

1000th

MONKEY

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FULL OF IT, An Interview: Tim Hall

By Pat King

This book begins over ten years ago and it is, as you've said, mostly true. How long did you think about writing it before you put it to paper?

I wrote an early draft in 1999-2000, right after I left the paper, but then a series of personal disasters really did a number on me and I didn't regain my footing for about three years. Also, I'm a fast writer but a slow editor; it's taken me a long time to learn how to write in a way that I'm somewhat happy with.

Did the distance help your objectivity?

No! Death to objectivity! Objectivity is good for marriage counselors but deadly for artists.

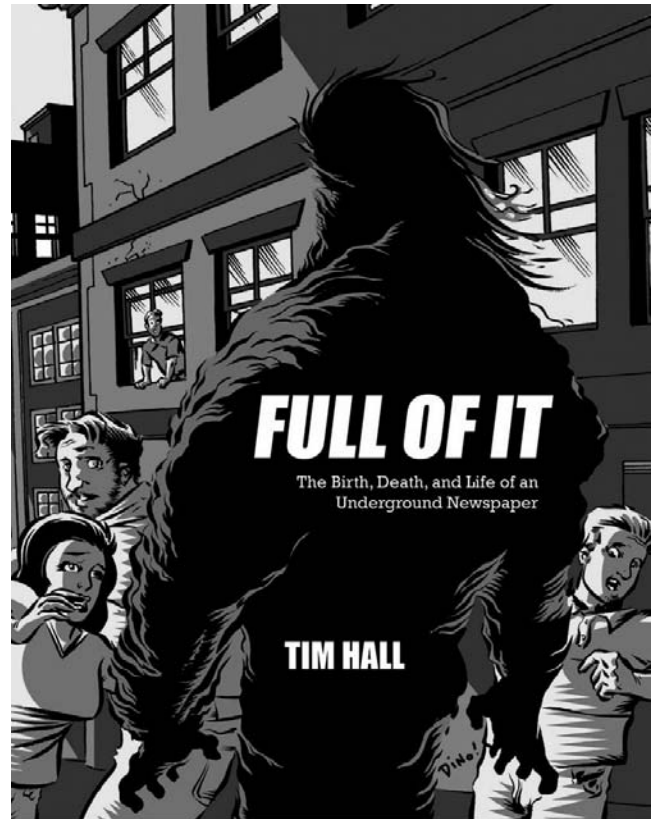
Were there things that were hard to remember?

Luckily I have a really good memory, so what combining or compression or sweetening I've done is careful and selective—and which is why I choose to call it fiction. Also I still have all the old newspapers themselves to look through and they were a big help.

Maybe it's just because I'm particularly interested in these themes, but I noticed that two major issues you dealt with in your book were collectivism and the problem of human evil. Did you want to explore these things consciously? Or did the themes emerge from the writing itself?

It was definitely conscious. Collectives are very hard to pull off; bad people are naturally attracted to such structures because their looseness and dependence on mutual trust and individual initiative make them ideal targets for havoc-making. Human vampires, like Buzzy in *Full of It*, seek power and control by taking advantage of people's natural willingness to believe the best in others. Haven't we all fallen prey to someone like that at least once? I've been taken in by several vampires over the years, including other writers and even members of my own family. It's never pleasant.

You mentioned earlier that you're a slow editor. What exactly did you mean by that? Are you a writer who constantly



www.TimHallBooks.com

goes over his writing looking for the perfect word? Or do you have trouble working out the larger issues like what to leave out, character development and the like? Or is it some combination of these?

I'm usually not looking for the perfect word, I'm not a vocabularist like so many literary writers. Mostly I'm looking for my own imagined ideal organic blend of rhythm, voice, subject matter, pacing, humor, tension, arc, drama, climax, etc. Removing all clues and fingerprints. Hiding seams. Sanding it smooth. For all the errors and rough spots that a savvy editor could find in my work I actually slave over it to the point of madness. I don't care if I suck, but I'm terrified

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: BOOK REVIEWS • COMMENTARY • ESSAYS • IDEAS • INTERVIEWS • SARCASM

**Alienation and the Outsider:
A Writer's Manifesto**

There is no mystery to death. Only life has remained an enigma.
The only life for me is the organic life.
Fuck those who explore the great Nothing.
Those who are microscopic.
I'm interested in the telescopic.
I'm tired of writers with no guts, myopic navelgazers.
I will not worship at the altar of Nothing.
Literature has become a commodity.
I'm through with that.
I want to create a new Life.
Do you understand? NEW LIFE.
It will be a synthesis of art and the everyday.
There are other writers who have done this: Hemingway, Breton, Tzara, etc.
Outsider Writing.
To be an Outsider Writer, you must first become outside.
First, an Outsider rejects bourgeois culture.
Then, they reject ALL Robot lifestyles.
Next, the Outsider becomes a bit Mad.
Madness is not insanity. It is reality amplified, multiplied.
Remember what Jack Kerouac said about Madness.
Outsiders will call for Madness to spread throughout the world, so that the world might know sanity.
Madness in Life is the Theater of Cruelty without the theater.
Or if there is a theater, it is made of the day to days that we travel through.
To the Outsider Writer, all of reality is theater, all theaters are games.
But there are always rules to a game.
The Outsider explores these rules, rejecting nihilism.
Outsider Writers are spiritual anarchists.
The Outsider Writer is concerned with human liberation.
The Outsider Writer is open to experimentation but not bound to it.
Outsider Writers can be quite playful.
Outsider Writers sometimes tell instead of showing.
Outsider Writers are TYPISTS in form because Typism moves and liberates.
The time is right for a great new wave of Outsider Writers.
Filters are being destroyed. Artists are dealing directly with the audience.
A writer shouldn't live apart from their reader.
Outsider Writers want to become books, become indistinguishable from them.
They want to wail at you from the pulpit in your mind.
They want you to write a book.
They want to meet you on the street and recognize a fellow book.
Outsider Writers are a psychic café.
We're all in the mind.
The mind?
So once again we're on the subject of death.
Whose death? Who's death?
Remember what Yeats said about death.
There is only death if you believe in Time.
The problem of death is the problem of Time.
It's time to kill Time.

www.outsiderwriters.org/

of laziness. I write to the absolute limit of my ability in everything I do.

You wrote the Typist Manifesto, which was based on a quote from Truman Capote where he says about Jack Kerouac's work, "That's not writing, that's typing." You and many other undergrounders have embraced this kind of writing as something to strive for, rather than something to be ashamed of. What attracted you to Typism and why do you like reading it?

I started Typism after reading an article about the Stuckists, a group of outsider English artists I admire. Typism was a tongue-in-cheek kind of response. I wrote and told them about it and got their blessing, which was nice. But on the heels of what I just said, about tormenting myself over my finished books and stories, I really believe that typing—that is, the act of expression or crying out or “first thought best thought”—should be absolutely encouraged. Typism is about the act of speaking out, not censoring yourself.

Do you read any writers who work in a more traditional style; say Henry James or Saul Bellow?

I prefer traditional writers, actually, because they restore a sense of proportion and logic to my overheated imagination. My earliest big influences were people like John Cheever, Shakespeare, P.G. Wodehouse and Katherine Anne Porter. Probably one of my dirtiest secrets is that I'm a secret admirer of Anita Brookner. And I love Edith Wharton, John D. MacDonald, and Robert Ludlum.

Your novel takes place in the mid to late nineties, when Internet publishing was in its infancy. How do you feel about electronic publication? Was something special lost when zines started to move toward Internet publication? Do you think we'll see the day when the majority of books and periodicals are published electronically?

I honestly don't care if books and periodicals die, but I don't think they will. A screen emits light, burns energy, is always dying. The great advantage of print is that the energy is completely embedded and it's a silent technology. I don't just mean ambient computer noise, I mean the psychic noise of light and pixels and battery discharge. Computers are really disgusting when you think about them.

You had an interesting way of generating publicity for Full of It—You gave the book away for free in an audio version before you released the book. How did this work out? Did it help your sales or hurt?

I wound up stopping that after chapter 9, though I didn't see any effect on sales either way. When you're competing against the biggest market crash since 1929 and Sarah Palin's tits, what the fuck is a free download gonna do? But I'm still very iffy about giving too much away for free. I understand the reasoning behind it and it can certainly be a successful approach, but it's not a case where giving things away free automatically translates into success/sales/fame or whatever you're ultimately after. There's a right and a wrong way to give stuff away, and I'm still figuring that out.

Is it more important that your work gets read than getting paid for it?

It's important for me to be paid, but that doesn't exclude other ways of sharing or exchanging my work. Like I've traded one of my custom slipcasses for a painting by an artist I really admire. And I'm reading Lewis Hyde's excellent book "The Gift" to get more perspective on the subject. But I can't help but notice that those who *do* get paid for their work are generally those who are just relentless, shamelessly self-promoting hustlers—and that goes from the "underground" to the bestseller lists. I have an intense hatred for such people as a rule and yet I'm in this business to succeed, so it's a constant struggle.

Do you think literature has become a mere commodity these days?

Books are commodities, and the act of writing is becoming commodified as writing programs attempt to imprison the act itself, fetishizing and attaching all kinds of idiotic rules to it, dressing it up in grotesqueries, but literature itself? The ideas, language, situations, dreams, characters? Nah. That's the software of life. Assholes will always be tinkering with it, but humanity runs on it. Aliens won't care about the atomic bombs that destroyed us, but they're going to be fascinated by American Psycho.

You've said that *Full of It*, along with your first novel, *Half Empty*, and your short story collection, *Triumph of the Won't* is your "New York Trilogy." Are you finished writing about New York? How are the three books related to each other? Are they one large story or thematically related or both?

The books are related in the sense that I've tried writing the life of an aspiring artist—generally me but not exclusively—at a particular point in time in a particular place. So the books are linked in that they are chapters of my life and deal with similar themes: the search for community, love, and meaningful work when one has little to go on other than fear and doubt. I've got at least one more autobiographical book in me, a memoir of discovering the guitar as a teen on Long Island, called F-HOLE, which should put the autobio stuff to bed for now. That will make it a four-book trilogy, but what the hell.

How did the idea of packaging your New York Trilogy into handcrafted slipcasses come about? What do they look like? How many have you made? What has the response to them been like?

I'm always looking for ways to do something special and unique with my books and at the same time "move some units" as they say in the business. At some point I hit on this idea and started making slipcasses. I've got pictures of them on my website, but basically they're either wood or heavy posterboard that I then decorate with things I've got on hand: paint, text, objects, whatever. They're like my own kind of Cornell boxes but turned inside out. I've made 6 so far and five of them have either been bought or, in one instance, traded for a painting by an artist I admire. So the response has been good—people always love

having something personal and unique, especially in the electronic-everything age.



Kristin Fouquet

You've also self-published all of your books so far. Any advice for people who are thinking of going this route?

Study. Learn everything you can about self-publishing first. Remember, every book you can sell yourself potentially takes a few dollars from one of the huge multinational conglomerates that completely dominate our literary culture and are actively destroying it. That should be incentive enough.

I once took a class on James Joyce. When we got to *Ulysses*, I became frantic and bored. Then I had a revelation: this was just a giant archeological dig. Once you found out what was hidden in Joyce, he had no more depth than Kerouac (who has plenty of depth in many of his books). And yet, this is the style most championed by literary academics. What do you think of the archeological dig method of academic literature and its influence on post-modern writing? Do academics have any influence anymore?

Those are great questions but they're a bit above my pay grade. But freedom is freedom, and Joyce was practicing his form of freedom every bit as much as Kerouac was. Or Proust or J.R.R. Tolkien, for that matter. Sometimes it seems like that dig method is a kind of a cultural make-work project in the universities, especially with some of the more whacked-out theory, but there's a lot of great writing that I wouldn't have been able to fully appreciate without an academic context: Joyce, Faulkner, Shakespeare. As for academics, I hope they still have influence! I'll take my chances with academics over the assholes at Fox News any day.

Where does Outsider writing such as your own fit in the bigger literary picture? Can Outsider Writers influence the culture at large?

I don't know where I fit in; if I did I guess I wouldn't be an

outsider any more, and it would probably be a hell of a lot less fun. But of course we can influence the culture. Going back to Joyce, you have to remember that Ulysses was published by a bookstore owner, and whatever I might personally feel about the writing it's a monumental achievement and great gift to humanity. Kerouac's scroll sat on a desk at the publisher for years; Naked Lunch was edited by friends while the author was on the nod; a Christian office supply salesman offered a postal worker \$100 a month for life in exchange for poems to publish. So while the publishing industry depends on reliable, stable product that it can neatly slot into its various categories, literature itself has always been driven forward almost entirely by outsiders. So yes, we can absolutely influence the culture—we always have. Having a group like OW is very important; not only does it give many of us hope that we're not entirely alone and/or crazy but it can help keep some of the vampires at bay, the ones who would co-opt the term for their own nefarious uses. It's like somebody's cool basement party room where I feel I can strip down to my skivvies and bark like a dog once in a while. It's freedom, in other words.

When and why did you start writing?

I started writing novels at age 10 or 11, right after reading The Hobbit. Before that I had wanted to be a songwriter for the band Kiss. The first song I wrote for them was called "I Can't See You No More (Cause You Just Sprayed My Eyes With Mace)". I start-

P o e t r y

Three from Jason Michel:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1:
the day smells
asparagus piss pungent,
while ground beneath
my knuckled feet,
groans hard and gentle.</p> <p>2:
two creatures sit
in a pissing thunderstorm,
outside a pub
laughing, for if not</p> | <p>they would weep like rapists.
3:
a wandering dog,
which way will he run
at winter's demise?
insects are waking up.
men are still sobbing.</p> |
|---|--|

and I couldn't write for several years, we lost a couple of houses and then I was homeless for a while, living with other families. I had turned to guitar by that point and got really good at it but my heart was never in it like writing. I kept trying to get back to writing through my teens and twenties and finally at 29 I decided to quit music and drinking and devoted myself to it completely. And hello.

Did your quitting drinking have anything to do with starting to write again?

I started writing a month or so before I quit, but it was tentative and unfocused. It's really more accurate to say that starting to write gave me the strength and need to quit drinking. I've fallen off the wagon a couple of times and I've really enjoyed those times as well. But alcoholism has basically destroyed my family so first and foremost it was an act of rebellion against them. Naturally it freaked them out so they called me the "alcoholic" in the family, which I believed for a while and even fell into that AA mind control shit, but right now I'm too happy to think about drinking. I approach my writing like an athlete; if I'm the slightest bit off I can feel it and I don't like that feeling.

Thanks for doing this interview. I'd like to finish up by asking you to let our readers know about your next book, F-Hole. Also, where can readers get their paws on a copy of your books?

F-Hole is a musical memoir about finding salvation through a boombox, Neil Young song, and a glass of rum and Coke. I'm planning on doing it on the stage, with reading and songs; it's going to be like High Fidelity crossed with Hedwig but without the lipstick. Hopefully it will also feature a marimba player. As for my own books, I really appreciate it if people order through my own site (<http://timhallbooks.com>) using PayPal. Not only do I sign and doodle every copy, but I actually get to make a few bucks on the deal, instead of all the money going to Amazon. Thanks, Pat, I've really enjoyed this.

Kristin Fouquet



ed writing because my home life was pretty frantic and stressful. I suffered a number of nervous breakdowns as a child starting in the first grade, mostly psychosomatic illnesses like paralysis or deafness. In first grade I once crawled around the house for four days, I couldn't feel anything below my waist. The doctor made a house call, actually, but he couldn't find anything wrong with me; that was the first time I heard the term "goldbricking." My mom thought I was faking it. Later my hearing would just completely go out, I'd get a ringing in my ears in the middle of class and then the plug would be pulled and I literally wouldn't be able to hear a sound for five or ten minutes at a time. It was terrifying. It was either start creating my own worlds that I had some control over or die. Then my concentration went in the 7th grade

Caroline Meyer's *Hidden Cigarette Butt*

Fresh off of last year's *Stolen Whiskey Nip*, fourteen year-old Caroline Meyer offers her follow up, *Hidden Cigarette Butt*, with all the broken swagger and nervous seclusion we've come to expect from this young rebel in search of a coping mechanism. The release party happened entirely in her head. Few were invited, fewer attended. Her father interrupted. Cue tears.

The *Cigarette Butt* capitalizes on context, gaining immediate traction by occupying bedroom space traditionally reserved for the icons of childhood innocence and dependence: stuffed animals, coloring books, favorite outfits; these trinkets are dead. Where butts piled in office building ash pots or tossed amidst landscaped courtyards may yield to an implied adulthood,

Caroline's filter smolders at the foot of her filthy bed, under a pile of blankets, hidden, as a child raised on fear has learned to do.

The importance Caroline places upon the nub, each exaggerated mock inhale, the coughed exhale, is made evident by her means of concealing the relic. While her father, between beatings, occupies himself with strange women and his own bottles and smokes and grown-up drugs, Caroline sneaks a drag, touches the yellow paper to her swollen lips and poses for the discerning eye of her cracked bedroom mirror. She is the woman of her father's dreams.

Her father embraces fresh cigarettes with a longing romance Caroline yearns to share. She will learn the ways of capture. Until then, she studies her father's spent filters for the transcripts of love.

Similar to Her Sister's *Bruised Pelvis* monologues, *Hidden*

Cigarette Butt at times only hints where perhaps it should yell. But with the recent slew of memoirs-turned-fiction, it's only natural to ignore whispers and wait for something more convincing. "We all have troubles," the reader wants to say. "Why should I take time for you?" Which is exactly the reaction her father hopes for, knowing that a meek voice will rally no army.

Joel Reynolds's *Dried Bar of Soap*

Dried Bar of Soap disappoints, seems half-finished, and genuinely stinks, which itself is an unexpected paradox. Joel Reynolds, normally braggadocio, popped collars and Axe spray his trademark accoutrement, releases this unfortunate wreck just one week after his similarly disappointing debut, *Break Up With a Perfect Girl*. That first work, a collection of sordid experiences and lessons hard taught, hard learned, surprised all of those who have come to embrace Reynolds's misogynistic persona (having appeared widely in smaller circulation markets such as "Dance Floor Weekly," "Hangover in Class," and "Hi-Fives All the Time" under multiple pseudonyms such as Dude, Bro, and Joel Ram-holes). But as he ages—hitting 32 this year—the persona seems to be quickly fading away in favor of familial aspirations. In a recent interview with Bartender #1, Reynolds says, "I want a son. I didn't mean to push her."

So what exactly caused Reynolds's to abandon *Soap*? Is he so distraught over failure of *Break Up* that good personal hygiene, generally accepted as an invitation to interaction, no longer serves a purpose? Will we ever have our Joel "Ram-holes" back?

Perhaps Reynolds better serves the weekly free circulation market, and should resign to maintain a presence among those lower rags. His heart is in the right place with *Dried Bar of Soap*, but sometimes heart isn't evidence enough for a respected place within adulthood. It's okay to wash now, Joel.

Down Home

An Interview with Crystal Folz

by Kristin Fouquet

With stories being published online since October 2008, the birth of an online zine in November, and the first issue of a print version out in January 2009, Crystal Folz has been quite busy. Fortunately for us, she took some time out to chat and let us get to know her and the story behind her recent projects.

Your online journal, *Shoots and Vines*, began in November 2008. What was your vision when you created it?

I've always been a collector. I've collected books - nothing specific, both non-fiction and fiction, music, seeds, herbs, and memories of people. A couple of years ago, I began decluttering my house and my life. It was then that I ditched parts of my collections and vowed never to collect again. I hadn't anticipated joining Outsider Writers and finding what I did there. I never leave my libraries without a collection of poetry or short

fiction. I travel between three or four libraries looking for new poetry books and anthologies. I began seriously reading poetry in the fourth grade. Given the time span between then and now, I thought I had accomplished a very well-rounded knowledge of poetry and prose. At Outsider Writers, I found Scot Young, David O'Prava, and others I had never heard of before. I followed every link because I wanted to absorb every bit of writing I could find by these writers. Those links led to other sites and other writers. I will admit that the first few weeks I felt I had been neglected my entire life. The libraries I attended never had books or collections by these writers.



Shoots and Vines was born purely out of selfish reasons, but I've planted it with great work, watered it with fresh work, waited patiently for other mags to pick up the writers shown there, and now it's vining into print. I never intended to go to print, but I have a love for ink on my fingers. I hope by moving into print, I'll pick up readers at coffee shops and record stores which will increase viewing at the online zine. The more I read work by these writers, the more determined I am to show them to everyone I know.

My hope is that other magazines, both online and print, will see these writers and publish their work. I was disappointed when I first began looking for some of the writers online. I might find one great piece, and nothing else. I think that is partly because online mags generally don't run an author frequently. I really don't care so long as the work is good. I want readers to come back again and again to read work by these writers. Like I said before, I am a collector.

There is a school of thought that suggests that the web is overrun with ezines many of which die a very quick death and many of which consist almost solely of solicited work. To what extent if any, did you consider this in the formation of Shoots and Vines and how do you see your journal as being potentially immune to this type of thing? What will you do to nurture it?

I didn't even think about it when I started my zine. I was so new to the online lit circle. Many of the online zines I found when I was looking to submit my own work for the first time back in late October 2008. I started up S&V a month later, by soliciting work from friends, I should add. I don't really worry about it dying. It might change venues, but it won't die. S&V isn't really a zine for me anymore. It's a collection of people who are so diverse and whose writing is so diverse, I really don't see it as a passing thing anymore. It's like being in a crowded room for the first time and not feeling uncomfortable because you've seen inside each person at some point or another.

I'll tell you something. I don't know if the writers who submit work to me pick up on this in our email exchanges, but I truly love reading what they send me. I spent so much of my life doing what I didn't want to do - from piano competitions as a young child, to cheerleading, to advanced math, to working in a strip joint. Now I read something new everyday from someone who writes to me; S&V is a book written just for me.

The day calls for submissions are closed at S&V will be the day it dies. I started this zine because I wanted new writers and old writers to mix. Sometimes I'll get an email from someone who writes, 'I haven't really been published anywhere.' Like that's something that would stop me from putting out her work! It took almost two years of my friends encouraging me to submit

Kristin Fouquet



work before I finally did it. If I had to wait for letters of recommendation or supply previous publishing history with that first submission, I would have never worked up the nerve to submit.

I really think work should stand on its own. Maybe a person only writes one great piece in her lifetime, but that's an accomplishment. I think that's why I've never worried about putting up writers as regular contributors either. If they keep pumping out good work, why not show it? Maybe it's the Kentucky gal in me, but I know immediately what I like and don't like. I've been told this is a bit off in the lit mag circle, but if I read something by a writer that doesn't quite fit what I'm looking for but I like his writing style, I'll ask him to send more. At Shoots and Vines, there is no 'I regrettably send this to tell you your piece has been rejected'. Even if the piece doesn't work for me, I will send feedback so the writer knows why, or I will find other lit mags which accept similar work and

send them that information. In southern conversation, we talk around things before we finally get to the point, even though we both know where the conversation is heading. I think I'm finding that with writers, too. The good thing is some writers are now sending me work they know I will like, but still dance around the tongue with me.

When I first read the question, 'What will you do to nurture it?' I tried to think of contests or blue-light specials I would offer to writers in order to keep their work coming. Thinking about it now, though, I've decided I will do nothing more than take them down home. I'm not a kid who thought it would be cool to start a magazine. I'm not looking to commercialize S&V, or hoping to pave my future with riches by publishing these writers. Most everything I've published was first read while I was sitting down with a cup of coffee in my black and red checkered flannel nightgown, or in between stirring supper dishes, or while drinking a canned beer on Saturday night with a terrycloth towel wrapped around my wet hair. The only way I can comfortably nurture S&V is to let the writers know who I am. If writers are only in it for the exposure it shows, but they will still get published if the work is good. If writers write because that pit in their stomachs lurched when they had a sick thought in the middle of the day while waiting to pick up the kids from school, they'll send work to S&V because they know where to find down home.

When you say that you are "not looking to commercialize S&V," I understand that to mean you are opposed to advertising. You've requested a dollar to cover postage for the print zine. Do you foresee having to charge subscriber fees? Will S&V ever "go green" by using recycled paper and toners or soy based inks?

I'm not opposed to advertising. I think my best advertisement so far has been word of mouth. When I say I'm not looking to commercialize, I mean I have no desire to make S&V anything bigger than what it is: a stay at home mom printing poetry written by her friends. I was in eighth grade or early high school when I read my first zine. The entire three page booklet was devoted to local bands. A kid handed me a free copy at a show one night. I'd like to keep S&V just like that - leaving copies in coffee shops, laundry mats, record stores, and stuffing them inside poetry books at the library.

Kristin Fouquet



If I do get a following, or a demand for the print zine, I might think about offering 'green' subscriptions to offset the cost of printing, not to make money. I try to buy everything recycled as it is. I think keeping the majority of the work online saves lots of paper, but only hits a certain group of people who are looking to read online. S&V Print was created with the intention of getting work into the hands of people who aren't following us on the net. I've made it available on Open Book and PDF, so I don't really see many people from online wanting to buy it or have a paper subscription.

I am working on patches and stickers. They are all homemade (gotta love the DIY community!). I'd like to hand them out along with the print zine or offer them for the cost of printing and shipping online.

The pleasure I get from S&V all comes from the grassroots, spread the word type of movement that has always been present in the underground. I've never been a mainstream kind of girl. I don't shop at Wal-Mart. I buy all of my clothes second-hand. I just passed my basic skills test at rollerderby practice a couple of weeks ago. I rarely wear makeup. I've spent my entire life sitting on the outside. The only way I know how to make S&V grow is to keep it out here with me, and I just don't have a commercial face.

As a writer, what challenges have you faced in the transition to editor? Does the writer begin to resent the time being put into the editorial role?

I really don't think there has been a transition. I've always written, and I've always read other people's work with the eye an editor would use. I think most avid readers do that. I have noticed that when some people first submit there is an air of apprehension about me, not necessarily their work, that comes across in their emails. I really wish that wasn't there. Since I'm so new to publishing and submitting my own work, that might be something that is customary yet I'm too inexperienced to understand.

I love it when people submit work and write, "Heard you were looking for work. Here's mine," without any formalities other than good manners. To me, that shows the human side of what we do. It's not all about big words or shocker endings or making a name for ourselves. Just because I don't publish a piece, doesn't mean it's not any good. It just means it wasn't what I like or doesn't flow with what I'm looking to put in my zine. I don't think, as an editor, my name should stand above any of the writers at S&V. I don't see myself as someone who sits in judgment of other people's work. I'm just a reader who knows what she likes to read. Like I mentioned earlier, S&V is a book for me. I think the writing I publish reflects my interests, my personality, and what I feel. I would never put up a piece I didn't relate to in some way. Maybe that is what makes my zine different and will sustain it. I publish what *I* like, not what I think will make my zine popular or get the most views.

People tend to shy away from my work because it is very personal. I don't sit and write everyday. I get a nudge. That nudge becomes a constant thought. That constant thought grips my heart until I can't go another minute without writing about what is holding me down. Those are the types of pieces I like to publish. I don't resent the time spent as an editor because I think it improves my writing. Everything I've written, especially over the past two years, has been influenced by song lyrics and the emotions that are drawn out of me by the writings of others. I think it is incredibly important for writers to read what others have written, and being an editor allows you to see it in infancy; especially if you develop relationships with writers who will then send you pieces and ask, "What do you think of this?". They might not be ready to show the world, but they are comfortable trusting you with what's inside. Not only do you get an idea about what is out there, but you get a sense of what is going on inside the hearts and minds of others and how it relates to you, both as a person and a writer.

In your story "No Fear," you describe seeing your alter ego in a mirror. What has this experience with S&V revealed to you about yourself?

I don't know that it has revealed anything so much as reaffirmed that I am completely content being me. I've worked very hard over the last three years to strangle some demons. I was pushed to be perfect for so long that I never learned what it was

like to accept myself as human. I would like to say that writing brought those demons to the surface so I could rid myself of them, but it was sharing the writing that actually did it for me. It wasn't enough to write them down. I had to know others had read about the things I had done, and didn't hate me or think I was a terrible person. I think reading what others send me to publish allows me not only to accept myself, but understand that everyone feels the things I do to one extent or another. Stripping away that 'special' feeling took away the loneliness I had lived with for so long.

Joe Smith



P o e t r y

Two from Cheryl Townsend

KISS MY ANGST

and call me sweetheart
before you walk out the door
and before I lock it behind
you

Let's face it
neither one of us
was more than an hour
to each other anyway

So don't call me and I'll
return the favor
and if I see you again
just pretend I'm not
really ignoring you

BEEF IT UP

Sad to say to a Vegan
but let the juices go
We all have a little
cannibalism in us
somewhere
Giggle me this
just beyond that
last thought

With night just near
I'll play another hand
Shuffle the deck and
toss another item
when I feign loss

Is it possible to win
when we both want to lose
when we both play at naïve
Nosh the last hand
because I've got an ace
up my sleeve



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