may

poeks (2:26:59 AM): hahaha

poeks (2:27:03 AM): i have an aunt mabel

Dr Evil (2:27:17 AM): it was so disgusting touching her for the first time, even with gloves on

Hildi (2:27:21 AM): what do you mean she look asian

Dr Evil (2:27:38 AM): like her eyes were closed and slanted looking

Dr Evil (2:27:52 AM): it made me sad to think of her as an old korean grandmother or something

Dr Evil (2:28:15 AM): she must have been really sick and bedridden. she had bedsores on her back
Hildi (2:28:24 AM): i thought you only see parts of them at a time
Dr Evil (2:28:41 AM): well, we started by dissecting the back so we saw all her back and head
poeks (2:28:49 AM): do you know what they'd died of?
Dr Evil (2:28:59 AM): i mean, you just cover the rest with this moist towel
poeks (2:29:00 AM): or a sort of need-to-know basis?
Dr Evil (2:29:09 AM): we don't know their age or how they died
Dr Evil (2:29:26 AM): but when we open her up we might get a clue
poeks (2:29:35 AM): i guess that would be kind of too much information. i don't really know why i even asked, in retrospect...
Dr Evil (2:29:37 AM): like a shriveled black lung or giant tumor
Dr Evil (2:29:50 AM): no, lots of people asked that
Dr Evil (2:30:02 AM): so may has a really short neck
Hildi (2:30:21 AM): oh like jennifer ehle
poeks (2:30:25 AM): so what is the procedure for opening her up to the back muscles?
Dr Evil (2:30:36 AM): we started by cutting from the occipital bone on the back of the head down to the sacrum
poeks (2:30:51 AM): do you have to do that whole ten thousand layers of skin deal?
Dr Evil (2:31:06 AM): you use a scalpel and push down about 3 inches
Dr Evil (2:31:15 AM): our lady was really fat so it was even more for us
Dr Evil (2:31:29 AM): then you 'reflect' back the layer of skin
poeks (2:31:32 AM): who did the dirty work?
Dr Evil (2:31:38 AM): all 4 of us
Dr Evil (2:31:45 AM): no one escaped
Hildi (2:32:01 AM): how long are scalpels
Dr Evil (2:32:21 AM): so you pull back the skin in sections and use a scalpel to loosen the connective tissue underneath. it's very silence of the lambs-esque
Dr Evil (2:32:31 AM): the scalpels are very small
poeks (2:32:52 AM): what did the muscles look like?
Dr Evil (2:33:04 AM): a 2-3 inch disposable blade
Hildi (2:33:16 AM): what if you find a moth cocoon
Hildi (2:33:20 AM): then you'll know who did it
Dr Evil (2:33:21 AM): our lady was so fat all we saw at first was layers of fat
Hildi (2:33:28 AM): was she a size 14
Dr Evil (2:33:39 AM): it was this strange radioactive looking yellow
Dr Evil (2:33:51 AM): with lots of yellow oil
Dr Evil (2:34:16 AM): she was probably more than a 14, but petite
Dr Evil (2:34:24 AM): or maybe she just shrunk with age
Dr Evil (2:34:35 AM): we started by trying to neatly cut out the fat
Dr Evil (2:34:49 AM): but by the end, we were just digging our hands into and ripping it out
poeks (2:34:52 AM): like in chunks or something?
poeks (2:34:55 AM): mmm
Dr Evil (2:34:55 AM): it was so stressful and gross
Dr Evil (2:35:21 AM): i mean, it's attached pretty well so yeah, kinda chunk like
Hildi (2:35:22 AM): EW
poeks (2:35:29 AM): Dr Evil, you will be scarred for life
Dr Evil (2:35:29 AM): with help from the scalpel
Hildi (2:35:30 AM): that's awful
Dr Evil (2:35:45 AM): it took us over 2 hours just to get down to the muscle level
poeks (2:35:54 AM): oh mein gott
Hildi (2:36:07 AM): wow
Dr Evil (2:36:09 AM): all the other bodies were all skinny
Dr Evil (2:36:12 AM): we were so jealous
Hildi (2:36:18 AM): were you sweating?
Hildi (2:36:26 AM): did anyone compliment your pj pants from target?
Dr Evil (2:36:47 AM): we were actually all red and stressed and somewhat sweaty
Dr Evil (2:36:55 AM): yes, i got lots of compliments for my pj scrubs
Dr Evil (2:37:02 AM): they were a big hit
Hildi (2:37:09 AM): oh the extra three bucks were worth it
Dr Evil (2:37:15 AM): you should see some of the scrubs people wear
poeks (2:37:26 AM): you should have totally gotten the button-down top
poeks (2:37:37 AM): or a one-piece with the booties attached
Dr Evil (2:37:40 AM): this one jewish guy, who looks very penn state, has a pair of lavender scrubs. it's gorgeous
Dr Evil (2:38:01 AM): this other guy, wears his scrub top like a muscle shirt or a baby t
Dr Evil (2:38:24 AM): why did he buy a child's extra small when he's all gross and beefy like a wrestler?
poeks (2:38:40 AM): so what happened after the fat ripping?
Dr Evil (2:38:41 AM): anyway, so we finally clear away most of the fat

Dr Evil (2:39:01 AM): and then you cut away the fascia, this thick membrane that covers muscle
Dr Evil (2:39:10 AM): and the muscle looks like dark meat chicken
Dr Evil (2:39:21 AM): a dark red, you know?
Dr Evil (2:39:49 AM): the muscle is made up of fibers which you can see running in different directions
poeks (2:39:49 AM): i learned about that in my one month bio extravaganza
Hildi (2:39:50 AM): wouldn't it be so weird if you got hungry during anatomy class
poeks (2:40:01 AM): i bet some people do
Dr Evil (2:40:17 AM): you guys have to smell the place to understand how impossible that is
Dr Evil (2:40:28 AM): the smell could drive you crazy i think
poeks (2:40:32 AM): no, i bet that's a fetish for some
Dr Evil (2:40:40 AM): and it lingers in your nose for hours
poeks (2:40:45 AM): you'll get all used to it
Dr Evil (2:40:53 AM): aauuggh, i hate thinking about it cuz then i imagine i can smell it
poeks (2:41:00 AM): Dr Evil, you'll be immune to the formaldehyde
poeks (2:41:12 AM): it'll smell like roses
Dr Evil (2:41:16 AM): the worst is sometimes when you're doing stuff little bits of fat or skin get flicked up
Dr Evil (2:41:33 AM): i'm mortally afraid of that crap hitting my face or landing in my hair
Hildi (2:41:52 AM): do you have to smear that stuff under your nose
Dr Evil (2:42:08 AM): so there's all this muscle that you then reflect, which just means folding up
Dr Evil (2:42:21 AM): no smear stuff under the nose, they're not rotting
Dr Evil (2:42:38 AM): just formaldehyde-y
Dr Evil (2:42:49 AM): so that was day one
Hildi (2:42:58 AM): imagine you were saying something
Hildi (2:43:03 AM): and a little bit flicked into your mouth
Hildi (2:43:07 AM): then you'd be a cannibal
Dr Evil (2:43:35 AM): after you're done, you place back the thick slabs of skin over the opened up cadaver, put the towel over it and moisten it
poeks (2:43:37 AM): so what was day two like?
poeks (2:43:51 AM): ew, it's like terracotta or something
Dr Evil (2:44:01 AM): don't think that ppl haven't talked about little bits flicking into the mouth
poeks (2:44:03 AM): do you spray it with a with mist-er?
Dr Evil (2:44:15 AM): i'd puke
Dr Evil (2:44:29 AM): no, you just pour embalming fluid onto the towel
Dr Evil (2:44:33 AM): all over the body
Dr Evil (2:44:39 AM): then you wrap it up in plastic
Dr Evil (2:44:44 AM): and go home and shower for 3 hours
Dr Evil (2:45:02 AM): seriously, i almost scrubbed off my skin
Dr Evil (2:45:34 AM): the grossest is that people wear their scrubs to lecture before lab
Dr Evil (2:45:55 AM): all seating in the seats, rubbing off bits of cadaver, smelling it up
Dr Evil (2:46:07 AM): these people are filthy i tell you
Hildi (2:46:23 AM): wait till you do the bowels
Dr Evil (2:46:28 AM): i bet they'd sleep in them and wear them on weekends too
Dr Evil (2:46:51 AM): our lady has this weird button thing right at the tip of her butt crack
Dr Evil (2:47:05 AM): i'm not sure what it is for
Hildi (2:47:18 AM): on her flesh?
Dr Evil (2:47:28 AM): it's this white button thing pressed into the skin
Dr Evil (2:47:39 AM): it's weird, i'll let you know what it's for when i find out
Hildi (2:47:46 AM): maybe she's like matt damon in bourne id
Dr Evil (2:48:02 AM): day 2 we looked at the deep back muscle
Dr Evil (2:48:19 AM): this day was much better since a lot of the fat was gone
poeks (2:48:27 AM): can you all see the vertebrae and stuff?
Dr Evil (2:48:28 AM): although she still has a lot left
Dr Evil (2:48:47 AM): the other bodies are all red and white. ours is still very yellowy and fatty and oily
Dr Evil (2:48:58 AM): she's so fat that it's hard to see the vertebrae
Dr Evil (2:49:15 AM): however, today we ripped off a bunch of muscles and cracked open the spine
Dr Evil (2:49:22 AM): we had to use a bone saw
poeks (2:49:32 AM): what do those look like?
poeks (2:49:44 AM): like one of those serrated cleaver deals?
Hildi (2:49:47 AM): is it electric?
Hildi (2:49:57 AM): maybe it's like a turkey slicer
Dr Evil (2:50:05 AM): yup, it's electric and the blade is circular and it spins
Hildi (2:50:08 AM): i knew it
Dr Evil (2:50:13 AM): you can hold it in your hand
Dr Evil (2:50:18 AM): it's creepy
Dr Evil (2:50:38 AM): all this powdery bone was flying up
Dr Evil (2:51:04 AM): oh i forgot to tell you that on the first day, i had to cut through a bed sore while opening up the back.

Dr Evil (2:51:10 AM): i almost gagged
Hildi (2:51:17 AM): what's in a bed sore
Dr Evil (2:51:29 AM): it's just pooled up blood basically
Hildi (2:51:36 AM): was it black
Hildi (2:51:45 AM): and gooey like molasses in jan?

Rip Out Your Lungs

2002-09-20
Westfield, New Jersey

Dr Evil had Anatomy class yesterday, and you know what that means: more Nasty Body! Yay! Dr E relates the gory details of this installment.

You have just entered room "Nasty Body."

poeks: it's that time again!

Dr Evil: muahaha

Hildi: muhahaha

Hildi: go!

Dr Evil: we cut out the lungs and heart yesterday

Dr Evil: it was disgusting as usual

Hildi: (i heard this in person already by the way)

poeks: i need all the fatty details

Hildi: (poeks seeths with jealousy)

poeks: yeth

Dr Evil: people looked like they were delivering babies or something. except the babies were bloody lungs...

Hildi: ew

Hildi: why do you compare them to delivering babies?

poeks: where's your bibi!

Hildi: (bibi means wife in hindi)

Dr Evil: you'd stick your hands into the body cavity and it would make these nasty air sounds.

poeks: so the cavity was open already?

Dr Evil: we cut open the chest 2 weeks ago

Dr Evil: i wish you could smell the body cavity

poeks: me too

poeks: so everything was exposed?

Dr Evil: our lady has a very small thorax

Hildi: you should take poeks to smell her

Hildi: did you try the vics vapo rub?

Dr Evil: it's difficult to remove the lungs, you have to cut and squeeze and pull and push. i imagine that's what labor is like. i forgot, i have to go buy some

poeks: what did you excise the lungs and heart with?

Hildi: just their bare hands

poeks: what did may's lungs look like?

Dr Evil: you just take a scalpel and cut the branches of the lungs (off the trachea) and then pull it out with your hands

Dr Evil7: may's lungs had black stuff in it

Hildi: are the lungs collapsed?

Dr Evil: maybe she smoked

poeks: so you cut them open, too?

Dr Evil: they are pretty shriveled up

Dr Evil3: we cut them out and i accidentally cut one of them in half

Hildi: maybe she was an inuit and the cooking fire was inside the tent

Dr Evil: yeah, the black spots could have been just from pollution and stuff

Dr Evil: lungs feel very weird

Dr Evil: the texture is almost spongy

Dr Evil: i wish you could feel it

Hildi: are they light in weight?

poeks: maybe you can hack off a piece and stick it in your pocket

Hildi: maybe you can make a touch-board of bodily organs

poeks: yeah!

Dr Evil: mm, they were pretty hefty since it's they were shriveled up

poeks: on one of those cork message boards

Dr Evil: i wil not put pieces of dead organs into my pocket

Hildi: "and here are the fallopian tubes"

poeks5:06: with three by five cards identifying each part with a black sharpee
 Dr Evil: but how to keep them moist?
 Hildi: ziplock might work
 Hildi: wrap them in a wet papertowel
 Dr Evil: the little chunks would dry up, the papertowels would have to be constantly rewetted
 poeks: but then youd have to water the cork board
 Dr Evil: all day yesterday i felt like i could taste dead body
 poeks: Dr Evil, i'm sure youre not supposed to ingest parts of your nasty body, are you?
 Dr Evil: i swear the smell permeates my mucosal linings
 poeks: are you going to start using shop talk all the time?
 Hildi: maybe you can relate the smell to something plesant
 poeks: are you gradually easing us into it?
 Hildi: like denjang
 Dr Evil: or sesame oil?
 Hildi: or.. chamgireum
 poeks: anyways, what did you do with the lungs?
 Dr Evil: then the professor came by and chopped out the heart. it was crazy!
 poeks: you didnt get to chop out the heart?
 poeks: bummer
 Dr Evil: we just looked at them and tried to identify different arteries and veins
 Dr Evil: i was scared of damaging it
 Dr Evil: it was so gross. all covered in fat
 Hildi: i can't believe hearts can actually be *covered* in fat
 Dr Evil: and you had to put your face all close to the open thorax and smell
 Dr Evil: it was literally covered in fat twice
 poeks: that may was a busy gal
 Dr Evil: there was a layer outside the pericardium pleura and then a layer inside the pleura too
 Hildi: how old does she look?
 Dr Evil: it was double layered heart
 Dr Evil: it's hard to tell when they are all pickled
 Hildi: can they remove the fat through surgery?
 poeks: i bet they would remove it with a 3 1/2 in paring knife
 Dr Evil: i guess the fat doesn't always cause problems
 poeks: martha could be a surgeon
 Dr Evil: martha would be a very good surgeon
 poeks: so you opened up the heart?
 Dr Evil: no yet, we open the heart on monday
 poeks: she would be involved in some scandal having to do with leaving instruments in peoples bodies tho, i bet
 poeks: youd see her on video in your ethics class
 Hildi: you get to look inside the heart!
 Dr Evil: ew you should have seen the people
 Hildi: the heart is an organ of fire
 Dr Evil: gloves were covered in bright red blood and gore
 Dr Evil: i like that, i believe that
 Hildi: and you dr.evil get to look inside it
 Dr Evil: martha would fail ethics
 Hildi: martha is a good person inside
 Dr Evil: no i don't think so
 Hildi: she is!
 Dr Evil: nope
 Hildi: none of yous understand
 poeks: you are delusional, hildi
 Hildi: only me

Bumbe, the Dearest Deer

2002-09-23

Westfield, New Jersey

Just a few minutes ago I was outside smoking a cigarette on the front porch. There I was, minding my own business, when I catch a figure in my peripheral vision. I, not one to take sudden apparitions in stride, started, my heart skipping several beats. It was not, as I had assumed, a homicidal maniac who had somehow wandered into suburban Westfield, but a young deer on the front lawn.

I figured it would run away at my jumpiness, and I *afAcAcâ€šA~Acâ€žAcd* only catch a glimpse of it *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀcs* white bedecked hiney, but the young chap stood his ground. Now, I *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀcve* seen many a deer cross the rural expanses of Rising Way, but up until that point I *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀcd* never seen a deer which didn't *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀct* neurotically flee at the fall of a leaf.

Not only that, the deer actually wandered closer. Shocked, I stared at it there, wondering how close it would get. Without warning, he stopped in his tracks and started stomping his hooves, perhaps appalled that I sat there smoking on the front porch of my parents house at the age of 23.

Now amused, I continued my unabated gaze as the young buck stomped away. At length he started meandering off, and I figured my chance encounter had come to an end. To my delight, he doubled back and started making a sort of indignant snorting sound. Maybe he thought I was one of his sibling deer *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀc*, his lay-about, good-for-nothing brother, maybe, again run astray from the flock, smoking behind mother *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀcs* back.

I stifled a laugh, and he finally took flight, joining several other deer too timid to confront my self-destructive behavior.

I just found that amusing.

In other news, I just got back from a ten day trip to San Francisco with Hildi. We took a zillion photos, which shall be up post haste. Or eventually. I haven't *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀct* yet decided.

They Say, No Smoking Please

2002-10-10

Westfield, New Jersey

My final right of passage into adulthood: I got my wisdom teeth out on Tuesday. Sure, getting four teeth yanked from your mouth is no walk through the park, although that nitrous-oxide sure didn't hurt. All I remember is the dentist putting the IV in my arm and saying, "Wow, you have some good veins. Plenty of patients would be willing to borrow your veins, particularly the ones who walk in and say 'I don't have any veins!'" "Hehe... wha..." I replied, and was out for the count.

The aftermath, of course is a completely different story, although it wasn't half as bad as I expected. Aside from enduring my mom's chiding ("Hee, you look like a chipmunk." "Hello? Hi Hildi, here's Jen, she looks like a chipmunk." "Jen, would you like some meatloaf? Muahaha!"), there is the requisite pain and swelling to address. It's really not much fun, as you can imagine.

That said, the most difficult part to deal with is only applicable to that group of henious criminals Californians like to call "smokers." I wasn't aware of it from the get-go, but apparently one is not to smoke for one week after getting his wisdom teeth extracted. Sitting in the dentist chair all woozy, listening dully to the assistant and my mother banter about the post-wisdom do's and don't, I perked up at the mention of the ole nicotine addiction.

"So she shouldn't smoke, either, huh?" Little Orphan Annie asked.

"No, not at all. Not for..." the nurse added, pausing for dramatic effect.

At this point I was expecting her to say something like two days. I had recently gotten a gnarly tooth extracted, and two days it was (not that I actually abided by that rule). To my dismay, the nurse curtly finished her sentence: "one week."

You non-smokers out there won't be able to appreciate this, but let me repeat that for those who missed it: ONE WEEK. SEVEN DAYS. ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-EIGHT HOURS. ONE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED FORTY SECONDS. You get the point. Except you don't *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀct*. It *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀcs* a long-ass, mutherfucking time.

I bought myself a box of Nicoderm beforehand, which I guess has helped. I *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀcve* chewed my Carefree sugarless gum (which I probably shouldn't *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀct*). I fiddle endlessly with a paperclip. But still. It really, really sucks. It *ĀfĀcĀcâ€šĀ~Ācâ€žĀcs* harder than it looks, man.

Anyway, just thought you should know about my pain and suffering. Promise to write about San Francisco soon soon. [Dramatic cliffhanger] I may be moving back there, you know.

Muahaha.

I think somebody slipped me some crazy pills. Happy (happy). Bye.

Sinner rider, rides in with the storm

2002-10-27

Westfield, New Jersey

Big Red: So, I heard the flat fell through

poeks: yes...

Big Red: To comfort you, I want to reintroduce an old friend

Big Red: The Christian movie reviews

poeks: yay!

Big Red: Here is The Matrix:

Big Red: <http://www.capalert.com/capreports/matrix.htm>

poeks: the "only" thing that could comfort happens to be just that

Big Red: I like the criticisms:

Big Red: "Calling real that which is bizarre"

poeks: haha

Big Red: Is that in the Bible as a sin?

poeks: i think they just make shit up because no one bothers to look it up

Big Red: "Graphic invasion of a human body by 'mirror matter'"

poeks: muahahaha!

poeks: oh this is going to be good

Big Red: female anatomy ghosting through clothes

poeks: thanks so much

Big Red: tattoos

Big Red: stopping bullets with the mind

Big Red: That's a sin?

Big Red: How can that be a sin?

Big Red: That's not really possible!

poeks: if it were it would be a sin

Big Red: "levitation"

poeks: maybe they are thinking of The Exorcist

Big Red: Whew. I think I'll look up another movie.

Big Red: Oh, this one is funny

Big Red: Office Space:

Big Red: <http://www.capalert.com/capreports/ofcspace99.htm>

Big Red: "Gamming (maximizing exposure of upper legs in a dress while sitting)"

Big Red: They made that up... that's not a word

Big Red: Gamming? What the fuck

poeks: you'd think if they were going to make up a word it would be sorta intuitive

Big Red: Okay, that was the only good one there

Big Red: Wow, The Rocky Horror Picture Show scored relatively well.

poeks: hmm

poeks: "exploding human preceded by rippling of his flesh"

poeks: because exploding human only aint no crime

Big Red: Oh... is that still The Matrix?

poeks: i'm slow

Big Red: Here are some from The Sixth Sense:

poeks: now there are three letter words?

Big Red: "Ominous, fearful programming"

poeks: or is that just "god"

Big Red: Yeah, what's that?

Big Red: Fug!

poeks: baf!

Big Red: Sit!

poeks: poo!

poeks: i wonder if poo is a sin

Big Red: "A nine year old boy walking the streets alone"

Big Red: "A child in underwear urinating"

poeks: hee

Big Red: "glorification of unholy presences"

Big Red: "Talking to a child about what dead people want"

Big Red: "Clairvoyance"

poeks: "lies"

Big Red: I mean, you could view the whole thing as a lie... it's fiction

poeks: "dog licking man's clothed privates and him liking it"

poeks: hee

Big Red: Wait... what's that from?

poeks: america's sweethearts

Big Red: Hm... that whole movie was a sin, in my opinion
poeks: true
poeks: whoa, antz scored really high
Big Red: Cartoons often do
Big Red: Good, wholesome family fun
poeks: ah, i saw red and thought "bad"
Big Red: A high total score is good... but a high CAP ID is bad.
Big Red: It's a complex system that they describe at some lenght
Big Red: length
poeks: i bet
Big Red: This is why the Bible thumpers are slowly taking over the country
Big Red: Because they are crazy fuckers who take the time to count all the "Fucks" in South Park
poeks: they have elaborate categorical systems?
poeks: yeah...
Big Red: Then they put it up on websites
Big Red: And other crazy fuckers come and look at it
poeks: "open mouth kissing with a decayed body"
poeks: the mummy returns
Big Red: And then they all go protest at the theater because stopping bullets with your mind is a SIN
poeks: which i recently saw
poeks: and was excellent, as i'm sure you would imagine
Big Red: Oh, I saw it
Big Red: Ted loves The Mummy
poeks: i've never seen the first...
Big Red: It's quite similar
poeks: i loved rock's egyptian accent at the beginning
poeks: as good as any southerner reading "faust"
poeks: ooh "shrunken heads "
poeks: "scorpions crawling over decomposed bodies and in and out of skulls "
poeks: i bet there's a lot of sin goin on in those tropical environments
Big Red: "Aggressive behaviors of striking miners"
Big Red: That's from Billy Elliott, a nice tame feel-good movie
Big Red: "adolescent ignoring father's commands and arrogance toward him with snippets and bold language "
Big Red: snippets
poeks: hee
poeks: do they know what "snippet" means?
Big Red: "clothed scenes of adolescent heterosexual flowering "
Big Red: no. Do they know what sexual flowering means?
poeks: they don't know much from sex, those good christians
Big Red: "sneaking to defy and deceive "
Big Red: What other kind of sneaking is there?
Big Red: Sneaking for Christ?
Big Red: "Hey, Mom, Jeremy and I are going to Sneak for Christ tonight... we'll be back at 10."
poeks: haha
Big Red: "teacher invading home rule "
poeks: what?
Big Red: I don't even know what the fuck that means
poeks: maybe they ran out of stuff so they were just typing random words
Big Red: Okay, I just have to give a full list from Charlie's Angels:
poeks: "woman as likely sex toy "
poeks: ooh!
Big Red: dressing to maximize female form or skin exposure
partial nudity
flash full nudity
gamming
excessive breast exposure
vulgar tease
inappropriate touch - female to female
camera angle to force viewer on private parts
suggestive eye movement
fleshy dancing
nudity by implication (bare female backs)
attempts at seduction
poeks: that should be good
poeks: more gamming
Big Red: damn gamming

Big Red: Guess what?
 Big Red: I'm gamming right now
 poeks: sinner
 poeks: "levitation by and for evil forces "
 poeks: see, levitation in general isnt a sin
 poeks: they're contradicting themselves
 poeks: stupid zealots
 Big Red: Okay, this is from Hannibal:
 Big Red: "display of the Italian horn "
 Big Red: What the hell is that?
 Big Red: "implied mental control of animals"
 Big Red: Okay, I have to go
 poeks: maybe horn is a euphemism for, you know, the wee-wee
 Big Red: I am terribly, terribly late
 poeks: fine
 poeks: spoil my fun
 Big Red: No, the euphemism for that is "full frontal male nudity"
 poeks: ah
 Big Red: So, until we talk again
 Big Red: Please
 Big Red: Don't call real that which is bizarre
 Big Red: It is a sin.
 Big Red: Goodbye.
 poeks: and you hold off with the gamming
 Big Red: Will do.

We gotta get out of this place

2002-10-28

Westfield, New Jersey

Dear New Jersey,

I have known you all my life. I have lived within your warm embrace for nineteen long years. You were there when I learned to walk, when I learned to talk, when I beat my sister up for the first time, and when I got that Smurfmobile for Christmas. YouÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢ve seen me grow from the shy, immature girl I once was into the shy, immature woman I now am.

Without you, New Jersey, my parents would have never met and performed the acts too gross to visualize in order to produce me. Without you, there would be no me. For this, I must thank you. Thank you for crisp fall days that arenÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢t too cold and the Ice Cream Junction that used to be on the corner of Madison Hill Road and Westfield Ave. Thank you for hot, hot summer days and cold, cold winter nights when the heat doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢t work in my room. (Psych! I actually hate you for those, Jersey.) Thanks for The Shore and the limited number of shark-related deaths there. Thanks for the cul-de-sac on Riffle Ave where we used to play kickball and the guy that used to plow the snow into big piles we could sled on. Thanks for winterÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢s frozen Milton Lake and ice skating at night until the police came and chased us away. Thanks for that craptastic artificial Christmas tree we had in Rahway and all those silly crafts my mom used to make for family and friends during the holidays. Thanks for never poisoning me on Halloween when I was young and vulnerable. Thanks especially for that one skeleton costume that scared the shit of out my cousin Scott so bad he wouldnÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢t let me wear the mask in his presence.

Thanks for lots of things, New Jersey. I know you get a bad rap and all, but really, youÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢re not so bad. People just need to give you a chance. I gave you a chance, New Jersey, even though I was kind of forced to. I gave you a bunch of chances, and sometimes you came through with something great like fireworks at Aunt LaurieÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢s on the fourth of July. But it wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢t all glamour and smiles, now was it, Jersey?

I am here to confront you about our abusive relationship. You hurt me, New Jersey. You make me cry and sulk and pout. You make me feel so depressed and helpless I feel as though IÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢ll never be able to leave this very spot. But IÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢m here to tell you that you canÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢t hurt me anymore.

IÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢m leaving you, Jersey, and I ainÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢t takinÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢ you back this time. IÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢m going to run away with San Francisco again, because she never does me wrong. WeÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢re in love, me and San Francisco; itÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢s a forever love, ours. Mope all you want, New Jersey, because on November 16th IÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢Ã¢Ã¢ÃƒÂ¢ll be gone.

Sincerely,
Jennifer L. Oslislo

Flight: American Trans Air flight 275 (Non-Stop)
Depart: Newark, NJ (EWR) - Sat, Nov 16 at 11:30
Arrive: Chicago-Midway (MDW) - Sat, Nov 16 at 12:50

Flight: American Trans Air flight 935 (Non-Stop)
Depart: Chicago-Midway (MDW) - Sat, Nov 16 at 13:45
Arrive: San Francisco, CA (SFO) - Sat, Nov 16 at 16:15

More misguided morons

2002-11-01
Westfield, New Jersey

Someday, articles like this: "Learning about gay rights backers from the fights they pick" will no longer make it to print in major newspapers. And if they do, those writers will be viewed as the "bigots" and "homophobes" they really are. Because, y'know, those words aren't just propaganda spread by minorities, as this columnist would have us believe. Sigh...

Is it scary for you baby?

2002-11-02
Westfield, New Jersey

Ever since I read the Salon review a few days ago, I *hate* to see The Ring. I mean, I hadn't read any other reviews, and the previews looked pretty dumb, but Salon gave it a flabby-sorta-kind-a-okay. As a rule, I don't expect scary movies to be good, so I wasn't swayed by the wishy-washy review. In fact, I wholeheartedly expect them to be awful. My one criterion for a satisfying scary movie is this: scariness. If a scary movie frightens the beejesus out of me, then, well, it's done its job in my book. Take 13 Ghosts. Was it a good movie? No. Was it less than horrendously awful? No. Did it almost make me piss my pants in fright? Sure did.

So yeah, Salon said The Ring was scary. This afternoon I decided I would see The Ring and decide for myself. Would Charlotte see it with me? Nope, she's seen it and swiftly pronounced the original Japanese version of infinite deeper scariness. Dr Evil perhaps? Good luck tearing her away from her *studies*. (muahaha!). Hildi? Hildi would no sooner see a scary movie than gnaw off her own arm for amusement. Little Orphan Annie and Ed Harris? Hmm... If I asked Little Orphan Annie first perhaps I could trap the duo into seeing it with me.

And that, as it were, was exactly what I did.

My dad, of course, did not want to see The Ring, as The Ring is a bad movie. Fair enough: as we pulled into Loews Theatre, he promptly announced he would watch Jackass and meet up with my mom and I afterwards. Fine. His loss.

The most important aspect of watching a scary movie is to have someone to watch it with. Sure, you can watch it by yourself, but then there's a limit to how scared you can be. I find that the more freaked out I am, the more freaked out my partner in crime becomes. The more freaked out the partner in crime is, the more freaked out I get. It's a vicious cycle of terror-y goodness. In retrospect, I should have brought Mary Magdelene, who, after viewing Bambi didn't sleep for days, but I unfortunately hadn't thought of it in time.

Another thing I hadn't thought of was that on a Friday night Loews Theatre would be packed to the brim with annoying teenagers. Annoying teenagers who sit directly behind *me* and at random intervals give running synopses of the plot thus far. Annoying teenagers who exist for no other reason than to tempt my resolve in not pelting them with stale Milk Duds.

And babies. Who on god's green earth brings a BABY to the THEATER? Apparently, a woman at the back of the theater did. The same woman who, when confronted by other mild-mannered viewers over the blood-curdling screams of her infant, insisted, *...I paid for this movie, too.* *Touche*, evil

bitch from hell, touchAfÆ'A,A©.

In short, the environmental settings did not make for optimum Scary Movie Viewage. The last thirty minutes were still pretty scary, even if the film did try to eschew its undeniable silly horror movie genre for some sort of artiste-like one at times.

So from now on IÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ€žÂcm only going to watch scary movies in a dark, windowless room, at midnight, with Mary Magdelene, who has just been told sheÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ€žÂcs being followed by a serial killer.

Aside from that I have just one thing to say: Hazelnut coffee tastes like ass.

California I'm coming home

2002-11-12

Westfield, New Jersey

T-minus four days until I move back to the Left Coast, and IÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ€žÂcm starting to feel the pinch of anxiety. Granted, it doesnÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ€žÂct take much for a cross-country move, in theory. My bag shall contain

1. one weekÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ€žÂcs worth of clothes
2. one toothbrush
3. one tube toothpaste
4. one stick deodorant
5. one book and magazine for plane
6. one spiral notebook and writing implement
7. one Canon Powershot G2 digital camera and USB cable
8. two Western Digital 7200 rpm 120 gb hard drives
9. one HP dvd200i DVD/CD writer and blank CDs

Really, what more does one need in life?

For once, I see somewhat on top of the whole 3000 mile move deal. I have a place to stay, for one. When has that ever happened before? My pal Lucy and me will be big pimpinÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ€žÂc in a fab two bedroom apartment on the Castro/Noe border. I, of course, had nothing to do with the arranging of such fine accommodations.

Other, more pressing things linger, however. Namely, the job. Will someone please hand me job on silver platter? Please?

Anyway. In other news, I have finally gotten off my ass about all them purty pictures taken by myself and others this summer. DonÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ€žÂct expect much in the way of commentary, but the photos, they shall be up.

And we all shall rejoice.

The penitentiary ain't the place for me

2002-11-14

Westfield, New Jersey

My Schedule for the Next Few Days

Thursday, November 14th, 2002

5:24 AM Fall asleep.

7:04 AM Wake up. Look at clock. Go back to sleep.

9:01 AM ÃfÂcÃcâ€šÂ-Ãcâ, -Ã“ 2:30 PM Repeat as necessary.

2:34 PM Vow to wake up for reals this time.

2:35 PM Go back to sleep.

2:45 PM No really, wake up.

2:50 PM Put doggies outside.

2:51 PM Make coffee, taking care not to spill grounds all over floor like usual. Contingency Plan: If spill grounds, sweep grounds under garbage can with foot.

2:55 PM Check email. Check WinMX for finished Buffy downloads. Scoff, as none have finished. Check email.

2:56 PM Consider going back to sleep.

2:57 PM Having overcome urge to sleep, vow to call Hiring Manager at DI.

2:58 PM Decide phone call too scary.

2:59 PM Think about doing laundry, as bringing dirty clothes on cross-country move = gross.
 3:00 PM Think about mailing rental application as to avoid being whacked by Lucy upon arrival at SFO.
 3:01 PM Think about future plans to consider the possibility of packing.
 3:02 PM Think about possibly preparing for interview at DI on Tuesday.
 3:03 PM Check email.
 3:04 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 7:00 PM Check email.
 7:01 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 7:30 PM Eat dinner with parents. Join in hijinks of making fun of arbitrarily selected person at table.
 7:30 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 8:00 PM Chat with Lucy about move logistics. Claim have sent rental application via Next Day Air.
 8:01 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 9:00 PM Watch Survivor with parents. Wonder why no one has taken hit out on Penny.
 9:01 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 10:00 PM Watch New Imaginary Girlfriend Jorja Fox on CSI.
 10:01 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 11:30 PM Watch YaYa Sisterhood with Little Orphan Annie, because Little Orphan Annie rented it, you see, and would not normally ever watch aforementioned Fine Example of Cinema. Also: Ashley Judd.
 11:31 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 5:23 AM Check email.

Friday, November 15th, 2002

5:24 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 7:00 PM [See Thursday, November 14th, 2002]
 7:01 PM Field call from Hildi, who claims she and Charlotte will come by in 90 seconds.
 7:02 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 7:59 PM Wait for Hildi and Charlotte.
 8:00 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 8:29 PM Pretend not to be Cranky Baby, because Hildi and Charlotte *almost* committed Unforgivable Act by going to Concierge Thingy in New York instead of Poeks Moving to San Francisco Again Dinner at KimChiHana.
 8:30 PM Arrive at KimChiHana and meet Dr Evil, Mary Magdelene, Miss Chang, and Miss Chang *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄcs* Boi. Apologize for lateness.
 8:31 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 10:00 PM General hijinks.
 10:01 PM Vow not to drink too much as must wake up early tomorrow to catch cross-country flight.
 10:02 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 1:34 AM Drink too much. Also, say trottely things and generally make fool of oneself.
 2:12 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 2:27 AM Say trottely goodbyes with much misting of eyes, even though will be back in one month for holidays.
 2:28 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 5:23 AM Check email.

Saturday, November 16th, 2002

5:24 AM Fall asleep.
 7:00 AM Bid Little Orphan Annie entrance to room. Deny must wake up *now.*
 7:01 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 9:00 AM Repeat as necessary.
 9:01 AM Wake up as if bit character in horror film who has just had horrible nightmare involving death of loved ones. Leap out of bed and shower, eat, throw things in car. Consider attempting to squeeze Max and D into suitcase.
 9:02 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 9:45 AM Stuck in traffic on Route 22.
 9:46 AM Arrive Newark International Airport. Say teary goodbye to parent(s).
 9:47 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 10:09 AM Wait in check-in line behind visiting Southerners.
 10:10 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 10:29 AM Wait in security line behind visiting Southerners. Fight back tears of anxiety due to impending missed flight.
 10:30 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 10:32 AM Rush to gate. Note line forming at gate. Realize not late at all. Look sheepish.
 10:33 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 10:59 AM Wait in boarding line behind visiting Southerners.
 11:00 AM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 12:00 PM Wait in plane with visiting Southerners, wondering when 11:00 AM flight will take-off.
 12:01 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 7:14 PM Enjoy comfortable flight in spacious Economy area of plane, sandwiched between two obese mothers obviously rocking screaming children. Nurse eight (8) salted peanuts doled out by gracious (read: highly irritated) flight attendant, as is only source of nourishment one shall obtain for duration of flight.
 4:15 PM (PST) Arrive San Francisco International Airport. Perform soft shoe Happy Jig.
 4:45 PM *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ,-Ä* 12:00 AM Spend rest of fun-filled day moving all Lucy *ÄfÄcÄcâ€šÄ-Äcâ€žÄcs* shit into apartment.

I'll be gone till November

2002-11-15

Westfield, New Jersey

Dear Minions,

I'm leaving tomorrow morning for San Francisco, so I probably won't be able to do any updates for a week or two. Dry your eyes... I'll be back soon.

Sincerely,
Poeks

Thanks for the Ether

2002-11-17

San Francisco, California

So I finally broke down and decided to interview at DI. This basically entailed walking in the door, sitting down in a conference room, and answering this zinger: "When can you start?" As my new manager A told me, "C-Note and I decided unless you came in drunk or stoned, we were going to hire you." Fine by me. A seems like he will be fun to work with, so I'm not quite as reluctant to go back as last week. Had lunch with C-Note and Tech Analyst T and back to SF I went. It may not be my father's DI, as C-Note said, but I think I can enjoy it just the same.

I spent a total of five hours at the movies today. First, after deciding nothing at the SFMOMA seemed particularly enticing, I went over to the Metreon to look over its meager offerings. Nothing good was playing, so I chose the latest Harry Potter marketing ploy, even though I personally believe Bill Gates, the founder of Starbucks, and J.K. Rowling will eventually meld into one person and become the Antichrist. As for the movie, here is my advice: save five bucks and rent the first one instead. I mean, is every Harry Potter movie just going to be the same predictable story-line with better and better special effects. Jeez.

After HP, I impulsively took the 38 over to the UA Galaxy theater to see All About Lily Chou-Chou. As I approached Post St, I noticed a line wrapping round half the block. Who knew Shinji Iwa was so popular? I wondered. I timidly walked up to the ticket counter and mumbled my doomed desire to see Lily Chou-Chou. To my surprise, the 7 o'clock show wasn't sold out. Man, must be a big-ass theater. I walked back around the block and got in line. What was everyone waiting for? I asked burly young man ahead of me, wholly expecting him to reply "Why, the latest Japanese export, you git." To my utter and complete surprise, he clearly flabbergasted someone could even ask such a thing, said "Die Another Day." You know, that new James-Bond-blockbuster-shoot-em-up-thingie. With Halle Berry. "Oh..."

Yeah. I know. How do I manage to dress myself in the morning and make it home every night without getting horribly lost? I don't know either.

Anyway, apparently the general population of San Francisco does not feel the same way I do about Faye Wong. No matter, All About Lily still trumps Harry Potter (*and* Die Another Day, I'd be willing to wager) any day. It's not for the weak of heart or short of attention span, but I liked it quite well. You might throw up or fall asleep, but at least you won't be consumed by the Forces of Darkness.

In other news: the Collingwood St Hill is at war with my smoking habit. It shall be a fight to the death.

Hangin' tough

2002-11-17

San Francisco, California

Today while loking to buy some dish detergent in the Castro, I stopped for the light on 18th & Castro and noticed a guy and girl makin' out big time on the street corner. Nobody's fool, I quickly checked the guy out to make sure he wasn't, in fact, female. Noting the broad, muscular shoulders, narrow hips, and general homeboy attire, I stared in amazement. A male and a female kissing here, at the gay Ground Zero of the Milky Way Galaxy? Weren't they afraid of, like straight-bashing. I crossed the street ahead of them, and feeling the boy's leery eyes casing my joint, I turned briefly and looked up at him. Hey, I thought, that guy has boobs. Not man-boobs, mind you, but ostensibly authentic female, lactose producing orbs. He was, afterall, a she.

Today in the paper I read a line which stated, "San Francisco: Some of our best men are women!" Ain't it da trufe.

Rumors of my death are slightly exaggerated

2002-12-04

San Francisco, California

Just wanted to drop a note stating that I am, in fact, still alive. I'll be adding some entries just as soon as we get DSL at

home, which, as far as I can tell, will be never.

I'm so tired, I haven't slept for weeks

2002-12-10

San Francisco, California

I am sick. Sick like a dog. Sick like a dog with rabies. Except without all the foaming at the mouth.

So like, Charlotte came to visit and we did fun things. And then Lucy and I had our housewarming party and we did fun things. And then on Saturday I also did fun things.

But all these fun things, they jes been wearing me down. Plus, I am allergic to our ghetto IKEA couch.

Can you help me find some fake ID

2002-12-12

San Mateo, California

On the way to work this morning I stop in the Safeway on El Camino to purchase my daily pack of cigarettes. I walk up to the Customer Service counter. The woman behind the counter greets me.

"Pack of Marlboro Lights," I blurt.

"Sure... can I see your ID?"

I fish it out of my wallet and hand it to her, because I get carded for cigarettes all the time. Yes, I know I am twenty-three years old, and yes, I know that is five years past the legal age to buy nicotine. I look young. I have accepted this and moved on with my life.

All is going according to plan until Safeway Drone furrows her brow in obvious concentration whilst examining my driver's license. I can almost see the gears turning in her square-shaped head. At length she takes a booklet out of a drawer in front of her.

At this point I really have no idea what's going on. I mean, clearly Safeway Drone is doubting the validity of my ID -- I mean have you ever seen a New Jersey driver's license? It looks like a piece of construction paper dipped in laminate. But what's the deal with the booklet?

Craning over the counter, I notice the booklet contains photos of driver's licenses. Okay... fine. I defer to my earlier point of the fake-looking-ness of NJ IDs. She'll just look up the little photo of the Jersey one and I'll be off on my merry way.

But no. She is looking at each photo individually, scrutinizing it, perhaps memorizing key aspects for future reference. Safeway Drone is, I conclude, looking at a directory of *fake IDs*. I didn't even know such a thing existed.

I sigh dramatically as she leisurely flips through Connecticuts and Coloradoes. Finally, she's reached the last page, *Canadian* fake IDs, when she pauses. She looks up at me. She looks down at my license. Up at me. Down at license. Me. License. She takes booklet in hand and *walks over to a cashier* who is clearly in the process of attempting to *serve customers* and ostensibly asks his opinion. She looks at me. Down at license. Over at booklet. Up at cashier.

Having gotten the go-ahead, Safeway Drone comes back to the Customer Service counter and sells me my godforsaken cancer sticks. And then she asks me if I would like to sign up for a Safeway Card. And I tell her to stick her Safeway Card into one of her orifices such that she will never be able to retrieve it. Except I don't. I give her a tight-lipped smile and say "No, maybe some other time," retrieve my cash, and swish on out without having made eye contact.

As I walk to work I wonder if maybe there's something to this whole youthfulness deal. Maybe it's the difference between the Tri-State Area and California, but I never got carded quite so much there as I do here. I'm thinking maybe I'm like Merlyn, and as I age, I'm actually getting younger. Years from now cops will pull me over and insist that I cannot possibly be old enough to drive. Eventually it will come to the point when, while attempting to purchase a caffeine-infused beverage, a morally-minded barista will admonish, "Hey little lady, you shouldn't be drinking coffee, now should ya?"

Friday Fun

2002-12-12

San Francisco, California

Hey San Franciscans,

Come see my roommate's Herioc Acts of Color and a Hollywood Ending art show thingy tomorrow night! Yay, art!

Says Lucy:

I would like to invite you and your friends, and anyone willing or capable of leaving their house, to my 2002 opening tomorrow.

This event is sponsored by the number Two, a fabulously balanced number. Two Chris's in Two live painting acts, Two DJs from Two nations, Two cabaret acts, Two choices of wine and beer.

On display are large format works *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ãcâ,~Ã* acrylic on paper *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ãcâ,~Ã* accompanied by a photo slide experience. These bursting colors would stand to end a small amount of your life suffering, for only a moment, and then you would emerge bored, if not for the presence of the dual Chris art attack. Chris Natrop (www.psynk.com) will work the large format with his *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ã...â€œOrwellianÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ã,Ã* charcoal technique and Chris Nolan will bring to life his penchant for lusty images in large format acrylic.

But why stop there? Two cabaret acts will further fragment the night. Asian Princess will carry you away on her rocking pony -- what a tart she is! And later Kitten on the Keys will capture your heart with her sassy, sultry show.

All this to the music of two superstar DJs Marti (Ion Flux *ÃfÃcÃcâ€šÃ~Ãcâ,~Ã* SF) and Kerry Tucker (UK). Beer and wine will the supporting cast, so come with thirst.

Date: Friday the 13th of December

Time: 8:00PM-12:00AM

Location: 410 Jessie Street Art Space (at 5th between Market and Mission)

Please park at the Mission Street Garage (<http://www.fifthandmission.com>)

Rain, rain go away

2002-12-13

San Francisco, California

Know what's really fun? Commuting to work in the teeming rain and showing up looking like a wet rat. Now there's a good time.

You's a ho

2002-12-15

San Francisco, California

Whenever we have guests over, a frequent occurrence at the Lucy/Poeks household, there will come a point in the night when conversation must be abruptly halted, and I must go over to my computer in order to play our household theme song: Ludacris's "You's a ho."

Ludacris is definitely one of the artist's I most hate to love as most of his songs are of the uber-misogynist bent, but damn, how can you resist songs with lines like "I got hos, I got hos. In different area codes, area codes"? I, for one, cannot.

But anyway, I put the song on, and everyone present must stop whatever they're doing and listen carefully to the profound and insightful lyrics. I thought given the fact I cannot actually force you too, gentle reader, to listen to our most hallowed tune, I would post the lyrics. It's almost as good. Almost...

Artist : Ludacris

Song : Hoe

(Chorus)

Ho (Ho)

You'z a Ho, (Ho)

You'z a Ho, I said that you'z a Ho (Ho)

You'z a Ho, (Ho)

You'z a Ho, (Ho)
You'z a Ho, I said that you'z a Ho (Ho)

You doing Ho activities
With Ho tendencies
Hos are your friends, Hos are your enemies
With ho energy to do what you do
Blew what cha blew, screw what cha screw
Y'all professional like DJ Clue,
pulling on my coat tail
And why you think you take a Ho to a Ho-tel
Ho-tell everybody, even the mayor
Reach up in the sky for the Ho-zone layer
Now C'mon playa once a Ho always
And Ho's neva close, they open like hallways
So here's the whole cake for your Ho Ho crew
And everybody wants some, cuz Ho's gotta eat too

Chorus

You can't turn a Ho into a house wife
Hos don't act right
There's Ho's on a mission and there's Ho's on a crack pipe
Hey Ho, How you doin' Where you been?
Proibly doing Ho stuff Cuz there you Ho again
It's a Ho wide world, (uh huh) that we livin' in
Feline feminine fantastical women
Not all, just some
You Ho who you are
There's Ho's in the room, there's Ho's in the car
There's Ho's on stage, there's Ho's by the bar
Ho's by near and Ho's by far

Ho
But can i get a ride?
No
C'mon nigga why?
Cuz you'z a

Chorus

You got a run in your panty-Hos
Even your daddy knows
that you sucking down chocolate like daddy-os
Your Hos are ho-rrible, ho-rendous
On taxes ya'll writin' off, Hos as dependents
I see the Ho-rizon, It ain't surprisin'
It's just a Ho-asis, with ugly chicks faces
Hos don't feel so sad and blue
Cuz most of us niggas is Hos too

Chorus
(You's a Ho)
(Muthafucka, I ain't no Ho)
(Yo mama a ho)

(Mutha fuckas, I'm so tired Of ya'll niggas
always talkin about ho this and Ho that,
You the muthafuckin Ho nigga, I wasn't no Ho last night)

Ho bring yo ass
(Okay hold on)

Addendum to Please Mr Postman

2002-12-17
San Francisco, California

Okay, so it occurred to me that I could just look up the DSL package on UPS.com and check the status.

Delivered on: Dec 17, 2002 7:21 P.M.

I'm in the clear. I open the box, set everything up. No green DSL light on the modem. Hmm. Restart computer. Recheck settings. Repeatedly unplug and plug DSL modem into phone jack. No green DSL light.

After roughly an hour of futzing, I break down and call Covad tech support. This might strike some of you as strange, since I am such a phone-phobic individual. Whenever I have to do things as mundane as call up to schedule a hair appointment, I'll get Hildi or Charlotte to do it for me. I hate the phone. Hate hate hate. I hate talking on the phone, I hate listening to people talk on the phone. I hate holding the phone to my ear. I just plain don't like it. But desperate times, you see, they call for desperate measures.

So I call Covad Tech Support Dude. We go through the whole installation process all over, in painstaking detail. Restart computer. Check settings. Click here. Click there. I'd been through it all, of course, but I wanted to make Absolutely Sure I did not miss something that would deny me my godgiven right to a broadband connection.

Eventually it became clear to Tech Support Dude that my settings were all correct. "Um, do you have a different phone jack you could plug the modem into?" he timidly inquired. Why yes, I did. Unplug. Replug. No dice.

In waltzes Lucy, who tells me the PacBell fucked up our connection and had to put in two phone lines. He continues ranting as I dash to his room and replug. "Still not coming up," laments Tech Support Dude (TSD). Scheisse.

Finally, he suggests I get to the phone box (down in the (decidedly wet) garage) and try that. I get down there. Locate Lucy's extension cord. Unplug garage door opener. Drag \$1 thrift chair over to outlet, screeeeEEEEech. Plug in modem power supply. Just as I am about to random unplug and replug wires, TSD stops me. He thinks I shouldn't do it. I figured he feared for my safety, but as it turns out, he just didn't want me to mess up the configuration.

TSD leaves me the phone number of Speakeasy's (my ISP) tech support line. Fine. Thanks, TSD, you've been loads of help.

I call up Speakeasy. I reach Tech Support. I get disconnected.

```
While (!Tech_Support_Lady) {
  redial(Speakeasy);
}
```

It took a while. Eventually I get through, tell them my freakin' account number, and Tech Support Lady (TSL) asks, "Oh, did your phone thingy just get installed yesterday?"

"Um, yeah."

"Ahh... well it takes three days for the phone company to finish the loop."

At this point I ran up to the second floor of our house, clambered up to the roof in the teaming rain, and threw myself to the ground below, dying on impact.

Actually, no.

But I'm convinced technology hates me.

Please Mr Postman

2002-12-17
San Francisco, California

So like this package just came. It says: Lucy, 123 Our Street, San Francisco, CA. Normally, I'd just place it on the table with the rest of the numerous items he receives daily via the USPS, however, today is different. Today is the day (or thereabouts) that our handy, dandy DSL Self Install Package (retail value 199\$US) is supposed to come. So I'm thinkin' *maybe, just maybe, this is our DSL package*. Maybe today is the day I get to setup our DSL and not have to toil on this godforsaken 56k modem. Neat, huh? Except Lucy is not home.

I called Lucy on his cell, and some woman picked up, "Lucy lent me his phone today, so you can't reach him."

"NooooOOOOoooo!" I said.

Okay, I didn't really say it, but I thought it really hard.

What if Lucy doesn't get back till late and I can't install our DSL in time before I leave on Thursday morning?! What if I can't download Buffy episodes all week while I'm gone?! That is just an unbearable scenario.

So I'm sitting here, sitting next to the package that says Lucy, 123 Our Street, San Francisco, CA. I'm wondering. I'm thinking, hell, it's *got* to be our DSL package. It simply *must* be it. You know? It wouldn't be *that* bad if I opened it. I could tape it right back up if it were frilly women's underwear or something. No harm done.

But opening other people's mail. That ain't good. That's what the people who rip the tags off mattresses do. I, my friends, am no mattress-tag-ripper-offer.

But still. This is DSL we're talking about. This is *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* we're talking about. These are important things.

Could I? Should I? Would I?

No. After a solid fifteen minutes of ruminations, I decided I would not be that person that opens other people's mail, even though it is obviously our DSL package.

God, if you do in fact exist, please take note before sending me off to homo/glutton/liar/thief hell. Thank you.

Get me a ticket for an aeroplane

2002-12-18

San Mateo, California

Um, so contrary to what I had thought fifteen minutes ago, my flight is today, not tomorrow. As in less than two hours from now today. Shit.

H is going to drive me to the the airport, but damn. My camera be at home. Oh well.

Big girls do cry

2002-12-25

San Francisco, California

Well, our phone line is finally up. I would ask you to call, but we have no:

A) phone

B) answering machine

C) caller ID

Without these three integral pieces of technology I am afraid I cannot receive your call, note your phone number, and let the answering machine catch it. Ah well. It would've been in your best interest not to call anyway.

So upon learning that we do, in fact, have a connection to the outside world of sorts, I rushed home, lickety-split from work, caught the 3 PM train from Hayward Park to 22nd St, San Francisco, waited a good fifteen minutes for the 48 bus to meander along my path, hoped on, paid the indifferent bus driver my shiny new one dollar bill, sat next to an old man who took up nearly half of my allotted personal space, got off at 24th St and Castro, popped into Walgreens to pick up a water filter, trudged up the colossal hill of the Castro, heaved my exhausted body into the house, and signed up for a ghetto ass (three months free trial!) MSN account. I suppose it will have to do for the time being.

Actually, I left work early (with my boss's blessing, I'll have you know) because I was, as I mentioned earlier, sick as a dog with rabies. The point still being, of course: internet access. So here I sit, typing away on my fab new computer (2.4ghz, 512mb, 120gb) in my new house, with my (not really) new Mozart concertos blaring. I am, as the kids say, happy as a clam.

I suppose a sufficient amount of time has passed so that I may tell the sad tale of times in recent memory not quite so carefree and gay. A few weeks ago, before I became once again a gainfully employed, contributing member of society, I sat at home in my swank Castro pad awaiting the arrival of said fab new computer. I waited and waited, watching my ghetto Walgreens alarm clock loudly and irregularly tick and tock away the seconds. Finally, the day arrived.

"Bzzzzzz," said my brand new, less than melodic doorbell. I flew downstairs like a Hoo on Christmas before he realized the Grinch had stolen it. A Fedex Man, clad all in his uniformed finery greeted me at the door. Two packages he brought! My,

what a fine day, I mused, as I signed duly on the X. Up stairs I went with my two new packages. Hmm, speakers... cool, and an LCD monitor... also very nice. But something seemed awry; something was missing on this idyllic day in the city. My computer! It seemed everything had arrived on schedule except for the one most important element. At least, I thought, I could hook up the computer to Lucy's monitor, had it come in my new monitor's stead, I lamented, as strains of "Big girl's don't cry" wafted through the corners of my subconscious. Miffed, I went back into my room and sulked.

"Bzzzzzz," reiterated the none-too-clever doorbell. Could it really be?! I rushed to the window to make sure I wasn't experiencing auditory hallucinations, and saw that yes, yes *another* FedEx truck was knocking on my chamber door. Very efficient, I thought, but I wasn't complaining. Sure enough, my computer had arrived, and the nice FedEx lady lugged it up the stairwell while I waited below, all 1950's housewife.

After several distressing minutes spent looking for a three pronged outlet, I managed to get everything up and running. My day was almost complete. Now all I had to do was get my DVD burner and hard drives out of the suitcase stowed away in my closet, hook 'em up, and concede that my life was, indeed, complete.

As I rummaged through my suitcase I noticed that two of my neatly sealed and heavily padded cardboard boxes had been unceremoniously ripped open. Hmm. Given that I am on the Top Ten Most Wanted Potential US Terrorists list (and you think I jest), I wasn't entirely surprised my stuff had been searched. But, and this is the real kicker, BUT, those were the boxes that contained all the material possessions I own in the world worthy of gently placing in neatly sealed, heavily padded cardboard boxes. In other words, those were the boxes that contained my two 120gb Western Digital 7200rpm hard drives and one HP DVD200i DVD writer.

The DVD writer was clearly broken, the DVD bay having been most completely and undeniably opened by force. Fine. There's five hundred dollars I can claim against the SATAN WORSHIPING, EVIL INCARNATE, GEORGE W. BUSH SUPPORTING ATA airlines. Fine, I can deal.

So I hooked up my apparently unharmed hard drives, figuring I was in the clear, although the chorus of "Big girls don't cry" once again fought its way into my reluctant cerebral cortex. One hard drive was fine. This one had some Very Important Items on it such as email from the past year, some of my photos, most of my mp3s, and a bunch of TV show video files. Good stuff, I say, good stuff.

On the other hand, the other hard drive wasn't doing so good. I couldn't get Windows to detect it, and lacking any significant hardware expertise, I figured it was probably a better idea to get a second opinion. Unfortunately, that was the hard drive with all the important stuff on it, namely, all my photos from this summer (around 1000), thousands and thousands of dollars of software, all the development work I've done in the past two years, all my movies, and most importantly, my 134 episodes of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Right now the IT department at work is toiling away, working toward recovering my dear departed data. I try not to lose hope, but sometimes, sometimes it's hard.

As it turns out, big girls do cry.

Hungover On Judgement Day

2002-12-28

Westfield, New Jersey

I haven't been writing lately, because this chair is too far from the keyboard to type comfortably. Just kidding, I haven't been writing, because I've spent the better part of the last ten days sleeping and being hungover. Me: needs to stop drinking. Me has about three remaining brain cells, and they ain't so happy about my fervent attempts to kill them off, too.

Anyway. I made it back to Jersey as scheduled, even though I realized my flight was on the 18th of December, 12:24 PM (PST) at approximately 10:30 AM, on the 18th of December. It wasn't pretty, but I made it somehow, albeit without anything but my handbag, wallet, and jacket (thank Gawd for e-tickets). Clean clothes are overrated. So is medication that makes you crazy when you don't take it. I got some nice new duds and Celexa refills for Xmas, so things are looking up these days.

After I had a brief powwow with my boss, who informed me he would be taking my life after I got back from Jersey on the 2nd of January, H, who has the world's cushiest job, was kind enough to drive me to SFO. I was actually on the early side. Last night I had a dream I was fed a full airline meal on ATA, but we all know that has never transpired.

I had fun at the Oslislo and Manchester holiday parties. Right now I do not have the brain capacity to write about them. Maybies later.

Oh! That reminds me. Although my beloved 120GB Western Digital 7200 rpm hard drive is now officially deceased, I evidently put up all my photos from this summer on the server. So all is not lost. Hurrah!

In other news, if you are a religious person, please say a prayer for Hildi's family, who, being Korean, apparently does not have the Luck o' the Irish.

Don't make me over

2003-01-13

San Francisco, California

Let me tell you a story. I awoke this morning at 8AM feeling as though I might die. Standard weekend fare this, although generally not on a Monday.

I passed through the living room cursing the morning and searching for my wallet, convinced the world was conspiring against me. Stepping over my dear, sweet S, snuggled tightly against G, who still remains ostensibly unaware of his immutable boiness, I wondered how, precisely, I had gotten to this undesirable bullet point in the continuum of existence.

I had spent the better part of Sunday in blissful isolation, figuring my day would continue as such for the rest of the weekend. I got my hair cut at Lucy's fave place on Fillmore (dykey, 20's flapper, again), afterwards walking around with my shit-eating grin, a considerable burden lifted. Back home I read on the gray, frumpy, IKEA couch with Cruzy, Lucy's 20-year-old girlfriend, attempting to narrow the gap between my lack of studiousness and the DI_Bookclub meeting on Wednesday. Status quo for a lazy Sunday.

But then it went all awry. Two of Cruzy's friends appeared suddenly, waking me from my idyllic obliviousness. Now, Collinghood Hill is a place of many transients, so at first I paid them no mind, opting instead for the thankless job of continuing my book club duties. Eventually Lucy raised himself from his latest canvas in the garage to make dinner, thus rustling me out of my inner sanctuary into the kitchen, plying wine and good conversation.

Fair enough. I went without resistance and this marked the end of my simple, non confrontational weekend.

Soon I was indifferently picking at fresh beansprouts, launching cognitively my newest endeavor: the Collinghood Hill Chronicles. As I mentioned, many are the men and women who pass through our open doors -- I thought it best to begin cataloging our guests. So I photographed all present and had them note several relative details in my ratty notebook.

At length I had had altogether too much wine and good conversation, Cruzy's friend S slowly evolving from not-my-type (pale white girl) to pretty-cute to supa-cute, all within an hour. Before long the four of us lay in drunken congregation on Lucy's stylish mid-century-esque couch, mulling over the concept of going out this fine eve.

The Top, it was, a bar cum pseudo-club, like many in San Francisco, positioned precariously in the Lower Haight. Into the car we piled, me uncomfortable next to G, Mistuh Boi, and not my one-tru-luv S. Into the bar, stumbling with confident drunken swagger, we went, not stopping until we alighted upon the dance floor, Redbull and vodkas in hand.

Most of the rest of the night was a blur, as if often the case, marred by a few, somewhat lurid recollections: Cruzy and S bound together at the waist by the leather restraints Cruzy had bought Lucy for Xmas; talking to a nice man from Senegal clad all in 49ers gear, who was later identified to me by Lucy as that jerk who used to date my (v. v. hot) sister; G still macking on S, still, still apparently oblivious to the fact that he is boi; dancing with Lucy, dancing with Cruzy; looking on with shady, shady old man's lewd gape as Cruzy and S grind away on the dance floor. "They used to be lovers," adds Luce, mid-groove, as I look on in utter amazement. "Dude, S is so hot," I manage, attempting to find my footing.

The night ended somewhat sourly, as is par for the course, the bouncers not letting me back in until last call due to my inability to walk a straight line back into the club.

We drove home, me still scrunched unhappily against G in the back seat, who, I might, still did not know he is gay, as he coddled my imaginary girlfriend S.

Finally at home, I evidently collapsed into bed, not waking again until aforementioned, devious, evil, cruel 8AM.

Now I sit, still half drunk, on San Mateo-bound train, listening to Dionne Warwick wax philosophical about the difficulty of breakups. I may be hungover and in the same clothes as last night, but you convince me, gentle reader, that life ain't grand.

Kiss that frog

2003-01-13

San Mateo, California

Hildi: did you write more?

poeks: yesh

poeks: i am so hungovas

poeks: i think i might have to go home

poeks: sign

poeks: guestbuch

Hildi: i' reading it now

Hildi: hold on

Hildi: what the heck

poeks: what?

Hildi: clearly luce and g have to get to gether

poeks: they so should

Hildi: and then you can have either cruzy or s

poeks: muahaha

Hildi: but then cruzy might switch off between you and s

Hildi: or you and luce

Hildi: cruzy is ho

poeks: well, such is her way

Hildi: she *is* 20

poeks: dude, she is maybe even more ho than lucy

poeks: and that is pretty fuckin ho

poeks: do you think a person could turn into a ho just by visiting the house of ho?

Hildi: maybe

Hildi: or at least just during the duration of the stay

Hildi: the house of ho intoxicates you

poeks: it makes hoishness seem commonplace and expected

Hildi: as typical as taking a shower or eating a meal

Hildi: as involuntary as breathing air

poeks: there is no avoiding ho at collinghood hill

poeks: we are considering charging admission for entrance, though

Hildi: i'm nevas going to the house of ho

poeks: ew

poeks: you are just afraid to temporarily become a ho

Hildi: just because you are a ho doesn't mean all your friends are hos

Hildi: first of all

Hildi: i wouldn't become a ho ever

poeks: whatever

Hildi: and i'd just have to watch it all take place

Hildi: where would i sleep?

Hildi: not a square inch of un-ho ground in that place

poeks: well, there's my bed if you promise not to be fresh

poeks: which is often ho-free

Hildi: who knows

Hildi: give it a few days

poeks: then there is the inflatable mattress, although who knows how many hoes have had sex on that

Hildi: it might also be ho infested

poeks: you could always sleep with luce and cruzy, god knows that bed is pristine and virginal

Hildi: i'd rather die

poeks: what if you *had* to sleep in that bed or sleep on the floor?

Hildi: i'd take teh floor

poeks: that is pretty hardcore

Hildi: would you rather sleep in the same bed with luce and cruzy?

poeks: i wouldnt mind some cruzy hoeness

poeks: but then luce might be involved, and nobody wants that

Hildi: like i said. i'd take the floor

poeks: hmm

poeks: or the foot of the bed

poeks: that's probably relatively safe

Hildi: or maybe in the kitchen

poeks: true

Hildi: surely no one hos around in the kitchen

poeks: it's carpeted
poeks: v comfortable i'm sure
Hildi: hmm. carpeted kitchens are usually yucky
poeks: you could sleep under the kitchen table

Hildi: you know, i kind of entertained the idea of having sex with that date
Hildi: but then when i saw him again, he was so unattractive
poeks: hmm
Hildi: but then again, even if he was hot
poeks: you are still a prude
Hildi: i don't know if i could do it
Hildi: yeah

poeks: maybe i'll just stay at work and do nothing
Hildi: that's a good idea
poeks: can you move to sf today?
Hildi: noe
poeks: why not?
Hildi: sf is not as nice as ny
poeks: whatevs
poeks: sf is best place in worl
Hildi: maybe for hos
poeks: i bet you miss sf
poeks: miss it and wipe away a solitary tear occassionally
Hildi: i was there twice
Hildi: besides, i dont' miss things or people
Hildi: remember?
poeks: oh yeah

poeks: so wednesday begins V. seduction plan
Hildi: your'e silly
poeks: why do i always engage in clearly futile endeavors?
Hildi: silly rabbit
Hildi: trix are for kids!
poeks: meh
poeks: but why can't trix be for poeks!
Hildi: ah don kno

poeks: don't you love people who look like frogs?
poeks: usually it's men but occasionally you'll happen upon a woman who looks like a frog
Hildi: yes, i just love them
Hildi: LOVE them
poeks: usually a middle-aged latina matriarch
Hildi: god, martha stewart has such great ideas
Hildi: i wish she was my mom
poeks: oy
Hildi: better yet, i wish i was martha
Hildi: but not old and evil
Hildi: but small and korean
poeks: and sterile?
poeks: antiseptic?
poeks: humorless?
Hildi: i'm not big on sex
poeks: true
Hildi: no, i bet martha is wicked and funny
Hildi: in a mean mean way
poeks: i don't think so
poeks: martha has no time for the funny
poeks: she is too busy making perfect meals

poeks: i wonder if frog-like people have a moment of clarity in their lives wherein they realize they look like a frog and their whole life is changed
poeks: there's this one guy at work who is a frog, and all i can think when i pass him is frog-frog-froggy-froggy-froggy
poeks: does that mean i am nice?
Hildi: yeh
poeks: i wonder if some people think we are nice

Hildi: everyone does
 Hildi: okay i have to work
 poeks: :-(

War, what is it good for?

2003-01-18
 San Francisco, California

"From San Francisco to Washington, D.C., from Paris to Tokyo, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the world's streets Saturday to protest potential military action against Iraq by the Bush administration and its allies.

In Washington, where temperatures hovered in the mid-20s, as many as 500,000 protesters rallied outside the Capitol, while in San Francisco tens of thousands of peace activists marched up Market Street from the Ferry Building to City Hall."

[Huge protests for peace](#)

I read an article this morning in the NY Times on the Antiwar marches in the US this Saturday, but now it's no longer on the "National" page, presumably buried along with the other "old news." The article mentioned that there were "tens of thousands" in DC and in its closing sentences, mentioned the 12 or so who protested the protests. Um, okay. Whatever NY Times.

In SF, there were many more than "tens of thousands." -- "The protest's organizers, an umbrella coalition called International ANSWER, or Act Now to Stop War & End Racism, estimated the crowd at 200,000. Police put the number at 55,000," says the SF Chronicle.

So there you go.

I had first heard about the protest in San Francisco about a week ago while waiting for the godforsaken MUNI to take me to the train station. A flyer proclaimed the date and location, and I thought, "Hey, maybe I'll go to that." Later various and sundry were all discussing the protest-to-be, muttering "Yeah, I'll be there," in hushed tones, afraid to be singled out by Homeland Security for Double Speak.

On Saturday morning I rolled out of bed, and having been invited to meet Samwise Gamgee and his crew on Howard and Main, I found the inertia necessary to get my ass down the hill and into the Castro.

Sweet Transvestite

2003-01-29
 San Francisco, California

poeks: i am so excited to dress Lucy up as a woman! [For our excursion to an SF ladies' bar this Thursday]

Big Red: I've been thinking about it

Big Red: Could be difficult without a shopping trip

poeks: hmm

poeks: true

Big Red: He is too tall and too hairy... it presents challenges

poeks: tall is good on a drag queen

Big Red: Shoes, in particular, are a challenge

poeks: ah yes

poeks: i was thinking more along the lines of boobs

Big Red: And he needs something that covers to the wrist and ankle... because he has copious dark hair

poeks: worst case scenario, he will not look worse than a german drag queen

Big Red: With bad shoes

poeks: yes

Big Red: Do you think obvious drag queens are okay in the lady bars?

poeks: i think so

poeks: as long as he proports to be "female identified"

poeks: trans-ladies are usually okay at girls bars

Big Red: Oh, then that's not a problem

Big Red: Except I can't think of any decent tranny who would wear Lucy's shoes

poeks: too bad we don't *know* any trannies...

Big Red: Well, not intimately
 Big Red: Not on a clothes-borrowing level
 Big Red: Not on such short notice
 Big Red: Actually, I do
 poeks: oh?
 Big Red: But I don't know if I could get his shoes on such short notice
 Big Red: I will send an email, though

Big Red: On a different topic, please regard this sentence from Bush's speech last night:
 Big Red: "Hussein and his minions have attacked Iraq's own citizens, tortured the children of those he wanted to give up information, tortured folk by dripping acid on skin, with electric shock, hot irons, cutting out tongues and rape. "
 Big Red: I mean, how much are those speechwriters paid? Can they not construct a parallel sentence?
 Big Red: And who the hell uses the word "folk" in the middle of a sentence about torture?
 poeks: hee
 poeks: i remember this one line -- he was talking about terrorist threats on the us -- "and some of those threats are no longer around. let's put it this way -- they are no longer a problem for america and our friends"
 poeks: i wonder if he ad-libbed that
 Big Red: Yes, very classy
 poeks: very tony soprano
 Big Red: He's a real Churchill, he is
 Big Red: "The dictator of Iraq is not disarming," Bush said. "To the contrary, he is deceiving."
 Big Red: Okay, that's actually a good line
 poeks: And many others have met a different fate. Let's put it this way: They are no longer a problem to the United States and our friends and allies.
 poeks: there it is
 poeks: can you not picture tony soprano saying that?
 poeks: or maybe paulie?
 Big Red: I've never seen that show
 poeks: psh
 Big Red: But I can picture Marlon Brando saying it
 poeks: In all of these efforts, however, America's purpose is more than to follow a process. It is to achieve a result: the end of terrible threats to the civilized world. All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attacks, and we're asking them to join us, and *many are doing so*.
 poeks: riiiiight
 Big Red: He said it, so I'm convinced!
 Big Red: I wonder when old Tony Blair comes up for reelection? Because if it's soon, we could be down one ally
 Big Red: leaving us with, oh... none
 poeks: i'm thinking maybe tony blair has multiple personality disorder -- perhaps that confused bush
 Big Red: Well, he might... because he did get elected as a liberal, and now he's busting a Thatcher
 Big Red: That's got to be awfully confusing
 poeks: this is true
 Big Red: Here would be a great plan... join the Republican party, espouse right-wing beliefs, work your way up to the presidency, and then turn radical, claiming that Jesus told you to suffer the children and promote peace
 Big Red: Wouldn't THAT confuse everyone
 Big Red: Sort of the opposite of what Tony Blair has done
 poeks: i hear sydney is nice
 Big Red: Yes, it does sound lovely

State of the world today

2003-02-02

San Francisco, California

Ya know, I try to remain sanguine about humanity in general. It helps me to sleep at night thinking that human beings have some sort of essential goodness that needs only a small, yet conscious, effort to bring to the fore. For the past several years I have held the conviction that, if anything, trying my best to bring that kernel of ego-less, unmitigated "truth" (for lack of a better word) out of every person I meet may very well be my ultimate goal in life. I think it's a valiant enough vocation.

Now, I read a lot of weblogs. Some I skim and never come back to, some I link and read regularly, some occasionally, some obsessively. I, being me, look for persons of like proclivities -- of late they've been values along the lines of similar sense of humor, political views, world view, sexuality, and physical location. I consider this an aspect of my life-long journey to become more me. Permit me a huge generalization, but I think that humans need this. And everyone does it. Humans need to categorize, to find their "own", to belong and feel loved and appreciated. Ain't no shame: simply evolution, biology, and culture. Great.

I think there's nothing wrong with all this, because, well, I am human. There's no abstraction that my little mind can concoct that will change this. Somewhere along the line I decided to be a participating member of society, to live by some basic rules of conduct, and now I have to play silly game (or valiant, depending on your perspective). I tell myself I live by my own rules, that my values are sound and "right", that I am a good person. Silly, yes, but we humans live day by day, and it seems to help to think this way. Now, I don't really *believe* that my ideas are any more right or wrong than anyone else's, even if they happen to clash severely with others' beliefs. It just doesn't ring true to me, and, intellectually, I find it harder to condemn the worst that society has to offer than to just kinda be. Lazy, perhaps, but soundly rationalized (at least in my brain).

Sure, I'll stand up for what I believe in, but at the end of the day it really makes no difference in the long run. America will eventually fall. Other empires will rise and fall. Humanity will end. Earth will end. And it'll all probably start all over again.

I try to hold this all in the forefront of my mind, to accept everything without judgment and to try to hold on to what makes me feel most me-like. But me, I am human, too.

Anyway, the short and long of all this is: I found a link to a website (which I will not link to, on principle) through a weblog I enjoy, and it just sucked all the optimism right out my bones. This country, it make me sad sometimes. Sigh.

Man, and I thought the State of the Union speech was depressing...

They'd remember this as Valentine's day

2003-02-14

San Francisco, California

poeks: Hildi-san!

poeks: wie warst dein v-tag?

Hildi: pokes

Hildi: i went to a party at columbia with my bitter cousin S

poeks: she must be good on vday

Hildi: it was a phd grad student party. however prior to going to the party, i had no knowledge of the phd grad part. only the party part

Hildi: out side of the door, there were two bowls filled with valentine notecards cut in half with numbers on them. one bowl for girls other for boys

Hildi: so you're supposed to find your other half

poeks: oh no

Hildi: my other half found me

Hildi: he was a russian phd student named oleg

poeks: hahahahahahaha

Hildi: v.v. not hot

poeks: hahahahahahaha

poeks: nice

Hildi: and then i met like 2 other russian guys

Hildi: both named yuri

Hildi: one was kind of hot though

poeks: what is with all the russian grad students

Hildi: i think one of the girls who lived at the apt was russian

Hildi: actually one of the yuris was really quite good looking but he was bald

Hildi: but v.good looking face

poeks: that's a deal breaker

Hildi: i know

poeks: i am so lucky i don't have to deal with baldness

Hildi: when are you going to the almond farm?

poeks: what?

Hildi: aren't you going to meet that woman who is open to having a relationship with a woman and you're both going to kermit's almond farm?

poeks: oh yeah

poeks: well, the neck thing is inhibitive [I pulled a neck muscle yesterday. Owies]

poeks: but i might try to get a ride over on sunday after the protest with kermit's friend D i met in new orleans a couple yrs ago

poeks: i should be okay by then maybe?

Hildi: maybe you can go get a neck massage

Hildi: they're like 30 bucks
poeks: lucy gave me one
Hildi: luce is such a gay
poeks: but the power lesbians know of a "great massage therapist"
poeks: straight gay guys are almost as fun as gay guys, i've decided
Hildi: indeed
poeks: they make very good friends, as they are just like girls

poeks: hey
poeks: question
poeks: what is your shoe size
Hildi: 5.5
Hildi: why?
poeks: I found these shoes with penises on the front that are really cool
Hildi: um
Hildi: i don't think i'd wear them...
poeks: serious
Hildi: does it stick out?
poeks: you would love them
poeks: they are very Korean
Hildi: what do you mean penises?
Hildi: are the drawn on the shoe?
Hildi: or are they dildos that stick out from the shoe?
poeks: they have penises sort of sticking out of the front
poeks: kinda built in
poeks: Sorry this computer has been hijacked by Lucy
poeks: this is a hoax
poeks: there are no penis shoes
poeks: yet....
poeks: till I get my thinking cap on
Hildi: only hos wear penis shoes
poeks: shee
poeks: you are a ho inside
poeks: we just need to tease it out of you
Hildi: no
Hildi: hos always think everyone else is ho
poeks: you koreans are all the same
poeks: hos on the inside
poeks: and republicans on the outside
poeks: sad
Hildi: you can only be a ho if you like sex
poeks: see what i mean
Hildi: that's like the first step
poeks: yep and you are on to the second step
poeks: aight
poeks: i am out
poeks: not gonna make you come to terms with it tonight
poeks: but soon
poeks: muahahahaha

Hildi: was that luce?
poeks: maohaha
poeks: whenever you need to know if it's me, just ask how the mainlanders laugh
Hildi: ok
Hildi: heehee
Hildi: that's our secret password

poeks: I heard that
poeks: hehehehehe
poeks: BTW
poeks: to learn to like sex you just need a good teacher
poeks: that is all
poeks: watch

poeks: so much for the secret password
Hildi: watch what? porn?

poeks: i was tricked into complacency
 poeks: this is the real slim shady now
 poeks: luce and cruzy went to be hoes
 Hildi: ewwww
 Hildi: hos celebrate valentine's day?
 poeks: apparently

Roll the bones

2003-03-19

San Francisco, California

Today started out like any other. I got up at 12 PM, burned the coffee, cobbled together the necessary materials from our waning supply of household food and made a quesadilla that promptly gave me explosive diarrhea. Yes, status quo in the Poeks/Lucy household.

While contemplating going back to sleep, I heard the doorbell ring. Now, who could that be? I mused. Lucy is away in Barbados, and with zero social hoes in the house, Collinghood Hill was eerily silent and, yes, a bit lon-e-ly.

It was none other than the friendly UPS Man.

"Hey, great, you're here. I always have trouble getting through to you guys," he said.

"Yes, like many, this household used to consist of those with, like, jobs," I replied. Well, in my head.

"You got a big box!"

I had been expecting a big box(!), waiting patiently by the door like a dog waiting for his master. I waited. And waited. And waited some more. When I had all but lost hope, Herbie finally came!

"What's in here, anyway?" UPS Man asked.

"Um, well, it's a skeleton, actually."

"Huh. You must be a science student, eh?"

Preferring to let this one lie, I did not pipe up, "No, I'm just weird" and struggled up the stairs with my new treasure. You see, I bought this skeleton on eBay. It seemed like a good idea at the time. I mean, technically, it was for artistic purposes, but we all know the joy I shall revel in when people come over for dinner and greet Herbie on his stand, arm outstretched in greeting.

So Herbie and I got to know each other, trudging through small talk about the windy weather, impending war and the like. Although I am truly ecstatic about my new anthropomorphic acquisition, there are a couple bummers about my new friend:

- a) Herbie is heavy as hell and unfortunately will have to take a seat in Lucy's car when he wants to go out. So much for taking Herbie to see the sights of San Francisco via the MUNI.
- b) Herbie seems kind of fragile. I foresee substantial injury to his person in the future. Oh well.
- c) Herbie's hip joint doesn't have the same range of motion we living people have, so while in a sitting position it kind of just looks like he's making a lewd gesture.

Anyway, I put him out by the window in the living room, so he can wave to passersby. When Lucy gets home, I'll have to put him by the door to ~~scare the shit out of him~~ greet him when he gets home.

Talking about freedom

2003-03-22

San Francisco, California

Hildi: i want some freedom toast

Hildi: i want to go to ihop

poeks: do you think freedom toast tastes like regular toast or something more exotic

poeks: but certainly not french toast

poeks: maybe marmalade

Hildi: i think i could taste patriotism in freedom toast

Hildi: whereas in french toast... i could not.

poeks: french toast is anti-american anyway

Hildi: what about french manicures?

Hildi: i should tell my mom to switch it to freedom manicure

Hildi: protesters are getting too violent
 Hildi: i don't think you should go there anymore
 Hildi: just stay home with herbie
 Hildi: police can get all weird too
 poeks: i was standing *across the street* from ones of the corners the protestors had shut down
 poeks: and the police were all rushing out, pushing us back and we weren't even *protesting*
 poeks: after i left they just started arresting anyone standing around
 poeks: and in fact arresting more bystanders than the people who were doing active civil disobedience, since they were like movin' around and stuff and i guess harder to catch
 Hildi: that's ridiculous!

Hildi: what kind of coffee pot does lucy have?
 Hildi: is it antique or something?
 Hildi: that you put on the stove?
 poeks: you put the water in the bottom and it boils up through the grounds and through a tube up into the pot
 Hildi: that is ridiculous
 poeks: you know, i've gotten so used to lucy's gayness that i don't even notice it anymore
 Hildi: i guess one would get used to it
 Hildi: i mean, it's not just spurts of gayness
 Hildi: it is a very rich all around gayness
 Hildi: it is good that lucy is not a girl
 Hildi: he would have been such an ugly one

poeks: did you ever look at those pictures of him as corinthia?
 Hildi: yes, though i think you should have lined his lips with dark lip liner and put really light pink lipstick on the inside
 poeks: you should have been there
 poeks: you would have done such a better job with the makeup
 Hildi: i know! there is so much potential for dramatic eye makeup with lucy, because his brows are so thick
 poeks: i loved how he looked like such a clown with beth's pale pale foundation, though
 Hildi: like an old drag queen who just won't let go
 Hildi: like norma desmond

poeks: oh
 poeks: so know how i had herbie in the window, waving to people?
 Hildi: yeah
 poeks: so today the door rings, and i go downstairs
 poeks: and this woman is standing there
 poeks: she's like, "this is really hard, but can you do me a favor?"
 poeks: "my sister-in-law died last week, and the skeleton is just..."
 Hildi: HAHAAHAHA
 poeks: isn't that crazy?
 Hildi: hahaha
 poeks: i felt so bad
 Hildi: can't stop laughing
 poeks: hee
 Hildi: that is ridiculous
 poeks: it's like a french farce
 Hildi: freedom farce

I just wanna live fast, diarrhea live fast!

2003-05-05
 San Francisco, California

I got food poisoning at Tu Lan today. This is particularly distressing, not only because I love Tu Lan with every cell of my mortal body, but because it is the only restaurant I ever eat at. If not beef pho at Tu Lan, then what and where?

Also, what is the deal with cute girls not calling me back? Forces are most certainly aligning against me of late.

Burn the Witches

2003-06-08

San Francisco, California

I was at Borders today, mulling about on this lazy Sunday, perusing the media section in search of a juicy and fun read, when I came upon *Watching Movies*. Basically, it's a series of interviews, conducted by Rick Lyman of The New York Times, in which he sits down with various influential directors and actors and watches, well, movies. The idea is that the media moguls choose a movie that is personally meaningful to them and talk about how the movie has influenced their life and career.

I picked it up on a whim, but it's actually a pretty interesting read, taking the reader for brief jaunts through the minds of such hard hitters as Woody Allen, Ang Lee, Sissy Spacek, Julianne Moore, Kevin Smith...

Wait a second, now. *Kevin Smith*? Ever since seeing *Dogma* a few weeks ago, I have been trying to crystallize in words exactly why I hate Kevin Smith. I now realize that my intense disdain for this "reputable" "director" is not because he sucks nads (although he does) but because critics are amenable to him. And this is what I do not get.

Eschewing for a moment the very idea that Kevin Smith was even *considered* for inclusion in this book, Lyman says in the interview's intro that he "considered [Kevin Smith] extremely smart about film." Now, I can't say I wasn't doubtful, but I was so ready, after having experienced the full gamut of the suckiness that is Kevin Smith as a director, to sit back and be completely blown away by his subtle, nuanced appreciation of his craft. Not. As it turns out, Smith had absolutely zero interesting things to say about the film he picked, *A Man for All Seasons*, choosing instead to pontificate on his child-like, monochromatic view of good and evil. What the hell?

And then there's *Dogma*. Usually, before I see a film I read a few reviews to get an overview of the plot and, y'know, find out if it sucks or not. Well, The New York Times called *Dogma* "mercilessly funny!" Salon said, "Smith's comic-religious fantasy turns out to be the sweetest hot-potato movie imaginable." Imagine how surprised I was when *Dogma* turned out to be neither merciless, nor funny, nor redeeming in any way, shape, or form.

And yes, I know, Smith is not a "visual stylist." Although I do consider cinematography to be a vital element of a good film (after all, we are *seeing* the film with our *eyes*), there are plenty of pragmatically-shot films I enjoy. It's not just that Smith doesn't have an eye for composition, mood, conveying emotion, etc, it's that his shots and scenes are so poorly done and jarring that it is at times difficult to figure out what's even *happening*. And the acting. Don't get me started on the acting.

So yeah. I hate Kevin Smith. I don't know who he fucked to get where he is today, but damn, he fucked them but good.

On the brighter side, I also learned today that Julianne Moore rules. Well sure, I already knew she was great, but her intelligent and impassioned analysis of *Rosemary's Baby* was a treat. If only Kevin Smith would cease to exist and Julianne Moore exist twice as much.

Thank you for your business

2003-06-25

San Francisco, California

Six months in review...

To: New User
From: Poeks Technologies
Date: November 15, 2002

Congratulations on the purchase of your new Poeks Version 23.4 system and/or parts! Your order is being processed and please allow 3-5 working days for your order to ship. You may always check online for your order status. Poeks Technologies will rush any order. All rush order requests will be accepted. Remember to keep your Poeks v23.4 well lubricated to ensure it runs at optimum performance. Keep it in a sunny location and avoid cold temperatures.

Shipping Information
Name: New User
Shipping Address:
123 Any Street
San Francisco CA
Daytime Phone#: 555/555-1234
Payment Type: Visa
Credit Card: ****_****_****_****
Expiry Date: 06/03

Customer #: 123456
Sales Order#: 654321

Product Description Qty
Poeks Version 23.4 1
Subtotal 1648.01
Tax 140.08
Shipping 60
Total 1848.09

Description Quantity Price
DDRAM 256MBI32X64 PC-2100C2.5 CRL% (ITEM#20145001) 2 Standard
HD 100GBIWD WD1000JB 8mb Cache OEM (ITEM#22144108) 1 Standard
CPU P4/2.4BGHz 533M 478PIN/512K RTL (ITEM#19116139) 1 Standard s
DVDITOSHIBA 16X SD-M1612 OEM % (ITEM#27130010) 1 Standard
CASE 64", SLIM VERSION FS710 RT (ITEM#11124002) 1 \$+66
BLONDE HAIR DYE, 3 MONTHS (ITEM#29102150) 1 \$+13
NEWFOUND DIRECTION BB P4 478 RT (ITEM#35106009) 1 \$+46
NEW JOB AT DI TI4200 64M (ITEM#14122143) 1 \$-25,000
FAB PAD WITH LUCY 1550V BEIGE (ITEM#24002015) 1 \$+950
DRINKING PROBLEM 5.1 5200 RETAIL (ITEM#36116116) 1 Standard

To: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
From: New User
Date: November 15, 2002

Hi. My new Poeks is great! The only problem is that if I lubricate my Poeks at the suggested rate, it seems reluctant to start up before 11 AM. Some days it won't start up at all. My Poeks also seems incompatible with DI MASTER ITEM#32106119. Help!

To: New User
From: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
Date: December 20, 2002

Greetings, New User. Glad to see you are enjoying your new Poeks version 23.4. In response to your query, we suggest you lubricate your Poeks as often as possible to keep it running in tandem with NEW JOB AT DI TI4200 64M. Also try running ANTIVIRUS FAMILY XMAS VACATION HW PCI 2977 WO/V to avoid finicky behavior.

To: All Users
From: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
Date: January 13, 2003

Users,

Due to potential system failure, we now recommend that users cease lubrication of Poeks version 23. We have a Poeks Version 23.5 Patch available for download with S/W SOCIAL ANXIETY OFC 2002 OEM to replace DRINKING PROBLEM 5.1 5200. Please upgrade as soon as possible. Also, Poeks Version 23.5 is no longer compatible with NEW JOB AT DI TI4200 64M. Please contact your Customer Service Representative to arrange for this to be replaced with UNEMPLOYMENT PS/2.

To: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
From: New User
Date: March 10, 2003

Wow, my Poeks is running great and takes awesome photos! Although you recommend I keep FD 1.44MB ANTI-DEPRESSANT MEDICATION #D359M3% installed, I don't think my Poeks needs it.

To: New User
From: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
Date: March 11, 2003

Dear User,

I'm warning you, FD 1.44MB ANTI-DEPRESSANT MEDICATION #D359M3% is necessary to ensure proper functioning. If you uninstall it, you run the risk of system failure.

To: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
From: New User
Date: May 5, 2003

I tried pairing my Poeks with a similar model, but AMBIGUOUS STRAIGHT GIRL 6MM 20544 did not seem to be compatible. Now my Poeks is raising errors more often and occasionally will not respond. Also, my Poeks will not process photographs as often. What shall I do?

To: New User
From: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
Date: March 10, 2003

Dear User,

If you reinstall FD 1.44MB ANTI-DEPRESSANT MEDICATION #D359M3% as soon as possible, you will avoid permanent damage to your Poeks version 23.6 Upgrade. We've shipped your SISTER VISIT TO SAN FRANCISCO OATC-710-GX2 as an emergency measure, but you may also try to pair your Poeks with UNAVAILABLE MARRIED WOMAN 6MM 20545. Hopefully this will help your Poeks to run properly.

To: All Users
From: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
Date: March 25, 2003

Please visit our website to obtain the following mandatory upgrades:
ENNUI 3000+/333 FSB 512K
APPETITE LOSS 9800 PRO 128MB DVI/TV 8X AGP
NAUSEA ANTEC SL450 450W
SEVERE DEPRESSION ATA133/100/66/33

Users,

You may find you must keep your Poeks running all night occasionally and will more than likely experience erratic behavior. You must not power down Poeks Version 23.7 for more than 4 or 5 hours per night.

To: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
From: New User
Date: June 6, 2003

I am having serious issues with my Poeks Version 23.11. Whenever I attempt to turn it on, it gives me the Blue Screen of Death. I fear my Poeks may have had a system breakdown. It no longer returns error messages and will not respond to any attempt to reinstall the software.

To: New User
From: Poeks Technologies Customer Service
Date: June 10, 2003

Dear User,

I must regretfully inform you that your Poeks Version 23 has experienced a serious system failure. I'm afraid your uninstallation of FD 1.44MB ANTI-DEPRESSANT MEDICATION #D359M3% has invalidated the warranty and you must purchase the new Poeks Version 24. Unfortunately, Poeks Version 24 will only operate at a location greater than 3,000 mi from your location. Please try our new Poeks Version 26 in 2005. Thank you for choosing Poeks Technologies. We appreciate your business.

To: New User

From: Poeks Technologies
Date: June 25, 2003

Congratulations on the purchase of your new Poeks Version 24.1 system and/or parts! Your order is being processed and please allow 3-5 working days for your order to ship. You may always check online for your order status. Poeks Technologies will rush any order. All rush order requests will be accepted. Remember to keep your Poeks v24.1 avoid lubrication to ensure it runs at optimum performance. Keep it in a sunny location and avoid cold temperatures.

Shipping Information

Name: New User
Shipping Address:
123 Any Street
Westfield NJ
Daytime Phone#: 555/555-1234
Payment Type: Visa
Credit Card: ****_****_****_****
Expiry Date: 11/03
Customer #: 123456
Sales Order#: 654321

Product Description Qty

Poeks Version 23.4 1
Subtotal 1648.01
Tax 140.08
Shipping 60
Total 1848.09

Description Quantity Price

DDRAM 256MBI32X64 PC-2100C2.5 CRL% (ITEM#20145001) 2 Standard
HD 100GBIWD WD1000JB 8mb Cache OEM (ITEM#22144108) 1 Standard
CPU P4/2.4BGHz 533M 478PIN/512K RTL (ITEM#19116139) 1 Standard s
DVDITOSHIBA 16X SD-M1612 OEM % (ITEM#27130010) 1 Standard
CASE 64", SLIM VERSION FS710 RT (ITEM#11124002) 1 \$+66
NATURAL HAIR (ITEM#29102150) 1 Standard
EYELINER Z-640 5.1 51 (ITEM#29102150) 1 \$+4
ABS 6 USB 2.0, SATA (ITEM#29102151) 1 \$+400
NEWFOUND DIRECTION BB P4 478 RT (ITEM#35106009) 1 \$+46
HOME 1550V BEIGE (ITEM#24002015) 1 \$+0
SOBRIETY 1.1 5200 RETAIL (ITEM#36116116) 1 Standard

Back East for me, folks! See you in Jersey on Tuesday...

This indecision's bugging me

2003-07-01

San Francisco, California

I slipped out like a thief in the night. Except not so much in the night as at noon on a sunny San Franciscan day. The Bay Area had been enticing me to stay for two weeks, coyly suggesting that San Francisco might actually have a summer. The weather gods had been churning out day after day of eighty degree weather, a veritable factory of charm: skinny girls in tank tops meandering about, patrons sitting at outdoor cafe tables with newspapers in laps and legs crossed at ankles, happy doggies on leashes.

My last weekend coincided conveniently with Pride weekend, perhaps the gayest three days in the gayest city in the world. Saturday unraveled slowly, moment after moment of blissful idyll spent with fellow female aficionados Lucy, Mickey, Cruzy, K, and the recently de-boyfriended Huma Roja. We lounged in Dolores Park admiring the women in various states of undress, me cheerfully indulgent with Lucy and Mickey as they mercilessly teased me about the lovely, lovely Ms Roja.

Through some wonderful and awful twist of fate, I somehow found myself spending the rest of the day and night with Huma, utterly smitten by her; all bones and angles, clumsy and quirky and relentlessly charming. I found myself memorizing everything about her that day: the sinewy slope of her neck, the curve of her nose, the small scar between her shoulders, her fluttering eyelashes as she slept. It was a simply lovely, albeit heartbreaking day, and I almost, almost stayed.

Thankfully, my last day in the fair city was consumed with the pressing task of tying up loose ends, and I was hardly able to waste a nostalgic moment smoking in the backyard, much less ruminating endlessly on whether I was making an ill-advised decision in leaving. There was furniture to be moved, hard drives to box, Herbies to ship.

When finally Lucy's getaway SUV arrived at the airport, I had a scant hour to schlep my remaining belongings inside, and instead of enumerating the various ways in which he had helped me, of how good a man he is, and how I love him to bits, I simply thanked him and hugged him goodbye. I had baggage to check, boarding passes to acquire.

Now, I know this story well. I can delineate the past five years in terms of simple cycles that begin and end with grandiose, sweeping gestures. To San Francisco! To Berlin! To New York! No, to San Francisco again! No, New York! It's an insidious succession of decreasingly innocuous occurrences: the ennui, the restlessness, the depression, the resolve. When it's bad, I tell myself that a person must survive as best he can and that the Pavlovian response resulting from a major decision is the only effective way I know of climbing up from the end of the rope. As time goes on, however, and the surging score of a new beginning begins to play, I lose sight of the pain and griping terror of a descent into a place with no name in pleasant conversation. I forget the helpless paranoid delusions and vivid hallucinations of color and texture.

I know I am here because I had resolved to never let that happen again. Because rote tactics of survival are no longer good enough. To be sure, when I arrived at Newark Airport, I was happy to see my mother at the airport. I am pleased with the thick heat of a New Jersey summer. I am glad to see my parents and sister and doggies and friends. I revel in the distinct, forthright directness of an East Coast personality. I appreciate the abrasive cadence of a nasal Jersey accent. Still, I look at these circles, and I can't help but wonder what I am doing here back at the beginning.

Nice to see you

2003-07-30

New York, New York

Tuesday. My first interview back on the East Coast. After a month of living the sedentary Jersey high life, I was finally getting out the Garden State and into the Big Apple. I left the house at 10:30 AM (thank the stars for that leisurely forty minute walk to the Westfield train station) for a 1 PM interview Downtown, and through some bizarre machination of fate involving NJ Transit, an ill-advised trip on the NJ/NY PATH, and a languorous cab ride with a confused driver, I managed to arrive at this company's Broad St office three minutes late.

The interview was going well up until the very end, when my beige cotton-poly clad interviewer hit me with some extremely simple and straightforward technical questions. I got flustered and completely dropped the ball. I'm sure if he had asked me to spell my first name backwards, I would have come up with similarly unimpressive results.

My hopes and dreams of infinite riches and fame dashed, I wandered aimlessly through 14th St subway station looking for the PATH connection. It may appear as though Manhattan is well connected through the graces of the hallowed MTA, but in actuality I think it is just one big tunnel underground, through which one must trudge in order to get to the one or two actual subway platforms.

Along my journey who should I see sitting on a lonely subway bench but the lovely KB from my Westfield High School days of yore? Somewhat taken aback, I paused. You see, throughout four dramatically angst-laden years of high school KB was the object of my formidable powers of obsession. We played soccer together, and so I was able to stalk her unabashedly without seeming to be entirely insane. She was the first person I came out to, the first to receive the business end of my adolescent declarations of unconditional love, the first person to break my little Poeks heart.

We had lost contact years ago, but y'know, she is KB, so of course I had to talk to her.

INT. 14th ST SUBWAY PLATFORM

KB is sitting on a wooden bench, absorbed in her thoughts. POEKS, looking sheepish, approaches KB with obvious trepidation. Various UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE mill about on the platform, off to god knows where.

POEKS
KB?

KB stares at Poeks, somewhat confused.

POEKS'S INTERNAL
MONOLOGUE SUBTITLES

Hmm, she must not recognize me, since
I got so hot and all.

KB
(with dawning recognition)
Heyyy!!!

KB hugs Poeks awkwardly.

KB
How weird! How are you? What have
you been up to?

POEKS
Yeah, I just got back from San Francisco.
Blah, blah, small talk, small talk.

POEKS *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸* SUBTITLES
Damn, she is still cute.

KB
Oh, I *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸*ve been blah, blah. Small talk.

KB *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸* SUBTITLES
wonder if Poeks is still completely insane.
Maybe I should get out of here.

POEKS
Cool. Isn't *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸* it strange that blah, blah.

POEKS *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸* SUBTITLES
Hmm, maybe I should ask her out for
coffee.

SUBWAY CAR pulls into station.

POEKS
(oblivious)
So, yeah, like, um. Well, I was wondering *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸*!

KB
Oh. So, where are you going?

POEKS
Oh me?
(absently plays with her hair)
Oh, I *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸*m. I *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸*m just going back home, I guess.

WOODY ALLEN appears out of nowhere.

WOODY
Uh, well, you just said you were going
downtown.

POEKS
Woody, this is my scene.

KB *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸* SUBTITLES
Now *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸*s my chance! Now, back slowly
away without any sudden movements *fâ€šÃ¢,~â„¸*!

KB
Hey, it was nice talking to you.

KB hugs Poeks again, and picks up her things.

POEKS
(flustered)
So, yeah. Nice talking. To you. Too.

POEKS *fâ€šÄâ, -â„,cs* SUBTITLES
Wahh!

KB
(stepping into subway car)
Bye!

POEKS
Yeah. Bye.

And so, I dropped the ball (no pun intended) not once, but twice today. It *fâ€šÄâ, -â„,cs* okay, though -- KB said she is moving back home soon, so I can stalk her from here.

You're not losing hair, you're gaining face

2003-09-04
Westfield, New Jersey

So yeah, I *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄm* still alive. Have not been up to much lately, aside from the whole falling off the earth deal, so not much to relate. However, one of my favorite cousins, for whom I cannot at the moment think of a good name, is coming to live in the Tri State Area with the vast majority of the rest of the Manchesters. Hopefully she shall be staying at Chez Poeks, which would be v. fabulous.

Aside from that, I did go to a few family parties of late. One was at one of my mother *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* sisters *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* houses: a soiree for Aunt *SÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* boss, for whom Brenda Blethyn does some contract work. Since I have been such a prodigious lay-about these past few months, Brenda decided to pawn off some of the work to me. Hence, I was meetin *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* the boss. Boss Man looks almost exactly like John Malkovich. I found him to be actually quite witty and amusing, although I feel I must have missed a few quips due to the fact that whenever he spoke all I could think was, *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs*...â€œMalkovich Malkovich Malkovich. Malkovich, Malkovich. Malkovich? *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* Am beginning to wonder if there is a celebrity doppelgaenger for all us non-famous people in the world.

Overheard at the party:
[Revelers mewing over Aunt *SÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* extremely friendly and adorable Shih-Tzu, Nicky]
Someone *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* child: When *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* her birthday!
Aunt S: It *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* October 5th, just like Whitney.
Child *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* mother [with no apparent irony whatsoever]: Oh, you mean Whitney Houston.
Aunt S: Um, no *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* Whitney, my niece.

Also went to a bridal shower for cousin on my dad *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* side of the family, which featured women of all ages and enough leopard print to make an extra from the Sopranos blush. As you can probably imagine, the one thing I in the world I consider worse than a bridal shower is, well, a baby shower, so I spent much of the grand fete wishing I could partake in the ubiquitous blue sangria. Thankfully, the one person in the room who seemed more uncomfortable than I was the bride herself. She looked incredibly happy, though. It could *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs*ve been the sangria, but I don *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* think so. Plus Aunt P and cousin D, the bride *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* mother and sister, are hilarious. So it weren *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* s *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs*bad, after all. But still, if I ever get married, I ain *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* havin *fÄâ€šÄâ-Äâ€žÄcs* no bridal shower. How would that even work, anyway?

I think I have an ulcer.

The Love Bug Will Bite You

2003-10-08
Westfield, New Jersey

I woke up this morning to find exactly twenty-eight bug bites on my legs. Was it an ornery nest of baby spiders usurped from their nest in my pajama bottom drawer? A sudden outbreak of fleas in my sheets? Have undertaken large-scale washing initiative in response.

V. itchy. Itchiness has sporadically migrated to parts of my body not traditionally associated with my legs, such as my right shoulder, my lower back, the tip of my nose. Must invest in more calamine lotion.

Went to visit the Hulk at school with her (male) friend S. On the drive over we listened to the following, which I present to the jury as further evidence of S's latent gayness:

Exhibit A: Alicia Keys "Songs in A Minor"

Exhibit B: Amerie "All I have"

Exhibit C: Justin Timberlake "Justified"

Your Honor, the prosecution rests.

The Melting Point Of Wax

2003-10-25

New York, New York

Madame Tussaud's: just as fun as a barrel of monkeys...

Paddy's Leather Breeches

2003-11-04

Westfield, New Jersey

poeks: I think wings and beer are in order [to celebrate Hildi's new job-to-be]. When you get home tomorrow Dr Evil and I will buy you a round of wings.

Hildi: But you know the wings from Charlie Browns always give me diarrhea.

poeks: But it will be celebratory diarrhea.

Hildi: You don't even eat wings.

poeks: Yuh huh. Although I can't say wings are my favorite food.

Hildi: Why? They're so delish.

poeks: They entail way too much effort for so little joy.

Hildi: You must hate crabs.

poeks: And lobster.

Hildi: Lobster is so good. the tail requires almost no effort.

poeks: Meh.

Hildi: Actually, I think I like lobster because it can be bathed in butter. And then it is fat in your mouth. Yummy.

poeks: Lobster itself -- not so yummy.

Hildi: Lobster itself -- exactly does it taste like?

poeks: It's like tofu.

Hildi: People just assume lobster tastes like butter. Lobster and butter flavors are the same thing.

poeks: Why not dip tofu in melted butter while wearing a bib?

Hildi: I never wear a bib.

poeks: Oh, but the bib is integral to the lobster experience.

Hildi: I never get to the cracking and making such a fuss over the lobster bit.

poeks: I used to order lobster in Maine when I was wee. But no more.

Hildi: Do you like shellfish at all though? Clams, mussels, crayfish?

poeks: I like scallops.

Hildi: Scallops! They are good. But so weird looking. How could that have been alive?

poeks: They should at least have little eyes on them or something.

[...]

poeks: Oh so, this morning I went to Overlook Hospital with my dad, so one of us might give blood for my mom for her knee replacement surgery next week. And afterwards he dropped me off at the jug-handle on Rt 22.

Hildi: uh

poeks: I figured I would cut through someone's yard from the highway and not have to walk all the way around.

Hildi: 1) I didn't know your mom was getting surgery.

Hildi: 2) Why did he drop you off at the jughandle?

poeks: Oh, she is getting a bionic knee.

Hildi: No way!

poeks: Brenda Blethyn will be like the Bionic Woman. We've decided she will devote her life to fighting crime.

Hildi: Wow. What if afterwards she can play violin? Or do Irish dancing? Okay, so the jug handle, very strange place to just drop your kid off.

poeks: Well, it's Ed Harris. He had to go to work. Anyway. So I cut through and started walking up my street. Suddenly this car pulls up beside me. At first I didn't know if they were stopping for me, to ask directions or what, so I kind of kept walking and looking back simultaneously. This guy gets out of the car and goes, "I DON'T WANT YOU TRESSPASSING ON MY PROPERTY! I DON'T ALLOW TRESSPASSERS ON MY PROPERTY!" It was kind of funny. I think he was retired and had nothing better to do than badger people who cut through his yard. So, I just said "Uh, thorry about that," and went on my merry way. I think maybe he felt a little silly.

Hildi: I think a good way to make him calm down would have been to dance the ballet.

poeks: That would have been a good moment to have Brenda around with her bionic knee to do a nice little Irish jig.

Hildi: Yeah, everyone likes a little Irish jig.

poeks: He would have realized how imprudently he had acted and maybe have begun to clap in time. Or play the spoons

Hildi: It's just so strange how the Irish dancing brings forth both humility and joy to hardened hearts.

[...]

poeks: Big Red met [Peaches Christ](#) on Halloween! She got me her autograph!

Hildi: Really?

poeks: "Guess what I did on Halloween? Went to see Peaches Christ at Midnite Mass. They showed Fright Night and featured an interview with one of the stars of Fright Night, a man who has done no other significant work since then and is now a gay porn star. Afterwards there was an autograph session, and I had Peaches, Martiny, and the washed up actor sign a poster for you. It is in my room waiting to be mailed. As I spelled out your name for Peaches and explained that it was for a friend who moved to New Jersey and missed her terribly, she said, "Oh yeah... I think she's emailed me..."

Hildi: You emailed peaches christ?

poeks: Well, no. Not that I know of. But I did bookmark her on friendster. The point is that Peaches was gallant enough to *pretend to have heard of me*. Those drag queens are some classy dames.

Hildi: Wow. You know, class caint be learned.

Express yourself, don't repress yourself

2004-01-18

Westfield, New Jersey

Hildi: Do you think I could make money by writing erotica novels? And thereby also come to terms with my repressed sexuality?

Poeks: "And then he told her, 'Come to me.' And then they had sex. The end"

Hildi: "And they closed the heavy oak doors of the bedroom. The end." There's a book on sale called "How To Write Erotica." It's \$2 -- I'm going to buy it.

Poeks: Will you even be able to read that?

Hildi: I dont' know. We'll have to see.

Poeks: I always find it amusing that you are a Scorpio, the most sexual of all star signs. You are like a French farce.

Hildi: I know! My life really does seem to become more and more farcical everyday.

Poeks: You should write stories about doing research for your erotica novels, too. "Today I quickly walked past a burlesque club."

Hildi: "Today I put on a lacy black bra and felt ashamed."

Hildi: Do you know anyone who knows anyone who writes trashy romance novels?

Poeks: I know someone whose greatest desire is to be an erotica novel writer -- she has a pen name and everything -- but not anyone who actually writes them, as far as I know.

Hildi: How can that be anyone's greatest desire?

Poeks: I know some strange folks.

Hildi: Maybe if I settle down as a house wife I can start writing those stories since I'll at least be having sex. Maybe.

Poeks: In SF you can take classes to learn various sexual techniques and such.

Poeks: "Ladies, Know Thyself"

Poeks: "Strap-ons for Women and Men"

Hildi: Ew. Strap-ons are so wrong!

Poeks: Different strokes fo' different folks.

Hildi: Does it go around your waist? Is it like a panty with a dildo on it? It's such a weird thing. I wonder when it was invented.

Poeks: I bet a lo-o-ong time ago.

Hildi: 200 BC.

Poeks: Right after Eve.

Hildi: Since the beginning of time.

Poeks: Prepare yourself: <http://www.goodvibes.com/cgi-bin/sgsh0102.exe?FNM=54&UID=2004011811555844&>

SKW=HA21

Hildi: Is it weird? My mom is sitting 2 ft away from me.

Poeks: It's kind of like weird leather underwear.

Hildi: I don't need to see it. You'll be impressed to know though that I have seen a dildo before. It was black and bigger than bratwurst.

Poeks: In person? Hey, that's something.

Hildi: It was a long time ago when [former acquaintance] moved into a new apartment. He said he found it in his closet.

Poeks: Ew.

Hildi: That it was just there when he moved in.

Poeks: Like a housewarming present.

Hildi: I bet it was his. Anyway, it was really gross.

Poeks: Yeah, who would leave a dildo for the future renters? "I bet they could get some use out of this."

Hildi: "We'll leave the plates and the dildo."

I got the power

2004-01-23

Westfield, New Jersey

Hildi: Ms Peniston [Hildi's boss] told me to order some pants for myself so I can wear ONLY [Fashion label at which Hildi works. Let's call it "Sissy"], especially for when I go to the stores. So I ordered myself a pair of white pants. I tried them on in the bathroom today, and it was like sausage casings. But white.

Poeks: There was a girl in Express today who was wearing white pants who eloquently summed up my aversion to said color. She had a distinct outline of a shoe sole right smack on her right buttock.

Hildi: Why were you in express?

Poeks: Aforementioned ten dollar jeans.

Hildi: Express does have good sales, but I always feel a little embarrassed to go in there. Such a trottely store.

Poeks: I know, I feel so old. I feel like I shouldn't go in there if I am not The Incredible Hulk or Ben.

Hildi: You can when the sales are really good.

Poeks: I feel like I will buy almost anything for ten dollars. It's amazing the range of things that are worth exactly ten dollars to me.

Hildi: \$10= lunch at Japanese restaurant

Hildi: \$10= movie

Hildi: \$10= jeans at Express

Hildi: It's weird when people say things like, "clever, intelligent, serious" about clothes. To me they sound so foolish.

Poeks: Fools.

Hildi: Ms Peniston thinks Sissy clothes are smart. She says though that sometimes people don't understand the concept of the Sissy line. The masses just want 'no-brainer' clothes. She says "they don't understand" about 80 times a day. What's there not to understand? A mohair motorcycle jacket with crystals on the sleeves will not sell for \$800. I would not buy it for \$10 -- I'd rather watch a movie. She also always holds things up and asks me how much I would pay for something like it. And I just kind of throw out a price. "\$200." Which is a lie. I would never pay \$200 for a tank top. And she says, "Really? That's good. Maybe this one should be like 200 or 230". And there you go folks. Why are Sissy prices so expensive? Because of me.

Poeks: Now if anyone asks me i will have the answer.

Hildi: I can't believe people pay that much money for one article of clothing.

Poeks: Fools!

Hildi: I feel like shoes and bags are one thing. They can be up to 200. But one sweater or one cashmere panty? It's not right. It's just not right.

Poeks: Would Ms Peniston die if you said that to her?

Hildi: No, I don't think so. I think she'll remember that I "make close to nothing." That's what she said. "When I make close to nothing long time ago, I went to retail store and work there for dkny." So she wants me to do the same thing.

Poeks: So you may follow in the footsteps of your Mentor.

Hildi: Whatever. I live with my parents. I can do whatever I want.

Vote for me

2004-02-24

New York, New York

From the Desk of the Attorney General

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Georgie,

Now that we have effectively distracted the American Public, thus ensuring no one will pay any mind to Your slight transgressions during this term, we are ready to continue with the next phase of Operation Obfuscate and Dismay. Please review the suggested presidential ballot modifications below and let me know which of the alterations should be made.

Yours,
Asscroft

1. Inundation

- ☐ George W. Bush
- ☐ George W. Bush
- ☐ John Kerry
- ☐ George W. Bush

2. Poor Grammar

- ☐ Not opposed to not not Bush
- ☐ Not not for Kerry's opposition

3. Confusion

- ☐ If George W. Bush was in a rowboat traveling 13 miles per hour and John Kerry was in a rowboat rowing at 15 miles per hour, who would first reach a point 12 miles from the starting point, assuming that Kerry has a 10 minute lead?
- ☐ John Kerry, Ralph Nader, George W. Bush, and Al Sharpton were each wearing different-colored tee-shirts. The colors are red, green, blue, and yellow. Neither John nor George ever wears green, and neither Ralph or George wears yellow. Al wore blue. Who wore a red tee-shirt?

4. Arithmetic

If George W. Bush has 5 apples and John Kerry has 3 apples, who has more apples?

- ☐ George W. Bush
- ☐ John Kerry

* A nod to Hildi for creative insight into the Heart of Darkness.

Workin' for a livin'

2004-03-12
New York, New York

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have gone and gotten myself a job. Please hold your applause until the end.

I had a few panicked minutes this morning walking down 23rd St, because I could not for the life of me remember where this, my new place of employment, was. I'd say I assumed I'd know where the building was, given the fact that I had just interview there a week and a half ago, but the fact of the matter is that I had simply not given it a second thought.

I walked up and down 23rd between 7th and 6th Avenues, hoping I would recognize the facade by the men out front hurling off color remarks my way. Was "hey doggy, doggy" in front of my new professional home? No, it wasn't him after all, and dern it if I didn't even have my boss's phone number on me. Shit, I can't miss my first day, I thought, ruminating over the inevitable scenario of walking up to each building in Chelsea, peering inside the plate-glass windows to scrutinize the architecture. Was it even on 23rd Street, or did I assume so, because it was the nearest subway station?

Now sweating profusely, I decided to take a chance and try the next block over. At least I knew it was on this side of the street. Or did I?

I crossed 6th Ave with doubt in my heart and glanced briefly down 23rd, hoping for divine inspiration. In the distance I saw a

sign for Moda Furniture and instantly remembered it was conveniently located right next door to my new digs. Thank god for seductive, high-end furnishings.

No wonder it's taken me so long to find a job...

Tell Me About Your Mother

2004-03-26

New York, New York

Poeks: So, i got a job.

Big Red: How exciting. Doing what?

Poeks: Same old.

Big Red: Barista?

Poeks: Heh.

Big Red: Oh, not that old. My sister got me a Rosie the Riveter action figure.

Poeks: Nice. I did not know such things existed.

Big Red: And there were pictures on back of other action figures made by the company, one of which was Barista. Others were Jesus and Freud.

Poeks: Oh, i got the Freud one once. For my therapist.

Big Red: Who my 8 year old nephew called "Frood." So we corrected him in the recommended way, by laughing at him

Poeks: Yes, I'm sure he won't need to see anyone with the profession of that action figure in ten years.

Big Red: Eh, it's the way of our family. We figure a kid learns faster if you talk to him like an adult. And that's how we talk to adults... mockery of any perceived weakness.

Poeks: Hee.

Big Red: So what's the job? Actually, ignore that. As if you weren't already, because I actually have to go. I'm doing a little contract work for my old employer and really should be on my way. Sigh. And there's so much NON work to do today. As there is every day. Ciao. Am I talking to myself here? Hello?

Poeks: Soddie, I was talking to my boss. I'm all new and can't ignore him just yet.

Big Red: Hope you've got the volume turned off

Poeks: Yes, I am no IM amateur.

Big Red: Tee hee. I'm reading your blog. "I've got the power". Very funny. I'm just really tickled by the phrase "one cashmere panty."

Poeks: Yeah, I think the word 'panty' is inherently amusing.

Big Red: I really like it when clothing stories take the plural out of things.

Poeks: Exactly.

Big Red: "Our exclusive Kensington pant." Like "pants" are just so WalMart. "Our Juicy Couture jean is fresh, electric, now."

Poeks: You are going to get me in trouble for guffawing at work.

Big Red: Right. Speaking of which, didn't I say I was going? I can feel my husband's disapproval radiating up at me from downstairs.

Running and skipping; merrily tripping

2004-07-08

New York, New York

Hanging out in my apt on 14th St.

Twisted Hipster

2004-08-06

Brooklyn, New York

A stroll through Greenpoint and Williamsburg.

Ballad of the Blue Cyclone

2004-08-09

Brooklyn, New York

Walking around Coney Island

A Certain Cemetary

2004-10-03

Brooklyn, New York

Walking around Greenpoint Cemetary with Agent 99.

I'm haunted

2005-11-05

Northampton, Massachusetts

Went to Northampton for Agent 99's birthday and broke into the infamous and abandoned State Hospital. Sadly, we were too chicken shit to head too far inside...

Are you there, God? It's me, Poeks

2006-05-16

Brooklyn, New York

Dear Diary,

I know, it has been over two years since I wrote to you last. I've been... busy. Very, very, very extremely busy. Okay fine, I've been lazy. Very extremely lazy.

So yeah, if you'll have me, I'd love to write to you sometimes. Now, dry your eyes, we can work this out.

So, what have you been up to, Diary? I see, sitting around... with no content... for two... years. Ah. Well, you'll be happy to know there have been several auspicious changes in my life since last we met:

1. I live in Brooklyn (go Bombers!).
2. I have a Girl, who shall henceforth be referred to as Agent 99.
3. I am gainfully employed at a nice company.
4. I made this brandy-new website.

I know -- it's all so terribly exciting. So yes, Diary, you may look forward to many heartfelt outpourings from the very depths of my soul. Or, perhaps, I'll just go on about the same old, wise ass drive! Just like old times!

Till then,
Poeks

Walk This Way

2006-05-22

Brooklyn, New York

A few weeks ago I was walking through the Fulton Mall en route to Agent 99's apartment, as I am often wont to do. I'm strutting along my merry way, when suddenly I notice a woman walking a few yards ahead of me. This, in of itself, was not a exceptional occurrence -- in these modern times it's commonplace to see women walking along the streets of Brooklyn. No, there was something particular about this woman, something about her that lifted me from my normal strolling oblivion.

This woman, I noticed, was wearing a short skirt the approximate color and consistency of the tissue paper normally associated with gift wrapping accoutrements. Or, perhaps, today was laundry day, and in a moment of creativity she thought, yes, these dryer sheets will do nicely. Squinting slightly, I could actually see the outline of her underwear and incumbent wedgie. It was impressive. The ass itself was one of those gravity defying numbers -- what I tend to refer to as a

Shelf Ass. It's the kind of ass upon which one could stow a few travel items for one's journey through the Fulton Mall or, perhaps, a small collection of Hummel figurines. It was certainly not the kind of ass that required a neon sign outlining its existence, but to each his own.

While attempting in vain to suppress my guffaws, I noticed another adjacent phenomenon: a small group of men walking along with us had formed a sort of V-formation behind the tissue paper bedecked woman. To my amusement, these men were blatantly, unabashedly staring at this woman's ass with eyes like laser beams. One man, ostensibly Shelf Ass's friend's boyfriend, walked a consistent yard behind Shelf Ass, for optimal buns viewing. Older women walking in the opposing directions were actually stopping in their tracks to turn and issue judgement laden "tsks." Whether these were directed toward the woman or her onlookers (or both), I don't know, but it was awesome. As I approached the intersection at Boerum Place, Shelf Ass and her two friends turned north, changing course. The entire group of hovering ogles, in unison, turned with them, possibly to follow Shelf Ass across state lines, if necessary.

All this got me thinking. Perhaps we've got it all wrong about the migratory patterns of birds. Maybe, just maybe, the whole procedure is due to a female bird flying south for her yearly winter vacation in Orlando. A gaggle of male birds, spotting this female with scandalously sparse tail feathers, decides to follow her, absentmindedly, inadvertently accompanying her all the way there. After witnessing this entertaining slice of human behavior, I believe this is a perfectly logical explanation.

Shame, Shame, Shame

2006-05-31

Brooklyn, New York

Agent 99 and I were perusing YouTube the other night, and came across this bit of wonderful:

And also [this, featuring the same pair](#), which is really weird. Even if you're not a Tina fan, due perhaps to her transgressions in the '80s (shame, shame, shame, shame on you!), there's a lot of [awesome stuff](#) of [hers up there](#) from the [60s](#) and [70s](#) (just put your hand over the screen when they show Ike). I can't help but laugh at the absurdity of the conceit that Ms Turner couldn't make it without Ike back in the day. He was just so full of blah and crapitude, while she was so obviously full of all that is good in this world. Thankfully, we have the luxury today of being able to laugh...

Another highlight was a [ceremony awarding Tina with something or other](#), which was hosted by Oprah, who claimed to be Tina's biggest fan. Agent 99 and I couldn't help but interject things:

Oprah: "I love Tina so much..."

Agent 99: "I bought her soul."

If you squint, you'll that sitting next to her grace is... Laura Bush? WTF? And to the left of her, George W. Really? I feel like there was a missed opportunity here. Tina, while everyone was being distracted by Oprah's extra flaminess, could've easily just kicked them over the edge with a flourish of her stiletto. No one would have noticed, and if they did, well, she's Tina Turner ferchrissake!

After this, we went on to watch some Ella and Nina, but I won't link to those just yet. Perhaps I should start a Ladies of Jazz (and Motown!) series...

Don't Sit Down

2006-06-10

Brooklyn, New York

Personal problems prohibit posting prosaic prose. Please: patience!

Today is my ____ day. I hate my ____ day. But to lift your spirits and mine, I give you this: [wright20.com's Mid-Century Antiques Live Auction on eBay!](http://wright20.com's-Mid-Century-Antiques-Live-Auction-on-eBay/)

I noticed right off the bat that they are auctioning a pair of [my chairs](#) with a starting bid of the equivalent of what I paid for mine. I can think of nothing more pithy to say about that than MUAHAHAHA! MUAHA! MUAHA! MU! AHA! Muah. Hah...

Anyway, yeah. If you know me, you know that I'm both too picky and too thrifty to ever actually purchase furniture, so perhaps this auction will help alleviate this a bit. There's a short list of stuff I actually like, and unfortunately said stuff is generally way out of my price range. Some items are harder to come by than others, such as sofas. I like me some [Artifort sofas](#), but I have trouble justifying spending THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS on anything, really. Ooh! Wait. [Coconut chair!](#) No reserve!

See my problem? There are plenty of great chairs out there, and some of them are actually within the amount of US Dollars I am willing to relinquish. Sofas? Not so much. So anyway, should you ever come to a dinner party at my apartment and find yourself eating off of a paper plate sitting precariously on a lovely Mid-Century antique side chair, you'll know why.

I remember when I lost my mind

2006-06-17

Brooklyn, New York

I have many Interesting and Important things to write about, but today I'm gonna go for the low-hanging fruit. Just to let you know, in case you're keeping score at home.

I know I'm waaay behind the curve on this, but I thought I'd share. A few days ago the Hulk, my sister, who now calls my Fort Greene one bedroom home along with her 70lb albatross, I mean dog, was watching tv in my bedroom. She calls me in to watch a group on Conan or Leno or some such, and I thought, hey that's a catchy song. Later in the week I hear the song again on the radio and think, hey I should downl--I mean *acquire* that song. I go home and *acquire* the song, which is Crazy, by [Gnarls Barkley](#). On a whim I acquire the rest of the album, and holy crap, it's really good. It turns out Gnarls Barkley is a collaborative effort by [Cee-Lo](#) and [Danger Mouse](#). Neat.

Danger Mouse has been on my uninformed radar for a while, but I hadn't really thought much of him after [The Grey Album](#). I did acquire it, because it sounded like an interesting idea, if nothing else (hip-hop and the Beatles, whodathunkit?). But really, I just cannot abide the sound of Jay-Z's voice for more than 30 seconds at a go. I got rid of it.

But now here's Danger Mouse and Cee-Lo, another rather odd pairing, and it's just love at first sight. It's kind like Daedalus with soul vocals. At any rate, I highly recommend it.

See This Movie

2006-06-25

Brooklyn, New York

Last night I saw [An Inconvenient Truth](#) with Agent 99. One of the opening scenes of the movie featured a composite of

satellite photos superimposed atop one another, yielding a cloudless view of the earth's continents stretched out in all their glory. I don't know about you, but such photographs and maps of our home planet always fill me with such a sense of humility and pride. They make me want to explore each nook and cranny, each convex or concave ripple.

Should you feel the same way, and even if you see pictures of the earth and see only a banal series of squiggly lines, you should see this movie. I infrequently agree with one Mr Roger Ebert on the subject of films, but I think he put it best when he wrote, "In 39 years, I have never written these words in a movie review, but here they are: You owe it to yourself to see this film. If you do not, and you have grandchildren, you should explain to them why you decided not to."

Poeks Art

2006-06-30

Brooklyn, New York

Some paintings, drawings, and scribblings from the days of yore.

Craigslist Hacks

2006-07-10

Brooklyn, New York

I slapped together a little Perl Magic just now to analyze rents in Brooklyn (I was bored, okay?) and thought I'd share. My little program parses [Craigslist](#) listings in a number of neighborhoods and returns the average rent for one and two bedroom apartments. Take these results with a grain of salt: they just match on text strings close to the name of the neighborhood (for example, Park Slope entries are culled from strings containing the phrase "park slope", whereas Fort Greene ones from the phrase "t green"). They don't take into account Craigslist's frequent misspellings or anything. At any rate, I found the results interesting. The 2 BDRM prices seem pretty spot on to me, but I was quite shocked at the 1 BDRM ones. Apparently the amount I pay in rent is actually *below* the average in Ft. Greene. And my rent hurts my soul something serious. Jeez, Brooklyn, you're killin' me here...

Anyways, enjoy, Brooklynites.

Two Bedroom Apartments

Cobble Hill

Total Properties for rent: 23

Sum Price: \$63239

Mean Price: \$2749

Brooklyn Heights

Total Properties for rent: 36

Sum Price: \$110863

Mean Price: \$3079

Williamsburg

Total Properties for rent: 395

Sum Price: \$802921

Mean Price: \$2032

Bay Ridge

Total Properties for rent: 76

Sum Price: \$111691

Mean Price: \$1469

Carroll Gardens

Total Properties for rent: 30

Sum Price: \$70750

Mean Price: \$2358

Park Slope

Total Properties for rent: 98

Sum Price: \$214218

Mean Price: \$2185

Bushwick

Total Properties for rent: 70

Sum Price: \$94280

Mean Price: \$1346

Fort Greene

Total Properties for rent: 25

Sum Price: \$53090

Mean Price: \$2123

Boerum Hill

Total Properties for rent: 8

Sum Price: \$18075

Mean Price: \$2259

One Bedroom Apartments

Cobble Hill

Total Properties for rent: 20

Sum Price: \$39658

Mean Price: \$1982

Brooklyn Heights

Total Properties for rent: 36

Sum Price: \$74985

Mean Price: \$2082

Williamsburg

Total Properties for rent: 269

Sum Price: \$451223

Mean Price: \$1677

Bay Ridge

Total Properties for rent: 82

Sum Price: \$79230

Mean Price: \$966

Carroll Gardens

Total Properties for rent: 44

Sum Price: \$76695

Mean Price: \$1743

Park Slope

Total Properties for rent: 119

Sum Price: \$201490

Mean Price: \$1693

Fort Greene

Total Properties for rent: 38

Sum Price: \$63095

Mean Price: \$1660

Bushwick

Total Properties for rent: 60

Sum Price: \$75850

Mean Price: \$1264

Boerum Hill

Total Properties for rent: 20

Sum Price: \$38167

Mean Price: \$1908

Craigslist Hacks, Part Zwei

2006-07-14
Brooklyn, New York

Since I was a wee Poeks in high school, the gift of the graph has grown strong in my heart. Back then I used to create these incredibly elaborate statistics and graphs on all manner of variables relating to the sports teams I had joined. Hundreds. Of. Pages. Yes, I was *That Girl*. In ninth grade I snagged the coveted "#1 Statistician" from the Varsity Volleyball Coach. By "coveted" I of course mean "first ever" and by "#1" I mean "only." I was a popular gal back in the day... yessiree...

Now that I'm a programmer by profession, I can put these OCD tendencies to good use. For you! I've reworked the stats from my Brooklyn Rent Mystery Machine into graph form! I know, I'm so excited I just peed a little. Just a little. I've got a cron job going that will collect data on rents in Brooklyn for various neighborhoods, which then will be plotted on a graph showing trends over time. If you don't think that's kinda cool, then you're no friend of mine. And you were *definitely* never #1 Statistician.

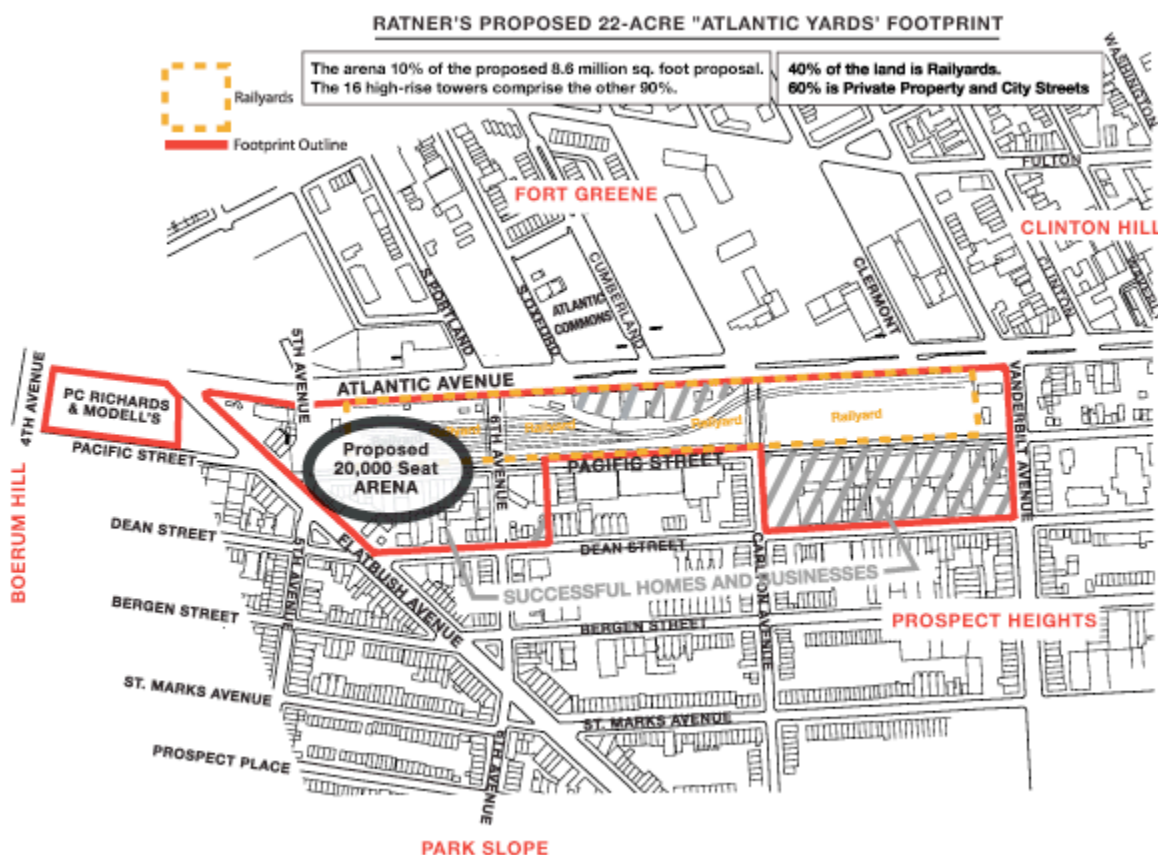
Anyways, have a look-see at the [Brooklyn Rents Graphs](#).*

* NB: As of this writing there is only two days worth of data, but it'll become more impressive and fabulous over time. Promise.

Develop, Don't Destroy Brooklyn

2006-07-20
Brooklyn, New York

On Sunday, Agent 99 and I went down to Grand Army Plaza to check out a rally against this:



The proposed Atlantic Yards Project is a shady bid by real estate developer Bruce Ratner, the man that brought us such sad Brooklyn dead zones as the Atlantic Mall and MetroTech. The project envisions stuffing a 20,000 seat arena, 17

skyscrapers, 7000 housing units and over 600,000 sq ft of office space into a 22 acre area of Prospect Heights.

Imagine, for a moment, that when the developers first conceived of the Chrysler Building they mused, "Ya know, I really like the idea of one Chrysler Building, but why not 17 of them! In a row!"

Beyond the simple audacity of suddenly erecting nearly 20 massive edifices splat in the middle of downtown Brooklyn (thus casting [my neighborhood in darkness](#) throughout most of the winter -- remember, Brooklyn's tallest building is currently the Williamsburg Savings Bank), there are many [issues worth getting all riled up about](#), including the abuse of eminent domain, diversion of \$1/2m in tax dollars, insane traffic in an already insane area, and false promises of both affordable housing and permanent jobs.

In response, 4000 Brooklynites stomped out to Park Slope for a good old fashioned protest featuring many local community leaders and councilpersons, as well as Brooklyn homies Rosie Perez, Steve Buscemi, and Dan Zanes.

If you're interested in learning more about the project, check out the sites below, but if not, I've got some purty pictures, too.

[Develop, Don't Destroy Brooklyn](#)
[Atlantic Yards Report](#)
[No Land Grab](#)
[On NY Turf: Atlantic Yards](#)

I've got chills, they're multiplying

2006-09-07

Brooklyn, New York

I know, I've been remiss in my blogging duties. Life, she is stressful of late. So instead of a lengthy diatribe about The Life and Times of, I give thee this pithy chat.

Hildi: This iChat is weird. iChat is so much more evolved.

Poeks: [Wieso?](#)

Hildi: There are little bubble things. Like cartoon bubbles. It's all new to me.

Poeks: It's a whole new [Welt](#). Speaking of welts... we had to take poor Jax to the emergency vet this morning.

Hildi: What? Again? Oh wait that was [Digger](#).

Poeks: When The Hulk woke up Jax's whole body was covered in huge welts. He apparently had an allergic reaction to something, so he had to have steroid and Benadryl shots.

Hildi: Awww.

Poeks: Yeah, poor thing.

Hildi: But he's ok now.

Poeks: Yeah, he looks much better. Have to give him Benadryl for a few days. I think I've reached my pet crisis quota. I feel like I've spent more time at the vet in the past two weeks than sleeping.

Hildi: Last week [Hildi's boyfriend] took Phoebe [his cat] to the vet because she kept peeing everywhere. And it turns out, after forking over 300 bucks, that she has a urinary tract infection. Which I just recently had. So I feel her pain.

Poeks: Aw poor kittle.

Hildi: Poor Phoebes. They stuck a thermometer up her butt, but she kind of seemed to like it. She didn't mind it at all.

Poeks: [Hildi's boyfriend]'s cats are kind of kinky.

Hildi: I think because they're virgins. A lot of repressed sexual energy.

Poeks: Yeah, like mormons gone wild.

Dr E. the Vigilante

2006-12-22

New York, New York

Exciting things always happen when I'm home sick. From [Hildi's blog](#):

"i got mugged tonight on the corner of e.4th st and 2nd ave.

after a fantastic holiday dinner with friends at mamlouk, [dr.e](#) and i were strolling down 2nd ave towards the F train stop, chatting and slowly digesting the six course meal we'd just consumed. suddenly i felt a forceful tug at a shopping bag that i had hooked onto my arm. once i realized what was happening, i tightened my arm in an effort to hold onto the bag, but the handles ripped easily. i fell to the ground from the force and the man made off with the shopping bag. i heard dr.e cry "help!"

and it wasn't until then that i actually felt scared.

it took me a second to get back on my feet and once i did, i saw the most bizarre thing. the thief was laying face flat on the sidewalk not five feet from me and dr.e was prodding his back with the spoke of her opened umbrella! the rain had made the streets slick and he had fallen as soon as he turned to run the other way. "what are you doing? give it back!" yelled dr.e. i was afraid that he would turn around and attack her so i told her to let him go. out of nowhere a young girl in a red jacket joined in, "what are you doing?" the man got back up and began to run with the girl right behind him. it seems the two were together. one to nab the bag and the other to act as a distraction, to act as though she would chase him down.

the contents of that shopping bag: one h&m long sleeve shirt, nubbly and worn from frequent wash and wear. one pair of leather gloves, very wrinkly and having a dime sized hole in the cashmere lining of the right glove. one doggie bag full of lamb kebab and egyptian rice, a delectable and probably the most worthy item in the bag. luckily i had been holding my clutch purse under the other arm, and they hadn't seen it when they pegged me as their next victim.

i had wondered if it would just be a matter of time, a matter of probability. but it's more than that. time, place, luck, what you are wearing, how you are walking- all of those things factor in. so i guess it could happen again, easily enough. maybe i'd better invest in a fanny pack.

lastly but not leastly, i would like to say thanks again to dr.e for being such a good and protective friend. i can't believe she ran after a man twice her size and struck him with her umbrella. for some reason, i keep thinking that she had one foot on the man's back, but this might just be my head glorifying her attack. regardless, she is a very brave woman. i cannot say i could have done the same for her, had she been the victim.

dr.e, i am going to buy you a very nice umbrella since you broke yours in an attempt to so valiantly reclaim my bag."

Mac the Knife

2007-01-25

Westfield, New Jersey

So. I'm not really sure what exactly what my damage is, but in three business days I will be the proud parent of a shiny new [Macbook Pro](#). It's kind of hard to justify this somewhat frivolous purchase... after all it cost *substantially* more than my dandy 20" iMac. I figure I'll go into the office more often to make up for it. It may mean I will have to get up earlier than 10 AM sometimes, but that is the kind of sacrifice I'm willing to take for a new Mac.

I'd been hemming and hawing for a while about it, what with the impending release of [Leopard](#). I'm not really so much of a new tech type of gal myself -- my iPods have all been gifts or hand-me-downs, I've never and probably never will own a PDA, and last year was the first time I'd ever gotten a cellphone that wasn't a near cousin of those huge, rectangular monstrosities from the 80s. But computers, they are my kryptonite.

I'm sick, I know. So... anyone want a used Dell Inspiron 600m? It doesn't have Windows installed on it (Ubuntu, natch), but eet could be ahranged. Sadly, it's only got on-board graphics, so no [Mac x86](#) ;)

Strangers with Candy

2007-05-09

New York, New York

Although a lot has transpired in my life since last I wrote, today I'm going to write about the important things in life. Namely: Amy Sedaris.

Yesterday Agent 99, Hildi, and I shlepped up to Chelsea for an Amy Sedaris reading at... some wine store. I arrived the least late to the affair, so I made a bee-line to the back of the ever-expanding, Amy-lovin' crowd. Hildi and Agent 99 made their way toward me a little later, but no worse for wear, since Ms Sedaris was fashionably late.

At length, the store's proprietors placed a chair about an arm's length in front of me.

"Ohmigod, Amy's gonna be right..." I squealed with delight, only to be interrupted by Hildi's booming, "HI!!!"

I turned, and who was there, tapping feverishly at Hildi's shoulder, but Amy Thedarith herself!

"Mmmmmhmmpphb," she muttered appreciatively at Hildi's dress, unable to extricate the lollipop from her mouth.

The "reading" itself was brief but lovely. Amy's went through a couple of her craft's from *I Like You: Hospitality Under the*

Influence, including the Hangover Eye Burrito. This she demonstrated with a sack of navy beans, felt eyes, glue, and a hapless assistant she chose from the crowd.



This poor fellow looked rather reluctant to ascend to the top of the desk on which Amy stood but was game, albeit either really nervous or mentally challenged. First, he filled Amy's hose with too many beans, causing a small shower of uncooked navy beans to be sprinkled upon the floor and crowd. Then, after Amy wrenched the tube of glue from his shaking hands and applied the felt eyes to the burrito, he demonstrated the application of said burrito to his own eyes. Except he figured a good idea would be to put the burrito onto his face with the wet glue against his own eyes. I was at an unfortunate angle for the demonstration, but it seemed like one of the felt eyes stuck to his face and then fell sadly to the floor.

Here's a photo of Amy exasperatedly peeling the Eye Burrito off the poor man's face, but it sorta just looks like she's beating him about the head.



Afterwards, Amy answered a round of questions from the audience with her characteristic wit and ridicule.

"Amy, I'm having a theme party. The theme is "excess," and," started a young woman from the crowd.

"The theme's "excess," okay," continues Amy.

""Excess", and "nautical.""

"Excess *and* nautical?"

"Um, yeah."

"That sounds like an awful party."

I didn't bring my copy of the book, since I was convinced it would be too crowded for us to get in anyway, but Hildi did! And Amy signed it! Hildi did not, however, ask Amy what to do to avoid being all red-faced on the subway after a night of heavy drinking. Oh well. I bet Amy would have had some very practical advice. Like maybe, "That sucks for you. Maybe you should try taking a cab."



More random folks' photos on [Flickr](#).

Some choice bits from YouTube.

Clips from Amy on the Martha Stewart Show

Amy on Letterman

[Amy on Conan](#)
[Amazon promo](#) for [her book](#)
[More on YouTube](#)

As Far as I Can Spit

2007-06-12
Brooklyn, New York

We're back from Thailand! Pictures and commentary to follow (must get my film developed). The thing I missed most about New York? New Yorkers' complete and almost pathological indifference to their fellow man... or so I thought.

Me: So some woman spat at me last night.

Hildi: Haha. What??

Me: I had just woken from a nap and was going to the bodega to get cigarettes. Some woman and her three children are walking toward me, me still half asleep. And she goes, "Don't bump me, whitey."

Hildi: Hahahahahaha. OMG.

Me: I'm like, ok, she cannot have possibly said what I think she just said. So I walk past her, and sure enough, out pops a meaty arm to bump into my side.

Hildi: Oh man. And then she spat at you?

Me: So, still walking, I turn around, half confused, half what the fuck?

Hildi: I would have scratched her eyes out.

Me: She's turned turned too and has this look that I assume was intended to look tough and angry. But it just sort of looked like a petulant child's pout.

Hildi: Did you do anything? Like hit one of her small children?

Me: So, still scowling, I turn and continue, and then this large, grown woman *spits* at me. I just kept walkin'.

Hildi: She's obviously crazy.

Me: It was really disturbing.

Hildi: Yeah. How old were the kids?

Me: Two were very small and one was older, but I didn't get a really good look. It was kind of sad and weird, I guess.

Hildi: It is. Walking away was probably the best thing you could have done.

Me: Yeah, I didn't really want to engage a large, crazy woman.

Hildi: I might have said something if she were alone, but with the little kids it's not like you can start yelling at her.

Me: Right. Clearly the small children of a spitter have enough to worry about as it is.

Hildi: Exactly.

Agent 99's Thailand Photos

2007-06-18
Bangkok, Thailand

Still haven't gotten mine developed, but Agent 99 has hers posted up on Flickr.

[Check 'em out.](#)



Fixed that thing

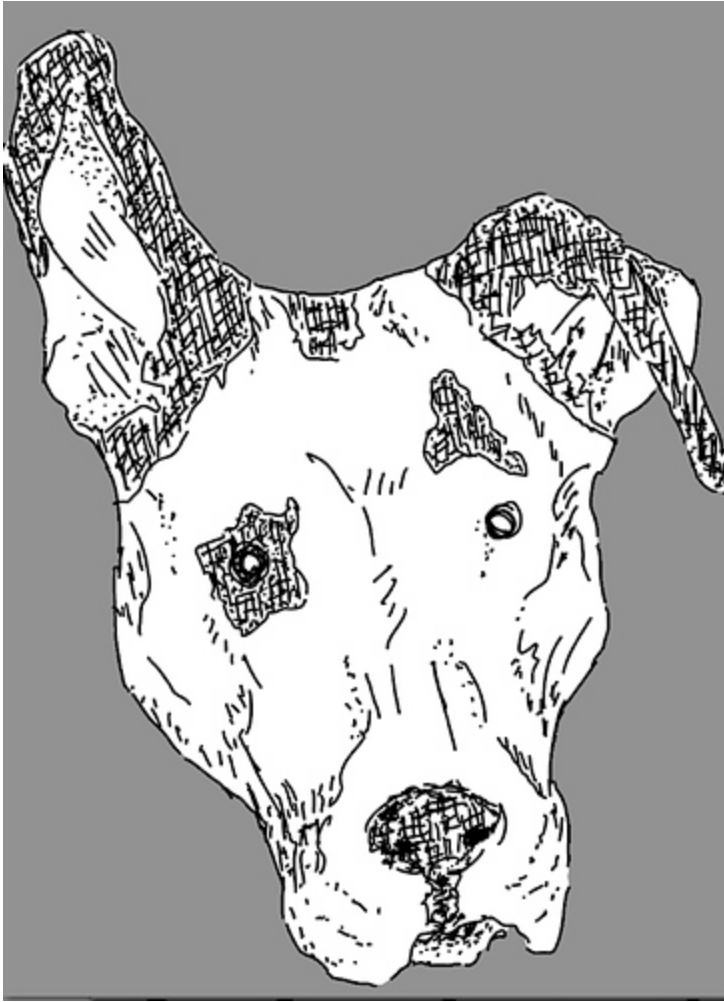
2007-07-28
Brooklyn, New York

I finally fixed my RSS feed. Sorry 'bout that, y'all.

Jax Head

2007-08-30
Brooklyn, New York

Drew a Jax for a t-shirt design. [Get yours](#) while supplies last!



No, I won't chicken out

2007-09-01

Brooklyn, New York

Agent 99's cousin is taking a monumental step in his life: for the first time ever he is moving out of The Brooklyn. I know what you're thinking. "Who would ever want to leave The Brooklyn," you're thinking. Well, fortunately he's not going far, just a short (and by "short" I mean long) train ride across the East River and waaay up Manhattan in Washington Heights. To mark this life-altering event, we spent the day doing Brooklyn-type things: eating at Terrace Bagels, riding the Cyclone in Coney Island, getting a Brooklyn-shaped tattoo. Okay, truth be told, *I* didn't get a Brooklyn-shaped tattoo. But Agent 99's cousin did. So yeah. Not only was this second time I'd ridden the world famous Brooklyn Cyclone, but it was also the second time I've subsequently suffered from world famous back and neck pain the next day. Y'all, I cannot in good conscience recommend riding the world famous Brooklyn Cyclone. In fact, I think that rather than require us to give them six US dollars to ride this roller coaster, they should just straight away give us, say, six thousand dollars in projected legal fees. I'm just sayin'. Also: 99's cousin's friend N said that her friend was riding the Cyclone and a *piece of the Cyclone fell on his head!* A piece of the world famous Cyclone. His head. My girlfriend's cousin's friend's friend. It's true. I have a totally awesome photo of Agent 99 holding on for dear life to the lone horizontal bar separating her from instant and painful death. Unfortunately what I do not have is a scanner, so you're just going to have to use your very colorful imaginations. Below, the Brooklyn Cyclone giving me the ole \$6 massage:



Art Blog!

2007-09-09
Brooklyn, New York

I had a dream last night about my estranged cousin Jane. This morning as I was writing the date in my sketchbook, I realized that today is her birthday. Hi, Jane. Happy 30th, wherever you are.

So anyway. I just wanted to let you know that I started an [Art Blog\(!\)](http://art.poeks.com). Check it out:

<http://art.poeks.com>

On Art

2007-10-06

Brooklyn, New York

Agent 99 and I found at apartment! It's a spacious number in Carroll Gardens, and we're both rather excited.

In other news, here's a repost from an entry I wrote for le [work blog](#):

"I'm an artist." The words roll off my tongue as smoothly as a mouthful of gravel. "I'm a musician," says the man at the coffee shop in Williamsburg. And we, reflexively, think "no, you, my friend, are a *waiter*." But what is it about art that makes us humans so uncomfortable? What is art anyway?

It's a tiresome question, I know, but it's been brought to my attention again recently upon reading [Alberto Ruiz's recommended Practice and Science of Drawing](#), by Harold Speed (available, by the way, for [free download from the Gutenberg Project](#)). Here's what ole Harold has to say about art:

"Here is a savage, shouting and flinging his arms and legs about in wild delight; he is not an artist, although he may be moved by life and feeling. But let this shouting be done on some ordered plan, to a rhythm expressive of joy and delight, and his leg and arm movements governed by it also, and he has become an artist, and singing and dancing (possibly the oldest of the arts) will result."

"Or take the case of one who has been deeply moved by something he has seen, say a man killed by a wild beast, which he wishes to tell his friends. If he just explains the facts as he saw them, making no effort to order his words so as to make the most telling impression upon his hearers and convey to them something of the feelings that are stirring in him, if he merely does this, he is not an artist, although the recital of such a terrible incident may be moving. But the moment he arranges his words so as to convey in a telling manner not only the plain facts, but the horrible feelings he experienced at the sight, he has become an artist. And if he further orders his words The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Practice & Science Of Drawing to a rhythmic beat, a beat in sympathy with his subject, he has become still more artistic, and a primitive form of poetry will result."

"Or in building a hut, so long as a man is interested solely in the utilitarian side of the matter, as are so many builders to-day, and just puts up walls as he needs protection from wild beasts, and a roof to keep out the rain, he is not yet an artist. But the moment he begins to consider his work with some feeling, and arranges the relative sizes of his walls and roof so that they answer to some sense he has for beautiful proportion, he has become an artist, and his hut has some architectural pretensions. Now if his hut is of wood, and he paints it to protect it from the elements, nothing necessarily artistic has been done. But if he selects colours that give him pleasure in their arrangement, and if the forms his colour masses assume are designed with some personal feeling, he has invented a primitive form of decoration. And likewise the savage who, wishing to illustrate his description of a strange animal he has seen, takes a piece of burnt wood and draws on the wall his idea of what it looked like, a sort of catalogue of its appearance in its details, he is not necessarily an artist. It is only when he draws under the influence of some feeling, of some pleasure he felt in the appearance of the animal, that he becomes an artist. Of course in each case it is assumed that the men have the power to be moved by these things, and whether they are good or poor artists will depend on the quality of their feeling and the fitness of its expression."

Clearly art is a very personal thing indeed, which is probably why my rote reaction is to vomit a little in my mouth. But since we're talking about the subject, I might as well offer up my own personal definition. Upon reflection, I am struck by the similarities of the *feeling* of creating art and of viewing it. Both cause one to be thrown with such force into almost an alternate dimension of visual experience. So to me, art is the experience of swooning at life. It may be more rudimentary than Harold's more technical, two-pronged Feeling and Execution, but for me it's that moment of breath catching in your throat, of your heart suddenly dropping into your stomach. Whether walking down the street looking for things to photograph, sitting slack-jawed before the [Dying Slave](#) at the Louvre, or experiencing the divine curve of the model's back at drawing class, to me anything that causes one to step outside the mundanity of the everyday and just *swoon* for a moment at life is truly an act of art.

Your milage may vary, of course, and really, since we're speaking of such personal things, I wouldn't have it any other way. So [Dave McKean](#), I love you dearly, but I cannot agree with you that design is not art. The rhythmic curves of [Pierre Paulin's orange slice chair](#), a work of design, are just too swoon-worthy to me.

And me? I'm no artist. I'm just a Swooner at Life, thanks.

Packin' Up My Bags

2007-10-21

Brooklyn, New York



I took a shot of myself with PhotoBooth in between sessions of feverous (and somewhat panicked) packing. Although I'm not really sad to leave my little hovel, it did make me nostalgic for one hot minute. It is *my* little hovel. So in honor of my first one bedroom apartment, here's a list of things I will miss about ole Ashland PI in Brooklyn:

- * Bitch Troll neighbor upstairs who always leaves "helpful" notes
- * Bitch Troll neighbor upstairs throwing away my lawn chair
- * Copious ceiling water damage
- * Duct-taped together cabinetry

- * Kids who egg my apartment building
- * Crazy ladies who spit at me
- * Mutant roaches the size of small dogs
- * Broken... door bells, window grates, dryers, etc
- * Creepy bodega guys who ask me out (although they will probably be replaced by brand new creepy bodega guys)
- * Electricity and/or heat in common areas spontaneously being shut off
- * Landlord who cashes rent checks months after payment

Okay maybe not... I *will* however miss a) the rent and b) the puppies upstairs. Carroll Gardens/Boerum Hill, here we come!

A Day in the Life of

*2007-11-08
Brooklyn, New York*

Today I found a piece of cardboard in my bread (??), but I ate it anyway.

Also, we're all moved in! Yay!

TED Talks - Jill Bolte Taylor: My stroke of insight

*2008-03-19
Brooklyn, New York*

"Neuroanatomist [Jill Bolte Taylor](#) had an opportunity few brain scientists would wish for: One morning, she realized she was having a massive stroke. As it happened -- as she felt her brain functions slip away one by one, speech, movement, understanding -- she studied and remembered every moment. This is a powerful story about how our brains define us and connect us to the world and to one another."

Oh Coraline no

2008-04-02

Brooklyn, New York

Ugh, is [Coraline](#) *really* not coming out until January 16, 2009?! 2009? I'm not sure I can wait that long. I recently read Agent's 99 copy, and the novella has quickly moved through the ranks to become, perhaps, my favorite Neil Gaiman children's book. Hell, I even picked up a copy of Subterranean's special edition of [Coraline](#) (illustrated by Dave McKean). I'm looking into ways of making 2009 arrive faster, but so far no luck.

In the mean time, there's this:

And this:

And this, which is completely unrelated to the film, but has some really neat cut-out illos:

If that's not enough to convince you, then perhaps the fact that Jennifer Saunders and Dawn French star as Miss Forcible and Miss Spink!

Lazy Esses Coming to a Bookstore Near You

2008-04-15

Brooklyn, New York

As a lover of all the Sedaris children, I was delighted to learn that David is soon coming out with [a new tome](#) to delight all and sundry, *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*. He'll be in town at Barnes & Noble, Union Square on June 4th if anyone wants to join me!

