

◇ Defenestration ◇

Volume II, Issue VIII

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No Smoking
by
Bernie Poliquin

A smoker
A non-smoker
And a politician
Walk into a bar

The smoker pulls out a cigarette
The non-smoker points to the "no smoking" sign
The smoker blows smoke in his face
The non-smoker complains to the politician
The politician takes a poll
The poll is inconclusive
The politician consults a bureaucracy
The bureaucracy takes a poll
The non-smoker forms an activist group
The smoker exhales billows of rebellion
The activist group riots

The bartender changes the sign to say
"No smoking unless you feel this sign violates your rights"
The non-smoker gets sick from second-hand smoke
And dies angry
The smoker gets lung cancer from first-hand smoke
And dies regretful
The politician appears on TV
And dies rich

The Reason Why
by
David Choate

The Orangutan moves about
Your Malayan canopy.
He swings along with nothing on-
An awful thing to see.

I guess in Borneo you don't care
If you keep you britches on.
You can't begin to know it's sin.
You can't see that it's wrong.

But the Big Guy way up in the clouds
Won't tolerate this long.
He'll waste you commies with tsunamis-
So think about a thong.

Two Poems
by
Ella McCrystle

We'll always have Paris

Terrorism has made true vigil-keeping
impossible, ruined imagined melodrama:
hand pressed to glass with dignified grief
while watching plane engines disappear
in a diffused twilight sky.

I wanted to be Bergman or maybe Maria Braun,
standing by that runway, eternally waving
farewell to my soldier, singular pining,
awaiting news of his return in quiet grace.

Instead I was stopped at the gate,
forced to send ticketed passenger only
through approved security devices,
sent back to the car park
before he'd even left the structure,
forced into public displays of affection --
hardly passionate or Bergman-esque.

And though I should feel reassured
by the extra protection of my beloved,
I can't help but feel a twisted betrayal
at my jilted dramatic scene.

Questionnaire at the Dating Service

I see no option for wit.
With some chagrin I pencil in other options:
my mind, humor and general loopiness.
None of these will feed through the computer
complains the sullen woman who peers
through streaks of black and purple hair.

She ignores me as I tell her it all depends
on whether you believe Joe, who likes my legs
or Steve, who appreciates tits. Really, I continue,
these are personal choices for men to make.
Steve is clearly a boob man.
Look at his Saturday Night dates -- meager
in all areas but the harnessing of triple Ds.

Then there's the whole leg thing.
Mine are OK for a short woman:

they curve, they wrap, they even walk.
But I'm no supermodel
nor Barbie.

Eyebrow tilt - light bulb!
I ask the bored woman
for an entire second form.

Name: Barbie

Best Feature: Ability to balance my long legs
and super-perky bra-negating breasts
on top of two centimeter feet.

I arrive home to two messages on the machine.
"Barbie got 400 calls," says Little Miss Sullen Streaks.

Nobody was interested in Ella's wit.

Two Poems
by
Fran LeMoine

If It Rained

If it rained
haikus
printed on
origami birds,
you still would not read them.

Everybody in This Movie is Dead

Being here with you now,
it's just like watching old movies.
I watch "Potemkin" and I say,
"Everybody in this movie is dead!"
I'd go home if I wasn't already there.

The Spot
by
Daniel Cox

Thank god a fly was buzzing around the tin ceiling of the barber shop, flirting with death in the spinning fan blades. I needed something to distract me from what Pedro was doing. Or not doing.

He circled around me with his silver-plated scissors, pushing my head around in measured thumb-thrusts, sighing ambivalently and tapping on jars of colored antiseptic and old-fashioned aftershave.

"There's something wrong here," he said vaguely.

He must've seen my hands closing into fists.

"Oh, sure I could hack it all off in five minutes," he continued, "but then you'd have to walk around feeling out of balance with the universe."

"It's just a haircut. Now cut before I lose my mind. I'll worry about the universe."

He snipped peevishly around my left ear.

"It's never just a haircut. And I won't take your money so I am free of your consumer demands. Money corrupts art in the most profound way, especially in the school of styling."

Pedro began to twitter the scissors in his fingers, whisking the metal blades like a madman cutting air, and I knew that it was only going to get worse.

He knew exactly how to phantom-cut and air-snip all around my craziness spot without touching it. He was a master of capillary torture, avoiding the part of my head that craved his professional attention the most.

The bastard knew what he was doing. The universe began to explode into stars behind my eyes. I wanted was to see him suffer like me, so I launched what he would perceive as an artistic attack.

"That's what you get when you cut with ghetto scissors in the wrong kind of light."

Pedro spun me around threateningly on the barber chair.

"You can always go to the abattoir across the street," he fumed, "I hear they specialize in army cuts and unibrows."

The fly landed on his scissors.

Pedro had to have known what was stuck in my craw, why I came to him religiously every three weeks.

My craziness spot is the annoying cow-lick near the crown of my head, made up of

individual hairs plugged directly into my insanity. The longer these offshoots got the crazier I felt and they itched like devil's flea powder. I would twirl and twirl and twirl them, rubbing a patch of my scalp raw and bloody until I could get Pedro to quell the fire for another few weeks.

He had been right—it wasn't just a haircut.

He began to fiddle with my hair again, spraying it with water, endlessly frizzing it up and tamping it down, ogling it from different angles with the help of a yellowing hand mirror from another century.

I summoned patience I didn't know I had. Maybe the old boy had found a place in my head, beyond my lunacy.

"You have to cut right here," I said showing him, careful not to touch my spot in case it threw me into a fit of insecurity and scratching, careful not to sound patronizing in case it raised his dander. "It would make me feel a lot better."

"Don't tell me where to goddamn cut. Now shut up and let me work."

The stars bunny-fucked themselves into constellations, taking me past my breaking point, my psycho-threshold.

I wrestled the scissors out of his hand and cut madly at my craziness spot. He crushed my knuckles into the blades and we cut my head up real bloody together. Our fighting hands jig sawed through my hair and when it was all over my insanity was lying in clumps on the floor.

The world was beautiful again.

"Get the hell out of my shop," Pedro screamed, "and don't you dare tell anyone you were here! Your head will ruin me!"

"Don't worry. I'll tell them I was across the street," I said with a big rainbow of a smile.

The fly landed on his head and he swatted it away. But it had made him start scratching, in the same spot, over and over again.

Camelot: A Place of Fancy and VD
by
Alison Burke

The dictionary defines Camelot as: "A place or time of idealized beauty, peacefulness, and enlightenment." Perusing my newly found job options last night at a strip club by this name, I found that often the people who are stressed with the job of titling venues many times erroneously name such places. My stroll into the club was hindered at the door, when I was harassed by a bouncer who did not think I was old enough to enter the club—though I had already furnished ID. For a normal person, this would have been a sign, but not for this penniless bum.

Smoke and the rancid smell of drunken old man oozed from the velvet covered door as I opened it. I pranced in to be accosted in the darkness by a thick man in a suit holding his earphone like a secret service member. He then took me by the arm to a guy named "Joe," who was informed over walkie-talkie that I was interested in a position. Meanwhile, a chubby, tattooed college girl shook her boobs for about 10 old men. Technology and class all rolled into one; surely this was the paradise of King Arthur.

"What position are you interested in?" He grimaced like a patron of Dior at the unveiling of last season's runway.

"The position which avoids being lusted after by men older than my grandpa. You should keep a defibrillator in this place."

Ignoring my medical advisement, the man continued on, "What experience do you have?"

"Well, I have been getting naked for free for the last few years, but I thought it was time to start cashing in on it. I'm already 5'8, do I have to wear the shoes?"

"You have to wear shoes—if you don't, it's a health code violation. Athlete's foot."

Was he kidding? They want me to rub my clit against a pole where about a dozen other girls have been doing it previously—girls who have been entered more than the British Museum and this dude is worried about diseases of the feet. Who was this guy? In the feudal system, I think his title would be court jester.

I inspected what was left of the club. The dankness surrounded my feet as I ascended the staircase to the main dance floor. The bad lighting and heavy drinking were all necessary to the ambiance. Retrospectively, this actually was somewhat of a tribute to Feudal times. Almost no light after 5pm, strange and impossible-to-remove smells, deadly ramped illness and minstrels blaring from the speakers. Though, I must point out that Exhibit's rendition of "Greensleeves," *c'est magnifique!*

Bobbin Monologue
by
Iain Maloney

So there I was just the other day, sitting in the Bobbin over a quiet pint with Dan, the funny one you'll remember. So anyways I turned to him and said something along the lines of "Do you remember the days of our youth lad, those crazy first year days when the sun was a distant memory and the low grade Spar vodka flowed freely in our veins and rooms, when students were students and the Loft was called The Elf?"

"Vaguely" Dan replied sharpening that legendary wit on another Murphy's. "Those were the days of Dickens, Hamlet and Monday nights with Irish John. Them were great days. Whatever `appened to `em?"

"We grew old lad" I replied thinking that now, at almost twenty and one I was nearly fully grown up and therefore nearly dead.

It reminded me of a time, years before when I was sitting in our local, a dirty little den that made its income chiefly from exploiting underage delinquents like myself, and I turned to my mate Barry who had just made an even bigger tit of himself by smashing a beer glass with a stray cue ball from the ever ripped pool table in the corner beside the bandit and said to him. "God lad, we'll be teenagers soon. Ain't the days passin' right quick. It seems only yesterday that we nicked that forklift and drove it down the road at a heady but still quite safe speed of fifteen miles per hour."

To which Barry, ever the realist replied "It was fookin' yesterday ye daft twit. Look I've still got that bruise from where the you caught me with the forks."

He was right an all, there it sat raised and purple like the heather on some far flung Yorkshire moor, highlighted by the dull glow of his Lambert and Butler Light.

I was brought back to the Bobbin by the sound of Dan's exclamation that it was my turn to brave the obstacle course of rugby players in order to procure us another round of the black stuff. "Aye we're getting on a bit now lad, sooner or later you'll find us in some smoky pub nursing pints while we sit and reminisce about our youth."

Groaning as I forced my tired old legs up from the stool, recently converted from a beer keg I received a monetary note slipped into the palm of my hand by the ever-ready Dan. "My round" he said, "I just wanted to see if you'd go for it."

I wasn't impressed by his cheek but it had taken me long enough to stand up so I thought a may as well make the trip now. Anyway my bladder isn't what it used to be and I felt that a trip to the lavatory was an increasing necessity.

I stood at the bar contemplating the random factor graffiti of "Beware the Caribou" which adorned the wall above the urinal, an unusual warning in central Aberdeen but I heeded it with due care and consideration and, upon receiving the two pints of Murphy's which I had instructed the bar person to prepare for me, I looked both ways before setting out into the throng of Bobbin customers.

It had now been some ten minutes since I had left Dan at the table and he greeted me with the same introspective left wing look he gives to anyone brave enough to approach his table. "Here's your change lad" I told him, placing the pints on the wobbly table surface, careful not to waste any of the beverage and handing him his change.

"£1.20 out of a fiver. Not bad." he said looking pleased. "But when you were walking back you carried a beverage in your right hand which is two fingers."

I had forgotten that we were playing International Beveraging Rules and pretended to curse as I was forced into downing a small but welcome portion of my drink.

"Oi, you mentioned the d- word in your monologue" Dan butted in, forcing me into taking some more of the non-bitter liquid.

"Still we're only third years at the moment" I said to him after swallowing as much as I could. "Not passed it yet."

"And at this rate we're not going to pass it" Dan replied unleashing his semantic flexibility with rapid and effective force.

"Oh you little wit" I replied, mumbling the 'w' of wit in order to make it sound similar to shit which was what I was trying to say in my aged, round about sort of way. Still we'd probably last a bit longer if we just stayed away from the bar and its caribou. Which, of course, we won't.

The Nouveau Shelter for the Rich by **Michael Fowler**

Every year or so I and about 12 other extremely wealthy citizens check into Jacques Nouveau's Shelter for the Rich for a couple of weeks just to get away from all the damn money for a while.

At the Nouveau Shelter we put aside our trappings and burdens of fabulous wealth, unbridled power and political sway, and for two weeks we live the lives of the poor and homeless. We share their struggles and deficits, get back to the core of humanity, see what really life is about without all that green stuff blocking the view. And what a view it is, too, really.

The Nouveau Shelter is modeled after the Tender Scapegoat county shelter for the homeless, only of course it really isn't. Tender Scapegoat has aged, donated hospital beds the size of coffins with stained plastic covered mattresses, donated food, no privacy, and raccoons and squirrels running around in it due to its proximity to an inner-city park. And you have to be poor to get in. The Nouveau Shelter has private rooms, AC, new beds, is located on a scenic lake well outside the city limits, and is pest free. And you have to be rich to get in. Each of us pays Jacques \$5000 for his two-week stint, a bargain in terms of understanding the human condition and getting down to life's gritty basics.

In the true spirit of a shelter, The Nouveau Shelter is small and Spartan in its accommodations, however. There's TV, but no video games. There's a chef skilled in preparing simple but healthy meals. Radio, but no CD players, unless you bring your own. Laptops are not allowed, but cell phones are. Jacques does up-to-date research on the real homeless population, and informs us that today's homeless individual has a backpack and a cell phone. So we are allowed those. But once we park our Rollsies and Mercedeses and BMWs out front, we're not allowed to use them. The real homeless, Jacques explains, drive clunkers or ride the bus. How, for two weeks, I envy them.

As at Tender Scapegoat, the actual shelter, we at Nouveau Shelter are assigned chores to do. I myself, though I have servants at home for this sort of thing, am obliged to sweep out the dining area at the end of each meal, and also to empty my own personal wastebasket in my room as if I am a room service employee. When I do so, I get a feeling of being bonded with all men everywhere without being shown a lot of false respect due to my unimaginable wealth. Grand!

Another thing Jacques has us do to shake off our burdensome riches and privilege is panhandle for a day. Twelve of us pile into the Mercedes van like so many wealthy wetbacks about to sneak across the Mexican border, and Jacques takes us into the heart of the heart of the inner city, where there are actual miscreants and people without college degrees walking about. He assigns each of us a street corner, and instructs us in asking our fellow citizens for 'change.' I dressed down and didn't shave or shower for the occasion, and as a result managed to cadge 50 cents from a man whose bank I own. He didn't recognize me until I laughed and handed it back to him. Was he surprised! We are encouraged to return any money we receive, since it's obtained under false pretenses, and most of us, I assume, do. Though not all, I am sad to say.

After an hour or two of panhandling, Jacques takes us to a real soup kitchen for lunch. We are supposed to be treated like any other group of the penniless and hungry as we wander in from the streets, but of course there's no mistaking us as we arrive in our spotless new van and file in, immaculate in the finest casual wear, expensive hairstyles, imported wristwatches, and carrying our Wall Street Journals. Then too there's a special table set up for us with the manager of the kitchen at its head, and over a meal of donated bread and cold cuts just like what the starving and dispossessed around us are eating, we discuss the needs of the place. The manager is in fact soliciting donations, and that is the real price of our meal with him, though most of us are willing to make a contribution to the kitchen's upkeep. I make out a check for \$100, tax deductible, of course.

Right down the street from the kitchen is an actual flophouse, and those who wish to may sign up to spend the afternoon and night on one of the urine-soaked pieces of rug on the floor, or in one of the rusty metal folding chairs in front of the blaring black-and-white TV. Jacques will pick us up the next morning in the van, or we can call him by cell phone at night if we get too worried. But the person in charge here doesn't seem particularly enthusiastic about our presence, and perhaps for that reason none of us takes up this offer or makes a donation, though Mr. Benton of our party, who's really in the swing of things, asks if the flophouse has a souvenir shop. After a disenfranchised chap with Tourette's Syndrome starts hitting on us in an energetic fashion, we leave in a hurry and Jacques apologizes to us for the shabby treatment we received. He will let the board of directors of the house know about it in no uncertain terms.

Next Jacques takes us to the free clinic. Here those of us who, in the next couple of weeks, would receive knife and gunshot wounds in disputed drug deals or in shootouts with the police, or incur drug overdoses or roll our cars in high speed DUI mishaps, would be brought for treatment, if we were truly down-and-out. But in fact we wouldn't be brought here, even if those things happened to us, but we would prefer to die first, since we are rich. We have carte blanche at the finest medical facilities in town and private physicians to look after us, so who needs this dump? But it's good to know that, were I to be knifed senseless in the Atomic Bar just down the street, or succumb to bad crack in the parking lot down the way, I can still have a second shot at life and the American Dream thanks to this wonderful clinic.

As an added diversion at the clinic, where the staff is also soliciting donations, I get to play the part of 'Daddy Rapper,' a down-and-out ghetto musician cum pimp who has just been pumped full of lead by one of his jealous, hopped-up whores. I let go and give a sterling performance as I'm placed on a stretcher by a medical attendant who mimes giving me treatment while explaining step-by-step what he does to resuscitate me. I say things like, 'Baby, I ain't feelin' too hot,' and 'Dat mo-fo ho is goin' to pay.' Afterward the attendant tells me that I was very realistic. I give generously, as who would not?

Then it's back into the van and home to the shelter. We talk over our experiences of the day and offer a reward of no job duties for the next 24 hours for the one who had the most harrowing scrape with penury and powerlessness. Homer, our African-American friend, was told by a policeman on the street to 'Move along, there,' and wins hands down.

At dinner back at the dining room Jacques and we plan our next day. It will include a visit to a plasma bank to donate blood as if for cash, also a visit to a temporary job service where we can make a few bucks loading trucks and cleaning warehouses and the like, or just watch others do it for the vicarious thrill. We will also spend a few hours under a bridge, if the weather's fine, to get a feel for homelessness in the wild. Jacques's also lined up a guest

speaker, a former hobo who lost his leg train-hopping, who will describe his life on the rails after dinner. Man, I bet he's lived and how!

After chow it's cleanup for those who have chores, which is most, followed by an AA meeting attended by actual alcoholics in the community. I'm not going to pretend none of us have that problem, but of course we go to private clinics in the French Alps for our real treatment, and certainly don't advertise the fact. At the meeting we hand around a pack of cigarettes provided by the coordinator, just as if we didn't have enough cash to buy our own smokes. I tap one out of the pack even though I don't smoke, just for the experience.

Finally it's to our rooms for the one hour a day of self-indulgence we're permitted. I usually have a mixed drink from my private martini wagon and call the wife to let her know I'm OK, poor and downtrodden but OK. Then it's lights out at 10:00, no exceptions, since in a real shelter there would be those of us getting up early to catch a bus to work, and they need their rest. Well I know how that goes, except for the bus part. I think hard about why I'm here, just as Jacques says the residents of a real shelter must do as part of their rehab. I realize that all too soon my two weeks will be up, and I'll be back in a position of supreme wealth and limitless power. Before that happens, I'm going to grab all the poverty and degradation I can and relax.

Just Sex
by
Rob

I'm screwing Joe's wife. On her kitchen table. She's howling, the table legs are creaking, my arse is going ninety to the dozen. We do this twice a week. It's just sex, nothing serious.

In walks Joe. Holding a gun. It's serious.

"I know what you're thinking," says I.

"It's not what you're thinking," says Pam.

"You think so?" says Joe. He looks at my weapon, raises his. I have an impressive penis, but right now I'd swap his weapon for mine.

I look at Pam. Pam looks at me. We're still locked together. I'm about to die. Fuck it. I might as well finish what I'm doing.

I'm screwing Joe's wife, on her kitchen table. She's howling, I'm hollering, the table legs are creaking, my heart is going ninety to the dozen. Joe's watching. He's not happy.

"I'm going to shoot," he says.

"Me too!" I say.

"Shoot!" shouts Pam.

I shoot. Joe shoots. Joe misses. The bullet ricochets around the kitchen, hits Joe right between the eyes. He drops to the floor. Joe is one unlucky bastard.

I'm in no rush, finish Pam off and dismount. The table legs are grateful. Pam looks down at Joe.

"What are we going to do?" says Pam.

"I think we should stop seeing each other," I say, reaching for my pants.

"I mean, about Joe," she says.

"Not my problem."

"You bastard!" she says, and starts crying.

Joe sits up. Still holding the gun. Joe is one lucky bastard.

"Where am I?" he says.

"What do you remember?" says Pam.

"Nothing," he says.

"Honey, you just came home and found this bastard raping me."

"You bastard!" says Joe, raising the gun.

"You bastard!" I say.

He points. He shoots. He misses. The bullet ricochets around the kitchen, hits Pam right between the eyes. Joe faints. Pam drops to the floor. She is one unlucky bitch.

Fuck it. I'm done with Pam. It's just sex. I'm out the door.

Crispy And The Deep South
by
Ricky Garni

CRISPY AND THE DEEP SOUTH

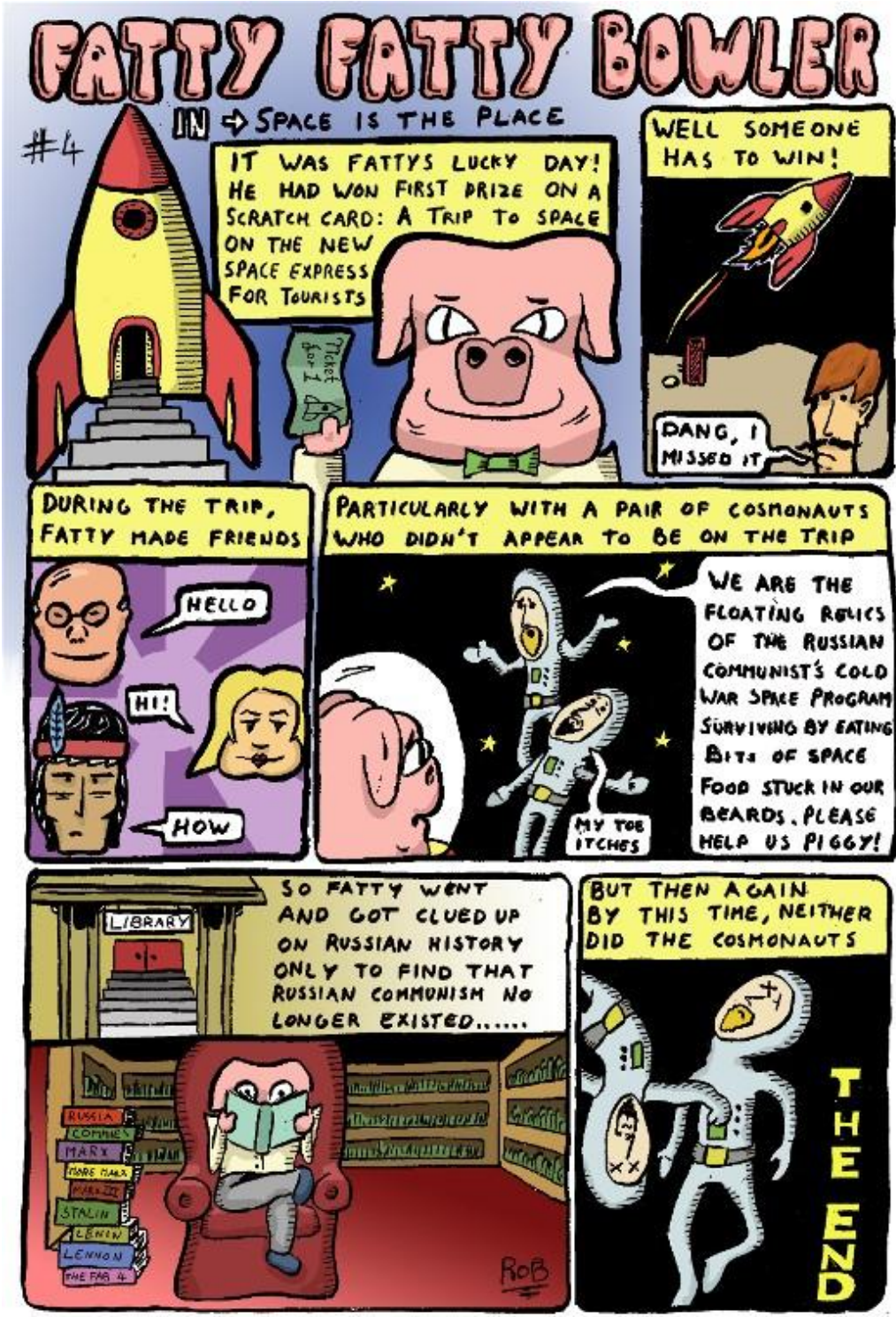
I SLEPT THROUGH
THE MOST IMPORTANT
PARTS OF **GONE WITH THE**
WIND. AND THEN I REALIZED

IT WAS ALL A
DREAM. THERE
NEVER WAS A MOVIE
CALLED **GONE WITH THE**

WIND. A BOOK, YES, BUT NO
MOVIE. OR WAS THE BOOK A
DREAM THAT I HAD WHEN I
FELL ASLEEP WATCHING A
MOVIE? PERHAPS IT WAS.

I BELIEVE THE MOVIE
WAS **GONE WITH THE WIND**.

Space Is The Place
by
Rob Verrecchia



Contributor Biographies

Bernie Poliquin is primarily known for his exhaustive essays in trying to get people to correctly pronounce his last name, but has been known to deviate into themes of Chronic Bowel Inflammation Syndrome (but only on Friday evenings while on dates), as well as the constitutional monarchy of the 18th Street Taco Shack. A semi-native of Manitoba, he currently attends classes at Brandon University in an effort towards a Bachelor's degree in English, and hopes to one day save the world. Or enslave it. Whichever seems the most convenient at the time.

David Choate's life can be easily summarized: while men have always kept a safe distance from him, women, on the other hand, quite literally (and inexplicably) roll over for the man. In the past common courtesy compelled him to grant a number of these petitions. Consequently, Choate can not today pass through an international airport without being heckled by harpies holding up kids. This could explain Choate's current campaign for physical purity—which he inaugurates above with this strange overture to simian world which presumably he feels is the easier sell.

Ella McCrystle's 2005 goal is to finally wax the *other* leg. She scribbles notes others call poems and is considering getting serious about it. PEN American Center Prison Writing Program mentor, editor of *The Hiss Quarterly* and founder of Write to Heal, Ella inappropriately breaks into Billie Holiday tunes, talks to the voices in her head and misplaces things for a living. When not in therapy, she mothers furry creatures and ponders cheese. If you happen to find her lost virginity or are interested in more of her writing, please contact her: Invoking the Serpent. (<http://thehiss.net>)

Fran LeMoine: a.) Lives in New Hampshire; b.) Earns money by writing descriptions for an auction house's monthly catalog; c.) Has had two collections of poetry published, most recently *The Moon Makes No Difference To Me* (Asterius Press, 2002); and d.) Is working on a collection of short fiction that's turning into a novel.

Daniel Cox's stories have made regular appearances in *Word Riot* magazine, and are forthcoming in *Thieves Jargon* and *Somewhat* magazines. A chapbook of his short fiction, *Episodes of Deflated Magic*, was published in 2004 by Fever Press. He has written celebrity interviews for the legendary punk newspaper *New York Waste*. Daniel is looking for a publisher for his novella.

Alison Burke calls herself a Galilean/Newtonian Ball-Kicker and enjoys the company of attractive Persian men.

Iain Maloney, Scottish by birth and inclination, writes serious stuff as well as comedy. He currently lives in Japan where he teaches English.

Mike Fowler is a great guy. Please buy the new projects from *Boom! For Real* and *Sweet Fancy Moses*. See websites for details.

Rob is a blind, one-legged treefrog living deep in a forest in Papua New Guinea. When not climbing trees, playing the mandolin, chasing newts, or holding an umbrella, Rob enjoys hopping up and down on a keyboard to see what it spawns. In his spare time, Rob likes to lie motionless on his back, whistling, and staring at clouds. Rob is also a keen campaigner for amphibian rights. If Rob were a person he would lead a mysterious life somewhere in

England with his wife and kids and Sony Vaio, close to some trees.

Ricky Garni has devoted many years to the illustrated biographical study of the enigmatic early 20th century Andalusian symbolist poet CRISPY FLOTILLA. A work in progress, Mr. Garni now struggles to capture in prose the painful later years of Mr. Flotilla when, broken and penniless, the brilliant poet spent his last days living in obscurity with a cocktail waitress known only as Captain Bob.

Rob Verrecchia is an 18 year old student from the south of England. At school, he gave up art lessons as soon as was possible due to a severe hate for the subject. However now, intending to become a doctor, he draws cartoons in order to survive exciting lessons of science. He regularly posts his art on <http://fattyfattybowler.deviantart.com/> so take a peep!