

GEOFFREY LITWACK

2004 ANNUAL

2 *Geoffrey Litwack*

Geoffrey Litwack 2004 Annual

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This volume is dedicated to the diarist Robert Shields.

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PREFACE

So: I'm including my journals again this year after deciding against it in 2003, but this time around they're more heavily edited, not only to prevent embarrassing myself but also to cut (some of) the boring schlock that occupies my mind.

I wrote fewer short stories this year in favor of doing paid stuff (which I can't include) and working on my novel. Thanks to a superior printer, grayscale images can be included in this edition, so I went crazy and stuck in a reproduction of *Jokes no. 1*, my first comic book. I had a totally rugged bout with anxiety this year, and I'm including some of the material that generated. My advice: if you suffer from anxiety and it's fucking up your life, seek out cognitive-behavioral therapy. It's hard, but it's long-term more effective than anything else, even SSRIs.

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D.F.W.', written in a cursive, slanted style.

INTRODUCTION

Kate Litwack

INT. LITWACK FAMILY ROOM, DAY

GEOFFREY LITWACK and his sister KATE lounge on the beige Ikea couches in the sparsely decorated room. Bored, Kate vomits into the potted African violet on the coffee table between them. Geoff continues reading *The New Yorker* and giggles, adjusting his soundproof Bose headphones.

KATE

What's so funny?

Geoff

This cartoon. Did you just throw up?

KATE

Yeah.

BEAT.

GEOFF

(Lowers his headphones)

So, I was thinking about letting you write the intro to my 2004 Annual.

KATE

Really? Are you serious?

GEOFF

Yeah.

KATE

That's awesome. What should I write?

GEOFF

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I don't know. Whatever you want.

KATE

Cool. So can it be called, like...
"Geoffrey Litwack's Penis Enlargement
Application"?

GEOFF

(Laughs uproariously)

Sure, yeah. Cause everyone knows Geoffrey
Litwack needs none of that!

KATE

T.M.I, Geoff. But can I really
do that??

GEOFF

Yeah, if you want.

BEAT.

EXT. LITWACK BACKYARD, NIGHT

PUMPKIN, the Litwack's cat, stirs in her sleep. After a
minute or two, she yawns, stretching her paws out in
front of her. She looks up at the moon, which has taken
on a green glowing quality. Her pupils grow huge.

PUMPKIN

Meow!

MUSIC CUE: Eerie Orchestral.

INT. LITWACK FAMILY GUEST ROOM, CONTINUOUS

Geoffrey tosses and turns on the fold-out mattress.
Fitful dreams.

GEOFF

Mmmgadvuergerdjfhdsdnmmfllzzzmmmm....

INT. KATE'S GUEST HOUSE, CONTINUOUS

Kate sits on her couch, reading Calvin and Hobbes. Her Popular Season One DVD flashes on the TV in front of her.

POPULAR SEASON ONE DVD
(On TV)

"If I wanted your opinion, the
subject would be pancakes."

EXT. LITWACK BACKYARD, MINUTES LATER

Pumpkin slinks around the pool, never taking her eyes off the now bright green moon. Fur bristling, she lowers herself to a crouched position under a beach chair. Sensing danger. Suddenly, there is a CRASH of LIGHTENING and a bright green FLASH in the sky.

INT. KATE'S GUEST HOUSE, CONTINUOUS

Kate jumps, the comic book flying out of her lap. She gets up and draws the curtains back. Rain begins to pelt the windows, obscuring her vision. Her eyes narrow. Something strange is happening.

INT. LITWACK FAMILY GUEST ROOM, CONTINUOUS

Illuminated by more flashes of lightening, Geoffrey lies awake, eyes disturbingly wide and unblinking. He twitches, but he cannot move his arms or legs. He is frozen. His throat makes desperate wheezing noises as a GREEN MIST drifts through the cracks in the window panes and crawls onto his bed. The mattress begins to shake.

INT. KATE'S GUEST HOUSE, CONTINUOUS

Kate turns her back to the window. She bends to pick up her comic book when she hears a sound. She straightens up, letting it drop to the floor again. She grabs the remote and turns off the TV. Cautiously, she listens. She hears it again. She moves close to the window again. What IS that?

EXT. LITWACK BACKYARD, CONTINUOUS

Pumpkin sits on the beach chair now, HOWLING AT THE NEON MOON. An unearthly wail.

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INT. LITWACK FAMILY GUEST ROOM, CONTINUOUS

Geoffrey is wheezing more now as he becomes completely engulfed by the strange green mist. The mattress shakes violently.

INT. KATE'S GUEST HOUSE, CONTINUOUS

Kate goes to her door. She opens it and runs out into the pouring rain, just as the electricity goes out.

EXT. LITWACK BACKYARD, CONTINUOUS

Kate looks around for the source of the noise. She sees Pumpkin, soaking wet, howling at the moon.

KATE

KITTY! KITTY NO!

She runs to the cat and sweeps her into her arms. Pumpkin keeps moaning, eyes fixed on the moon as if hypnotized. Kate runs back to her guest house and puts Pumpkin inside. The cat still wails. Kate runs to the Litwack house and opens the door. Before she goes inside, something catches her eye.

KATE'S POV:

The green mist surrounds the windows of the guest room. Light flashes inside and a slow rumble rattles the window panes.

Kate SCREAMS and runs inside.

INT. LITWACK FAMILY HOUSE, CONTINUOUS

Kate rushes through the kitchen, down the seemingly endless hallway to the guest room and throws open the door.

INT. LITWACK FAMILY GUEST ROOM, CONTINUOUS

Geoffrey lies unmoving on the mattress, the green mist swirling around his torso. His eyes still wide, tears brimming and tumbling down his face in all directions. Kate screams again and runs over. She furiously bats at

the mist which has no effect. She shakes Geoff by the shoulders.

KATE

GEOFF!!! GET UP!!!! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!?!?

Geoffrey's throat makes another wheezing noise.

KATE

WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE!!!

Kate runs to the kitchen and grabs a giant can of CRISCO and the DUSTBUSTER.

INT. LITWACK FAMILY GUEST ROOM, CONTINUOUS

Kate runs back in and grabs Geoff by the shoulders, hauling him to the floor where he drops with a stone-like THUD. The green mist stops swirling and fuses into itself, becoming a giant GREEN GLOWING BALL. It hisses.

KATE

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU!?!?

Flashes emit from inside the ball and it hisses some more before WHISPERING in a frightening voice.

MIST BALL

We come from Planet Granted Five. We came to punish the One who Takes For Granted. Our mission is not yet complete. Move out of our way, cosmically attractive Earth-inhabiter, or be destroyed.

Kate revs up the dust buster.

KATE

I don't think so, ASSBALL!!!

She LUNGES at the Mist with a loud cry and sinks the dust buster right into the middle of it. It hisses loudly as it begins to disappear into the mini vacuum.

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KATE

RUN, GEOFF! RUUUNNNNNNN!!!

Geoff lies on the floor, his arms and legs spasming to life, eyes blinking robotically.

MIST BALL

REVENGE WILL BE OURS, ATTRACTIVE
AND CAPABLE EARTH GIRL!!! WE WILL
MEET AGAIN!!!!

The mist begins to dissipate and drift back out the window cracks. At the last second, Kate grabs the can of Crisco and sprays a thick coating at the mist. It hisses loudly, becoming a shrill SCREAM as the mist becomes glutenous. As she sprays more, the mist begins to harden and crack as the screams become more violent. Spraying the last bit from the giant can, the mist stops screaming abruptly and EXPLODES INTO GREEN DUST that hisses and slowly disappears. Kate flings the can into a corner and runs over to her brother.

KATE

GEOFF!!! Are you okay?!!?
Speak to me!!

Geoffrey sits up slowly, dazed but certainly not confused.

GEOFF

Kate...we have to get to the hospital.

KATE

Oh my god, what happened??

GEOFF

NOW, KATE!!!

KATE

Okay! I'll get Mom and Dad!

Kate runs down the hall. Geoff looks out the window, fear in his eyes.

INT. LITWACK FAMILY CAR, 3:00AM

A confused Mother Litwack and Father Litwack drive a freaked out Kate and an agonized Geoff to the hospital.

MOTHER LITWACK

Why won't you tell us what happened??

GEOFF

BECAUSE, Mom! Just drive.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM, 3:30AM

Geoffrey and Kate sit far away from their parents. Geoffrey cradles a clipboard on his lap and shoots a suspicious look at his sister. Kate moves a few chairs over. Geoff continues to fill out his form. A few minutes later, he gets up and gives it to the nurse behind the counter. She looks at it and points to a door down the hall. He goes in and slams the door. BEAT. Kate watches the nurse, who sets the form next to her computer and gets up.

NURSE

Bathroom break, Marnie.
I'll be right back.

MARNIE(OS)

Okay.

Kate gets up and goes up to the desk, eyes on the paper. Silently, she slides it over the counter and reads it. Her eyes GO HUGE. She puts her hand over her mouth.

INT. HOSPITAL LOUNGE BACK ROOM, MINUTES LATER

Kate stands over a humming copying machine. The green copy light slides over her face.

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INT. POST-OP HOSPITAL ROOM, 5:00AM

Geoffrey lies on a blue cot, looking like hell. Kate sits next to him, solemn. A long minute passes.

KATE

So....hm. Wow.

Geoff gives her a dirty look. BEAT. Kate reaches into her pocket and brings out the copy she made of Geoff's form. He snorts.

GEOFF

Unfuckingbelievable.

KATE

Yeah. But you DID say....

GEOFF

KATE, no way. No FUCKING way.
Oh my god, I can't believe this. Fuck.

KATE

Yeah, alien mist. Pretty crazy.

Geoff tries to turn over, then remembers something and quickly stops. BEAT. He tears up.

GEOFF

They could have taken ANYTHING.
ANYTHING BUT THIS!!! This is...

He chokes up. Kate looks around.

KATE

Mom and Dad are coming.

GEOFF

Fucking great. I can't believe this.

KATE

Yeah. So even though you said
I could write that...story....
for the Annual, you're not going
to let me do it?

GEOFF

Not NOW, Kate, are you kidding?!?

KATE

Okay. Damn.

TENSE BEAT. Kate gets an idea.

KATE(CONT.)

Well....maybe I could write the story
of HOW it happened. It's so incredible,
everyone would think it was a joke. Nobody
would ever believe it, you know? It might be
kind of funny, actually.

LONG BEAT. Geoff looks thoughtful, then finally smiles.

GEOFF

Alright. It could work. But leave out
the part where I shit my pants, okay?

Kate takes his hand and squeezes it.

KATE

Okay.

THE END

2004 JOURNAL

1/1

Well, so, the first day of 2004. Not much fanfare, which is fine by me. I didn't even make it to midnight. I'm still in the middle of moving. Yesterday was a really hard day—I'm sore, tired, and yesterday I was anxious. I got in my new place, which is a great place, and almost had a panic attack because of, I don't know, jitters. I have to push through it, so today I'm going to spend an hour in there. I think when my sofa and bed are in I'll feel much more at home.

Right now I'm at my parents' house. I came last night for New Year's, and to get away from my life. I still have a lot to do, lots to move, and I need to find movers who will work today or tomorrow. It's all doable. I'm going to call the movers when I get home, and I think everything will work out.

It's 5:36pm, and I'm back from a trip to my new apartment. I don't know why all this is so hard. I'm exhausted, that's part of it, and I think I'm coming off an addiction to caffeine—I'm getting these headaches. I'm not eating well, drinking enough, but whatever. All this stuff has to get done.

My anxiety has been a little bit more frequent, but I feel like I'm coping with it pretty well. My depression, on the other hand, is on an upswing. I may get Bystritsky to increase my dose of Lexapro. I'm in it, I might as well be in all the way. Or maybe at the end of this I'll feel better. I don't know.

Right now I feel like shit. I should pamper myself. I'm no good if I can't function.

I have a goal, at least. My goal is to hustle for my expenses until I finish and sell my novel. After the novel is done, I'll consider getting a straight job. My mental health picture has to be complete, too.

I'm going to have to find my way around Beverly Hills. That should be fun, I hope. The library is going to have to be the hub, for a little while. I'll go there and write. Then I'll start walking there. Maybe I'll meet people. People. I need to share my life with someone. I hope it works with R. She's in Florida for a week. I have such a crush on her. I love her hair. Oh, R.

It doesn't feel like a new year. Maybe because I missed Dick Clark last night. It is, though. 2004. When I was a kid I never thought past 2000. I knew it would come. 2004 I never knew would come, but here it is. I'm excited. 2003 was actually terrible. Dad almost died. Nathalie and I broke up. I didn't do much work. I had an anxiety breakdown in San Francisco. I had very little sex. Man, I should be celebrating the end of that. 2004 can't help but be better.

Last night Kate said her New Year's resolution was to lose her virginity to a male supermodel. Nice one, Kate.

That's all I can think of. This time of year is always a lonely one for me—I want to be surrounded by friends and with a lover, but it never happens.

1/3

It's Saturday morning. I'm trying to get it together to make this last push to my new home in Beverly Hills. I couldn't be happier, basically, but it's mentally difficult to do this last bit. For the past two nights I've been sleeping twelve hours. The good news is I feel really rested and good. The bad news is I'm not quite done. This is so Geoffrey-typical: get up to the last bit and then stop. Well, not today. After I write this I'm going to get finished. My plan is to pack up every last thing in the apartment, put my car in 30-minute, and load it up to the gills. Then I'll go to Beverly Hills and unpack. Then back here, to load in everything that goes to the valley. Then I'm going to the library to get a card, then I'll unpack the stuff in my new apartment, then hit the Valley, taking this new route. That's a full day, right there. In my mind, it's the simplest thing, but the physicality of it makes it time-consuming.

Last night I dreamt about MacWorld. Steve Jobs told me he has cancer.

I might have to make two trips to Beverly Hills, but I'm cool with that. Today I'm going to walk around the neighborhood to find my lunch. I might even go to Subway and get a veggie sub. Tuna would be a risk, but veggies never hurt anyone. With mayo, I guess. What kind of bread?

I have no internet. It's a weird feeling. It might make me really productive to not have internet. I'm praying the library has it; that way, it would give me an incentive to go there in the morning, and I wouldn't have it at home. I might pay Sprint \$15/mo if I could get the Treo to work with my Mac. We'll see.

It's 9am. I got the best parking space for loading, so now I'm chill. It's definitely going to take two trips to the BH to get everything in. That's fine. I just have to start. If I can get the first trip done before noon, I'll be on track and on time with everything. If not, I'm in trouble.

God help me, I sort of want to have an orgasm. Maybe I will. I could do that and then pack up the car.

Had the orgasm. It was worth it. Now I'm packing again. I decided to start tracking my expenses month-to-month, to see if I can discern any wasteful patterns. I know, for example, that like everyone I buy food when I'm tired instead of cooking. Maybe I should instead prepare food ahead of time? Stuff like that.

1/8

Maybe this counts as killing time, but I'm going to make a journal entry. I'm at the library and should be working on my novel, but I'm feeling a little daunted. I'll do this first and see how I feel.

Speaking of seeing how I feel, my anxiety is doing a tiny, tiny little bit better. I read through the sixth chapter of the MAP-3 workbook last night, and it's actually improved my understanding of the physiology of anxiety, which is not only fascinating, it's helpful in controlling the symptoms. I definitely have anxiety and depression in combination. What I think is this: I have inherited genetic susceptibility to anxiety – I feel very deeply – but my

depression is rational, which is to say linked to the poor (improving) condition of my life and stuff like stress, exhaustion, etc. That to me says that if I see this program through, and work on the root causes of my depression, I might be able to make significant headway against both in this year.

In other news, I have some kind of a boil under the skin of my right jowl. Tonight I'm going to put Orajel on it and try puncturing it with a needle to see if it will drain. It feels hard to the touch. Gross, I know. I can't stand it any more. If a spider is laying eggs in there, I have to find out and do something about it.

Everything else is alright, basically. I'm getting used to Beverly Hills, which is an easy adjustment, as the place is so nice. I'm content in my new apartment but I can't stay in it all the time as it is too small and my neighbors are too...present. That's slightly uncomfortable but good; it makes me get out of the house. I'm looking forward to making money so I can afford to buy something and live an independent existence. Money money money: now that the illusions are gone, that's what it's all about. Well, it's good to face reality. Now I just have to make some money and I'll be fine. I have plans. We'll see how they go.

The big thing in my life now is the completion of my novel. I gotta finish it. I gotta. Not only is it time, saleable or not, I want it to be done. I know it can be sold. Lesser books get published all the time. If it's not a huge success, fine. Fine. I'll support it with a web presence and do the best that I can.

I haven't heard from R. for two days. She should be back in LA from Florida. If things don't pan out with R, the next school break is always right around the corner. I refuse to be sexually frustrated. It's been almost a year since I've had anything resembling satisfactory sex, and I'm not sixteen anymore. What I need to do is chill out and wait for R. to come to me on her own terms. Because I'm devilishly irresistible.

I'm not seeing much of my friends, but part of that has been Andreaa in Irvine and my not traveling. I will travel again. Maybe my next trip will be up North to see John.

The good news is that my 2003 Annual is almost together. I think I have the formatting CafePress needs down, and all that remains besides technical fiddling around is to get an introduction from Andreaa, who is always on time so no worries. And I have to make a web page, but that's no big deal. I'm pretty excited about it. Another book for the shelf. This last year produced four short stories, one unfinished. Maybe I should be aggressive about trying to get Honeybunnies published. I still have it out to the Land-Grant College Review. If that doesn't work, I'll edit and send it out to five more places.

It's 1:15. I'm going to have to start working sooner or later. I have to break through this ice. I'm living on ice: it's barren and cold on the surface, but good things are swimming around below.

Christ. Nothing else to say. At least I'm not letting my life get away from me. I haven't been spending my days lying around on the couch. Despite my anxiety, I've been pushing myself to go out and do things, and I have been. This month I have three goals: get something going with R., make some money and put it toward covering April expenses—April being the month I seriously try to achieve at least partial independence—and make a bunch of headway on my novel. The month is already almost a third over, so I have to stay focused and do what I'm going to do.

My parents: Sunday is Dad's birthday, but after that I'm thinking of telling Mom that I want to take a week-long break from talking on the phone. Maybe I'll drop by mid-way, but I think I want to reduce my daily phone dependence. I don't really have a shrink I can talk this over with. I could try bringing it up tomorrow. Or I could just talk to Mom about it. This dependence could definitely be tied up in my anxiety, and I want to find out, one way or another. Yeah, I should talk to her about it. I don't know. Just thinking about it is making me feel a little anxious and lightheaded, so what does that tell me?

What am I anxious about right now? I'm a little anxious just sitting here. (This cute blond woman from yesterday is back and smiled at me, so where before I was just sitting here doing my work, now I feel a little pressure, like I have an audience.) I'm

anxious about possibly being or getting a little dehydrated. I feel off-balance: I think that's due to too much oxygen to the brain? Sure enough, the muscles in my shoulders are tense and my chest feels a little tight. This is material for my journal. Long term, I'm a little anxious about helping Andreaa move and my shrink appointment tomorrow. But I do feel better for unpacking these things and writing in my journal. I'm going to work, I'm going to be productive, I'm going to make money, and I'm going to get over this anxiety.

1/12

I'm at the library. It's ten of one. I wanted to get here around ten or ten thirty, but I got waylaid talking to my neighbor (who might want to hire me to write his sitcom), and then I had to go to the post office to mail some things, including my watch back to Raymond Weil. I love that watch and I want it fixed, most definitely. So that's exciting.

Last night was Dad's birthday, his 75th, and we celebrated at this awful Italian restaurant where Robert Blake shot his wife. It was really, really bad. I talked to my Italian neighbor this morning and he told me that the best place in LA for Italian food is Madeo. Big surprise! This guy, Nino, who lives in my building actually works there. Pretty cool. He also told me that the Bona Sera girl is Canadian, of Portuguese descent. Good posture. She's beautiful.

Speaking of beauty, things seem to be rolling along with R. She called me this morning, all tired-sounding, and I called her back—she was busy, but I'll call her later. She sounds so cute on the phone. Such a small voice, so delightful. One of a handful of real girls in Los Angeles. Enough talk, though. We have got to get something going. I'm going to invite her to my apartment again. I'll tell her we can walk the streets, have a meal—California Pizza Kitchen, date restaurant extraordinaire, is right across the street. I guess it sort of hinges on my anxiety, but that's really shitty. I'm always going to have the anxiety. The question is how is it going to affect me.

God, speaking of my anxiety, I forgot to take my pill this morning. What should I do?

I think I should finish this, check out my books, walk home, get a Coke, take it, and then drive back for the rest of the afternoon, until closing. What else can I do, basically?

What I'm going to do is this: work for half an hour, on the novel, then buzz out. Plus minus an hour isn't going to make any difference. I'll see if I can get anything done right now.

1/13

Back in the library. I got here at three. It was a long morning, but productive. I mailed the PowerBook, got gas, Styrofoam plates (I don't have a dishwasher and my sink is a mess—let's face it, I hate doing dishes), Coke, cleaned my closet, and called Nancie, although I didn't get her on the phone. The closet turned out well—I was able to clear most of the space; all that was left was the cheap IKEA stool from my old kitchen and my sleeping bag. Sitting on the chair in there seemed like a stupid idea, so I disassembled, chucked it, and spread out the sleeping bag. When the urge strikes, I'm going to lock myself in and write. Anyway, I've cleared everything that was on my list at the start of the year. All the errands, I mean.

Not much else is going on. I'm feeling good, though. My mental health. Everything's cool. I'm comfortable in my library routine, although I suppose the productivity is not conclusively proven. Today I'm going to try to stay for six hours, which would be my longest stint yet. That would mean leaving at eight thirty, right before closing. We'll see how I do. I really, really want my novel to be done already. I'm deadly serious about being able to support myself by April. Mom talked to Kate's agent about voiceover work—you have to audition, but it sounds pretty easy. And if you work, if you're viable, you can make tons of money. That's what I want, isn't it, tons of easy money? I suppose.

I can't even talk about R. Action, now! I couldn't reach her yesterday. Maybe tonight. I'm going to tell her to come over, watch a movie, we'll take a walk. If not, I'll meet her anywhere, anytime. Just say the word. I have this anxiety problem, but as long as I don't get overwhelmed, it will be fine. I have to tell her

about it, but not yet, it's soon. I don't know how I got so crazy about her.

Andreaa is coming over tomorrow, and I'm looking forward to it. This will be the first time she's seen my new apartment. I'm going to ask her if she thinks I should get a rug. One more thing to lug around.

I wonder if there are any Brown people I knew in Beverly Hills. Probably not. Probably real cunts are the only people living here. I should really call that kid from my frat, though. I feel horrible that I ditched him. He's going to be busy. I'll get over my embarrassment and call anyway.

Maybe I'll cook dinner for myself when I get home. There's a chance I'll be too hungry and be like "fuck it" and go to SanSai, but you never know.

Luis is going to visit with John in NoCal, and I'm going to go back up there at the end of March. I'll buy a plane ticket next month, I guess.

It seems they have auction catalogs here. I have to remember to check for Kupka books.

So I think this is going to be a productive month for me. I'm not going to finish my novel, but I should be able to make a lot of headway. I should be able to finish a bunch of projects: my Qee entry, mixtape (with GarageBand), T207 fantasy cards, and my Annual.

Just did a little work on Book, the program I want to write in REALBasic, ebook software. There's nothing good on the Mac—or for the PC, really. I want to make something on the model of the iLife apps that has that special Mac polish and feel. I don't know if I'm going to be able to do it—I'm not much of a programmer—but maybe with help it's possible.

I think I may be turning into an ass man. Just something I've noticed. Those girls in their track suits are starting to kill me.

I bet the calmer I am and the more time I spend being calm outside of my house the more my anxiety will fade. I need to up the amount of interactions I have with people. That's one area where I'm drastically short. I have such high hopes for R. She would be such, such a nice addition to my life.

Me and the cat made up. I'm missing her again. I think she's sorry. She was pretty sweet last time I was over there, and so sleek. She looks like a cross between a cat and a sea otter. A cat otter.

Okay, now I'm going to try to get this Viewmaster graphic into vector format so I can do something useful with it. Shit—I never reinstalled Flash. Oh well. I'll do it later.

I am having just horrible trouble working. Maybe I should try opening Moon College, maybe that would help. I'll just stare at it if I have to.

1/15

The novel is going well. I'm working on it in a measured way for the first time, like, ever. The editing is really crucial. I wish I were a better writer, but I'm not, so the pruning and weeding stage is essential. And time consuming. If I finish by the end of next month, I'll be ecstatic. If I keep doing what I'm doing, I should be all right.

I feel blank. I don't know why. There's not an important thought in my head. I wish I had brought my printed copy of the chapters I'm working on. I feel like I needed to diagram a little bit, clarify. I have a tendency to get ahead of myself, run ahead of the plot. Mouth off.

Okay, well, I'm making progress on the novel. The second chapter is such a mess that the revisions I need to make are clear. The text isn't bad, and I feel like I have a good line of action, so maybe it will be okay. The prologue was okay. I'm feeling good about the novel. Not great, but good. I can't wait to finish and get it out there. I want my friends to read it. I want to be judged.

There is still a way to go, but the end is in sight. I just have to keep my head down and my shoulder forward.

My anxiety, on the whole, is better. I haven't been doing this program justice, and I haven't been pushing myself, as I should, but I'm improving. I mean, I'm going to taper off the drugs. That's going to be an adjustment. Best not to think about it. I wonder how much they're doing. We'll find out when I go off.

Pretty soon I'm going to ask the librarian if there's a place I can grab a sandwich around here. I'm hungry! I should have packed something. I could really go for some penne with pink cream sauce right about now. Or pesto. I could try buying pesto and dumping it on pasta. I'll think about it.

I said this before, but one nice thing is that I'm getting to the end of my errands and stupid little things I have to do. There were lots, going into this month, but I've whittled it down pretty effectively.

Freaking great news: I talked to the reference librarian, who said that there's a Subway attached to the 76 station on the corner of Crescent!! Nice. That's what's for lunch, boah. I should do more work on my novel before I leave (and give up my table) but I'm not going to. I'm hungry, so I might as well just go. Things are going well. I'm planning on staying here until six, seven. I'll court the electric finger of inspiration and see if I can finish the third chapter. That would be amazing.

I forgot my cell phone and I totally don't care.

1/21

Okay, here I am at the library—late, it's 12:15pm. I woke up, read a book, and slept until 11, which is why. Yesterday was a big writing day and I intend today to be the same.

This woman's laptop's fan was cycling on and off and I just couldn't take it anymore and moved rooms; however, when I shut my PowerBook and opened it again, it went down. I should try updating to 10.3.2 and see if that helps.

It's my newly fucked-up sleep schedule that's giving a helping hand to my panic. I need to shut off the lights and tuck myself into bed at an appointed time, not do a belly flop and have troubled sleep. Stating tonight.

OH CHRIST! I guess I am starting to feel a little overwhelmed. Bystritsky suggested that it's when your facilities for mediating 'overwhelmedness' get overloaded that you have panic attacks. Not enough sleep. Physical exhaustion. Other stressors. I think that the normally enjoyable flirting period I'm going through with R. is creating a little stress for me. So how do I counteract these problems without having a meltdown? Breathe. Relax. I think I'm going to try relaxing my shoulders.

I think that helped. Some of this anxiety stuff has to do with my weakness as a person; my character flaws. I'm easily tired, for example, so when I want to take initiative—even to walk across a room—there is an immediate block. Even to get my laptop and put my fingers to the keys sometimes presents a problem. Sometimes puts me to sleep. What can I do about this? I think exercise. That's what I talked about with Louis last night. He has a lot more energy. I could hear it in his voice. He's sharper. I don't have room for exercise equipment in my house, so I'm going to have to join a gym. That costs money, unfortunately. R. wants me to join 24 Hour Fitness, but I'm thinking the Y—which I should really look into. Is there a place I could walk from my house? Probably not. I would want to go three days a week and do weight training and cardio. I could listen to my iPod, zone out, go home, shower, and walk to the library. At some point I could add racquetball lessons into the mix. From what I've read on the internet, it sounds like you should visit a bunch of gyms and judge their cleanliness. Also, I realize that the new Park La Brea gym was pretty nice (small, but nice) and cheap. Whatever. It's something worth spending money on.

Speaking of spending money, I'm pretty pleased with my reconfiguration plan. The money going out will be balanced by the money coming in, and then some, if my estimates are correct. (Any cream will go towards April expenses.) I'll have this Tablet PC and will be able to begin experimenting with ebooks and

harvesting from Amazon.com. This is an important point, with the ebooks: NOTHING IS GOING TO GET SCANNED. I tried that shit already, and it was a huge pain. So will the Amazon technique be, but at least it's mindless. If I do one book a day, I'll be done in a year. This is a long-term project, so that's acceptable.

It's bad, it's wrong, but when the time comes I'm going to try eating my Clementine covertly in the library. I'm going to sit here at my table and peel the rind into the Ziploc bag. Stealth.

It's night. 8:37. Sort of a big juncture. I need to take a shit, pack my bag, call R., and head for the hills. My headache, which plagued me all day, was cured by my nap.

I'm making progress on my novel, but I need more style, more texture. I'm going to reread *The Art of Fiction* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and then go back to work. Unless I should keep doing what I've been doing, editing down, condensing, and then leave the book-reading for my final polish. It's just that I'm getting nervous as January draws to a close.

Man, I feel like shit.

1/23

It's ten in the morning. My life has been running awfully slow. I've been sleeping a lot; I took a three hour nap yesterday and then slept nine last night. I'm going to go with it; I figure my body is recouping from invisible damage.

Yesterday my Zelda Classics disc came from the Nintendo Power people and I spent two hours playing Zelda II. It's totally fun. I was telling Luis, I think the large field of vision you get with 2D games beats the predominantly first-person view which is so common in 3D. I'm probably going to play a little more now. I never beat the game, and that's what I plan on doing.

Man, otherwise. Otherwise I have a shrink appointment and I'm going to drive to the library after that so I can get my day of work in.

I think I'm going to redesign my annual cover. I'm going to add this Latin motto "No secrets under this roof." Which isn't exactly true; I cut all my journal entries. Still, it's a pretty good wrap-up of 2003.

In other news, I'm getting rolling on my screenplay. That's going to be my next project after my novel; it seems stupid to be in LA without writing and shopping a screenplay, and I think I might be able to sell it. Kate has done such a good job putting together a little network for me. I can just take it to Graham, maybe. The main thing is I have to produce. I have to finish this novel before I get sidetracked by anything else. The main thing is to sell it. I'm under a deadline, I have two more months. Three if I can rustle up some money for April. I really should be able to finish the novel in the span of a month. Nothing is so complicated. I just have to work hard and it will be done. I'm going to give it to my friends to read, of course. But. Anyway, all the neat ideas and projects I have going are great, but must be secondary. I'm doing fine. I just have to stay on track. Not finishing things is the albatross of my life, the great bird on my chest, and I've got to do something about that.

Fucking sigh. That's it. Shrink, library. I'm going to try to get everything up on eBay for this weekend, too.

It's almost four, and I'm back at the library, which closes at six. Kim is here, but I got aced out of my usual spot, so I'm sitting in the other room. My shrink appointment went pretty well, I guess, and I had lunch by myself in the rapidly declining Ambala Dhaba.

The challenge now is to devise a chapter which is kind of slow and meditative. Just hanging out on the moon and getting miserable. I should use my anxiety handbook to help me describe a panic attack.

God, I don't know. I guess I'll open the fucker up and stare at it until my eyes tear.

I am in the middle of a lousy day. It's noon. I've been up since eight thirty. I spent all that time on the internet. It took me two hours to have an orgasm. Anyway, I should be two hours into my work at the library by now.

I think I'm going to have to get a job. I don't know what else I can do. Unless I can get some more freelance writing work, somehow. I need to concentrate harder, become rawer and faster. Whatever bullshit mental block I have about writing, deadlines, production, and finishing: have to go. I'm sick of myself.

Maybe I should just try to write more. Maybe I should turn injection into a book weblog and try to review the books I read. I don't know if it's a good idea. Maybe a better idea would be to put the weblog on hiatus.

I think it might be a matter of conditioning and response. Right before I wrote the preceding sentence, I got up to attend to my boiling pot of ramen. When I came back to sit down on the couch, the first thought I had—it wasn't even that, it was a sub-thought, no, a pre-thought—was that I should fire up the internet and read something. Or read a book. Do anything but work on my journal entry. I get stuck on something, and my attention wavers. I distract myself. I get a lot done when I'm concentrating on the work at hand.

Anyway. I wonder if it would be possible to wrap up the preview draft of the novel this week. I have six days. Then I can celebrate with the Super Bowl. I hit Kinko's in the morning, make my copies, and watch football and drink. I could walk to a bar and walk myself back home, if I wanted.

I'm going to stay in today and work. Good. Good. I'm making a new draft of Moon College, d3, which will be a totally brutal draft. I'm going to rip shit out and REFORM it. I think I'm going to get rid of Syndic. I may also dispense with Luke Skywalker Chang. He doesn't do much. Anyway. I'm on the right track. The method I have of segmenting parts is helping me tighten this fucker up.

Fuck this. I'm not getting anywhere.

2/11

Here I am in the library, back in my regular routine. It's great. I just finished my map of the Tranquility campus—still needs some finishing touches, but it's basically done. I did get here late, so now it's 4:41. I could stay until nine, if I wanted. We'll see. I'm tired and resistant to working, but if I can get this "Nothing Happens" chapter edited, I'll go back. And maybe buy some groceries. I'm either going to buy groceries at Whole Foods or get more cookies at CVS. I'm trying not to spend money, but eventually I'm going to have to buy some food. If I did go to Whole Foods, I would get:

.5lb of cheese—it's a lot, but I use it when I buy it.
1 bag of salad.
Fruit.
Olives.
Silk.
4x Pomi.
Two onions.
Frozen lasagna.

I don't know what's going on with R. We have a date for Friday, but I was hoping she'd be on my side and we could hang out. In retrospect, I should have gone to the Farmer's Market that one time, but I was so wiped out. Time flows in one direction. Anyway, I don't know what to do. Do I want to be her boyfriend? The thing is, I got this email from B. asking when I was going to show her my apartment ("take me to your apartment") and just that brought out the beast in me.

Yeah, so, my main problem is how sick I am of my novel and how unable I have been to get any work done on it. Right now, for instance, I would like nothing better than to walk home, hit CVS for cookies, get food from Subway, get my mail, settle in at home, watch the Simpsons, read *The Fortress of Solitude*, jerk off, and then watch *The OC* and *Porco Rosso*.

All right, well, I just read the first chapter of *FoS* and it's really, really good so far. European while at the same time EXPLICITLY

American. You get his drift. I had no idea Lethem could write like this, no idea, but I am on my ass.

I am going to go home. I read through my novel and feel a little better. It needs an editor, but nothing's perfect. I'm going to pack it up and head home. I'm going to call mom, buy cookies and a sandwich. I'd love to check in to Taschen, but I don't think they have the book I want in yet.

2/12

It's 5:25. I've been at the library for two hours and hit my quota, so I want to go home, but I think I'm going to do a little journal entry stuff first, and I might take some time to read magazines downstairs on the way out. I should work more, but I'm exhausted with the material and I need to print out the rest of this chapter and have it in front of me.

My anxiety is getting a little better. I'm definitely more in control of it. I don't know how well that's going to fare me through the next big moves, but we'll see. The anxiety also functions as this protective layer.

Fuck it, I'm going. I'm all skitchy.

I'm thinking of making some carbonara. I actually bought both kinds of cheese so I can make it right, which I haven't done in forever, and I can do the one-bowl method wif yolks only. If I want the pasta I have to make it now. I can boil the fucker now and make the sauce concurrently.

All right, I'm doing it. I'm not even that hungry. Maybe I'll eat some and put the rest in the fridge. Hm.

I've got a headache. I really shouldn't watch fucking TV. If I had a fast connection, I'd go back to downloading everything.

It's 1 in the morning. Last thing: there's going to be a new Batman cartoon show. The cycle continues unabated. Lovely.

2/17

Okay, well, here I am at the library. It's 4:07. I forgot my computer charger, so my time will be limited to three hours, according to the battery monitor thing. I've turned the screen brightness down low and maybe that will help.

I lost a journal entry in a Word crash. I was thinking about Paul Ricour's statement that the present is the time when actions seem possible. Fucking eerie. Probably true. Time is so strange. Anyway, I've got to fight for more of the present in which I can do my work. That's all that really matters. I'm making progress on that front. Weirdly, routines, which I think of as something which capture you, have been freeing up present time in my life. When I get ready to go out early in the morning, as I did today, I can get a lot done. I went and picked up my watch from the valley. It finally came. I'm wearing it on my wrist. Awesome. It's my finishing touch. It's actually really nice to have the time on my wrist. It's been well over two years since I've worn this thing, and I love it. There is going to be a bit of an adjustment period.

I got something else done this morning: applied to Bread Loaf. Nathalie mentioned it to me last night, I downloaded the forms, filled them in, and sent them off with a copy of Honeybunnies. I fixed it up. Changed one word. It reads much better now. I don't actually want to be a waiter, but it's prestigious, and so I'll worry about that if I get in. It only took an hour or so to fill out the app, and now I'm thinking about applying for some grants. If I could actually get one, that would be money AND something to put on my CV. Which has been so pathetic of late.

As April 1 (Geoffrey Day) approaches, I'm looking out for some kind of job I can do—Mom might be able to get me work writing coverage for Rodney. That would be fine, as long as I wouldn't have to go in to his office too much. Freelance, you know. Anyway, it's time to pull my own weight. My anxiety is improving, very much so. It's not perfect, but I'm driving around, I'm calling people, I'm basically handling biz.

I gotta give George a phone call or an email or something, and I have to call John, too. Just put that in my outline. I'm far behind in everything. My novels, my friends, my projects. But I fully intend to dig myself out of this hole. Starting now.

2/19

Maybe I should apply the techniques I've been learning in therapy to thinking about my novel. I've been thinking that I have a shitload of work to do on it, but maybe that isn't so. Maybe it just *feels* that way because I've been so overwhelmed by it. I haven't had a routine or a plan, but now I do. I feel like pages 71-138 are undiscovered country. I don't know them. Maybe if I knew them I'd know what to do. I'm trying to resist getting bogged down in outlining, but maybe it would be worthwhile to make a quick outline of what has to be done, so I don't continue to blow things out of proportion. I'm going to spend a couple minutes on that right now.

Almost done. I have been blowing this out of proportion. There are fourteen chapters left to do, but two of them are done, and at least five are very short. I would have no qualms about cutting and mashing, specifically the four chapters which happen in Philly and NJ. In fact, I'm going to.

2/24

Okay, journal entry. I'm here at the library. It's 3pm. I talked to Eojean. She emailed me right before I woke up, I woke, and called her. Totally, totally lovely. We hadn't talked in ages. She's fine.

Big day for communication yesterday. I left a message with R.— we'll see what she does with it. I tried calling Melanie and then sent her a flattering email. Emailed with George. Talked to Luis about the B. thing.

I should get to work. I feel a little stuck. I feel like maybe I don't have the juice to write what comes next.

Okay, well, I'm getting a little bit done. I've rewritten a paragraph. Just bit by bit and you'll get there, Litwack. Getting there. I have just ninety more pages to go. I'll add some, I'll delete some, that's how it will come out. Some parts need to be completely rewritten, it's true, but I should be able to finish by April. Then I have to start hustling. Nancie's thing will be done

by then, way before then. Something has to come up money. I don't care what, but something has to sell.

3/1

I'm at the library, being productive. It's almost two and I'm hungry, so I'm going to try something new: I'm going to get sushi at Whole Foods and eat it there. Should be nice and relaxed. Then I'll come back to the library and work more. I want to finish this chapter and then work on Nancie's thing.

3/6

I haven't written a journal entry in a long time, so why don't I. It's Saturday morning, 9:15. I fell asleep with the lights on and my teeth unbrushed. Today is going to be kind of a fun day—I have all kinds of fun things lined up. I've got to put a bunch of cards on eBay, but after that I'm going to this library to photograph *AppleDesign* in its entirety, which should be hot. I think I'm going to put it on the web as a public service. After that I head to the rent's house, buy a duvet cover at Ikea, baseball cards, chill with my cat, eat sushi, and watch the McLaughlin Group. Then I think I'm going to head back here so I can work in the library tomorrow. I'm just not getting enough work done.

However, I am getting lots of other stuff done. I'm making a lot of progress with my anxiety, no question, and it's enabling me to get out of the house a lot more. I shot photographs of Andreaa, one of which might end up in People Magazine. My annual is coming out. I joined a gym, and I'm getting fit. I got a haircut. Basically I'm acting less and less like a crazy person and more like a functioning member of society.

3/8

I went to the gym this morning for my first session with a trainer. Nice guy. We did upper body, and I'm wrecked. Can barely lift my arms over my head, and I know it's going to get worse by tomorrow.

"The other thing that's super key," my trainer says.

3/15

Here I am at the library. It's 1. I just spent 1.5 hours reading *The Economist*, which I haven't done in a long time, and now I'm going to take an hour to make a journal entry and think about what's going on in my life.

It is eleven days until I fly north to see John and Luis. Before that, I hope to have my novel edited and the preview draft ready to read. I'll be in Palo Alto for a full week, and then Mom thinks I should fly direct to Vancouver. I talked to her today, and it seems like they will have a two-bedroom with at least a sofa I can crash on. I have no idea what I'm going to do in Vancouver, but today I'm going to take out a travel guide from the library and look at it tonight. I'm planning on having a great time. Nothing can hurt me. If I have a panic attack, or anxiety, I'll do my exercises and get through it.

3/16

Despite my better judgment, I'm making a journal entry. It's 2:20 and I'm at the library. I have a lot of work to do. I went over my novel, and it's feeling almost finished. Good feeling. I just have to work on it, which is not an automatic thing. It's like pulling teeth. But it's fun, though. I just have to roll on it.

Okay, so what else is going on. I'm almost thinking of going to UCLA to check out Franz Ferdinand again. I won't. But the album is really good. The first half is better than the second. Had a great time seeing them. I was going to go to this Black Clock event with Andrea tomorrow, but it looks like that is sold out. So instead she and Kim are going to Sarah Silverman on Thursday, and I'll go to that. I've got to keep conditioning myself for going out and shit like that, as I will be doing a lot of it in SF/Vancouver. I have some amount of anticipation, but with my brothers around, I can't fail.

I'm thinking about printing up my preview draft through CafePress. Probably too expensive. I'll do a cost comparison when I'm ready. That would be pretty exciting. I could make up a secret preview draft cover and everything. It would only take a day.

3/17

I think I'm turning into a domestic. I'm at the library, it's 3, I'm getting a late start. All I can think about is getting home to do some small, mindless chores. Do the dishes, finally. Vacuum. Set up the spam blocker on my web page. Little things.

I'm really tired. I'm hoping I can have a repeat of the writing day I had yesterday, but who knows. I'm exhausted. I stayed up too late last night working on my annual web page. It was worth it. Now I pay the price. If I can just get written what I expect, I stay on track. I want to have one breakout day where I exceed expectation. I'm not sure if I'm going to be done by the time I go up north.

Going up North: some anxiety there. I think it's going to be fine. I know what's going to happen. We're going to smoke weed, hang out, go to shows, go to John's radio show, go to the local bar, go to Arrow Bar, see Louis, maybe see C., get sushi, go to the beach, maybe hit Mitchell Bros. I'm going to be with my boys, and it's going to be great. No question.

And, oh, R. She called me from a blocked ID while I was on the phone with Eojean. She sounded good, happy. Said I had a "bomb-ass" website. I was actually happy to hear her voice. But I know it's not right. So I have to tell her I was hurt by the flake, I viewed her as a romantic prospect, but I've given up on that. And I cut my hair.

So? What. My anxiety is up a little, but I'm hoping Kim comes through with Sarah Silverman tix for tomorrow night. I could go out.

And, hey, I'm going to Canada. Vancouver. My plan is to lay low and recuperate if I'm wiped out by SF and run around and go wild if I feel good. Either way I want to check out Chinatown. Eat Punjabi food.

What else. I don't know. I'm feeling okay about myself. I'm getting on top of everything. I still have to write this bible for Nancie. That's going to be a task. But maybe it won't, maybe it will be okay.

Eating Skittles in the library. It's against the rules, but I can't help it.

I don't think I'm ever going to put my journal entries in another annual. People get too upset. And the editing is insane. What am I going to do next year? I'm not sure if I want to use my outline. Maybe photos. It would be pretty surprising to have just photos. We'll see if I can take any good ones. I've got to start pumping that up. I should fucking ride around the city taking pictures.

Anyway. Time to work.

3/18

I talked to Nathalie; she called me. She's still in New York. I expect her to call me when she's alone in Iowa. She wants to interview Andreaa for Black Book. She sounds together and okay, but it's hard to tell with her. I miss her. I wanted to say something, but it's impossible.

I'm finishing up my novel, and I'm going out of state and then out of country and forgetting about it. Maybe I'll meet a nice girl in Palo Alto. Maybe that bagel shop girl will recur. That would be a god damn divine miracle.

I didn't get any work done today, but I did send off all this eBay shit, clean the house (except for the dishes), and go to the gym. This is the first day I've faltered, and I'm confident I'll get back on track tomorrow. I just got hit by this tiredness around three, after I finished up with eBay, and it just slayed me. In retrospect, I should have taken a nap.

3/19

Didn't go to the gym. I should have. I woke up late, but I wasted an hour, and I could have been at the gym. Whatever. Time marches on. Right now I have to get ready for therapy, which means doing a load of unpleasant interoceptive exercises, although first I have to get clean, eat lunch, etc. I dreamed about Haribo gummy bears, so I'm going to pick some up at Ralph's afterwards, along with some Diet Coke, possibly w/ Lime.

I think I'm starting to see my first results from the gym. They're subtle. My metabolism is getting back into shape—I'm getting hungry more, but for less, and I'm thirsty all the time. Both good signs. I'm going to try to be more selective about what I eat—stick to fruits, nuts, vegetables, diet soda, water, fish. Smaller, human-size servings of pasta. Half as much. It's good. When I get back from my trip, I'm going to start lifting weights—not free weights, but Cybex. Fuck my trainer, I want to do what I'm used to. So if I can get some muscle back, that's going to go hand in hand with the cardio, and I'll be where I want in a couple of months.

Just had an exhausting UCLA shrink appointment. We did ten spinning trials, and it was totally draining. Olu assures me that with time, it's going to get better. I fucking hope so. I also fucking have to do the exercise every day. Christ.

Anyway, I'm at the library now and I feel better, calmer. I had forgotten to take my pill, which helped me have kind of a weird morning. I was totally depressed yesterday, and this morning. I'm back in the swing of things, though. If I can do my work, I'm going to go home and relax.

About going home: I think my apartment is becoming sort of a black hole. I go there, I surf the web endlessly, watch movies, mope. I should make it a place to do projects. If I'm really never going to write at home—if I can fill my quota at the library or elsewhere—then I should allow myself to work on other projects when I'm at home. Not allow this 'I should be working' feeling to creep in. It's a deal. Tonight I want to work on my Qee entry, so I make the deadline. I'll use my font, it will be great. Maybe I'll do a couple fast to practice—make a Pumpkin the cat Qee, etc. You're allowed four entries, so I might as well do them all.

I can't believe I forgot to bring my headphones. A little music would hit the spot right about now.

Well, I'm feeling a little better. If I can just get my work done, I'll feel much better, because then I can go home and work on my projects with a clear conscience. I forgot, the library is only open

until six today, so that gives me two and a half scant hours to work on this chapter. Hmm.

So: Late update. I got voice mail from Mom saying Kate is wrapping the 2nd, not the 7th! My trip is ruined unless I act. I'm thinking of finishing Nancie's thing over the weekend—I've reached a nice pausing point with my novel, 100 pages exactly—and changing my ticket to leave on Tuesday. Maybe. Although I don't think Mom will go for that plan because she doesn't like quick changes, and also I sense that Kate will be working hard. So. Maybe I should finish Nancie's thing over the weekend anyway, though. The logic holds, I might as well.

3/23

Here I am at the library. It's 1:15. I'm going to try to put in a full day and work until closing. I've never done it before, but maybe today is the day, if I pace myself. I plan on taking a break to get sushi at Whole Foods at some point. I keep forgetting to bring my headphones. I'm going to stow an extra pair in my bag so it's just automatic.

I went to see *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* with Andreaa and Brett yesterday—the movie was okay, Chinese food at Tasty Goody was even better, and it was great to see Brett, and really nice to see him and Andreaa together again. I hope they work it out, I really do.

Someone just sat down at my table, which is a first. It's fine.

Brett said I should give R. another chance. I'll call her when I get back from up North, I suppose.

I've had enough of the library. I finished a good chunk of this chapter. I'm going to try to prove to myself now that I can work at my house. I'm just tired of sitting here, and I want to see if Andreaa emailed me about this writer's thing. If I work it, I could finish the bible tonight in comfort. That would be hot.

Aight, well, I'm back, it's seven. I cooked dinner for myself and watched the news. I'm sort of drained, and planning on watching more television later.

I'm sort of proud of the work I did on this chapter today. I haven't read it back over yet, but I think it turned out pretty well.

3/24

My novel hurts. It hurts. Yesterday I was working on it and got so down, so depressed. I'm going to feel crazy about it until it's finished, and hopefully then I can let go.

3/25

Another day of avoiding work and doing little. I cleaned the house, went out to lunch with Dad.

I don't know. I'm crazy hungry. I want an orange. I'm thinking of cooking another bowl of ramen. Maybe having some coffee. Now I'm watching *The Apprentice*. I can't fucking help it. After this, though, I'm getting caffeinated and finishing what I have to do. I'm doing it, god damn it. If I can get to bed by three, wake up by ten, I'll be set. That's the target. I don't know why I sleep so much, or why I'm so lame, but I can't help it. I've got a headache. I'm going to get through it. I'm going to do this.

I could sleep. There's no question of that. I could sleep my fucking life away.

If I play this right, it's going to be fun. I haven't been in the pressure cooker for a long time.

Time to make the coffee. Too bad I'm out of Diet Coke.

Fuck, there's an ER. If it's new, I'm watching. Fuck.

3/26

In a way, today has been one of those days I wish could go on forever. Living today has been like living perched on the edge of a butter knife. I'm at the end of the month. I'm about to go on a trip full of unknowns and test my anxiety progress—I'm hopeful—see my old friends and recharge my batteries for the final fight. I did

my laundry; hot cotton. It was easy, so much easier than laundry any other place I've ever done it myself. Clean underwear, clean shirts. I've got to pack for tomorrow. I'm going to get to the house early so I can play with the cat before I go to the Burbank airport. I'm thinking about being uncool and taking my backpack so I can take my laptop. Should I take my laptop? I don't know. I'll worry about it getting jacked.

Anyway, for the rest of today, low expectations. I'll watch *The Simpsons*, *Wonder Falls*, pack. I'm thinking about giving Mom a call. I'll do the dishes, take out the trash.

The character of today really has been strange. I know I don't work, but that's why I can never really relax. Today I feel almost relaxed. I don't know what it is. Maybe talking to Nathalie took a load off my mind.

Yeah, so, keeping cool is the big project. Nothing else. Nothing fancy. Just keep calm, keep cool, enjoy myself. It's going to be fun.

Fucking weird shit going on with my burner. I'm just going to pack the actual CDs to burn, which should be okay.

Thought crossed my mind: I should run to Union to pick up a Supreme backpack to replace my EMS one.

4/6

I'm back in the library for the first time since my trip.

What a trip!

It was great. No panic attacks. I had some anxiety, but nothing I couldn't handle. My anxiety isn't cured, but it's much, much better. It was really, really nice to be with people. I'm sort of thinking about moving up there; so many of my friends are there.

I met this girl, and I think we hit it off—I friendstered her, and she wrote me a nice email. There was this other girl, Javiera, from

Chile, who was fucking radiant. All three of us fell in love with her instantly.

And we did so much. Ran around. John's band. Drinking, smoking. It was perfect as it could be with the absence of George.

Sigh!

So here I am back in LA, planning my next move. I really got into using my Treo up North, and it's already helping me stay on top of things. I'm going to try to go out more.

Oh! I had a date with R. yesterday. It was pretty nice. She's fourteen, and I don't think we'll be able to have a relationship, but who knows.

Something is really depressing about the library today. I think it's Passover. I feel like the ONLY JEW, which I am. It's a fucking lonely feeling. I passed the synagogue on Rexford and it was swarming. Something sad about the whole thing. Well, I'm going to the valley to spend time with my family and eat broiled salmon, that's what matters.

I have got to get to work. Got to get this monkey off my back. I'm so bad at writing things I don't want to write. I've got to just do my best. Pop up this document and STARE AT IT UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS. Here we go.

I got some work done on the bible. I hate doing it and I'm hitting a wall. I'm going to go and grocery shop right now, go home, eat lunch, mail my packages, chill, and then go see my shrink. Here we go.

4/7

So depressing. It's 9. Didn't get anything done today. Well, I downloaded the new Ghostface album.

Run! if you sell drugs in a school zone.

And I talked on the phone a little. I read *A Box of Matches*, which was great, great. My favorite Nicholson Baker novel ever. The envelopes metaphor killed me.

Luis' girlfriend broke up with him today. He sounded sad about it, for the wrong reasons, which means it's a good thing they split. Poor Luis, though.

So much I'd like to get done this week. I think Palm Desktop is helping – the week view is amazing. I'm migrating most of my OmniOutliner usage to it.

I've always wanted to be totally mobile, totally nomadic, and I'm getting there. I did a pretty good imitation on my Stanford trip. One problem was this: I did a fine job of packing the right amount of stuff into my carry-on luggage, but when I got there, it was like a yard sale. Maybe I could design a piece of luggage which transformed into a free-standing dresser of some kind. I envision a hanging bag for laundry, built-in clothes hooks, tripod legs. Puma24hour 2, I guess.

The good news is, I'm cut off from my parents. Technically it's only been a week, but practically I haven't gotten a check from them for a month. See if I can survive.

Long talk with Nathalie. It's 1:13 now and there's no chance of me getting any work done. What is clear is that I have to replace her in order to have her as a friend, to eradicate these traces of unhappiness. How the fuck am I going to replace Nathalie, though? Not with R., tho I like having her around. B. I might fuck one more time but she's useless. I'd go out with M., if she'd have me, but she's up north.

Why am I having so much trouble *working*? I don't know. It's late, I'm going to sleep. I'll work tomorrow.

4/9

Here I am doing what I do best: taking a shit. It's 4:35 on a balmy Friday in LA, and I had food poisoning last night, after I ate a Greek salad at a bar on Sunset with a B health rating. Anyway,

I'm just starting to get my appetite back, and I figure I'm going to grab some salmon from SanSai right now. Take a walk, get some air.

Today can still be a big day. I've post facto taken this week as a down week—I don't know where the time went, I guess I've spent lots of it lazing around indoors—but I can still have a big day today, which I sorely need. Basically I've got to finish Nancie's thing, ending two years of bondage, and turn it in to her Monday morning. I'm very firm on this. I also need to get a bunch of stuff up on eBay so I can pay next month's rent and eat this month. Well, it's worth it, it's worth it so I can live this magnificent life of extravagance where I look for the cheapest bag of rice at Ralph's.

Long conversations with Luis and my mom, who's crazy as usual.

4/12

So much for falling asleep. Fucking B. just called me to tell me the guy she's been sleeping with has genital herpes. They used protection. I let her suck my dick with no shield. Fucking a. She's going in to get tested on Wednesday, and I should probably line up a test for myself. Fuck, fuck, fuck. I'm so fucking stressed out I can hardly think, let alone go to sleep now. Fuck. It was that fucking guy in the fucking Indiana Jones costume, too.

Let this be a lesson, Litwack. I'd put the odds of me having it at 5%, but I should go in for a test. The problem is that I'm still with that fucking Korean health care group. Maybe I should go to a clinic, or something.

Okay, I think I'm fine. This website claims that genital herpes outbreak occurs 2-21 days after infection; I sent B. home in a taxi six weeks ago.

She hasn't had any symptoms.

My strategy here is I'm going to FORGET ABOUT IT until I hear from her.

Half of the unpleasantness of this was having to talk to B.. I guess the bottom line is, no sign of infection, no partners, no discomfort, nothing to worry about right this second. I'm not worried, and I'm not going to worry.

But I still am a little wound up.

I'm tired and paranoid and I think I will go to sleep now. Jesus, what a day.

I'm going to lie in bed and look at Moon College. I wanted to wait to work on it, but I've been doing nothing but waiting.

Maybe I should try to finish this fucking transcription instead. Fuck.

4/13

It's 7:42 and I'm up. I woke up sort of in a panic. Thinking logically, I really don't think I have anything. I'm going to tuck it in the back of my mind so I can go on functioning normally and forget about it until I hear something from B. Why am I so annoyed by her, by the way? Obviously I'm annoyed with myself for sleeping with her and exposing myself to risk when I knew in my heart how sketchy she was, but I'm also personally pissed at her, not just because of the H. I think it's because she's so shitty and lame when she could be sexy and cool. In any case, no more about this. No more.

Oh man, I went back to sleep and woke up at 12:30. I'm going to spend another day indoors; I might as well. But today is the day to finish up on One Foot. So tired of it already. The only other thing I'm going to do today is spin. I've got to. I'm already getting behind. I'm going to do five trials of 1:00 each.

I'm actually sort of sad about the UCLA anxiety program ending. It's funny how belligerent I started out towards Olu, and now I've totally mellowed. Just some kind of displacement.

Disjointed dreams last night. First I'm visiting Louis at a transfigured Apple campus on a winding hill and eating at a

strange Mongolian seafood restaurant. Then I'm running through a Japanese shopping mall. Then I'm with Nathalie and her dad. I give Philippe a Levinas book as a birthday present. He says he's read it in the French, and throws it in the street. My parents whisper to me that he's rude. I retrieve the book for regifting.

I'm thinking of moving. I'm thinking of going to San Francisco or New York. Maybe Brooklyn. The latter wouldn't make any sense, given that I hate New York.

Just talked to Mom. She gave me one of her useful little pep talks about working.

I'm totally addicted to the internet. Might as well acknowledge that. Now I'm going to crawl back to it while I eat my food, until it's time for *The Simpsons* and the news. My life would be a lot better if I got PBS.

Watching *Gilmore Girls*. Sort of boring so far. Still, usually heats up in the last fifteen minutes.

I just played this game, Uplink, which is total bullshit but reminds me of this old Infocom (I think) game, Hacker. I really want to get a GameboySP. I'd buy Final Fantasy Tactics, WarioWare, and the Mario RPG game, which I've been emulating.

I'm so fucking dumb. I've let the whole day go by again. Fuck. I'm going to play a little Pac Man, then get to it.

I feel so sick with myself that I'm not working. Tomorrow's Wednesday. I should have been done a week ago. I should center myself and go back in. I know exactly what I need to do to finish. I'm going to make a more detailed checklist, and then do breathing exercises. I hate this so much, but boy do I need to get back to work on my book.

It's so late, 1:16am. I'm lying in bed, pretending to work, which is a total precursor to conking out. Dad is coming for lunch tomorrow. I need to work out in the morning, and I need to do my arms. I didn't spin today. Time passes so fucking fast.

All right. I'm going to try to get some quality sleep and get up early.

4/14

I'm up, I'm up. It's 10am. Still freaked out about H, but a little less so. No symptoms, obviously. I'm going to check AdSense, then clean myself up and get to work before Dad comes.

The freaking AdSense results are delayed 48 hours. Hm.

Back from lunch, which was fabulous. Just wasted twenty minutes, but now I'm about to do what I said, sit at my desk and transcribe. With luck I'll be done in an hour and I can get to the library. Okay, here I go.

This is so fucking boring. I've got to stick to it and keep on going. I think I'm going to lie down. Bad for typing, good for relaxing.

I could finish tonight. I could, and then it would be done. Such a good feeling. So good. Slog on. Get through. I can call Nancie tomorrow morning, go over there, and BE DONE.

Oh man, one more five-minute recording. This is turning out to be more work than I expected.

I'm done with the transcription. It's almost seven. Damn, this is taking forever.

I should take a little break, do something else. I've hit a milestone.

I'm watching *Smallville*, then *The OC*. I'm going to be tired afterwards, but I'm going to go back to work.

Okay, it's almost eleven. I've got to get back to work. This thing is dragging on and on.

The word renumerative just popped into my head. Renumerate means recount. It's a rare word, only 623 hits on Google. I'm not even sure it's legitimate.

I took two sips of whiskey and now I'm tired and sad. This whole B. thing is weighing on me. I should go in and get tested. Go where? I should call Blue Cross and switch doctors, and I should do that tomorrow.

4/15

It's 2:15 and I haven't done shit. I'm going to finish this tuna sandwich and drive to the library after I sync my Palm.

Well, here I am at the library. It's almost three. I think I'm going to play a little Final Fantasy Tactics (my new obsession) and then get to work. Somebody took the table I like in the other room while I was looking at books.

It's FIVE. I just played two hours of video games IN THE LIBRARY. My life is on a downward slide. No question.

I'm starting to get a headache. I'm thinking of checking out these books and going home. We'll see.

I'm tired and lonely and depressed. It might be a good idea to make up technical, nondenominational synonyms for conversational terms with religious roots, like the one I want to employ, which is purgatory. Waiting room is close, but that's two words. Waitingroom. Better. I feel like I'm in waitingroom, a place between two places.

It is a total mystery to me how my anxiety is going to get cured by sitting in a chair and spinning around. I know the theory behind it, but my brain will not yield to its force. Hasn't it been a long time since I've had a panic attack? It has. It's so like me to go almost all the way, and then stop. Usher myself into waitingroom.

I'm going to play some FFT, then work on future episodes of One Foot.

This is all too much. I'm canceling out of my shrink appointment tomorrow.

This book I just read, *The Sleeping Father*, was pretty good. It made me want to think, and that's an accomplishment.

My teeth hurt, and my new dentist called up to cancel my Monday appointment. I guess I might still be able to go in Monday later in the day. Tomorrow when I wake up I have some phone calls to make.

4/16

My life is getting out of control. I did go to CMG today and talk to Rodney. We might be able to do something together. I don't know.

Umh. I should read a book or something.

(I read my anxiety handbook. Things seem much more manageable now.)

4/17

It's noon, and I'm at the library. Today is going to be a full day, an optimal day. I need a day like that. Today and every day after, right? We'll see. I'm going to play two FFT battles to relax and then get to work.

Okay, I'm done with that. Such a stupid game. It's interesting for Final Fantasy nerds, but for *players*, it's overly technical (twenty character classes?) and repetitive. I'm definitely going to buy a Playstation 3 and the first FF game for that, though.

Okay, so now, my goal is to have an optimal day. That means, first and foremost, finishing this fucking bible already. I was thinking last night, would it be possible to apply the CBT techniques which have worked so well on my anxiety to my work problems? Because the prime symptom, avoidance, is the same in both cases. So let's try. I've been avoiding writing this bible for a month, let's say. The first two weeks were just pure procrastination. What am I afraid of? Am I blowing things out of proportion, or—fuck, what's the other thing. I can't think of anything I'm afraid of. Nancie's disapproval. Or maybe it won't be good enough. Maybe it won't be good enough, and then Nancie will disapprove. What are the odds of that? It's taken Nancie a long time to be satisfied with my drafts, but I'm *basing*

this on something she's already happy with. So the chances she'll be satisfied are pretty good. And even if she isn't, what's the worst that can happen? I'll say that I can't put any more time into the project without getting some money back. Mmm. So I think I am blowing things out of proportion, in a way. The main difference is this: with panic attacks, you're wanting something negative—for the panic attack to *not occur*. With writing, you want something positive: to fucking write something. I dunno.

I have done more work in one hour on this than I have done in the past two weeks. It makes me feel a little stupid for waiting so long, but past is past. Time flows in one direction. I finish the setting background, I'll play a little FFT.

Man am I being productive. Finished the setting background and the first episode. Three more episodes and I'm done, fucking done.

Now what I'm thinking of doing, because I'm hungry and have to pee, is going home, getting some groceries on the way, and settling in to work there. But will I be able to work there? I don't know. Probably not. So what should I do? I'm also enjoying watching this little chickie at the table in front of me. We're wearing the same colors—blue jeans and beige sweaters. Weird.

I'm done with the bible except for the three episodes. I'm going to go home. I'm going to go home, but only so I can eat. I'm going to finish the episodes. I'm going to crush this day.

Back at home.

It's 8:30. No work done yet, but I've been making food and talking on the phone. I think now I'm going to play some FFT, which is quick becoming my pre-game ritual, then finish up on One Foot. Then I'm going to deal with eBay.

I just played a fuckload of FFT. It's 10:45. Uh. I want to finish out what I started. I'm all caffeinated, which means I probably will be able to stay awake. I'm going to have an apple and then get on One Foot. I'm so fucking close. I should remind myself that I've gotten no work done, at home, since I came back from the library.

54 Geoffrey Litwack

Seven hours, no work. I could be done with everything and finishing up that book by now. Whatever. I've got three good hours of work in me, I refuse to lose, it's going to get done. Plus I have snacks: I'm going to make myself some buttered popcorn pretty soon.

I did it: I finished. The final product, while in need of a polish, is pretty good, and *long*. We'll see how Mom likes it, tomorrow. I'll probably make some last minute changes.

The only thing I didn't get to is eBay, but I'm going to post the auctions on Tuesday.

4/18

It's midnight. I didn't work today; I went to the valley and sat *The Punisher*. Should have caught *Kill Bill II* instead. Mom read my bible and loved the characters and future episodes, but thought the treatment itself was weak, which it is. Now I have to go back and fix it. I don't think I have the energy tonight, even though I can't stand the thought of devoting even one more day to it. I'm going to rest and see if I can muster up any energy. Either way I have to drop this script at Rodney's office tomorrow.

Emailed B. about H. I'm getting worried. Plenty of psychosomatic itch. I could have it, which would be horrible. We'll just wait and see.

I realize it's been quite a while since I've written something for pleasure. I think since I wrote *Symbebekos* for George's birthday, which was pure pleasure to write. At least I'm getting back to my novel. Maybe it won't be pure ecstasy, but it's going to be loads better than One Foot.

I'm pretty tired right now. I'm going to rest for a couple minutes then see what to do.

4/19

It's almost five, but I'm at the library. I've been sitting here working on my schedule. I'm not done with the One Foot

treatment revision, which I know needs to be done. It's not even that long, I just don't want to work on it any more.

It should be shorter. I'm sure there's waste. I should try working on it in passes; do one pass, fix the obvious things, do a second pass, work on the less obvious stuff. It's my own fault. You can't expect something you dictated under extreme duress to be your best work.

What else. I talked to John and Luis just now. They're fine. John's busy.

I dropped off my screenplay at Rodney's office, which was kind of a step. I think it's good. If it got sold, or if it got me work, that would be amazing.

Done, done, done, I am absolutely done. It's not even seven, and I'm going home. This calls for some SanSai and a Coke.

12:54am. Had an unproductive evening, but that's fine. After I meet with Nancie, I'm in the clear to start work on Moon College again.

4/20

It's 2pm. I've been up, doing nothing. Playing FFT and watching tomorrow's OC. It's time to start on my work, but my stomach is upset. I'm thinking of driving to the library instead of walking. I've got to get there somehow. I still have to call BMW, too. I might put it off until tomorrow. I tried calling Nancie, but she wasn't in. I can wait for her to call me, I guess. Sigh. That's done, anyway. The meeting is a formality.

My stomach hurts, and time is slipping away. I should go to the library, but I'm tired and weird-feeling. Gotta push through anyway. Tomorrow I do my arms at the gym. That I'm looking forward to.

4:30. Here I am at the library, sitting at this sub-optimal table. Haven't yet opened Moon College. I was thinking I could write a design document and include it as a chapter.

Just moved to a different sub-optimal table.

Am I frightened of going back to work on Moon College? It's been a while. Let's try CBT again: I'm afraid that when I finish the draft, it won't be any good. The unconscious way out of this problem is never finishing the draft.

I'm reading through a little bit. It's not so bad. It has its own rhythm and logic. But I'm having trouble concentrating on my prose, and I'm super-worried about writing new material. Push on. On. Bits and pieces.

So daunted by this. It makes me want to go home and sleep.

This chapter, I feel like, is pretty unsteady. Not as bad as what follows. Strider is a stupid character. Jail is a stupid place to put Hilary. I have to think about this. I'm so close to going to McDonalds for a veggie burger and coke. So good. I could get apple pies, too.

4/21

So, it's 10:30am. I got a call from Nancie, who wants to meet. She's quitting work at the retirement hotel! Hopefully that won't dim her enthusiasm for the project. I think not. Anyway, I'm just waiting for her call. Hopefully I'll be able to come to Palm Court; if not, I think she wants to meet me at the Grove. I feel a little anxious, but I shouldn't. I've met with Nancie a million times. Everything's going to be great.

What else is going on. I was all set to go to the gym, which I think I'm going to do after I get back from meeting with N. If we meet at the Grove, I'm thinking of staying for *Kill Bill II*, which is on my list.

Oh! Hey! I got an email from B. last night, and she's clean. As a whistle. No H. By extension, that means I'm clean. Such a relief.

It's 5. Nancie never called. I'm going to the library for a couple hours of work. I hope.

Well, here I am. 5:20. We'll see how much I get done. I'm really tired and maxed out on caffeine and nicotine, but I still need to be able to work.

I just finished the Vladimir chapter. I'm so close to being done. I know what I need to do now. I need to cut out all this shit about jail, every single extraneous thing, and just put across the meat. Finish the story. I've got to rewrite the. Let me think.

Back home. It's 10pm. Just went outside and talked to Veronica, my Norse neighbor. Cute. You can see the Viking in her.

Oh, man.

4/22

My life is an absolute mess. It's 4 fucking pm and nothing, nothing. I've got to get to the library and finish this book. I don't know. Maybe I'm doing fine and I just need to catch up. Neaten my house, take out the trash, clean the carpet, put shit up on eBay. Let in some natural light.

I want a bigger apartment, some light, another room, a girlfriend, a new hot car. My life is pathetic and small. Fuck.

Maybe I'll wait until five to drive to the library. It worked well yesterday. Free parking. Actually, I should get myself there as soon as possible.

Aight, here I am. 4:30. I'm going to McDonald's after this for a fruit n' fuckin yogurt salad with fries, a coke, and cookies. It seems like this is the new structure of my day:

I'm depressed, that's what it is. I'm so fucking sad right now. Doesn't have to be that way. The best thing I can do is work and try to stay on schedule. Listening to Arab Strap doesn't help.

The other thing I don't understand is why my piss is so fucked up these days. Yellow like the sun. Stinks. I've got to drink more water. I've got to drink a gallon of water and see what happens. I can't be eating right, that can't help.

I've written the end of this chapter. This chapter is so hard, for some reason. Just a little fucking bit more after this and I'm done with the draft. Done with the draft!

Well, I did it, it's done. 5:58pm, Thursday, April 22, 2004. Done. Now I polish, and the preview draft is finished. It could be much better, but it's done. What's left is more or less procedural.

So, I'm going to McDonald's. Then I'm going home. I don't know if I can work any more today. I bet if I pushed I could get to the point where all I have to do is read the book. No problem, right?

I still have to spin tonight, which sucks. I haven't been practicing.

4/28

Dad is in the hospital again. There's a blood clot in his arm. It isn't a big deal—he has to go back on Cumidin for the rest of his life, get blood tests, etc.—but they're doing a bunch of tests, and the results aren't back, and the whole situation reminds me of how things were before, last year. However: as much as I feel shitty, I'm not unbearably anxious. I'm not relapsing. And objectively, until we hear different, Dad's condition isn't bad. The blood clot is already responding to treatment. After the MRI and CAT scans come back, then I'll feel better. God.

4/29

Dad's okay. All the scans came back negative; he's fine. Just the clot, and it's totally dissolving.

I went to the dentist this morning, and I need \$5k worth of work. Insurance pays for \$3500. Didn't do much for the rest of the day. I should have gone to the museum, or something. Saturday is Kaws. That should be fun.

4/30

What the fuck is going on. Nothing. I spun in a chair for ten minutes today without my anxiety exceeding a 3, a personal best. Dr. A has agreed to see me for psychodynamic therapy after I graduate from CBT next week. He's an M.D. Ph.D resident. I

need to ask him if I'll be observed. Probably yes, which is fine. For \$20 a week, I can live with that. I'm actually looking forward to having a real shrink again. I should get him some kind of present. Maybe not, since we're continuing. I feel oddly comforted about all of this.

Yeah, I feel like shit. That's starting to be the default. I'm also worried that my email is not getting delivered. Mmm.

Okay, here I go. I'm going to edit and listen to music.

It's almost midnight. I'm at page 40. Miraculously, I found a freestyle from my Capstone to put into Vladimir's mouth instead of having to write one from scratch.

It's horrible how much looser and more interesting in some respects my college work is. It's *too* loose, and there's no plot, but it's exciting to read where this new draft is boring and stupid.

5/3

May. Yesterday in the Valley I was thinking a lot about how much of a pussy I am as an artist. I've already decided that I'm not only a writer; I want to design, build, record. And I've got to get much more aggressive and crazy. I think I'm going to buy a backpack, put all my shit in it, and take it everywhere I go. Have my laptop, camera, book, all that shit at my disposal. I took a bunch of pictures last night and it was GREAT, just what I needed to do. I have this amazing camera, I should be using it every day. Basically, I want to somehow secure myself a position where I can do nothing but be creative all day long. Keep my expenses low, travel, I think I'm going to make a radical plan for freeing myself from physical possessions. I'm too bound by what people think of me. I should do what I want to do, allow myself to make mistakes, and not care so much.

I hooked up my AIFF hard drive, and it is so incredibly good to have some music selection again. I think I'm going to convert everything to Apple Shorten and reencode acc files on the same drive to load on my iPod. I've got to have some musical choice or I'll go crazy.

5/7

I watched the last third of the Rumsfeld senate hearing instead. Jesus Christ, how awful. I suppose the good news is that it's going to be difficult for Bush to be reelected. It's clever how he's positioned himself: like a lifeguard in a tower, with his allies yelling things up to him from the beach. Rumsfeld takes total responsibility, and even though Bush is Commander in Chief, he's protected. Cheney is nowhere to be found on this. The whole thing sickens me. Now we wait for videos of GIs raping Iraqi women.

5/13

Oh shit: the library got WiFi. This has an upside and a downside. If it's superfast, which I think it is, I'll be able to download things faster than I can at home. Downside, I've got to exercise self-control, control!

Went to this French Kicks show last night; it was nice. The new album is no great shakes, no *One Time Bells*.

The internet here really is fast—70k/s. I'm thinking of putting some books on hold, too. Maybe on the way out. I think tonight I'm going to bring home some comic books, just for easy reading. Also, I should work on something tonight—maybe eBay, maybe a Moon College side project. I'm expecting my first printed draft copy today or tomorrow—I was going to hang around at home and wait for it, but going to the library and reading magazines won out over total listlessness.

And now I'm going to work on NVP, I guess. Endurance—I want to get home around eight. So let's get to it.

Made lots of progress. I'm going home—best to ease into this thing. I'm going to get some ice cream on the way back, cook pasta for dinner, work more at the crib, and everything's going to be lovely. Hate to leave this fast connection, but I'll be back tomorrow.

11:01. I've had a full day of work. I've basically got the first act of NVP sewn up.

5/14

Dyslexic kids, they favorite 50 song is 12 Questions.

Tonight I guess I should call Blum and Poe, find out if I can go to this Murakami thing.

No more web for the rest of today. I've got all the torrents I need—I'm going to finish Mean Girls at the library, start on Shaun of the Dead, plus grab Jet's album and Radiohead *Com Lag*.

Yeah, once I'm done eating I'm going to put on a different pair of jeans and head for the library.

All right, here I am, quarter of one. Debbie called and I sat outside and talked to her for half an hour. That's its own thing; she's piqued at mom, etc. I just don't want to get in the middle, as usual. Don't borrow trouble. Anyway. I'm going to start my downloads and stare at PowerStructure.

Christ, the Radiohead album is coming down at 100k/s! I'm going to let it finish before I start on the other shit. My god – now Jet is coming down at 200k/s. This is crazy. 250k.

1:40. Making progress on NVP. My goal for today is to have the first act airtight.

2:23. I think the first act is pretty much done. Now I have to think about the larger plot.

All right, it's 3. I think I'm done for the day on NVP. I'm thinking of going home, actually. I could stay here and write a page of Mermaid Caviar, but. But. I'm at least going to stay here long enough to listen to this Moon College mini-mix I'm going to be sending out with my copies. Maybe I won't write anymore, maybe I'll just sit here and think, relax.

After this I'm going to look at *American Shelter*, buy bread and nuts, look lovingly at my copy of Moon College, deal with my bills, put stuff on eBay, go to the Murakami opening (so hot).

Then I'm going to come back and work on eBay; I don't want to but have to. HAVE TO. So that's that. I'm leaving in five minutes.

6pm. I'm home and getting ready to go to this Murakami reception. Just finished Chuck Norris' book, which was better than I expected, albeit a little repetitive. He studied with Ed Parker and Bruce Lee! It seems like he's the real deal. Definitely given me some juice for the screenplay. I sort of want to write the first act out, but I'm going to try and finish the outline first. It's not going to take that much longer.

8:15. Just back from Murakami at Blum & Poe, which was fantastic. I bought the entire Superflat figure set for \$80, too, which is reasonable, and he drew a thing on it. I talked to him for two seconds and said I thought his factory's paintings were getting even flatter, and he said he didn't think so! I'm going to go back, take Kate, and take photographs of the art.

9:23. Talked to mom. I've got to take care of these eBay auctions, but I just don't fucking want to. God. I'm starting to feel sort of sick.

10:46. I'm tired and headachy, but I got in my page of Mermaid Caviar. I'm going to rest, then maybe sleep, or maybe get some things up on eBay. Sure would be nice to get my life in order.

I've been well productive today, and I wonder if my attempt to curtail my web usage has anything to do with it. Most likely. I'll try again tomorrow.

5/17

5:23pm. I'm at the library. Just got here. They got *Kings of Infinite Space* in, which promises to be depressing, but I'm going to read it anyway. Kate's show didn't get picked up for Fall; they're talking about midseason. She met Melissa George today; foxy.

God, what else. I'm starting to feel a little depressed and bogged down, but I mustn't let that interfere with my work. I sort of want

a vacation; not to go somewhere, but to go somewhere and relax, be taken care of. The closest I can come is to lay out at the pool at my parents' house. I could swim.

10:12. I'm putting the finishing touches on the preview draft of my book and then I'm going to order 15 copies. Total intensity, here I come.

5/18

Here at the library, almost one thirty. I'm a little anxious; it's passing. Still don't have this anxiety problem licked. The feeling is the same: something bad is going to happen to me. I'm sick and I have to get out of here. But I'm feeling much better now. I guess the key is to just slog it out.

I'm going to put *Aloft* and that Lahri book on hold otherwise I'm never going to catch them. And maybe take out another novel. I should read *The Swimming Pool Library* already, but after *Kings of Infinite Space*, I want a sure shot.

Man, I'm having a lot of trouble working. This weirdo just sat down at my table when there's a table free right over there. Right over there. Okay, he's gone.

5/25

I have this dentist appointment in two days, which I'm dreading, and I spent a lot of time with Dad and Claudia, who was visiting, over the weekend. We ate at Nate n' Al's and Café Bizou, both of which were good solid places but didn't knock me on my ass. I didn't get anything done. Mom and Kate are still at Disneyland.

5/30

Picasso said: I'm exhausted if I don't work.

6/1

3:49: just spent about an hour and a half working on a model of my writing house in SketchUp, which was really rewarding—I got the whole thing worked out, and some nice images out of it. The design is way too crude—two boxes with windows. But I've learned something from this, and I'm going to make more sketches and improve.

6/2

Here I am in the library. It's 1:21; I told Andreaa I'd call her at four, which doesn't leave me much time. I'm going to do my work the best I can and then go.

Back from Andreaa's. Had Tasty Goodie with her and Brett, which was great. Promises of partying when they get back from Chitown. I rented *The Secret Lives of Dentists* for Nathalie, but she's sleeping—Nunsa's going to try waking her up in a little bit, but for now I'm socked in at home, about to have a cigarette. Also, my books came!!!

6/3

I'm actually writing this at three in the morning on the fourth, but be that as it may. I just drove Nathalie back to her house, the last time I'll see her in a while. She came over and we watched *The Secret Life of Dentists*, which was pretty good, and talked a little. She'll read my novel and get back to me. I listened to *Earth Angel* by Clinic in the car on the way back alone. Something deeply, almost hurtfully sad about all of this. That things have to change. I don't know. Anyway, my book is done, I have a screenplay to work on, girls to chase after. Live strong, my bracelet reminds me, and that's what I'm going to fucking do.

6/5

It's 1pm. I woke up at 11. Stayed up last reading *Saul and Patsy*. It was worth it.

6/9

I feel SICK and WEIRD. Brainsick. Just a little depressed, but it's a new kind of feeling. I think I missed my meds this morning in my rush to the gym. Tomorrow, when I wake up I'll feel better after I take them.

Anyway, today I was going to get a haircut and go to Café Midi, but neither happened. Instead I went to Dutton's, intending to get The Robot Builder's Bonanza and a haircut at that place but was advised that that place was pricy. I went to Brentwood in the first place because Courtney, the girl who cut my hair at Rudy's, left,

and I figured the place next to Dutton's would be cheap. Anyway, I did get the Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopedia, which was totally worth the \$20—it's amazing; the hatred that radiates from those tattoos is burning hot. Prison must be hell on earth.

I'm about to order this amazing LED lantern from Cabala's hunting supply, the most amazing store on the face of the earth. They have freaking everything.

What else. I went to the gym and got killed; my heart hurt and I could only do twenty minutes of elliptical and cool down. Friday I'm going to work on my chest and arms. Felt good afterwards, though. Energizing. Shipped out this eBay shit. Not much else.

I have a new Dell coming, and a new TV, their 17-inch HD. I'm excited; I hope it doesn't take too long to get here. And I just went on a buying spree: that LED lantern, a camo sweatshirt (\$10!), 3rd ed. Robot Builder's Bonanza (two weeks) and a CHEAP CHEAP CHEAP 264m USB key, just \$30 after rebate – pretty hot, considering I paid \$150 for my SanDisk 512 CF card. So that's it for the month, I've gotten absolutely everything I wanted, except for maybe a backpack and a skateboard. I'm not sure I want a skateboard, and now that I'm giving Kate this camera, I may not need a backpack, either. Shopping is not creating.

6/11

So today is my day without the web. I broke my vow already to look up Wentworth Miller, this actor Kate recommended for Vladimir, but that took just two seconds. Otherwise, I'm clean. I might pay bills online.

Talking to Luis right now. 1hr. Always a pleasure. He really makes me want to smoke cigarettes, though. What I should do now is go to that mailbox place and try to get my credit card statement copied so I can send it off. Done. Here I am taking care of the little things and not really working. It's okay. I've got Kate's gift together, packed off David's copy of my book.

I had a crazy dream last night that I went to work for Microsoft in an office. It was horrible. I had a nice desk-mate whose ambition

was to do as little work as possible. All I could think was that I wanted to get out of there and be doing things on my own.

Just bought *The Ghost In You* by the Psychedelic Furs. Such a good song. Life without music is a mistake.

So, I kept my web resolution until 5:30. I started listing stuff on eBay (almost done) and started surfing.

I think tonight I'm going to take a drive. I was going to go to Malibu, but maybe not for the first time. I need gas, I guess. A month, this has taken. Boy am I reticent. I should talk to my shrink about that.

6/14

Yesterday. Yesterday John called and said he had a two-hour layover at the John Wayne airport in Orange County, and I drove down there. I drove the highway! 100 miles both ways. And it was great to see John, so great. I was intoxicated with freedom. And I talked to M. while I was with him. She's so awkward and cute on the phone, a warm girl. I really want to get up there.

6/20

B. called me yesterday. I didn't call her back. Chilled me to see her caller ID. I feel like she either wanted to tell me she has AIDS, or that she wants to fuck me again. One or the other. And I thought, B., if you want sex, two rules. We have to be sober, and you have to be more fucking gentle. I'm so weak.

That's that. I'm in bed, the lights are off, I have to get up in time for my shrink. I watched *The Cider House Rules*, which was better than I expected but still trite. After my next novel, I want to make a work of art for GOD, or at least something totally new and beautiful. Maybe I could work with light. I guess what I'm thinking about is basically sculpture. Warhammer 40k X *The Babysitter* X death X video holography. Something like that. But anything that concerns human beings would be too obvious, but at the same time, we should be able to relate to the subject matter. So—I'll think about it. Plenty of time to think. I want it to be

simultaneous, I know that much. I guess I should do research on representing five dimensions in four dimensions.

6/21

Had a pretty good session with my shrink this morning, then came home and finished this VH1 thing which Rodney reacted well to.

I could eat. I could eat this other soy riblet. In fact, I think I will. So that's it: I'm going to eat this riblet, and then I'm gonna work.

6/23

It's grey and cold today in Los Angeles, just how I like it. Well, I got my editing done yesterday, just not the typing. So that's what I'm going to do now, type in all these corrections, then go to work on pp. 136-165. I cut the Downingtown hotel sequence. It was extraneous. We already know Hilary's a perverted fuckup; nothing else happens. Andreaa's right, I talk a lot about food. To a certain extent, I'm going to have to fight against my instincts.

The great thing about this apartment is that 90% of the time what I want is within my reach. (Like my black book.)

Weird dreams last night. I parked my black H2 outside a Barber shop, went inside, brushed aside her boyfriend and kissed B. on the cheek.

6/27

So, I'm 25. Tonight is my birthday dinner at Trader Vic's, which I'm looking forward to—Andreaa is coming, and it should be a good time.

I might as well count my blessings. I'm healthy. My family is healthy. I have good friends. My novel is almost done. I've been learning about surviving on no money. I'm doing well with my anxiety—everyone has a cross to bear. My baseball card collection is in good shape.

7/12

What, now, in my life, makes me happy?

- Point Dume. I've been there once, but it was great. Really relaxing. I felt at ease in a way that is rare for me.
- Writing, sometimes. Last night I had a blast writing a little screenplay for Luis, and before that a great time brainstorming ideas for VH1 shows. What I like best is coming up with ideas and working with short forms; execution drags me down.
- Playing video games. Sometimes. Sometimes, if I'm playing a really great game, I get into an intense flow thing and really enjoy myself. Pretty much on the earlier levels. Like I enjoy playing the first two stages of Qbert over and over.
- Spending time with my family. It's not a rampant, crazy kind of happiness, but it's definitely there.
- Once I'm settled in, spending time with my friends. No doubt.
- Being on my own and exploring new cities and areas so long as I have a place to go back to when I'm fatigued—an apartment, a hotel room. I liked looking around Mystic. Some of my fondest memories from childhood are biking around Ocean City, doing my thing (a Slurpee, unread comic books, sea air, the feeling of speed and wind).
- The cat. Oh how I love that cat. Resting with her on my chest is so perfect.

7/3

I'm really excited about the Ftrain Sitekit. It's going to be a while before it comes out, but then I'm all over it. I'll upgrade my server capacity and dump my whole life into it.

7/4

Happy 4th of July. Music is getting me through: the Hot Snakes, *Suicide Invoice* is great. I've been going back and downloading Pitchfork picks I've missed. There aren't that many, surprisingly. I was primed to love this Enon record, but it's only okay. Also *I See A Darkness*, which made me cry last night. "And then I see a darkness / and you know that I still love you / and there's the hope

that somehow you / can save me from this darkness...” Jesus Christ.

Just finished the Clinton book. I had to skim the last three hundred pages, but I read the Lewinsky part and the epilogue carefully. Clinton is a real Nietzsche character; for a little while the whole world felt the force of his will, a good will. That’s the charm of the book, even if it is too long and poorly edited. Oh well. Feels like a load off.

I took a look at the MIT OpenCourseWare website for the first time in a while, and it’s much better stocked than it was last time I visited, especially the Architecture pages. I’m gripped with the desire to go through some of the courses, but I have to focus now. It’s so hard, facing up to this book. I feel like an intense failure: for what’s on the page, and what is not on the page. The only way out is through.

7/13

The Mac is back! The logic board went. Took it in for repairs and they told me they couldn’t back up the hard drive and APPL might have to wipe it—gasp! Anyway, happy end, everything’s fine, but it’s been mighty grim around here with no iBook. WHAT A HOMECOMING.

Had a moderate envy attack reading Hiroshi Fujiwara’s weblog—crazy what he’s up to. Well, not reading, looking at.

What else is going on. Not much. They raised my Lexapro dose to 15, which seems to be fine; I haven’t been sleeping well, but fuck sleep.

I guess the other thing is I’m getting the desperate desire to escape Beverly Hills for the sea. I don’t know.

7/14

Weird day today. I woke up around six, watched *Porco Rosso* in French (no subtitles, but it didn’t matter—how *fantastique*), then went back to sleep until two. Then I talked on the phone, went out to buy bread, and BAM! it’s 5:40 and nothing has been done. I feel some anxiety welling up—tomorrow is Rem Koolhaas, then

Dave Angert, and Friday is J. Ames with Andreaa. Oh well—all these things will be fine. I always do them, and then wonder what I was worried about.

I bought a pill cutter at the grocery store. I need one now. Made me feel like an old person.

7/15

Interesting day today. Woke up late, Dave came over, I had some anxiety before, but it dissipated, we went to NikeTown, stopped in and said hi to Bianca, went to Taschen, where I got my copy of *Content* signed by Rem Koolhaas (very nice), and then we went to the valley, chilled out, and got Japanese food. Lovely.

7/16

So! I woke up at noon, and it's two now. I was up late talking to Nathalie. She moves to New York in three weeks. I told her that it's funny how I knew from sophomore year she would end up in New York and now she's finally going.

Anyway, Andreaa's coming to pick me up at 5:30 for dinner and the Ames reading. Brett is going to be there, which should be nice. But that means I have only three hours to get ready, mail this thing, and go check out the new Prada store, which should be exciting. I'm going to try to take photographs of the inside, but I bet they won't allow it. We'll see.

I'm anxious about going out tonight, but I was anxious yesterday, and it turned out fine. The key seems to be to go out first, do something else first and get used to being outside. Then things are smooth. The only thing I'm worried about is having time later to work on my shit—today is going to be a short day. I've got to start waking up at 8. I have this schedule for the next nine days I've worked out for myself, and I don't want to default on it.

Now: shave! Shower! Get dressed! Eat something to tide me over!

3:40. That's done. I'm back from the new Prada store, which was great.

7/17

I am tired of the sound of my own regrets. So often in this journal this year I've written "I wish..." or "I want..." and I'm sick of it. My reserves have somehow become depleted, but I'm not actually like this. I'm not an anxious person, I'm not an unadventurous person, it's just a weird sick period I'm going through. I'm going to get myself out of it, think myself out of it over the next couple of months. In a second I'm going allow myself some earnest fantasizing.

My novel is finished, and has been sold. I have a little money — not like my dreams at the outset, but enough to pay my debts, bills, and embolden me. It's ten months until my book comes out and I have to start giving readings.

I have found an artist's colony by the seashore in a state I'd never before considered. I apply, sort of forget about it, and then am accepted. I regretfully give notice on my apartment, say goodbye to Andreaa and my family, and set off, with stuff in a backpack and clothes in my rolling bag. It's frightening to take this step, but I feel like it will work, so I do.

I arrive at the colony and meet the people there. Most are older than me, but there are a few my age, and we form a club that meets at night. I become good friends with the boys and intimate with one of the girls—the most talented and beautiful of the bunch. We sleep together at night.

I stay for three months. After the first month, I am working every day, producing my second novel. The characters live, are like people I know. I figure out the ending, and it makes me sick, at first, until I reconcile myself to it.

I go back to Los Angeles, leaving the beautiful girl behind, and move to a new place. It's high up, with wood floors and a balcony. I finish my novel and take two weeks off. I sit on the sofa, listen to a lot of music, and allow the cool breeze to blow in through my windows. I also smear on sunscreen and go to the beach every other day. I meet a girl there, a girl who is different from me. She is confident, kind. We start seeing each other. When we do things together I feel protected by her warmth instead of

weakened by her strength. She likes to come over to my apartment and listen to music with me, especially the Velvet Underground. Sometimes we walk to the movies, or go out to eat. My ball rolls and I start getting more work. She too is doing well, and we have time together.

We decide to go on a two week trip to the east coast. I take her to meet friends and relations, and back to the Main Line. We rent a car, and I show her where I grew up, exactly the important places. She loves it. I tell her I want to move back, and she knows why. The trip is anxiety-free. "You're cured!" she says, teasingly, when I bring this up back at home, but I actually feel so. "The last four years of my life were not so good," I tell her. My head is in her lap. She strokes my hair and scratches my scalp. "Poor lover boy," she says. Those words and others pour over my face like syrup and shellac my eyelids shut. When I wake up in the morning I feel wildly alive, like a man saved from bears. She's sitting down, reading the paper, and looks up at me with her big, unworried eyes. I see a house, parties, friends, children playing under the tables and in the garden at night, being old and shopping for records with my teenagers. "You've saved me," I say.

We go to the bedroom and lie down. Bite down on my finger, I tell her, and rip the patch off her shoulder. Then we take our clothes off and spoon. The only movement is the deliberate, metronomic contraction of her muscles. It takes me about ten minutes to come, but when I do, it's incredible, the liquid volume. She stuffs a bunch of tissues between her scissor-locked legs, and rolls over to look in my eyes. She has me pinned like a butterfly in a scrapbook. "*I Think You're Just What I Needed*," she suggests, and in a dehydrated voice, I begin to sing.

7/18

I found this great Future Zombie t-shirt online – it's the old Batman "Detective" logo, except made out of stars. The only problem is that the image I have may not be big enough to make into a stencil. It's not like I could ever find it for sale in the US. Man, I love making t-shirts. Maybe I should buy myself a Print Gocco.

Well, so here I am at the library. I'm at a bad table in the quiet room. It's been forever since I've been here. Everyone is ugly except a girl who is hidden from my view, behind a column. I'm going to stay here until closing or my laptop battery runs out, whichever comes first.

7/20

So here I am, back at the library. It's 4:30. I woke up late, around 11, got a money order, then called up B. and spent a little time with her. She seems kind of out of it, but her face isn't as bad as I expected. She liked the cat. Then I wanted to stay on a roll, so I went to McDonald's and had lunch there, then came to the library. I'm starting to get the McHeadache now.

I haven't asked Bianca out, but I think I'm going to go over there later.

Note to self: you can read a five dollar bill out loud. Five. Federal reserve note. Five. DL 53260094 A. The United States of America.

It's ten, but I'm almost done with my novel, and my new T207 font is in the bag.

7/23

I was going to go to the beach, but I watched *I, Robot* and visited with Andrea and the baby in the park instead. So now I have a little time to eat, get ready, and work on my book, if I can.

4pm. I'm getting close. I just did some much-needed edits to pages 124-140. I think I'll get done inputting them, then get dressed, then go see Chuck Klosterman.

The new Hives album: it's good! I'm so close with this book.

7/25

I went to see Bianca and asked if she wanted to hang out—yes, she said. I almost passed out, but it was totally worth it. Now I'm way behind on work and stuff because I've been pacing around for four hours, but I'm happy.

7/26

Just saw Clinton's convention speech. Pretty good, could have been better. We gotta win this!

Two hundred more megs of *Six Feet Under* to go. I'm really curious to see this episode.

I gotta write. I gotta finish.

7/29

Waiting for Kerry to come on and give his speech. I kind of can't wait, and I can't turn off the TV yet. I can't concentrate.

I went out and did some shopping this morning; got bulbs for my car's headlights, bought an iTalk for my iPod (I like it so far), and went to see *Garden State*. Then I took Vendela Vida's book out of the library and read it—not bad.

Kerry's on right now. I'm not thrilled, but it seems like he's warming up.

All right, I'm making a little progress. The Kerry speech was good, and I just dictated a chapter into the iTalk. I wish the audio quality was better. It's fucking retarded that they limit it. I mean, why? It could have been 64 and not a threat to national security.

What else. Bianca hasn't called me, and I'm getting a little skitchy—I mean, I'm nervous about meeting her or whatever, but I'd be horrified if she rejected me. Esp. if it were based on Google and my annuals or something. Anyway, I think I'll go see her on Monday if she hasn't called and see what's up. Very gently. Fuck, I hate Los Angeles, but it's never easy to meet girls anywhere, except school.

I was going to read this Chaon book of short stories, but it's going to have to wait. I think I have a right to become a writer, but these other writers (like Vida) are so much...more beautiful than I am? Some quality like beauty. Their sentences, phrasings. I'm hard up when it comes to that. I think I'll improve naturally.

“Organically.”

What else. Talked to Louis for a couple minutes. Did these errands. I'm really looking forward to getting these new headlights in—they promise to be brighter and whiter, which has to be good, as far as I'm concerned.

7/30

I'm up, I'm up...10am, and I just finished my internet reading. This morning I used the alarm clock function of my iPod...woke up to "Sleep" by Automator; so nice. I think I'm going to start setting the alarm for 8:30. The earlier I wake up, the happier I am. Today is all about my novel, and I'm going to go see Kostas at 4x4 later tonight. I hope.

I think I'm going to start writing comic strips again. I'm going to call my new strip Gramscian Square. I just googled Gramscian squares and couldn't find anything. I wonder if Tennenhouse was making the whole thing up. It's funny, either way.

College	My life in Los Angeles
My life in the wild	My surrender

Something like that.

8/2

I'm at the library. I came in amidst this harrowing incident: the cops were arresting this oldish woman who was screaming and carrying on about her car and false arrest, but was wailing and partially incoherent. A whole crowd of people were standing

around and watching. I just slipped into the library, but now I wish I had stood and watched.

Anyway, I saw my shrink this morning, which was nice. Had a good talk. He thinks mindful meditation is a good idea. I sort of think so too, but the question is where. Anyway, after that I went to this great hardware store in West Hollywood (just two miles from my house) and bought jordan anchors and this car synthetic that promises to remove “light oxidation” so I’m hoping it will work on my car. It’s by 3M, so I feel like there’s a chance. Now I’m going to try to put the nail in my book already, and then I’m going to go home and mack on Bianca one more time. Hope she’s not a dead end. My hair looked much better yesterday.

8/4

10am. I did go to the beach yesterday, but it wasn’t as relaxing as last time. Still, it was a nice break. Today the replacement headlight lens for my car came, so that’s good, and I’m expecting these Murakami figures from Japan. Dad will be here at noon; we’re going to Madeo for lunch. I’m going to try to get dressed and go out to buy more screws and jordan anchors before that. I’m also out of printer paper. I’ve got to shave.

8/7

The major accomplishment of the day: I got moblogging working with my Treo and weblog, and it is pure magic. Amazing. I’m going to upgrade to a Treo Ace ASAP. The other thing I was trying to get working was del.icio.us tags to Movable Type, and I found a Perl script, but no dice. Surely with Louis’ help I could make it work, but I’m not sure if I want to trouble him.

I like having things on the web so much, I’m considering transitioning my writing over to private wikis. I could give people the URLs when I want them to read my stuff, I’d be able to log in and edit from any computer, and I’d never have to worry (too much) about backing up. Maybe I’ll get a wiki up and running and see what happens.

Maaaaan, I sort of want to go home and hit that new Japanese restaurant on my block. I’m not getting a ton done. Maybe I

should just take the day off. But I don't know what that means. I really need some friends I can call up and hang out with.

Back at home. I'm tired and my lungs hurt. Anyway, pretty soon I'm going to meet Adrian Tomine at GR2. I'll take some pictures. I just have to dig out some of his comics.

Sleepy time. Didn't get much done today. I looked into the history of Felix the Cat, though. I'm kind of crazy about Felix.

8/11

Isn't this crazy—I'm working in Word 2004. I like it so far—it's a little more responsive, and the formatting palette goes transparent when you're not using it. Kinky.

The apartment two doors down from me is having their air conditioner replaced. I talked to Dana and asked him if it was leaking—and he said, for years. There's mold under the floor, in the wood. And Emma, that little girl lives there.

8/14

Watching the Olympics. Gymnastics and swimming. It's fucking awesome. I'm hooked. The pommelhorse.

I got stuff done at home—didn't get the car painted, but everything else is in order. Now I've just got to write my two pages and it's almost midnight and I'm a little dry. No biggie. I'd deal.

I am. I'm trying to think about the web. The big deal at the moment is the suggestion that feeds should be the starting point for publishing, not the end. It's not a bad idea: all the applications you put data into—calendar, photo album, whatever—send feeds out, and then you splice all of them into one and publish it to the web.

And you could have a public blog and a private blog, say, and run your life off the private one from whatever device is at hand. For example: my private feed wouldn't have any of my snapshots or del.icio.us links (clutter; I want to share them with people, not have them in front of me) except ones tagged as actionable—a

link to the auto body place that's going to paint my car, a picture of the person I'm meeting for lunch.

Is the end result worth the trouble of setting this up? It might be if the feed sent messages to my phone so I never had to remember anything. Or if the superfeed could be analyzed for affinities—I go to this art opening, it recommends another, I give Chef Mako four stars, it knows to send me to Maple Drive. A shadow that stalks my movements.

Okay, I just posted that to my weblog. My weblog has made an exponential power leap this past week. I'm proud. I hope people start reading; I don't know how long I can keep it up.

8/18

Wednesday night. I had my meeting at CMG today; I think it went pretty well. My props went over, for sure, the video game and the toys and stuff. Now Rodney and Graham just have to read it.

I don't know. It's time to get money; we'll see if I can. I want to do this big.

And otherwise, nothing. My car has been acting up a little bit—instrument panel lighting up, funny sound—I've got to drive it to the valley tomorrow to get it painted, so we'll see if it holds up over the hill. I'm going to get my initials painted over the door handle. Awesome. GSL. I kind of can't wait.

8/19

Went to the valley today to get my car painted, went to the mall with Dad, ate a lot, napped, watched the Olympics. Frittered the day away! It sort of felt good, though. I've been a little wound up.

I got and replied to an email from Josh Bearman, which was cool. He's the guy who wrote that amazing Harper's piece about video games.

Now I'm going to sleep. My car will be ready by 4:30 tomorrow; earlier, I hope. Then I'm going home and going to work on my shit.

Okay, sleep.

8/21

It's about what happens when your worst enemy becomes your best friend.

That's the best summary of the book that I have. I think it's pretty compelling, too. See, good ideas do come late in the game. I guess for the new book it would be "imagine if you married your best friend."

8/22

Sunday. I've had a decent day today; I woke up early, linkhunted, and quickly wrote 1000 words on my novel. Then I hung around, then went to GR2 to look for a present for George's birthday. I found a card and some dope packing tape (it has pictures of Playmobil-like figures on it) but no present. I was thinking of getting him the new McSweeney's, but they didn't have it. Then I drove to Brentwood and my car started acting up hardcore, which troubles me. I don't know what it is, but I get the feeling it could die on me. It's been making this knocking noise. Anyway, it's a problem, because I have to go to my shrink tomorrow morning.

I'm also reading this new Ha Jin book, *The Crazed*. It's kind of taxing; not a fun read at all. Everything after Aimee Bender seems dry to me. I loved *An Invisible Sign of My Own* tons. It's nice to work on my own book. Sort of like falling off a log.

9:30. I finished the book. Not bad. Good ending. I didn't like it as much as some of his other books, but by invoking Tiananmen Square, its ambition is greater.

I'm still nervous about driving my fucking car. It should be okay. We'll see. If it's not, it's not.

8/23

That sound my car is making is like coffee percolating, but it held out for my drive. I'm at the library right now. I'm going to try to write 1000 words and this cover letter, which shouldn't be too hard. Just a draft.

Two new cartoons: “A traffic light is like a bad marriage – just get through it!” and (to star of david head man) “Your imaginary god is fucking up your ability to get laid on Friday night.” I bought felt-tip pens at Office Depot while I was in Westwood—\$5 for 4! Jesus fucking christ. I think last time I bought a box of 12 for \$3 or something. At Staples. Next time, Staples.

Well, this is exciting. I just sold a 200 word review to *Make Magazine* for \$75. I’m sort of excited. I’m going to try to write it tonight.

Okay, it’s 7:57. Just hit a high score (for me) in *Malestrom*: 161000. Terrible. It’s dark, I’m going to turn on the light. Done. Now I think I’m going to call Andy.

10:21. Lying around thinking about fucking B., if you must know. I gotta pull some nudes of her while her face is still fucked up.

8/24

Pretty good day so far, except for one thing. I finished my thousand words from yesterday, watched 6FA, did my web search, learned about Sudan. (The situation in Darfur is not as bad as I thought—only 50000 dead. It’s a Muslim vs. Christian/pagan thing, so it’s unlikely the fighting will stop any time soon. Put another way: those overarmed, undereducated fucks could go on killing each other until the end of time. (The dead aren’t casualties, they’re people who fled and died of other causes, mostly.)) Anyway, it’s 2:20, I’m going to shower, shave, then see if I can round up Mareno to have a look at my car.

9:45. I’m fucking tired all the time, despite a nap. Now is the time to take care of myself, correct this downward trend. I’m trying. I went to this LIT event at the Farmer’s Market. I stopped in. I looked around for fifty seconds, a minute, then left.

Oh, fuck *Maelstrom*. I hate that game. I love it too.

Today I was going to write my pages, the Make review, and this letter to Lloyd. I feel headachy and ready for sleep. I should write the pages.

8/25

I just had a great exchange with Fred von Lohmann of the EFF regarding the public domain status of Felix the Cat. It's not totally straightforward, but I think there's a good chance that Felix rightfully is in the PD and we just don't know it yet. I'm going to pursue this the best I can and then publicize it if I get good results.

Had lunch with Dad at Nate n' Als. Very nice. I bought myself that Tiki book at Taschen afterwards. Good investment in a reference. I like the idea of having a modern house with a crazy tiki backyard garden/pool. Which is what it made me think of.

I'm getting there. I'm editing. Man, I could use a Coke. Maybe I'll pick some up from Rite Aid on my way back. My car being broken kills me. I've got to get fucking gas, too. I should go to Robertson and just do it, but I don't want to. The longer I wait, the worse it is. Arg! Well, if I do get gas, I can probably buy Coke there, too, in the little shop.

So now I'm going to eat, try calling Luis, drink this Coke, relax. Tomorrow Marino is taking my car in—so hot!! The noise is driving me crazy, but the low vacuum pressure was too, even before that.

8/26

Almost noon. Marino has taken my car. Now I'm playing with Bloglines, which is great. It's better than a desktop client because it's distributed: I can use it from any computer. Also, it's open: I can get opml out of it, and people who want my subscriptions can get the opml too. So if something better comes along, I haven't spent two hours entering URLs for nothing. And it obviates the need to check webpages all the time. 90% of pages I read now have some kind of feed. Messageboards don't, but that's fine. And now all the pieces come into place: things I want to link and stay current with that have feeds go into Bloglines. Things I want to link that are of a single interest or don't have feeds go in del.icio.us. So I guess the next step is for me to thin out my Safari

bookmarks, farm archived shit out to delicious. I'll get around to it.

Good thing I stayed in the house. It's 3:30. Marino came back with my car—it was the alternator, and the car died right after it got in the garage. \$200, cheap, and another \$200 to take care of the other little problems. Perfecto. Now I'm going to *drive* to the library and maybe check out some of these booker prize winners.

5:15. I'm about to go to the library IN MY CAR.

8/27

Here I am at the library. It's 1:46. I'm listening to Pulp. I just read the Paris Review interview with Murakami (issue 170) and he said something about liking video games. Thank you. I also looked at Wired to get a sense of what a 200-word review should be like.

I just read the first chapter of *Jarhead* by Anthony Swofford (yeah, sitting here in the library) and it's pretty good. Not too long.

I guess I'm going to go to this Xiu Xiu show tonight. Just five bucks, and I've been meaning to go out.

8/31

Last day in August. It's almost three, I'm at home, back from doing a little shopping. I have a lot I could do today, including going to see Dave Eggers, although I'm not totally convinced I want to or have the energy to do anything besides lie around curled up in a ball. I'm waiting for Rodney to call—he finished my book and got Dad on the phone, so I don't know exactly his reaction. He liked it, but I need to know exactly.

9/2

It's 9:12 at night. I had my shrink appointment, helpful. B. told me to push myself, and I proceeded to do so by going to the Nuart to catch *The Brown Bunny*. I liked it. Then I went home and watched the Bush speech. Pretty good. It's easy to impress when expectations are low. I'm a little worried he's going to be

reelected. I'm almost done with my Make review, just have to punch it up.

9/6

I'm in the valley. It's four. The make review went in and Mark liked it, so now I have to send him an invoice, whatever that means. We went to lunch at PF Chang's, which was good. I'm thinking of going to Fry's and buying a DVD-R, but the dual-layer ones probably aren't out yet and plus do I want to drop \$300 this month? No. I'm kind of hot for DVDs, though. I could Handbrake big discs and otherwise copy single-layer ones, if I could get a drive for \$100 or something. Still, buying old technology is a bad idea.

Back from the valley. It's 9. I talked to John, who's back from Vietnam. He had a killer time. Erik Scott is in Berkeley, which is insane.

9/9

I have had the most intense day today. I bought *Getting Things Done*, read it, and decided to give it a try. Basically, I've been working on it for twelve straight hours. I was skeptical at first, but it's really amazing how much stuff I was able to dump out of my head. Do I feel better? I actually do feel a little better. I bought a file cabinet and labelmaker and love them so far. This may turn out to be a really positive thing. I think I'll write an article for my weblog when I'm through it.

9/10

Today was another big GSD day – I set up my “buckets,” as they say, and plowed through my inbox. It's kind of amazing – I do think I've managed to capture a lot of stuff – I'm not as good at figuring out next actions for everything, but I'm definitely in a better position than I was before. And my mind feels clearer. I went out to eat, ate in the restaurant, which was loud, and noisy, and felt nothing, no anxiety. And everything I've set my mind to do I've done. That's what it's supposed to be all about: increasing your ability to focus on one thing at a time. Downside? I do feel a little bit corporate, but that's going to fade – it's just the halo of the book's language and examples.

I guess another amazing thing was his suggestion that nothing be kept in your email inbox. I took it. I chewed through all 3000 pieces of my email, trashed a lot of it, and set up tons of folders and subfolders to use as staging and archive. That's been really great. In fact, the ad-hoc outline created by my mail folders and subfolders sort of describes the state of my life: lots of friends, not many professional contacts. No worries, I'll get there.

9/16

Well, I've been on the GTD routine for almost a week, and it's definitely been good. I've cleared a lot of stuff off lists and gotten a lot of stuff ON lists that previously had been on my mind. My filing system is set up, I have a useful inbox, and my anxiety level is down. I still feel like there's room for refactoring and improvement, but we'll see. The main thing is to kind of keep at it.

I bought a DVD burner, finally, a Sony, and it's fantastic. I can burn a DVD in seven minutes. I burned off all the mp3s I had hanging around my drive that I never listen to (40 gigs) and now I'm burning an archive of my AIFFs so I can convert them to AC3 and save the space. I'm down to one external hard drive: the 250 gig, and the other is on eBay right now.

9/20

It's 1pm, and I'm at the library. Things are going well: I went back to the gym this morning, finally, and then I walked to Washington Mutual and set up a new checking account. The girl who helped me was an Indian Muslim, first-generation, and after we were done, I asked her out to tea. She refused, but because she was working things out with a fiancée. There was no ring, so I couldn't have known. I was happy I asked. She was really cute. Anyway, then I went to Whole Foods and ate sushi.

I sort of accidentally discovered this photographic technique I like. I took a photo of myself to send to Eojean, but it didn't look finished, so I drew a word balloon on a piece of paper, scanned it, cut it out in Photoshop, placed it, and turned down the opacity so it looked like it's floating and voila. It looked really good. That's going to be my shit.

And: this backpack is the best I've ever owned. It's amazing. It distributes the weight so well that it seems much lighter when it's on your back. Yeah Supreme. I'm about to pitch a street culture weblog to this guy at Weblogs, Inc., which is cool. Writing for Make has made me much more interested in freelancing – it's fast, it's pretty easy, and you get paid. I don't know if I'm going to want to do it for the rest of my life, but it's okay for right now.

And: Graham wants changes to my book so he can take it to Dreamworks, so that's what I'm going to do. I'm sending him an email when I get back to my house.

9/23

10:10pm. Full day today. I did a bunch of errands and bought a skateboard, which was a great move. I fucking love it. Now I have to ride a lot and learn how to ollie. I also went to this Habitat For Humanity orientation, which was all right. It's a Christian ministry, in the strictest sense. I just want to know if it's evangelical. If so, I don't think I can work for them in good faith, but I think it will be all right. I'd like to do some construction.

I'm hoping Veronica will knock on my door, but we'll see.

Yom Kippur starts tomorrow at sunset, and I'm going to tank a giant pizza beforehand. Plain cheese regular crust, Papa John, thank you.

I got a Clapper, actually. It's a little sensitive, but pretty hot. I'm going to use it tonight.

9/27

I'm reading Matt Klam stories and they're really, really great. He makes it seem so easy, for real.

9/28

At the restaurant, the girl from Six Feet Under sat next to us. I wanted to say, hey, you're the girl from Six Feet Under! but didn't.

God I hope Larry finds a cute girl from Veronika's apartment. I gave her a hug, took her by surprise, and she returned a very light hug. Leaning forward with her shoulders, that kind of thing. Lousy.

I got an email from Ben Heller, too. I'm going to hang out with him the next time I'm in New York.

That's it, seriously. That's the latest dispatch from my exciting life.

10/7

I went to Kate's premiere, which was nice. Saw Tom Hanks again. R. was there, affectionate, and later Kate told me she's breaking up with Matt. I'm still really attracted to her, but it's such a bad idea.

9pm: Well, I beat Shinobi. The arcade version. Sort of a shitty game.

10/10

Went to Josh Bearman's reading, which was great, and I watched *The Hulk* (beautifully shot and acted but no humor so useless) and *Desperate Housewives*, which was okay. A nothing day. I didn't even clean the house, which I promised myself I'd do. Tomorrow. Tomorrow I'm going to my shrink in the morning; I'll buy *Katamari Damrcy* and get lunch.

This morning I went in and out of sleep and also in and out of what Luis told me is called a hypnopompic state – a fluid slipstream kind of consciousness right before you wake up but are not dreaming or asleep. There's something similar after the myconic jerk before you fall asleep. So I spent four hours going in and out of this amazing clean high, and realized that I have feelings for R. Which is absurd. Although: I've had girlfriends who were beautiful and too adult for their own good. Could I perhaps have one who's too childish for mine? I do like her. She's a sweet girl. We have some common interests. She's got a banging body. She's with this Matt kid, but she's done with him. What am

I supposed to do, though? I just checked AIM to see if she was on. Why am I so stupid? Seriously.

Christopher Reeve died, they just said on television. Man, life is tempestuous.

Why am I suddenly so conflicted? What I want to do is transcend human boundaries and flush out the old categories with acid.

10/13

It's past midnight, but I wanted to jot something down. I went to B.'s house for the third debate. She's doing CBT and it's helping—she's much calmer and shit. I tried to tongue the place where she's missing a tooth, but she wouldn't let me. As a consolation, she showed me her breasts, which are even bigger than before.

Any fucking way. Repo Man is done downloading, and from the first fifteen minutes, it's great.

10/19

I'm reading Warren Ellis' six-book *Scars* right now. It's pretty good.

Tomorrow I have a dental appointment. Two fillings. Not a huge deal. I'm trying not to think about it. I hate that shit.

Hunter S. Thompson is coming to Taschen at 6 tonight, and I have to decide if I'm going to go. He's not a favorite writer, and I can't really spare the \$25 for another book. On the other hand, he's famous and interesting, and it's right in my neighborhood. I could just walk over and see what's up.

Tomorrow night I think I'm going to invite B. over and try to fuck her. I might as well. Watch Repo Man again. Get something in before David visits.

The weather's fantastic right now. Dark, cold, and drizzly. I almost feel alive.

I'm not going. Fuck it. I don't have any money and I hate everyone.

I have this stupid Red Sox game on. When I should be working.

10/27

It's 4:30. I'm listening to Madvillany and am going to start typing in these freaking manuscript corrections. Also possibly Game 4 is on and I'll watch some of it. Rooting for the Red Sox, of course. Enough history. Here we go.

Red Sox win!!!!

10/29

Back at the library. I just voted, got here at nine in the morning, and it took an hour and a half. Diebold touchscreens. I was majorly discomfited by the machines; no paper receipt. They should print out a fucking paper receipt; you get a copy and the county keeps a copy. How tough is that?

11/1

1:36, at the library, feeling pretty good. I'm coming from a sprawling, productive session with Ajilore, where I discussed my feelings on Nietzschean philosophy as it relates to my present condition. Feels good to talk that shit out. I suggested, and I think this is a pretty good idea, a multi-dimensional diagnostic twin for the DSM that would chart health instead of dysfunction. This is my answer to the Hitler critique of the will to power: even if you took H. as someone with the will, he would chart much differently than Mother Teresa or Alexander or whatever. I know this reads ultra-high-school cheesy.

Anyway, anyway. I got myself a copy of the new Cabinet, I'm looking forward to going home so I can fuck with my PC, finish downloading iPhoto, put stuff on eBay, give a little attention to my personal projects.

Something that's very important: Tomorrow is the general election, and with luck Kerry will be in as the new godhead, I hope, I hope, I hope.

11/2

Election night, 8:30. Is it breaking for Bush? Florida isn't in yet.

10:19. Ohio is key now, but it looks like Bush is going to win. Republican presidents have been in office before, but never have I felt so estranged from my countrymen. Bush won on help from the Supreme Court and was faced with a very different set of issues from what anyone anticipated, but that he would be reinstalled...is...unbelievable. It makes me want to spit. It makes me want to move to Europe, or at least print up some protest stickers. I'm thinking "George W. Bush is not a Christian." Not that it's something that bothers me, but it does make him a hypocrite. Maybe he can be impeached.

Well. In positive news, my cable modem is working, so all I have to do now is get my wireless networking, uh, working. I'm getting tremendous speeds on things I'm sucking down: I should be watching *The Grudge* and reading comic books in no time.

11/3

11:05pm. Another wasted day. Have to retarget tomorrow. Bush, of course. I'm thinking of leaving the country. Traveling, at least. It's horrible. It's not enough to leave, there has to be change.

11/6

9:41. Back from the valley. It's getting so dark so early it feels like midnight right now. I'm slightly buzzed off cherries in liquor in chocolate, the Hungarian kind from Trader Joe's.

11/16

4:50pm. I'm about to go to see Andreaa to celebrate her acceptance to Bennington and eat Korean BBQ.

R. is starting up with me again; she called me twice yesterday and I talked to her—she had her wisdom teeth pulled this morning, but we'll go out and have lunch the next time she's in Beverly Hills adjacent. I hadn't talked to her in a while and she sounded different, maybe a little jaded. Then I called Kate today and Kate said, well, R. doesn't like to be touched but she does need someone to take with her to events.

I'm reading *Brick Lane*, which really is great and worthy of the praise bulldozed to Monica Ali's door. Next up is *The Woman In The Dunes*, unless Andreaa gives me a copy of her new book which I don't think she will because changes are forthcoming.

I'm back. Had a lovely time, of course. BBQ was great, hung out, watched Gilmore Girls, which was a weak, filler-type episode. Listened to Low's Christmas album on the way there, and it sort of broke my heart. John's favorite. I'm trying to practice this mindful meditation, and had a mini-breakthrough—feeling anxious on the way there, and then sort of opening myself to the amazingness of the LA sunset, how beautiful. I think the best thing about that *Miracle of Mindfulness* book is the way the guy talks about knowing the table—the ore melted for the nails, the trees grown from seeds, the grandfather of the carpenter falling in love and having a child and that child growing up and having a child. It's a good point, and sunsets are like that only global, concerning the earth and all of us, like magnetic fields if we could see them. I was very much in the moment that moment.

11/18

It's two in the morning and my head hurts. I took an ill-advised nap and then drank Pepsi with dinner, so I'm fucked up. It feels like I'm in a net underwater. The net is made of fine, fine mesh, each hole equal in size to the solid next to it. Pixel on, pixel off, pixel on, pixel off—my fingers can't get through so I can rip it apart and swim to the surface. Or something. I just have to bounce a little. I'm not depressed, I feel fine. I just need to get back to work on my book.

2pm: Feeling much better. Just got a bunch of busywork done and make the booklet for my 2004 holiday DVD, which I am now sort of excited about. Rock.

12/8

4:00, library. It's packed. I had to park on the top level, which was actually sort of nice as the sky is grey and overcast and Beverly Hills is looking beautiful. So now I'm going to try to sit and work here until the library closes. Knowing myself, I'll sit for an hour

and a half until I can rationalize some reason to leave or reach some minor milestone and then leave. Knowing the future doesn't necessarily change it. Here we go with Moon College.

4:40. Having a little trouble working. Having a little trouble *getting focused*.

8:41. Watching TV. Gum scraping tomorrow morning. All stressed out like crazy.

Reading *Pattern Recognition*. I find myself committing to it in full around page 110.

Just got R. on the phone. She was talking about kids! Kids! Oh, bad news.

12/14

5:30. Not a bad day so far. I've been working on my book in my closet where I can at least get some darkness. I love it and don't know why I haven't thought of it before – I used to work in a dry bathtub in Park La Brea.

Two events to report: my right front tire went flat, and I had to get the guy to come to put on the spare. Marino is going to patch the one I had on, so the whole deal isn't going to cost me anything. And R. came over and we walked around. She just left. She's so, so cute, I can't stand it. I very carefully kept my hands to myself this time and asked her, at the end, if she preferred that. Yes, she said, and I screamed as if stuck. She laughed. I don't know if I can take this or not. We'll see.

12/19

Time for a journal entry. 11:03pm. I'm writing this on my new PC laptop because my iBook hard drive crapped. I feel totally hamstrung without it, even though I'm not; I can get my novel off my backup drive with my USB key and use Word on this machine. No big deal.

I spent most of the day in the Valley; Mom and Kate are both much more chill after Kate's week absence. We ate at Jerry's, bowled a game, played some DDR and later went to a pet store to

pet some fucking depressing puppies. And they did my laundry.

I'm stressed out about tomorrow, which is going to be gym, shrink, gum scraping for an hour and a half, fighting the line for the Genius Bar at the Apple Store at the Grove (although I guess I could go to Santa Monica and check Kid Robot again) while doped up and sleepy, and then probably a call from Nathalie, who's back in town and wants to eat out with her boyfriend in, uh, tow.

12/20

1:13am. Didn't get much done today besides go to the dentist for the second half of my cleaning, which zonked me out. I napped until seven, then wrestled with my fucked up iBook with no success.

I did see my shrink today. He suggested I go to dinner with Nathalie and Sam, see them together, and let it sink in. "You call him her 'new boyfriend,'" he said, catching me out. Fair enough. Also we talked about this beautiful dream I had this morning before I woke up - I was in a sleepy seaside town, possibly Mystic, and hanging around with this guy who was editing found 16mm footage in the projection loft of the local one-screen movie theatre. He edited and edited and finally he put it aside and said, 'I'm done working on this. I accept that I will not be able to make it into a coherent whole,' turned into a large white bird, and flew out the window. I jumped out the window and flew after him, flying in dream for the first time, caught up to him, and said goodbye. Then I flew around for a little while and swooped back into the loft.

I'm going to play some more Zelda, then sleep.

4:47am. Sleep, yeah?

5:33 - what the hell? Why am I still up?

12/22

Basically uneventful day. Woke up late. Kate turned in her introduction for the annual, and it's raw and pretty funny. Maybe I should just hand my novel over to her to finish.

I did type up and regularize my long-form goal sheet for 2005. Stop laughing. I know I say this every year but 2005 is going to be a MONSTER YEAR! Grwarr!

12/23

There are two things I want to remind myself of before I forget, and I saw both of them on television. First is from *Beetlejuice*, the banana song (“Hey Mister Tally-man, tally me banana”) - the “deadly black tarantula” line would make a killer sample. And also, from VH1’s *I Love The 80s* or whatever - there’s a *Flowers In The Attic* movie, and they showed a clip. I should see that.

12/24

It’s the day before Christmas, and I’m sitting in my dark closet, getting ready to work on my novel. I’m going to sit in this closet until it’s done, pretty much. It’s not a punishment, it’s a celebration. I’ve really, really had enough. The novel is still magical to me, but it’s time to finish, and I want to work on the video game.

12/27

I just thought of a line I like: I have the metabolism of a chess player.

12/29

It’s 1:30 in the morning. I bought a bunch of weed today and smoked up a storm. It made me super, super hungry. Flashback, baby. I’ve been watching Adult Swim and playing *Zelda*, which I still haven’t beaten. I’m getting there.

I saw Nathalie and Sam twice. It was actually good. Sam seems like a good guy. I also met two of Nat’s Iowa friends, M and S - M was my connect today.

Also hit therapy this morning, which was all right too. I really feel like I’m doing well with dread anxiety. Maybe in the final stages. Just have to keep pushing.

I’ve also been rereading Murakami’s *East of the Border, West of the Sun*. I thought it was one of his weakest books (so did Jay Rubin, considering that he declined to translate it) but now I think it’s one of his best, at the front of the second rank behind *Wind-Up Bird*, *Hard Boiled Wonderland*, and *Wild Sheep*

Chase. Can't wait for *Kafka on the Shore*. I should have tracked it down months ago, but whatevs.

12/31

I'm reading Zizek's *Welcome To The Desert of the Real*, which seems like a good way to spike the year. This bird has flown.

ANXIETY RECORD

Geoffrey Litwack's Anxiety Record, sponsored by Lexapro:
Well-tolerated strength.

2/4/04

I've been thinking about the root causes of my "scary thoughts" (sorry, I can't help the quotes—I understand the word "scary" is supposed to make diminutive the unwanted thoughts—gently remind the patient those thoughts are irrational—but "scary" to me out of the context of Halloween :: "belly" out of the context of oboes) and for now I've settled on three basic fears: of death, entrapment, and embarrassment.

2/6/04

Things I haven't done in a long time:

Go to a movie – December 2003

Work out – March 2001 (!)

Go out to dinner with a group of friends – November 2003

Drive on the highway for >4 miles – July 2003

Play in a poker night – June 2002

Take a road trip – March 2003

Go to a concert – January 2003

Go to a bar – April 2003

Play tennis – some time in 2001?

Go to the dentist for teeth cleaning – May 2003

I can't think of anything else. Pretty depressing list.

2/9/04

Just got back from a movie. (*The Fog of War*.) I walked to the theatre and intentionally tried to make myself a few minutes late. Right before I left my apartment, my stomach started hurting, and I took some Pepto-Bismol. I thought to myself, what if I experience extreme discomfort while I'm at the movie? Then I would have to walk back nine blocks in distress—maybe I should

go to the later show, or tomorrow. Then I considered the worst case and decided that yes, I might miss part of the movie or have to go home early, but it wouldn't be the end of the world. My stomach still hurt a little on the walk, but I did some abdominal breathing, and that helped. When I got to the box office I joked with the ticket agent about the loneliness of going to a movie alone (he initially thought I was buying two tickets), which made me feel more in control of the situation. In my seat, watching the previews, I recorded some initial anticipatory anxiety, not surpassing a 3. The only thoughts I could pin down as a cause was that once the film started I would have to be in my seat for 90 minutes (I had looked up the length on the internet), and I was reviewing memories of the panic attack I had last time I went to the movies. Once the film started, my anxiety waned to a 2, and as I became enraptured by the narrative (it really was a great documentary), it faded entirely. Afterwards, leaving the theatre and walking home were completely without incident.

2/12/04

Feeling anxious, having just steered through an upsurge of panic on the street around 3:15pm. It was one of those times I would say the feeling came from nowhere, but I'll try to unpack the experience now while it's fresh. I slept six hours the night before, which is less than usual for me, and spent the morning reading a depressing (well, the moral of the story was to seek the golden mean, but plenty of suffering was described before getting there) book. I like to spend a full day at the library when I go, so I was unhappy about leaving my house so late in the day. I called my mom to kill time on the walk, and about halfway, when I turn from Beverly Drive onto Dayton Way, I had the distinct feeling that accompanies the start of a panic attack. I'll put thoughts in brackets. Lightheadedness [something's wrong] a tingling in my legs [what's that?] nausea [I should turn back and go home] [I could collapse] [I should just try to get to the library and see how I feel] [but even if I make it there, I won't be able to work and I'll still feel sick.] I stayed on the phone with my mom and tried to do some abdominal breathing, which helped. After about five minutes of walking, I felt better, but not much. Now I'm in the library, still feeling a little nauseous and anxious, maybe a 3. Basically, right now, I feel disarmed and fragile—like if I had to talk to someone I'd cry, or puke on their shoes. Still, the good

news is, I definitely felt a full-blown panic attack coming on and managed to turn it back with breathing and examining my anxious thoughts.

2/20/04

I'm trying to think through some anxiety about a possible situation. I'm thinking of going to a café where I have a small crush on a waitress—last time I was there, we hit it off and had a nice chat. (1. It was in-depth and 2. she wasn't serving me, so I don't think it was about the tip.) That was three or four months ago. I'd like to go back, but the idea makes me anxious. I'm going to try to break it down to its component parts and be exhaustive.

1. The drive from my house to La Brea. This doesn't make me anxious at all.
2. Parking. I know it sounds absurd to be anxious about parking, but last time I was on that street I got a parking ticket, and I am the sort of person who cannot enjoy their lunch while the prospect of losing \$36 looms. I know that I'm fine to park until 4pm, and I know another place to park after that. Taking things to their worst, if I got another ticket, it would be annoying but wouldn't break me.
3. Going from the car to the café counter. The prospect of being seen, and greeted, makes me feel uncomfortable. Uncomfortable how? It's a moment of being singled out, I guess. Why should being singled out make me uncomfortable? I don't know. The worst that could happen is I could say something foolish, or draw more attention to myself. This in turn might produce more anxiety or physical symptoms—I could feel hot. This occurs to me because I'm feeling hot right now, writing this.
4. So I've managed stage 3 and now I'm sitting at the counter with a menu. Virginie, the other waitress, asks me what I want to drink, and I say an Arnold Palmer. Bread, salt, oil, and balsamic vinegar are put in front of me, which I probably don't want, seeing as I'm not that hungry since I'm either anxious or expectant.

5. At some point during the meal, I get my chance to talk to M, the waitress I have a crush on. Perhaps she wants to know why I haven't been back; because I moved, I will tell her. I ask about her life (photography, Argentina, etc.) and she asks about mine (writing, Beverly Hills, etc.). I don't know if this is really what I'm worried about. I could say something stupid (it's possible—last time I asked her how she survived the economic ruin of her country, which was obviously the wrong thing to say): in the worst case, offend her. She could avoid me until I leave and make it clear she never wanted to see me again, in which case the crush is off. I could live with that, even though it would be sad. Or, worse, I could have a panic attack, sending me to their bathroom, whose location I am unsure of, or to my car. Still, I would survive it. It wouldn't be pleasant, but I've had plenty of panic attacks and survived.
6. My food comes. In situations where panic is possible, I like to order a salad, because it's light on the stomach (I'm probably not hungry) and if you don't finish, it's like whatever, it's a salad. This makes me a little anxious, because if I'm really feeling nauseous, I won't want to eat at all and getting the check will be awkward, but so, I look a little weird.
7. I pay the check, say goodbye to Virginie and M (hopefully giving her my card, with my number), and leave. No anxiety because I'm free.
8. I get in my car and leave. No anxiety.

Looking this over, I still feel the anxiety, and it feels amorphous still. The anxiety over being singled out is an interesting twist; I feel like that's something I discovered in the course of writing this down. I know from experience that 60% of the anxiety is located here, now, until I actually go, and when I get there, it probably won't be as bad as I think, and I'll chide myself for being stupid.

2/21/04

I just had sex. During the run-up, including picking the girl up, watching a movie, conversation, cigarettes and drinks, my anxiety level didn't exceed a 3. During the event, I was not anxious. Afterwards I was back to a 3 because I wanted to get her out of

my house (I realize I may be losing your sympathy at this point, but truth is truth), and after I put her in a taxi, back to a 1. Surprisingly, none of this was particularly laden with anxiety.

Although the anxiety was muted, I found the entire experience to be pretty depressing. The mismatch of expectations, the drunkenness, and our mutual incommunicability in general. I have to admit, I closed the deal against my better judgment because it was on my laundry list of things I hadn't done in a while.

2/22/04

Right now I'm getting ready to go to an acquaintance's birthday lunch, which falls under the "dinner with a group of friends" category. I also have a mild hangover (see above entry). I'd say my anxiety is about a 2. I realize that because I'm anxious I should think about the worst that could happen. With the headache: the dull ache in my forehead could develop into a nauseating, reality-bending supermigrane. The onset could bring on a panic attack. I could pass out. If I had a panic attack, I guess I could ride it out. It's still a pretty scary prospect. I would either go to the bathroom until I had pulled myself together enough to leave, or just leave then. Kim (acquaintance) and Andreaa (my friend) both know about my condition, so they would probably understand. I realize that I'm worried about spoiling Kim's birthday lunch, but if I absolutely had to leave, I could probably do it in such a way that it wouldn't totally disrupt the whole thing. I know from experience that people have selective memories and construct selective narratives about their lives, and my getting anxious and leaving wouldn't really rock Kim's boat so much.

What else could happen? I could get sick, I guess, or my stomach could hurt, but nothing a trip to the bathroom couldn't cure. The nice thing about this situation is that I was in a very similar meal last year (Kim, Andreaa, Andreaa's boyfriend) when my anxiety was much worse and still had a really nice time.

Other points of anxiety: I don't have a present for Kim, since I was invited on short notice, but I did get a card, so I think that will be fine. Also, I realize there could be a lot of people there I don't know.

So I went and had a lovely time. My anxiety didn't even exceed a two. In the car on the way there, I noticed that my headache was getting worse. Then I realized that I was frowning—carrying tension in my forehead. I tensed and relaxed, and felt much better.

2/23/04

Well, I went on the highway for >5 miles. I had a morning meeting, after which I was due downtown, so I got on the 110 and zipped down there. No anxiety worse than a 2. One mild scary thought—what do I do if I become anxious? Get off at the next exit, I thought, but both thoughts were basically idle. The whole thing was much easier than just getting back on the highway at all for the first time.

It almost seemed too easy. In fact, I even felt some of the old pleasure of driving fast. While I was downtown I met Tom Hanks, which you might think would make you anxious, but he's very easygoing and cool, so no problems there either.

Here's an update on my list:

~~Go to a movie—December 2003~~

~~Go out to dinner with a group of friends—November 2003~~

~~Drive on the highway for >4 miles—July 2003~~

Work out – March 2001 (!)

Play in a poker night – June 2002

Take a road trip – March 2003

Go to a concert – January 2003

Go to a bar – April 2003

Play tennis – some time in 2001?

Go to the dentist for teeth cleaning – May 2003

I feel like I'm on fire right now.

2/27/04

My recollection of this isn't perfect, but I'll do my best. My friend Andreaa took me to Pop Show, a musical performance where Burbank high school kids sing and dance their little hearts out. It started around 7:15; we had been the audience since 6:45. The event was held in a large school auditorium, and it was packed.

We were sitting right up front, and my egress was blocked by a bunches of people in my row on both sides. Around 7:10, after waiting for 25 minutes, I started feeling hot. I'm getting anxious, I thought. It came on suddenly, and I hadn't been anticipating feeling anxious, which almost made the feeling worse. At that point it was a 4. I took off my jacket and hung it on the back of my chair. As I twisted in my seat, I felt physically weak, enervated, and noticed a strange taste in my mouth—my tongue was dried out, and the taste was sharp and metallic. My anxiety went to a 6. I have got to get out of here, I thought. The urge to leave was very powerful, and frightening. I started feeling nauseous. What can I do to get out of here? I wondered. I'd have to get over all these people in my row. I'd have to tell Andreaa that I'm having a panic attack and wait for her outside until the intermission, which would ruin her enjoyment of the show. That thought made the anxiety worse because it made me feel trapped. At that point I told Andreaa that I was having some anxiety—I figured if I was going to leave, I'd have to prep her, and sometime telling someone how I'm feeling helps. She was concerned, but I told her not to worry, and at that moment decided to stay in my seat no matter what, and it was then that my thinking started to become more productive. All I have to do is sit here, I told myself. Even if it's three hours long, all I have to do is sit here, and I can probably recuperate. No matter what, if I just sit here long enough, regardless of whether or not I have a good time, we will eventually leave, in a timely, rather than desperate, manner. Also, I reasoned. What if I had to go to a show like this every night? Would I be able to do it? Of course. After a while it would become routine. There's nothing inherently unpleasant about sitting in the dark listening to music for three hours. So why not feign that comfort now? I looked at Andreaa, who I love, in the dark, and that was reassuring.

My anxiety went down to a 3, bearable, and after about half an hour it went down to a 2. The show went on for FOUR HOURS, but I did have a good time. The reassuring thing I can take away from this is that previously, surely, the level of anxiety I experienced at its worst would have been enough to drive me out of the situation and into the arms of a panic attack, but I feel quite

certain that applying the CBT Jedi techniques made a big difference.

3/5/04

Haircut – moments of 4.

Manicure – no problem.

Gym – no problem. Totally enjoying the machines.

3/7/04

I've been thinking of making a list of activities which absolutely terrify me, excluding those which carry actual significant risk (skydiving, for example, or street fighting).

Going on a rollercoaster. I've never done it. Ditto Ferris wheels. Singing karaoke. Never. I don't have much of a voice, but then I understand that the clown figure is part of the whole karaoke mythos.

Playing a team sport like soccer or volleyball. Haven't done that for a long, long time.

Going to a baseball game. Time is part of the equation, but I haven't been to a baseball game since I was seven, and I love baseball.

Additions to my regular list:

Gotten high. I can picture your objection, but smoking weed occasionally was a pleasant part of my life before I went on medication.

3/11/04


3:10pm: Near-panic attack in the library. I feel a certain abdominal tightness. Flushing in my cheeks. The edge of nausea. I think, I am going to just sit here and get through this. There is nothing physically wrong with me. I'm sweating. This is it. I'm going to breathe and let it roll over me like a wave. I know nothing is physically wrong. My anxiety is about a five right now. I'm hyperaware of the other people in the room. My brain is telling me to leave, leave, leave. I'm soaked with sweat. I'm thinking about my novel. I'm thinking about going to the bathroom and waiting for the worst to be over. I'm thinking how soon would it be permissible for me to leave? My face is COVERED in sweat, as are my arms. There's a cramp in my

stomach. All of my muscles are sore from working out. Maybe I have food poisoning from lunch. I think the worst is over, but you never know. I'd say for this episode my anxiety peaked at six. This seems to have come out of nowhere. I'm going to try to think about this. I'm sitting so facing two women. I've been watching one of them, who I'm slightly attracted to. I had wondered if she were watching me also. Earlier today I had gone back to look for the waitress I had a crush on, and not found her. Yesterday I ignored a call from R., the girl who has blown me off the last three times we had plans to meet. Yesterday I found out a girl I've had a crush on for years got engaged. This girl theme is the only thing that comes to mind.

JOKES NO. 1



LITWAC
Pickup



DON'T EVER GET
TOO YOUNG

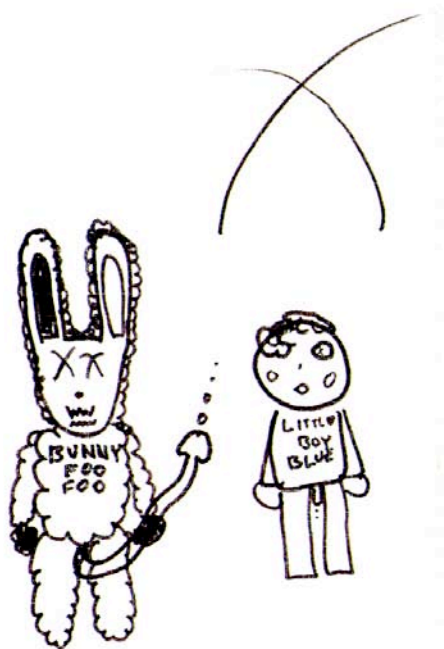


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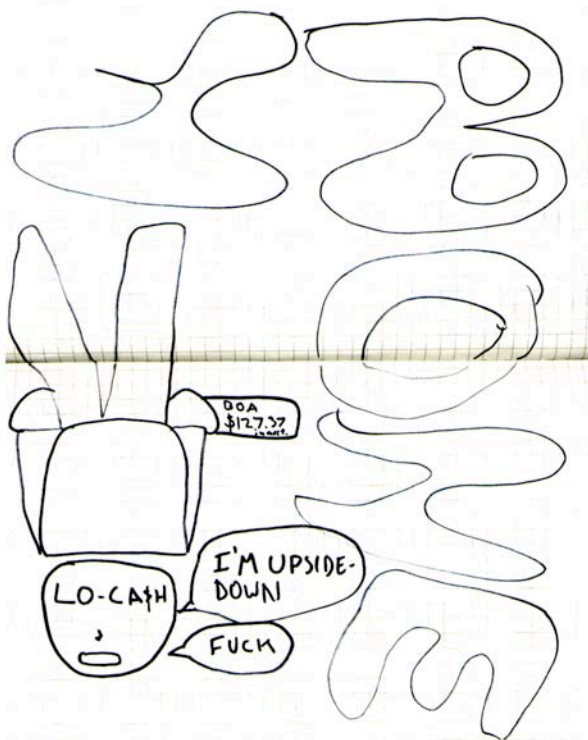


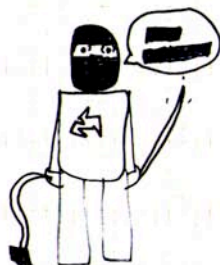
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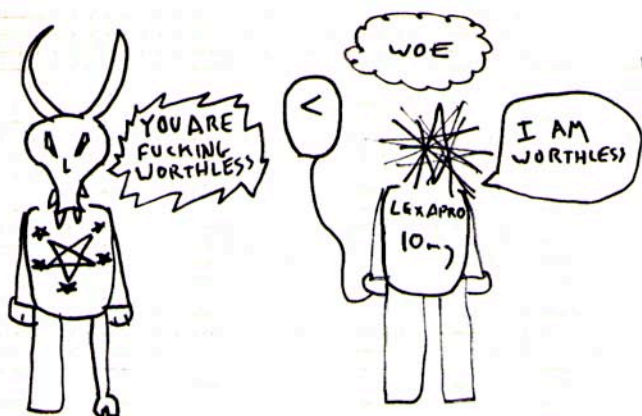


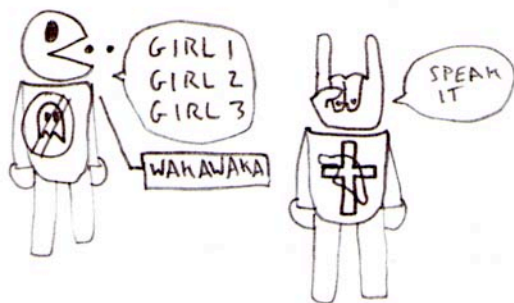


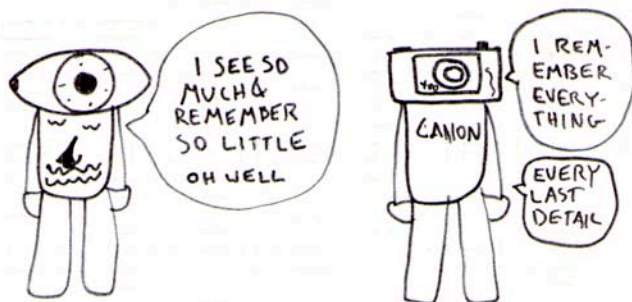






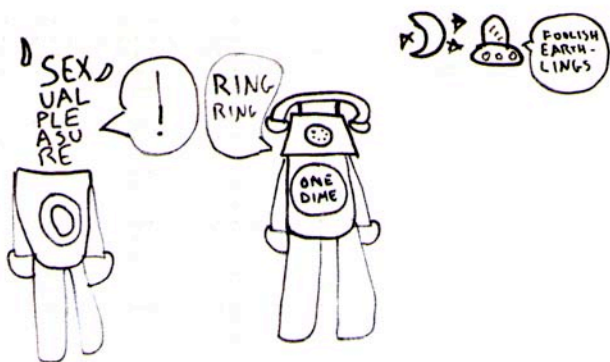


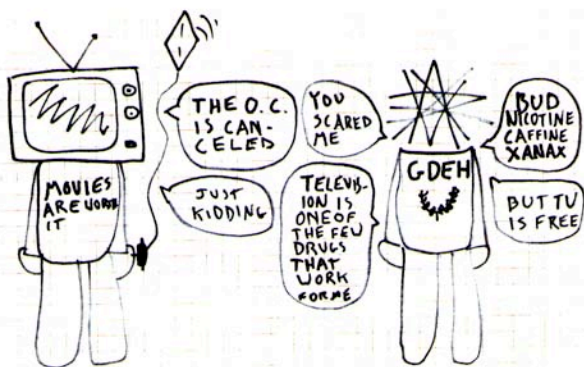
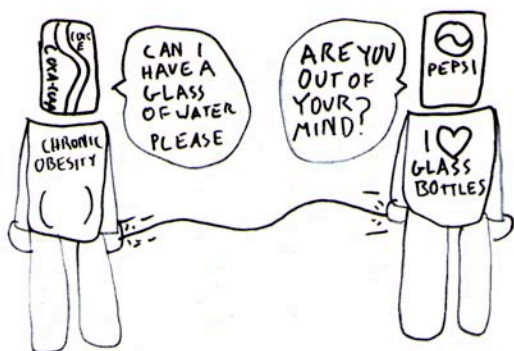


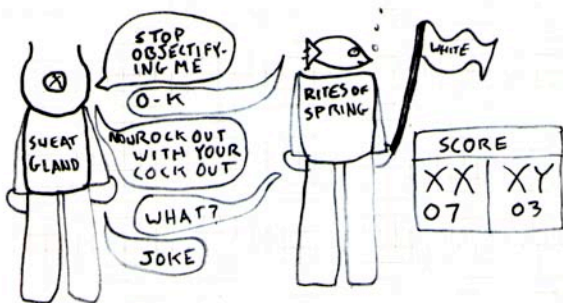


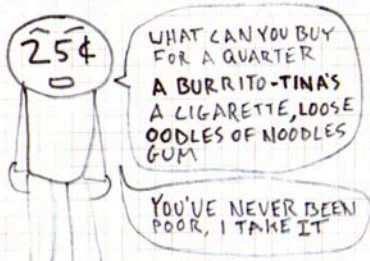
CLITWACK 1985

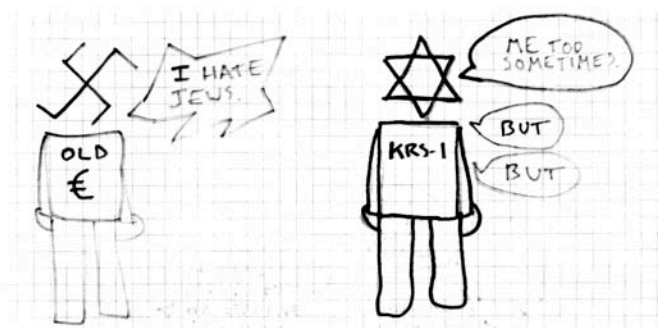
YOU STILL
AIN'T SHIT



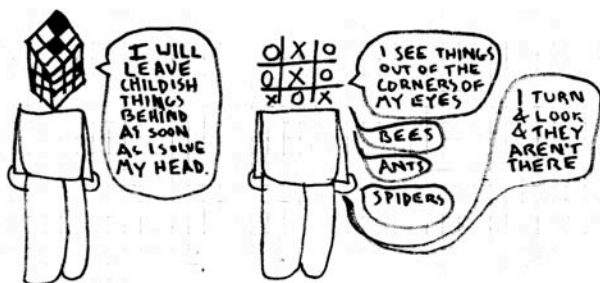




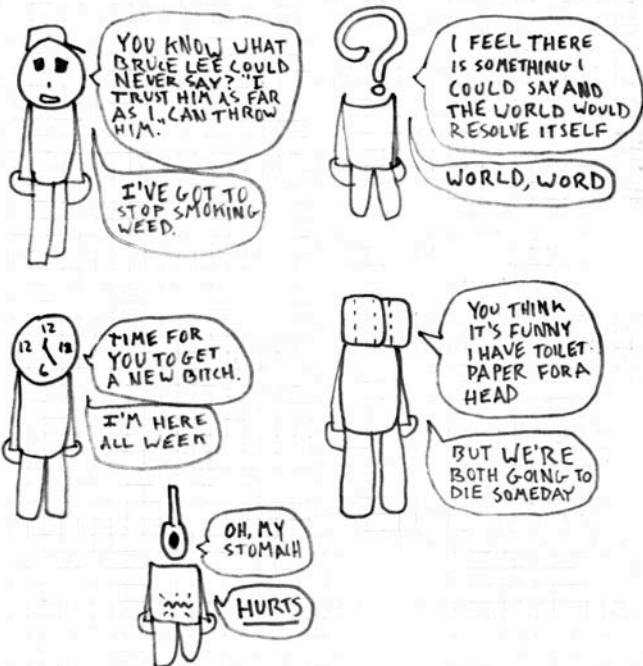








FINAL
LOVE









THE SON OF DRACULA VERSUS THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN

EXT. DARK ALLEY

The SON OF DRACULA, typical second-generation emigrant - a little schlumpy, impossible yearnings for an unknown home, poor, in need of support - has cornered the ARTIFICIAL WOMAN, who also has a problem: she's an escaped, built-to-order sex android. (That order was for a young Southern Belle, cute as a button, and the S in S&M.)

The Son of Dracula tries to bite her, and bounces off.

THE SON OF DRACULA
You're a replicant!

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN
I'm an android.

THE SON OF DRACULA
What's the diff?

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN
I can never die.

THE SON OF DRACULA
Me either!

INT. THE SON OF DRACULA'S APARTMENT

The Son of Dracula sits on his couch, shirtless, bruised, smoking a joint. The Artificial Woman is wearing his Stereolab t-shirt and not much else. Improv some chat.

THE SON OF DRACULA

I'm gonna need to get some blood
pretty soon.

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN

I'm going to have to beat the shit
out of you again soon.

THE SON OF DRACULA

Will there be a happy ending?

She puts him in a headlock.

INT. DARK BASEMENT

The Son of Dracula has cornered a pretty blond
girl.

PRETTY BLOND GIRL

So...you've got some Mclusky
bootlegs down here?

The Son of Dracula draws closer to her.

THE SON OF DRACULA

Yeah, maybe. 'All your friends are
cunts...'

PRETTY BLOND GIRL

'Your mother is a ball-point pen
thief!'

The Son of Dracula goes in to kiss her.

PRETTY BLOND GIRL (cont'd)

Hey, too fast.

THE SON OF DRACULA

Awwwwwww.

INT. THE SON OF DRACULA'S APARTMENT

The Son of Dracula and the Artificial Woman are
steady maxxxin'.

THE SON OF DRACULA

My father wasn't emotionally available to me. Usually he was out terrorizing the innocent. When he was home, pretty much he'd be reading in his study. Sometimes I'd go to him, and he'd be a giant bat.

Beat.

THE SON OF DRACULA (cont'd)

And, like, he'd fly away from me.

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN

That's kind of beautiful.

The Son of Dracula reaches out and tucks a loose lock of hair behind her ear.

THE SON OF DRACULA

You're kind of beautiful.

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN

Fuck you.

THE SON OF DRACULA

Huh?

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN

I'm not a woman, I'm not human, I have no emotions, certainly not for you. And I'm not helping you with this-

The shot pans to her left, revealing a pile of bodies on the floor.

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN (cont'd)

any more!

She storms out and slams the door.

THE SON OF DRACULA

(yelling at the door)

I'd say that showed an EXCESS of emotion!

He goes over to the pile of bodies, sticks a straw in the pretty blond girl's ear and starts drinking her remaining blood.

His cell phone rings. 50 Cent's Many Men. It's a text message.

PHONE
WANT TO WATCH ANAL INTERIORS 7?

The Son of Dracula texts back: YEAH.

EXT. DAN'S HOUSE

Dan greets the Son of Dracula.

INT. DAN'S KITCHEN

Dan and the Son of Dracula are rapping around in the kitchen. Dan's trying to open a beer bottle with the edge of a knife.

THE SON OF DRACULA
So, my robot girlfriend left me.

DAN
Yo, nigga, one robot, many faces.

He cuts himself with the knife and his thumb starts bleeding.

DAN (cont'd)
Fuck!

The Son of Dracula looks at the blood, longingly.

Dan catches him looking and holds out his thumb.

DAN (cont'd)
All right, already.

The Son of Dracula practically leaps forward to suck the blood out of the cut.

DAN (cont'd)
Well, this isn't gay.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM

The Son of Dracula and Dan are watching Anal Interiors 7. This one German chick is gaping like a pony on a hot day.

THE SON OF DRACULA
What's the fascination?

DAN
I have a theory: you know the Pizza Hut Stuffed Crust pizza?

THE SON OF DRACULA
Yeah.

DAN
How long has that been around?

THE SON OF DRACULA
I don't know. Three or four years?

DAN
Six years. Just about as long as the focus in porn has been on the exit.

THE SON OF DRACULA
Clearly that's it.

The sit and watch.

DAN
Can you turn me into a vampire?

THE SON OF DRACULA
Sure.

DAN
And I get life everlasting.

THE SON OF DRACULA
Until the Rapture, right. But you have to give up your immortal soul.

Beat.

THE SON OF DRACULA (cont'd)
And because I sired you, become my
slave.

DAN
What's it like to not have a soul?

THE SON OF DRACULA
Music sounds like ice in a blender.
Food turns to ash in your mouth.

DAN
Can you still come?

THE SON OF DRACULA
Dude, it's not like being on anti-
depressants.

There a knock on the door.

DAN
Who could that be?

INT. DAN'S FRONT HALL

It's the pretty blond girl, looking dead. The Son
of Dracula peeks around Dan.

THE SON OF DRACULA
Ho, snap.

PRETTY BLOND GIRL
I followed you, master.

EXT. THE SON OF DRACULA'S APARTMENT

The Son of Dracula opens his trunk and helps the
pretty blond girl out of it.

INT. THE SON OF DRACULA'S BEDROOM

The pretty blond girl is on top of the Son of
Dracula, cowgirl style.

THE SON OF DRACULA
(panting)
What's your name?

PRETTY BLOND GIRL
Sandra.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SON OF DRACULA'S BEDROOM

The Son of Dracula and Sandra are in bed, under the covers.

THE SON OF DRACULA
Right after sex, do you ever get the feeling that something bad is going to happen?

SANDRA
Like what.

THE SON OF DRACULA
I don't know. Like somebody is going to bust in, or something.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SON OF DRACULA'S BEDROOM

They're still in bed.

THE SON OF DRACULA
The blood of children is the best-tasting.

THE SON OF DRACULA (cont'd)
There is a God, and He sucks.

THE SON OF DRACULA (cont'd)
Einstürzende Neubauten? All
vampires.

Sandra gets out of bed and does a hypnotically dance.

The Son of Dracula stands on the bed and raises his fists.

THE SON OF DRACULA (cont'd)
Yes! Yes!

CUT TO:

INT. THE SON OF DRACULA'S APARTMENT

Sandra and the Artificial Woman are sitting on the Son of Dracula's sofa.

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN
(pointing to Sandra)
She loves you because she has no choice. I'm here of my own free will. So choose. Who do you want?

THE SON OF DRACULA
I want Mary Jane from Spider-Man 2. Did you see how cute she looked, how fair and placid?

He takes hold of Sandra's wrist.

THE SON OF DRACULA (cont'd)
Failing that, I'll take my baby here. You hurt my feelings, Small Wonder.

THE ARTIFICIAL WOMAN
Fine.

CUT TO:

EXT. A FIELD OF FLOWERS - NIGHT

The Son of Dracula and Sandra are in love amongst the tulips.

CUT TO:

INT. THE KITCHEN OF A NICE HOUSE - NIGHT

Sandra and the Son of Dracula fuss over a little kid in a Dracula costume, who runs around their ankles.

END.

The first half of **JELLY**

I wish I could show you Davis. It is flat, the streets are a grid, and there is a Japanese restaurant with a waterfall and ovalular pond that circulates a flotilla of paired sushi pieces in little boats.

Pony! my mother yelled. She'd heard my friends call me that and picked up on it but didn't know it was short for pony-cock.

Yeah?

It's for you.

Do you know where Cean got that robot jellyfish?

She pushed the phone into my chest. Take your call!

Hello?

Pony. It was the voice of Majolica, my high school girlfriend. I'm back from Connecticut.

Me too. I mean, LA. I just got in tonight.

Do you want to come over?

User. Why don't you come here?

Because I'm scared of your mom.

We stood under the garage basketball hoop, smoked, and looked at her parents' back woods. I asked her if she still loved me.

No. Do you—

I totally do. I think about you all the time.

You always were a girl.

I walked through her house and drove home.

My brother threw a soccer ball at my head. I frowned and let it bounce off.

Welcome home, douche.

Where did you get that jellyfish?

The internet. It dances around to music. You like it?

It's hot. How much was it?

A hundred bucks, with the aquarium. I'm refereeing ayso soccer matches on the weekends and making bank.

You know what Dad would say?

What?

Occasionally even a blind squirrel gets a nut.

Cean made a fist. You're gonna die. Speaking of violence: I saw part of an episode of *Mutant X* on TV yesterday and there was a scene where the bad guy shoots a laser at someone. Then it's in slow motion. The good guy sees the beam coming and jumps out of the way but the problem is, the beam is like inching across the room. If it were a real laser and time were slowed down like that, it would still be all zap!

Because it's going the speed of light.

Exactly.

Hey, I said. Take it easy, dipshit.

The next evening my brother was out, my mother was out, my father was still dead, and the phone rang. It was Jelly.

Hey. I didn't mean to upset you.

It's fine. You hit my emotional funnybone, or something.

I still love you, Pony, you know that. There's a tiny little vessel of my heart that belongs to you. Tiny little. With our initials carved in it. I'm seeing somebody at school, though.

Oh Jelly, I thought.

We sat in my Dad's den. His first microscope sat on top of his non-fiction bookshelf, crammed with engineering and signal processing textbooks, and his papers cluttered the coffee table, sliding out of their folders. Me and my mother and brother were going to keep the room like this, always leave the door open, and not talk about it.

Jel put her elbow on the arm of the sofa. You heard about Jake.

High on glass Jake who crushed the skull of that little girl's cat Jake?

We have to go visit him, and I thought we could go together.

Okay.

My boyfriend will be here on the ninth, so before that.

I hate your boyfriend.

You'd like him if you met him.

Can he make you come?
No one can make me come.
Good.

She punched my arm. Don't you want me to be happy?
Not if you're not with me.

She looked up at the ceiling. Her neck was still
miraculous. You know what makes me tired?

What?

The human condition. The gulf between thoughts and
emotions. Biology, like, sexual partnership. Other people. The
repetition of the same old plots and tropes. The linear experience
of time in general.

I held out an imaginary coronation pillow. I crown you
queen and hero of winter break.

What do you *think*, Ewan? What do you actually think
about what I'm saying?

I don't think anything. What does your shrink say?

I'm not seeing him any more. I'm cured.

Are you off your drugs?

Of course not.

I took her to my brother's room. I put on Kenna, which is
like South African Depeche Mode, and we sat in the dark and
watched the jellyfish twist and spazz.

You got me pregnant once.

Are you sure?

I missed my period for two months.

It wasn't stress, or dance, or something?

I saw the embryo in the toilet.

I scrunched my eyes shut. Were you sad?

I was about to get an abortion, so no, I was relieved. She
gave me her hand, and I held it.

God, Jelly.

LISTS REJECTED BY MCSWEENEY'S.NET

Names of towns where mail-in rebates are processed

Mascoutah

Calais

Coppell

Rancho Santa Margarita

Niagara Falls

Young America

Walled Lake

Words my Dad has recently used in conversation that caught me totally off guard

Obviate

Aqueous

Interdict

Circumflex

Rhizomatic

Fuck

Literal meanings of the nicknames of my favorite World Poker Tour players, in descending order of guessing difficulty

Pills manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline in which diphenhydramine is the active ingredient.

A large cephalopod found in the Gulf of Mexico.

A mythic monster named for its fierce gaze.

An intensely distressing dream or experience.

A round liquid film filled with air or gas.

One with control over others or an owner of slaves.

One skilled in wizardry.

A teacher or instructor.

A matter of verifiable fact.

Answers: Sominex, Devilfish, The Dragon, Nightmare, The Bubble, The Master, The Magician, The Professor, The Truth.

Adolph Hitler's eBay Feedback

Fast ship from Germany...would do biz w/ again! A+++++++
the armband arrived in great condition as described thanks!!!!

Easy deal! hope Blondie2 likes her new collar!

Great communication ,fast payment, Hope to do business with derfuhrer again

Wonderful Buyer! Good Emails, Lightning Fast Payment! WOW!
=-) :-) =-)

Asked if my name was Slavic?? slow ship&item was broken,
wouldn't refund AVOID

Super smooth! Thanks so much--God bless you.

FRAGMENTS

Emily

In my memory are a girl and a boy, both seven. It has snowed ten inches, and they are standing outside under the breezeway, halfway between the big house and the school. Performing the most independent act of his young life, the boy removes his left glove and takes Laura's hand. It's cold and slick with melted snow. The muscles in her hand contract twice, and then she pulls away. Her parents are socialists; his and a couple other families are listening to them talk in the house. He and Laura were given popcorn balls with apple cider and sent outside to play in alligator boots and snowpants. The game has been follow-me-around. Arms to their sides, they rolled like logs down the back hill past the ragged badminton net to the banks of the creek. She pulled everything down, squatted, and peed like an animal, then kicked fresh snow over the spot.

When we were fourteen, Laura's mother died of the shakes or bird-disease. She had always shook, and was shriveling up. Bird-disease because I figured her bones were becoming hollow, rotting out from the inside. Her father, a teacher and an artist, gained exactly the weight of his wife at the time of her death as a tribute. The *Fine Young Cannibals* were popular that year — *Johnny Come Home* would be on the radio and I would think of Paul carrying Julia around in his stomach and seat. Laura and I ironically bounced on the trampoline in the forest and she would ask me to hit her, and I would, straddling her on the twiggy ground and punching her where she was covered by her sweater. Once, when she compared me to a kid we knew who was moving out of town, I hit her in the face. Her eye blackened; the whole

side of her face turned yellow and there was a print of the tops of my knuckles in broken blood vessels.

Untitled

I feel hot breath on the back of my neck. But it's not true—my lover isn't here.

I go to the fridge. It is almost empty. I look at its insides with matching empty eyes. There is sweet relish, half of half a liter of soy milk, and a glass of sweet, homemade relish from Kelly.

Not to be stupid, but Kelly sweetly relishes seeing me. I feel about Kelly the way I feel about her relish: something comforting about having it/her around, but lacking actual utility.

ooo

It's not that my antidepressants don't work, because they do. They do. I skirt the edge of the whirlpool of despair in my little white sloop, now. The boat is called The Blah. I feel blah.

ooo

I'm walking around my Hancock Park neighborhood and I see a comely girl wearing a tight green t-shirt depicting Jesus crucified on a dollar sign. Life is Pricele\$\$, it says above that. And I stop her. We get to talking. She's a studio hair stylist. I eventually tell her how Mohammad wanted the Jews to accept him as the final prophet, and first prayed towards Jerusalem, not Mecca. But a holy savior is never coming for the Jews. We will never accept anybody in that capacity, not even David Blane.

ooo

Old TV I miss:

Simon & Simon.
Magnum PI.
Super Powers: Galactic Guardians.
The Cosby Show.
B.C. – A Special Christmas

Old food I miss:

Nestle Crunch ice cream bars.
Dunkin' Donuts chicken noodle soup.
Freshen-Up liquid center gum.
Homemade beef jerky from the farmer's market
Funnel cake.

ooo

We're going to O Street?
Mm-hmm, my friend said.
Eventually we pulled out all his suitcases, piled all his stuff, and packed it. He pointed out what was new, things he had bought. We loaded the furniture first, and then the suitcases. It took two and a half hours. Then he took me out for an early dinner. Ideally, we had both missed lunch, and over a fried onion blossom with pink dipping sauce, we talked about his hopes for the future.

ooo

Don't worry, there's going to be narrative, even if I have to make a few things up. Maybe you'll be able to tell what's made up, because those things will be a little clumsy.

ooo

I get home from the onion blossom and my life feels precarious. That's not right. My existence is in danger: the cigarettes I don't smoke are hanging out of stuffed Diet Coke cans, overdue library books are pushed under the bed, clear Dixie cups are coated with hardened Pepto Bismol. My existence is the good-looking pastry that tastes like shit.

My tears like pieces of fried chicken

Baltimore.

What I knew about Baltimore came from the television show *Homicide: Life On The Street*.

Mike the Hacker

Mike went places he shouldn't have been, looked around, and took things. In that respect he was like the hero of an old text-adventure game. I caught him red boxing. He was cagy about it. Taking off the top twenty tissues. Getting kicked of the dorm, calling me for his medicine. He sold me a red box. I used it to call my girlfriend in Connecticut.

The dorm

Since it was summer, they allocated all of us doubles. I left the extra set of furniture where it was. It was almost too heavy to move.

What I brought with me from home

My stereo, which was a Sony boombox. Its remote. Marilyn Manson's *Antichrist Superstar*. Clothes—my black hoodie and indigo 501s, which was all I wore. My waist was a 33. My laptop, a seven-pound Powerbook 540 with an extra battery. My journal, which I had bound myself in a bookbinding class. A lighter, even though I didn't smoke, and a four inch knife with a black grip, also in the danger category, that I carried in my left sock.

The classes

I started with Moral Philosophy and Macroeconomics, but dropped the latter when the graduate student who was teaching the class drew a graph upside down on the first day. I switched to a screenwriting class, which was great.

What I ate

The cafeteria situation was outsourced to the Marriot. Semis would roll in weekly to deliver frozen and perishable foods. I like the chocolate pudding and the crinkle-cut French fries, but that was all.

I found a gas station two blocks away that sold fried chicken. The store (the QuickStop, let's say) was clean and white with a red pinstripe motif and an entire counter in the back was dedicated to fried chicken. They sold a lot of it. This kind of thing was not uncommon on the East Coast at the time. In Ardmore, near where I lived at home, a pizza place had sprung up attached to a gas station and was swarmed—12" pepperoni pizzas \$5, two for \$9, three for \$13 plus a free two liter Coke. Anyway, I ate that chicken every night, with a biscuit and gold-flake potato wedges. And I would buy a two-gallon bottle of spring water for 99¢. I was terribly thirsty that whole month, and obsessed with the idea of the exit of ketones and glucose from my body through urine. I wanted my piss to be clear, totally clear. I was drinking four gallons of water a day.

Scream

Our screenwriting teacher took us to see *Scream*, which he considered to be tightly structured and plotted. True.

Plagiarism

One of the students in my class turned in a light edit of *Short Cuts*. An earthquake united the different stories. There was a big in-class debate.

An actual thing Katlyn said to me on the phone

“My mother is going to die soon.”

What she said after I said I was sorry

“She's fat and middle-aged. There's a history of heart attacks on that side of the family.”

Then she sighed

“It’s not that I don’t like her. We’re cute; she makes her little concessions to me. We have fun together. It’s just that she’s better off dead.”

The fire drill

Some girls are in t-shirts and Umberto shorts, shivering. I’m wearing jeans and my hoodie, which I fell asleep in.

Wandering around, learning the campus

I did a lot of walking. What was I looking for? A student whorehouse that sold comic books and Italian water ice. There was an arcade. Someone taught me to beat *Virtua Fighters 2* on one quarter, with one button, and I played *Pang*, sort of like *Asteroids* with balloons.

My moral philosophy papers

The first was a modest meditation on punishment. (I had not yet read *Discipline and Punish*.) The second was a response to John Rawls’ *On A Theory of Justice*. Both were lousy and got As.

What happened afterwards

I cut out of the second month of classes and went to meet Katlyn in Times Square, where her mother had rented us a hotel room for five days. I brought everything with me—the boombox, my clothes, my laptop. The first day was my eighteenth birthday. We ate at Howard Johnson’s and got drinks. They served us without comment. I think I had about four rum and Cokes. Then we went back to the hotel room. She took her clothes off and lay down on the bed. I kissed her breasts but the thing between her legs had nerves and knotted up.

After the blood and *Liquid Television* she wanted to know about our prospects for a shared future and I deflected all of her questions.

MIXTAPES

Global Mixtape

Waking Up	2:35	Evan Dando
Positive Tension	3:53	Bloc Party
Emasculate The Masculine	4:15	The Unicorns
Alabama Sunshine	2:46	The Rapture
At The Back Of The Shell	2:26	The Kills
Piano	2:57	French Kicks
Take It Easy (love nothing)	3:24	Bright Eyes
Heartbeat	3:06	Annie
Make 1, 2	2:49	Arthur Russell
High Come Down	4:30	Junior Boys
There Ain't No Fool In Ferguson	2:45	McLusky
I Summon You (demo)	3:55	Spoon
No Cars Go	6:02	The Arcade Fire
Through The Walls	3:32	RJD2 (feat. Ric Ocasek)
Half Man	0:10	Bill Cosby
High in the Clouds	2:50	Ol' Dirty Bastard
Mambo Sun	3:42	T. Rex
Secret Place	3:32	The Clean
There Is A War	3:01	Leonard Cohen
Meditation	2:41	Carlos Santana,
Mahavishnu, John McLaughlin		

The Specter of Global Mixtape

Why Do You Do This To Yourself	1:59	Evan Dando
Advance Cassette	2:52	Spoon
Break Down	2:00	Buzzcocks
Insensatez	3:54	Paula Morelenbaum
Helicopter	3:40	Bloc Party
Losing My Edge	7:43	LCD Soundsystem
T.V.	3:53	The Flying Lizards (With
Deborah Evans)		
We Tigers	2:43	Animal Collective
Teach Me How To Fight	5:31	Junior Boys
Jeepster	4:12	T. Rex
Mahogany	4:40	Eric B. & Rakim
Devil In The Details	4:06	Bright Eyes
A Song From Under The Floorboards	4:12	Magazine

Global Mixtape Liner Notes

1. Evan Dando, Waking Up - I wanted to put It's A Shame About Ray on but that's way too well-known and loved and would have interrupted the mixflow. Then I remembered reading on Kate Sullivan's blog that she saw him live and his new material was great, and so I got a copy of his new album and it's solid but this track leapt out at me like a sprung tiger. Beatles versus the Talking Heads and Evan sings like Hayden because he just "woke up."
2. Bloc Party, Positive Tension - I know nothing about Bloc Party except they have a great record and everyone is listening to it. This track just grabbed me.
3. The Unicorns, Emasculate The Masculine - I know this could almost pass for Wheezer, but listen to the words.
4. The Rapture, Alabama Sunshine - The Rapture get French Kick-y on the break, whether they know it or not. Otherwise I love it because it reminds me of the 3-2-1 Contact theme song.
5. The Kills, At The Back Of The Shell - This song came to me via Skeet On Mischa and Fluxblog. It's so dirty, I love it and plan to nab the first bar for my mashup record.
6. French Kicks, Piano - This is from their Young Lawyer EP and was distributed on the European version of One Time Bells. The Kicks are one of my favorite bands, period...
7. Bright Eyes, Take It Easy (Love Nothing) - Bright Eyes, Litwack? Digital Ash For A Digital Urn has some fantastic songs on it. Basically, this is what I wanted from Steven Merrit instead of that stupid I album.
8. Annie, Heartbeat - This is Pitchfork's Single of The Year for 2004. *Anniemal* is what we get instead of a good Saint Eteinne record ever again. I like to think this song is sung to Annie's dead boyfriend.
9. Arthur Russell, Make 1, 2 - This sounds like something Jeff Magnum would have recorded if he'd been 26 in the 70s on Quaaludes all the time and pals with Giorgio Moroder and Stevie Wonder. "One time you call me up but I don't even have a phone" - yeah!
10. Junior Boys, High Come Down - Thank you, Pitchfork. The term IDM kind of makes me sick now - sorry, if it doesn't make me dance alone in my room it's not dance music - but this is Intelligent Dance versus the best lessons of 80s pop and everybody wins. The album itself is a super heavy

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two caret diamond, go get it.

11. McLusky, There Ain't No Fool In Ferguson - I like to think this song is about LA. It could also well be about the Ukraine.

12. Spoon, I Summon You - An acoustic demo off their forthcoming album. Cannot wait.

13. The Arcade Fire, No Cars Go - The only song I like off their first EP. The hype about them would be justified if every song on their album was as good as the first track. Worth keeping an eye on, anyway.

14. RJD2 feat. Ric Ocasek, Through The Walls - The last Cars song. RJ keeps his shtick under control and does it big.

15. Bill Cosby, Half Man - Just an intro.

16. Ol' Dirty Bastard, High in the Clouds - Everybody loved Dirty except the federal government and what kills me about this track is how he says "now it gets serious" at the beginning and it's clear that he was trying to pull it together for Roc-A-Fella. Rest in peace, baby.

17. T. Rex, Mambo Sun - Phoenix put this song on a mixtape on wearephoenix.com and as I worship at their altar I checked it out. Solid gold. They say on oldies radio stations that "they're not making any new oldies" which is complete bullshit because there are always old songs that fit new moods and this is one of them. Fucking killer.

18. The Clean, Secret Place - John sent me the complete Clean and this is my pick. I love you John! Anyway, they were a New Zealand punk/new wave band who spun off some members into The Bats, which is the other New Zealand band that people know but sucks compared.

19. Leonard Cohen, There Is A War - There is a war. Not in the Middle East. The other one, our war.

20. Carlos Santana, Mahavishnu, John McLaughlin, Meditation - I don't know why the fuck Santana went pop, I really don't.

YEAH 2004!

Workflow

43 Folders was all the rage in Q4, for good reason. It made me think maybe I should share my workflow with my readers; I like reading this kind of thing, myself.

Word processing:

Microsoft Word 2004 for most things, and I'm doing my novel in Ulysses, which is overpriced and weird about markup unless you're a LaTeX guru, which I'm not, but it has a great fullscreen mode.

Web:

Safari, but I'm right on the verge of switching to Firefox for del.icio.us and AdBlock plugins. Bookmarks go in del.icio.us, photos I want to share in Flickr and Photobucket, Feedroll flows stuff to my weblog, Bloglines is crucial for reading and snipping interesting posts, Google, obv's, Ask Metafilter (now that I'm finally a member) for tapping the collective intelligence, and Feedburner. Distributed web services that allow you to do whatever you need to do from anywhere you happen to be are for the children; even though I was resistant to the idea back in the day, I sort of want an online office suite I can trust.

External memory:

My Treo 600, which I always have with me and consider invaluable. I straight-up use Palm Desktop for notes, calendar, addresses, which isn't great but works flawlessly. Things have to sync when I press the hardware button. I got *this* close to scamming a free 650 from SprintPCS, but now it looks like I'm going to have to wait. As much as I like Bluetooth headsets, it's not worth a \$200 offset.

Television:

I have Azureus set up with the RSS plugin that grabs the shows I like and plops them on my PC hard drive. TiVo would actually be better, but I'm cheap.

Thievery:

Happens on the PC. SoulSeek is still the music backbone, along with Usenet; eMule for hard to find stuff and comic books.

Books

Aimee Bender, *An Invisible Sign of My Own* – Just perfect, actually.
Alan Moore, *Top Ten*

Charles Baxter, *The Feast of Love*
Chester Brown, *I Never Liked You*.
Dan Chanon, *Among The Missing*
David Allen, *Getting Things Done* – this helped me in a major way.
David Foster Wallace, *Oblivion* – Uneven in the sense the some of the stories are meh, but two of them are transcendent, especially *Good Old Neon*, which says what I've been personally trying to say.
Jim Lee, *Batman: Hush*
Jonathan Ames, *Wake Up, Sir!*
Jonathan Letham, *The Fortress of Solitude*
Magnus Mills, *Three To See The King, The Restraint of Beasts*.
Matt Klam, *Sam The Cat* – The best short stories I read all year.
Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*
P.G. Wodehouse, *Right Ho, Jeeves & The Code of the Woosters* – the depression cure.
Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*
Vendela Vida, *And Now You Can Go*.

Music

Annie, *Anniemal*
Bloc Party, *Silent Alarm*
Bright Eyes, *Digital Ash For A Digital Urn*, like Xiu Xiu for the masses.
Buzzcocks, *Spiral Scratch* (ep)
Chromeo, *She's In Control*
DFA in general.
Evan Dando, *Baby I'm Bored*
Everclear, *Sparkle and Fade*
Hot Snakes, *Audit In Progress*
Interpol, *Antics*
Junior Boys, *Last Exit*
Low, *Christmas*
M.I.A. & Diplo, *Piracy Funds Terrorism, Vol. 1*
McLusky, *Do Dallas*
Meat Puppets, *Meat Puppets II*
MF Doom, *MM..Food & MM..Leftovers*
Nirvana, *With the Lights Out*
Phoenix, *Alphabetical*
Spoon, everything.
T. Rex, *Electric Warrior*
The Arcade Fire
The Hives, *Tyrannosaurus Hives*

Video Games

Final Fantasy Tactics Advance – easily the best GBA game I've played; totally looking forward to FFXII.
Katamari Damacy – Wheel!

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Legend Of Zelda: The Wind Waker – I didn't beat it before, so I rebought it. It's so good.

Mario Kart: Double Dash

Paper Mario 2 – Too easy, but still pretty good.

Solitaire – WindowsXP. Sometimes the simplest games are the best. My best time is eighty seconds.

Movies

Back Against The Wall

Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary

Carnival of Souls

Garden State

Harold and Kumar Go To White Castle

I, Robot – I kind of liked parts of it. Oh, all right: Sandra Bullock II and the cyborg arm.

My Neighbors the Yamadas

Primer

Spellbound

Spider-Man 2

The Bourne Supremacy

The Brown Bunny

Visitor Q

Food

\$3 salmon sashimi from the market on Sawtelle above Olympic.

Andreaa's Korean place.

California, California. Quick, easy, free refills, good tempura.

Jarritos Tutti Fruti.

Mako box lunch, \$25 well spent.

Mr. Noodle

Nate n' Al's, easily the best deli in LA. (Brent's is far.)

The Money Tree, which has the best inexpensive Southern Italian food in the Valley and the naming tech.

Magazines

Cabinet

Comic Art

Garden (toys)

Huge

Make

Old Cardboard

Paper Sky (bilingual!)

Re-Magazine

The Vintage Baseball Collector
TM

Places

Munky King/Chinatown, Kid Robot/Santa Monica.
8 Ball in Burbank for your kitsch needs.
Supreme LA, which got me skating again.
Jay and Silent Bob's Secret Stash in Westwood. No back issues, but
superfriendly staff and good magazine selection (they carry Comic Art).
California Science Museum

People I Don't Know

Brian Michael Bendis
David Byrne
Jennifer Love Hewitt (you know what turned me around? *Can't Hardly Wait*)
Momus
Phillip Torone
Warren Buffett

Other

Jewelboxing King cases; worth half what they cost but still better than
everything else out there.
Veronica Mars, which is like Buffy except the characters aren't little bitches
and the writing is better.
Acronym. I can't afford it, but I thought the new stuff was crazy—the bag
that interfaces with some of their jackets, Gore-Tex waterproof cashmere,
attention to detail. Maybe next year.

In 2005 I look forward to...

Kafka On The Shore.
Davos reports.
White Box robots.
Arular, M.I.A.'s proper full-length.
Taking photographs.
More mindfulness.
Trying to taper off Lexapro.
Seven Soldiers
The *Beautiful Losers* show coming to OC.
Trips around the world to see my people.
MacOS X 10.4's Dashboard.
Batman Begins.

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Dragon Warrior VIII/Final Fantasy XII.

PlayStation 3 screens.

Wanda and the Colossus

Doing Halloween big.