



The Daily Friday

fiction*satire*humor*punk journalism

The Drop Out Issue

For All Those Who Didn't Make It. Or Maybe. For All Those Who Made It. But Aren't Sure Why.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being Done With College

Fiction By David Downs

The first thing I remember about my tragic graduation day was the humidity that made my black gown stick to my legs. My mortarboard had a divot that bored into my scalp and I took it off the second I sat down in the 5th row back from the graduation stage.

A prairie of white chairs spread out from the stage across the green faculty lawn. The ocean and waves were off in the distance and the sky was gray with the cozy marine layer. I rubbed the sore spot on the top of my head and my fingers became slippery with sweat. Part of it was the summer haze, but part of it was that I was actually leaving college.

We were filing in by name and rank and I looked back toward the lines of my peers and the sea of white chairs. Everyone was walking too slowly, not in step with the classic graduating music. It looked like some batan death march — the smiles looked forced, the eyes were shifty.

Behind the graduates, on the rise of grass, I spotted my parents and they saw me seeing them. They freaked out, all crazy frantic waving. I waved and sat down. It felt like high school graduation, except I was one of the doomed kids that couldn't look forward to college.

Since we were all separated by name, my group of friends was scattered throughout the sea of black gowns. I had never seen or parted with the girl sitting to the right of me. Though we were all dressed in cap and gown, certain status symbols shined through. The hair had little flowers in it, the makeup was done in a salon and went too heavy on the purple

eye shadow, the jewelry was real. The conspiracy of impressions said she was definitely sorority. Maybe it was my own prejudice.

I thought of myself — shorts, T-shirt, sandals, shaved head — I was graduating in the same outfit I had lived in for the last four years. The dolled-up sorority girl didn't seem to like me, but I was in a better mood due to proper clothing. To my right sat a guy who's face was vaguely familiar. He could've lived in my dorm freshman year. During the death march he introduced himself with a firm handshake saying, "My name's Todd, Todd Ferris. It's hotter than a motherfucker out here."

Todd was dressed in a suit under his gown, and I could see his shoes were black and shiny. I looked at my beat-up skater shoes that had lasted two school years. I remembered buying the shoes and how I was two years ago. *Jesus, God, I can't believe this is happening. They always tell you it sneaks up on you. I tried to love every minute and prepare myself but, — fuck.*

"Tell me about it," Todd said. I blinked. I had been mumbling aloud.

"At least you're dressed for the occasion," Todd went on, "I wore this hot-ass suit. I feel like I'm already in hell."

I laughed, "Yeah, my parents bitched, but I told them, 'I paid for this wretched education and I intend to graduate naked if I feel like it.'"

"They went for that?"
"It's true. I'm loaned up the ass, and in debt to the government for over \$40,000."

"Shit."
"I still have to put on a suit for pictures and stuff, but that's fair."

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The Daily Friday is:

advertisement free and recruiting for next year. This is our last issue for the academic year and we rocked.

If you like what you see, or if you see potential, contact us. Too many good writers with talent and drive come in my office their senior year. They never got around to doing that thing that might set them off. Now it's too late.

At the *Nexus*, the doors are always unlocked. One must only possess the will to open them. Come find us. We work in the night, like gnomes.

The Daily Friday is:

Editor: David Downs
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Diploma

continued fiction from p1A.

Todd told me how his Dad demanded a suit and tie after 5 and a half years of paying tuition at UCSB. His freckled white face had an old tan. The light blue eyes looked smart and were a little reddened and puffy. He didn't have frat-boy beer fat on his face.

"What were you doing here for 5 and a half years?" I probed.

"A little of this, a little of that." Todd smiled.

"Well, what are you graduating with?"

"Religious studies major and business economics minor."

"That's a unique combo."

"The biz econ is my Dad's requirement," Todd said.

"Are your parents here?" I asked him. I wanted to see what Dad looked like. Probably a polo shirt with a businessman's bulge, stern eyes and a receding hairline. A big silver watch and thick forearms.

"They aren't here yet." Todd said. "I expect my mom soon."

The cell phone of the probable sorority girl on my right started singing. The tune was "Gimme Dat Nut," and it got halfway through the chorus before she picked up and said, "Hello! ... Hi Terry! ... No ... I know ... Yeah ... Yeah, I'm like, like a walking sauna ... uh-huh ...

uh-huh ... totally! ... oh my god! ..." I turned to Todd and he was smirking.

"It's funny when they nail the stereotype," I said. Sorority girl didn't hear. She was completely engrossed with her cell call.

Todd watched her with a smile. He blinked weirdly, too slowly, and took a big whiff of the marine air, looking up at the gray

I smelt the salty air and tried to burn it into my memory. Everything had always been so perfect

in this town.

Everything was slipping away.

Once all were seated, the chancellor began his platitudes — mentions of Excellence and Diversity. Then it was the dean's turn for platitudes. It got hotter. Students and parents fidgeted in their plastic seats and the heat made everyone's butt sweaty. The guest speaker was also full of platitudes. It was depressing. There was some unspoken given that underlined every word, every smile.

This is all ending.

The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more dreadful than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.

"I'm gonna fucking miss this place so much," Todd sighed.

In our little mini-friendship of two hours, I said, "Yeah, man, I know. It sucks. It's not fair that they let us live here for four years, on the edge of the most glorious continent, in the most interesting time in the history of the world. They let us live and love here, and then it's gone."

"Get a job," Todd said

"But you can make it better than college if you bust your ass." I sounded like my Dad or something.

mockingly. "Get a car payment."

"Get a 401K plan," I added. "Get a tract home."

"Get a crappy marriage," Todd continued. "Get a kid who loathes you."

"Grow up," I said sternly. "Take care of your shit!"

"Screw you, Dad!" Todd whined like a dysfunctional 15-year-old.

It was funny. I started

laughing, and when Todd saw I was laughing, he laughed too. The chancellor told the first row to line up for their degrees, and my butterflies were gone.

"You know, I didn't want to leave," Todd said seriously.

"Me neither, but I —"

"They throw you out if you get too many units and don't graduate." Todd's face was grave.

"No shit? Is that what happened to you?"

Todd nodded his head seriously. "My Dad freaked when he heard I had too many units and no degree. I told him I was working toward a 5-year master's."

I snickered, "Holy shit, your dad must've been pissed."

Todd didn't laugh. "Luckily, I had enough religious studies and business econ stuff for them to give me a bachelor's."

"Fair enough," I said.

"Now my Dad wants me to go work at his company. I just wish I could stay."

"You can man. Just go back to school somewhere else and get a master's," I said. "The real world sucks and I don't blame you. I'd do it if I could afford more loans."

"My Dad says I'm supposed to start next Wednesday. It's the only

The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more dreadful than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.

way."

Todd looked bummed. He watched the people getting their names called — walking up to the podium, getting their degree.

His eyes were somewhere else. Each student shook the chancellor's hand and smiled for the photo.

"Every person I talked to who's graduated hates their life somehow, and it's making them a bitter person," Todd said.

"Everybody says college was the greatest time of their life. Afterwards,

work and life is just a daily hassle with no end except a two-week vacation. They sound sad and desperate."

I said I agreed. *What the hell was he staring at so hard?* "But you can make it better than college if you bust your ass." I sounded like my Dad or something. "Most people are pansies and are too timid to ever stop letting life happen to them. They

never get off their ass, in college or otherwise, and they're doomed to be unhappy."

...

"Do you think you're peaking?" Todd asked me while continuing to stare off. I thought he was goofing.

"Am I peaking? ... I don't know, maybe. I hope not. I hope this isn't the peak. I expect a decent plateau of life with mini-

... What if we are peaking? What if this is the top for most people? ...

mal pain and suffering."

"But do you think it'll ever be like *this*?" Todd implored without looking at me.

"Fuck it, man," I said.

"We're doomed, we've always been doomed. I'll have to live to see if this was the peak."

"I think most people peak in college," Todd said, as he watched the third row stand and walk to the side of the stage.

"I'm gonna miss this place so much."

"Me too, man." I shut up and watched the ceremony. Todd was bumming me out. I remembered him never actually looking around for his family and I

re-examined his eyes. The puffy redness looked less like a pot smoker and more like someone who was crying.

I read a book last quarter where this guy believed that one moment of perfection was all you were ever guaranteed in a lifetime. He said you live your whole life after that perfect moment knowing how good it was, trying to get back to that perfection through memory. But nothing ever measures up. You die knowing that was the moment, and you didn't — couldn't — enjoy it enough.

"Yeah," I said nervously. Todd was rustling around underneath his gown using both hands. *No, I'm not graduating next to a psycho public masturbator.* Todd saw me staring and said, "Silly String. I'm getting it ready."

He flashed the bottom of the silly string can, and I said, "Oh." There was more rustling and clicking noises, then Todd was done. He faked a smile, and I returned one. Our row was called, and we all detached our sweaty butts from the plastic seats. We started moving slowly, and I saw the order would be

I saw my parents blasting away with a long zoom lens and gave them a wave. They freaked out again. Todd's jaw was tense. I could see the tendons in his temples working. He was staring at the podium and not responding to my clever 'just peak, and die' comment.

"Todd ... dude ..."

I gave him a poke the ribs and hit something definitely not flesh. Something metal and with weight. Now he looked at me.

"... Where's your dad, your family?" I asked, unable to hide the falter in my voice about what the hell was big and metal and heavy and under his gown. Todd's face crinkled up, then evened into a serene Buddha smile. "My Dad couldn't make it. My mom's been dead since freshman year. I have no siblings."

"Do you have a water gun under there, or what?" Todd smiled. *I'm totally reaching. A fucking water gun? Please let it be anything other than what it felt like. This kind of thing doesn't happen here. This is Santa Barbara.*

I looked at the pretty lagoon, and the serene horizon off in the dis-

torority girl, me, then Todd.

"I've had so much perfection at this school," Todd sighed.

Todd was completely freaking me out. *What's all this cryptic bullshit about peaking. He must be fucking with me. I have to throw him a curve ball.*

"I'm gonna miss it too, man," I told Todd. "And you have a good point. What if we are peaking?"

... What if we are peaking? What if this is the top for most people? ...

What if this is the top for most people and someone could statistically guarantee me a miserable life for the rest of it. Why bother?" I watched his eyes.

"Why not just hand us our degrees and push us off a cliff?" I asked — no change in the eyes at all.

"If this is the best we'll do, why add the suffering of 40 years?" Nothing.

"Just peak, and die —"

Sorority girl's cell phone started singing, "Gimme Dat! Gimme Dat! Dat Nut!" as we

stopped near the side of the stage. "Hi mummy ... I know ... I know ... thank you ... ohhh, mom."

tance. *No bad things happen here. This is God's country.* The chancellor started calling the names of the people on the end of our row. Todd looked over my shoulder at the podium and the chancellor. He was acting all wrong and he was letting me sense it.

The 'I'm meeting my Mom soon' comment smacked my brain, and I ran cold. *This doesn't happen here. People don't do this here.*

The chancellor was calling the third person before sorority girl. I didn't know what to do. I was supposed

to be graduating, just graduating. I took no class on suicidal or homicidal or something-cidal people with a big metal thing on their side. *This doesn't happen here. Not here. I was not taught how to handle this!*

"Dude, I'm supposed to be graduating," I blurt stupidly to Todd. The girl before sorority girl gets her name called and she walks onto the stage.

"Then just graduate," Todd says calmly.

I was sweating antiperspirant and I looked at my parents waving from the back. I moaned. This was all for them. I didn't care about school, but the idea of disappointing them kept me from leaving school. I hated the classes. I learned little. I discovered a lot about me, but mostly, I did college for them.

Sorority girl's name is called and her sisters cheer from amid the crowd. I turned to Todd and prepared to confront him, but his hands were at his side in a way only I could recognize.

"Just peak, man. Just peak and go home," Todd said. He looked calm like he'd been through this moment so many times it was already a fond memory.

They called my name. "Stephen Feers!"

I walked up the stairs half expecting to be shot in the back of the head and half wanting Todd to do it. It would be painless. No job, no mortgage, no haircuts, no bullshit. Bliss.

"Congratulations, Mr. Feers!" the chancellor said.

I took my diploma in numb hands and walked off the stage.

"Todd Ferris!"

I didn't turn around. I heard the chancellor say, "Congratulations, Mr. Ferris!"

I couldn't turn around.

I wouldn't turn around.

[CRACK!]

... I clutched my new degree and walked toward my parents.

The Week in Briefs

When news breaks, we sell the scraps to homeless people.

Six Kids Protect Idaho Oil Strike With Rifles, Wild Dogs



SANDPOINT, Idaho — Six children armed with rifles and wild dogs have holed up in a shack for the last three days in a standoff with local law enforcement.

Bonner County sheriff's deputies have blocked off a dirt road leading into the McGuckin family land. The dispute began when police arrested the children's mother, JoAnn McGuckin, on May 29 for neglecting her children and defaulting on a bank loan. Authorities were acting on a tip from Arthur Drysdale, the bank manager responsible for the McGuckin's finances.

"She's completely irresponsible," Drysdale said. "They're all barefoot and there's a still in the shed. Our first concern was for the children."

A month ago, JoAnn McGuckin discovered oil on the family's 25-acre property. Hunting rabbit for dinner, JoAnn misfired and struck the ground, sending up a geyser of crude oil. She contacted Drysdale at First United Idaho Bank and arranged for a loan to finance drilling equipment.

Drysdale's assistant, Jane Hathaway visited the McGuckins and reported the appalling conditions to Drysdale.

"She was this poor, ignorant mountaineer and barely kept that family fed," Hathaway said. "Those kids were running wild, drinking out of jugs and eating road-kill opossums. Yet she struck oil, black gold, Texas tea, and she kept babbling to all her kinfolk about swimming

pools and movie stars."

Drysdale immediately notified the Sheriff's Dept., which arrested JoAnn McGuckin while she was in town buying buckshot and nails. When deputies and child welfare agents arrived at the family compound to place the children in foster homes, things went wrong.

When one of the children, 15-year-old Ben McGuckin, spotted deputies, he yelled, "Get the guns!" to his siblings and set the dogs loose.

The children do not have running water or electricity, but they have firearms and 27 half-wild dogs. Bonner County Sheriff Phil Jarvis was the last person to walk up the road to the McGuckin cabin. He was chased off with bullets and dogs.

"Y'all come back now, y'hear," one of the children shouted, waving a shotgun.

The Littlest Senator Quits GOP After Being Picked Last for Tee-Ball

WASHINGTON, D.C. —



Democrats prepared to take control of the U.S. Senate this week after Senator James Jeffords (I-Vt.) defected from the Republican Party, calling them "a bunch of tools."

Jeffords left the GOP after a series of slights, insults and abuses from Republican senators. Most recently, President George W. Bush picked Jeffords last for his team in a game of tee-ball on the White House lawn. Bush said he almost forgot about the quiet, skinny senator.

"J.J. just stands in right field, and he's not much of a hitter," Bush said. "Besides, he throws like a total girl."

Key Republican senators also made

Jeffords feel unwelcome. Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) would frequently shove Jeffords into the washroom during Senate recesses, hold Jeffords by the ankles and dunk his head in a toilet while flushing it, Senate insiders said.

According to an aide, Lott denied the "swirlee" allegations.

More hurtful, Jeffords' aides said, were the taunts from Jesse Helms (R-Va.). After Jeffords' home state of Vermont passed a law recognizing homosexual civil unions, Helms reportedly mocked Jeffords in Senate chambers, calling Vermont "faggy and gay" and saying that made Jeffords "way queer."

Jeffords expressed his displeasure to Democratic colleagues in the Senate's audio and visual club. Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) reportedly told Jeffords that the Democratic Party was a "noogie-free party" and welcomed more sensitive senators.

Daschle refused to confirm or deny that he promised Jeffords the chairmanship of the environmental committee and a Captain Kirk lunchbox.

Bush Daughters Take Off on Desert Crime Spree in '72 Drop-top Thunderbird

AUSTIN, Texas — Authorities have launched a manhunt for President Bush's twin teenage daughters who fled town May 26 in a stolen convertible and are believed to be armed.

Barbara and Jenna Bush first fled from law enforcement after the Austin police raided a bar and attempted to cite the two women for underage drinking. A scruffy Secret Service agent, Tom Pittman, intervened, holding police at bay with a pistol. The president's daughters fled out the back door, hot-wired a 1972 Ford Thunderbird, brought the dusty red car

around front, honked and sped off into the night with Pittman.

"These gals are real confused and dangerous," Austin Sheriff Jed Pikeman said. "Jenna's boyfriend Clyde says she gets real strange when he's not around."

Witnesses roughly a mile outside the city reported seeing Jenna Bush and Pittman engaging in sexual activity in the backseat of the Thunderbird. Barbara was driving erratically and waving a bottle of some kind, witnesses said.

Pittman, however, was apprehended the next day. The trio apparently stopped at a gas station in the Texas panhandle when Pittman tried to hold up the station and shoot the clerk. Pittman refused to comment, except to say that the Bush twins squealed out of the parking lot when they heard gunshots.

"Fucking bitches," Pittman said.

Pikeman said the twins had robbed three other gas stations and appeared to be headed to Arizona. Late last night, a convertible matching the Thunderbird's description swerved around a roadblock outside Barstow, Ariz., and off-roaded into the desert, blasting Sheryl Crow on the stereo.



Now in charge of cross-state efforts to apprehend Jenna and Barbara, Pikeman said he has issued an all-points bulletin and requested helicopters.

"We'll head the ladies off somewhere around the Grand Canyon," Pikeman said. "Though, we'll probably have to let them go with a warning. They are the president's daughters."

Salmon and Stagnation: A Drop-Out's Tale

Wise Words Written Under Both Duress and The Influence by Senior Brian Henley

"Never write anything drunk," says I, "you wind up with self-indulgent tripe." But the *Daily Friday* is a lot like "Late Night With Conan O'Brien," in that it's got a time slot that precludes an audience. Therein lies the greatest liberating factor of this publication: nobody's listening. I'm writing into a diary right now; anything you have an issue with is basically a violation of my privacy.

Apparently, I'm supposed to be writing for a dropout issue. We're supposed to make fun of dropouts, is that right? Yeah? Well, guess what. I was a dropout, I am a dropout. I left USC after two years as a biology major. I made it past organic chemistry before I realized that it wasn't for me, so I packed my clothes and left.

There are many things that I learned outside the educational system. I learned that the status of a dropout is one of stagnation. A dropout is like one of those salmon that

couldn't get up the waterfall — you spend the rest of your life in the pool that you reached, maybe you backtrack and find a tributary that you follow to its source. Either way, you know that your future is defined by the thing you couldn't defeat. Even if you reach the source of another river, you know that it's not your place, that your destiny lies up a different stream, beyond the obstacle you couldn't surmount. When I came home, my

mom said, "I think you made the right choice. It takes a lot of guts to admit that you're in the wrong place." That is a very diplomatic way of saying that I had gone as far as I was going to go. I had reached my pinnacle.

A dropout has abundant free time. From the hour you wake until the hour you sleep, each moment weighs heavily. "What are you doing?" ask the family friends. "I'm killing time until I die." Either that or you're lying.

I'm writing into a diary right now. anything you have an issue with is basically a violation of my privacy.

In an effort to kill time, I went to visit a friend of mine who had moved to Alaska. He was suddenly 6'2", and sporting a full beard. His town stayed light from 4 o'clock in the morning until 2 a.m. He and his friends raced snowmobiles across melting sleet into lakes on purpose, and then fished them out and purged the engines on the spot. They watched "Deliverance" drunk

"What are you doing?" ask the family friends. "I'm killing time until I die." Either that or you're lying.

and in the dark. I learned how to construct, operate and maintain a potato gun, and personally participated in the ass-shooting of a bull moose with a nutritious projectile. But one thing was indispensable. I couldn't leave Alaska without seeing the salmon run.

"You can't leave Alaska without seeing the salmon run," he said. We popped in some Neil Young and we were on our way. He didn't used to like Neil Young. He

drove for three hours before pulling off onto a turnout that was apparently invisible to Californians. He stopped the car in an equally invisible parking spot, and we were soon hiking up an indiscernible trail. Soon we were shadowing a river. The river was full of broad, brown leaves that hugged every rock and bend. As we got farther up, I saw some of the leaves swimming. I realized with a mounting sense of horror that the leaves

were swimming upstream, and they were all that were left of the salmon.

My friend explained:

"We came too late," he said, "once they mate they start to die." The salmon I saw were trapped in the same pool. They had started to rot. One had a loop of intestine that trailed a foot behind him. The vertebrae from another glistened in sequence as he flipped his tail. Another had let his composition fall to the point that sunlight shone onto the pebbled streambed through his abdomen. It was a ghastly shadow.

"Two days earlier and we would've seen some bears." By the time my friend spoke, I was waist deep in the stream. Some irrational impulse had me after the fish. If I could catch one, and keep it in a bowl or something, then maybe it would stop rotting. I wanted them to stop rotting.

I kept thinking, "If a fish can rot while it's still alive, what keeps people from doing the same thing?" The sad part is that they do. Every day, in a million ways, some people are falling apart where they stand. But we're still swimming. I keep swimming.

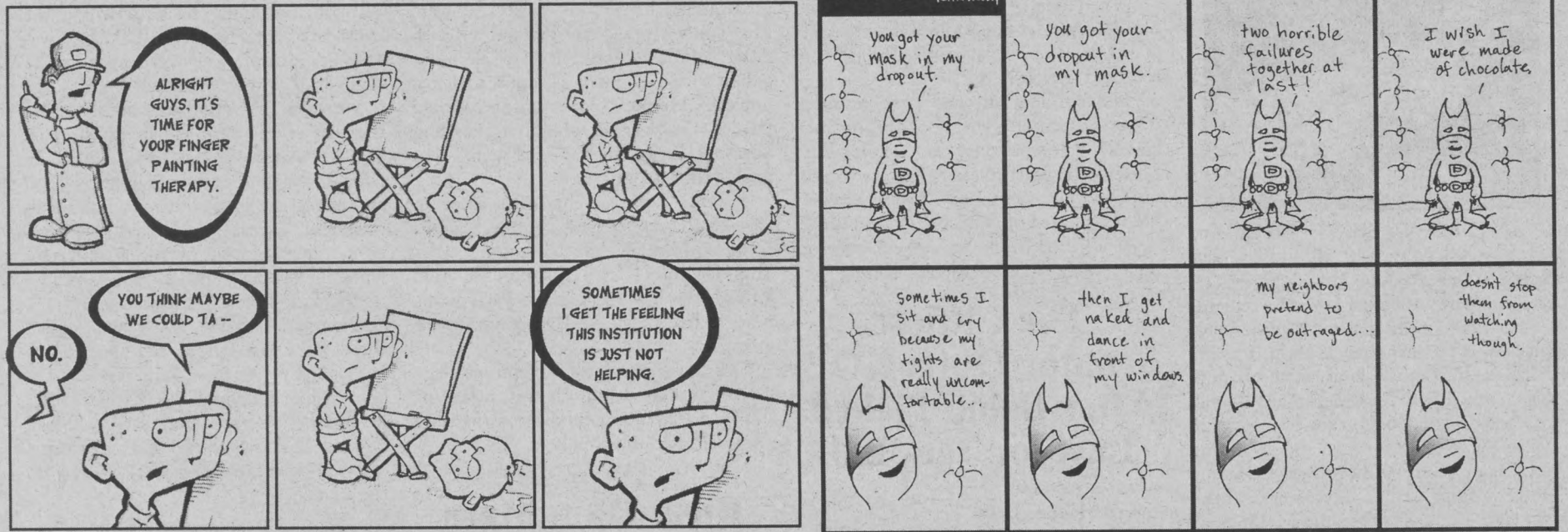
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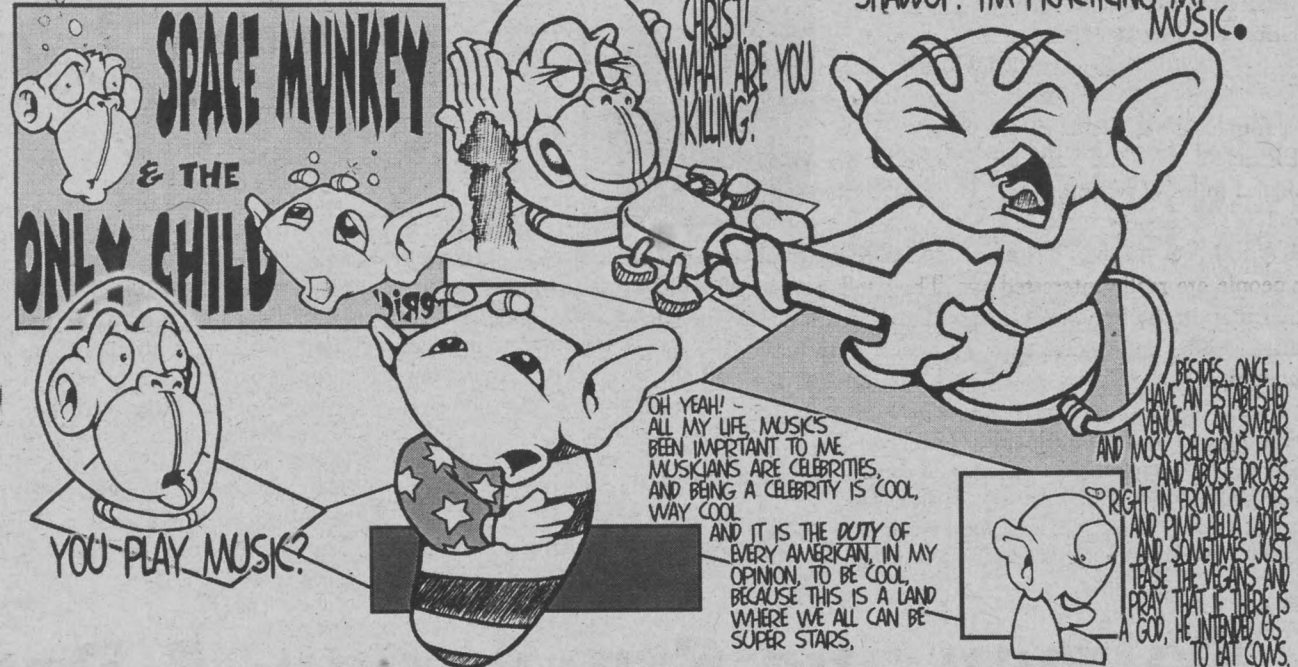
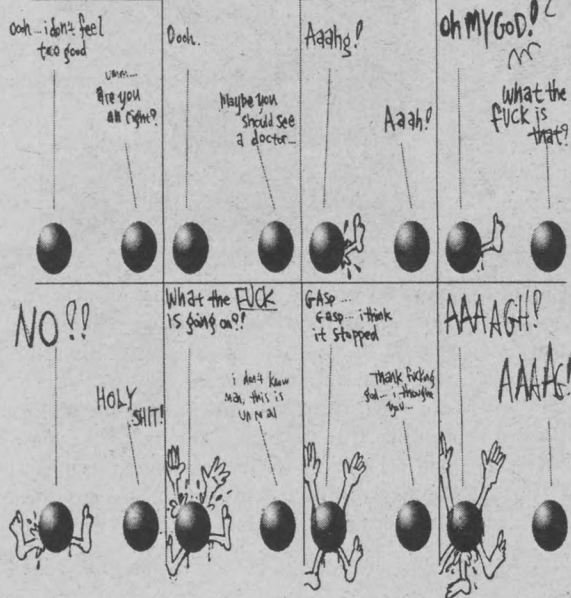
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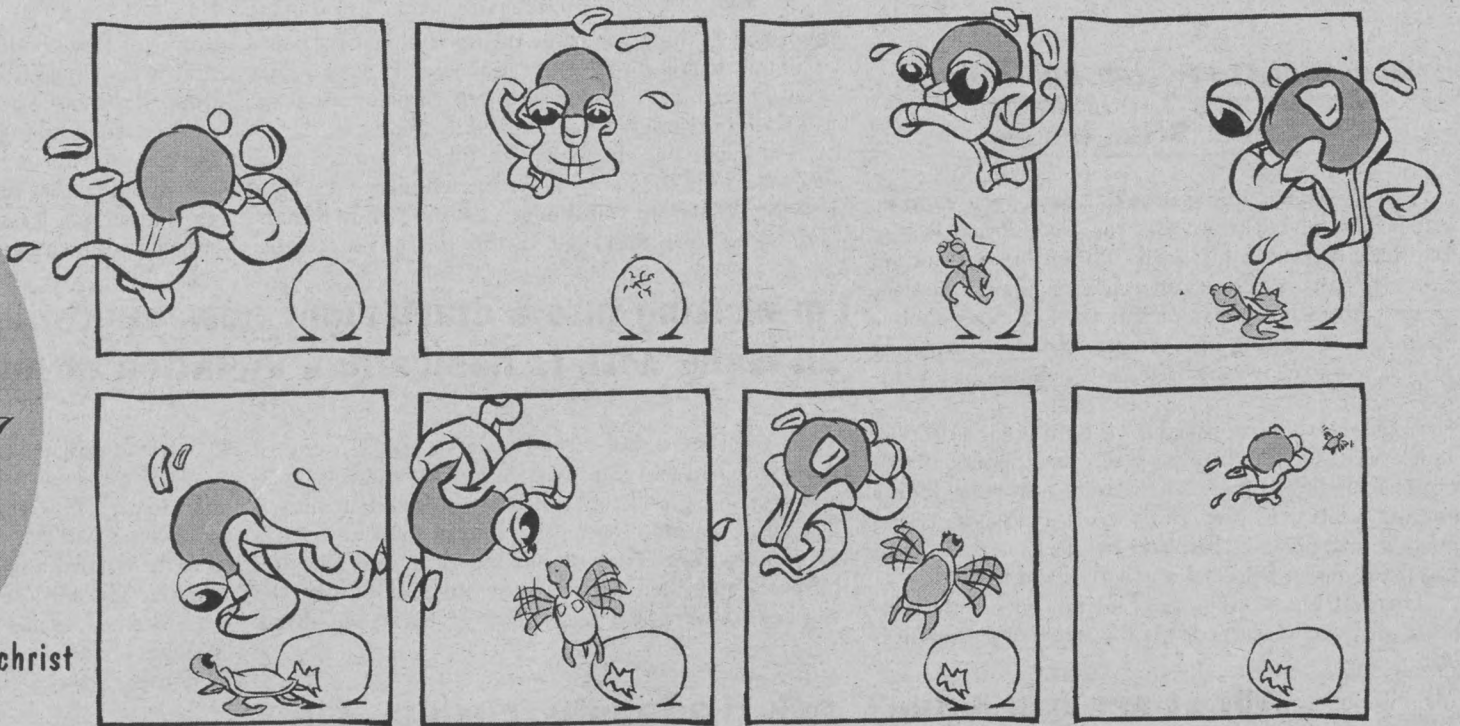
Wretched Excuse



Duck Dog

Featuring the
Tenacious
Turtle

By: Rad Sechrist



DOG BALL
MEETS THE FUZZ

BY CONOR



CHOMP

