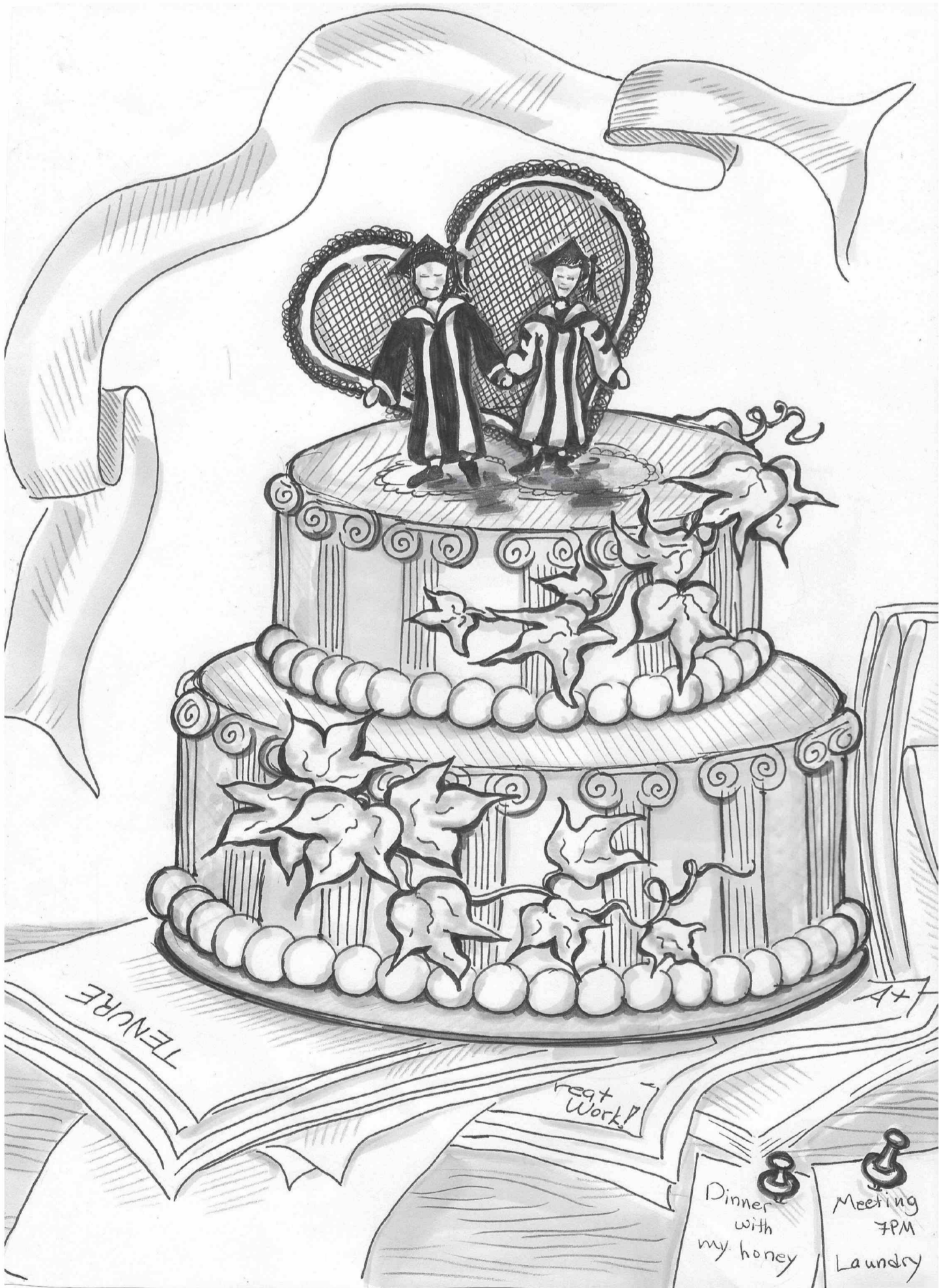


# post magazine

Brown University • September 30, 2010 • Volume 11 • Issue 4



## Professing Their Love

academics put a ring (and tenure) on it

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Sometimes you just don't know what to do. Should I stay or should I go? I can't really quantify how much trouble there'll be in either case. But I don't know that there's ever any reason to be afraid of not knowing. A little bit of the unknown makes the known go down. I'm not anti-science by any means, but it's nice to contemplate the possibility—rather than having to assert the fact—that there are vibrating strings in 11-dimensional space. Learning how to construct consistent, cohesive theories that might be able to explain the world seems better than unquestioningly accepting the theories of others.

And that brings me, perhaps unexpectedly, to art. Art doesn't have to explain; it's perfectly great when it transmits this idea of possibility. It doesn't need to simply reflect reality; it ought to add to it, contribute to the font of inspiration, and help us accept that there will be times when we just don't know. Hop on a balloon, fire up the burner, and let those thermals take you where they may. You don't need a weatherman to tell which way the wind blows, but would anyone really want to know the seven-millennia forecast?

sam

Dearest reader\*,

Post-ys are witty Wednesday night drinkers and Thayer Street blackout survivors with a taste for irreverence. But when it comes to what needs to be said, we say it.

We like it when you listen. And be warned, I have a streak of Miss Manners in me this week. So I'm serving up an out-of-the-blue and only slightly stern etiquette tidbit, and then I'll go back to being peaceably irreverent with the rest.

Here's what I have to say this fine Thursday morning:  
Say please.

Say thank you.

And damn it, play nice.

It often bears repeating\*\*. It shouldn't require it, though, so take it to heart. You've been warned.

Signed fondly, affectionately, cordially,

With love from your own aspiring Emily Post-,

kate

(\*copyright Marshall, who singlehandedly introduced this stunning turn of phrase to the English language. English is eternally grateful, and so am I. Please may I borrow it?)

(\*\*according to wikianswers, "a literal meaning would be the repetition of one or more bears." Speaking of eternal gratitude: well. All I can say is thank you, internet. Thanks for that.)

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POST-weekend

five

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2

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the Underground •  
Fri. 10pm

3

FIRE AND ICE  
Zete • Fri 10 pm

4

OUT OF HAND: JUGGLING  
SHOW AND WORKSHOP  
Alumnae Hall •  
Sat. 9:30pm

5

NOT ON BROADWAY . . . YET  
PW Upspace • Sat. 10pm

TOP TEN

# Things to Do in a Blackout/ While Blacked Out

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- 2 Glow-In-The-Dark body paint
- 3 All those candles Reslife doesn't know about
- 4 Knocking down exit signs
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- 9 "Who's in my mouth" -- Marshall
- 10 Dirty shadow puppets

## "To This Day it Still Smells Strangely Like Camel"

susan allen isn't your average landlady

max ROSERO

contributing writer

It's late afternoon in Providence, and the sky is brimming with the golden end-of-summer light that illuminates the aging glass windowpanes of nearby historic houses. In a newly-opened Turkish coffee house on the eastern perimeter of College Hill, I wait patiently for my guest to return from ordering a drink at the bar. She arrives minutes later, a pair of thinly rimmed glasses hanging securely around her neck, and takes a seat at our small tiled table in the corner of the café's main room, ready to tell me what I want to hear.

Susan Allen, the woman who sits across from me, is a jack-of-all-trades, a woman who wears far more hats than one would expect from a mother of four. She is an archaeologist, a wife, a historian and a scholar — she also happens to be my future landlady. As we sit sipping a pot of Moroccan mint tea at our table in the window, she tells me of her childhood in the Midwest, of following her father down to the Indian burial grounds behind the Cincinnati public pool to uncover arrowheads newly unearthed by the spring rains. Often, they got more than they bargained for: "Sometimes, you would walk around and there would literally be teeth sticking out of the ground," she goes on to tell me. It was those early experiences uncovering the forgotten past in the backwoods of suburban Ohio that started Allen down the path towards a career most can only dream of. After leaving the heartland behind, Susan went on to attend Smith College, where she soon became taken with the stories a favorite professor would share from her time abroad in Europe. "It was then that I decided I wanted to go

to Greece," says Allen. And that's exactly what she did, but not before taking a small, cross-country detour. Not long after graduation, Susan packed up her things and moved to Los Angeles in hopes of finding some work as an actor. Though she struggled to find parts, what she did find was work at a wholesale Greek travel agency. "I was working during the day for this travel agent and teaching myself Greek out of a giant dictionary at the L.A. public library during my lunch hour," Allen recounts. Eventually, her hard work paid off and she was able to finance her first trip to the country she had heard so much about. "I got a Greek boyfriend, who met me at the airport with a dozen red roses, I did the whole thing," she says, referencing her immersion into Greek culture. "I just totally fell in love with the place."

More than a quarter of a century later, Susan is still studying what she loves, working as an archeologist and visiting scholar in the classics department at Brown. In between jet-setting to digs in Cyprus and Israel, Susan and her husband Peter, a professor of anthropology at nearby Rhode Island College, settled down in Providence for good, though they still found time to pursue their passion for what they loved. "Greece is a place Peter and I share," she says, referencing her husband's shared interest in studying the ancient world. "Our kids like to joke that he does the living Greeks and that I do the dead ones."

As it turned out, the couple found another interest they could share: real estate. They even managed to start a small business on the side, buying up a group of historic houses in the area and

renting them out to college students like myself. "We've been doing this for a while," she tells me, smiling as she takes a sip from her cup. "In fact, the house next to yours used to sit a couple blocks away...until we moved it." She smirks. Had I not already been convinced that Susan is a woman with a trick or two up her sleeve, I would have at least batted an eye at such a statement. But something about her tells me that moving an entire house is not beyond her realm of possibility. "I was the general contractor so I can tell you all about it if you'd like" she goes on to elaborate. "It's the largest house they'll move in one piece — 180 tons!" I smile, wanting to know more, and we talk until the tea runs out about what it takes to uproot and transport a century-old Victorian.

From moving houses in Providence to excavating ancient ruins on remote Greek islands, it appears Ms. Allen is a woman who has seen it all and is more than happy to share her story with those willing to listen. "Isn't this place great?" she says of the coffee house, as we gather our things to leave. "It reminds me of some of the markets I used to visit while on digs in the Middle East, where I would haggle for carpets and old Bedouin wedding dresses."

"Wedding dresses?" I ask curiously.

"The best piece I ever found," she continues, "was this head dress that was covered in coins." She pauses for a second as if she has forgotten something, and then picks up where she left off, "Though to this day it still smells strangely like camel."

## Back to the Future

partying like you  
just got here

marty MCFLY

Editor-in-Hiding

Keeney Quad is the same rambling brick dormitory I remember. It's Wednesday night and I'm on the move, trying to sniff out some dank trees. The air is thick and the linoleum floors are lit with a florescent glow. Some freshmen are getting ready to go to FishCo.

A lean kid named Jake staggers my way; his face is ruddy and his speech a garbled slush. I figured his name because a girl in a clingy red dress kept repeating, "Jacob, be in a picture... Jacob! Be in a picture with me! *Jake!* Are you listening to me? I need more vod-kah!"

But Jake is busy. "Who are *you?*" he asks, poking me hard in the chest with one finger. "Are you... are you talking to my girl?"

I was absolutely talking to his girl. She was twirling her hair in her finger and pushing her breasts together with her arms crossed. Like I don't know that trick.

I take a look around the bedroom I'm in and it's all very theatrical. There's easily two-dozen freshmen and everyone desperately wants to be well-liked. There's a lot of loud laughter and forced intimacy. I get invited into a circle to take shots with some guys whose hats are all on backwards, and we all toast to Brown or something.

Then FishCo. Some half-hearted hellos on the porch. Spark up. Drink stolen liquor. Some would-be-frat freshman looking to impress.

Dance floor. I'm not an exhibitionist; you know I'm a beast.

So then I'm trekking up the Hill with my boy and we run into these Legs we know, some loose cannon art student. And then we're at some RISD party and all the guys are wearing mesh shirts and drinking white-wine and are emaciated. And the chicks all look like '60s housewives (pearls, curls) and we're both like, "So, girl. Do you draw?"

We roll out because they all started twitching to Major Lazer and it made us uncomfortable. We're going to hit up some Nice Slice and on the way we get a text that sh\*t's poppin' on Angell.

*You know what let's do? Let's shotgun a Four Loko.*

I'm in some sheets.

*How did I get here? Oh did I really text...Yup, I really did. That'll be nice in class... man, I got to finish that English paper in the morning. F\*ck.*

# Professing Their Love

academics put a ring (and tenure) on it

fred MILGRIM

staff writer

In the spring of my freshman year I took a first-year seminar called *The Roaring Twenties*, with Professor Tamar Katz. It was my cup of tea: early 20th century literature (read: *Gatsby*), a group of 20 students and short, response-style writing. Professor Katz knew how to spark discussion, and I was generally very happy with the course (read: I got an A).

Fast forward to the following spring. I'm in *Further Adventures in Creative Nonfiction* with Ed Hardy, a visiting lecturer. All of his courses are workshop writing classes, and each day it was a different student's turn to be critiqued — but Ed's critiques are fun, not stressful, and they fly all over the place. We pulled stories out of everywhere, and the class had a great dynamic. So, at the end of the semester, it seemed only appropriate for us to celebrate with a pizza dinner at Ed's house in Cranston.

"You may or may not know I'm married to Professor Katz, and our sons will be there. I hope you don't mind."

*You're whaaa?*

I had high school teachers who were married to one another, but I hadn't given much thought to my college professors' personal lives. I mean, I knew academic couples existed, but at least they shared the same last name in high school.

Before they took their vows, many now-married professors first met in grad school; as Seth Rockman, associate professor of history, puts it, "When you spend your 20s and 30s in grad school, where else are you going to meet anyone?"

So it was a shock for me to discover that two of my professors were together — one tenured (Katz) and the other an adjunct professor (Hardy), who gets paid by the class and remains exempt from department meetings.

One of my friends at Brown, the daughter of two biology professors, told me that occasionally advisees will sit down with her mother, professor Kristi Wharton (associate professor in the MCB department) to talk about their classes — including the ones her husband teaches.

"I'm in evolutionary bio with professor Rand — I just love him, he's so great," they might say. Or they might lambaste him.

Meanwhile, professor Wharton will do her best to stifle a giggle, but she eventually reveals, "You know, he's my husband."

"Sometimes students don't realize that their professors actually have lives," Wharton told me. "David used to walk down Thayer street with our

daughter on his shoulders, and people would stop and say, 'You have a daughter?'"

Hiring academic couples is one of the toughest issues that universities face when looking to fill their faculty. When universities try to snatch up superstar professors, often they're forced to fill two positions—one for the professor, and one for their spouse. But sometimes, it's too costly to hire both academics.

Professor Rockman is married to Tara Nummedal, also an associate professor in the history department, and the two of them are currently in Los Angeles completing research for their next books. The two met in grad school at UC Davis, and after working on their postdoctoral research, Nummedal was offered a position at Brown in 2002, and Rockman in 2004, after a tenure track position opened.

"We didn't have a lot of leverage over Brown, so one of us got a job, and the other one had the good fortune of applying for a position that opened up," he said. But not everyone is so lucky. "It's a story very typical of academic couples; if you don't want to have a commuter marriage of 3,000 miles, you have to look for creative ways to end up in the same place, and sometimes institutions will help you, and sometimes they'll stand in the way of that."

"Tara and I are exceedingly lucky," he said. "We're able to walk to work together."

According to a 2008 Stanford study that surveyed 13 leading research universities, 36% of faculty members are married to another professor. It is important for universities to develop a spousal hiring policy in order to compete for the best and brightest professors. According to the report, "Academic couple hiring has increased from 3 percent in the 1970s to 13 percent since 2000."

Citing this article, Rockman explained, "If you don't have a spousal hiring policy, you aren't making a serious commitment to faculty diversity." Smaller schools trying to woo Ivy League professors away have had generous spousal hiring policies.

On the other hand, places like Harvard are "very obnoxious" about creating professor positions, and they may try to find a way around creating a second professorship, Rockman said. They have different ways of creating jobs, such as offering administrative positions in hospitals.

It is a touchy subject, and not everyone turns out happy in all cases, but it



Katerina Dalavurak

seems that Brown has been one of the more progressive options (at least for the professors here).

For assistant professors in the physics department, Anastasia Volovich and Marc Spradlin, the journey from Harvard grad school to Brown was *relatively* straightforward. They did, however, spend part of their postdoctoral research time on opposite coasts, Volovich at Santa Barbara and Spradlin at Princeton. When looking for faculty positions, they had five overlapping offers and Brown stood out.

"We came to Brown because we were very happy with the situation, and the research group here in our department is very strong," Volovich said. "At other interviews, there were a lot of unprofessional questions."

"Most of the questions were directed at her," added Spradlin with a laugh. "They were very inappropriate." But Brown did not seem too concerned about their marriage, so they ended up here.

In 1990, when professor Rand was offered a job in the EEB department, his wife Kristi was pregnant with their daughter (my friend), but she decided to set up interviews at the schools that he was deciding between.

At one point, she was giving a presentation and the chairman was constantly whispering to the person next to her, "What does she expect? She's pregnant!"

Wharton eventually accepted a position at Brown, and applied for many grants over the next five years to pay her salary and support her research. "I was told I had ruined my career by people I was close with. They said I was never going to make it," she said. She proved them all wrong when she was eventually offered a tenure track position in 1995.

Raising a family is a challenge for any working married couple, but working at the same institution sometimes makes it easier.

"To some degree, you govern your own life, you can be more flexible with raising a family," Wharton said. "But the demands are pretty intense. I have

a lot of women advisees who ask me, 'How did you do it?'"

Dealing with daycare and young children is difficult, but the challenges get more demanding as children get older, Wharton said. "Now the issues are psychological. Sometimes it's hard for me to be sitting here writing a lecture and not think about her."

For professors Katz and Hardy, the English department set up their teaching schedules so that one can be home on a weekday in case the kids are sick (although I clearly remember each one cancelling class to attend to their children on multiple occasions). "I think it's easy being in academia," said Katz. "There's an enormous amount of work, but you can choose when to do it. If you need to go home, you can do that."

"It could potentially be a lot tougher," said Hardy.

When asked to name the best part about being in a relationship with another professor, the answers were consistent across the board. They understand one another's craziness.

As Wharton puts it, "They understand the pressures and challenges on you." When her husband comes home at two-o'clock in the morning, she knows why.

"They understand why you're up until 2 am thinking about a problem, or why you can't go to a movie, because you have to grade papers. These things don't stop when you go home at the end of the day," said Rockman. Sometimes the intense focus on work can become a problem, though. "An argument at a faculty meeting suddenly comes home, gets discussed over dinner, in bed and over breakfast. Lack of boundaries can become a real problem," Rockman added.

So next time you have a chance to get pizza at your professor's house, go for it. It's a glimpse into the lives of two great professors, and two great people, at that. As Rockman's colleague once said, "Just because someone is having sex with someone else doesn't mean they deserve to teach at Brown." So if they're both here, you know they deserve it.

# Out of the Woods

bon iver & kanye west: expect the unexpected

katie DELANEY

music editor

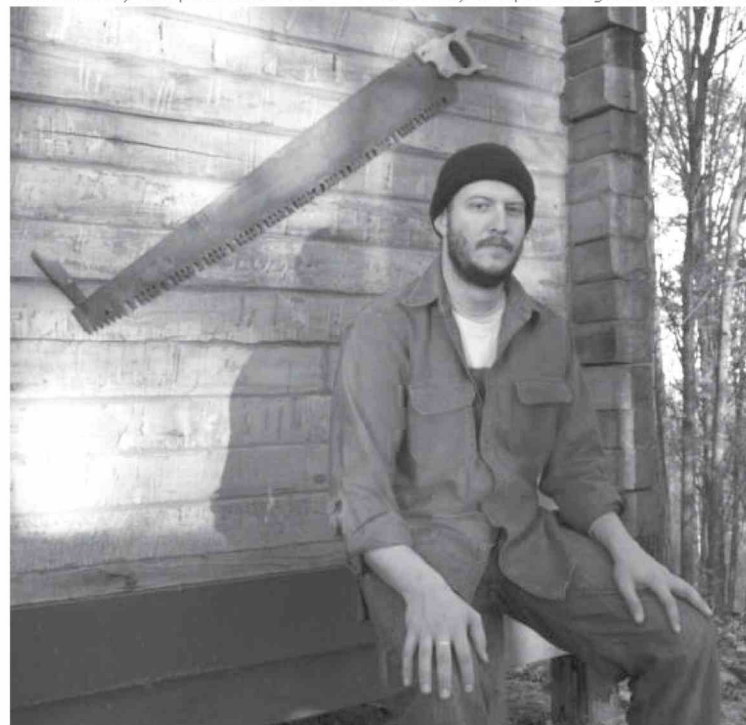
Imagine you're in Hawaii. Now imagine you're in a studio in Hawaii with Kanye West. He's working on his latest album, and you guys are just hangin' out: John Legend is there, so is Nicki Minaj, so is Rick Ross. And then this shaggy white guy walks through the door, wearing a faded flannel shirt, a beard with bits of leaves stuck in it and knit hat, and you realize that it's that guy from Bon Iver — the one who recorded that mopey yet heart-wrenching breakup album alone in a cabin in Wisconsin. Weird? Not as much as you might think.

Justin Vernon's collaboration with Kanye came as a sort of novelty shock to the music world. For West, it was a step further than his work with Chris Martin on Graduation's "Homecoming"—not only is Vernon slightly less well known than Martin, but his music is less poppy, less compatible with West's, at least upon first glance. (Try and imagine a Kanye verse over "Skinny Love." It hurts.) But the team-up is actually less jarring than it seems. Buried deep in Bon Iver's first album, *For Emma, Forever Ago*, the track "Wolves (Act I And II)" hides a hint of a vocoder. And there the glinting streams of auto-tune start to come together, and the West/Vernon pairing begins to make sense.

Vernon, as it turns out, is no stranger to collaboration or to genre-bending. In college he started indie rock/alt country band DeYarmond Edison with three friends. The foursome left their Wisconsin hometown for Raleigh, NC, where they found moderate success and recorded two albums. Eventually though, creative tensions in the band caused a split. The other members went on to form bluegrass-y group Megafaun. After breaking up with his band, his girlfriend, and suffering a particu-



Photo courtesy of <http://idolator.com> Photo courtesy of <http://weblogs.sun-sentinel.com>



larly rough case of mono, Vernon returned home to Wisconsin and recorded *For Emma*. Alone in a snowy cabin, Bon Iver was born.

But the fun doesn't end there. After his *For Emma* success, Vernon went on to collaborate with post-rock instrumentalists Collections Of Colonies Of Bees in a group called Volcano Choir. Their album, *Unmap*, uses Vernon's distinctive voice as another layer of instrumentation, rather than a traditional vocal part with verses and choruses. And then there is Vernon's participation in Gayngs, a supergroup whose member list reads like a who's-who of the North Carolina / Minneapolis music scenes: members of Solid Gold and Digitata, saxophonist Michael Lewis (of Andrew Bird's band and jazz-trio Happy Apple), and Doomtree Hip Hop Collective members P.O.S. and Dessa. And, for the happy ending inclined, Vernon's old friends Megafaun are also Gayngs members.

When you take all this into account, Vernon comes out less like a reclusive mountain man and more like a talented musician with a curious nature and a flare for experimentation. So, in a way, it sort of fits that Kanye's new album would sample "Woods", from Bon Iver's EP *Blood Bank*. And it's even less surprising that Vernon, musical collaborator extraordinaire, would be down to join in on Kanye's studio time in Hawaii. If anything from this mash-up should be celebrated, it's Vernon's versatility. After all, you have to hand it to a guy who can jump from a home life of "going to the farmers market, going to the studio, and going home to play with my cats," to a studio in Hawaii, "sitting in the back room rolling a spliff with Rick Ross, talking about what to do on the next part of a Kanye song."

## Cheaper Than a Therapist

why you cried during *the lion king*

priyanka CHATTERJEE

literary editor

Confession: I am an English concentrator. That fact, combined with my position as literary editor of this lovely publication, makes encouraging the greater student body of Brown University to put aside time to read fiction seem rather self-serving. After all, I get concentration credit for the habit. And, to be fair, there is a contingent of people that solely believe in reading the books to stay up to date on references in popular culture and conversation (although let's be honest, I have never heard someone reference Hemingway without either a tinge of irony or pretentiousness). But there are bigger and better reasons to read fiction—and not just the classics, though those \$6.99 price tags at Borders can be hard to resist. Nonfiction is fact about the world; fiction is fact about human nature.

I've had the nonfiction versus fiction argument with a lot of people. The die-hard nonfictionites insist that they stay purists because they are interested in learning about the world at large. Why get emotionally invested in a bunch of characters that don't actually exist when you can

read an equally compelling true-story memoir of a person that probably was in the situation anyway? Why read *The Kite Runner* when *Reading Lolita in Tehran* can do it for you, and with greater factual accuracy? The point of nonfiction is to educate. I won't even deny that *Freakonomics* remains one of the most revolutionary books I've ever read, and that Gladwell guy sure had a lot to say about blinking. But with the advent of the internet and History Channel documentaries, the only new things that nonfiction has to offer are accounts of incredibly specific circumstances. Half of these instances come in memoirs, many of which have the same emotional gravity as a great piece of fiction. At this point in the argument, I am usually asked why someone should bother becoming emotionally invested in someone that doesn't even exist.

To this, I speak to the same people who cry at movies or television shows about people that don't actually exist. I'm talking to everyone who's ever seen *The Notebook* or *Saving Private Ryan*, or even people who have teared up during a particularly somber episode of *Scrubs*. These movies, and all

their derivatives, teach us about the human condition. And while images are moving, especially with a soundtrack behind them, so are words. That's why we have commencement speeches, toasts, and eulogies. A gifted writer can produce the same effect with sentences as any director can; that's why there are Oscars for screenwriting too. We have vows at weddings, not montages. There's a reason almost all Nicholas Sparks novels get turned into the movies; the conditions he creates for his characters have the capability to move people entirely disconnected from that situation. Ever cried during *The Lion King*? Based on *Hamlet*. Clearly, the power of words is integral to our daily life, and this is nowhere more evident than in great fiction.

And, as we learned with the James Frey/*Million Little Pieces* debacle, even nonfiction can be greatly exaggerated for emotional effect. Why not read something actually styled with skill? A breeze through Junot Diaz' 2008 Pulitzer Prize winning *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* gives the duality of the immigrant experience a lot more heft and relatabil-

ity than anything a sociology textbook can give you—and that's with stream-of-consciousness writing. A jaunt through any of Zadie Smith's works gives readers a well-executed and intricate portrait of modern-day England that goes beyond Prince William and Posh Spice. And for those who have commitment issues? There are always books of short stories, like Jhumpa Lahiri's lauded collections or *Oliver Kitteredge*, by Elizabeth Stout—all the talent in an eighth of the time.

Fiction is an exercise in escape, as those middle school inspirational posters always told you. But it is just as much an exercise in education, though a different kind than nonfiction. Fiction is learning about the way people interact, the way people emote, the spectrum of conditions that mankind can be put through. Fiction gives people the ability to sympathize, a greater capacity for empathy. So if your girlfriend is telling you you're not open enough with her, or your friends say you're just too sarcastic, pick up some well-crafted fiction. Trust me, it's far cheaper than a therapist.

# "I Don't Suppose You Ever Fell in Love with a Midget Weighing Thirty-nine Pounds"

saroyan's *the time of your life* at trinity rep.

michelle MEYERS

staff writer

"In the time of your life, live—so that in that good time there shall be no ugliness or death for yourself or for any life your life touches." So begins a long and beautifully philosophical quote by playwright William Saroyan, whose 1939 play *The Time of Your Life* won both the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award. *The Time of Your Life* went up this past weekend (September 23-26) at the Pell Chafee Performance Center's Citizen's Bank Theater, associated with Providence's Trinity Repertory Theater. The performance featured second-year actors from the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program and was directed by Michael Perlman, who graduated from the MFA Directing program this past year.

One of the challenges of staging *The Time of Your Life* was maintaining its relevance for modern audiences 70 years after it was written. The play, set during the Great Depression in a San Francisco dive bar called "Nick's Pacific Street Saloon, Restaurant, and Entertainment Palace," centers around Joe, a young, wealthy loafer. Joe encourages the talents of the bar's host of eccentric

patrons, which includes, but is not limited to, Harry, a comedian/dancer hoping to make it big; Kit Carson, a rough-and-tough Indian fighter; Tom, Joe's errand-boy and best friend; and Kitty Duval, a prostitute with whom Tom falls in love. Saroyan's tone reflects his buoyant optimism. Despite being set in the late '30s, *The Time of Your Life* is a comedy with relatively few moments that delve into the ugliness of the poverty and racism of the Great Depression.

*The Time of Your Life* is very much of its period, with the dialogue often adhering to a Cannery Row-esque style somewhat reminiscent of a comedy routine "shtick." As the play progressed, however, the actors were able to discover a way into the characters such that the audience could penetrate their slapstick veneer and engage with them as real and genuine characters. Particularly strong performances were given by Philippe Bowgen as Joe, Charlie Thurston as Nick, and Lauren Lubow as Kitty, although the ensemble as a whole was an abundantly talented group of actors. In addition, Ricky Oliver's use of physical comedy and movement in his portrayal of Harry was one of the highlights of the night.

Perlman's staging of the piece was right on the mark. The naturalistic lighting, the off-balance arrangement of chairs and tables stacked on top of one another as scenery, and the haunting tune of the chorus of women acting as the jukebox all contributed to the creation of an authentic atmosphere that went beyond the sometimes hokey and stereotyped situations.

One of the most poignant moments of the performance was a conversation between Joe and Kit Carson that perfectly encompassed the mix of comedy and poignancy that represents Saroyan's writing at its best. As Joe holds a revolver in his hand, telling Nick that he "wants to study it. I'm interested in things," Kit Carson enters the bar, a lumbering, cowboy-type looking for a drink. Carson asks Joe: "I don't suppose you ever fell in love with a midget weighing thirty-nine pounds?", a question that elicited howling laughter from the audience with its odd specificity. As Carson engages Joe with his apocryphal tales of Western life, though, embodying the mythology of the American dream and the self-made man, Joe soon opens up,

## NOT ON BROADWAY...YET\* \* A concert celebrating new musical theatre

Come to the **Production Workshop Up-space** (7 Young Orchard Avenue) this Saturday (10.2) at 10 pm for an evening of new musical theatre - composers include Kerrigan & Lowdermilk, Joe Iconis and Scott Alan to name a few. Celebrate this new work with FREE Duck & Bunny cupcakes and Meeting Street cookies after the show. Free tickets will be available in the PW Lobby at 9:15 pm Saturday. Concert concept created by David Brown '12, Alex Keegan '12, Katelyn Miles '11, Jillian Robbins '11 and Elizabeth Rothman '11.

saying, "Living is an art. It's not like book-keeping. It takes a lot of rehearsing for a man to be himself." In this way, Saroyan's writing transcends its era, addressing questions of identity that remain applicable today. Though our generation may not have grown up during the Great Depression, we similarly engage with issues of how to live our lives and what it means to be oneself rather than constructing a façade.

## Mockumenterrible

abc's *my generation* doesn't impress

sam CARTER

editor-in-chief

Trying to capture the essence of a generation is almost always a Herculean task. Maybe it's even a job for an Atlas. But it's never a job for television executives. Especially the uncreative ones at ABC. They came up with the idea to create a fake documentary (they'd probably prefer the term mockumentary, but only a precious few truly warrant the term) that follows high school classmates ten years after graduation. They comprise a veritable diaspora of people from Generation Y, so the producers — in a fit of what we can only presume they thought was sheer televisual genius — called the show *My Generation*. So subtle and oh so clever.

The show begins with ten high school seniors being interviewed by a woman whose face is never shown. Everything is filmed in a painfully self-aware documentary format. Not only is this terribly derivative, but the shots of the aforementioned interviewer and her camera crew add nothing for the viewer. The only people who could ever make something like this work are the producers of *The Office* and Christopher Guest.

It takes a lot to make a television's

plot truly great, so I cannot fault the show for having a plotline that only does enough to make me mildly interested in seeing what happens in the next episode. Stereotypes populate the list of characters, and the writers — in what we can only presume was an effort to seem more clever — attempt to make them more interesting by attaching their fates to various cultural events from the past decade.

Take, for example, the character who was a star basketball player at a prestigious university and — in what we can only presume was a bout of confusion on the part of the writers — then decided to enlist in the army after the 9/11 attacks. While it's great that there's some unabashed patriotism here, it hardly seems likely. And maybe I'm crazy, but I thought that the whole point of a mockumentary was to satirize real people. Make the characters seem too unbelievable and you've got yourself a fictional piece in which you can't truly comment on the nature of an entire generation.

Sickeningly predictable events and traits occur, including — but not limited to — the prom night pregnancy and the high school lovers (a different twosome,

not the soon-to-be pregnant ones) still pining for each other ten years later (and the writers — in what we can presume was yet another artistic epiphany — even add in a family objection to the lover; ol' Bill's rolling in his grave). Besides September 11, there's also the Enron fiasco and the Iraq war. The high school classmates, who almost always have their stereotype literally spelled out onscreen (like we couldn't figure it out from their actions), such as "The Nerd" or "The Rich Kid" whenever they appear, are all from Austin, TX. *Walker Texas Ranger* was an okay Texas show, but *Friday Night Lights*, which recently received its first Emmy nods, is a great Texas show. *My Generation* hardly challenges *FNL*'s claim to the throne and, to be frank, thoroughly disgraces the ever-vibrant artistic originality that so pervades and characterizes Austin.

Maybe it's fair to say that it's unfair to be so harsh on a show just because of its pilot. But then, by the same token, you'd have to wait twenty years or so to evaluate whether a historical event was just or unjust. And that, at least to me, seems inappropriate. Save yourself the time and learn about this generation by

actually interacting with its members — not watching them on television.

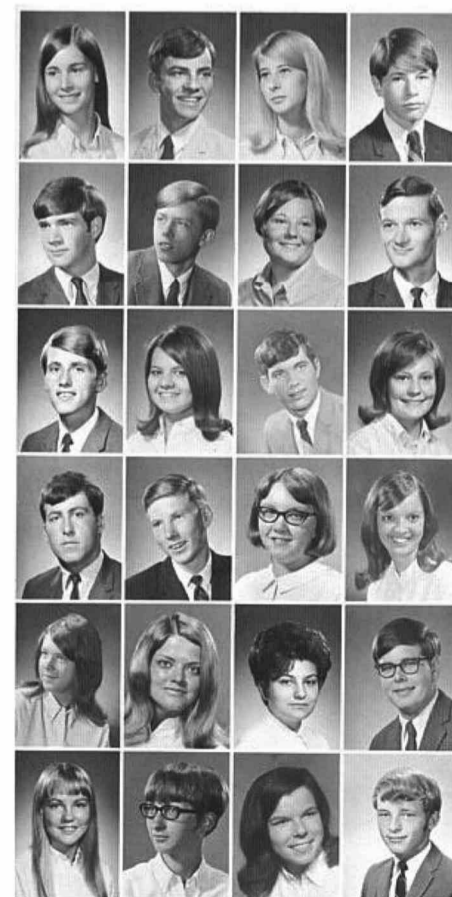


Photo courtesy of <http://www.historic.columbusindiana.org>

# Me Jane, You Food

## playing the v card

jane BRENDLINGER  
food columnist

I must admit, dear reader, I have a confession. To some foodies, I know that this might come as a shock and an outrage, but I can't hide any longer. My name is Jane Brendlinger, and I am a vegan.

This might sound like a strange sort of admission, yet during the nine months that I've practiced veganism, people have reacted to this news like I just admitted to having some quirky chronic disease. Some respond with pity, like those people who offer you a muffin then quickly retract the gift in a self-made awkward moment: "Want to try — oh wait, right. I'm *so* sorry." I must remind them that it's okay, that if I chose to do so I would certainly be physically capable of consuming said muffin, and they need not upset themselves. Others absolutely recoil at the proposition, as if there existed between them and me a great rift in cultural understanding: "But *why?*" And thus begins the Great Vegan Inquisition, and I am placed on the witness stand to testify in defense of veganism. And when these questions come, I sigh and begin my spiel...

I first started my vegan adventures this past January as a New Year's resolution. A third-year vegetarian, I'd often flirted with the idea of going all the way,

dietarily speaking. I'd read all the food lit that argued in its favor, learning about the health benefits as well as the environmental impact of changing your diet, not to mention the countless animal lives saved in the process. And so I decided to try it out for a year, as a test of will power and in an effort to gain a greater consciousness of my consumption.

The results of my dietary experiment were a bit counterintuitive. In limiting myself to select food groups, I ended up expanding my culinary horizons. I discovered meat substitutes, not just the fake look-a-likes such as Ratty vegan nuggets (though I enjoy those immensely), but proteins one can actually cook with like tofu, seitan, and tempeh. Vegetables became my new passion and my favorite medium, with all the color, texture, and flavor they add to a meal. Baking became chemistry: I didn't need eggs, I needed binders, and I didn't need butter, I needed fats to weaken the bonds of gluten proteins. Being vegan transformed me as a cook, granting me a deeper culinary knowledge and a greater intimacy with food.

I can't say it hasn't been difficult, and I can't say I haven't eaten animal products since, either. No matter how many vegan scientists put their heads together, they

will never produce a substance quite like cheese. The closest thing I've eaten thus far is called, "We Can't Say It's Cheese." Aptly named, because you really can't. In Europe this summer, I took a two-week vacation from eating vegan, and I can't say I didn't enjoy it, either, cheese being one of the most fantastic food innovations in existence.

Every time I give into temptation, and every time I'm put up to defend my food philosophy, it's hard not to reconsider. Would I eat dairy if I lived on a farm and got it straight from the cows? Perhaps. If I'm eating vegan, should I also avoid leather products and check my shampoo labels? A line must be drawn somewhere, I think, so I remain in the realm of being a dietary vegan. Will I never eat an omelet again? Someday, I think, I might transition to a relaxed version of this diet. I've learned that there's nothing wrong with temperance, and even being a weekday vegan or even eating less red meat works towards the same goals. For now, I'm enjoying the ride, exploring a world of flavor, pure chemistry, and savoring each bite.

**My favorite chocolate cake recipe (vegan, if only by coincidence):**

Ingredients:  
*1 1/4 cups flour*  
*1 cup sugar*  
*1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder*  
*1 tsp baking soda*  
*1/2 tsp salt*  
*1 cup warm water*  
*1 tsp vanilla extract*  
*1/3 cup vegetable oil*  
*1 tsp distilled white or apple cider vinegar*

Note: For ultimate dish-saving laziness, you can even mix the batter in the pan.

1. Combine dry ingredients. Make four holes in the mixture, ranging in size from large to small. Pour the warm water into the largest hole, the vegetable oil in the second largest, and the vanilla and the vinegar into the two smallest. Combine with fork.

2. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, or until cake passes the toothpick test. Let cool, then top with powdered sugar or your favorite vegan icing: my favorite recipe uses powdered sugar, vegan margarine, soymilk, and vanilla, whipped to fluffy creaminess. Garnish icing with Oreos: they're vegan!

# Pastoral Bliss on Wriston Quad

## presided over by the honorable dairy cow

rémy ROBERT  
staff writer

It is a crisp day, somewhere between summer and fall. People freckle the muddy grass with their humble picnics of fuzzy yellow peaches and torn-off tufts of sourdough bread. A mild and sweet caramel-colored dairy cow presides over everything, gazing sleepily through her thick eyelashes.

The scene of this pastoral bliss? Wriston Quad. Flanked by fraternities and the Ratty, it seems an unlikely site for fresh oregano and natural beeswax votives, but hey, when else do rainbow hordes of veggies collide with irony and livestock? I'll take it.

Rhode Island, for such a tiny state, is an agricultural powerhouse, and that becomes abundantly clear every Wednesday from 11:00 to 2:00 at Brown's own farmer's market. Like a glorified produce aisle, it offers an array of the freshest, crispest crops. Toss in some other specialty groceries from Rhode Island-based producers, and meeting your daily quota of fruits and veggies — all locally sourced — is actually easy. Here's a guide to the best and loveliest of the farmer's market.

**Seven Stars Bakery** (Providence): Charming woven baskets bear sinewy baguettes, stout olive-spangled loaves, and flaxen sourdough, all for \$3-4 a pop (although commitment-

phobes can opt for smaller, cheaper durum rolls). I warmly advise any carb enthusiast to snag one of the bakery's specialty sandwiches. I go weak in the knees for the ham-Swiss-and-butter variety, but if you possess the kind of self-restraint I've never known, there are less brazen vegetarian options, with roasted red peppers, Narragansett Creamery mozz, and olive tapenade (as well as turkey with bacon and avocado mayo, or roast beef with watercress and horseradish). Brownies fill peculiar round cups with fudgy, sludgy fervor and are by all accounts superior to their square cousins.

**Barden Family Orchard** (North Scituate): offers blushing apples, butternut squash, and some of the most beautiful heirloom tomatoes I've seen. My favorite weekly purchase is the quarter-peck of peaches. \$7 will get you right around 13 or 14 of them. What's striking about these peaches is not only their quality (the succulent flesh doesn't cling to the pit and would make Stellaluna herself soar in giddy circles) but also their effusiveness. These peaches are here to party. The first bite often yields a gush of peach nectar that will spill between your fingers, trickle down your arms, and cloak you in post-peach afterglow. You've been warned.

**Narragansett Creamery** (Providence): Wedges of cheese and masterfully concocted spreads send out a siren call to Seven Stars' warm loaves; it is "twoo wuv" indeed. Bread or no bread, you'd do well to pick up an orb of celestially milky buffalo mozzarella or a block of buttery, Gouda-esque "Divine Providence" cheese. My staple is the pirate spread, named because of its key ingredient, Salty Sea Feta. The cheese is whizzed with sundried tomatoes and spices until it is fiery and smooth à la Jessica Rabbit. Go on ahead with your bad self.

**Pak Express** (Cranston): From the tiny one-acre patch that farmers Mr. and Mrs. Xiong rent nearby come grape tomatoes in whatever shape and color suits your fancy, from glossy red bonbons to more homely, heterogeneous baby heirlooms. A dry pint will run you a full 100 cents (the best deal at the market, hands down). Last week, I picked up a sack of green beans, which I have since eaten raw on their own and as vehicles for salsa. Such a good decision: my two-dollar bag has lasted me all week. As a bonus, I extracted one exemplar that measured a full nine inches, which must set some kind of record, somewhere. It's history in the making, y'all.

*Honorable mention:*

**Bernie B's** (Warwick): There is de-

lightful conversation to be had with Bernie the beekeeper, a real-life incarnation of Carl from *Up!*, about his unique pink lemonade honey and other fascinations. Butter him up and he may just tell you his secret, especially if you swap him a quarter for one of his flavored honey straws.

**Besto Pesto** (Pawtucket): Besto Pesto does what it does—lemon-basil pesto—very well. The lush green spread is brightened by the citrus and rounded out with romano and a smidgen of garlic. You can keep it frozen before opening, too; I foresee some hoarding during this gray winter.

**Hill Orchards** (Johnston): Apple cider. GO! Though Hill Orchards is also the source of apple butter, apple-sauce, and just plain apples, it's this cider that I want to buy by the bushel. This is what apples want to be when they grow up.

If you miss the Wednesday markets, there are other markets that happen in the Providence area on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, so chances are you can still get your fix. Make haste, as these markets will close down in late October, but when that happens, be sure you check out the wintertime market outpost for wintry crops and brunch (!) at AS220.

MM  
sexpert

# Sexicon

## menstrual art

**Menstrual Art:** *n.* the use of menstrual blood as pigment in paintings, sculptures, and performance compositions, perceived variably as gross, empowering, and/or clumpy.

In 2008, the Museum of Modern Art opened an exhibition called, "Pour Your Body Out (7354 Cubic Meters)" by Swiss conceptual artist Pipilotti Rist. Two video projectors (conspicuously mammarian in shape) cast a 25-by-200-foot wraparound video on the pink-curtained walls, and featured fruit, pigs, toes, earthworms, nude women, and, oh yeah, menstrual blood. According to a lot of unproven (but conceivable) rumors, MoMA asked Rist to edit out the deluge of menstrual fluid that surges over the screens from between the legs of a bathing-suited beach babe, ending the video à la that scene from "The Shining" when the elevator doors have an aneurysm. Luckily, Rist refused to censor her vid, and proceeded to paint the town—er, walls—red.

"Body fluids attest...to a certain irreducible 'dirt' or disgust, a horror of the unknown or the unspecifiable that permeates, lurks, lingers, and at times leaks out of the body, a testimony of the fraudulence or impossibility of the 'clean' or 'proper,'" writes Elizabeth Grosz in *Volatile Bodies*. Moreover,

end-of-the-century artists confronted, consciously or not, a growing global preoccupation with blood as a main transmitter of HIV. People became increasingly aware of their own blood, of the seeming homogeneity of the collective—dare I call it—blood-pool, despite the microbes running through the veins of potentially anybody. The United Colors of Benetton launched its 1990 Fall/Winter campaign with billboards, posters, commercials, and magazine ads of AIDS- and other "modern problem"-related images without taglines. Oliviero Toscani's hard-to-look-at photographs were comprised of everything from the bloodstained clothes of a dead Croatian student to a white baby nursing a black woman's exposed breast to vials of—you guessed it—blood. With Benetton, advertising campaigns had suddenly adopted the shock factor that artists had been using for decades to express what Grosz calls, "the permeability of the body, its necessary dependence on an outside, its liability to collapse into this outside (that is what death implies)...." Lo, blood everywhere, an instrument of awareness, a cause for controversy, maybe, but also a natural human unifier. The circulatory system: everybody's got one.

Not so with the uterine lining! Menstrual blood, which differs from other blood with its viscous consistency, clots of dark tissue, and variously pink, brown, and crimson color, is not something ev-

eryone experiences (which is why, incidentally, I chose to include what many readers will consider superfluous and unwelcome information). Menstrual blood goes a step beyond Serrano's blood-and-semen pieces; at least, in my experience, it's generally more acceptable to discuss men's sexual exploits (be they pussy-, penis-, or porno-induced) than to describe the relative heaviness of a woman's menstrual flow. The process of ejaculating semen is also usually more pleasurable than that of shedding the endometrium (which, wouldn't you know it, doesn't even Spell Check). Incarnate in menstrual blood is the burden (and boon) of the fertile woman, the dilemma of whether or not to bring life into this world which is so rife with the repression of truth. A menstrual bloodstain implies labor, odor, age, motherhood, daughterhood, one-half a wasted zygote, dirtiness, secrecy, mucus, moodiness, tenderness, pain (though I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the beauty of so many of those things and the power often derived from experiencing them). The blood art movement had missed the forest for the trees—or, more aptly, missed half the trees in their rendering of the forest. Serrano didn't commission any menstrual blood for his cibachromes. The United Colors of Benetton didn't feature dirty tampons.

Judy Chicago did, though. In 1971, the outspoken feminist artist made a photolithograph of a woman's hands

pulling a red tampon from between her legs. Chicago's "Menstruation Bathroom," a life-sized walk-in bathroom covered in bloody "sanitary napkins," etc., was a prominent piece of explicitly menstrual American art; the path was probably laid, however, by women like Kiki Smith, Barbara Kruger, Carolee Schneeman, and Frida Kahlo, whose "Henry Ford Hospital" (1932) and "Unos Cuantos Piquetitos" (1935) deal, if abstractly, with menstruation. The works of these women, in the context of a culture increasingly fascinated by bodily fluids, precipitated a broader integration of the menses into the underground art world. Finally. Call it a pubescence.

With the growing popularity of eco-friendly products like the Diva Cup, menstrual blood is easier to preserve, observe, and play with. Adding a little acrylic to a cup of blood can prevent it from darkening and hardening once it's been painted on a canvas, or so I hear. There still isn't an abundance of venues for menstrual art, though; if MoMA's still getting queasy about a little menorrhagia on their walls, I'm not anticipating a menstrual coup de musée anytime soon. For now, there are Livejournal forums and Blogspots; Google "menstrual art" and you'll be inundated with picture after crimson picture of animals, landscapes, female bodies sprouting wings, rising up.

# Lovecraft & Dorian

## toeing the line

lovecraft &amp; dorian

sexperts

Dear Lovecraft and Dorian,

My friend told me this story and I want to get your opinion. She had this boyfriend that was always saying, "Let me put my toe in your vag — it'll be funny." She kept saying no, but he kept saying it would be soooo funny that she finally agreed. (This was probably over a span of five months.) Here's where we disagree: She thinks he's being honest that his main motivation was to get a laugh, but I think he was getting off on it. Who's right?

Toe Fun or Toe Freak...

Darlink TFTF,

I am waving the Bullshit Flag on this one. While toe-vag contact might be hilarious for some people, this kid most definitely was getting more out of it than a few laughs. He kept asking for FIVE MONTHS! Only someone who really, really wants to get his toe in a twat and get off on it would be that insistent. Or maybe he is just truly dedicated to his lulz in a way that I could never be—but probably not. My verdict: You're right, and he loved every minute if it.

xoxo  
Lovecraft

Dear TFTF,

While it seems like this guy was really determined to get his toe inside his gf, I can't say that it was necessarily sexual. I mean, the guy may have simply watched that one episode of *Weeds* and decided that toes going into vaginas must be particularly hilarious. If he has since stopped asking about putting his toe inside his girlfriend, then it is possible that he only wanted to do it to laugh about it. I would be far more skeptical if, on the other hand, he hasn't stopped asking, "Hey, you remember when I put my toe in your vag? And it was like hilarious? Yeah, we should do that again!" (If this were the case, I'd advise your friend to talk to him about his fetish and why he felt like he had to hide it, etc., etc.) If it turns out that he *was* doing this to get off on it, I have to say that she really ought to break it off with him. Anyone devious enough to lie about why they want their toe in your vag for five months could be doing *anything* behind your back.

Your Friendly Neighborhood Stag,  
Dorian

"there is...a fine  
line between healthy  
release and creeper  
status"

Dear Lovecraft and Dorian,

With the birth of BrownFML last year, I think we can all agree that there is a considerable amount of oversharing. One of the topics that has been brought up time and time again (especially around finals) is jerking off in the SciLi and, to a lesser degree, in the Rock. I'm wondering what the etiquette surrounding this is. Is it 100 percent gross and lecherous? Or completely okay as long as you're discreet?

Playing with Privates in Public

Darlink P-cubed,

Wanking can be a nice and necessary study break, but there is definitely a fine line between healthy release and creeper status when you bring libraries into the equation. I think it's fine as long as you're super sneaky about it. Number one rule is to find a room with a lock. No stack wanking! You can never know when a freshman might be searching for a copy of *The Negative After-Potential of Frog Skeletal Muscle Fibers* in the dark because they don't know how to turn on the stack lights.

SciLi stack bathrooms lock twice,

I'm just sayin'. Also, be quiet. The last thing I want to hear when it's 2 am and I'm 60 percent through a sociology paper due the next day is a masturbatory noise seeping through the vents of the bathroom door. So lock the door, don't make noise, and clean up your jizz (if applicable) with something that you then successfully dispose of so it will not stick to an unsuspecting victim's shoe. Or take the ten-minute walk back to your room and you won't have to worry about any of this. You probably could use the fresh air anyway.

xoxo,  
Lovecraft

Dear PPP,

I can't say that I've ever jerked off in a library, but I have done enough in them to know that at least half of the fun is the thrill of almost being caught in public. I would say that (as Lovecraft suggested) as long as you don't leave any fluids behind, then I see nothing wrong with it. Just be safe—cool as they are, I doubt the Bro-Po would take as liberal a view of it as I do.

Your Friendly Neighborhood Nag,  
Dorian