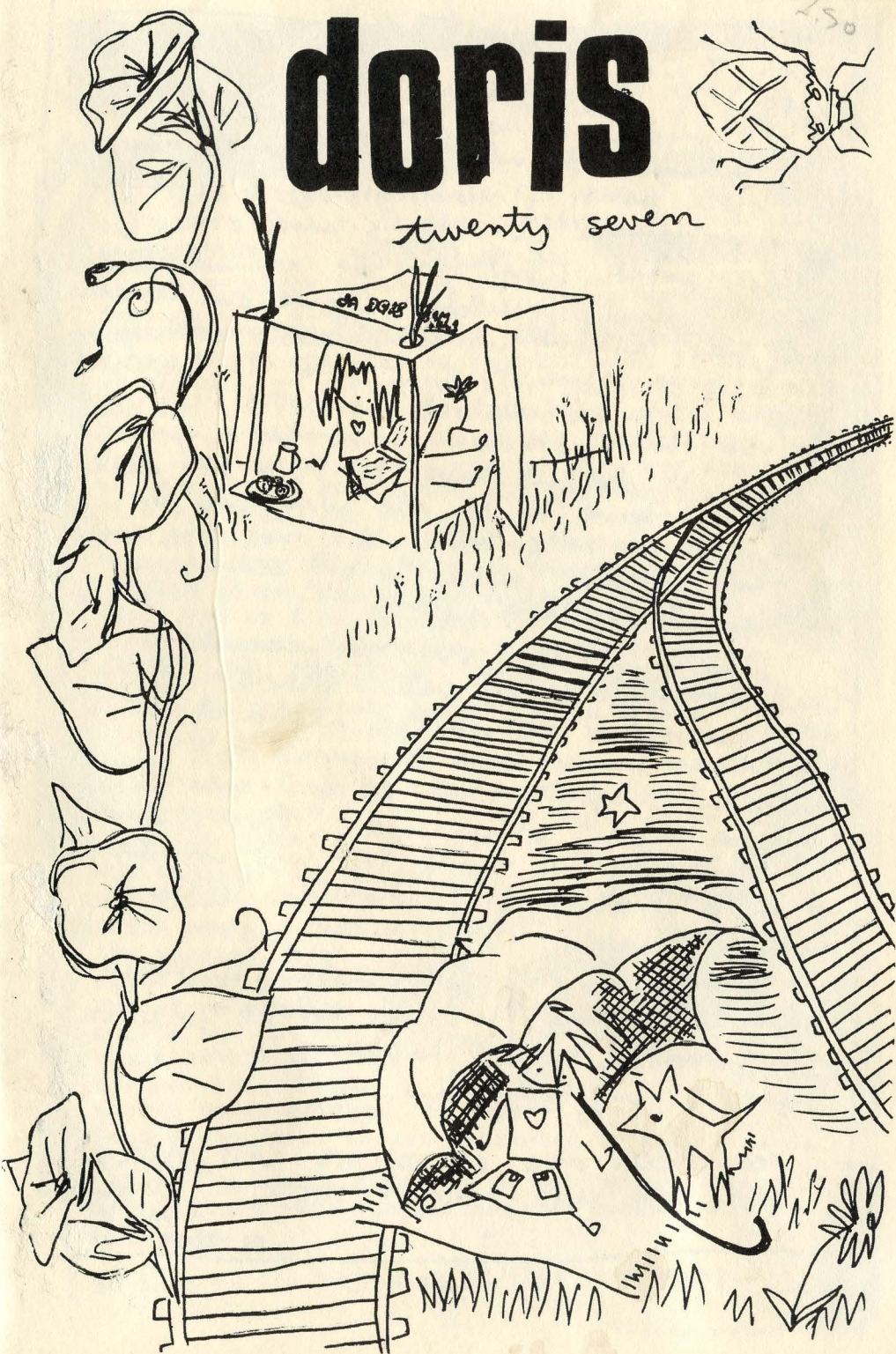
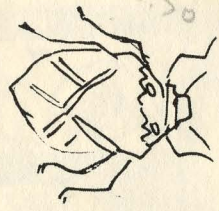


doris

twenty seven



intro

hi there! This is Doris 27.
I typed up on my Smith Corona +
drawn up with my crappy grocery
store pens. I was giving a speech
to The Harvard librarians and one of
them asked "but how do you make a
zine?" and I couldn't figure out what
she was asking until I said "well, you
grab your glue stick..." and The librarian
gaped. Yes. Glue stick + scissors + learn
to use the photocopier. make a few
copies. It doesn't have to be a big deal.
It doesn't have to be all wrapped up
in ego or self-hate. It's not the end
of the world. a little bit scary. a
little bit exciting + fun.

This is The UVWXY2 issue of
The encyclopedia set. years + years
ago I decided to do the alphabet, so
I'd have an excuse to write about
certain subjects that I'd feel weird
writing about otherwise. But it ended
up that 1/2 the time I'd just make
up a title that fit whatever letter I
needed. Well, it's finally over +
next who knows. maybe I'll make
tiny zines with an advice column.
No matter what happens I will
always write Doris.

FOR ORDER INFO, GO TO THE LAST
PAGE. YOU WILL FIND IT THERE.

fall 2009

under it all

Once upon a time I moved to the city of rain,
the city of roses. It wasn't bravery so much as
desperation.

Some people think of me as a great adventuress.
I just want to clear the record.

I had gotten accepted to Reed college. It was
my way out, my excuse to leave behind my suicidal
mom who I'd been trying to save and couldn't.
One day I was driving her to the mental ward to
have her locked up, and arguing with her about
why she should stay alive. She kept saying,
"I'm so tired. Why would it be so bad?" and I
finally broke. I didn't say it outloud, but I
thought, "Maybe she's right. Maybe it's
selfish of me. Maybe she would be better off
dead. Who am I to force her to stay alive."
But I couldn't just leave. I needed an excuse.

And to be completely honest, I was trying to
leave my sweet surface love too. He made me
laugh every day, but he didn't understand the
deep, deep sorrow. I think he didn't have any
reference point for it. Either that, or he was
just too scared to go there. He was my love

and my only real friend,
but those of us who have
roots that go deep into
the marshes, need at
least some people
around us who are
mucked in too. or
who know how to
dredge. or who know
how to build bridges. We need
people who know. We get exhausted trying to explain.

I didn't have the strength to make other friends,
and I didn't have the language to explain why I
had to go.

so that is the beginning of this true story.

The youngest member

But it also true that we are born with certain strengths, or we learn them so early they become part of our cells and our skin. Other strengths we have to work for.

and may be I was born with adventure somewhere in my spirit, but I was also really scared. There was always a pull both ways. Mostly I did what my older sister showed me. I didn't stray outside the blocks I knew. She was the one who wanted to go further.

I had empathy and the desire to please, the need to fix things, the ability to love strongly. I was not distrustful or bitter. I learned early on to see the good in people and to want to draw that out. I responded to care, any tiny bit of care. I did not let go easy.

and I was scared of things. I didn't like to go places where I wasn't wanted, and I didn't know where I was wanted. I was scared of doing things wrong and I was scared of rejection. When I was 15, I rode the city bus to then end of the line because I was scared to ask the driver to tell me where my stop was.

I thought that everyone knew more than I did, like there was a secret language to the world that everyone had learned but me. I cried when I was put on the spot.

I used to sit and dream of the sun. On calm days

When I moved to Portland, I was trying to get there in time to meet up with my little sister. She had been on a road trip and I'd given her my dog for protection. I drove straight across the country without stopping except for gas. The Dakotas were more beautiful than I knew, with fields of sunflowers turning to the sun. In Montana a storm blew through the mountains like a judgement: stop here. go no further.

but I drove because I was scared of everything, and if I stopped, the fear could catch up to me. I was scared of what I was leaving and what I was going to, and scared of rest areas and scared of small towns. Scared I'd get lost or if I slept in my car someone would break in and hurt me or I'd get arrested for vagrancy, and if I left my car to go sleep in the woods, maybe all my belongings would be stolen. I drove until I started to hallucinate, and then I kept driving.

I'd seen hollywood movies and read the bestseller books and the fashion magazines and I was not immune to their messages. I knew what I was worth as a girl and a woman. I had not learned to defend myself yet. I had engrained deep inside of me the fear of everything and the fear of rape. I wanted to fight those fears but hadn't really figured out how.

There were other strong messages too. They went like this: people who don't numb themselves to the world can not live. love without violence or manipulation is nieve. strong idealistic belief is childish innocence. You have to grow up and leave behind childish things. If you hold on to wonder, belief, love, you will end up killing yourself or murdered or in some other way dead. especially if you were a girl.

I promised myself I would prove that shit wrong. I would live. I would always lift my face to the rain and taste it like wine. I would prove them wrong. I would stay alive.

It is hard to keep promises to yourself, and it's true that at one point I did try and kill myself. but I lived.

Have you ever seen the movie Wings of Desire? It was a German movie about after WWII, East Germany. In the beginning, everything is grey and black and white and devastated. There are these two angels, they are just plain looking angels, and what they do is they observe life. They meet up with each other at the end of the day, usually in the library, and they report back what they noticed -

*a woman folds up her umbrella in the pouring rain + lets herself be drenched.
a man reads to a child and the child listens without blinking.*

I was friends with people who worked at the art theater when it came out, so I used to go a few times a day and watch just the beginning, just that part. "That is what I will do," I said to myself. and it is. still.

When I got to Portland, I went to the campus and I had a total panic attack. Everyone looked so healthy and they scurried around like they knew just where they were going. I felt crazy. I was scared I wouldn't be able to find the right room. In high-school I sometimes sat through whole wrong classes just because I'd walked in to the wrong room and was too embarrassed and ashamed to admit it.

At the college financial aid office they said it didn't matter how many years I'd been on my own, I wasn't considered independent until I was 24. I knew I wouldn't be able to get my dad to fill out my financial aid forms even though he didn't have much money anymore. and my mom, I didn't want to bother her with anything. So that was the end of that.

Tell me more about human beings," she said to her grandmother.

I rented the first room I could find. I couldn't relate to or talk with my roommates. I couldn't find a job. I had a little jewelry making business that brought in just enough money to get by. I budgeted it out and after food and bills and rent

I could only spend \$5 a day. I sat in coffee shops and watched people and wrote, but I got really depressed and lonely. There was so little meaning in my life. I finally found a flyer for Food Not Bombs, and I went there.

Food Not Bombs was still a new organization back then. In Minneapolis, my political collective had been asked to help start a chapter, but we didn't because it was decided that even if it had revolutionary intentions, it was still basically just charity. I didn't have anything to say about it because I still didn't trust myself enough to voice my own political questions or opinions.

FOOD NOT BOMBS BELIEVES THAT PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEED EACH OTHER. WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO GET FOOD OUT OF THE GARBAGE THE RIGHT TO COOK IN OUR OWN KITCHENS + TO SERVE FOOD IN PUBLIC PARKS TO THE HUNGRY + TO WHOEVER WANTS IT. AND ANYONE WHO WANTS CAN COME AND COOK WITH US. THERE ARE NO PERMITS TO SIGN + NO GOD TO BOW DOWN TO.



So in Portland, I went to the Food Not Bombs house, more hoping to meet people than expecting to change the world, but even so, I was terrified they would reject me. Was it bravery or desperation that got me to walk through that door? I hadn't talked to another human in weeks.

it didn't come naturally. the friendships didn't blossom out of nowhere. I felt uncomfortable for awhile. I came each week and cooked and peeled and chopped, and eventually I felt normal there, and eventually I made friends.

I had studied a lot, even though I hadn't gone to much college, and I knew what I thought about some things, like what bullshit private property was and how here in America we are always trying to buy things to fill the void in our lives, when really the void could only be filled with meaningful social and political engagement, active citizenship, work that had tangible benefits for myself and the people around me. What is it called? alienated labor? no more alienated labor! I believed in creating rest that was restful and not just pure escape. I knew I shouldn't hate my body and I should value women's friendships at least as much as I valued men. I knew these things, but I didn't know exactly how to fit them into my life. There is only so far you can get alone, reading. Eventually you have to live some of it.

In the rain, with my new friends, I started to confront some of my fears.

Leila, who was only 9 years old then, took me through the alleys to pick fruit. I said "but aren't these other people's trees?" She said "The trees don't belong to anyone. If the people yell at us, we can just yell right back." I learned to stop buying much of anything at all. We made each other presents. What we made was more beautiful than anything we could buy. When there was real life to live, there was less of a void to fill. I got over my fear of admitting poverty and I went to the damn foodstamp office.

I moved in to the Food Not Bombs house, and living there with a bunch of people, I got to think and rethink, and feel and refeel, what it means to live and have grown up in an individualistic society and to try and live collectively. When do you call people on their crap and when do you accept them for who they are. when do you struggle for more cohesiveness and when do you let it go.

The girls in the house helped me start to learn to stop hating my body. First we just talked together about the ways we felt and the messages we were

always getting from magazines and our families and the whole world around us. Then we got out our sewing machines and made cloth pads, which I thought was kind of stupid and also disgusting

because I didn't want to touch all that blood and what was wrong with that? But I did it and honestly, it really did begin to change the way I felt about my body and my self. Plus my

cramps weren't so bad anymore and I didn't bleed nearly half as much after I stopped putting chlorine up inside of me, or whatever it is about tampons that fucks you up, I can't even remember any more.

but I became less afraid and less afraid of myself.

Travelers came through the Food Not Bombs house, and they talked about places I'd never seen, freight trains and cities and cops and going hungry and desolate nowhere and the strange people who would come to their rescue. It was pure adventure and part of me wanted it - a freedom with nothing to tie me down. But I also believed in staying put and fighting and building where you are. and finding adventure in the life you are living.

I promised myself I would live. I would not box myself in, no matter how tempting. I would confront my fears, little by little, and I would live a life of intention and passion and hopefully that would save me. and it did.

I used to worry - what does it mean to be a real writer? was I one? was it good or did it suck?

WRITING

was I a fake? what if I was stuck? what was the point? I thought there had to be an answer, a key.

I READ BOOKS ABOUT WRITING + BOOKS ABOUT CREATING A WRITERS LIFE

I READ ABOUT WHAT REAL AUTHORS DID. ISABEL ALLENDE WOULD OPEN UP THE WINDOWS + CLEAR THE AIR + LIGHT A ONE HOUR OR FIVE HOUR CANDLE + NOT STOP WRITING UNTIL THE CANDLE BURNED OUT. She made a ritual of it.

when we speak from what we truly know + feel our words vibrate with truth that is felt by listeners + ourselves before we understand it

URSULA LEGUIN KEPT A PAD OF PAPER ON THE KITCHEN TABLE + SCRATCHED OUT SENTENCES BETWEEN TAKING CARE OF HER KIDS

JACK LONDON TRIED TO GO ON A SOLITARY RETREAT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, BUT THE QUIET AND LACK OF HUMAN INTERACTION MADE HIM UNABLE TO WRITE A THING.

JAMACA KINCAID WAKES UP BEFORE DAWN TO GET 4 HOURS OF QUIET WRITING TIME

DELMORE SHWARTZ LIKED TO WRITE FOR ONLY ONE HOUR A DAY. PREFERABLY IN A CROWDED CAFE

CAROLYN CHUTE DRANK RED ROSE TEA INSTEAD OF COFFEE

I TRIED EVERY TIP AND SOMETIMES A NEW WAY WOULD GET ME WRITING PROLIFERICALLY FOR HOURS OF DAYS OR WEEKS. BUT EVENTUALLY I WOULD FALL BACK INTO MY OWN SLOPPY HABITS. SOMETIMES WRITING FOR HOURS A DAY, SOMETIMES NOT WRITING AT ALL FOR WEEKS OR MONTHS.

and I couldn't figure out, was I real. was I a real writer or just a fake. eventually I figured out that the whole question "was I a real writer" was bullshit. the question "was I a real writer" was part of the competitive system I wanted to destroy, where everyone is suppose to strive to do something brand new thats never been done, to make a mark on history, to be better than everyone else. I didn't want that shit, so why was I looking to those models for legitimacy. I had to ask new questions like - why did I write. and then hold myself accountable to my own reasons + standards.

I WRITE IN MY JOURNAL BECAUSE IT HELPS ME TO LEARN TO BE PRESENT AND TO PROCESS WHAT I SEE + FEEL + THINK

Dear diary
I am here in Arizona. My Grandma is dying, maybe. outside is the weird green of the watered lawn here in the desert that I wish could return to desert. when do we stop trying to make things what we want them? should I tell her to fight to stay alive or should I let her go?

I WRITE BECAUSE IT HELPS ME TO SEE THE WORLD IN NEW WAYS + FIGHT THE BRAINWASH OF BLACK WHITE, FAT THIN, BLOND BROWN.

WRITING HELPS ME TO LOOK MORE + SEE MORE

she looks like she wants to say something but she doesn't.

she rubs her thumb under her chin. HE has the longest eye lashes - hidden

she leans forward when he walks. Her face has strong expressions

I WRITE DORIS BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE WORLD FUNDAMENTALLY, WE HAVE TO CHALLENGE OURSELVES AND EACHOTHER TO BE BRAVE AND ALIVE

LET'S JUST JUMP ON THE BED

AND WE HAVE TO TAKE OUR EXPERIENCES + FIND THE LESSONS IN THEM AND PASS ON THESE LESSONS IN A WAY THAT DOESN'T ALIENATE

and zines are a perfect place for me to work on becoming a better writer + to work at articulating + editing + learning to spell a little bit better + learning to draw. I write it all down in my journal + then look at it and think "what is the essence of this - what is the important part?" Sometimes it is just one sentence worth saving. I write from there + edit + write + edit. I believe in care but not a stifling fear or ego driven perfection.

HOW'S IT GOING?

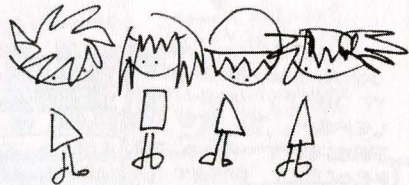
PRETTY GOOD. I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THE SLOGAN "GROWING UP = GIVING UP" and HOW I LOVE GROWING UP

IT HELPS ME THINK OF NEW SUBJECTS TO TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT SO LIFE STAYS GOOD + NOT BORING GOSSIP.

here, I made this

IT HELPS ME TO HAVE A PROJECT I CAN FINISH + PUT OUT THERE TO FEEL CONNECTED + NOT SO ALONE.

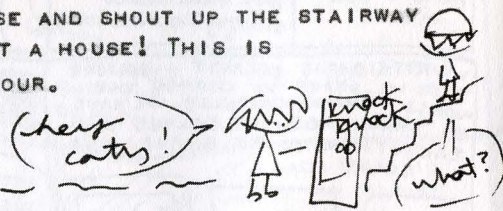
vamoose



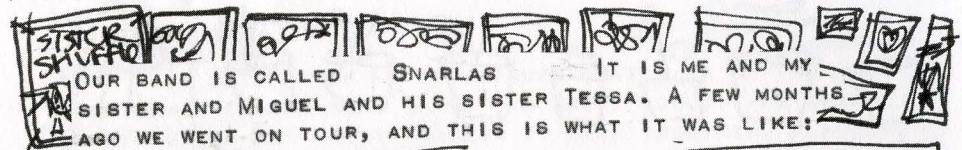
ONCE UPON A TIME... OK JUST KIDDING. THIS IS ACTUALLY ABOUT TOUR. THE BEST TOUR I'VE EVER BEEN ON! MY SISTER IS FINALLY IN A BAND WITH ME! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! SHE SAID 'WHY WOULD I WANT TO SING IN A BAND? IT'S THE TWO THINGS I HATE THE MOST, BEING IN FRONT OF PEOPLE AND PEOPLE HEARING ME SING!'

I WISH I HAD AN INTERCOM SO I COULD ASK HER IF THAT WAS A PROPER QUOTE. WE USED TO HAVE ROOMS RIGHT NEXT TO EACHOTHER WHICH WAS PERFECT BECAUSE WE HAD PRIVACY BUT COULD ALSO SIT IN OUR SEPERATE ROOMS AND THEN YELL AT EACHOTHER WHENEVER WE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING FUNNY OR WHENEVER WE HAD A QUESTION OR IDEA. NOW I HAVE TO GET UP AND WALK ACROSS THE HOUSE AND SHOUT UP THE STAIRWAY OF OUR NEW HOUSE. WE BOUGHT A HOUSE! THIS IS THE BIG NEWS. ASIDE FROM TOUR.

OK. HOLD ON.



OK. I'M BACK. SHE SAYS THAT WAS PRETTY MUCH A DIRECT QUOTE. "BEING THE CENTER OF ATTENTION. I HATE THAT!" SO I ASKED HER HOW SHE LIKES SINGING IN A BAND NOW AND SHE SAYS "IT'S STILL SCARY, BUT IT'S EXCITING TO BE AFRAID OF SOMETHING AND THEN JUST SAY 'FUCK IT' AND DO IT ANYWAY. I THINK IT'S GOOD FOR ME." THE OTHER THINGS SHE SAID SHE LIKES ABOUT IT IS THAT SHE GETS TO LEARN TO USE HER VOICE IN NEW WAYS, AND SHE LIKES STARTING TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT HOW MUSIC WORKS. "MAY BE I'LL WRITE MY OWN SONGS" SHE JUST SAID! THAT IS THE BEST NEWS I'VE HEARD ALL DAY! OF COURSE I HAVEN'T HEARD MUCH NEWS TODAY BECAUSE I SPENT THE DAY RAKING LEAVES OUT OF THE CREEK THAT OUR GREYWATER RUNS INTO, AND SAWING UP A BIG OAK TREE THAT FELL DOWN, AND REPLACING OUR MAILBOX WITH ONE THAT HAS A FLAG SO OUR MAIL LADY WILL START PICKING UP OUR OUTGOING MAIL HOPEFULLY. BUT EVEN IF I'D HAD A DAY FULL OF GREAT NEWS, THIS WOULD STILL BE THE BEST NEWS EVER!



OUR BAND IS CALLED SNARLAS IT IS ME AND MY SISTER AND MIGUEL AND HIS SISTER TESSA. A FEW MONTHS AGO WE WENT ON TOUR, AND THIS IS WHAT IT WAS LIKE:

PITTSBURGH PITTSBURGH! WHEN DID IT GET SO GOOD IN PITTSBURGH? IT IS A CITY ON THE DECLINE, SO THE PUNKS

AND EXPUNKS HAVE BEEN BUYING HOUSES AND FIXING THEM UP IN THAT WAY THAT PUNKS DO, SALVAGING SCRAPS AND CREATING SOMETHING NEW. ONE OF THE HOUSES HAD SALVAGED SO MUCH

HARDWOOD FLOORING, THEY ENDED UP USING IT ON THE WALLS TOO. THERE WERE HAND-PRINTED POSTERS EVERYWHERE AND ART COVERING EVERY INCH OF EVERYTHING. THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS I LOVE ABOUT PUNK - HOW THE AESTHETICS OF OUR LIVES SHOW OUR RESISTANCE TO THE - COMMODIFICATION

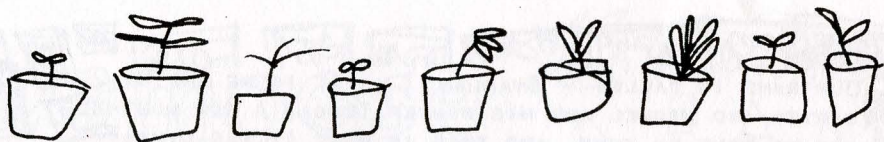
OF EVERYTHING. THE WORLD SAYS "BUY THIS, BUY THAT, WANT THIS, IT'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY," AND WE SAY "FUCK THAT! WE WANT YOU OUT OF OUR HEADS! WE WILL LIVE OUR OWN LIVES! WE WANT SOME KIND OF MEANING, WE WANT SOME KIND OF CULTURE, AND WE WILL BUILD IT WITH WHATEVER WE CAN FIND. WE DON'T WANT YOUR MASS PRODUCED PRODUCTS. WE ARE NOT YOUR CONSUMERS OR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE, WE ARE HUMANS."

AND I LOVE IT WHEN OUR RESISTANCE IS BROUGHT INTO OUR HOMES AND TURNED INTO A HISTORY AND A TESTIMENT AND A NEST. A NEST OF COLOR YOU CAN CURL UP INSIDE AND BREATHE.

IN PITTSBURGH WE HAD A ZINE READING FIRST. WELL, FIRST THERE WAS A POTLUCK WITH LOTS OF GOOD FOOD, THEN THERE WAS A ZINE READING WITH LOTS OF GOOD STORIES, THEN THERE WAS THE SHOW. ALSO LASERS PLAYED, WHO I LOVED. THEN BAD DAUGHTORS, WHO I LOVED EVEN MORE. BAD DAUGHTORS WAS A 3 DECADE BAND: ONE WOMAN IN HER 20'S ONE IN HER 30'S AND ONE IN HER 40'S, ALL OF THEM AMAZING WOMEN, SIMONE, ARTNOOSE AND ALISA.

LAST TIME I SAW ALISA SHE GAVE ME A LITTLE ZINE SHE'D MADE. IT WAS FOR LEANNE'S "FUN A DAY" PROJECT.

"FUN A DAY" IS SOMETHING LEANNE CAME UP WITH TO HELP PEOPLE GET THROUGH THE DREARY MONTH OF FEBRUARY. HOW IT WORKS IS, EVERYONE PICKS SOMETHING THEY LIKE TO DO, AND THEN THEY DO IT EVERY DAY, AND THEY DOCUMENT IT, AND THEN AT THE END OF THE MONTH THERE IS AN ART SHOW SO EVERYONE CAN SEE WHAT EVERYONE DID.

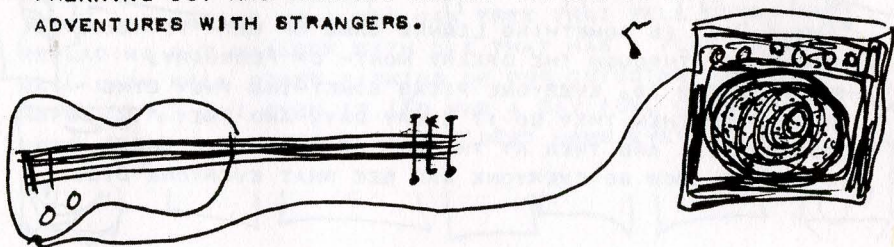


CAIT PLANTED A SEED EVERY DAY AND HAD A SHELF FULL OF DELICATE SEEDLINGS. LEANNE SENT A LETTER TO A DIFFERENT FRIEND OR ACQUAINTANCE EVERY DAY, AND INSIDE EACH LETTER WAS A POSTAGE PAID POSTCARD SO PEOPLE COULD WRITE A STORY OR DRAW A PICTURE OR JUST WRITE BACK, AND THESE POSTCARDS WENT UP FOR HER DISPLAY. ALISA FOUND A SLANG WORD EACH DAY THAT WASN'T REALLY USED ANY MORE. LIKE "FLUFF IT!" WHICH MEANS GO AWAY! AND "SWANNING" WHICH IS "GOING PURPOSELY ANYWHERE WITHOUT A PURPOSE."

WHAT ABOUT "VAMOOS!" IT'S ONE MY MOM USED TO SAY. IT MEANS "TO LEAVE HURRIEDLY" BUT SHE'D SORT OF USE IT MORE LIKE "SHOO SHOO. COME ON KIDS, GET YOUR COATS ON AND GET OUT THE DOOR! VAMOOS!"

IN PITTSBURGH, CATY AND TESSA SLEPT AT ARTNOOSE'S HOUSE, IN THE ROOM ABOVE THE ROOM WITH THE PRINTING PRESS. I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED THESE KINDS OF PRINTING PRESSES, THE KIND WHERE YOU HAVE TO TAKE EACH LETTER AND PLACE IT IN PLACE. FOR SOME REASON WE HAD ONE OF THESE PRESSES IN MY JR. HIGH AND IT WAS REDICULOUS HOW LONG IT TOOK JUST TO PEICE TOGETHER A FEW SENTANCES AND PRINT IT. AND IT TOOK SUCH CARE, SUCH ATTENTION. AND I'M ALWAYS AMAZED THAT THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE USED TO HAVE TO DO TO PRINT THINGS. THEY PUT TOGETHER WHOLE BOOKS AND WHOLE NEWSPAPERS THIS WAY. I LIKE TO THINK OF THE TIME SPENT, THE COMMITMENT TO REPRODUCING WORDS, AND HOW THE PROCESS OF IT WAS GENERALLY NOT SPENT IN ISOLATION.

ON TOUR OUR PRIORITIES WERE; EAT ENOUGH FOOD, GET ENOUGH SLEEP, PLAY AS HARD AS POSSIBLE, HANG OUT WITH OLD FRIENDS AND MAKE NEW ONES - PRETTY DIFFERENT FROM MY PREVIOUS TOURS WHERE NO MATTER WHAT MY INTENTIONS WERE, I USUALLY JUST ENDED UP GETTING DRUNK AND FREAKING OUT AND RUNNING AROUND TRYING TO HAVE ADVENTURES WITH STRANGERS.



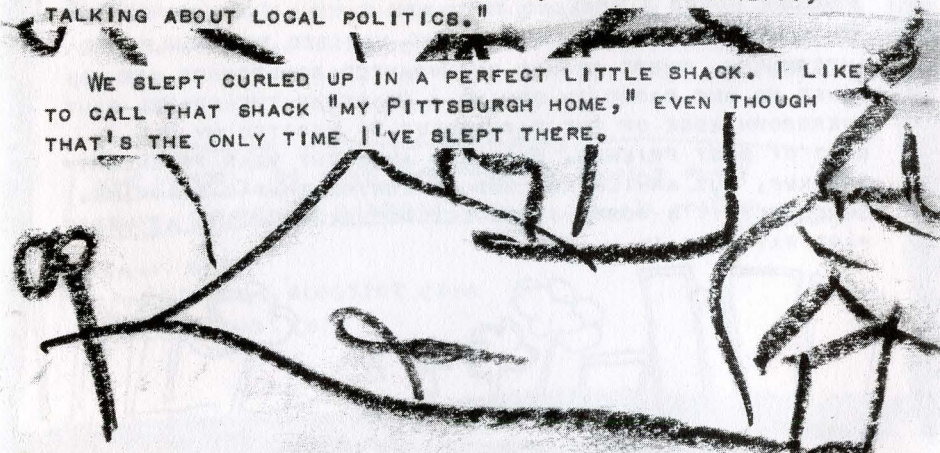
IN PITTSBURGH ME AND MIGUEL WENT BACK TO THE EAST SIDE AFTER THE SHOW SO ME AND GEOFF COULD TAKE APART MY GUITAR AND TRY TO SOLDER IT BACK TOGETHER. ALREADY, ONLY 4 HOURS FROM HOME, THE GUITAR AMP HAD BROKEN AND MY GUITAR WAS SHORTING OUT.

A COUPLE HOUSES UP FROM GEOFF'S HOUSE WAS THE LANDSLIDE SQUAT. "THEY CALL US THE RETIREMENT HOME" SAID GEOFF. WE WERE STANDING AROUND THE KITCHEN EATING SPAGETTI AND TALKING ABOUT LOCAL POLITICS. I'M NOT TOTALLY SURE HOW LANDSLIDE WORKS EXACTLY. OUR FRIEND EMILY LIVED THERE FOR YEARS AND I SHOULD PROBABLY CALL HER UP AND ASK HER, BUT IT'S LATE AND I CAN'T FIND HER NUMBER. I DO KNOW THAT BASICALLY, A FEW YEARS AGO, SOME FOLKS BOUGHT A FEW ACRES OF ABANDON LOT, AND THEY STARTED FARMING IT AND SQUATTING THE EMPTY HOUSE AT THE EDGE OF THE LAND.

THEY TOOK ME ON A TOUR OF THE HOUSE ONCE, AND I REMEMBER A BEAUTIFUL WOODSTOVE ROOM WITH ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS. BANGO. FIDDLE. GUITAR. ACCORDIAN. THE DAY BEFORE OUR SHOW THE COPS HAD COME AND KICKED EVERYONE OUT OF THE SQUAT AND BOARDED UP THE WINDOWS AND DOOR. IN THE END THERE WAS ENOUGH COMMUNITY OUTCRY THAT THE MAYOR OR SOMEONE LIKE THAT TOLD THE COPS OR WHOEVER THAT THEY HAD TO LET THE KIDS BACK IN, BUT THE DAY WE WERE THERE, NO ONE KNEW WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN.

MIGUEL WENT TO GO HANG OUT WITH EMILY AND THE OTHER LANDSLIDERS WHILE ME AND GEOFF TRIED TO FIX MY GUITAR. WHEN HE CAME BACK HE SAID, "THEY CALL THIS THE RETIREMENT HOUSE BUT THEY WERE DOING EXACTLY THE SAME THING OVER THERE. STADING AROUND THE KITCHEN, EATING SPAGHETTI, TALKING ABOUT LOCAL POLITICS."

WE SLEPT CURLED UP IN A PERFECT LITTLE SHACK. I LIKED TO CALL THAT SHACK "MY PITTSBURGH HOME," EVEN THOUGH THAT'S THE ONLY TIME I'VE SLEPT THERE.

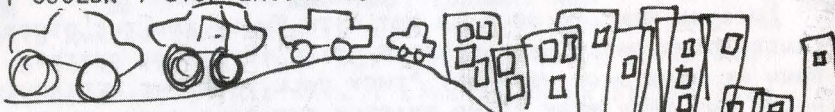


TOUR. AT THE RATE THIS IS GOING, IT'S GOING TO TAKE YOU A WEEK TO READ ABOUT OUR ONE WEEK TOUR SO I'LL HAVE TO START CUTTING TO THE CHASE.

IN BALTIMORE WE HAD A LOT OF DUMPSTERED APPLES SO I WAS SHOWING EVERYONE MY FAVORITE SNACK - APPLE BOATS. YOU CUT THE APPLE IN HALF AND HOLLOW OUT THE SEED PART AND THEN FILL IT UP WITH PEANUTBUTTER AND THEN YOU CAN EAT IT WITH ONE HAND WHILE YOU DO OTHER STUFF.



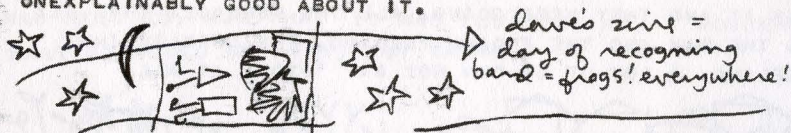
MICHAEL WAS TALKING ABOUT ANARCHISM AND HOW MAYBE IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF HALF THE ANARCHISTS WORKED ON POLITICAL ORGANIZING AND HALF THE ANARCHISTS STARTED PRACTICING CHAOS MAGICK AND THEN WE COULD ATTACK THE POWERS THAT BE FROM ALL DIFFERENT ANGLES. I DON'T KNOW WHAT INSPIRED ME TO ASK MICHAEL FOR HIS DEFINITION OF CHAOS MAGIC. I'VE HEARD PEOPLE TALK ABOUT IT BEFORE AND IT ALWAYS SEEMS SELF-IMPORTANT AND LIKE A REAL COP-OUT. BUT I LOVE MICHAEL AND I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE CARES ABOUT AND HOW HE THINKS AND WHAT HE WANTS. AND I ALWAYS THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO REEVALUATE OUR ASSUMPTIONS, SO I SAID "WHAT EXACTLY DO CHAOS MAGICIANS DO?" AND MICHAEL GOT THE GLEEM IN HIS EYES AND HE STOOD UP AND SAID "FIRST, YOU DRAW A PENTAGRAM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, THEN YOU GRAB YOUR CHERRY VODKA AND YOU OPEN IT UP AND YOU SPIN AROUND REALLY REALLY FAST!" I COULDN'T STOP LAUGHING.



IN NEW YORK I EXPLAINED MY DRIVING STRATEGY. "WHenever SOMEONE HONKS I PRETEND THEY ARE SAYING 'I LOVE YOU'." WE WALKED BEHIND THE MUSEUM AND VISITED THE SCULPTURE INTERNMENT, WHERE BROKEN OR UNWANTED SCULPTURES ARE LINED UP AND CAGED IN BEHIND A FENCE AT THE GRAVEL, OVERGROWN EDGE OF THE PARKINGLOT. I VISITED MY OLD BEST OF BEST FRIENDS. WE'D HAD AN EIGHT YEAR FRIENDSHIP BREAKUP, BUT AWHILE AGO HAD A REUNION THAT'S STICKING. SOMETIMES IT'S WORTH IT TO LET PEOPLE BACK IN. AT LEAST PART WAY BACK IN.

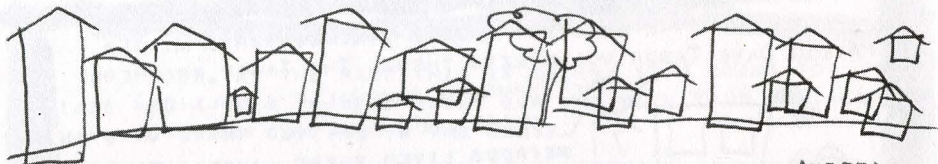


BOSTON HAS THE SWEETEST LITTLE ZINE LIBRARY. MY OLD FRIEND DAVE TABOR VOLUNTEERS THERE. THE TABOR BROTHERS CAME TO ASHEVILLE A MILLION YEARS AGO, WHEN NOT MANY PUNKS OR WEIRDOS LIVED THERE, JUST A WANDFUL OF US LIVING IN A BIG PINK TWO STORY BUILDING NEAR DOWNTOWN. THERE WAS A BLACK FLAG HANGING WHERE THE AMERICAN FLAG WAS SUPPOSED TO BE, AND WHEN THE TABORS WERE TRAVELING THROUGH THEY SAW THE FLAG AND KNOCKED ON THE DOOR AND SAID "WE SAW THE FLAG AND WERE WONDERING IF ANARCHISTS LIVED HERE." THEY STAYED. I REMEMBER TEACHING DAVE TO CHAINSAW. HE WRITES A ZINE I'VE ALWAYS LOVED. HE WANTED TO BE IN A BAND AND I SAID "EVERYONE SHOULD BE IN A BAND. ANYONE CAN DO IT." AND HE SAID "MAY BE EVERYONE EXCEPT ME." UNTIL NOW. HE'S FINALLY IN ONE. THEY PLAYED WITH US AT THE ZINE LIBRARY. AND HE LOOKED SHY AND NOT SHY, HAPPY, AND I WAS PROUD. EVERYONE SHOULD BE IN A BAND, IT'S TRUE. THERE'S SOMETHING UNEXPLAINABLY GOOD ABOUT IT.

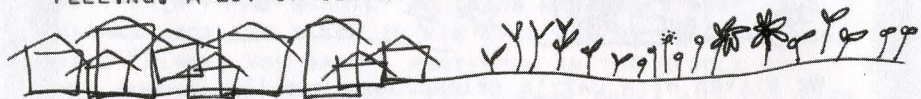


WE STAYED WITH CATY'S FRIEND JOBB WHO I'D ALWAYS WANTED TO MEET. HE USED TO DO CONSENT WORKSHOPS ^{organised} THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICA'S PROTESTS (THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS IS WHERE THE U.S. TRAINS RIGHT-WING INSURGENTS OR THE MILITARIES OF OTHER COUNTRIES TO KEEP THOSE COUNTRIES SAFE FOR U.S. INVESTMENTS. THIS USUALLY MEANS BRUTALLY VIOLENT REGRESSION OF ANY TYPE OF FREEDOM MOVEMENTS. IT INCLUDES ASSASSINATING DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED LEADERS. IT INCLUDES THE GENOCIDE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE. IT IS AN INTENSE AND SYSTEMATIC VIOLENCE THAT IS HARD TO DEAL WITH, BUT SO IMPORTANT THAT WE KNOW THIS HISTORY - THIS CURRENT REALITY.

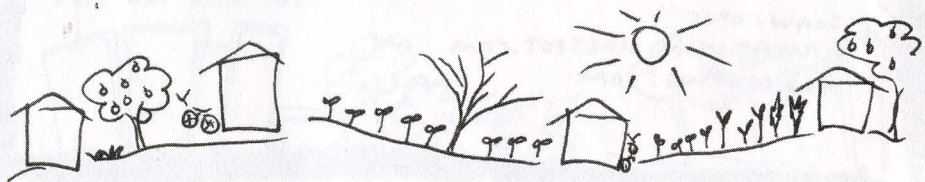
reading recommendations
THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS - leah gill
GUNS, GREED + GLOBALIZATION - jack nelson - ^{palmer}
SOAW.ORG
KAMARIKUN.BLOGSPOT.COM
NARCONNEWS.COM



I REMEMBER TALKING TO JOSH ON THE PHONE BACK WHEN ANDREA AND I WERE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO A CONSENT WORKSHOP. I REMEMBER HIM TELLING ME ABOUT AN EXERCISE HE DID MOSTLY WITH GUYS. HE'D HAVE THEM PAIR UP, AND ONE OF THEM WOULD STAND A LITTLE WAYS AWAY, AND THEN START SLOWLY WALKING, GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THEIR PARTNER. THE PERSON STANDING STILL WAS SUPPOSED TO SAY 'STOP' WHEN THEY STARTED TO GET UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT ALMOST NO ONE SAID IT WHEN THEY FIRST STARTED TO FEEL THEIR BOUNDRIES BEING CROSSED. THEY WAITED UNTIL IT WAS UNBEARABLE. AND THIS FEELING, IT HELPED THEM TO UNDERSTAND WHY GIRLS AND PEOPLE CAN'T ALWAYS SAY 'STOP' IF THEY DON'T WANT TO BE DOING SOMETHING. THAT FEELING IN YOUR BODY LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T SAY IT, YOU MIGHT LOOK STUPID, MAYBE YOU CAN TAKE IT, WHAT IF YOU SAY IT AND THEY KEEP GOING. ALL THE MESSAGES THAT GET IN THE WAY AND THE FROZEN FEELING, THE UNBELIEVING FEELING. A LOT OF US CAN NOT SAY 'STOP' AT ALL.



JOSH AND HIS SISTER BOUGHT A HOUSE IN A KIND OF FUCKED UP PART OF BOSTON AND FIXED IT UP REALLY NICE AND BOTH ENTERED LAW SCHOOL. A LOT OF THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA AROUND THEM WERE GETTING THEIR HOUSES FORECLOSED ON, AND JOSH AND HIS SISTER AND SOME OF THEIR FRIENDS THOUGHT 'WE HAVE THIS PRIVLEDGE, WHAT CAN WE DO WITH IT'. SO THEY FORMED A GROUP, AND THEY WENT DOOR TO DOOR FINDING OUT WHO WAS GETTING FORCLOUSED ON AND EXPAINING TO THEM THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS AND HELPING PEOPLE FIGHT. I LIKED HOW HE TALKED ABOUT IT - SO MATTER OF FACT, SO DAILY LIFE, NO BLOWING IT OUT OF PROPORTAON, NO REVOLUTIONARY PATTING ON THE BACK. JUST - 'WE HAVE THIS PRIVELEDGE, WHAT DO WE DO WITH IT, HERE'S ONE OF THE THINGS WE DID THAT WAS USEFUL.'



I USED TO WORRY A LOT ABOUT GETTING OLDER - ABOUT PUNKS GETTING OLDER. LIKE WHAT WOULD WE ALL DO? WE HAD BEEN TAUGHT THAT TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE YOU HAD TO GO TO SCHOOL, GET A JOB, STICK WITH THAT JOB NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT SUCKED. YOU NEEDED HEALTH INSURANCE, YOUR OWN LITTLE APARTMENT, YOU OWN LITTLE GIRLFRIEND, YOU NEEDED TO GO OUT TO DINNER, GO OUT TO THE MOVIES, BUY THINGS TO MAKE YOU AND YOUR LIFE PRETTIER. AS PUNKS WE SAID 'FUCK THAT'. WE WERE



UGLY, WE WERE SLUTTY, WE LIVED ALL TOGETHER OR NOWHERE AT ALL. WE CREATED OUR OWN AESTHETICS. WE GOT EVERYTHING WE NEEDED FROM WHAT THE REST OF THE WORLD THREW AWAY. INCLUDING EACHOTHER. WE WERE THROW OUTS. WE FOUND EACHOTHER IN THE TRASH.



BUT THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MY FRIENDS STARTED DIEING, AND THERE WAS A TIME WHEN MY FRIENDS STARTED STANDING IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM DURING THE SHOWS AND THEN LEAVING. AND I RETREATED SOMEWHAT TOO, BECAUSE THERE WAS A PART OF MYSELF I HAD TO RESCUE. AND NOW THAT IT WAS RESCUED, NOW THAT IT WAS FLOURISHING, I WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE, OUT THERE.



ONCE UPON A TIME, PUNK CYNICISM WAS REBELLION AGAINST A WORLD OPTIMISTIC WITH THE PROMISES OF CAPITALISM; WHEN RONALD REGAN SAID HE'D GIVE MONEY TO THE RICH AND IT WOULD TRICKLE DOWN TO THE POOR, AND WE WERE TOLD THE WORLD'S RESOURCES WERE ENDLESS AND TECHNOLOGY WOULD SAVE US, AND THE MERGER BETWEEN CORPORATIONS AND THE MEDIA WAS GETTING MORE BRILLIANT AND INSIDIOUS. CYNICISM ITSELF WAS A FORM OF REBELLION. BUT NOW EVERYONE'S A GYNIC, DESPITE THE NEW SELLING POINT OF HOPE.



SO HOW DO WE FORGE RESISTANCE? WE FORGE IT WITH VISION, AND BELIEVING IN OURSELVES AND OUR COMMUNITIES, AND LIVING LIVES OF INTEGRITY. *and fighting for our beliefs*



A COUPLE OF MY FRIENDS WHO I THOUGHT WEREN'T GOING TO MAKE IT OUT ALIVE ARE STILL ALIVE. THEY'RE ELECTRICIANS. ONE OF THEM EVEN BOUGHT A HOUSE FOR TWO OF OUR CRAZY AND UNEMPLOYABLE FRIENDS TO LIVE IN. SOME OF MY FRIENDS ARE TEACHERS NOW, SOME ARE WRITING FOR THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS, SOME ARE WRITING BOOKS, SOME HAVE UNION JOBS, ONE HAS A RECORDING STUDIO, ONE RUNS A RESTAURANT,

A COUPLE OF THEM WORK AT AN ANIMAL SHELTER, ONE HELPS OLD PEOPLE GROW OLD AND DIE WITH DIGNITY, ONE WORKS AT A RAPE CRISIS CENTER. ONE IS A THERAPIST, ONE IS A DOCTOR, ONE WORKS FOR THE FOREST SERVICE, ONE DOES RESTORATION CONSTRUCTION. SOME HAVE BABIES AND FAMILIES, SOME HAVE GONE BACK TO SCHOOL. SOME LIVE ALONE, SOME STILL LIVE ALL TOGETHER. FOR THE MOST PART, THOSE OF US WHO LIVED, MADE IT THROUGH WITHOUT AS MUCH GIVING UP AS I'D EXPECTED.

A BUNCH OF THEM STILL PLAY MUSIC. MOST OF THEM ARE STILL INVOLVED, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, IN CREATING OR MAINTAINING CULTURES OF RESISTANCE, OR WORKING TO BUILD MORE EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES.

IN PROVIDENCE, MERIDITH GIVES ME HER ZINE. IT'S A ONE SHEET WITH A DRAWING OF TWO CATS, TWO WITCHY CATS STANDING OVER A CAULDRON, STIRRING. IT'S KIND OF CRYPTIC, WITH A SENTENCE HERE AND THERE, LIKE A MAP OF SOMETHINGS IN HER HEART OR LIKE AN INSIDE JOKE SHE'S PARTIALLY LETTING ME IN ON. AND IT SAYS TO ME, "I AM FINALLY HAPPY. I AM TRUELY IN LOVE." AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT IT SEEMS TO SAY.



IN VERMONT, PAULA COMES TO SEE US. SHE WAS MY IDOL WHEN I WAS 18. SHE KNEW EVERYTHING AND MORE THAN I EVER THOUGHT I WOULD. SHE KNEW HISTORY AND PLANTS AND PHILOSOPHY AND PROTEST TACTICS AND COULD IDENTIFY ANIMALS IN THE WOODS BY THE NOISES THAT THEY MADE. SHE SHOWS UP IN BRATTLEBORO AS ELEGANT AS EVER AND I LOVE HER JUST AS I ALWAYS HAVE. WE'RE MORE LIKE EQUALS NOW. AND EVEN THOUGH WE'VE PROBABLY ONLY SEEN EACHOTHER 3 TIMES IN THE PAST TEN YEARS, THE FRIENDSHIP STILL FEELS NATURAL AND STRONG.

WE PLAY WITH ANTOINE'S BAND, MY OLD FRIEND FROM ASHEVILLE. HE'S JUST BOUGHT A MILK COW WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ALL TAKE TURNS TAKING CARE OF IT, LEARNING HOW. WE PLAY WITH UKE OF PHILLIPS, CABNERS, DAN USED TO INTERN ON MY SISTERS FARM AND HAS BEEN OUR FRIEND NOW FOREVER, AND AMY IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE ARTISTS AND THEIR VOICES SOUND SO STRANGE AND PERFECT. EVERYONE SITS AROUND THEM AND REQUESTS SONGS AND I THINK "HOW DOES EVERYONE KNOW THE TITLES?" IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE. WE STAY WITH DALIA AND SATURN, MY NEW FRIENDS WHO I LIKE SO MUCH I WOULD ALMOST THINK OF MOVING TO VERMONT JUST TO BE NEAR

THEM, EXCEPT I LIVE IN OHIO NOW. I HAVE A HOME. IN THE MORNING, SATURN BUILDS UP THE FIRE AND DALIA GOES OFF TO THE BAKERY AND WE GO TO HELP BUILD A YURT, EXCEPT WE'RE LATE AND IT'S PRETTY MUCH ALREADY BUILT AND THERE'S A STORM COMING EVERYONE SAYS WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT OUT. THEY TELL US ALL KINDS OF WEIRD BACK ROAD ROUTES, BUT WE JUST HEAD SOUTH, TAKE THE FREEWAYS AND WE MAKE IT. HOME. SWEET HOME.



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epilogue

There were times when I wanted adventure. My friends hopped trains and came back filthy, covered in dirt and each other. full of escape stories, fighting the cops stories, and the random encounters with strangers - normal people, - who reached out and gave them something, a ride, some food, some part of their lives.

in a world that made people so empty and shut of off and judgemental and alone, it was these random small things that sometimes gave us hope.

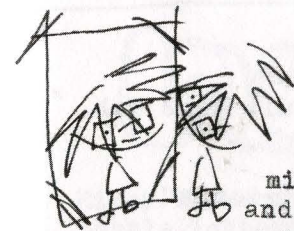
i felt kind of like a poseur. but I watched everything around me and I learned everything I could.

When the rain came through the roof, I learned to patch it. When the sink wouldn't stop dripping, I took it apart. When the van broke down, i looked under the hood. I read the manuel. I bought tools, a worthy investment, and lost them. When my garden wouldn't grow I asked my sister



I hadn't noticed.

and it's funny because it never felt like it was adding up that much, but now we bought a house and I tear out the walls and ceiling, rewire the lights, hang up the drywall, redo the plumbing. There's a lot I don't know My friends come and help me. But I know enough that I know this is possible. to make a home livable.



Sometimes I look in the mirror and there are ways my face is changing. some wrinkles. I try not to look in the

mirror too often. I think "how ugly!" and then I look at women my age or older and their wrinkles which I think are totally beautiful.

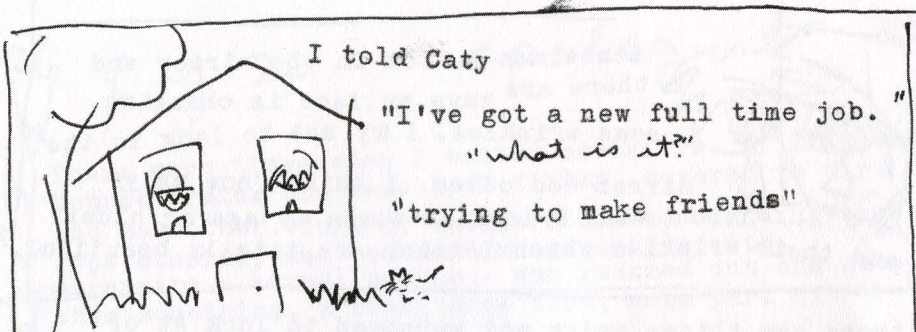
there are things we're not supposed to look at or think about. there are things we're not supposed to be curious about. there are things we're not supposed to learn.

I say learn them, look, think, be curious. don't give away your power if you can help it.

when I moved here, I couldn't stop crying. Sometimes the crying would come so suddenly and strongly I would fall to the floor. It seemed extremely dramatic, but I had no control over it. and I wasn't depressed exactly. there was a big part of me that was happy.

I read "burnout is caused by a failure to mourn" I tried to let the sorrow pass through me.

I thought that since I didn't have any friends here and couldn't remember how to make friends it would be the perfect time to write a few books. I was going to write my political autobiography - more about the politics and less about my life. I got a library card at the college library and a whole stack of books about Ronald Regan and about the wars and U.S. intervention in Central America in the 80's. I layed in bed and read a lot and took a lot of notes and felt really isolated - like 'I'm ok, but where is the joy in life?'- I decided maybe I better work harder at making some friends first.



Every day I'd be busily doing stuff around the house - we were renting a sweet house in the country with a pond and acres of woods on a dirt road. Every day I'd sigh and say "I guess it's time to go to work", and I pack up my backpack and head in to town. Since I didn't feel very outgoing, making friends mostly consisted of just sitting around one of the two places I felt sort of comfortable, the coffee shop or the collective restaurant/bar. I'd bring my normal paying work with me, and I'd sit at the booth tying knots in the ends of scarves I'd woven. I'd write out invoices or whatever it is I had to do.

I figured if I was just around long enough, maybe the people would find me. I also tried to talk enthusiastically to anyone who I had even vaguely met before. I waved at people who I thought should be friendly to me. Some of them looked like I was crazy. Some of them said hi. Johnny invited me to the Make Believes show. Finally! A show to go to! There are a lot of bars and shitty college bar shows and I hadn't figured out how to find the shows that weren't just misogynist jockrock.

The MakeBelieves were incredible. if they come to your town, go see them.

I got obsessed with Mikey, the one visibly queer boy in town. "Do you think he's queer or just a hipster" I asked Caty. She said "the hipsters here don't look very gay yet." well, now that I think about it, she probably didn't say that. I was probably just talking to myself.

LOVE LOVE LOVE

Mikey had a shirt that said "Love Love Love" in bubble letters. His hair was kind of curly with one patch dyed blue or green. The color hadn't taken very well. He had those kind of sad or tired or hungover eyes. I wrote him a note and tied it up with string. I made him a fortune cookie with the fortune saying 'a new friend would bring you much happiness.'

If I ran into him at night when he was drunk he'd call me his straight wife and I'd loudly claim that I was not straight! I was like 80% gay. His eyes weren't tracking. We never did become proper friends. I gave him my Doris Anti-Depression Guide and he told me he really liked it, it had some real LOL moments. When I got home I asked Caty, "do you know what LOL means?" She said "oh, I just read an article in the New Yorker about text messaging. I think it means 'laugh out loud'.

The New Yorker. boy oh boy.

I came up with a brand-new tactic for making friends. Usually before I would just try to be unobtrusive,

Like, if I found people I wanted to be friends with, I just tried to hang around them and not get in their way. I tried to watch them and anticipate their needs and fulfill their needs before they even realized them. I took care of them when they were sick or brokenhearted. I pulled secrets out of them. I tried to make myself indispensable.

My new friendship approach was really different. I figured I would try and do the thing that was hardest for me to do - ask people for help. It was something I was trying to practice. And I knew that generally people really like to help other people when they can and it's sort of flattering to be asked for help with something, as long as the something is a useful thing and not too boring or sucky.

Like I asked the two toughest looking girls in town if they would teach me to ride a motorcycle. One of them said she would except she didn't know how yet. The other girl had road rash on her shoulder. she laughed her perfect laugh and said if I wanted to learn from her, she'd teach me. I asked the grad-school writer girls I met if they'd read something I wrote and tell me if it made sense. We ended up starting a writing group. I asked Johnny for direction. I asked White Horse if I could borrow their shop-vac. I asked Sarah if there were any punk or notspunk houses where people did stuff together not just couples and she said 'sure. Tocmanistan. I'll go down there with you.' There were people on

the front porch, bikes in the bushes, a practice space in the garage. I said "can I come over and cook in your kitchen when I'm in town? Can I set up an office in the back? Do you want to start a band? Do you want to go on a friendship date?"

I like how people can be shy and not shy at the same time. Lizzy had the prettiest sparkly sweater. the nicest blush. she asked me thoughtful questions about things that mattered in my life and hers. Indigo wanted advice about relationships and collective organizing. Miguel was quiet sometimes, and stood on chairs and slept in his freebox and held my hand when I couldn't stop crying.

and I know it has been said a million times in zines - the list of things that make friends be friends. and I know it has been said a million times - how we need to make sure there are always houses people can come to, places we can gather. how we need to make sure to welcome. to not isolate. to keep taking risks. to keep seeing beauty. to keep alive and alive in the world. and to remember to thank our friends for the things they have given. and to remember to give. reach out. risk. love.

- end

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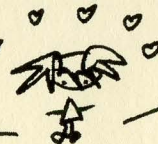
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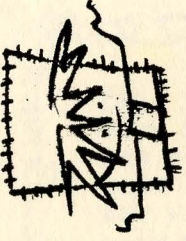
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the quote in The writing comic
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