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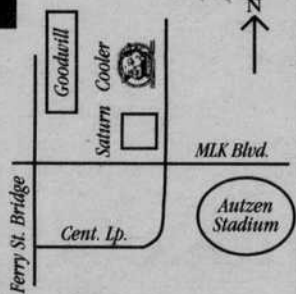
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Music helps ease pain of break-ups

The only reservation I have for Feb. 14 is to hide away in my bedroom with a bottle of red wine and a couple of Smiths albums. Yes, this year I refuse to hide behind a pleasant facade of pink and red. I can no longer deny my loathing of Valentine's Day. There is no sincerity in three-pound boxes of chocolate or heart-shaped mylar balloons. Instead, I intend to revel in the genuine pain of Morrissey. So in ironic honor of this weekend's holiday, I have compiled a list of the best break-up songs.



Helen Schumacher

Notes from the underground

Leave it to a band whose lead singer is rumored to have committed suicide over the dissolution of his marriage to write the ultimate break-up song — Joy Division's "Love Will Tear Us Apart." What makes this song so great is that on the surface it sounds like a cheery dance number, yet the lyrics hint at a much darker message. The song begins "When the routine bites hard and ambitions are low...resentment rides high, but emotions won't grow." The message of the song isn't hidden by unnecessary euphemisms or allegory. I have yet to hear faded love described as succinctly as when, halfway through the song, lead singer Ian Curtis asks "Why is the bedroom so cold?" The

question seems to echo from underneath chilly covers. When love turns sour, it really does tear you apart.

On the other end of the thermometer is the warm, comforting music of Al Green. Better known for his sexy ballads, Green is not the first name that comes to mind when considering break-up songs. However, his amazing cover of the Bee Gees song "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart" takes heartache and drowns it in a voice that flows thick and slow like honey.

What could be better solo listening than a band that built its entire fan base by writing songs about feeling alienated? Radiohead's "High and Dry," off its landmark album "The Bends," captures the bitter sting of being deserted by someone who never deserved your affection in the first place. It's smug and reassuring, and pretty in a depressing way.

Not all relationships end with loathing. As you may gather from the title, "Left Only With Love" by Smog is a graceful reconciliation. The sparse song features limited guitar and minimal percussion. Instead, the tune is carried by Bill Callahan's vocals reciting "You did what was right to do and I hope you find your husband and a

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Immature culture needs training bra

Well, I tried. Really. I have spent the past week pining over a topic for this column, and while many things crossed my mind, one thing kept throwing itself into my consciousness.

Yes, it was Janet Jackson's boob.

I can't help but see it — it's everywhere. Still, I can't turn on the television or check my e-mail or read the news without seeing Janet's look of horror and her now-censored mammary. According to Lycos, Janet and her boob is the most-searched-for event in the history of the Internet. Sorry, Ms. Jackson.

The thing is, no one is talking about the real disgusting events that took place on that shameful Sunday. No one mentions the fact that Janet and Justin's performance, aside from the accidental striptease, was one of brutality and misogynistic domination. No one talks about Nelly, not only reaching for his penis, but shaping it into a missile for all the world to see. No has even questioned the real boob, Kid Rock, and his idiotic performance, which in reality is more disturbing and wrong than anything the Jackson family could produce. And in the "hip" category, all of the artists who performed during half-time did a terrible job lip-synching now-defunct hits from their sorry collective pasts. Nothing was new there, nor was any of it even remotely interesting, aside from the half-second flash of flesh.

Shock is nothing new to network television, and it is certainly not new to musicians. Just ask Eminem or

Marilyn Manson. America's television history is inundated with "shocking moments." We expect these things from our musicians. Someone has to step up and question American progress from time to time, and it's usually them.



Carl Sundberg

Reasoning with madness

CBS seems to have forgotten that one of its longest-running television programs, "The Ed Sullivan Show," hosted a plethora of "shocking" performances. On Sept. 9, 1956, Elvis Presley became "Elvis the Pelvis" after lewdly gyrating his hips for an audience of 56 million viewers. By his third performance, Elvis's dirty hips were cropped from the frame.

Another "shocking" performance from that same show came a few years later, when The Doors performed their hit "Light My Fire." The producers told singer Jim Morrison that he had to say something other than "get much higher" because of the apparent drug reference. He agreed to it before the show, but sang the song with the original words, live on television. According to keyboardist Ray Manzarek, Sullivan was so irate he didn't even shake their hands. He banned the group from ever appearing on the show again.

It's safe to say that the outrage of CBS and Michael Powell — chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and son of Colin — was not much different than that of Ed Sullivan. But in all honesty, was it really that shocking? With multiple ads running during the Super Bowl for

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