

This book is dedicated to the memory of all three of my amazing grandparents, who taught me the value of creative expression, personal integrity, and living a bold life.

No Straight Lines: Four Decades of Queer Comics Edited by Justin Hall

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I came to this beloved art form of words and pictures, perhaps like you, swaddled in the innocent candy-colored bliss of Blondie, Dick Tracy, and Peanuts. It felt natural to progress to the comforting bedtime binaries of Batman, Spider-Man, and Wonder Woman. I remember the first bitter tears of what I then believed to be my burgeoning maturity when Gwen Stacy was murdered (Oh Nooooo!), although I can't recall a single strand of her perfect platinum hair being out of place.

This all ended in the summer of 1974, when a friend shared a secret pilfered from his older brother's nightstand. It was called Zap Comix and given the harmless joy buzzer sound of the title, I was unprepared for the bolt that hit me in the shape of Robert Crumb's muse: her fleshy, hairy legs, her jaunty wall-eyed breasts, the briar of her crotch and armpits, the beads of sweat upon her brow (sweat!?!? nobody sweated in the Marvel/DC universe unless they had something to hide and she was completely naked!) and, of course, her knowing smile.

It was as if someone had popped my eyeballs from my head and nuked them in the microwave from soft to hardboiled. I tried to pretend it was no big deal. But one night, tucked into bed with the latest issue of Wonder Woman, questions became wedged like splinters in my mind; did Diana Prince ever have to shave or were the Amazons on Paradise Island born with perfectly smooth legs? Did she ever brush her teeth or cut her nails? Did she wear underwear under the costume or was the costume technically underwear? Did she pee standing up like in Zap Comix, or did she have to sit down, and if she and Superman were to get married, would they bicker about toilet-seat rules like my mom and dad?

I tried to go back, back to Eden, to the Shire, to those magical Marvel/DC fantasies of good and evil and flawless teeth, where you can make any problem go away if you punch it hard enough, where no one ever had to shave or shit or, heaven forbid, menstruate. But it was too late. I needed more. I needed reality.

I needed politics, social commentary, and adult sexuality. I needed complexity, ambiguity, and humanity. I needed the darkly twisted mirror of the Freak Brothers. I needed the ink-smudged irony and insight of Matt Groening's Life in Hell. I needed the heartbreaking honesty of Lynda Barry's Comeeks. But it wasn't until I discovered Alison Bechdel's Dykes to Watch Out For that I really understood what I was looking for, a queer world with stories and characters that I could recognize, that I could laugh with and care about.

What I needed was a book like this: hairy legs and all.

Lana Wachowski December 2011

NO STRAIGHT LINES

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I set out to make No Straight Lines the definitive anthology of queer comics. In the most profound sense, I failed.

The world of LGBTQ cartooning is even richer and deeper than I could have imagined at the beginning of the long process it took to produce this book. The more I dig into this material, the more I continue to uncover. What in my initial hubris I imagined as the definitive collection has now been revealed as simply a collection; no matter how well-researched and how thoughtfully compiled, the subject matter here is simply too

vast and mercurial for a definitive statement.

This is for me both a source of frustration and giddy excitement. The difficulty and complexity of collecting, presenting, and examining such work means that more should be done in this vein, especially as our culture is progressing rapidly toward new ways of thinking about both queerness and sequential art.

My first task in putting together No Straight Lines was to create a working definition of queer comics. They are comic books, strips, graphic novels, and webcomics that deal with LGBTQ themes from an insider's perspective. These works are sometimes created by straight artists and read by straight audiences, but they differentiate themselves from queer representations in mainstream comics by the perspective they evince. In the past, the mainstream never touched LGBTQ characters except in a derogatory or fetishistic fashion; that's different now in the age of well-rounded lesbian superheroes and sympathetic gay Archie characters. Still, it remains the job of mainstream comics to assimilate LGBTQ characters, while it falls to queer comics to dissect queer identities and examine in more profound ways the queer experience.

At the outset, I had to make some concrete decisions about what No Straight Lines could include. First, I settled on literary (by which I mean non-pornographic) comics; wonderful work has been done in queer erotic comics (I've made some myself), but that material has been for the most part better



catalogued than its literary counterpart. Second, I decided that the collection would include only the Western world; the subject of Eastern queer comics, particularly the material in Japanese manga, is too vast and requires its own book.

In collecting the material for the book, I had three considerations, in this hierarchy of importance: artistic merit, historical merit, and representational merit. First and foremost, No Straight Lines should be a tremendously good read. After that, it should leave the reader with a better understanding of the complex history and diversity of LGBTQ comics.

Perhaps my biggest frustration was the near-impossibility of excerpting from longer narratives. As my editorial focus was squarely on stories that could be enjoyed in the form in which they are presented in the anthology, many graphic novels, serialized comics, and long-form webcomics simply proved impossible to excerpt in a satisfying way. Thus, the vast majority of the work here is short stories and one-pagers; luckily there was still a huge amount of stellar material to choose from. I've included a list of notable works in the back of this collection for those interested in reading more.

What you are holding in your hand is not the definitive anthology of queer comics. Instead, it is a signpost pointing the way to a unique artistic underground. I hope that you continue along that path to discover more of the richness it offers.

Justin Hall

NO STRAIGHT LINES

Comics and gays. They go together well; after all they have one major thing in common: both tend not to get any respect.

Jerry Mills, 19861

A young man is given a lecture about loneliness by his penis after a tryst in the backroom of a bar; a trans woman's cartoon alter ego tries to hire nurses from Hooters for her sex-reassignment surgery; refusing to hide her "disfigurement," a lesbian gets a tattoo across her mastectomy scar after a battle with breast cancer; a bisexual woman's boyfriend breaks up with her because he's worried she'll be too tempted by lesbian sex parties; a 370-foot-tall giant smashes a cathedral in rage as he is dying of AIDS.

These are snapshots from four decades of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) comic books and strips, and represent the wide range of subjects, themes, and styles in this unique and vibrant artistic underground.

LGBTQ comics have fought a long, uphill battle for recognition. While comics have traditionally been dismissed as puerile and simplistic, queer cartooning has been even further marginalized within the comics world, rarely garnering shelf space in comic book stores or recognition at conventions and awards ceremonies. They have existed in a parallel universe alongside the rest of comics, appearing almost exclusively in gay newspapers and gay bookstores, and published by gay publishers. Queer comics have been primarily created for their own communities, and they have been neither interested in, nor able to gain, a wider market.

The insular nature of the world of queer cartooning, however, has created a truly fascinating artistic scene. LGBTQ comics have been an uncensored, internal conversation within queer communities, and thus provide a unique window into the hopes, fears, and fantasies of queer people for the last four decades. They have forged their aesthetics from underground comix, gay erotic art, punk zines, traditional illustration, camp humor, and the biting commentaries of bull dykes, nerdy fags, gender radicals, and other marginalized queers. They have analyzed their own communities and their relationship with the broader society in smart, funny, and profound ways.

The visual nature of comics has been important for a community forging its self-image; as Alison Bechdel wrote when describing her creation of *Dykes To Watch* Out For, "I had set out... to make lesbians visible." And that she did; many young queers struggling to come out and find their place in society discovered their first images of LGBTQ people in her strips and those of her fellow cartoonists.

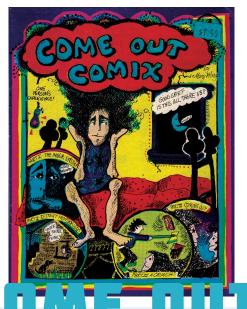
Now the gay newspapers and bookstores are closing down and the bigotry against queer people and their stories is waning. LGBTQ cartoonists are moving out of the queer media ghetto and bringing their work to wider audiences. This, then, is the perfect moment to take stock of queer comics, to give them their due, and to chronicle their largely hidden history; this is the moment to celebrate a world with no straight lines.



The first queer comics, those manifestations of underground art and revolution in ink, were first and foremost about gay sex. Touko Laaksonen can be considered the first gay cartoonist, as he was producing his underground, erotic comics as early as the mid-1940s, and selling them through a mail-order business in Europe. In 1957 he began creating illustrations for *Physique Pictorial* magazine in the U.S., for which he gained the pen name Tom of Finland. Pirated copies of his comics made the rounds in the U.S., but it wasn't until the loosening of the obscenity laws in the 1960s that Laaksonen, along with his contemporaries who were making erotic comics and illustrations, was finally able to distribute his erotic work openly. He remains, years after his death in 1991, the most influential creator of gay erotica in the world, and his wordless adventures of the sexually insatiable leatherman Kake have inspired generations of cartoonists, as well as other artists and lusty viewers.

Alongside this flowering of erotic material came the birth of the modern gay-rights movement, sparked by the famous Stonewall riots of 1969. The movement was borne along by a wave of gay newspapers and magazines, the longest running being *The Advocate*, begun in 1967. These new gay papers needed comics, and so gay gag strips such as Joe Johnson's *Miss Thing* and Sean's *Gayer Than Strange* began to appear.

While the nascent gay liberation movement was taking to the streets, underground comix (which spelled comics with an "x") were exploding in San Francisco. Robert Crumb published the first issue of *Zap Comix*







UNDERGROUND COMIX, AND LESBIAN LITERATI

in 1968, which he first sold out of a baby carriage that he pushed through the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, and then later through the hippie head shops. Other comix artists (virtually all of them straight men) joined Crumb, but the material they were producing, while breaking boundaries with their depictions of sex, drugs, and other adult subject matter, tended toward misogyny and homophobia.

Trina Robbins was perhaps the most prominent exception to these trends; on arriving in San Francisco in 1970, she put together *It Ain't Me, Babe Comix*, the first all-female comix anthology. Two years later, she joined up with a crew of other women creators and local publisher Last Gasp to create the *Wimmen's Comix* collective. For the inaugural issue, Robbins produced "Sandy Comes Out," the first comic about a lesbian that was neither derogatory nor erotic.

The story also happened to be about Robert Crumb's sister Sandy, who had arrived in the Bay Area to stay with her famous brother Robert after a divorce had left her and her baby with nowhere else to go. Robert wasn't happy about her staying with him and continually tried to pass her off to his male cartoonist buddies, much to Sandy's dismay. Robbins swept in and offered Sandy a place to stay; they were roommates for a time, and remained friends afterward.

Shortly after moving out of Robbins' apartment, Sandy came out of the closet, eventually moving into a gay, hippie commune in San Francisco. Sandy told Robbins about her experiences, which inspired Robbins to create "Sandy Comes Out," with Sandy's help on the

script. History was made; the story was the proverbial stone dropped in the pond, creating ripples that eventually grew into an LGBTQ comics movement.

Mary Wings was a ceramics major living in Oregon and fresh out of the closet herself when she read "Sandy Comes Out"; she was immediately inspired to create her own comic. As she later said, "In those days of identity politics, only a lesbian could really tell the story of coming out, so I hastened to do a rejoinder to Trina's story. It was as if Sandy came out, went to the bar, took karate lessons, and that was it. There was an emotional and spiritual side to coming out that wasn't there."

Thus, *Come Out Comix* was born in 1973 on a photocopy machine in the basement of a local radical women's karate school. In the back of the comic was an address; readers could order more copies directly from the artist for one dollar. *Come Out Comix* was raw, but it was earnest. It was also the world's first lesbian comic book. Wings eventually made a bigger name for herself in another medium by creating the first lesbian detective novels.

Around the same time, the Spanish cartoonist Nazario was forming a collective of underground comix creators in Barcelona. This was the time of Franco, and the authorities regularly harassed the artists; despite the danger, Nazario introduced radical queer elements into his work from early on, culminating in the edgy, transgender detective comic *Anarcoma*.

Back in San Francisco, Larry Fuller, one of the very few African-Americans in the comics industry,

published the racy *Gay Heartthrobs* in 1976, with art by Mike Kuchar and others. Unlike previous gay erotic comics, *Heartthrobs* was produced in the standard comic book format, as opposed to chapbooks or folio books, enabling it to be sold in comic book stores and tying it more closely to the larger comics world.

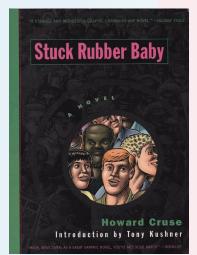
During the same year, Roberta Gregory published *Dynamite Damsels*, in outrage that a straight woman had created the first story about a lesbian ("Sandy Comes Out"), much as *Come Out Comix* had been. Gregory emerged as a true comics prodigy, and the book was the first continuing series self-published by a woman, queer or straight.

The success of these early LGBTQ comix inspired Denis Kitchen, the owner of Kitchen Sink Press, to publish an anthology that would explore gay life in a substantial way. Being straight, Kitchen realized he needed to enlist an openly gay creator to be the editor of the series. He went to his friend Howard Cruse, who was producing the comix series *Barefootz* at the time. For Cruse it was an exciting opportunity but terrifying as well, since it meant publicly coming out of the closet in an industry that was highly intolerant. Still, Cruse had already tested the waters earlier with "Gravy on Gay," a *Barefootz* story about a gay character, and was encouraged by the response. He agreed to helm the project, and *Gay Comix* was born.

Cruse and Kitchen had no way of knowing who in the heavily closeted comics industry was actually queer and willing to contribute to such an anthology. So they, in Cruse's words, "did everything but drop leaflets out of helicopters to spread the word about our project." In a mimeographed letter sent to virtually every underground cartoonist the two could think of, Cruse called for stories of "emotional authenticity" that were "about people, not genitals," in order to move the series out of the campy erotica of *Gay Heartthrobs* and closer to

the depth of the lesbian

To Cruse's delight, the two pioneers Wings and Gregory agreed to contribute, along with Lee Marrs, one of the founders of Wimmen's Comix and the creator of the series *The Further* Fattening Adventures of Pudge, Girl Blimp. Cruse collected material from several other contributed creators, his own story Billy Goes Out, and Gay Comix



#1 hit the stands in 1980, ushering in a new era of LGBTQ comics. Cruse became known as the godfather of queer comics, both for his role in the creation of *Gay Comix*, and for his exceptional cartooning skills, which were fully realized in his groundbreaking 1995 graphic novel *Stuck Rubber Baby*.

COMIX TO COMICS, PUNK ZINES,

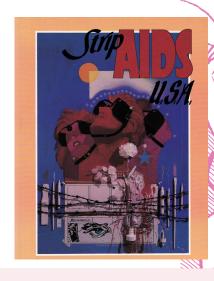
Gay Comix became one of the longest-running underground comix anthologies, with 25 issues over the next 18 years. Cruse handed over the editorial reins to Robert Triptow with the fifth issue, and Bob Ross, owner of the San Francisco-based gay newspaper the Bay Area Reporter, took over as publisher with #6. Andy Mangels became editor with #14, and changed the title to Gay Comics in the next issue, dropping the "x" to reflect how the industry had changed, with material previously described as underground comix, in Mangels' words, "now given the much friendlier name of 'alternative comics.'"⁵

During its illustrious run, *Gay Comix* was the backbone of the LGBTQ comics scene, providing a space where established comic book creators could expand their artistic horizons; where comic strip creators could publish longer format stories; and where new creators could cut their teeth, often with work of tremendous artistic courage. It was a series in which personal, intimate storytelling, as well as bizarre, fan-

tastical concepts, were used to describe queer experiences. Leather zombies, super-powered lesbians, and swishy fish shared space with stories about coming out, the loss of loved ones to AIDS, and cruising the backroom of a gay bar. *Gay Comix* was a place where LGBTQ readers and comics fans could find stories that reflected their lives and passions, providing inspiration and community in a difficult world.

At the same time that *Gay Comix* was establishing itself, Ralf König was beginning his cartooning career, basing much of his work on the leather subculture of Cologne. He produced strips that were eventually collected and published in 1981 as *SchwulComix* (*Gay Comix*). In 1987, he created *Kondom des Grauens* (*The Killer Condom*), his first comic with a continuous story, which was







AND ART DURING THE PLAGUE

later made into a film. He swiftly became Germany's most successful and prolific comic book creator, gay or straight, and the most visible queer cartoonist in Europe.

Despite König's success and the contributions of creators such as Nazario, Holland's Tom Bouden, and the acclaimed French memoir cartoonist Fabrice Neaud, the world of LGBTQ cartooning in Europe remains significantly less developed than in North America. "The advantage for the U.S. is the common language of 300 million people," says François Peneaud, the creator of the websites The Gay Comics List and LGBT BD. "In Europe, there are more than a dozen languages, and the potential audience is thus far more fragmented. So, niche artists face a more uphill struggle to make their works known." Different artistic traditions and cultural mores, as well as the economic challenges of publishing, make translating European works into the English-speaking market difficult as well.

While *Gay Comix* was changing the landscape for LGBTQ comic books in the U.S., the gay newspapers were simultaneously nurturing a market of queer comic strips. Rupert Kinnard's Cathartic Comics showcased the first continuing queer African-American characters, and Cruse began his series Wendel in the pages of **The Advocate**, thus creating the first ongoing, intimate look at a gay couple in comics. Alison Bechdel soon joined him in 1983 with her popular strip Dykes To Watch Out For, which chronicled the lives of a group of urban lesbians. Gay newspapers became numerous enough during the 1990s that they could provide a successful weekly strip cartoonist with a living wage, or near to it. Eric Orner's The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green and David Kelly's Steven's Comics were important strips that appeared during that decade.

The weekly strips' publication in the gay newspapers gave them a timeliness and immediacy that was often used for direct political and social commentary. It also placed them even farther outside of the traditional comics industry than the queer comic books and tied them in even more strongly to the LGBTQ community and the queer media ghetto.

The first cases of HIV/AIDS appeared in 1983, and the disease spread quickly through the gay community. Homophobic backlash compounded the horrific tragedy, and the gay community soon found itself literally fighting for survival. LGBTQ cartoonists' responses to this holocaust were varied. From the searing rage of David Wojnarowicz's posthumously published comic 7 *Miles a Second*, to the biting sarcasm of Carl Vaughn Frick's *Watch Out! Comix*, to the empathy of Jaime Cortez' *Sexile* (a biography of AIDS activist and proud trans woman Adela Vazquez), cartoonists provided an intimate look into people's fear, anger, despair, as well as courage and precarious hope in the face of such a profound challenge.

Robert Triptow was living in San Francisco and editing *Gay Comix* when his friends, including several cartoonists, began dying in droves. "Every weekend would be full of funerals," Triptow said, "and it was hard to make comics when everyone was dying all around you." In 1988, Triptow helped create the benefit comic *Strip AIDS USA*; Trina Robbins had seen the U.K. anthology *Strip AIDS* put together by Don Melia and Lionel Gracey-Whitman and was inspired to create an American version, asking Triptow and Bill Sienkiewicz to join her as co-editors. These three saw comics as a tool to both raise money and help educate; as Triptow wrote in the introduction, "You can't get AIDS from reading this book. Instead, it could be part of a cure... for hysteria, the *other* AIDS epidemic."

The story of HIV/AIDS occurred on a timeline similar to that of a social movement that also had a profound impact on LGBTQ comics: punk and its attendant zine culture. A strong DIY (do-it-yourself)

and creative ethos, combined with the emergence of more affordable production technologies such as cheap photocopy machines, Super 8 film, and 4-track recording devices gave the punk movement a heady, democratic vitality. It seemed like everyone was in a band, making films, and creating comics.

New distribution methods emerged to handle this underground market, with publications such as *Factsheet 5* serving as a clearing house and providing reviews for other zines and minicomics (i.e. magazines and comics produced on photocopy machines and folded and stapled by hand, in lieu of a professional printer and publisher). These zines and minis could be ordered through the mail directly from the creators and paid for by hiding a couple of dollars in the letter.

The publication of the zine *J.D.s* by G.B. Jones and Bruce LaBruce in 1985 launched the queer punk movement "homocore" (later renamed the more inclusive "queercore"). Queercore was designed to piss off both the punk mainstream and the establishment gay and lesbian culture, aligning itself with third wave feminism and the riot grrrl movement by reclaiming derogatory language ("bitch," "dyke," and "queer") and rejecting binary gender notions and mainstream assimilation. It set the stage for a wave of punk and postpunk minicomics, such as Diane DiMassa's cathartic Hothead Paisan: Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist and Craig Bostick's comics biography of punk icon Crash Darby, by offering young, alterna-queer creators an entre into a new world of self-publishing. As comics historian Sina Shamsavari writes,

These cartoonists were of course critical of homophobia, but far less concerned with affirming a sense of shared gay identity and community, and much more concerned with focusing on their personal lives and identities, with critiquing mainstream gay culture as con-

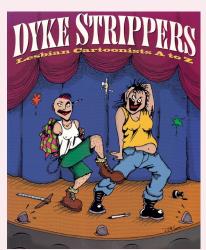
formist and commercialized, and with creating an alternative vision of queer life and culture.9

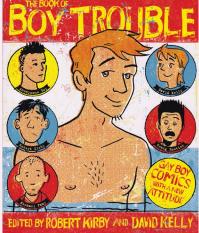
Queer perspectives were becoming more complex, and cartoonists were tackling the new *zeitgeist* with their usual gusto. As Angela Bocage wrote in 1990 in the introduction to the first issue of her anthology series *Real Girl* ("the sex comic for all genders and orientations by cartoonists who are good in bed"), "If gender identities, the realness of girl and boy, are

plastic, they can be melted down. Re-shaped. First a re-imagining of the possibilities would be called for. ... Comics are well suited to these explorations. ... Comics can show subjective worlds very well."¹⁰

This promise was especially borne out by the women cartoonists. In 1990 Andrea Natalie formed the Lesbian Cartoonists Network, and anthologies such as *Girl Frenzy* and *Dyke's Delight* were giving voice to a vibrant creative scene. New artists such as Roxxie, Leanne Franson, and Kris Dresen joined veterans like Jennifer Camper and Roberta Gregory to create a golden age of dyke comics. *Dyke Strippers*, edited by Roz Warren in 1994, collects an excellent cross-section of this work.

Robert Kirby was inspired to create comics in 1990 by picking up, on a random impulse, an issue of Holy Titclamps, a free zine packed with comics and the enticing words "file under queer" stamped on the cover. Lightning struck. He later wrote, "A lot of people who did their own zines had the same little epiphany that I did, encountering a homemade alternapublication that created an instant frisson, a sense of new creative possibilities."11 The result was his minicomic series Strange-Looking Exile. He later refined his craft, producing the weekly strip *Curbside*, and by 1994 the seminal anthology *Boy Trouble*, with co-editor David Kelly, which was intended to generate some of the same dynamism among male cartoonists that abounded in the queer women's scene. The anthology helped galvanize a new wave of gay male cartoonists, such as Steve MacIsaac and Victor Hodge, while also featuring more established creators such as Ivan Velez Jr., Jon Macy, and even Howard Cruse. Ever the agitator, Kirby is now editing a new anthology series called *Three*, featuring new breakout queer cartoonists such as Ed Luce and Joey Alison Sayers.







By the turn of the millennium, LGBTQ identity consciousness had further evolved, and a new wave of openly transgender cartoonists, as well as cisgender artists interested in dealing with trans issues, emerged. While there had been a rare smattering of trans stories published earlier, it wasn't until the early 2000s that creators such as Gina Kamentsky, Dylan Edwards, and Tristan Crane (the latter of whose graphic novel *How Loathsome*, created with artist Ted Naifeh, was nominated for a 2004 GLAAD media award) created what is proving to be one of the most dynamic segments of queer comics.

Trans creators face similar challenges of visibility and representation today that lesbian, bisexual, and gay artists did back in the 1970s, and they are using the language of comics to define themselves in much the same way. "I'm creating comics now for the little girl I was then," says Christine Smith, creator of the all-ages strip *The Princess*, "and presenting a young, trans girl in a normalized, non-pathological fashion." This is an act of artistic courage and community analogous to that of Mary Wings, who had not heard the word "lesbian" until she was 19 and created *Come Out Comix* in 1973 to help other young women in that same predicament.

Along with a more sophisticated and complex idea of queerness, the new millennium saw technology once again change the cultural landscape, with easily accessible computers and the Internet creating new possibilities of cheap publication, interactivity, and community. Printed zines and minicomics began an evolution, continuing to this day, into more handcrafted art objects, with blogs and webcomics emerging as the preeminent means for fast, direct work. Queer cartoonists, along with the rest of the comics world, started producing work and connecting with fans online.

"Having my strip up every week gives me regular feedback from fans," says Tony Breed of the webcomic *Finn and Charlie Are Hitched.* "It helps me decide where to go with my characters and story

lines."¹³ Comics' unusual legacy of printed letter columns has dovetailed into something even quicker and more interactive. This has profound implications for queer cartoonists, who have a special impetus to develop community around their work, and is used to good effect by webcartoonists such as Mysh, an Israeli artist who can reach an international audience without having to leave his country by putting his Englishlanguage, haiku comics up on the Web.

Prism Comics is at the center of this new reality. Created in 2003 by Charles "Zan" Christensen and grown out of Andy Mangels' groundbreaking *Out in Comics*, Prism is a non-profit organization supporting LGBTQ comics, creators, and fans. Prism hosts a website (prismcomics.org) with creator profiles and news, provides grants for queer comics, and publishes an annual *Guide To LGBT Comics*. Other queer comics websites such as the Gay League (gayleague.com) and Fanboys of the Universe (fanboysoftheuniverse.com) have emerged as well, using the Internet to create virtual, queer, creative communities.

As online opportunities are opening up, the traditional queer media ghetto formed by the gay and lesbian newspapers, bookstores, and publishers is coming unraveled under pressure from online media and sales, a poor publishing climate, and increasing acceptance of queer stories in the mainstream. The formerly safe and cozy ghetto is no longer able to nurture queer cartoonists as it has in the past; on the other hand, there are opportunities now for creators to reach wider markets. LGBTQ comics that were well established in the queer media ghetto have begun to make inroads into the comics mainstream and beyond.

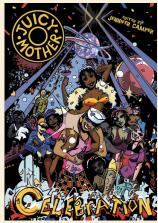
This broadening of audience must come with a broadening of material. As *Bitter Girl* creator Joan Hilty says, "If I just write about coming out, the bar scene, and queer politics I'll die of boredom. ... Over the last 40 years we've become so much more assimilated as a group that we've got both the blessing and

the curse of needing to go beyond that source material now."14 Cartoonists such as the prolific Paige Braddock (Jane's World) and Tim Fish (Cavalcade of **Boys**) are among those adjusting well to this new reality by creating humorous, character-driven comics with primarily queer characters that appeal to both queer and straight audiences.

The career of Alison Bechdel illustrates this trend perfectly: in 2006 she released the superlative graphic novel Fun Home, which deals with her relationship with her closeted father who may or may not have committed suicide. Fun Home was a crossover success, garnering a mainstream publisher and named **TIME Magazine's** Best Book of the Year. This recognition would have been impossible at the beginning of her career when comics weren't taken seriously as a medium and queer stories were dismissed by the mainstream; conversely, it would be impossible to make a living with Dykes To Watch Out For now, with the closure of so many of the gay newspapers that supported the weekly strip.

"When I started out," says Bechdel, "my books were 'lesbian comics.' Then they started being seen as simply 'comics.' "15 In 2004 the Alternative Press Expo, the largest independent comics convention in the U.S., brought Bechdel in as a guest of honor. After over two decades of making her strip, it was the first comic book convention she had ever attended or been invited to, as well as the first year that A.P.E. had a Queer Cartoonists panel and Prism Comics had a booth. The queers had arrived.





One of Prism's major functions is creating an LGBTQ presence at comics conventions, by providing a booth where queer comics creators can sell their work and by hosting panels. Conventions are a growing business; they provide an experience that stores or online sales cannot by creating a social event where fans can interact with the creators and each other. Bent Con, which started in 2010 as a small group of gay male cartoonists hawking their wares in the abandoned former Mr. S Leather store in Los Angeles, grew the next year into a small, queer version of Comic-Con, and promises to continue expanding. Creating LGBTQ convention experiences will certainly be part of the new paradigm for queer comics as traditional retail spaces collapse.

Whatever new venues open up, LGBTQ comics will survive, as they have for four decades, despite the odds. As Jennifer Camper, veteran dyke cartoonist and editor of the *Juicy Mother* anthology, says, "There have always been a number of us making stuff [and] we all had our own ways of doing it. We've always created our own templates."16 It is precisely this scrappy attitude that guided the early lesbian comic books, the gay strips, and the queer zine anthologies. It will guide the LGBTQ graphic novels, comic books, and webcomics of the future. With so little real money in the comics medium, every creation is a personal labor of love, with all the splendid, messy diversity of artistry and business plans that that implies.

Queer comics will survive, and they will prosper. They will continue to document the changing realities of the LGBTQ experience; they will comment on

everything from our bad hairstyles to our choices in one-night stands, from our courage facing illness to our need for community, from our attempts to achieve marriage rights to our dubious taste in music, from revolution to the freedom to live a mundane life. Queer creators will continue to hold up a fractured, funhouse mirror in which we LGBTQ people can view ourselves and allow others to see us as well. This is the role of the artist and storyteller, the truth teller and spinner of tall tales.

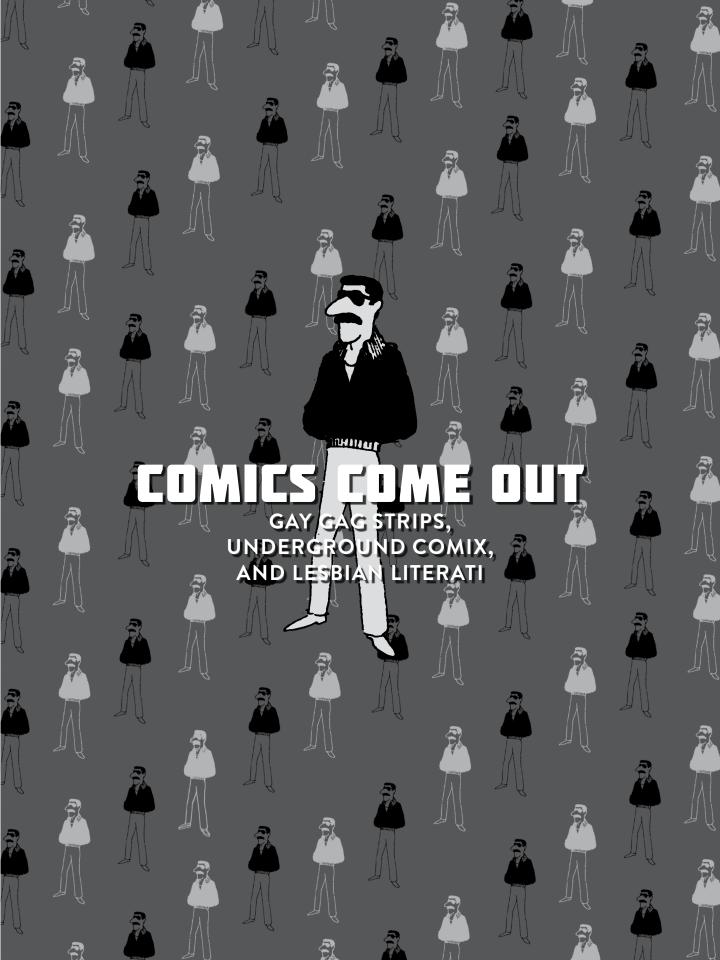
The future is bright, queer, and full of comics.

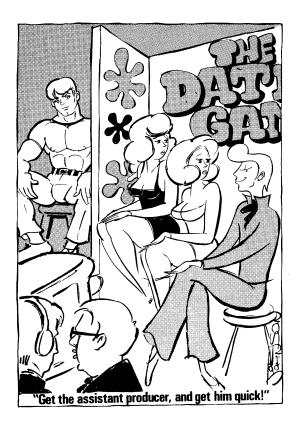
Justin Hall December 2011 San Francisco, CA

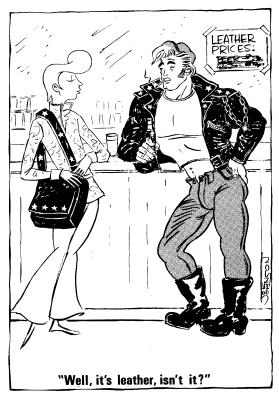
- Jerry Mills, "Introduction," in Meatmen #1 (San Francisco: Gay
- Sunshine Press, 1986) 5.

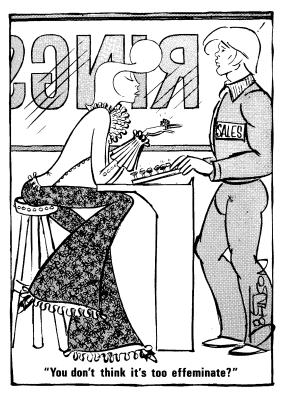
 Alison Bechdel, "Cartoonist's Introduction," in The Essential Dykes To Watch Out For (New York City: Houghton Mifflin, 2008) XVII.
- Mary Wings, filmed interview by Robyn Dalbey and author, 2011, no_straight_lines.tumblr.com.
- Howard Cruse, "Editor's Notes," Gay Comics #25 (San Francisco: Bob Ross. 1998) 1.
- Andy Mangels, "Editor's Notes," Gay Comics #25 (San Francisco: Bob Ross, 1998) 40.
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- Robert Triptow, phone interview by author, 2010. Robert Triptow, "Introduction," Strip AIDS U.S.A. (San Francisco: Last

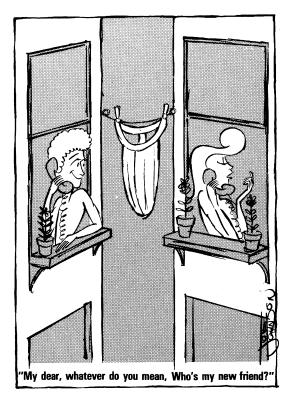
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- Robert Kirby, "How I Did It: Part 1," (blog) March 24, 2011, robkirbycomics.com.
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 Queer Comics Project class at the California College of the Arts, 2011,
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- 13 Tony Breed, e-mail message to author, 2011.
- Joan Hilty, interview by Alex Dueben, 2009, comicbookresources.com. 14 15
 - Alison Bechdel, e-mail message to author, 2009.
- Jennifer Camper, phone interview by author, 2009.



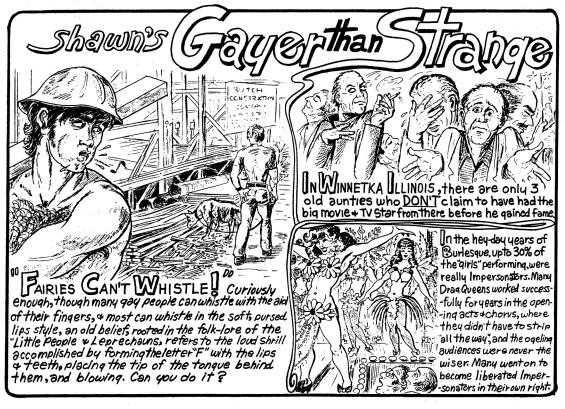


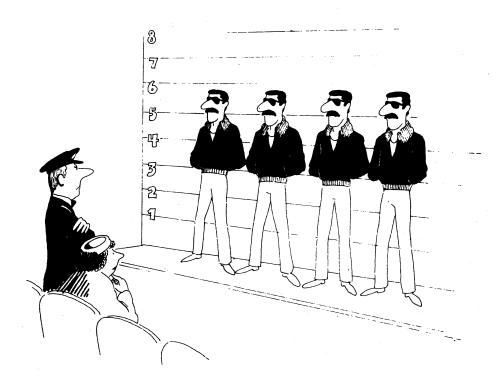




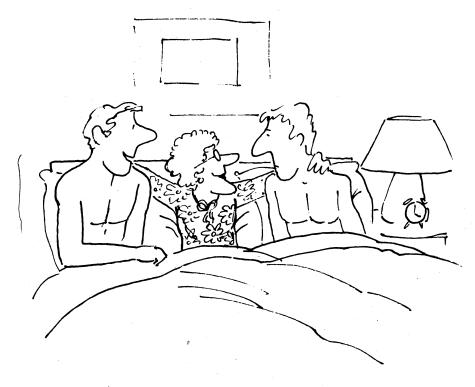








Why most gay crimes go unsolved.



"When Mother accepts something, she goes all the way."





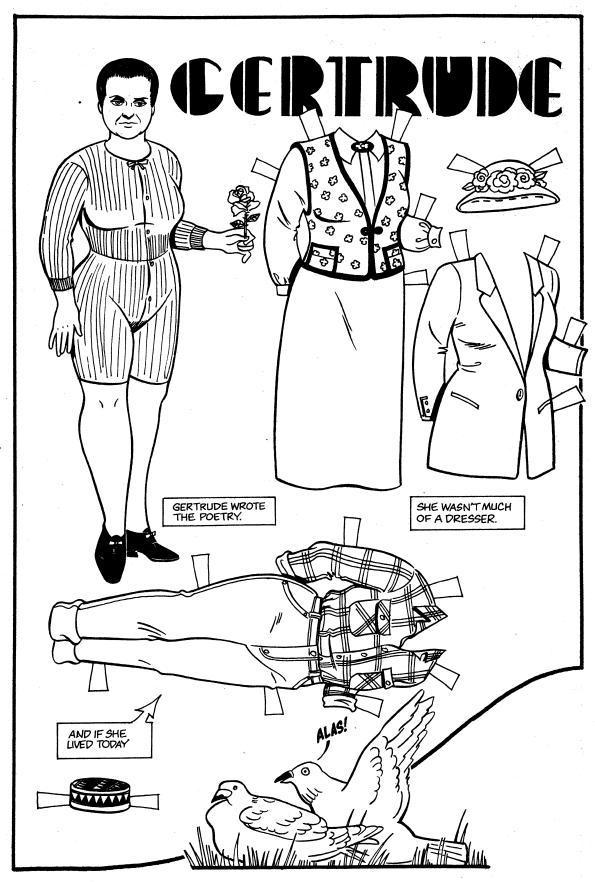
SANDY, YOU **MUST** FIND A **POSITIVE AL**-

TERNATIVE TO THE DEHUMANIZING NU-



















WAVE OF **DEATH** ENSUED IN THE SOCIAL CATACLYSM HANNAH GRUEN, THE HOUSEKEEPER, PASSED ON, THEN SARA'S FATHER COMMITTED SUICIDE. WE ATTENDED THE FUNERALS TOGETHER



ORTUNATELY, MY WITS HAD TOTALLY OUTSTRIP.

PED THOSE OFMY "MOTHER" WHO HAD REMAINED MENTALLY AROUND THE AGE OF
EIGHT... THE DEATH OF MY "GRANDFATHER"
LEFT ME -FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFEA FREE PERSON ...





TWO VERY GROWN-UP CHILDREN WHEN WE

DECIDED TO THROW OUR LOTS IN LIFE TOGETHER ...



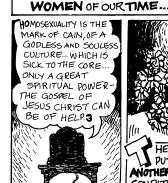
NKNOWN TO MY "MOTHER", SARA AND I BUILTA CABIN ON THE FAR END OF THE GROUNDS ... EXCEPT FOR ABSENTEE "EXECUTORS" WHO HANDLED THE FINANCES, SARA AND I WERE FREE FROM "SUPERVISION



A THOUGHT TO THE FUTURE. THE YEAR AFTER PROHIBITION WAS REPEALED WE DRESSED

UP AND WENT TO A BAR ... YES, WE WERE











T WAS A CHOICE BETWEEN EVERYTHING OR NOTHING IN A HUNGRY WORLD



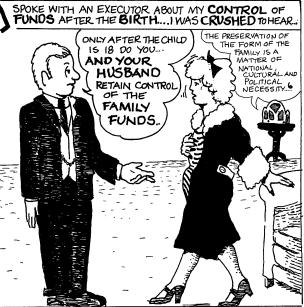


HE SEEMED LIKE A MAN PREOCCUPIED WITH BUSINESS AND POLITICS ... I MADE OUR MARRIAGE CONDITIONAL ON OUR LIVING ON MY CHILDHOOD ESTATE SO I COULD SEE SARA OFTEN









NO! I'M TOO SCARED!

COLLECTION!

OSCARS TOO FOND OF HIS RIFLE





THOSE WONDERFUL FOLKS FROM THE VICE SQUAD...



PROTECTING MORAL

ONE EVENING AFTER A HEAVY DAY OF HOUSE-PAINTING, NORMA STOPS "THE LAVENDER LIONESS " (A YOU-KNOW-WHAT BAR!) FOR A DRINK-AND RUNS INTO AN OLD FRIEND ...

KERRY! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN SIX YEARS- HOW'S IT BEEN GOING?

LOTSA CHANGES, NORMA-BUT I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN MY HEAD STRAIGHTENED OUT- IF YOU'LL PARDON THE EXPRESSION-



WE'LL HAVE TO GET TOGETHER-**SOON..** YOU KNOW HOW I'VE









LEWD CONDUCT IN PUBLIC?!? ALL I DID WAS KISS HER!

ya Hugged HER, TOO! BETTER GETCHER STORY STRAIGHT HON!

NEVER HEARD SUCH BULLSHIT- IT WAS JUST A PLAIN OL' HUG-AN'-KISS! I DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH HER TITS,

WE'RE GONNA GET YOU FOR USIN' OBSCENITIES IN THE PRESENCE OF A WOMAN, TOO!



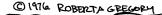


THAT'S RIDICULOUS! "IN THE PRESENCE OF A WOMAN ... ' -WHAT DO YOU

DO YOU REALLY WANNA KNOW, YOU DYKE?



YOU'RE REALLY ASKIN' MEANWHILE, THE LADY I WAS FOR IT .. OVERT SEXUAL PAINTIN COP STANDS HERE ACTIVITY IN PUBLIC ... IN DRAG! A HOUSE! IT'S MY OBSCENITY -- WEARING UNIFORM! MEN'S CLOTHES ---





DON'T WE EACH GET A PHONE CALL? I HAVE TO CALL MY BABYSITTER -

SO YOU GOT KIDS, HUH? YA MAY NOT HAVE EM TOO MUCH LONGER! HAW!

THEY WERE JUST KIDDING, WERENT THEY ? : SOB : I HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT SISTERS HAVING

HEY! DONCHA LEZZIES KNOW WHEN TO QUIT? HANDS OFF!



LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO SEPARATE YOU SEX FIENDS! THIS WAY, BUTCH!

THIS HAS GOT TO BE A NIGHTMARE!

WHERE AM I GONNA GET FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS ?

WELL, I HOPEYA LIKE JAIL, HOW! THERE'LL BE LOTSA CHICKS JUST LIKE YOU THERE -!

YES, I'M TALKIN' TO MY LOVER ON THE PHONE, YES, SHES A WOMAN, AND YES, YOU CAN'T DO A DAMNED THING ABOUT IT!







WELCOME TO THE DADDY TANK" -WHAT'S YER NAME?

OH, WOW - EVERY BULLDYKE IN THE CITY MUST BE HERE! WONDER

HI, BABE! DON'T WORRY-EVERYTHING'LL BE O.K.! HEY! IT'S HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE '59! DORIS!



HI, AMY!

HI GERRY!

HI, GINGER.

HI, BERT!





WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GOOD OL' DAYS WHEN YA COULD TELL THE "BUTCHES" FROM THE "FEMMES"



I'VE BEEN IN THE SLAMMER 34 TIMES - LOTS OF IT FOR THE SAME REASON YOU GOT IN THOUGH THE LAST TIME WAS FOR BUSTIN' A COP'S JAW)-IT'S NO DISGRACE. NOT WITH THESE CHICKENSHIT LAWS THEY GOT AGAINST US!



DISGUSTIN' QUEERS! AT LEAST WE'RE MAKIN' THE CITY SAFE-

FOR STRAIGHT FOLKS! HOPE YOU'RE USIN' A RUBBER, FELLA!

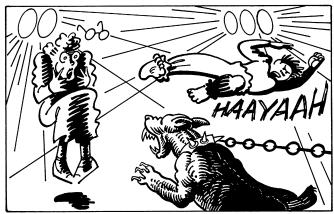


UNFORTUNATELY, MOST OF THESE EVENTS WERE REAL! NAMES WERE CHANGED TO PROTECT ALL OF US!



ORPHANED AT BIRTH, I MAD SPENT THE LAST 12 YEARS NURSING MY DRUG-CRAZED FLOWER CHILD UNCLE, PONDEROSA SUNSHINE, IN HIS UNSUCCESSFUL BOUT WITH HERPES DEMENTIA. HIS RECENT DEATH HAD THRUST ME BACK INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF LIFE — AS ARCHITECTURE REPORTER FOR THE STOCKTON TIMES-PICAYUNE. OUR LADY OF THE BLEEDING PANCREAS ORPHANAGE HAD GIVEN ME MY SHARE OF LOWING....UH... COMPANIONS, BUT LOVE HAD NEVER CROSSED MY PORTICO. SO, IT WAS A CAREFREE PHOTO/JDURNALIST WHO DROVE UP TO MOURNING FOG MANOR, THE BARDNIAL ESTATE OF CARMEL—THE MOST PERFECT EXAMPLE OF MISSION REVIVAL GROTESQUE IN CALIF. MY EDITOR HAD SENT ME CHEERFULLY FOR A SUNDAY FEATURE...

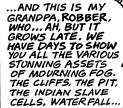




@82 LEE MARRS-









SO THIS IS LARIAT BARON.
LAST OF THE BOSTON BARONS,
WHO'D PLUNDERED ALL THE
STATE FOR GENERATIONS
UNTIL DUELS, INBREEDING,
AND ANTI-TRUST LEGISLATION
ENFEBLED THEIR PROUD
LINE. WHAT LIPS! WHAT
EYES! WHAT NOSTRILS!
WHAT HIGH HEELS!
THEOREM THEOREM THINDE! THROBBA THROBBA THUMP!

















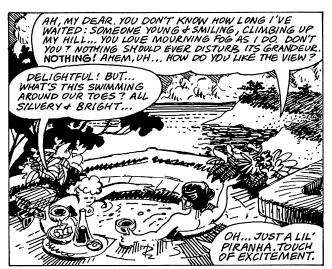














BUT... BLISS ENVELOPED MY PARCHED SOUL, AND I TURNED A BLIND EYE TO ANY SHADOW CAST BY THE DARKER CORNERS
OF LARIAT'S LIFE. WHAT
CARED I FOR HER PAST?
THE PRESENT WAS FIERY, VIBRANT, WARM.



THIS LIL' PIGGY WENT INTO INCOME PROPERTY, INTO INCOME PROPERTY,
THIS LIL' PIGGY GOTTA
HOME, THIS LIL' PIGGY
NEEDS A BUYDOWN,
THIS LIL' PIGGY NEEDS
NONE, THIS LIL' PIGGY
IS IN ESCROW, THIS
LIL' PIGGY...



























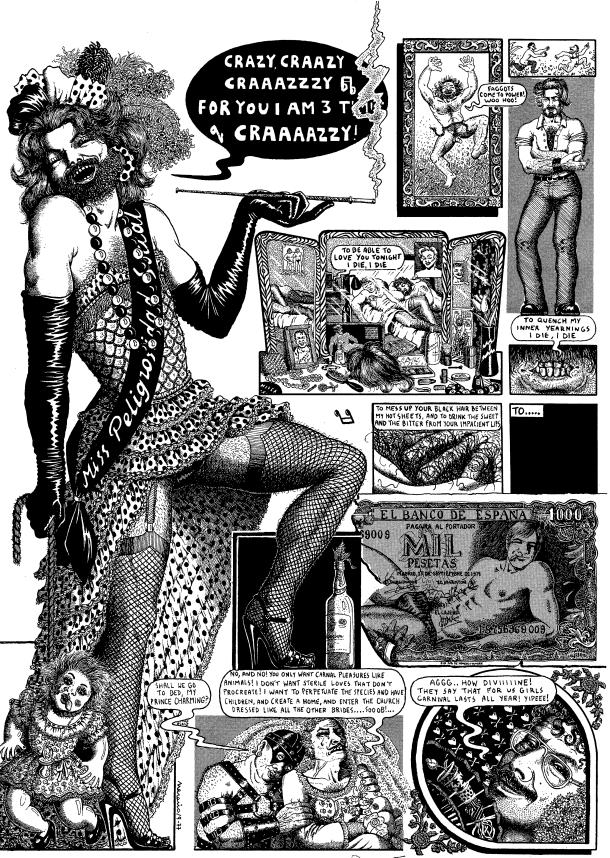






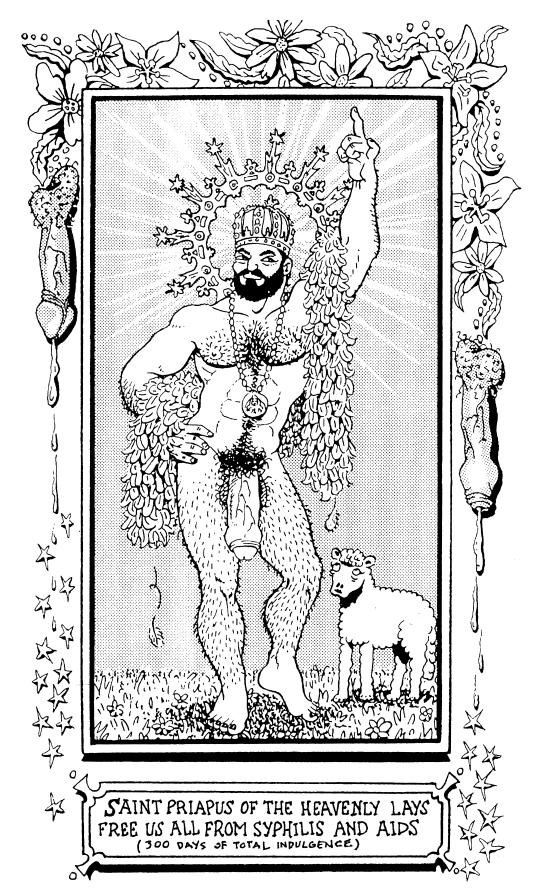






Para Tereni de Mararin







THE PAWN AFTER PAYO OF SEXUAL REVOLUTIONS FINDSTHE CHILDREN OF LIBIDINAL LIBERATIONS SCATTERED IN STRANGE NEW LANDS FAR FROM FORMER PATHWAYS OF FREE LOUE.

DURING THE NIGHT A GRIM PANDEMIC SIEGE BURNED OVER SEA AND SOIL, SOME CHANGED CASUALLY IN TUNE WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT, OTHERS GREW NEW SHELLS. TOO MANY BECAME EXTINCT. A FEW BECAME TRAPPED IN THE MECHANICS OF THEIR DINOGAUR WAYS.









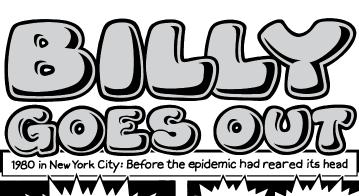








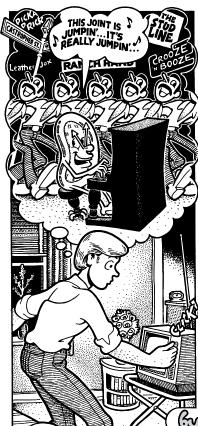


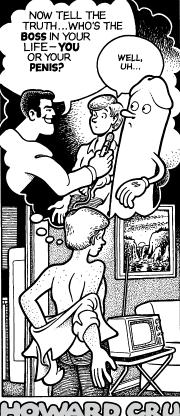




























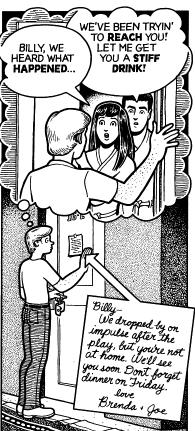


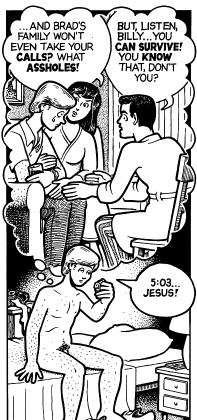












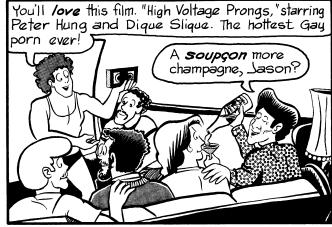
















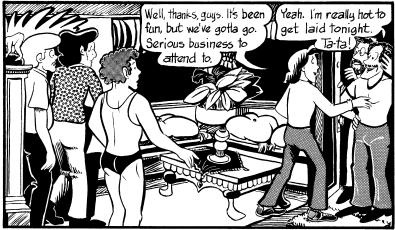












"The hotlest porn film ever," you said. "They'll drop their pants and come during the credits." We schemed for weeks to get those three in our clutches!



Oh, let her be, Duchess. It was hopeless. Nobody could make a porn film that would seduce those three numbers.



Mary, it so happens that I taught William Higgins everything he knows. Why, he lost his virginity to moi.

> res, and so did Socrates.

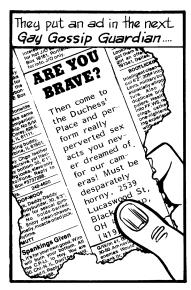


And what fun it'll be to make! Acres and tons of naked bodies all over the house, writhing in ecstasy!











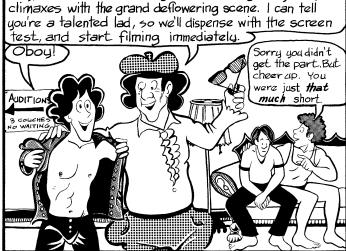




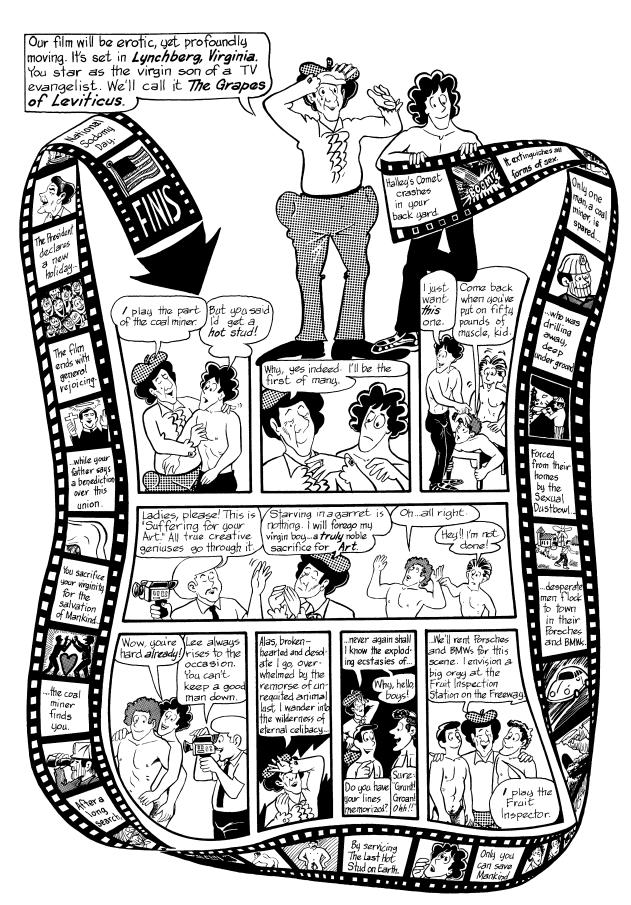








Why, this film has a starring role for a virgin boy. The plot





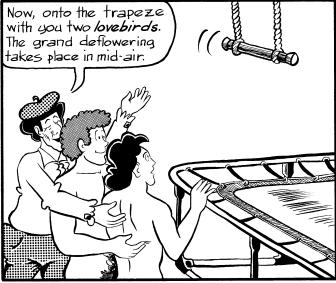


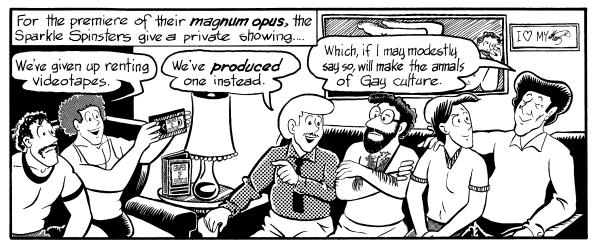


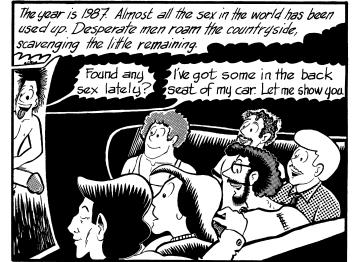


















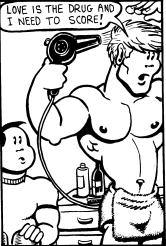
Don't look now,

There's only









LOVE IS A BURNING SENSATION FAR BEYOND THE IMAGINATION! LOVE IS A NAGGING IRRITATION CAUSING MY HEART COMPLICATIONS! LOVE IS A GROWING INFECTION AND I DON'T KNOW THE CORRECTION!



IT'S SAVAGE AND IT'S CRUEL AND IT SHINES LIKE DESTRUCTION! IT COMES IN LIKE THE FLOOD AND IT SEEMS LIKE RELIGION! IT'S NOBLE AND IT'S BRUTAL, IT DIS-TORTS AND DERANGES, AND IT WRENCHES YOU UP AND YOU'RE LEFT LIKE A ZOMBIE!!







MY MOTHER ONCE TOLD ME SOMETHIN' AND EVERY WORD IS TRUE: DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME ON A FELLA WHO DON'T LOVE YOU!



NOW GOOD LOOKS I'VE LEARNED TO DO WITHOUT CAUSE NOW I KNOW IT'S LOVE THAT REALLY COUNTS!

HE MIGHT NOT LOOK LIKE A MOVIE STAR! HE DOESN'T DRIVE A CADILLAC CAR! HE SURE AINT THE BOY I'VE BEEN DREAMING OF, BUT HE'S SURE THE BOY







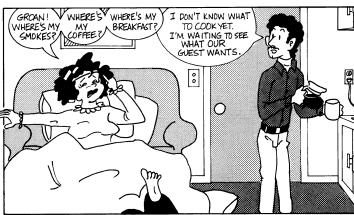




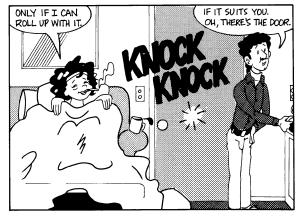


GOOD HEAVENS. I THOUGHT YOU MEANT THAT YOUR NEW NEIGHBOR WAS GAY!





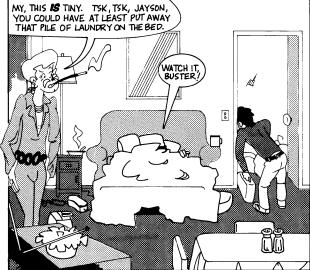






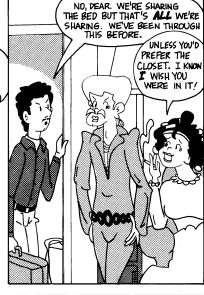
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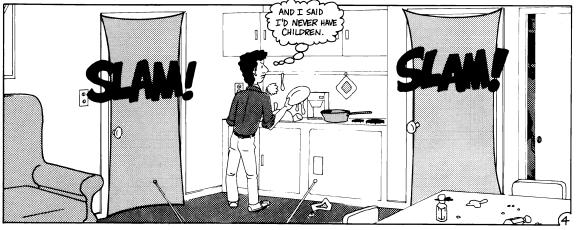






















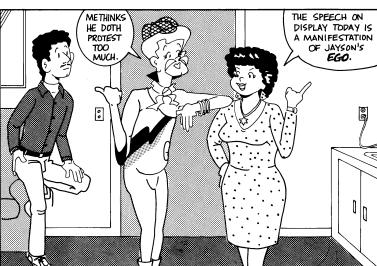


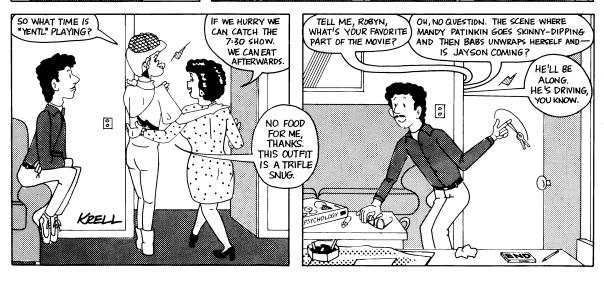










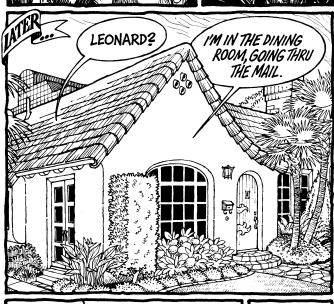


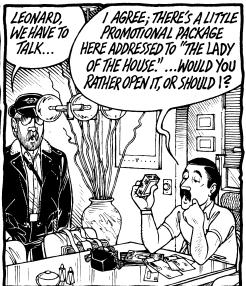


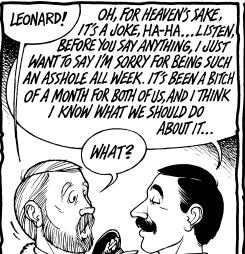


OH, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!...GIVE
ME A BREAK, GIRL; THIS IS THE
1980'S! I KNOW THAT MONOGAMY
IS BACK IN STYLE THESE DAYS, BUT
REALLY!... ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL
ME THAT LEONARD SPENDS ALL DAY
WORKING WITH THOSE HOT MODELS IN
HIS PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO AND YOU
SPEND ALL DAY OUTFITTING THESE
HUNKS HERE IN YOUR LEATHER SHOR,
AND NEITHER OF YOU HAVE EVER
BEEN, AT LEAST, TEMPTED TO FOOL
AROUND?









... WELL, WE
REALLY HAVEN'T
SPENT ANY QUALITY TIME TOGETHER FOR WEEKS.
... ALL WORK
AND NO PLAY...
I MADE RESERVATION'S FOR
PALM SPRINGS.
A ROMANTIC
WEEKEND IN
THE DESERT,
JUST YOU
AND ME.



WELL,...UH, I DON'T KNOW...I MEAN, IF YOU





YEAH! IN FACT, I THINK
I'LL GO OUT TONIGHT; THE GAUNTLET
IS STILL WALL-TO-WALL FLESH ON FRIDAY
NIGHT, ISN'T IT?

MAYBE.

" I CAN WEAR **YOUR** FAVORITE TIGHT, FADED 501'S WITH MY "CHEAP N" EASY" T-SHIRT AND THE BLACK WORK BOOTS **YOU** GAVE ME FOR MY BIRTHDAY.



THAT SHOULD MAKE FOR GOOD FISHING.





WELL, UH... I LIKE YOUR PLACE... I SEE YOU HAVE A VIEW OF THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN, SORT OF.



WHO GIVES A FUCK ABOUT THE
HOLLYWOOD SIGN? I HAVE A MUCH BETTER
VIEW OF SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD! ON A
FRIDAY NIGHT, LIKE THIS, I CAN WATCH ALL THE
HOT STUDS ON THE STREET, DOWN THERE, CRUISING UP THE HILL TO THE DETOUR, CRUISING
DOWN THE HILL AND INTO THE

GAUNTLET..



UH,...MAYBE I SHOULD MOVE AWAY FROM THE WINDOW; I GET VERTIGO...SURE IS HOT IN HERE!

> I CAN IMAGINE! LET ME HELP YOU WITH YOUR JACKET... FOR STARTERS...





YOU CERTAINLY HAVE ENOUGH PICTURES OF LEONARD IN THERE... WHAT, ONLY TWO SHOTS OF YOUR KIDS?...! SWEAR, YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH OF LEONARD IN THAT WALLET FOR A WHOLE PHOTO ALBUM!

I GUESS SO...THIS ONE, WITH LEONARD
AND COIT TOWER, IS MY FAVORITE. WE WERE
IN SAN FRANCISCO FOR THE WEEKEND,
LAST VALENTINE'S DAY. LEONARD MADE
RESERVATIONS AT ONE OF THOSE INNS
IN THE CASTRO,
A ROMANTIC,
OLD, VICTORIAN
ROW HOUSE...





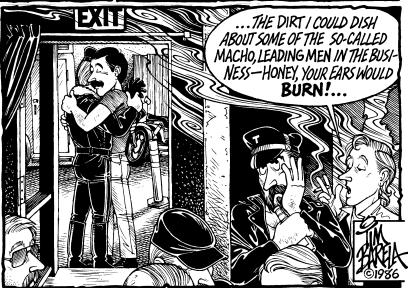


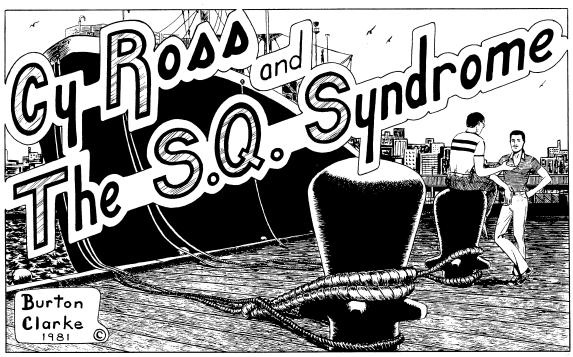
YEAH ... SOMETIMES I WISH I DIDN'T; A REAL GOLD-PLATED, LEATHER-CLAD HORSE'S ASS. THAT LARRY EVANS. HE'S SELFISH, HE'S STUBBORN HE'S JUST PLAIN STUPID! ALL FOR THE SAKE OF SOME SLEAZY TRICK, HE TOOK FOR GRANTED AND HURT THE ONE PERSON WHO MEANS MORE TO HIM THAN ANYTHING IN THE WHOLE WORLD. ... WHAT A BASTARD!

THAT'S MY LOVER, ALL RIGHT; A THOUGHTLESS, SELF-CENTERED. CALLOUS **SHIT HEAD...** ON THE other hand. He can also be **thoughtful, gen** EROUS AND LOVING. WHEN HE WANTS TO, MY LOVER CAN BETHE **MOST WONDERFUL** MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN...**I LOVE** THAT BASTARD *VERY.* VERY MUCH! THAT'S THE PROBLEM.





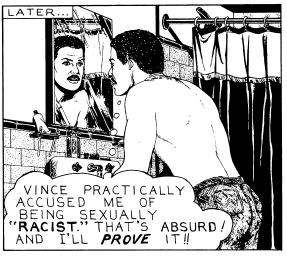












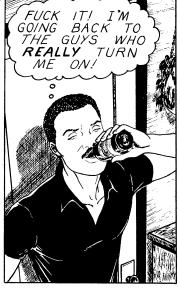


















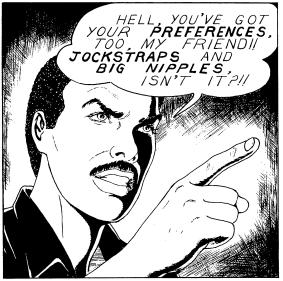








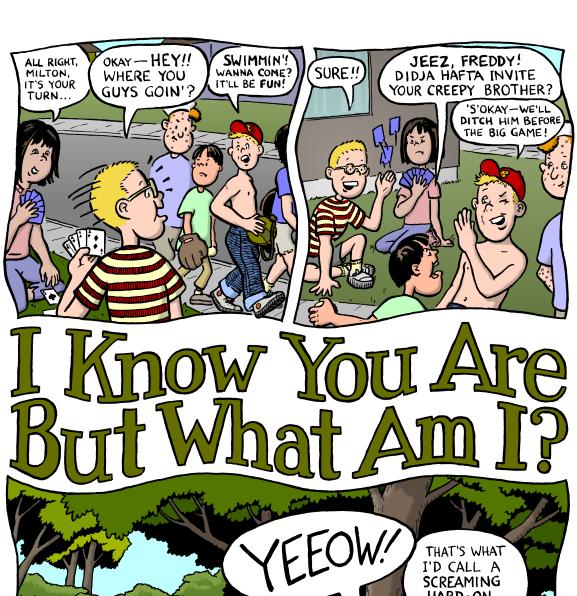


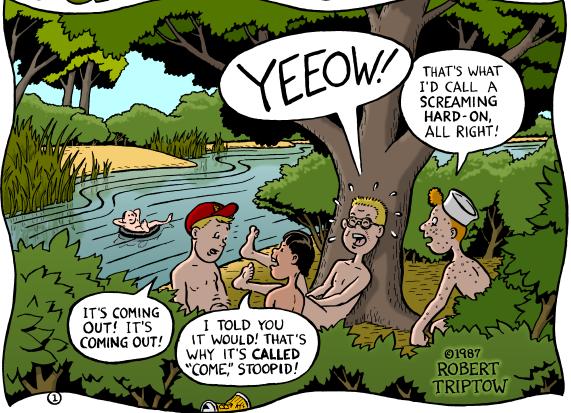


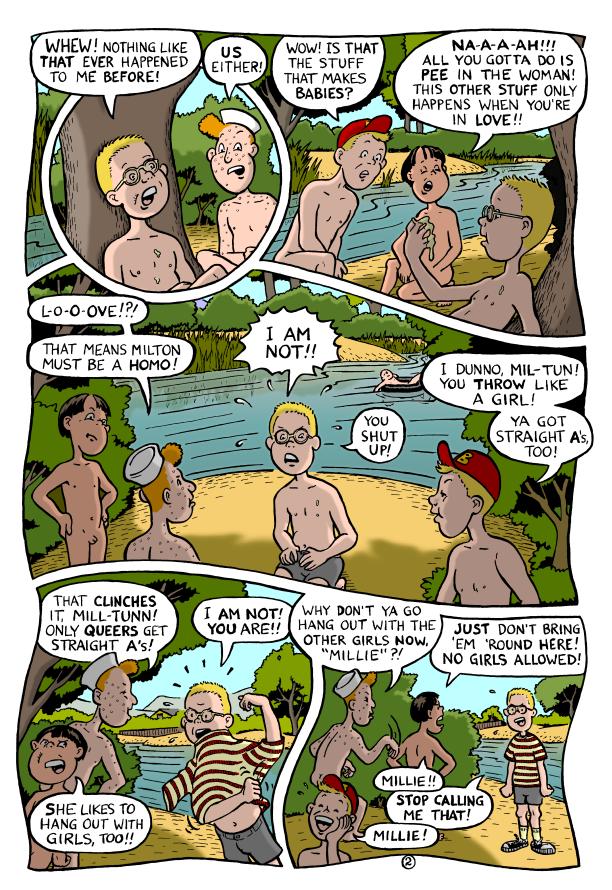


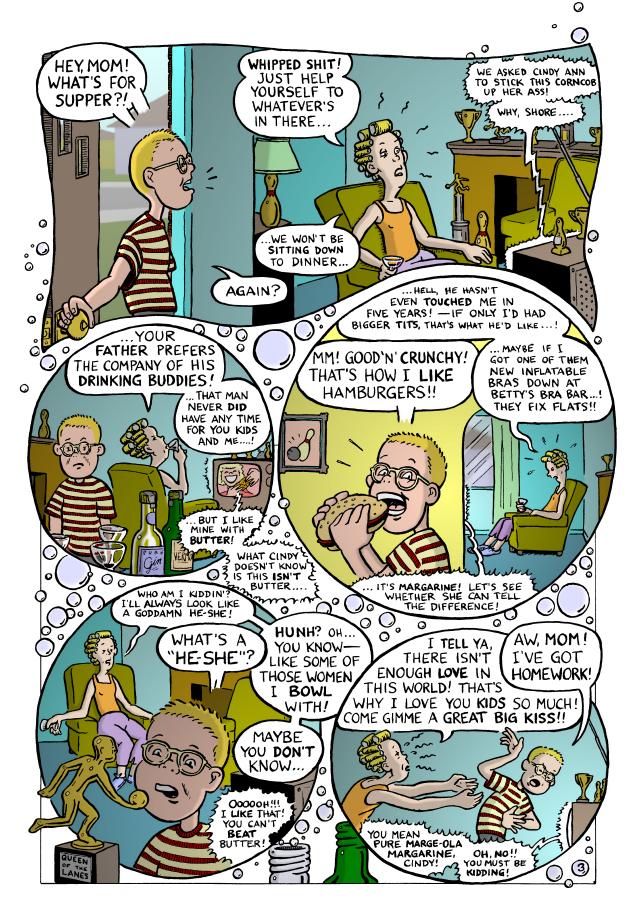


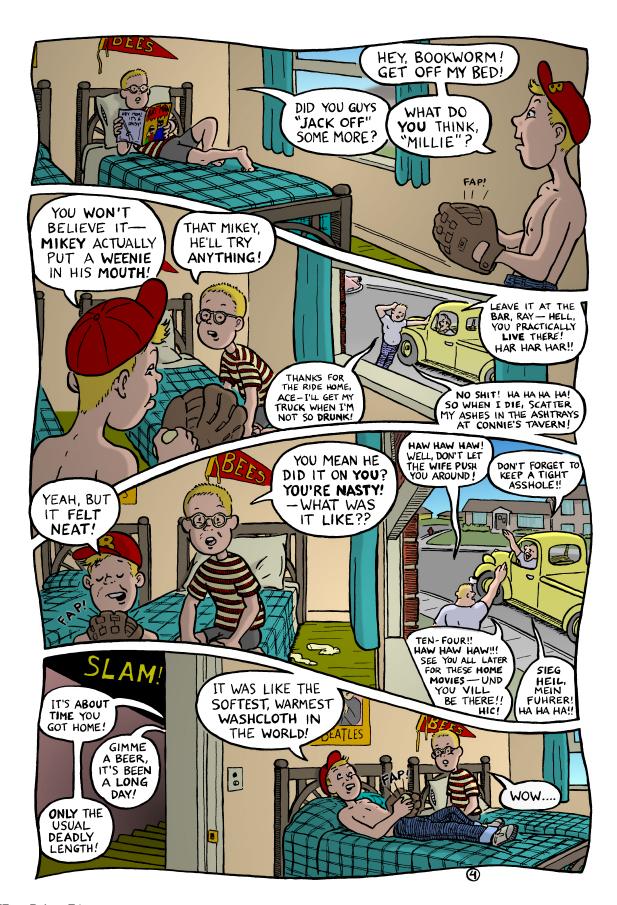




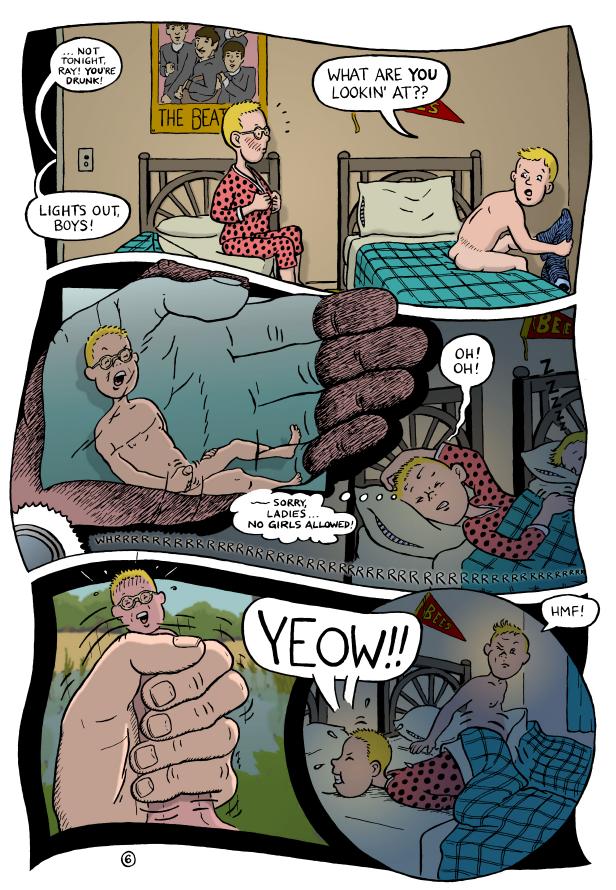


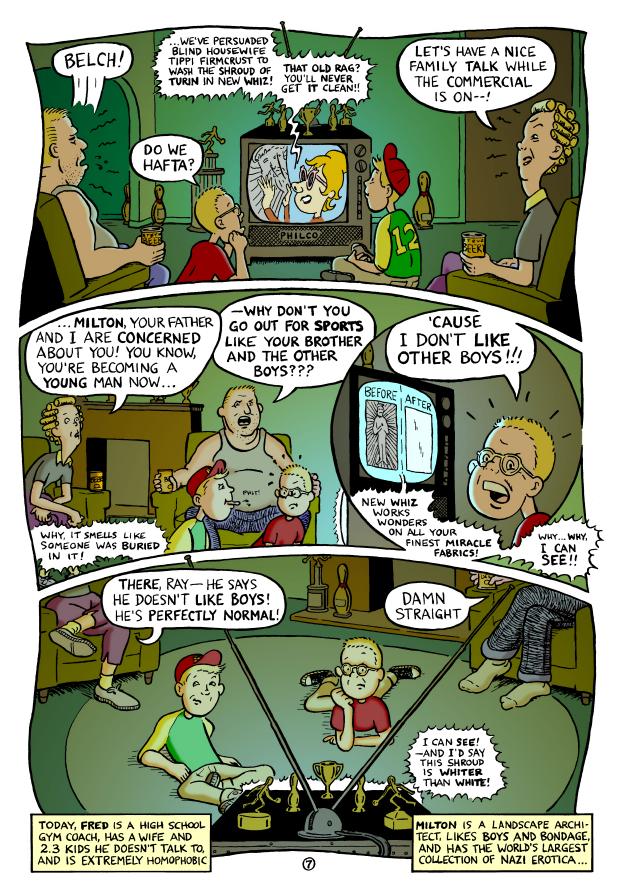


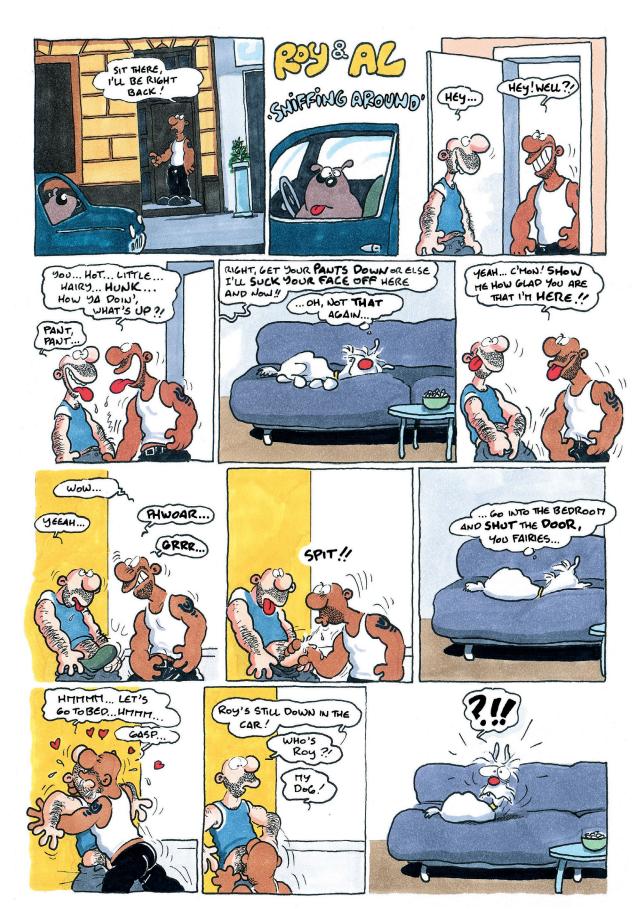


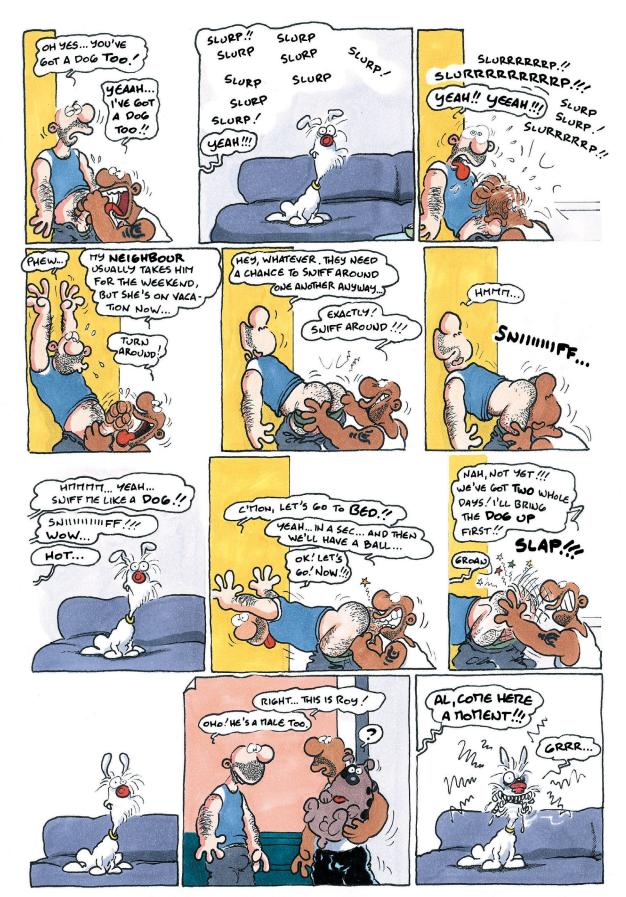
















OK SLOBBERCHOPS, LET'S NOT THINCE WORDS!!
THIS WHOLE DATHN APARTMENT IS TIY
AREA!! YOU'RE JUST A GUEST HERE,
SO WATCH YOUR TANNERS!

THE GUY WITH THE CAN OPENER OFTEN BRINGS Some SORT OF FAIRY BACK HERE. IT LASTS TWO OR THREE HOURS AT THE MOST, THEY GRIND ONE ANOTHER'S BACK PASSAGE, THEN ONE QUICK WIPE AND IT'S OVER! NOTHING SPECIAL!





SO DON'T GET THE IDEA YOU CAN TAKE YOUR-SELF ALL NICE AND COTIFY HERE, AND WHAT-EVER THE GUY WITH THE CAN OPENER SHOVELS INTO TY BOWL BELONGS TO THE! THE! RIGHT DOWN TO THE VERY LAST TTORSEL, SO I RECOTTIOND YOU DON'T EVEN

DREATI OF...





STAND, IT'S THAT !!



NOBODY, BUT NOBODY SNIFFS ROUND
THY BACKSIDE! NOBODY!! THAT'S BEYOND







THAT'S ALL I NEEDED: A STUPID, FAT, GAY DOG IN THE HOUSE THAT'S WANTING TO MATE WITH ME, BUT I'M HETEROSEXUAL,







BE QUIET NOW OR YOU'LL BE 601N6 OUTSIDE !!!





THIS IS AN OBVIOUS CASE FOR THE ANIMAL WEL-FARE LEAGUE, BUT ALL THEY CARE ABOUT ARE DUMB BATTERY HENS,













LISTEN UP, SLOBBERCHOPS...FIRSTLY, THE GOY WITH THE CAN OPENER ISN'T NY 'MASTER', HE'S THE GUY WITH THE



AND SECONDLY, I'VE BEEN
LIVING LONG ENOUGH AGAINST
TIY WILL IN THIS HOUSE FULL
OF QUEENS TO BE ABLE TO
STATE THAT THERE'S NO WAY
YOUR STUPIO MASTER IS



HOW COTTE? BECAUSE ULTITIATELY THESE HOTIOS ARE ALL PASSIVE! THEY ALL WANT TO BE FUCKED, EVEN IF THEY START BY WAGGING THEIR TAILS AND PLAYING BUTCH... AND YOUR CONT OF A TASTER IS DEFINITELY NO EXCEPTION THERE!

































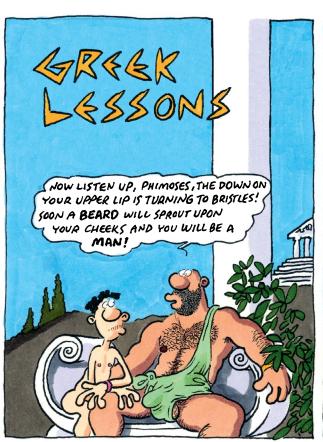










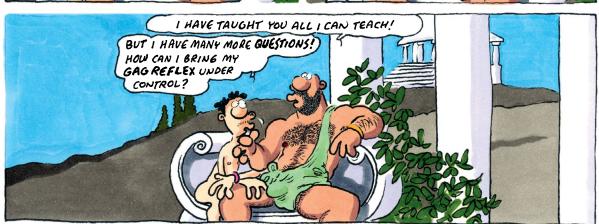


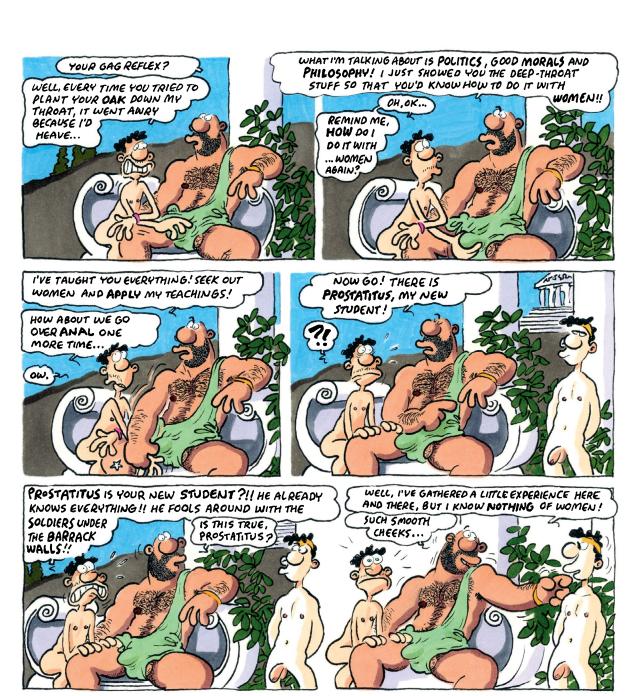


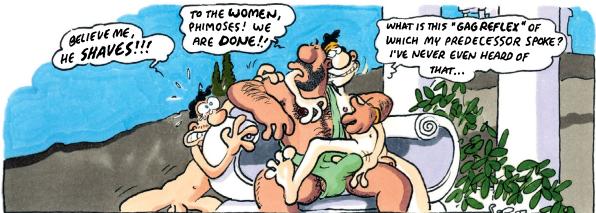






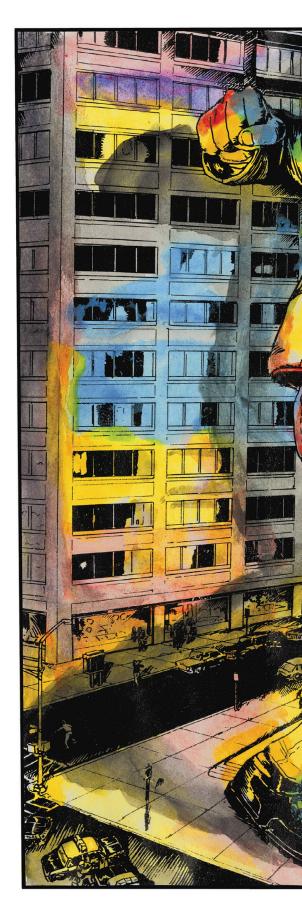




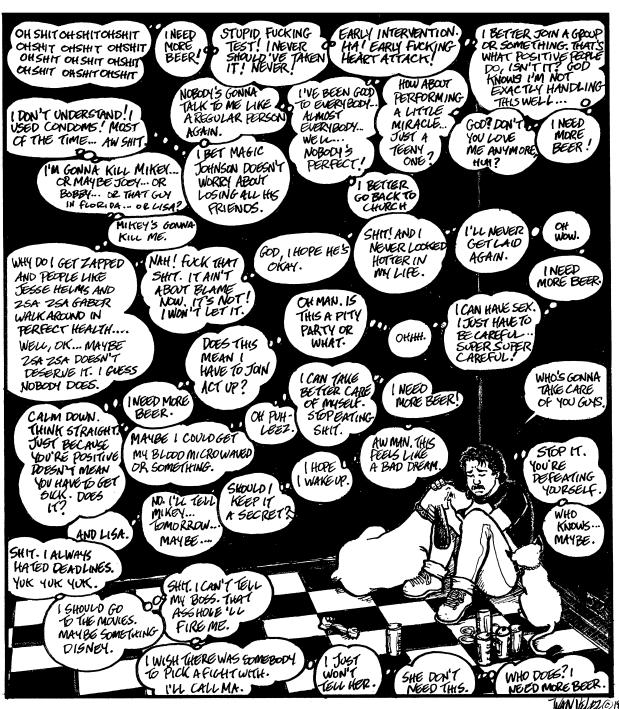


FLE UNIER DUEER COMIXTO COMICS, PUNK ZINES, AND ART DURING THE PLAGUE

AND I'M CARRYING THIS RAGE LIKE A BLOOD-FILLED BGG AND THERE'S ATHIN LINE BETWEEN THE INSIDE AND THE OUTSIDE ATHIN LINE BETWEEN THOUGHT AND ACTION AND THAT LINE IS SIMPLY MADE UP OF BLOOD AND MUSCLE AND BONE AND AS EACH T-CELL DISAPPEARS FROM MY BODY IT'S REPLACED BY TEN POUNDS OF PRESSURE TEN POUNDS OF RAGE AND I FOCUS THAT RAGE INTO NONLIOLENT RESISTANCE BUT THAT FOCUS IS STARTING TO SLIP MY HANDS ARE BEGINNING TO MOVE INDEPENDENTLY AND THE EGG IS STARTING TO CRACK AND AMERICA SEEMS TO ACCEPT MINROER AS SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD MURDER YOU AND IT BEEN MURDER ON A DAILY BASIS FOR TENCOUNT THEWTEN LONG YEARS AND WERE EXPECTED TO PAY TAXES TO SUPPORT THIS PUBLIC AND ROCAL MURDER AND WERE EXPECTED TO QUIETLY AND POLITELY MAKE HOUSE IN THIS WIND-STORM OF MURDER BUT I SAY THERE'S CERTAIN POLITICIANS THAT BETTER GET MORE COMPLEX SECURITY ALARMS AND THERE'S RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND HEALTH CARE OFFICIALS THAT HAD BETTER GET BIGGER FUCKING DOGS AND HIGHER PUCKING FENCES AND QUEER BASHERS. BETTER START DOING THEIR WORK FROM INSIDE HOWITZER TANKS BECAUSE THE THIN LINE BETWEEN THE INSIDE AND THE OUTSIDE IS BEGINNING TO ERODE AND AT THE MOMENT I'M A THREE HUNDRED SEVENTY FOOT TALL ELEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND POUND MAN INSIDE THIS SIX FOOT FRAME AND ALL I CAN FEEL IS THE PRESSURE ALLICAN FEEL IS THE PRESSURE AND THE NEED FOR RELEASE







WAN VELEZ @ 1991

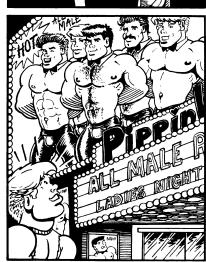


POPPERS



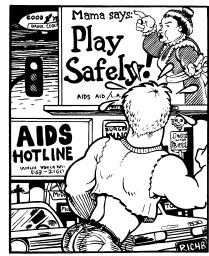






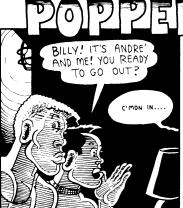






















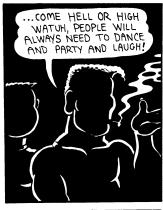
HONEY!

















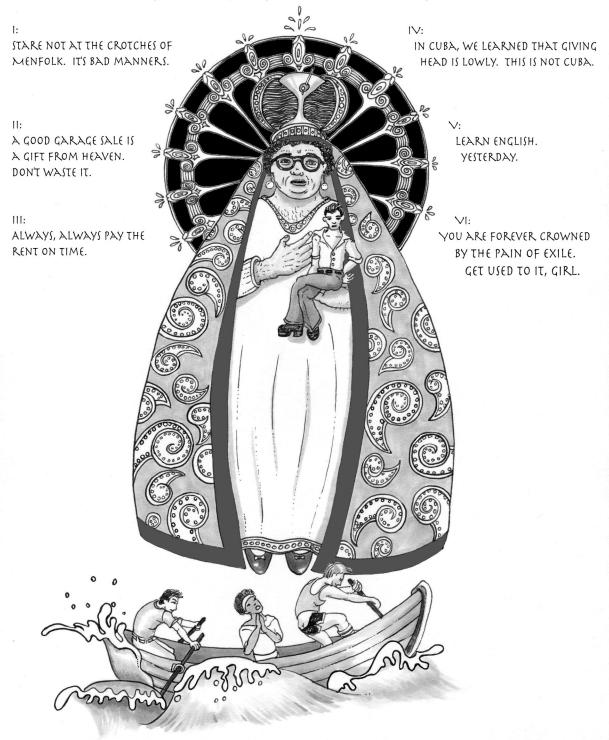


Rolando Victoria. That name is a sentence by itself for a reason, okay? He was the most bitchy, hilarious, faggoty faggot ever. I adored her. He opened his home to me as a refugee sponsor.

Rolando had been a nurse in the United States for twenty-one years.

He was my alcoholic Angel in America. I stayed with him rent-free for two years.

Like a good Cuban mama, he taught me the six commandments of living in the U.S.A.

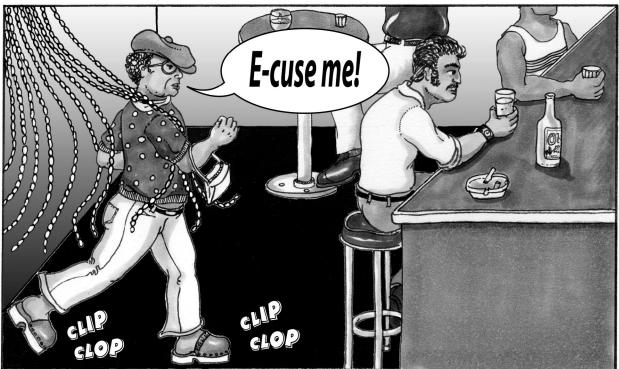


Living with Rolando was like living with a mother - if your mother was the Cuban queen of drama. By the spring of 1981, I was running around wild, enjoying the drugs and sex of queer life in Los Angeles. It all seemed like a great big game. That year, I was diagnosed with my first sexually transmitted disease. I mentioned it to Rolando and he went crazy.













After lecturing him about sexual hygiene and sexual disease courtesy, Rolando rushed back home and sat me down for my own STD sermon. It was early in 1981, and sexually transmitted diseases were a joke to the queer world. You got them, you went to the clinic and got meds and that was it. But Rolando had seen something hella serious.









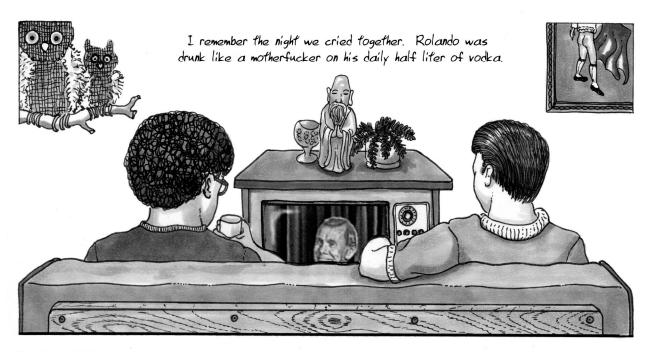




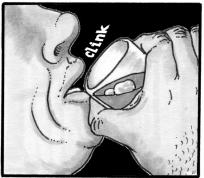
This is not a joke,



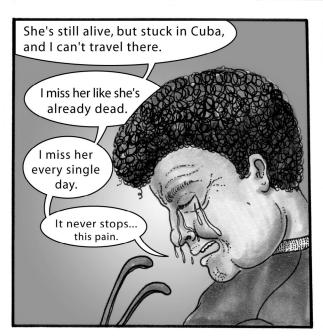


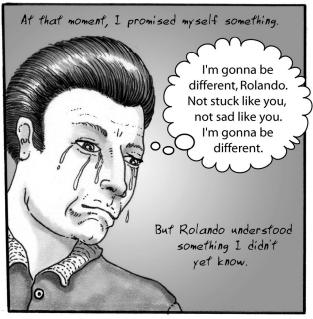


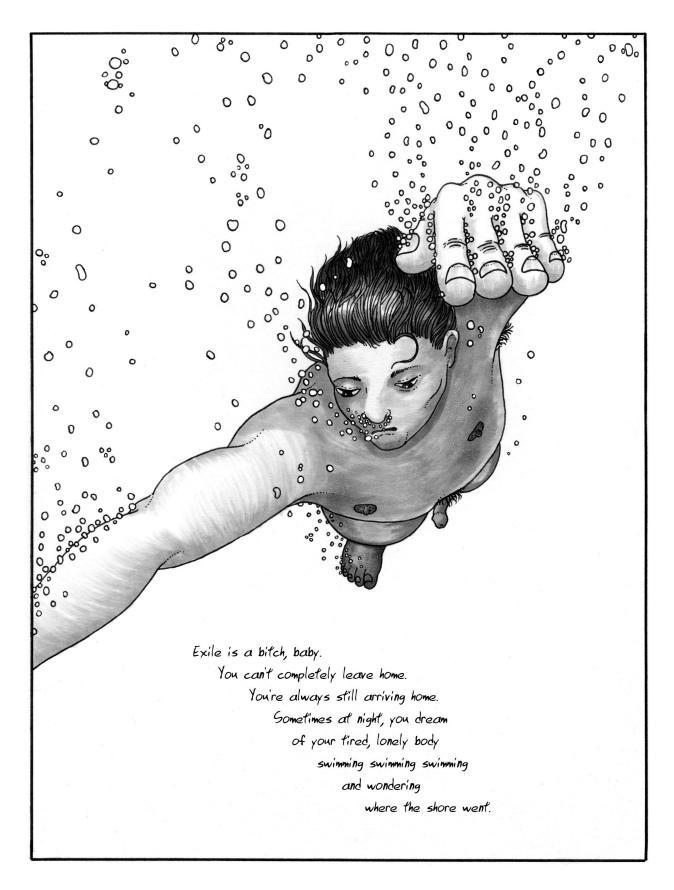












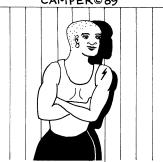




WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT HER NOW



SHE'D THROW GREAT PARTIES. PAID FOR ALL THE FOOD WITH FOOD STAMPS. GOD KNOWS WHERE SHE GOT THE LIQUOR. SHE HAD A WAY OF GETTING BY. ONE WEEK SHE'D BE ON UNEMPLOYMENT. AND THE NEXT WEEK I'D HEAR SHE WAS IN PARIS. IT WAS AMAZING.



SHE ALWAYS HAD A HUGE CAR. SOMETHING JUST RIGHT FOR DRIVE-IN MOVIES. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THOSE CARS CAME FROM - MAYBE THEY WERE STOLEN. SHE HAD ALL THE CONNECTIONS FOR THAT KIND OF STUFF.



I HEARD SHE USED TO TIE UP HER GIRLFRIENDS AND LEAVE THEM BOUND FOR DAYS, FEEDING THEM ONLY RICE CAKES, AND I'VE HEARD THIS FROM AT LEAST THREE PEOPLE, SO I'M SURE IT MUST BE TRUE



MOSTLY I REMEMBER HER SHINY BRIGHT RED FINGERNAILS, HER INCREDIBLE TITS, AND HER MOTHER'S RECIPE FOR STUFFED MUSHROOMS.



SIMPLY A WONDERFUL WOMAN. SHE HAD QUITE AN UNNATURAL FONDNESS FOR LEATHER CAR INTERIORS AND SEXY HOOD ORNAMENTS.



I NEVER KNEW HER WELL, BUT THEY SAY THAT SHE HAD AN INTENSE PORNOGRAPHY COLLECTION IN FOURTEEN LANGUAGES, ON VIDEO, AND IN BRAILLE.



I REMEMBER HER CARS-THEY WERE HUGE. BIG ENOUGH FOR THOSE ORGIES SHE LOVED. YOU'D FIND BRAS IN THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT, PANTIES UNDER THE SEAT, DILDOS IN THE TRUNK...



SHE HAD A DARK SECRET, SOMETHING PAINFUL AND DISGUSTING. IT WAS ALL VERY MYSTERIOUS, NO ONE EVER DISCUSSED IT. IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH CATS.



SHE LIKED HER CARS BIG AND HER WOMEN FAST-OR WAS IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND?

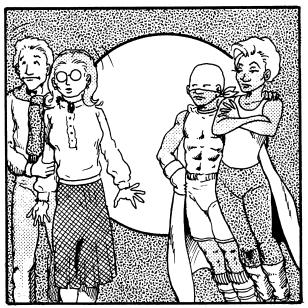


LETTER TO HE













IS YOUR CAREER SUFFERING DUE TO UNWORTHY PENISES??

ARE YOU TIRED OF FEARING FOR YOUR LIFE BECAUSE PENISES ARE STALKING THE PLANET?

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TERRORIZED BY AN UNWANTED PENIS?







WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF PENISES??



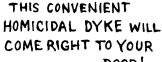


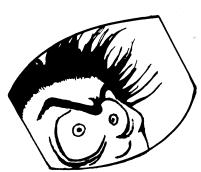






NEVER AGAIN WALK AWAY
QUIETLY BECAUSE THERE'S
"NOTHING U CAN DO"







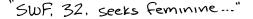






Dunno how much of a Dyke I really AM... haven't BEEN with a woman for over two years... let's check out some of these "personals"...

WOMEN SEEKING WOMEN "...



Lesbian, 36, outdoorsy, professional, feminine, seeks same ...

"Swell gal wants lesbian Soulmate_ Please be nonsmoking, feminine...





Whaddya EXPECT from some straight, yuppie paper, anyhow? wish there was still a womens newspaper in this town...



What's the MATTER with lesbians nowadays? All these wannabe "FEMS"...

Dykes like us deserve RESPECT...S upholding our individual integrity in the Face of Society's oppressive sex roles ...



Standing proudly. the courageous, the few. the beautiful. the strong- DYKES!

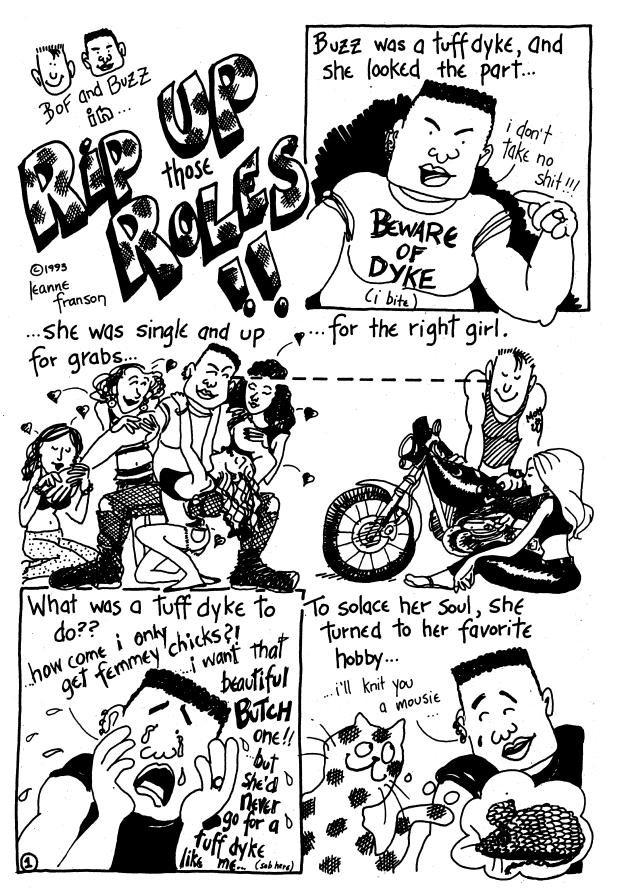
An inspiration to women EVERYWHERE!













.... Why you will never see me at a festian Sex Club LESUE EWING!!
WHAT ARE TO ME????? YOU DOING T THOUGHT I THOUGHT HEY ... DIDN'T YOU SAY YOUR GIRLFRIENDS "MARRIED) NAME WAS "LESUE??" Cestic Ewing in



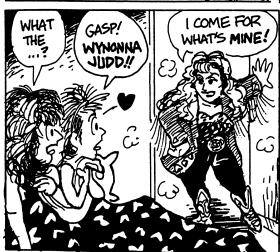














my own private michigan HELL

DRAWN IN SEMI-ANAL - SKetch O. Vision

BY ALISON BECHDEL @ 1993

VERY AUGUST, I SLOG OFFTO THE MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL TO SELL MY CARTOON BOOKS, ALONG WITH T-SHIRTS, MUGS, AND OTHER MERCHANDISING CONCEPTS OF DUBLOUS ARTISTIC INTEGRITY.



ONCE, "MICHIGAN" WAS A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE FOR ME.



JUT OVER THE YEARS, I'VE GROWN IN-CREASINGLY JADED WITH THE WHOLE AFFAIR.



AST SUMMER, EVERYTHING GRATED ON ME MORE THAN EVER.



ACH DAY FOR A WEEK I SAT AT MY BOOTH IN A HOTTENT, PEDDLING MY WARES.



AND EACH NIGHT I SAT IN THE SAMETENT, NOW COLD AND DARK, INKING PAGE AFTER PAGE OF CARTOONS.



RYING TO DRAW AT THE FESTIVAL WAS SHEER MADNESS, BUT WITH A MAJOR DEADLINE LOOMING, I HAD NO CHOICE.

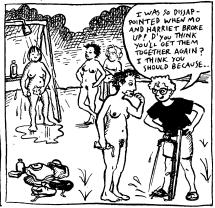


AT ONE OR TWO IN THE MORNING; I'D STUMBLE BACK TO MYOWN SMALL, MILDEWED TENT, AND TRY TO SLEEP.





AS THE WEEK WORE ON, I GREW MORE AND MORE TENSE AND EXHAUSTE D. THE COMPLETE LACK OF PRIVACY WAS PARTIC-ULARLY NERVE-WRACKING.



SINCE I WAS WORKING 18 HOURS A DAY, I DIDN'T GO TO ANY OF THE CONCERTS OR WORKSHOPS. I EVEN MISSED THE MOST SPECTACULAR METEOR SHOWERS IN YEARS.



Y MOOD WAS NOT IMPROVED BY THE FACT THAT SALES WERE SLOW.



A SENSE OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA BEGAN TO CREEP OVER ME. AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST MY CLAMMY SLEEPING BAG...



SUTSOON I WAS FEELING IT EVEN OUTSIDE, IN THE MIDDLE OF AN OPEN MEADOW.



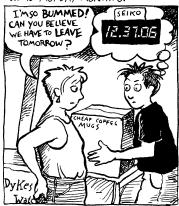
SATURDAY NIGHT, THERE SEEMED TO BE EVEN MORE MOISE THAN USUAL. AFTER DRAWING UNTIL MY HAND CRAMPED UP, I WENT TO LANGE TILLATE TO INVESTIGATE.



TWAS A HUGE AL FRESCO DANCE PARTY. A SEA OF SWEATY, ECSTATIC WOMEN PULSATED UNDER THE STARS TO A DRIVING, ANCIENT BEAT.



EXT DAY, THE FESTIVAL ENDED. BUT WE WEREN'T ALLOWED TO BRING OUR CARS IN TO LOAD OUR STUFF UNTIL MONDAY MORNING.



COULDN'T STAND IT. WITH A BURST OF FRANTIC, DESPERATE ENERGY, I HAULED ALL MY BOXES AND GEAR TWO MILES IN A CART, IN THE DARK AND RAIN, TO MY CAR.



A HUNDRED MILES AWAY, I SPENT THE HAPPIEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE.

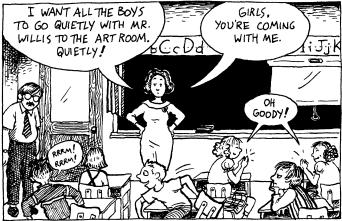


the POWERGEPRAYER

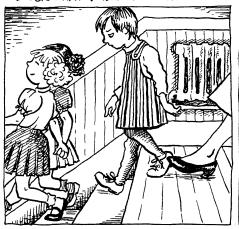
UNTIL THE SPRING OF SECOND GRADE, I WAS A CAREFREE, GODLESS CHILD. THE WORLD WAS MY OYSTER.

THEN ONE DAY AT SCHOOL, THE TEACHER DIVIDED OUR CLASS BY SEX.

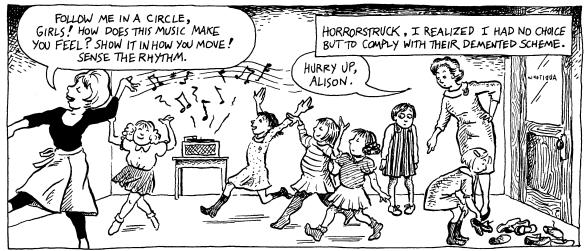




NOT EVEN MY WORST SUSPICIONS PREPARED ME FOR WHAT WAS TO FOLLOW.



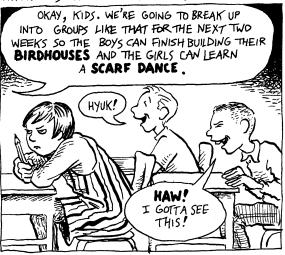




I WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING SINGLED OUT FOR SOME EVEN WORSE FATE.

BACK IN THE CLASSROOM, I THOUGHT MY HUMILI-ATION WAS OVER ... BUT I WAS WRONG.

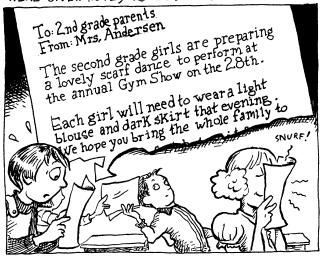




ALL THAT WEEK, I ENDURED THIS ASSAULT ON MY DIGNITY AND SELF- DETERMINATION.

BUT FINALLY THEY WENT TOO FAR. ONE DAY WE WERE WERE GIVEN NOTES TO TAKE HOME.





FRIGHTENED, I CONCOCTED A SHORT-RANGE SOLUTION TO MY PLIGHT.

I WENT STRAIGHT TO MY ROOM AFTER SCHOOL AND CHANGED FROM MY GIRL COSTUME INTO MY REGULAR CLOTHES.

AFTER POCKETING THE TEACHER'S NOTE, I PICKED UP A TROWEL FROM THE GARAGE AND SET OFF FOR THE WOODS.



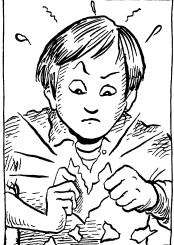




AT THE ABANDONED RAILROAD TRACKS. I STOPPED AND DUGA DEEP HOLE ...

TORE THE NOTE INTO AS MANY ... AND BURIED THEM. PIECES AS I POSSIBLY COULD...







THE NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, I HAD A BAD SCARE.

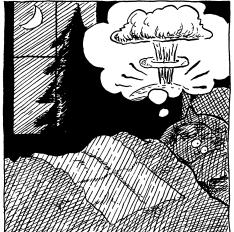
I PLAYED IT COOL, AND SHE DIDN'T SUSPECT THING. Α

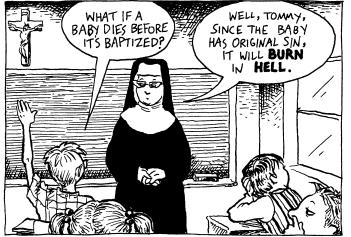




BUT THE DAY OF THE GYM SHOW WAS FAST ENCROACHING. DESPERATE NOW, I HOPED FOR A MIRACLE.

ON SATURDAY, I ATTENDED MY REGULAR WEEKLY CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS. I HAD NEVER PAID MUCH ATTENTION BEFORE. IT ALL SEEMED SO ABSTRACT.





BUT THAT MORNING, CATHOLIC DOCTRINE FELL INTO PLACE FOR ME.



THE NIGHT BEFORE THE GYM SHOW, I SAT UP IN BED SAYING A HUNDRED "OUR FATHERS."



AND I AWOKE THE NEXT DAY WITH DIVINE INSPIRATION.



MIRACULOUSLY, IT WORKED.



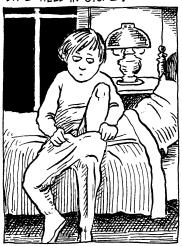
AND EVEN MORE MIRACULOUSLY, WHEN MY MOTHER RETURNED FROM TAKING MY BROTHERS TO THE GYM SHOW THAT NIGHT, SHE DIDN'T MENTION MY CLASSMATES' LITTLE PERFORMANCE.



YES, I HAD BEEN DELIVERED FROM THE SCARF DANCE. BUT SOMEHOW I COULDN'T RECAPTURE MY FORMER CAREFREE ABANDON.



AFTER ALL, GOD ONLY KNEW WHAT FURTHER EVILSTHIS LIFE HELD IN STORE .



JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, I SAID ANOTHER HUNDRED PRAYERS BEFORE I LAY DOWN AND SLEPT.



get me to the clerk on time

©2004 By ALISON BECHDEL

IN THE FIRST BLUSH OF HER ROMANCE WITH SAMIA, GINGER HAS BECOME A BIT LAX IN THE CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE DEPART-MENT.























what I know now about... being an Oppressed Minority Cartoonist



BUT ONCE I REALIZED I WAS AN OPPRESSED MINORITY, THOSE DAYS WERE GONE, FROM THAT POINT ON, ALL I DREW WAS CARTOONS ABOUT MY OPPRESSED MINORITY GROUP. I'M AN OP-PRESSED MI-NO.RI-TEE AND I'M OKAY! I DRAWALL NIGHT, AND I SLEEP ALL DAY ACTUALLY, FOR A LONG TIME THIS



AND I WAS NOTONE OF THOSE SELF-LOATHING OPPRESSED MINORITIES WHO WAS ASHAMED OF BEING AN OPPRESSED MINORITY.



IT'S TRUE, I HAD HOPESTHAT ONE DAY MY COMIC STRIP WOULD BE READ NOT JUST BY MEMBERS OF MY OPPRESSED MINORITY GROUP, BUT BY REGULAR PEOPLE TOO.

WAS NOT A PROBLEM.



I WOULD NOT KOWTOW TO THEIR BOURGEOIS TASTES, BUT WOULD MAINTAIN THE OPPRESSED MUNORITY AUTHENTICITY OF MY CHARACTERS. THE MASSES WOULD LOVE ME ANYWAY.



WHEN THIS DREAM FAILED TO MATERIALIZE, I GREW BITTER. IFONLY I'D WAITEDFOR A MORE OPPORTUNE TIME TO REVEAL MY OPPRESSED MINORITY STATUS.



I LONG FOR THE FREEDOM OF MYCHILDHOOD. BUTAFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF DRAWING OPPRESSED MINORITIES, IT'S HARD TO GO BACK

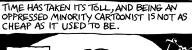


ALL I CAN SAY IS, THANK GOD FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION.

WANT ME TO DO A PIECE FOR THE SPECIAL OPPRESSED MINORITY PRIDE ISSUE OF "THE STRANGER"?

> THOUGH YOU'D NEVER RUN MY COMIC STRIP IN THE REGULAR PAPER, YOU OPPRESSIVE ALTERNATIVE WEEKLY-SCUM?!

EVEN

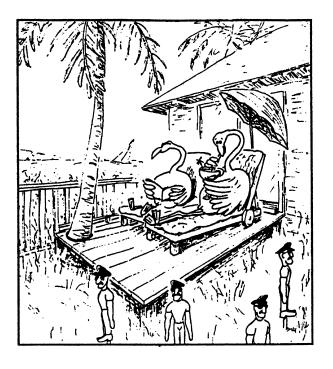








STONEWALL RIOTS



BY ANDREA NATALIE





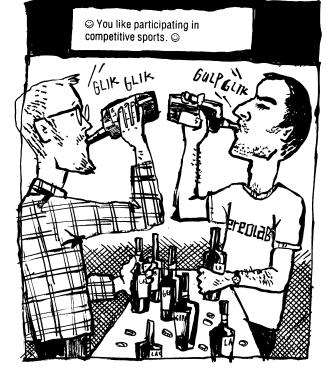
The sexual fantasies of lesbians sometimes involve men.



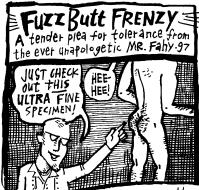
FORTUNE COOKIES And the small truths found there in . Mr. Fahy June 6 1998











My own personal fetish is the hairy assed man. I like hairy guys in general, but it's the FUZZY Butt that REALLY makes me crazy.

Know. I know You think it's revolting? Believe me, I've heard it ALL before. I'm not even sure HOW this taste of mine developed.





ive only had ONE teally hairy boyfriend, and he was always embattassed by his furry butt. I couldn't understand WHY he felt that way - 1 thought he looked -and felt-utterly glorious!

Of course, short of asking, there's really no sure fire way of gauging a guy's BUTT FUZZINESS FACTOR UNTIL "he's dropped his drawers. This moment always holds great suspense and drama...



blame the mainstream gay porn industry for the stigmatization of the hirsutery hind-quartered man. But, Luckily I think there's a growing hairy ass admirer demographic. (I'm not talking about BEAR-type quys who are fine in their own way)



THATS 50 REVOLTING! HE LOOKS ABOUT 12!

It just seems that the porn industry is fixated on doofy looking guys who've had every hair below the eyebrows waxed, shaved or trimmed. YUCK! This is supposed to be appealing? How boring! We need to learn to love our secondary sexual characteristics, boys, not ERASE them!

If you, dear reader, are lucky enough to be blessed with a hairy ass of your own, please DON'T BE ASHAMED! I consider you to be genetically gifted. And rest assured that there's someone who'd LOVE to LOVE it -er you!

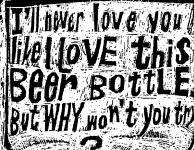


Bad Date Haiku

You busy tonight? MEETME?Hebar.O.K.? VILL there at ten



You like me what SATSOMETHING YOU IDJOT! cant Say it all



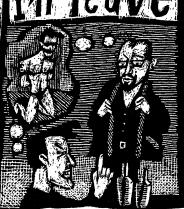




Kiss Me Monde I can't bear tease Plus You boning



You should go home now youke Both his maybe again maybe will leave



T can not stand you But I am left you am len't no we'you do Not call



TUNNEL OF LOVE

THIS SONG REMINDS ME OF A GUY I USED TO KNOW. AS My OGET WEAK IN THE KNEES OOOR OLD HEAD IS A REELIN' THE FUNNEL OF CON

WE WERE FRIENDS FOR A LONG TIME. YOU WOULD NEVER SEE ONE OF US WITHOUT THE OTHER.



THEN HE MET THIS GIRL AND THEY WENT OUT FOR A WHILE.



WHEN SHE STOPPED SEEING HIM HE WAS REALLY TORN UP ABOUT IT. SOMETIMES WE'D RUN INTO HER AND YOU COULD JUST SEE HIS HEART BREAKING. IT WAS SO SAD.

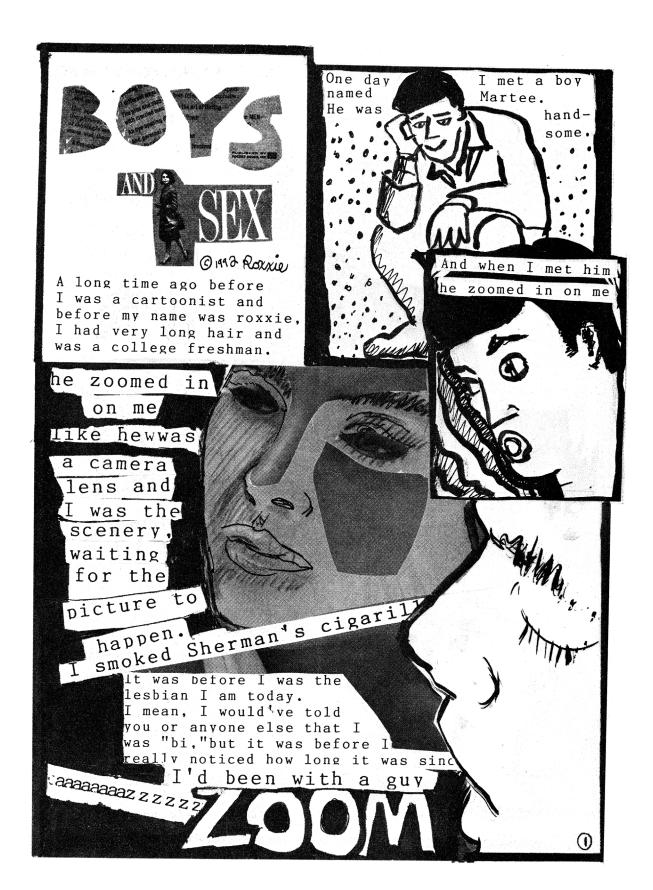


ONE NIGHT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT HER AND HE JUST STARTED BAWLING. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT To Do.



THIS WAS YEARS AGO. I'VE LOST TOUCH WITH HIM BUT I'M SURE HE STILL THINKS ABOUT HER. GOD. IT WOULD SUCK TO BE HUNG UP ON SOMEONE LIKE THAT.









REPLACEMENT

I'VE BEEN ON THE ROAD THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS WITH THIS BAND. THEY HAD ALREADY BOOKED A CROSS-COUNTRY TOUR WHEN THE BASS PLAYER BROKE HIS ARM. I'M JUST FILLING IN.



I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW THE OTHER GUYS WHEN THE TOUR STARTED. I MEAN, WE HAD A WEEK OF REHEARSALS AND THAT WAS IT. LUCKILY THEY TURNED OUT TO BE A LOT OF FUN.



THEY'RE ALL GREAT BUT I GUESS DANNY THE DRUMMER IS MY FAVORITE. I COULD HAVE A CRUSH ON HIM BUT WHAT'S THE POINT IN WANTING SOMETHING YOU CAN NEVER HAVE?



THEN THE OTHER NIGHT THERE WAS A BIG PARTY AFTER THE SHOW IN DES MOINES.



WHEN I WOKE UP, DANNY AND ONE OF THE GUYS FROM THE OPENING BAND WERE THE ONLY ONES IN THE ROOM. I JUST CLOSED MY EYES AND PRETENDED I WAS STILL ASLEEP



EVER SINCE, DANNY'S ACTED THE SAME AS HE ALWAYS DID. I GUESS I HAVE TOO. BUT KNOWING WHAT I KNOW NOW, IT'S GETTING HARDER TO KEEP THE WEEDS OF DESIRE FROM CREEPING INTO MY HEART.

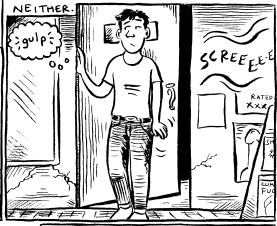


THE USE OF THE BUT TO THE POST OF THE POST

FOR A YOUNG FAG VENTURING INTO CHICAGO'S HALSTED STREET, THE MAIN APPEAL OF PLACES LIKE THE MACHINE SHOP-AS OPPOSED TO HALSTED'S TEN BLOCKS OF DISCOS AND BARS-IS THAT THE MACHINE SHOP HAS NO BUFF BOUNCER WITH A CHISELED JAW DEMANDING UP TO THREE PIECES OF IN-STATE PHOTO ID.

THIS IS A DEFINITE PLUS IF YOU ARE NOT ANGLO OR NOT OF LEGAL AGE, AND EVEN MORE WELCOMING IF YOU ARE





A YOUNG FAG NEEDS TO BE WELCOMED.







BUT THE ONLY INSTRUCTION IN-SIDE THE MACHINE SHOP IS A MAGIC MARKER SIGN, TAPED ABOVE THE DOOR BETWEEN THE FRONT ROOM AND THE BACK HALLWAY:



BEHIND THE COUNTER SITS A BIG
MAN IN A SHORTSLEEVED POWDER
BLUE DRESS SHIRT
WITH GREASY
STRAIGHT HAIR
AND THICK GLASSES.
HE LOOKS LIKE
WHAT YOU ALWAYS
IMAGINED THE
PROPRIETOR OF A
SEX SHOP WOULD
LOOK LIKE.



ALL THE WALLS HAVE RACKS OF MAGAZINES. THE FEW MEN IN THE STORE LOOK THROUGH THE MAGAZINES, BUT MOSTLY THEY GLANCE AT EACH OTHER.



OU WATCH AND TRY TO GET AN IDEA OF HOW THINGS WORK, SINCE THE INSTRUCTIONS ARE NOT THAT DETAILED. EVENTUALLY THE MEN FOLLOW THE ONE INSTRUCTION THERE 15, AND GO TO THE COUNTER, PAY FIVE DOL-LARS AND GO INTO THE BACK HALL.



THOSE BACK ROOMS ARE FOR SEX. YOU CAN FIGURE THAT OUT, LIKE YOU CAN FIGURE OUT THE MACHINE SHOP IS SOME SORT OF GAY SEX STORE. ITS WINDOWS ARE PAINTED BLACK, AND IT SITS NEXT TO THE BARS LOADING DOCK AND MALIBU OASIS, BOTH WITH YOUNG MEN WHO STAND OUT FRONT BY THE BUS STOP, BUT ALWAYS GET IN CARS, NEVER IN BUSSES.



BUT THERE ARE NO REAL INSTRUCTIONS WHEN YOU GO IN. NOT EVEN FOR THOSE BACK ROOMS, AND THEY'RE WHAT THE PLACE IS FOR. THE MEN IN THE FRONT ROOM JUST LOOK AT THE MAGAZINES FOR A SECOND BEFORE GOING BACK THERE. IF YOU ONLY LOOK AT THE MAGA-ZINES THEN LEAVE, YOU HAVEN'T REALLY EXPERIENCED THE PLACE. YOU'RE JUST LICKING THE SURFACE; IT'S FOREPLAY. YOU DON'T WANT TO WIMP OUT.

BESIDES, JUST BECAUSE YOU GO IN DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE SEX WITH SOMEONE. THERE'S PROBABLY SOME VIDEOS YOU CAN WATCH AND MAYBE JUST JACK

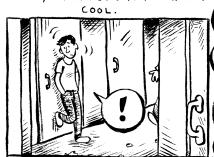


SO YOU PAY. AND GO IN.



AND IMMEDIATELY LEAN AGAINST THE WALL, BUT IT'S A DOOR. AND IF SOMEONE OPENS IT FROM THE INSIDE IT'S GOING TO WHACK YOU IN THE SIDE OF YOUR HEAD, WHICH WOULD NOT LOOK VERY









NO, THERE'S A MORE COMPLEX SYSTEM HERE. GUYS GO IN BOOTHS ALONE, THEN COME RIGHT BACK OUT, WITHOUT EVEN TAKING ENOUGH TIME TO MASTURBATE.



SO MAYBE IT'S MORE SUBTLE. MAY-BE YOU HANG OUT IN THE HALL, MAKE EYE CONTACT, GO IN A BOOTH ALONE AND HE'S SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW YOU.



YOU WAIT AND TRY TO FIGURE IT OUT. YOU CAN HEAR THE THUMP-ING BEAT FROM THE CLUB NEXT DOOR, WHICH IS NICE AND ATMOS-PHERIC. YOU CAN HEAR THE CHEESY SOUNDTRACKS TO THE PORN VIDEOS.



ARE THERE OTHER GUYS WAITING IN THOSE BOOTHS? DO YOU JUST GO IN, CHECK HIM OUT, AND HAVE SEX IF YOU BOTH WANT? WHAT IF YOU DON'T LIKE HIM? MOVE ON TO THE NEXT BOOTH? WHAT IF HE DOESN'T LIKE YOU? DOES HE KICK YOU OUT?



THAT WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLE AND DOESN'T SEEM FAIR. BEGGARS CAN'T BE CHOOSERS AND IF YOU'RE GOING TO JUST SIT THERE, WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO COME FUCK YOU, YOU'RE BEING RATHER PASSIVE AND IT SEEMS BITCHY TO BE SO



THAT GUY WHO WAS LOOKING AT YOU NEAR THE MAGAZINE RACK DUCKS IN A BOOTH-SHOULD YOU FOLLOW HIM? MAYBE THAT WASN'T WHY HE WAS LOOKING AT YOU. BUT HE'S BACK OUT IN

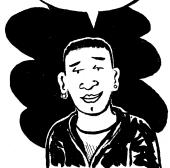


THE GUY IN FRONT OF YOU OPENS A DOOR AND SOMEONE INSIDE YANKS IT SHUT. MAY-BE YOU DON'T JUST WALK IN. MAYBE THEY DON'T LOCK.



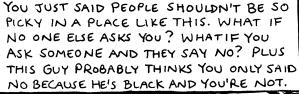
EITHER WAY, YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK REALLY STUPID IF YOU JUST KEEP STANDING AROUND.

FINALLY SOMEONE
COMES UP TO YOU AND
SAYS
YOU WANT
TO GO IN A
BOOTH?



HE'S CUTE, BUT YOU IMMEDIATELY SAY NO. IT'S A KNEE-JERK REFLEX, LIKE WALKING PAST PANHANDLERS. IN HERE IT'S A PRET-

TY BLUNT REJECTION, THOUGH.







HE IS REALLY CUTE. ACTUALLY, A LOT OF THESE GUYS ARE REAL LY CUTE. WHAT ARE ALL THESE CUTE GUYS DOING IN HERE? THEY COULD GET PICKED UP IN A BAR IN A SECOND, THEY'RE SO CUTE.



YOU'RE PRETTY CUTE YOURSELF.

SO YOU TURN BACK TO THE GUY BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO SPEND ANY MORE TIME IN HERE NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO. HE SMILES AND SAYS



WHY THE BACK? WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE ONES UP FRONT? DOES HE THINK YOU'RE A TOTAL UPTIGHT CLOSET CASE BECAUSE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND? YOU GO WITH HIM, HALLWAYS WINDING ALONG AND BRANCHING OFF, UNTIL YOU COME TO AN OPEN BOOTH

WITH A VIDEO PLAYING.



YOU FOLLOW HIM IN. YES, THE DOORS DO HAVE LOCKS! YOU LOCK IT. HE THROWS HIS JACKET OVER THE VIDEO SCREEN. YOU KIND OF LIKED THE VIDEO. MAY BE HE JUST LIKES IT DARK.



YOU KISS, SO THAT'S OK. START TO MESS AROUND. TRY TO KEEP IT SAFE BUT SUCH A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND MATURITY SEEMS KIND OF ABSURD WHEN YOU'RE FUCKING AROUND WITH A TOTAL STRANGER IN A VIDEO BOOTH IN THE MACHINE SHOP WHERE YOU JUST PAID FIVE DOLLARS ADMISSION.



THE SPINS AND TURNS OF THE MAZE HAVE LEFT YOU DIZZY; YOU'RE NO LONGER SURE WHAT'S UP OR DOWN, OLD OR NEW, HEADS OR TAILS. THE GUY SAYS, "ARE YOU A TOP OR A BOTTOM?" BUT YOU ARE TOO DISTRACTED BY AN OLD KAREN CARPENTER SONG STUCK IN YOUR HEAD TO ANSWER HIM.



AND YOU'RE DONE.

AND HE TALKS A LITTLE, AND KISSES MORE, SO IT'S NOT AS TOTALLY MECH-ANICAL AS SOMETHING OUT OF "CRUISING" OR "TAXI ZUM KLO" OR ONE OF THOSE OTHER DEPRESSING 70'S MOVIES.



BUT YOU WANT TO LEAVE NOW. YOU'VE DONE WHAT THE PLACE IS FOR.









ACCIDENT

REMEMBER THE NIGHT WE WERE SKATING AT THE POOL AND THE COPS SHOWED UP?



MY SHIRT CAUGHT ON THE BARBED WIRE AND I BIT IT HARD.



THE SCRAPES, CUTS AND BRUISES WERE WORSE THAN THE USUAL SKATEBOARD INJURIES. I WAS SURE SOMETHING WAS BROKEN.



YOU HELD ME TO KEEP ME FROM MAKING A SOUND.



NO ONE WAS THERE WHEN WE WENT BACK TO YOUR HOUSE.



YOU CALLED MY MOM TO TELL HER I WAS STAYING OVER THEN YOU PUT ON "DISINTEGRATION" AND HELD ME WHILE I FELL ASLEEP. THAT'S WHEN I KNEW LOVE WAS STRONGER THAN CONCRETE.





The high school students who were giving us the lessons were there, too. They all had muscles and hair all over their bodies. Some of them were making fun of us. E galore

got the idea to change my clothes in the toilet stall so I could have some privacy. Then I got busted by Kit Reece who told Mr. Terwilliger what I was doing. Mr. T creeped me out Get out other boys

He stood there staring at me the whole time. So I invented a way to change into my swimsuit with a towel around He yelled at me for taking it.





When we went out to the pool, we





That automatically put me in the worst swimming group. Kit Reece and I were the only boys. I already feltlike didn't want to be there. we hafta be swim buddies since we're the



The swim instructor for my group was Troy, the guy who saved me from almost drowning. said he would have to keep an eye on me then he winked at me



Some of the other groups had mean teenagers for instructors. But the Guppies was the best group and it was mainly because of Troy



I was actually learning how to swim and not hating it the whole time like I thought I would. For once, I was having fun with the other kids, too



Mr. Terwilliger was still freaking me out in the lockerroom. I liked having Troy there with me, he made me feel safer and always talked to me





Grandma said Uncle Merrill built the treehouse a long time ago. I come up here to be by myself and think about stuff. Like what happened at school this week. It started Monda



Mr. Terwilliger and some other guy was talking to my swim instructor Troy. The when I got out to the pool, I found out that Troy was gone and my group got a



Today was the last day of swim. ming. I'm glad. All I got was this phony certificate. I never said goodbye to Troy. I thought that he was my friend. He felt kind of like a big brother to methe Kind you'd pick if you could



He's gone now, like everyone else. Like my mom, my dad, my brothers and Kim, and my friends. I can't even make any friends here. There's my cousin Angel, but she doesn't count.

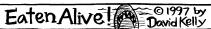


My little brother Tim has already made a lot of friends at school. He even joined Little League like my cousin Corby – that's why they're always gone now. So afterschool,1 usually just come up here. Angel always wants me to come and play with herfriends



Sometimes afterschool, I just sit and watch T.V. with my Grandma. The always watches her soap operas and game shows and has a main rule that You can only talk to her during commercials





You know that fish tank in the library? Well, Kitand I were looking at it and saw the baby fish



They were all at the bottom around this plastic plant. They were so tiny and so cute!



Then I saw this big, ugly mean fish that was hanging around the babies. I told Kit it was an emergency and that he go tell Mrs. Scherbarth, the librarian, about what we found.



So I told her that I read where you're supposed to put the babies separate from the big fish or the little ones will get eaten alive





Sometimes fish even eat their own young! Mrs. Scherbarth said it didn't really matter anyway as she'd only have to discard them because she had nowhere to put them and no time



FALLING

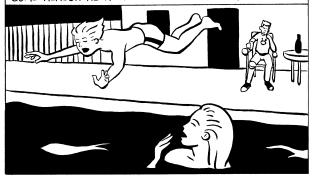
ONE NIGHT A BUNCH OF US WERE SITTING AROUND IN THE PARK. CASEY HAD GOTTEN SOME COLLEGE GUY TO BUY US SOME RUM TO MIX WITH OUR SLURPEES.



BRAD KNEW THESE RICH KIDS WITH A POOL WHOSE PARENTS WERE OUT OF TOWN SO WE ALL HEADED OVER THERE.



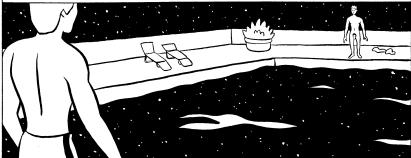
IT TURNED OUT TO BE QUITE A PARTY. EVERYONE WAS DRINKING AND SWIMMING. EVERYONE BUT TOMMY. FOR SOME REASON HE NEVER GOT IN THE WATER.



IT MUST HAVE BEEN FOUR IN THE MORNING BEFORE I REALIZED ME AND TOMMY WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO HADN'T LEFT OR GONE INSIDE.



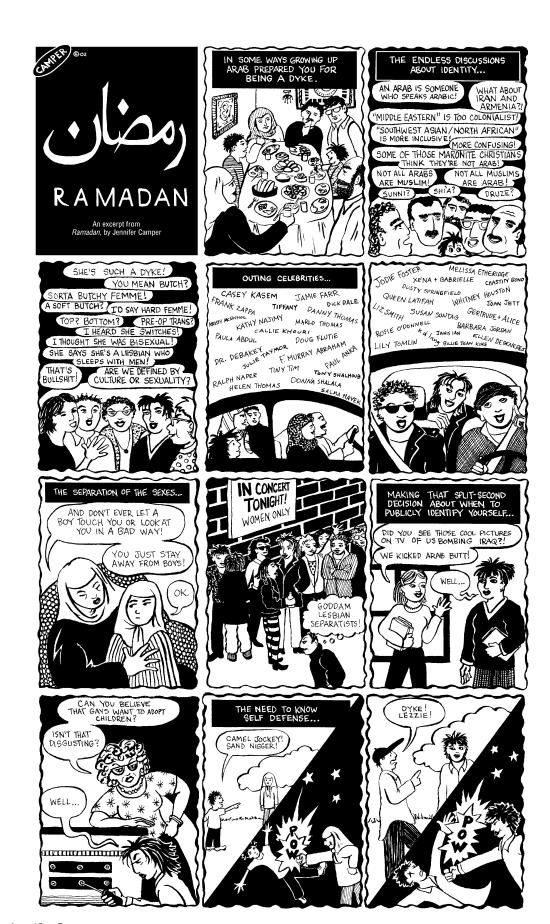
I WAS ABOUT TO DIVE OFF THE BOARD AGAIN WHEN I NOTICED TOMMY AT THE OTHER END OF THE POOL COMPLETELY NAKED. IT STARTLED ME AND I BECAME DISORIENTED. I FELT LIKE I WAS FLOATING BETWEEN THE BIG STARRY SKY AND ITS REFLECTION.



AS I LOST MY BALANCE AND PLUNGED INTO THE WATER, I DIDN'T WANT THAT FEELING TO EVER END.







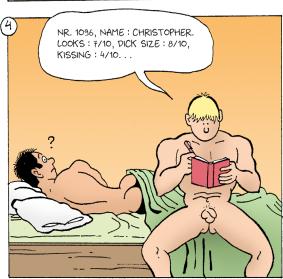


THINGS NOT TO SAY OR DO AFTER HAVING SEX









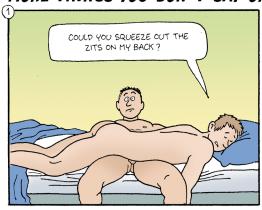








MORE THINGS YOU DON'T SAY OR DO AFTER HAVING SEX



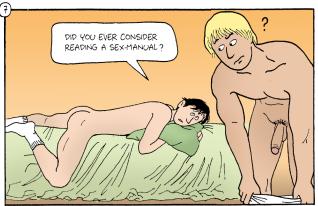












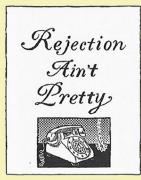








THE MOSTLY UNFABULOUS SOCIAL LIFE OF ETHAN GREEN



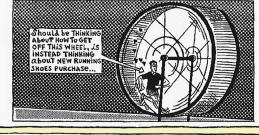






by eric orner





WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOU THAT MAKES YOU IGNORE EVerything laid at your feet, makes you covet ONLY WHAT'S UNAVAILABLE P



... and Despite all of your intellectualizing, THE SUPPORT OF YOUR FRIENDS AND THE EXPLAN-ATION OF ZOLNA, YOUR THERAPIST, IT STILL HURTS.,



MAYBE YOU'LL BUY A GUATAR, SCRIBBLE DOWN ALL The Pathetic, Tear-Jerking Thoughts You've BEEN THINKING, AND MOVE TO NASHVILLE TO RECORD COUNTRY WESTERN CD's...



AUGUST 1995

THE MOSTLY UNFABULOUS SOCIAL LIFE OF ETHAN GREEN

by eric orner



















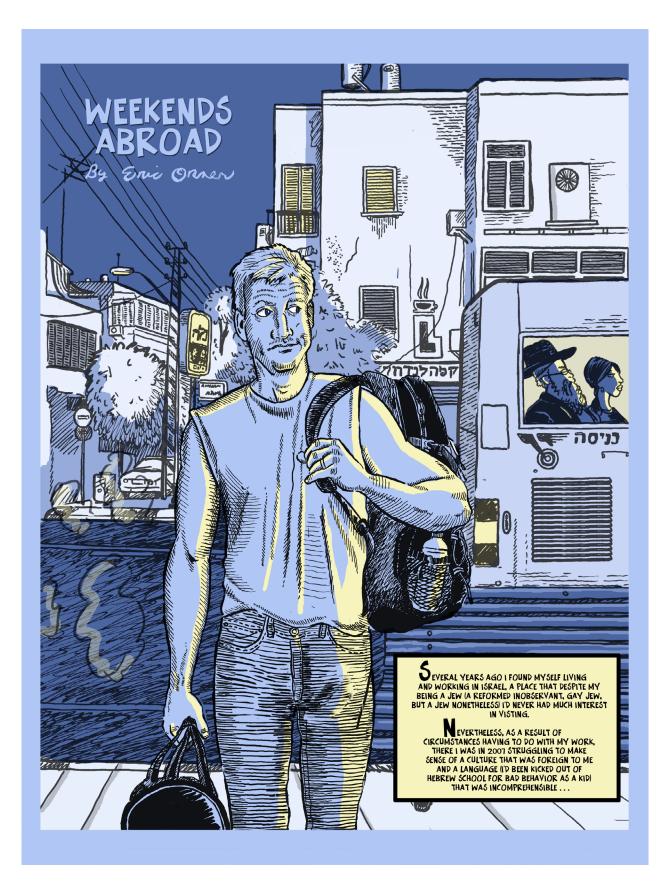




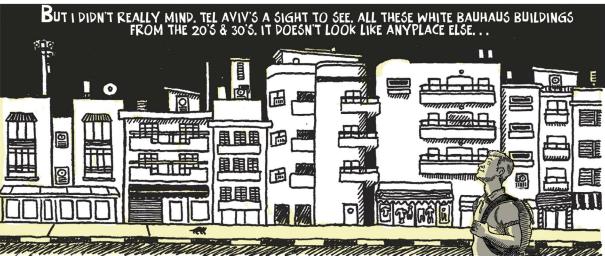
WOW! WAS IT SCARY ?



€,0. 6-1-2000







THE MAIN STREETS RUN PARALLEL TO THE MEDITERRANEAN, SO THE BUILDINGS BLOCK THE BREEZE.

EVEN AT NIGHT, IT'S A PRETTY SULTRY, CRUISY, PLACE...





ALONG THE WAY, IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED NEVE SEDEK, THE STREETLAMPS WERE BRIGHT ENOUGH FOR ME TO KEEP NOTICING THIS WEIRD VERTICAL GRAFFITI...



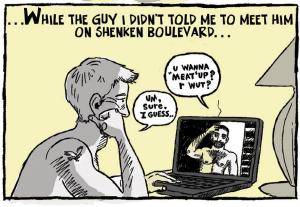


I WONDERED WHO WROTE IT...





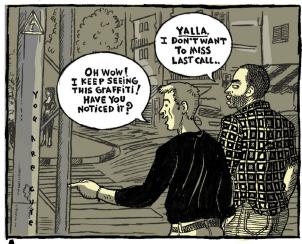




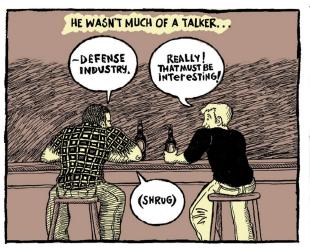
* NO THANKS

T WAS 2 AM, AND BUSY OUT. . . HE WAS ON A CORNER WAITING FOR ME . WE WALKED TO A PUB HE KNEW. . .





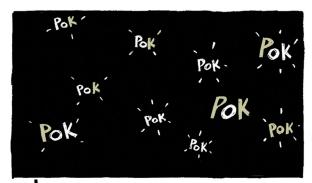
And back at the room all he wanted to do was fuck.
I tried to slow things up by making out a little,
But he had lousy breath. . .











SRAELIS ARE INSANE FOR THIS BEACH GAME CALLED MATKOT WHERE YOU WHACK A RUBBER BALL WITH PADDLES. ALL OF THEM, YOUNG, OLD, ULTRA ORTHODOX, SECULAR SEPHARDIC, ASHKENAZI, PALESTINIAN, DRUZE, YOU NAME IT, THEY'D PLAY ALL DAY EVERYDAY IF THEY COULD. . .









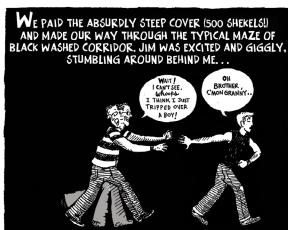


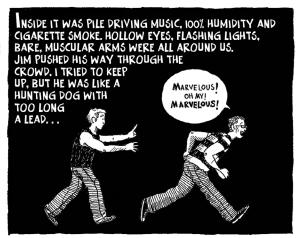


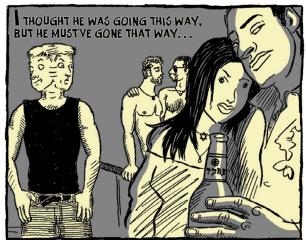




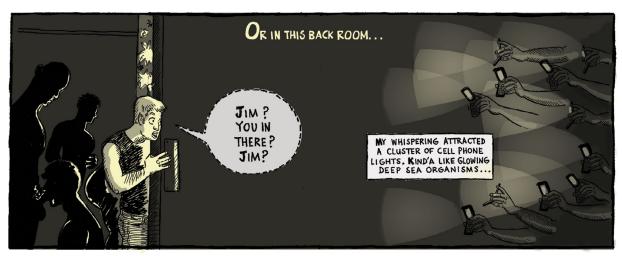




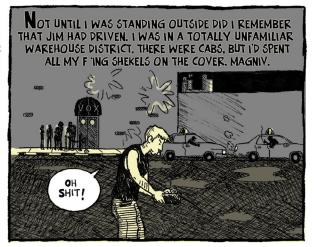








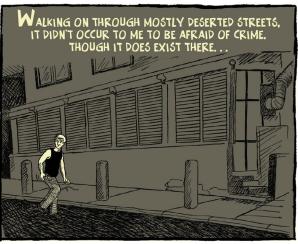




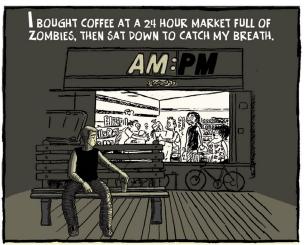










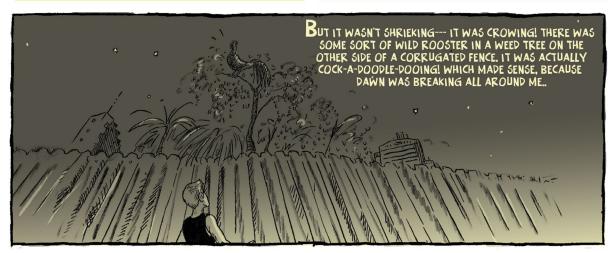


Here it was again! Printed on the slats of this BENCH. STUDYING IT, I APPRECIATED ITS NEATNESS AND PRECISION--- CLEARLY IT WAS THE WORK OF SOMEONE WITH A LOT MORE PATIENCE THAN THE TAG OBSESSED HOTTIE I'D BEEN IMAGINING...



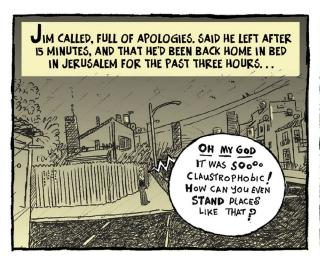


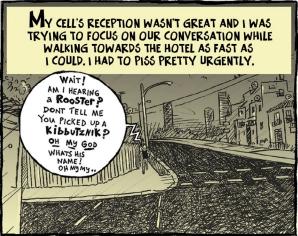


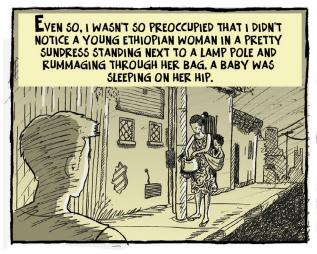


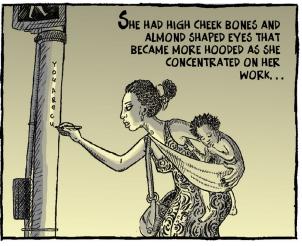




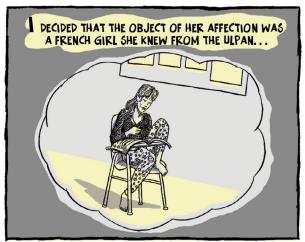














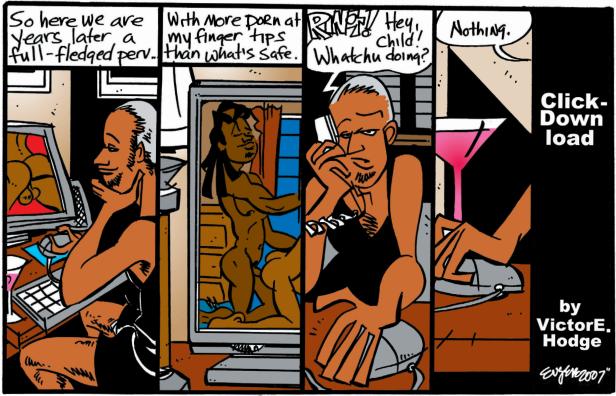


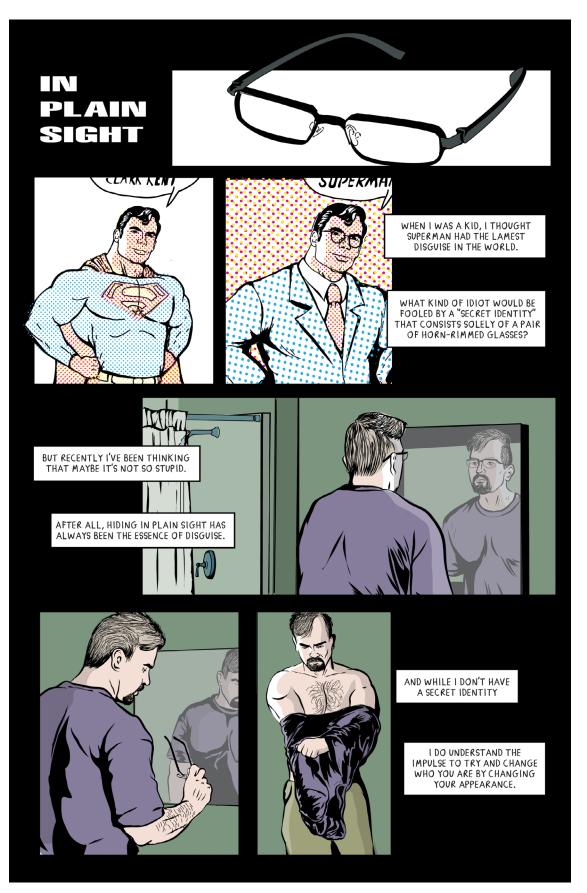


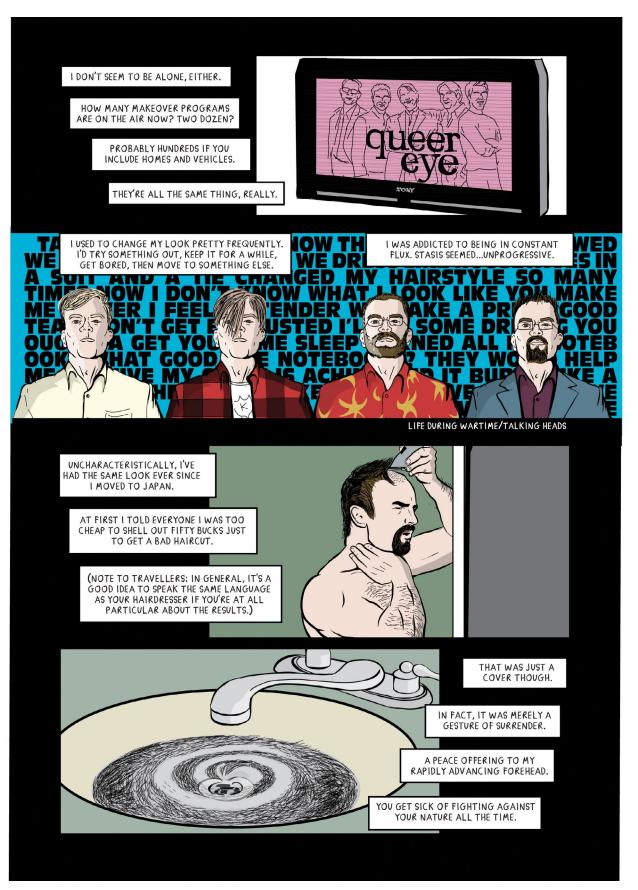


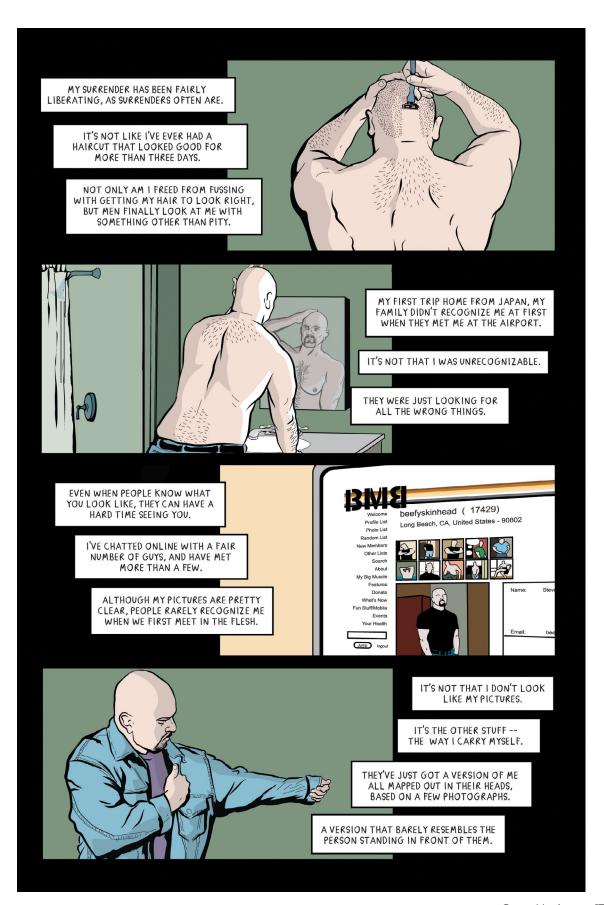


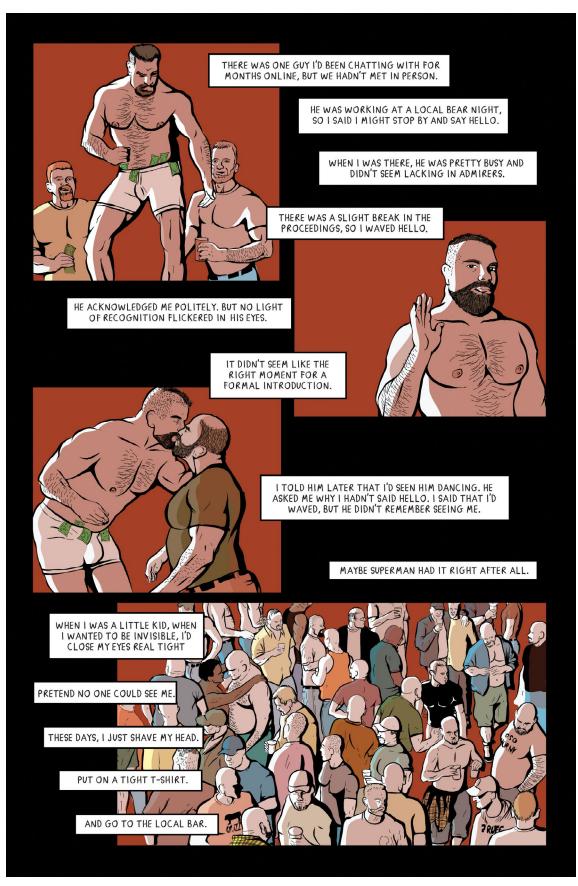






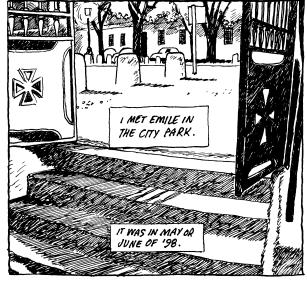


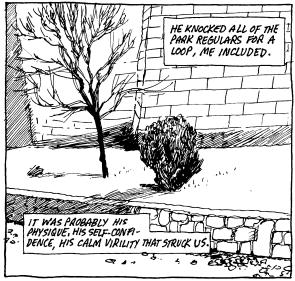




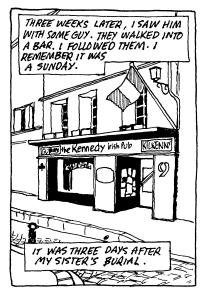
Émile

from spring '98 to today (an ongoing story)

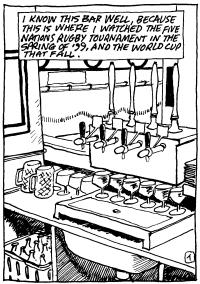


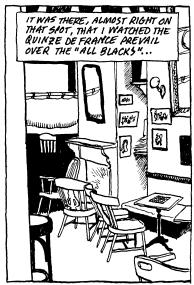






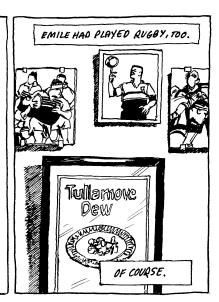




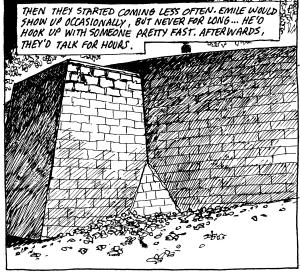






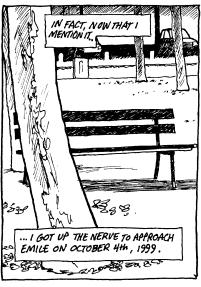




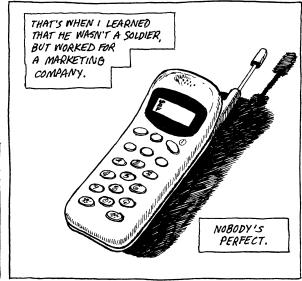


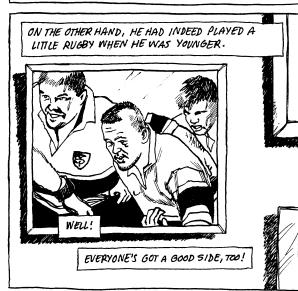


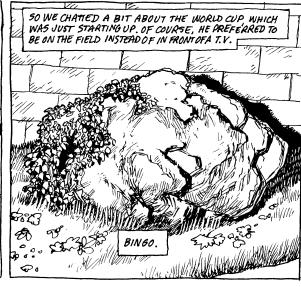












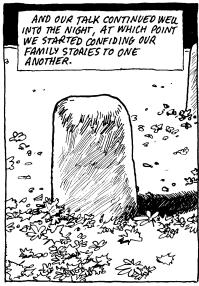




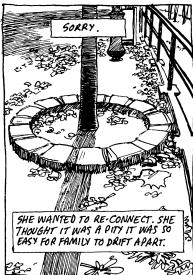


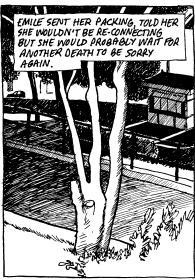




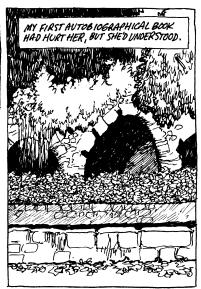


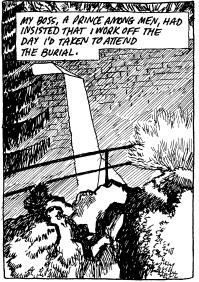




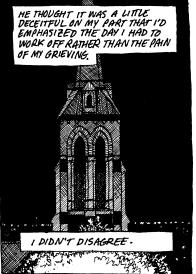


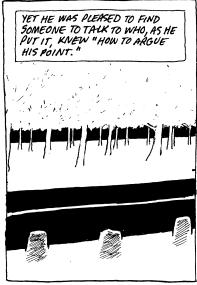








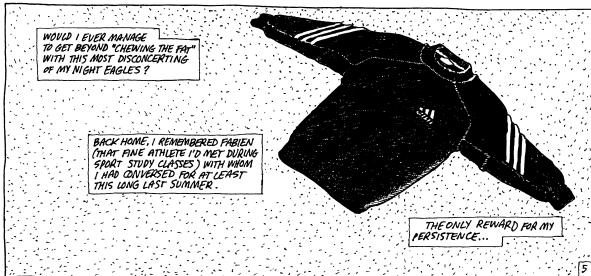


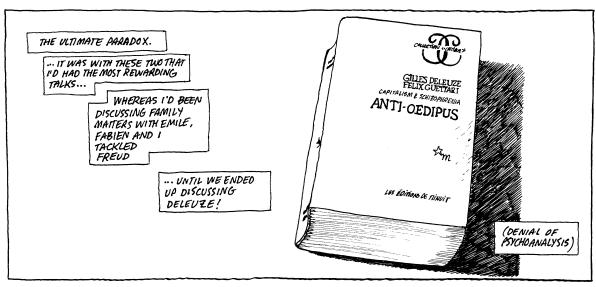






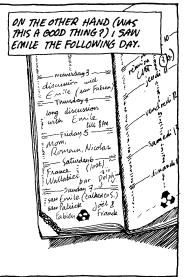


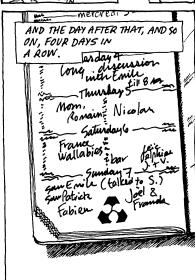


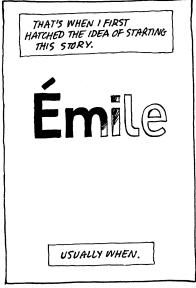


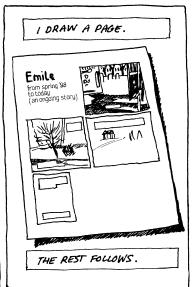














I HADN'T FELT THIS WAY IN FIVE YEARS. MY HEART HAD GROUND TO AHALT AND FELT DRY AS A PEBBLE, OUT OF GUILT OVER MY PREVIOUS AFFAIR... DIRTY, TAINTED. PALESTRINA CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE CATTORIES SIR DAVID WILLCARS THE PARTY OF THE P AND NOW IT HAD ALL STARTED UP AGAIN.

HOW MANY DAYS CAN I WITHSTAND MIS GAZE WITHOUT TELLING HIM? A HUNDRED? TWENTY? TEN? I MUST MAKE IT FOREVER.

I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE LIKE I USED TO ... ESPECIALLY IF HE DOESN'T RESPOND .

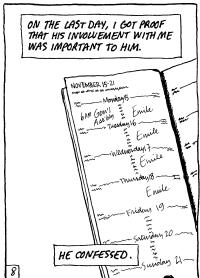
A meal He male

ABOVE ALL, I MUST SHIELD HIM FROM MY DESIRE. NOT MENTION IT TO HIM, NOT CALL HIM. NEVER WRITE HIM. (

e-mail



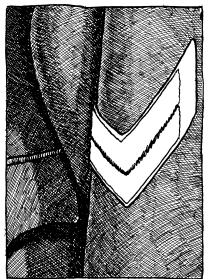




















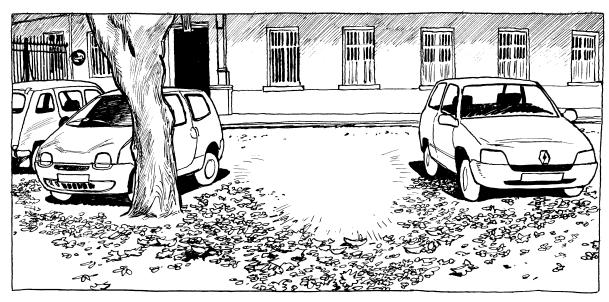


* MARINE INFANTRY







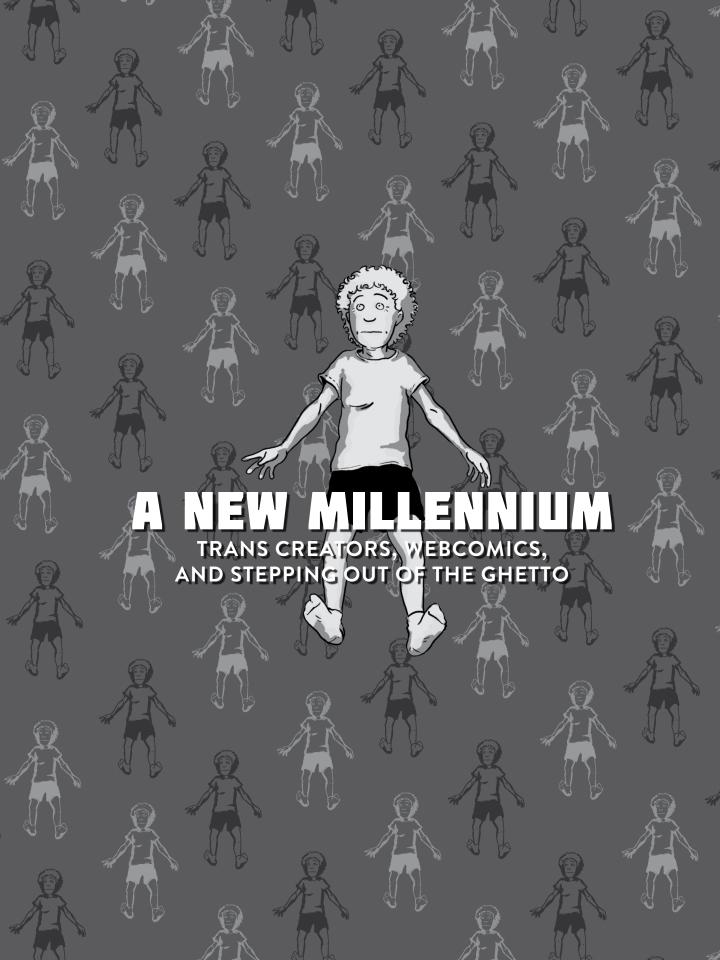






SUNDAY













I'm not sure how or why, but even though I'm physically male, my soul - who I truly am-is definitely female.



I've been struggling with this for a long time, and it's been really difficult for me to come to terms with.



I've been horribly depressed for as long as I can remember and for a bunch of years I was getting really drunk and using drugs as a coping mechanism.





At this point I'm not really sure what that entails, but the thought of living another day as a guy just seems too horrible to imagine.









GINA





KAMENTSKY *GENITAL REASSIGNMENT SURGERY

































* THE SURGICAL PROCESS USED TO CREATE A NEO-VAGINA

WELL MISS "BIO WOMAN"
WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE
ME? I HAVE MY
CREDIBILITY AS A
TRANSGENDERED
CARTOON CHARACTER
TO MAINTAIN! SOME
DECENT TITS MIGHT
NOT BE BAD, BUT DID
YOU EVER CONSIDER
WHAT MAKES ME
"AMERICA'S SHE MALE
SWEET HEART??"







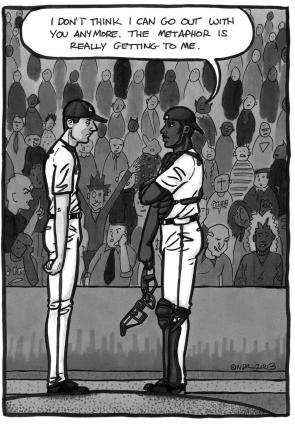
THINK OF THE DRAMA, PATHOS, LAST MINUTE INDECISION, TOUCHING BEDSIDE SCENES HUNKY DOCTORS AND WANTON NURSES! I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF DRAWING UP



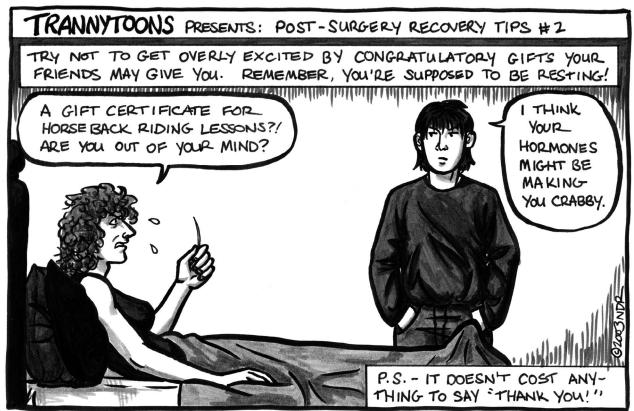
MUMBLE MUMBLE, WILL AGREE TO MUMBLE HER MUMBLE AND MUMBLE MUMBLE SURGERY UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS? HERE, I'LL READ IT ..

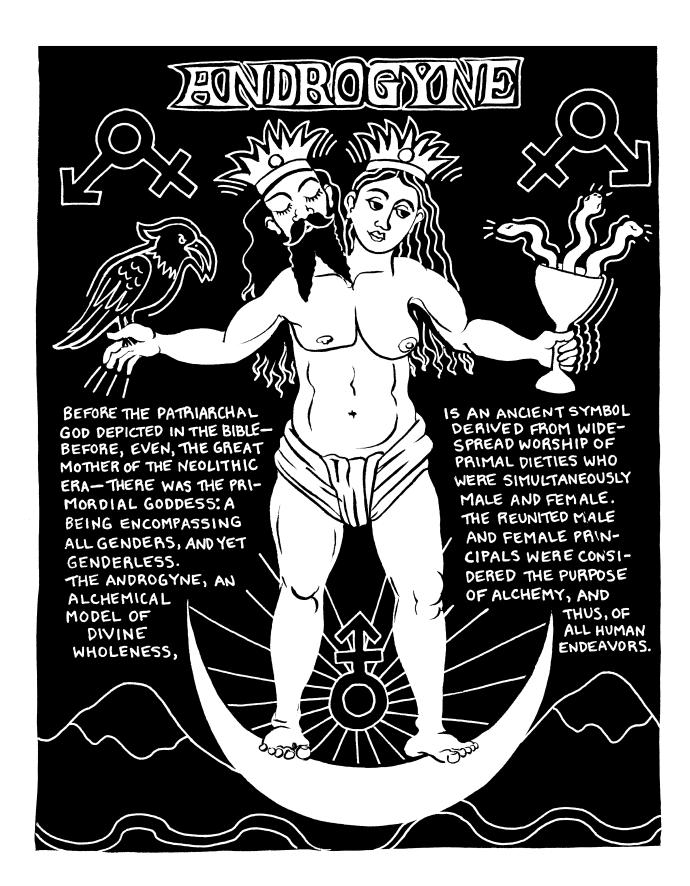












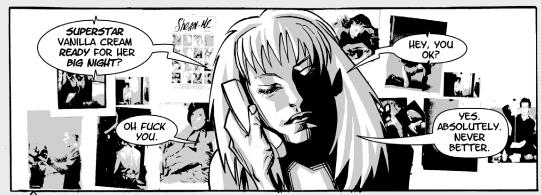










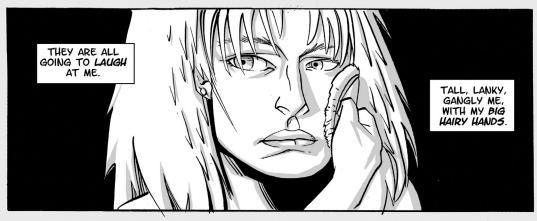






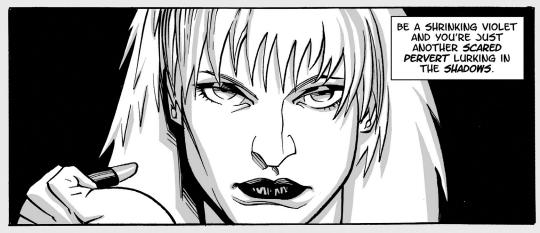


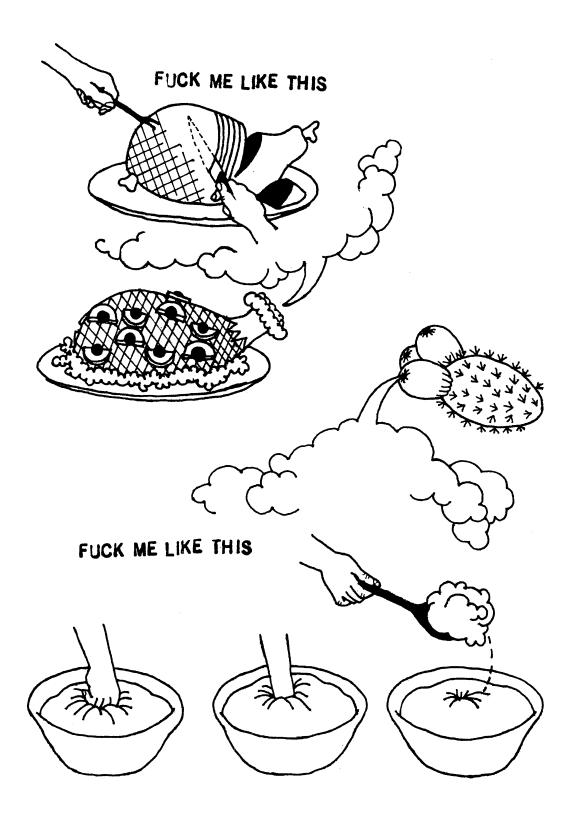


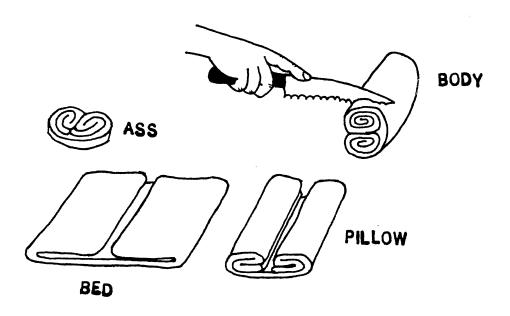






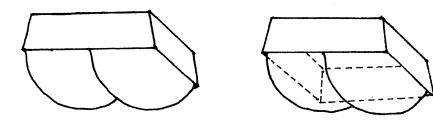


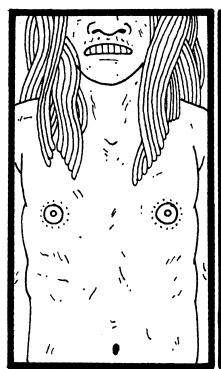


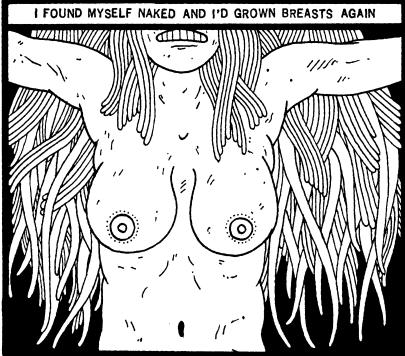


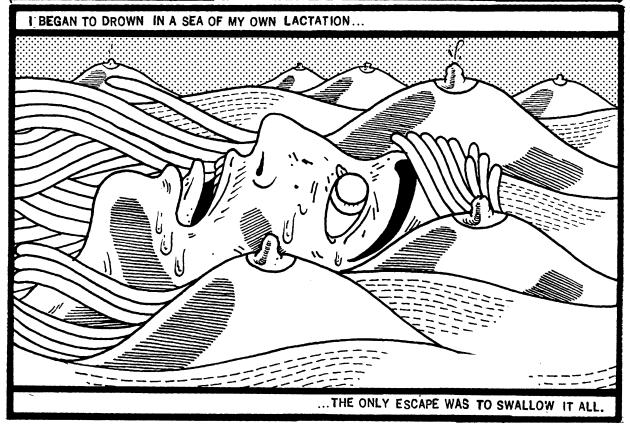


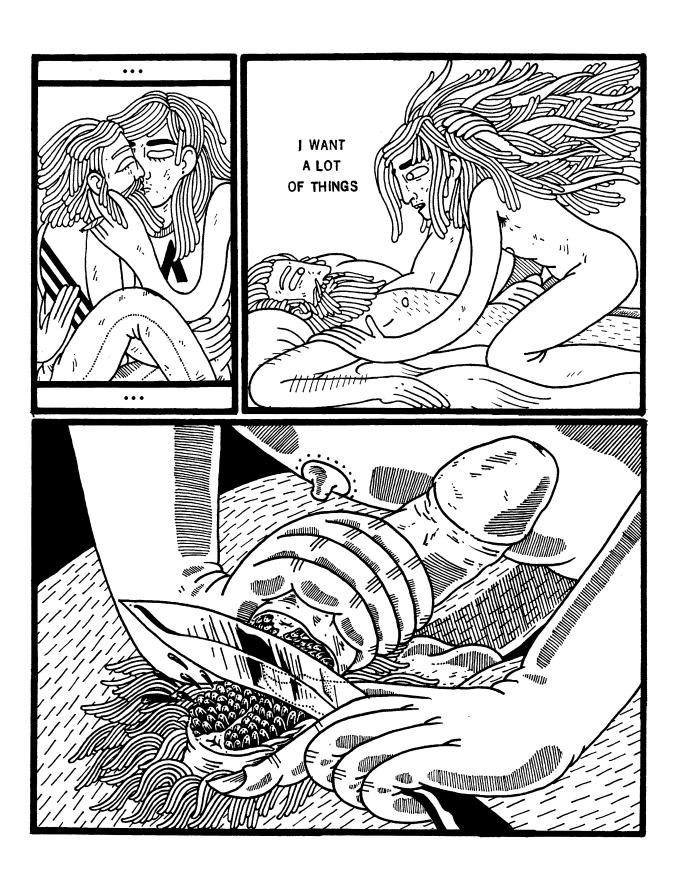
TENDERLY











The Worst Things I've Done to My Partners During Sex:



I officially apologize for ever becoming sexually active.













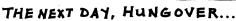












OH MY GOD I'M SO STUPID! WHAT HAVE I DONE ? ALYSSA'S MY BEST FRIEND! HAVE I RUINED



THINGS FOREVER? DAMN HER LIPS WERE SO SOFT ... Fuck Fuck Fuck

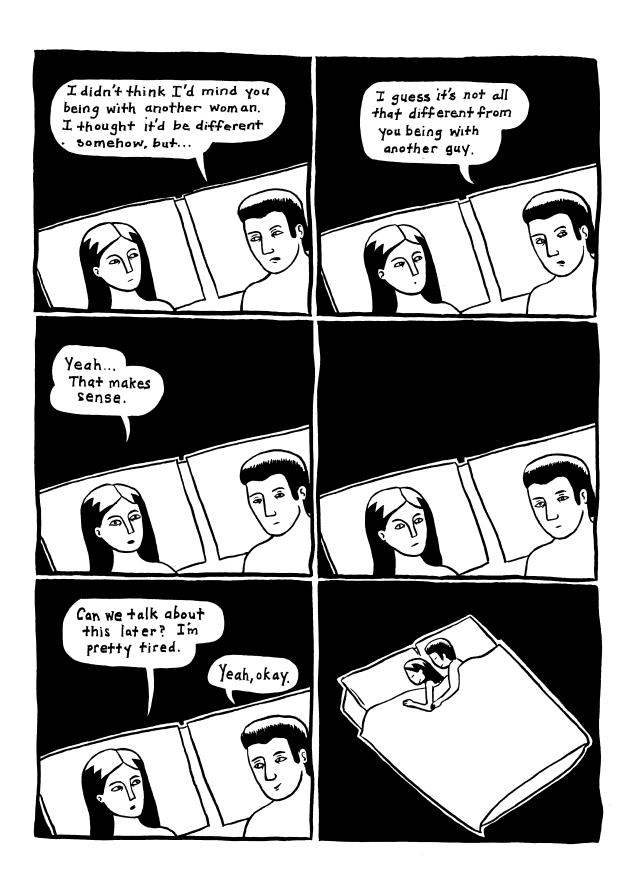
SOI WROTE HER A LETTER.

Dear alyssa,

about the other night, I as vorry! I can't believe I did the lt was totally inapp eally hope I di









Oap brought to you by Supra-Galaxy





















THE FIRST TIME I DID DRAG, I DIDN'T GO TO A GAY BAR, THOUGH. I WAS WITH MY PARENTS IN THE BASEMENT OF ST. IGNATIUS GRADE SCHOOL. MY AUNT PEGGY AND THE PRIEST WHO BAPTIZED ME WERE THERE. I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD.

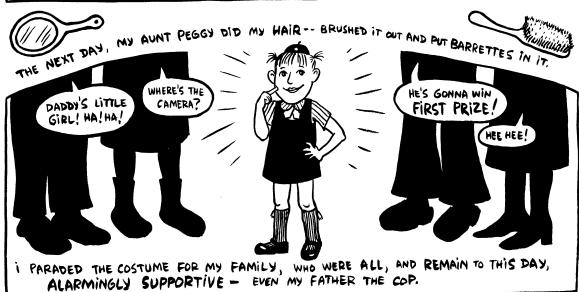
THE OCCASION WAS A HALLOWEEN PARTY AND COSTUME CONTEST -- MY FIRST BIG SCOUTING EVENT SINCE JOINING THE CUB SCOUTS A FEW MONTHS PRIOR.













OTHER BOYS HAD COME TO THE ANNUAL HALLOWEEN PARTY IN DRESSES BEFORE -- DRAG WAS NOTHING NEW -- BUT THEY'D BEEN EAGLE SCOUTS AND ATHLETIC TYPES, WHOSE BOYHOOD COULDN'T BE CALLED INTO QUESTION BY ONE HALLOWEEN IN BAD DRAG...





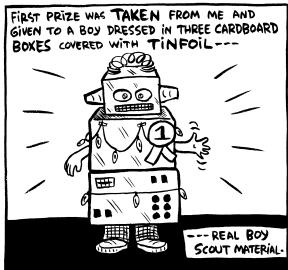
I WENT TO THAT PARTY IN AN OUTFIT I WOULD





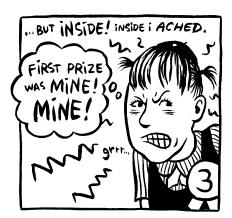












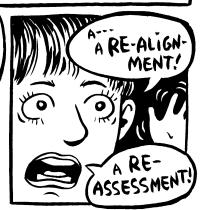


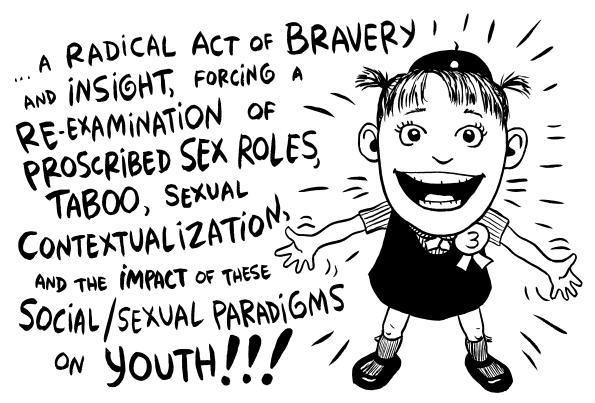














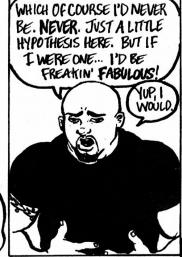




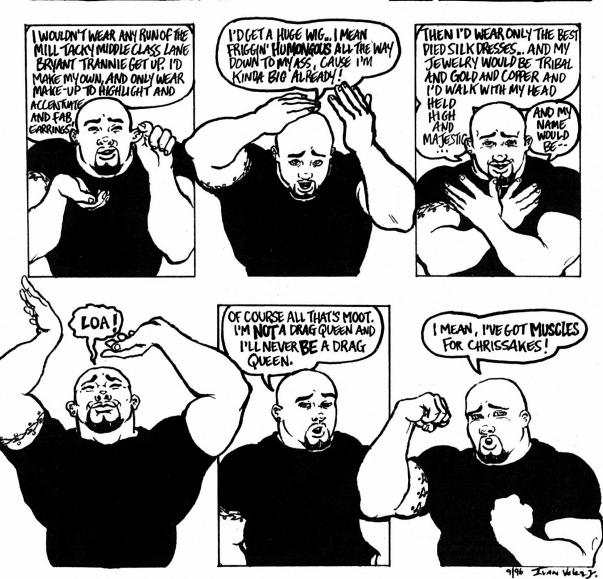








NOT THAT I EVER HAD A
DESIRE TO BE ONE. OH NO...
REAL MEN JUST DON'T GO
THERE. BUT STILL... I'D
BE A SPECIAL ONE...
AND
TOO
LOVELY IS















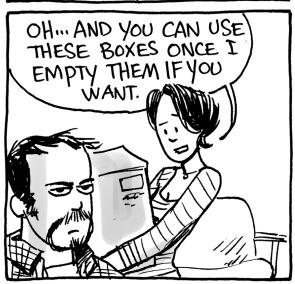




























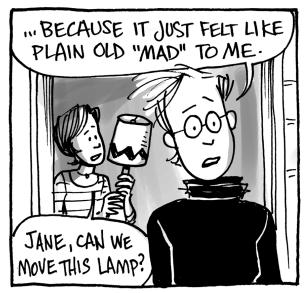
































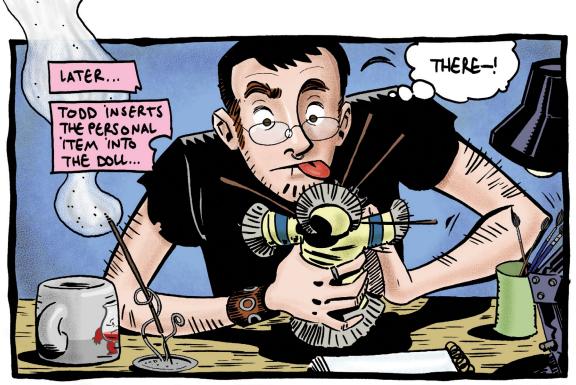






















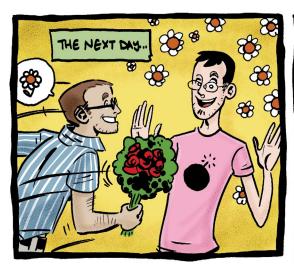




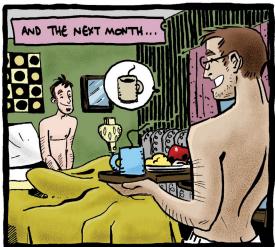


















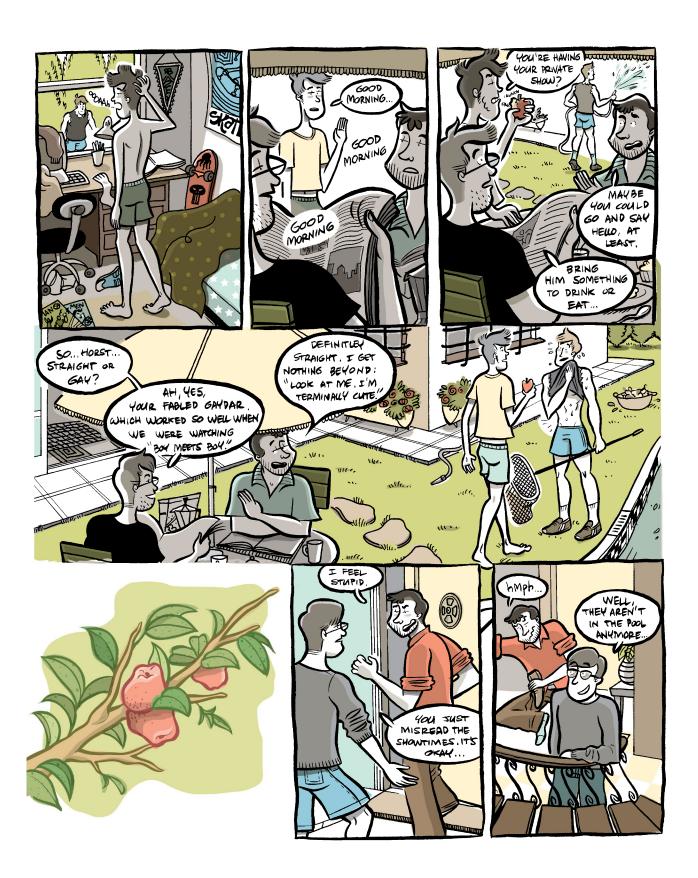














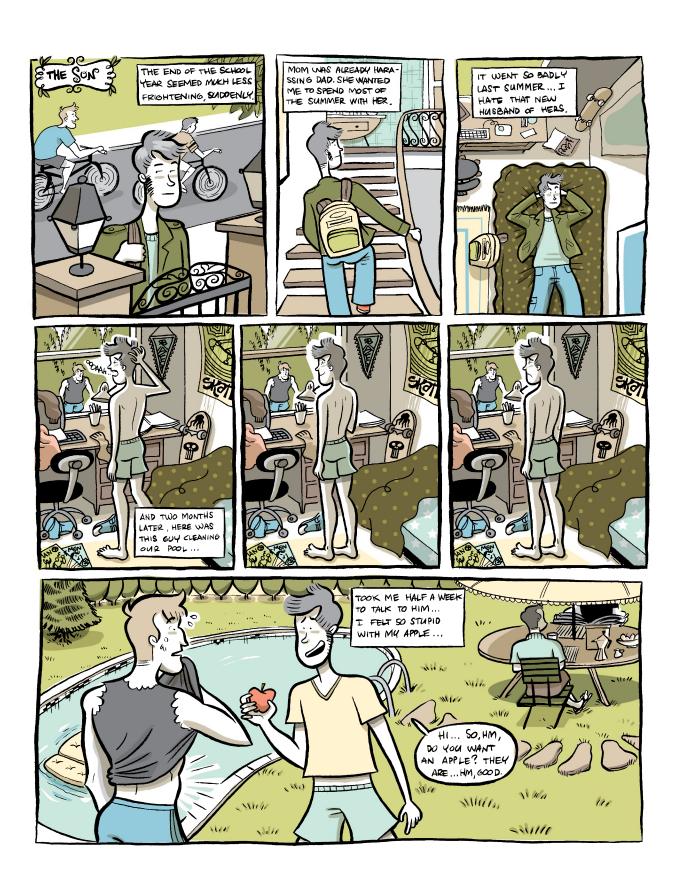


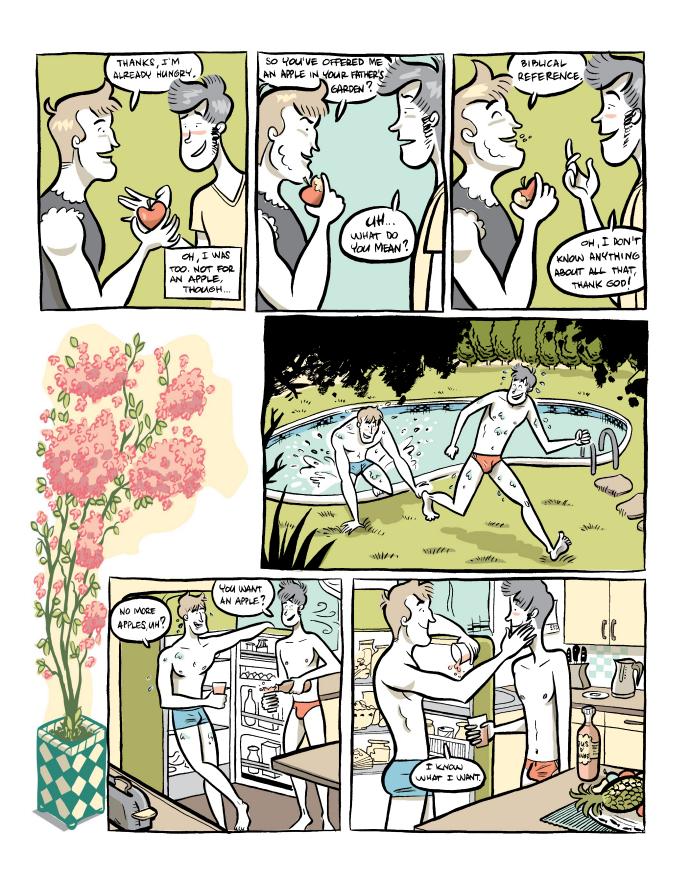










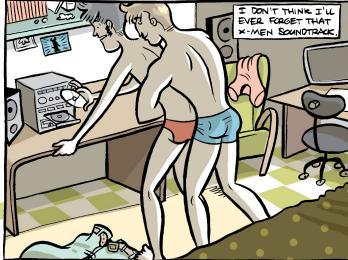




















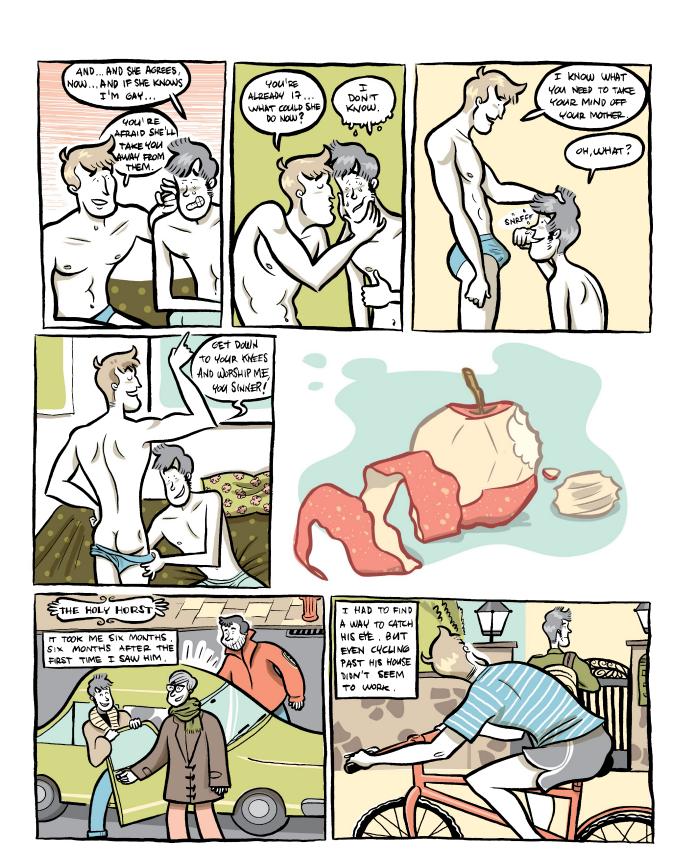


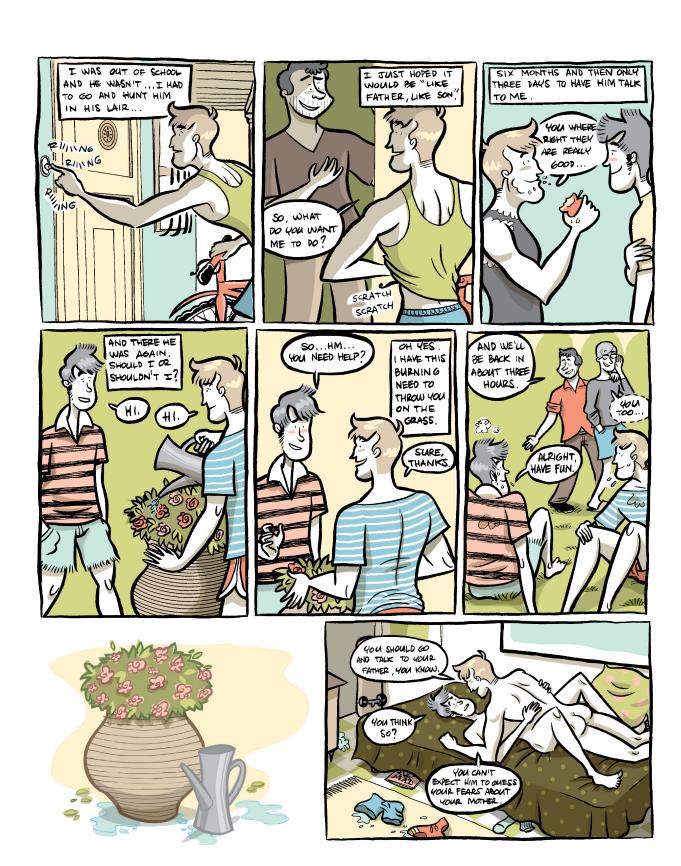


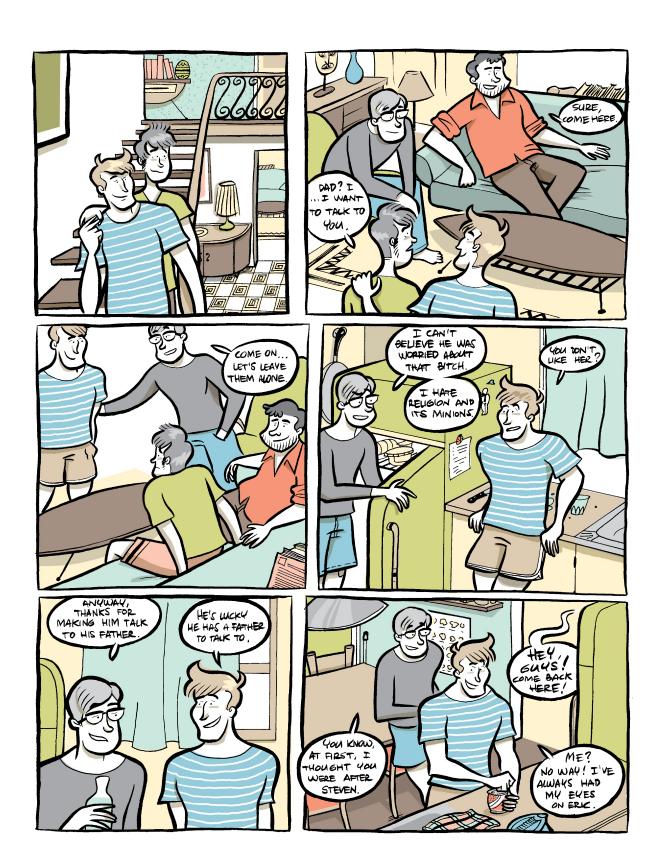


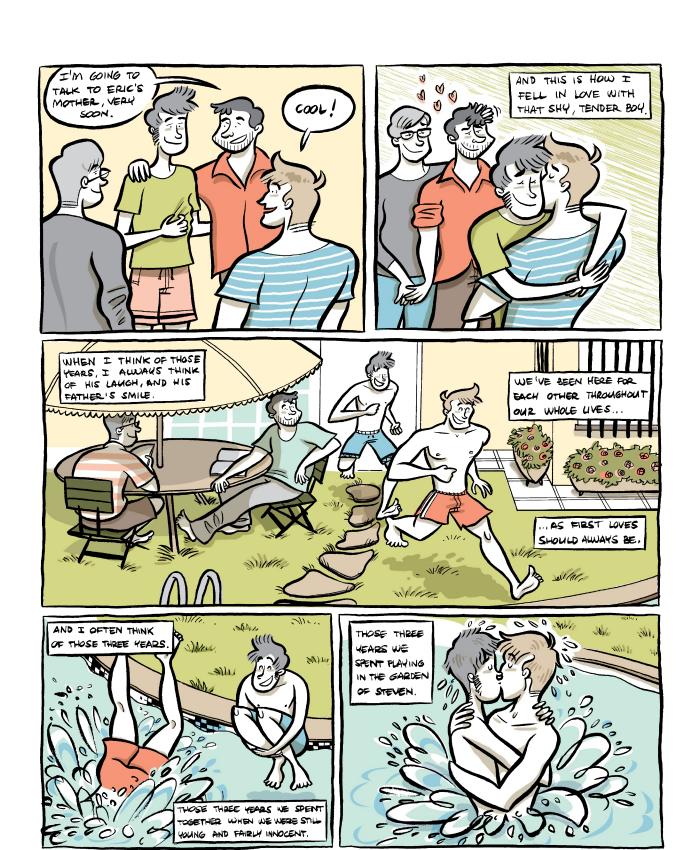


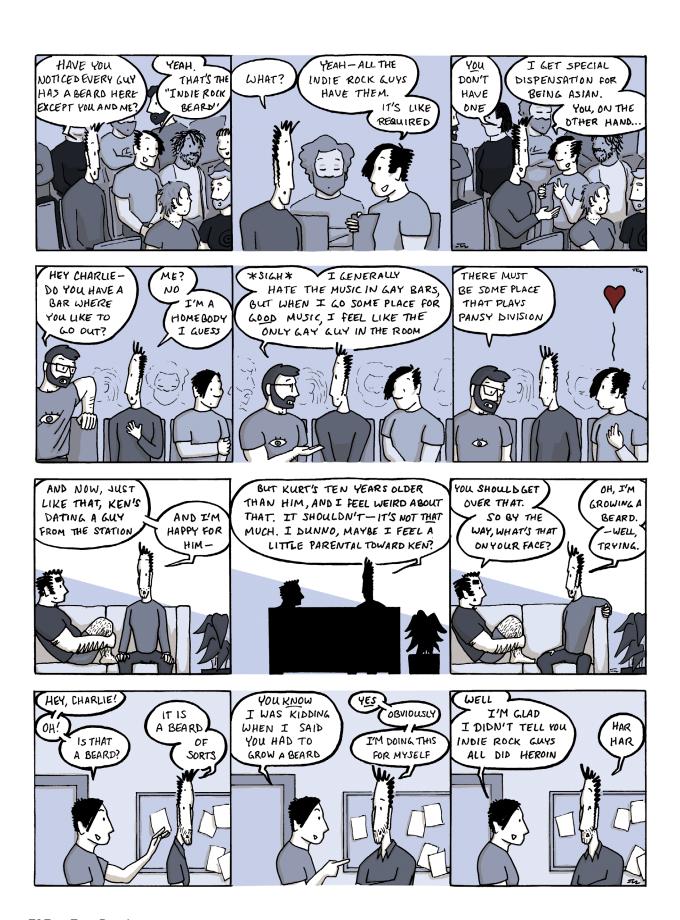


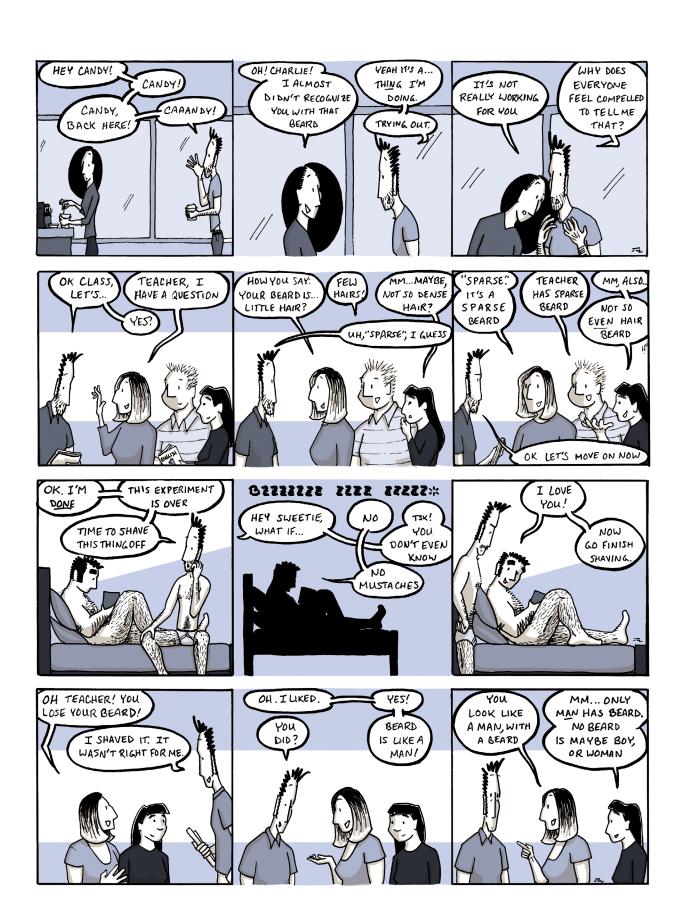


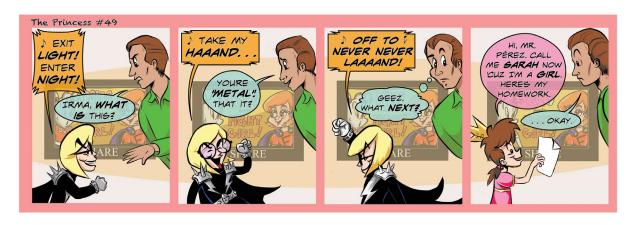


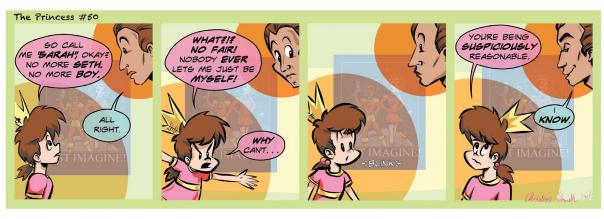










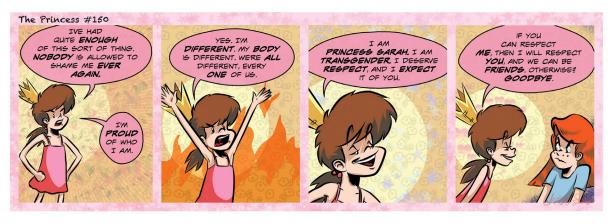














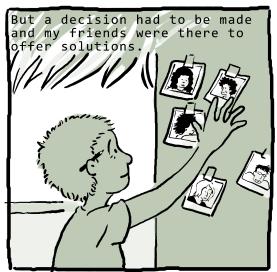






















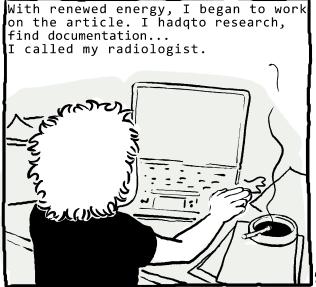
I still had to decide...





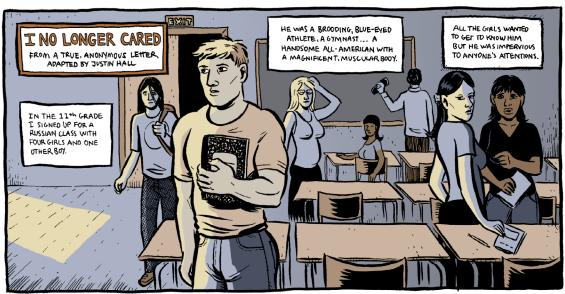








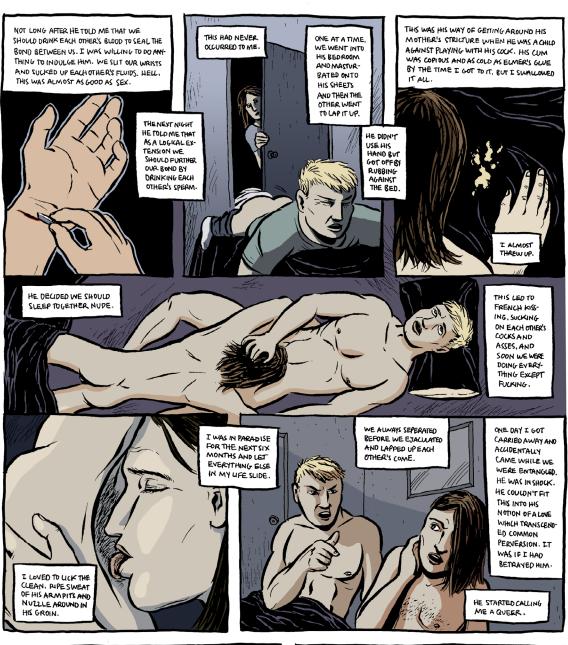
And entered a painful reality.





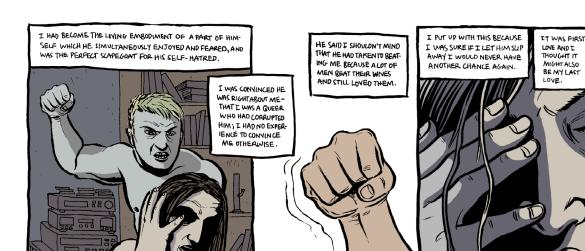




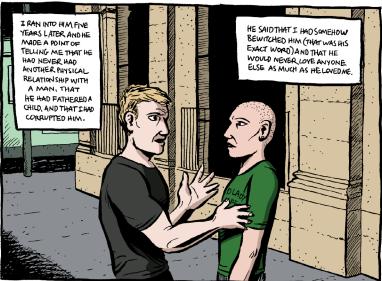




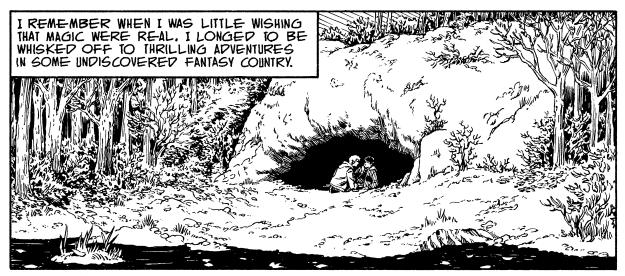












OR MAYBE ONE DAY I'D STUMBLE ACROSS A SMALLER BIT OF MAGIC. A RING OR A LAMP OR A BOOK. SOMETHING HUMBLE. BUT STILL EXCITING.



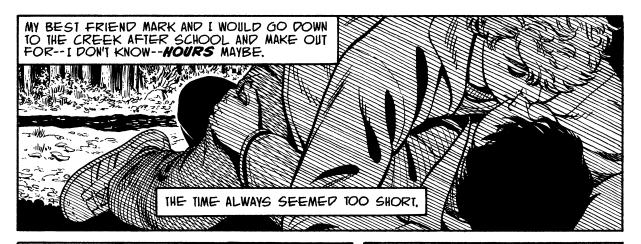
THAT NEVER HAPPENER BY THE TIME I REACHED SOPHOMORE YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL, I'D PRETTY MUCH FORGOTTEN ALL THAT CHILDISH STUFF.





HAPPILY EVER AFTER

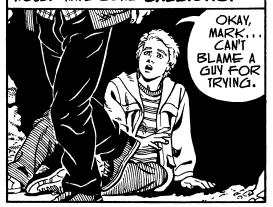
by ERIC SHANOWER



THE PREVIOUS YEAR I'D TOLD MY PARENTS I WAS GAY. THEY DIDN'T EXACTLY JUMP UP AND DOWN WITH JOY, BUT THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY MAJOR PROBLEM WITH IT.



NO ONE EXCEPT ME KNEW ABOUT MARK. NOT FOR **SURE**, ANYWAY, HIS PARENTS WOULD HAVE GONE **BALLISTIC**.



NOT THAT I EVER SAW BRUISES, BUT THE FIRST TIME I SAW MARK'S DAD SCREAM AT HIM AND HIS LITTLE BROTHERS WAS THE LAST TIME I'D BEEN INSIDE HIS HOUSE.



I KNEW THINGS WERE MORE DIFFICULT FOR MARK. BUT THAT DIDN'T MEAN I DIDN'T WISH THINGS WERE EASIER.



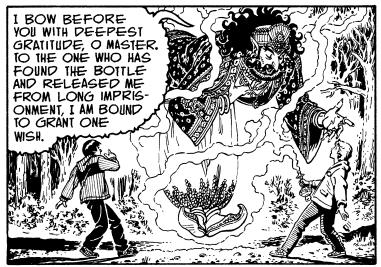








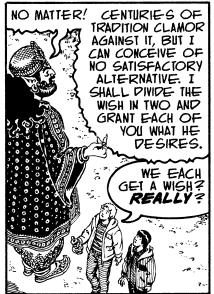


























AS THE DAYS PASSED MY WISH FOR MARK TO BE IN LOVE WITH ME SEEMED TO BE A FAILURE, HE WOULDN'T TAKE MY PHONE



WHEN I WENT OVER TO HIS HOUSE, HIS DAD CALLED ME A LITTLE FAGGOT AND TOLD ME NEVER TO COME BACK.

THEN MONTHS STARTED TO PASS.
WHENEVER I SAW MARK--ALWAYS AT A
DISTANCE--HE WAS EITHER ALONE OR
WITH SOME GIRL HANGING ON HIM.



I TOOK SOLACE IN THE REALIZATION THAT IT WAS RARELY THE SAME GIRL TWICE.

IN SENIOR YEAR I WAS ACCEPTED BY A UNIVERSITY FAR FROM HOME. I HEARD THAT MARK WAS GOING TO A COLLEGE FAR AWAY

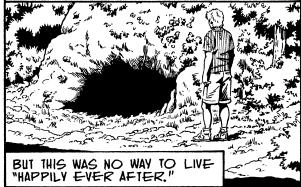


IT WAS A RELIEF TO KNOW I WOULDN'T BE CATCHING ANY MORE GLIMPSES OF HIM FLEEING INTO THE DISTANCE, BUT IT KIND OF HURT TOO.

I STILL FELT THE SAME AS EVER ABOUT MARK-THE WAY I'D FELT SINCE THE FIRST DAY OF SIXTH GRADE, THE DAY I SAID "HI" TO THE BOY WITH THE SHINIEST HAIR I'D EVER SEEN.



A YEAR PASSED BY. THEN ANOTHER. I TRIED TO CONCENTRATE ON OTHER THINGS, TO FORGET MARK AND THE WISHES AND HOW MISERABLE I WAS.



THE FIRST SEMESTER AT UNIVERSITY WAS TOUGH. BUT THAT HELPED TAKE MY MIND OFF MARK.



I TRIED GOING OUT WITH OTHER GUYS --EVEN HAD SEX WITH A REALLY CUTE ONE.

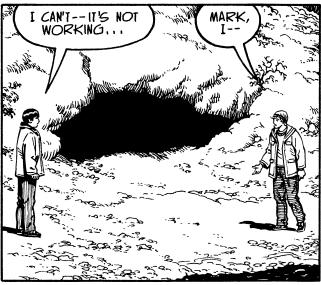


I CAME HOME FOR THE HOLIDAY BREAK. I'M SURE MARK'S BACK IN TOWN TOO. HIS SUPER-RELIGIOUS MOTHER WOULD NEVER LET HIM STAY AWAY DURING CHRISTMAS.

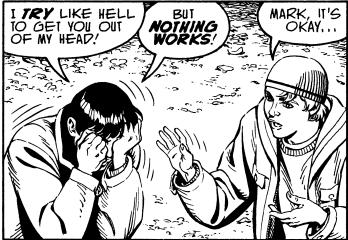




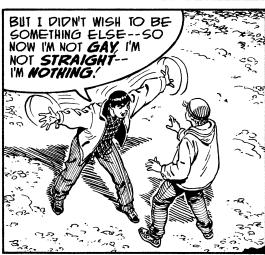












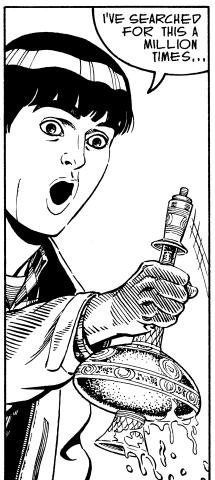






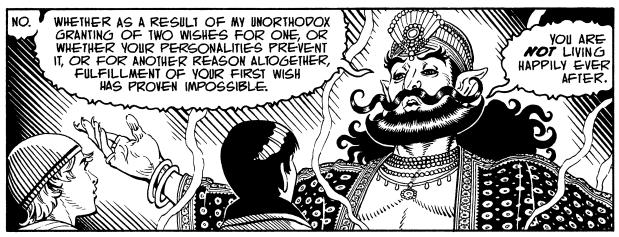


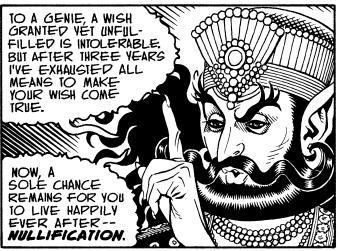


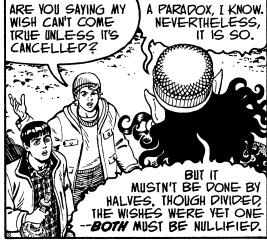




















THREE WEEKS LATER. I'M BACK AT COLLEGE. IF ANY-THING HAS CHANGED I WOULDN'T KNOW. I LOVE MARK AS MUCH AS EVER, BUT I HAVEN'T HEARD ONE WORD FROM HIM.















SO, TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PAST RELATION-SHIPS, HOLD MANY BOYFRIENDS HAVE YOU







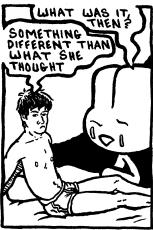
















... But he's really



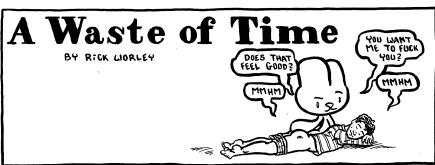














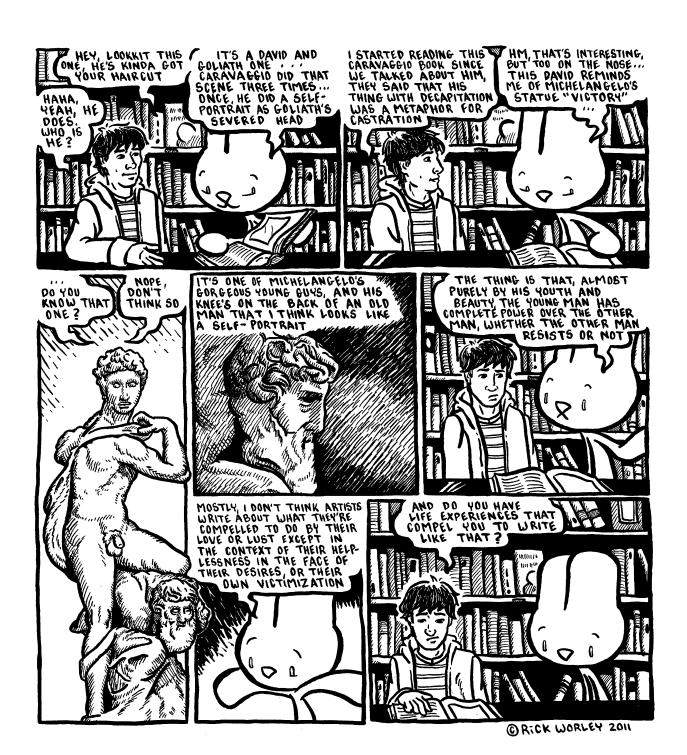


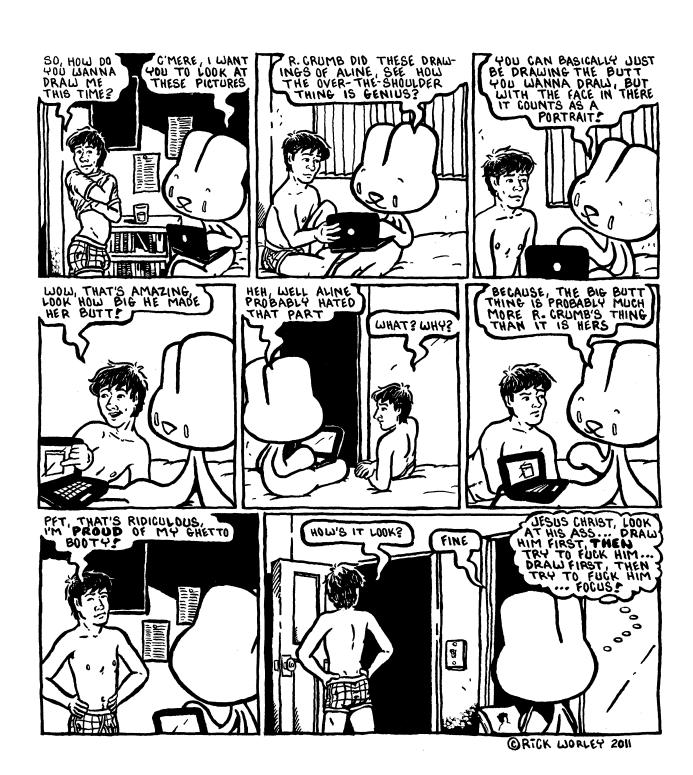






















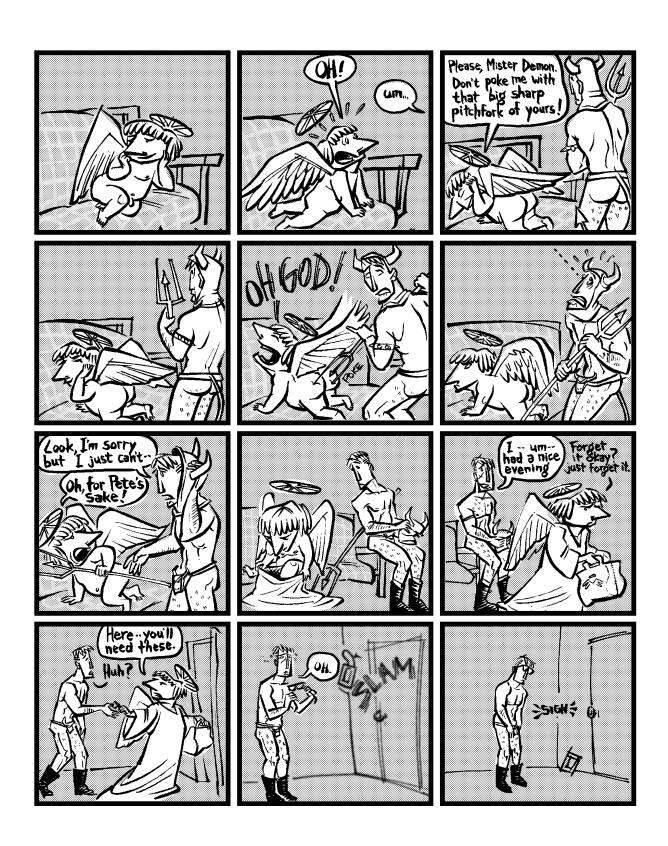




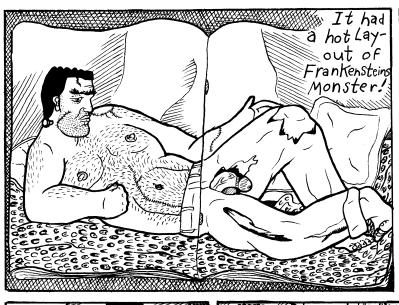




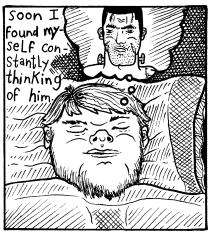






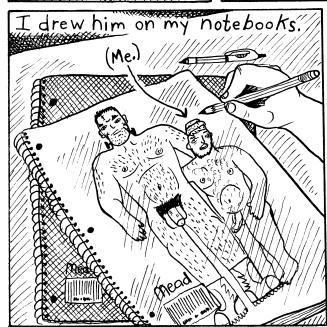


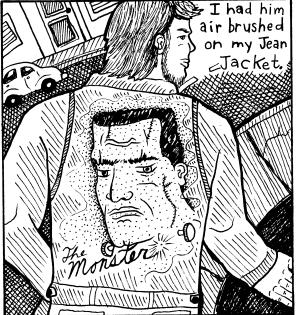


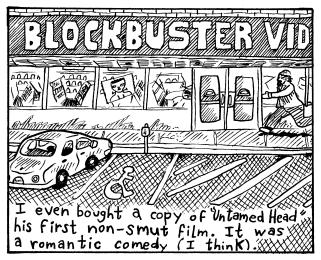








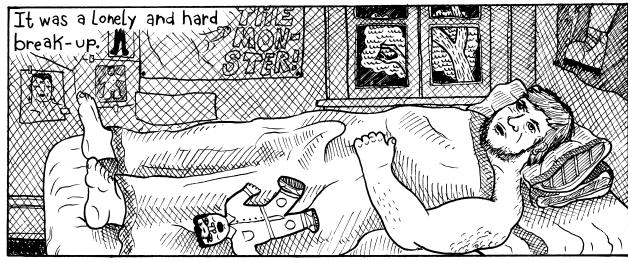


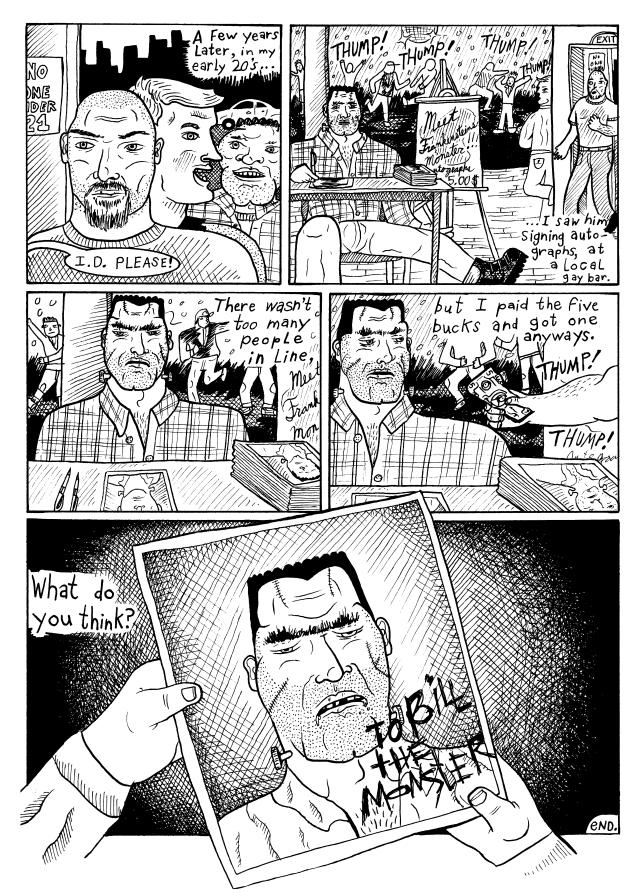






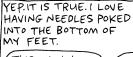






CALIFORNIA SUN-THE RAMONES

06.26.10





MET UP WITH PAUL AND DOLLY FOR AN EARLY DINNER AT GABY'S. THEN TO THE GALLERY WHERE I DRANK WATER AND DIET COKE AND HUNG OUT WITH SARAH AND ALISSA.





I JUST WANT SOME SKANK-CIRCLE JERKS

07.10.10





THEN FROM OUT



TO NATALIA'S ART



THE DAY I MET GOD-ADAM & THE ANTS

05.26.09







I FEEL ALRIGHT-THE DAMNED

09.25.10





LATER ON I HUNG OUT WITH PAUL, DOLLY, SACHA, ALISSA, SARAH AND ROLF AT THE OPENING AT THE GALLERY



THEN I DROVE AROUND IN THE WARM LATE NIGHT AIR WISHING SOMETHING HAD SOMEHOW GONE RIGHT INSTEAD OF THE WAY IT WENT



DO WHAT YOU GOTTA DO-NINA SIMONE

ALL DAY LONG DEPRESSION WANTED TO GET ME BUT SOMEHOW I MANAGED TO FIGHT IT OFF.



I MET MY LESBIAN PEEPS AT AN OBAMA FUND-RAISER AND I DRANK SOME ABSINTHE.





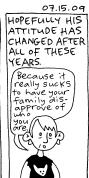
LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD-PAT BENATAR

FINALLY! I'M NO LONGER THE ONLY HOMOSEXUAL IN MY FAMILY!



I HAVE NO IDEA THOUGH HOW MY BROTHER IS HANDLING FINDING OUT HIS OLDEST 50N IS GAY, BUT I'M CURIOUS...

See...when I was a teenager and my family realized I had a girlfriend, my Dad and brother responded by forcing me into a car and driving me to a mental hospital where they tried to get me committed Luckily for me the mental hospital would not commit me just because I had a girlfriend, which I got back home I was given the choice of admitting myself or leaving. I left. And didn't talk to them for years.



12.18.09

KISS OFF-VIOLENT FEMMES

THIS EVENING A MOST SENSUAL WARM WIND BLEW.







HOLD ON, I'M COMING-SAMEDAVE

THIS EVENING I MET A REALLY CUTE TATTOOED LADY WHO WAS ALSO RUNNING WITH A DOGON MORE HILLY TRAIL.



LATELY IT SEEMS LIKE THE UNIVERSE IS PUSHING FOR ME TO QUIT BEING SO SCARED.



THEN I SPENT FRIDAY NIGHT DOING LAWNDRY AND CLEANING AND FALLING ASLEEP IN FRONT OF THE TV.



WORST DATES EVER- 1986

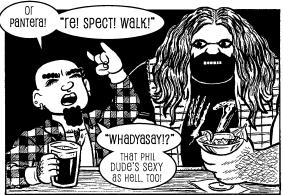


Nex7...1992

WORST DATES EVER: 1992















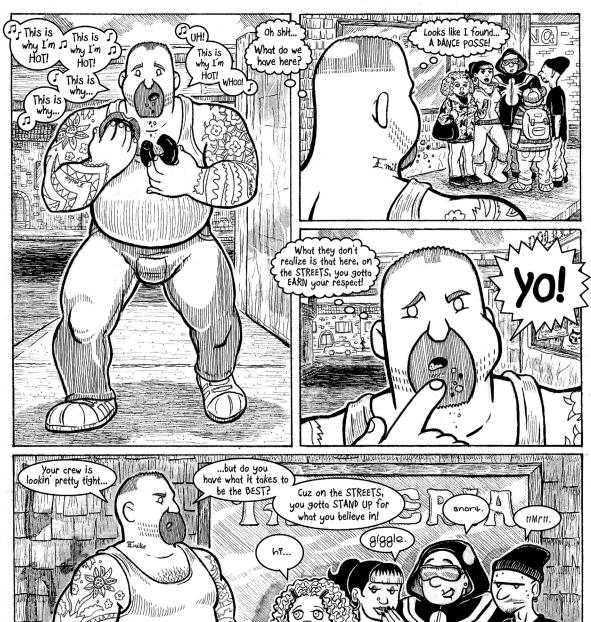


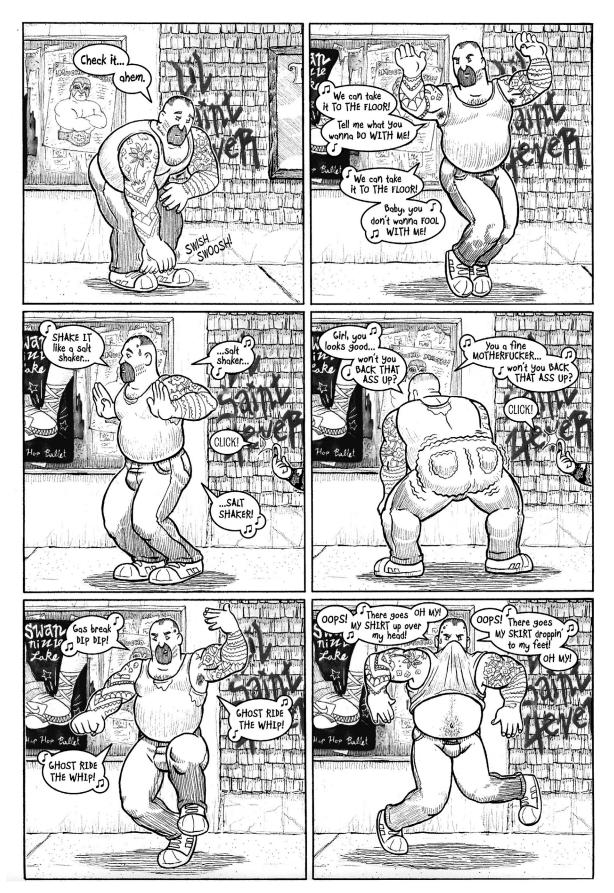
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WORST DATES EVER: 1997



COMBURIAN SECTION













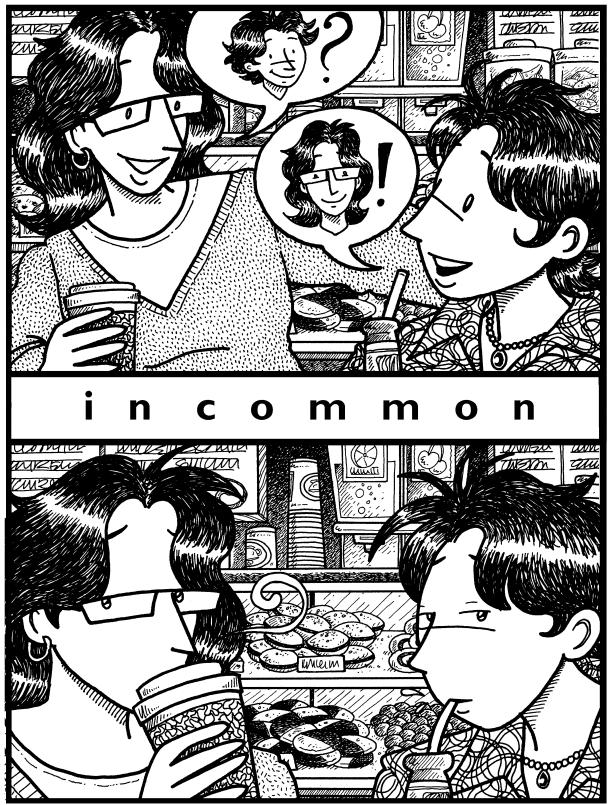


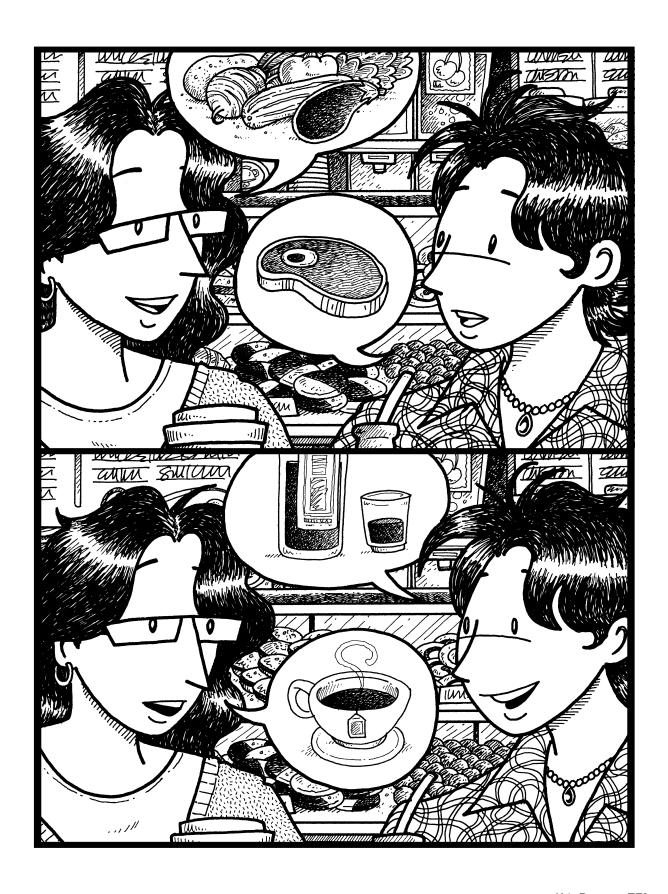
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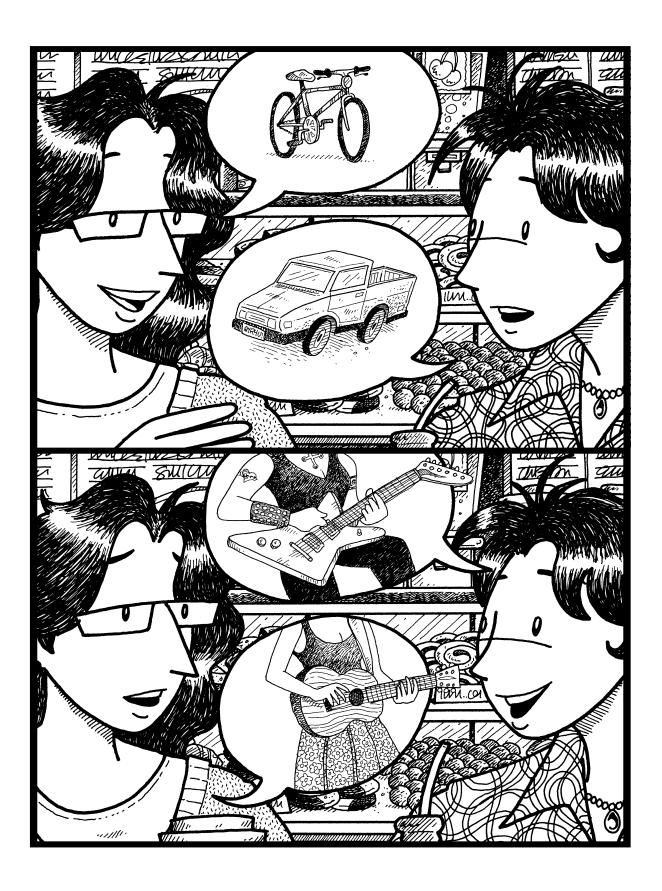


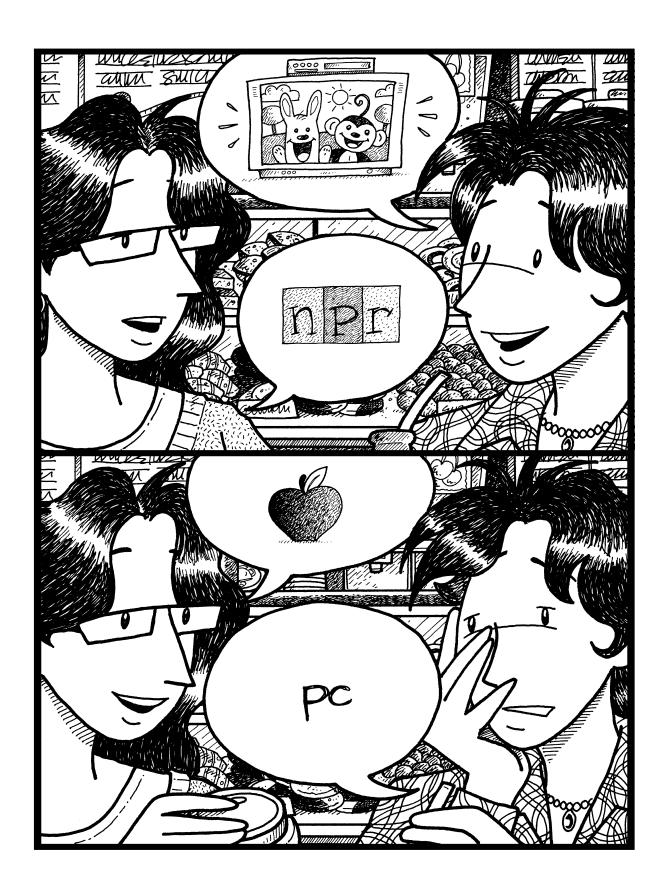


















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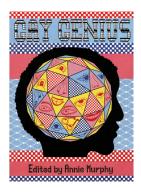




WWW. QUEERHAIKU, COM

Mysh **307**







FURTHER READING

Interested in reading more queer comics?
Here's a list of great LGBTQ graphic novels and anthology collections:

Graphic Novels:

Alí Babá y los Cuarenta Maricones* by Nazario Alicia en un Mundo Real* by Isabel Franc and Susanna Martín Calling Dr. Laura by Nicole J. Georges Cavalcade of Boys by Tim Fish Curbside Boys by Robert Kirby Duck by Tana Ford The Desert Peach by Donna Barr Fun Home by Alison Bechdel Gaylord Phoenix by Edie Fake How Loathsome by Tristan Crane and Ted Naifeh The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde and Tom Bouden Journal 3* by Fabrice Neaud The Legend of Bold Riley by Leia Weathington and others Le Petit Lulu* by Hugues Barthe The Less Than Epic Adventures of TJ and Amal by E.K. Weaver Marbles by Ellen Forney Princesse Aime Princesse* by Lisa Mandel Potential by Ariel Schrag Sexile by Jaime Cortez Skim by Mariko and Jillian Tamaki Strangers in Paradise by Terry Moore Stuck Rubber Baby by Howard Cruse subGURLZ by Jennifer Camper Super Paradise* by Ralf König Tales of the Closet by Ivan Velez, Jr. Teleny and Camille by Anonymous and Jon Macy Tough Love: High School Confidential by Abby Denson Transposes by Dylan Edwards

Anthology Collections:

The Troll King by Kolbeinn Karlsson

The Book of Boy Trouble edited by Robert Kirby and David Kelly

Dyke Strippers edited by Roz Warren

Gay Comics edited by Robert Triptow

Gay Genius edited by Annie Murphy

Juicy Mother edited by Jennifer Camper

Young Bottoms in Love edited by Tim Fish

Tim Barela is the creator of *Leonard & Larry*, which made its first appearance in 1984. It has since been released in four book collections.

Alison Bechdel set the bar for queer community comic strips with *Dykes to Watch Out For*. She is best known for the breakout success of her graphic novel *Fun Home*. dykestowatchoutfor.com

Craig Bostick draws and paints, but not as much as he should. He lives in an imaginary world where Perry Mason buys him Mai Tais at the tiki bar on the corner. aquaboy.net

Tom Bouden's career started in 1993 with comics for gay magazines, followed by the pseudo autobiography *Max & Sven*. He mainly works on commercially successful Belgian comics series. tombouden.be

Paige Braddock worked as an illustrator for *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* before accepting a position as Creative Director at Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates. Paige is the creator of the Eisner Awardnominated series *Jane's World*, and cocreator of the graphic novel series *The Martian Confederacy*. janecomics.com

Tony Breed lives in Chicago with his husband. When not making comics, Tony is an IT Manager and also helps run CHIRP Radio, voted best overall radio station in Chicago in 2011. hitchedcomic.com

Jennifer Camper's books include Rude Girls and Dangerous Women and subGURLZ, and she is the editor of two Juicy Mother comix anthologies. jennifercamper.com

Chino is the primary artist for the comic strip *From The Cellar*. He is also the creator of the children's comic *Jada to the Rescue*, and his art has been featured in numerous shows in the New York City area. <u>fromthecellarnyc.com</u>

Burton Clarke is an early gay comics creator who is best known for his work in the anthologies *Meatmen* and *Gay Comix*.

Jaime Cortez is a writer and visual artist based in Oakland, CA, and creator of Sexile, the comics biography of Adela Vazquez. He is currently working on On the Job, a graphic novel exploring the work and job history of his immigrant father. cortezjaime.blogspot.com

Tristan Crane is a photographer and writer from San Francisco. His first graphic novel *How Loathsome* was published in 2004 and nominated for a GLAAD media award. Crane continues to moonlight as a writer while living the nonstop excitement of life as small business owner. tristancrane.com

Howard Cruse, a dewy-eyed preacher's kid from Alabama, rose to prominence in America's brutal cartooning demimonde with his comics Wendel, Barefootz, and Stuck Rubber Baby, the latter of which won him both Eisner and Harvey Awards. howardcruse.com

Diane DiMassa drew Hothead Paisan, Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist as a social/ cultural anger release valve for the marginalized, abused, and disenchanted, and it worked. She is also a prolific, kick-ass painter. hotheadpaisan.com

Donelan is the creator of the gag strip *It's a Gay Life*, which was featured in *The Advocate, Frontiers, Meatmen*, and *Gay Comix*.

Kris Dresden is an artist and writer living in Chicago. She is a maker of books. krisdresen.com

Dylan "NDR" Edwards is the creator of several queer-themed comics, including *Politically InQueerect* and *The Outfield*. He is currently working on *Transposes*, a non-fiction graphic book about queeridentified FTMs and genderqueers. studiondr.com

Kurt Erichsen is the writer/artist of the *Murphy's Manor* comic strip. He has received awards from Gay & Lesbian Press Association and the Rotsler Award for cartooning. kurterichsen.com

Sina Evil (aka **Sina Shamsavari**) burst onto the queer zine scene at the age of 16. He is best known for the autobiographical and highly acclaimed comic *BoyCrazyBoy*. boycrazyboy.com

Leslie Ewing's cartoons have appeared since 1981, mostly under the title Mid-Dyke Crisis. Her work has been published in Wimmen's Comix, Gay Comix, The Bay Area Reporter, The Lesbian News, Bay Times, and numerous anthologies. bettyslist.com/cartoons.php

Edie Fake draws the food fetish zine *Foie Gras*, the comic *Rico McTaco*, the recently completed zine *Unisex*, and the queer mytho-log of *Gaylord Phoenix*, which won him a 2011 Ignatz Award. ediefake.com

Joyce Farmer co-created the underground, feminist anthology comic book series *Tits& Clits Comix*. She contributed to *Wimmen's Comix*, the anthology *Zero Zero*, and most recently authored the graphic novel *Special Exits*.

Michael Fahy is cartoonist and artist best known for his comics work in the anthology series *Boy Trouble* and *Three*. unclegrumpy.tumblr.com

Rick Fiala created gag strips for the gay magazine *Christopher Street* with editorin-chief **Charles Ortlieb**. Fiala's cartoons captured with great wit and élan the complexities of gay and lesbian urban life in the years before AIDS.

Tim Fish's work includes web comics for Popimage and Edge, *Cavalcade of Boys*, and the graphic novel *Strugglers*, as well as commissioned and commercial art. His latest book is *Trust/Truth*. timfishworks.com

Ellen Forney's books include *Monkey Food, I Love Led Zepplin,* and *Lust.* She has been contributing to the Seattle alternative weekly paper *The Stranger* forever. ellenforney.com

Isabel Franc is a writer, humorist, translator, and essayist from Barcelona. Her books include Entre Todas las Mujeres, a trilogy writing as Lola Van Guardia, and No Me Llames Cariño. isabelfranc.blogspot.com

Leanne Franson is a prolific Canadian cartoonist and illustrator best known for her ongoing series of comics *Liliane Bi-Dyke*. <u>liliane.comicgenesis.com</u>

Carl Vaughn Frick resides today in Portland, OR, with a boyfriend, two pitbulls, and three cats. His cartoons and graphics still pop up in the most amusing of places.

Roberta Gregory is best known in the comics world for her long-running Naughty Bits series, starring the unforgettable Bitchy Bitch. She also created the first serialized, lesbianthemed comic book, Dynamite Damsels, in 1976. robertagregory.com

Michelle Gruben is the author of *Bits and Pieces: A Girlfiend Comics Collection*. She began publishing her comics as a college student, and received three Associated Collegiate Press awards for cartooning. She lives in Dallas, Texas. girlfiendcomics.com

Glen Hanson is an illustrator and designer best known in the comic book industry for his work on *Chelsea Boys*. glenhanson.com

Andy Hartzell's comics have appeared in numerous publications, including *The Book of Boy Trouble*. He is also the creator of the minicomic *Monday*, and the graphic novel *Fox Bunny Funny*. andyhartzell.com

Joan Hilty is a comics writer, illustrator and editor, who has worked for DC Comics and Vertigo. Her weekly comic strip *Bitter Girl* can be found on Q Syndicate. joanhilty.net

Victor Hodge is mystery & horror writer, artist, and cartoonist. His work can be found in Juicy Mother, Boy Trouble, and his series Black Gay Boy Fantasy. blackgayboy.virtualave.net

Joe Johnson created some of the earliest gay comic strips with his series *Miss Thing* and *Biq Dick*.

Gina Kamentsky is the creator of the comic book series T-Gina: the Tale of a Fabulous Transgendered Gal and Her Search for Validation and a Decent Cup of Coffee. She wears several silly hats. ginakamentsky.com

David Kelly is the creator of *Steven's Comics*, which was collected in the book *Rainy Day Recess*. His work has appeared in *The Stranger*, *Juicy Mother*, *Gay Comics*, and the anthology series *Boy Trouble*, which he coedited. rainydayrecess.com

Rupert Kinnard's Cathartic Comics featured the first African-American gay characters in comic strips. It began its run in Cornell College's student newspaper in 1977, and was later collected as B.B. and the Diva in 1992.

Robert Kirby is the author of *Curbside*, *Curbside Boys*, and editor-in-chief of *The Book of Boy Trouble* Vols. 1 and 2. His latest anthology series is *Three*. robkirbycomics.com

Ralf König is the best known and most commercially successful German comic book creator. His books have been translated into many languages and adapted into several films. ralf-koenig.de

Jeff Krell created the groundbreaking comic strip *Jayson*, which debuted in the *Philadelphia Gay News* in 1983. ignite-ent.com

Ed Luce is the artist/writer of *Wuvable Oaf*. He lives in San Francisco with his life and creative partner Mark Herzog and their cat, Luna McQueen. wuvableoaf.com

Steve MacIsaac is an expat Canadian living in L.A. after several years in Japan. His solo comic *Shirtlifter* explores contemporary gay culture, identity, and sexuality. stevemacisaac.com

Jon Macy is best known for his graphic novel *Teleny & Camille*. His other works include the series *Tropo, Nefarismo*, and most recently *Fearful Hunter*. jonmacy.com

MariNaomi is the author and illustrator of the graphic memoir *Kiss & Tell: A Romantic Resume, Ages 0 to 22*, as well as the series *Estrus Comics*. marinaomi.com

Lee Marrs was the first woman to work for DC and Marvel simultaneously, but her cantankerous sense of humor led her to the undergrounds, where she was one of the founding mommies of the Wimmen's Comix collective, and produced the Pudge, Girl Blimp series. She won an Inkpot Award in 1982 and is currently the Multimedia Chair of Berkeley City College. leemarrs.com

Susanna Martín is an illustrator and comics artist living in Barcelona. Her books include Alicia en un Mundo Real (with Isabel Franc) and La Martina, la Por i el Gat Faluga. mystorycomic.blogspot.com

Chuck McKinney is an actor, writer, artist, cartoonist, and bartender best known for his web comic strip From The Cellar, based on New York City gay life. from the cellarnyc.com

Carrie McNinch is an artist, writer and zine publisher. Her work includes *The Assassin and The Whiner, Food Geek*, and *I Want Everything to Be Okay*, the latter published by Tugboat Press.

Jerry Mills (1951-1993) was the author of *Poppers*, an influential comic strip which appeared in *Advocate Men, Meatmen* and *Gay Comix*. He is survived by his partner Sal Lucarello.

Erika Moen is a full time cartoonist at Periscope Studio. She lives in Portland, OR with her delightfully British husband, Matthew Nolan, and their devil cat, Flapjack. ErikaMoen.com

Annie Murphy, homoregonian, armchair historian, and paranormal enthusiast, is the creator of the Xeric Award-winning I Still Live: Biography of a Spiritualist, editor of the Ignatz Award-nominated Gay Genius comics anthology, and co-creator of the Collective Tarot: a Magical Collaboration. ghostcatcomics.com

Mysh was born in Latvia and now lives in Tel Aviv, Israel. He started drawing at two, telling stories at three, and hasn't been able to stop since. These days he tells his stories in film, animation and comics. queerhaiku.com

Ted Naifeh is a comics creator responsible for many dark, delicious worlds. He lives and works in San Francisco. tednaifeh.com

Andrea Natalie was the creator of the Lesbian Cartoonists Network, and drew her Stonewall Riots strips for various queer publications.

Nazario is a Barcelona-based cartoonist and painter, and generally considered the godfather of Spanish underground comix. He is best known for his comics *Anarcoma* and *Alí Babá y Los Quarenta Maricones*. nazarioluque.com

Fabrice Neaud is a French comics artist and the co-founder of the Ego Comme X association. He is the author of the ambitious, autobiographical comics project *Journal*, which won him an Alph'art award at Angoulême in 1997. ego-comme-x.com

Allan Neuwirth is a writer, producer, director, author, and designer of TV series, feature films, books, and comics. He collaborated with Glen Hanson on *Chelsea Boys*. chelseaboys.com

Eric Orner's The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green was the most widely published newspaper comic strip about gay men, with four collections and a feature film adaption over its 15-year run. Since then, Eric has focused on longer-form graphic fiction. echonyc.com/~stone/Ethan

Francois Peneaud is a French writer who has contributed to the Young Bottoms in Love anthology, and writes the erotic fantasy Brother to Dragons. He runs the The Gay Comics List site, which reviews LGBT comics, BD, and manga. gaycomicslist.free.fr/blog

Trina Robbins is a San Francisco-based comics artist, writer, and historian, and one of the earliest and most influential women involved in the underground comix movement. She loves cats and vintage clothing. trinarobbins.com

James Romberger is an American fine artist with work in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Brooklyn Museums. As a cartoonist he has worked for Marvel, Image, DC/Vertigo, and World War 3 Illustrated, and is the co-creator, with his wife Marguerite Van Cook, of the sci-fi strip Ground Zero. thearteriesgroup.com/JamesRomberger

Roxxie is best known as the publisher and editor-in-chief of the lesbian sports magazine *Girljock*. She also made comics for such anthologies as *Real Girl* and *Wimmen's Comix*.

Joey Alison Sayers is a cartoonist living in Oakland, CA with her girlfriend, a cat named Monkey, and a dog named Salamander. jsayers.com

Dan Savage is an author and journalist best known for his advice column *Savage Love* and for the *It Gets Better Project* (co-founded with husband Terry Miller) to help prevent suicide among LGBTQ youth. thestranger.com/savagelove

Kevin Seccia is a writer and comedian who's written on numerous television shows, specials, and ill-advised ventures. He collaborates with Ariel Schrag on the webcomic Ariel and Kevin Invade Everything! howtobeatupanything.com

Ariel Schrag is the author of the autobiographical graphic novels Awkward, Definition, Potential, and Likewise, which chronicle her four years at Berkeley High School. She went on to write for the television shows L-Word and How To Make It In America. arielschrag.com

Lawrence Schimel is a Spanish-English translator living in Madrid. Writing in both Spanish and English, he has published over 100 books as author or anthologist, including the graphic novel *Vacation in Ibiza* (NBM). desayunoencama.livejournal.com

D. Travers Scott is the author of *Execution, Texas: 1987* and *One of These Things is Not Like the Other.* He currently teaches at Clemson University. oneofthesethings.blogspot.com

Eric Shanower is best known for his Oz novels and comics, as well as *Age of Bronze*, the ongoing retelling of the Trojan War in comics form. He has won multiple Eisner Awards. ericshanower.com

Shawn (1935-2005) was a pioneering gay cartoonist, artist, and activist who created comics for both mainstream gay publications and, under the name **Sean**, erotic comics for fetish magazines. He is survived by his partner Jim Newberry. seantheartist.com

David Shenton is one of the most prolific and well-known queer British cartoonists, with his strips appearing in virtually every UK queer publication at some point. His books include *Get Her!*, *Bananas Are Not the Only Fruit*, and *Drawn Out and Painted Pink*. dscomics.co.uk

BiL Sherman is a Minneapolis townie, media designer/illustrator/masturbator, rock 'n' roller circa 1970, skateboarder, and cat person. He has made comics throughout his life and professional career. He still has an obsession with the Monster!!! wankycomics.com

Christine Smith creates the webcomics Eve's Apple and The Princess. She is committed to creating comics that gender nonconforming children can see themselves reflected in, and discovering new ways to reach out and empower them. drunkduck.com/The_Princess

Robert Triptow is a cartoonist, writer, editor, and journalist. He began making comics for the *Gay Comix* series, which he took over as editor from issue #5 through issue #13. He has contributed to anthologies such as *Juicy Mother, Meatmen, Naughty Bits, Young Lust*, and *Real Girl*. roberttriptow.com

Marguerite Van Cook is an acclaimed artist, writer, musician/singer, and filmmaker. She has collaborated with her husband James Romberger on the comic strip *Ground Zero* and, along with David Wojnarowicz, on 7 Miles a Second. thearteriesgroup.com/MargueriteVanCook

Ivan Velez, Jr. was raised in the South Bronx and heavily influenced by chop-socky karate flicks, Spanish soaps and Astro Boy cartoons. He worked for mainstream comics (Milestone, Marvel, Dutton and DC Comics), but is mostly known as the creator of *Tales of the Closet*, a graphic series depicting the lives of eight gay teens in 1980s NYC. planetbronx.com

Maurice Vellekoop is an artist and illustrator whose work has appeared in publications such as *Drawn and Quarterly, Time, GQ, Vogue, Cosmopolitan* and *Wallpaper,* as well as in several books of his own. He lives in Toronto with his partner Gordon Bowness. mauricevellekoop.com

Mary Wings is a San Francisco-based writer, artist, and musician. She created the first lesbian comic, *Come Out Comix*, in 1973, but is perhaps best known for her series of groundbreaking detective novels featuring lesbian heroine Emma Victor.

Matt Wobensmith is one of the creative forces behind Wuvable Oaf, and runs Goteblüd, a publishing company and vintage zine store in San Francisco. He created the groundbreaking "queercore" record label and fanzine Outpunk in the '90s, as well as helped start the "homohop" music movement. goteblud.livejournal.com

David Wojnarowicz (1954-1992) was a painter, photographer, writer, filmmaker, performance artist, and AIDS activist prominent in the NYC art world of the 1980s. His graphic novel *7 Miles a Second*, created in collaboration with James Romberger and Marguerite Van Cook, was published posthumously.

Rick Worley is the creator of *A Waste of Time*, a series of autobiographical comics in which, for obtuse reasons, he draws himself as a cartoon rabbit. rickworley.com

Roger Zanni is an illustrator from Barcelona who likes to cook, water his plants, sign musicals, dance robot style, prepare cocktails, and make comics! He has worked with design studios, publishing houses, magazines, and advertisement agencies. rogerzanni.com

Justin Hall is a cartoonist living in San Francisco with his partner and their pet python. Hall has won both the Xeric Award and the Prism Comics Queer Press Grant for his work, which includes the series *True Travel Tales*, *Hard To Swallow* (with Dave Davenport), and *Glamazonia the Uncanny Super Tranny*, the latter of which was also nominated for a Lambda Literary Award. His comics have appeared in publications such as the Houghton Mifflin *Best American Comics*, *The Book of Boy Trouble*, and the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

Hall curated the San Francisco Cartoon Art Museum's "No Straight Lines: Queer Culture and the Comics," the world's first museum show devoted to LGBTQ cartooning, in 2006. He is on the boards of the non-profits Prism Comics, an advocacy group for queer comics, and Siewphewyeung (Our Books), supporting Cambodian comics. He currently teaches cartooning at the California College of the Arts. allthumbspress.com.



photo by Denise Macias

They say it takes a village to raise a child; it certainly took a big, queer-friendly village to raise this book!

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Justin Hall