

Goodbyes come without cynicism

"To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

I began this school year simply wanting it to end, literally counting the weeks at the beginning of fall term. I hesitantly returned to school for a fifth year. I thought to myself, "Only 10 more weeks until the term ends," and I would come home each day, curl up on my straw mat and count the days away.



Aaron Shakra

Out of range

Eventually, I surrendered this routine, and the procession of time became a backdrop for experiences that grew from the earth of familiarity. I talked with Julia Butterfly Hill under the dawn redwood tree. I sifted my hands through soil that has been worked for 30 years. I hosted an open mic. I encountered new and beautiful people each time.

So now, as it's finally over, I struggle to exist in the moment I'm experiencing. I want it to be over when it's

happening, and then afterwards I miss it. No final column could match the sentiment flowing through this body.

My life has been a series of imperfections that some might be tempted to call mistakes. But when enough time passes, I realize there are no mistakes, and everything's strangely as it should be. Only now, as I sift through this pile of incompletes that I attempt to finish in this last week of classes in order to graduate, I discover the words to say this.

I've wanted so badly to be an adult all my life, and now, as I am cast away from this womb of academia for the first time, I am finally wondering where my childhood went. I fear this detachment. Because this is what I know, and this is what I am comfortable with.

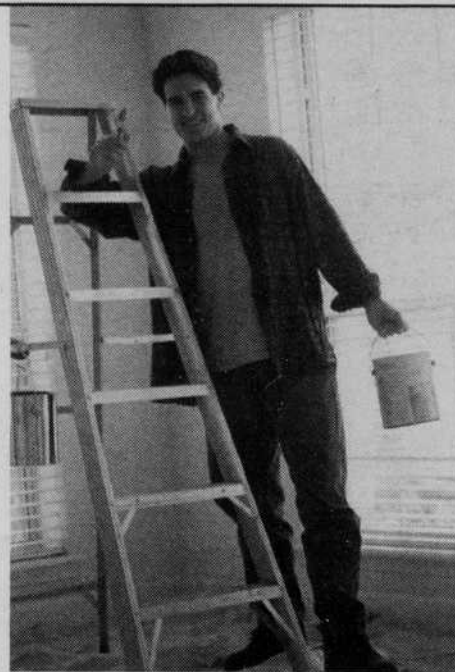
If only I could start it all over again, I could have taken more women's studies classes, taken more African dance and drumming, Japanese literature courses — I could have taken Urban Farm every term. If only ... no, such musing is pointless. I am about to be born again, and it's pointless to resist any longer. It is time surrender again.

Because after all, these stories are merely conception, a narrative I construct to order my experience, to mark beginnings and ends. When I take time to breathe, I know better.

Like Basho, I dream of setting out on long journeys with nothing but a few belongings and hanamuke (parting gifts) in my backpack. I wish to

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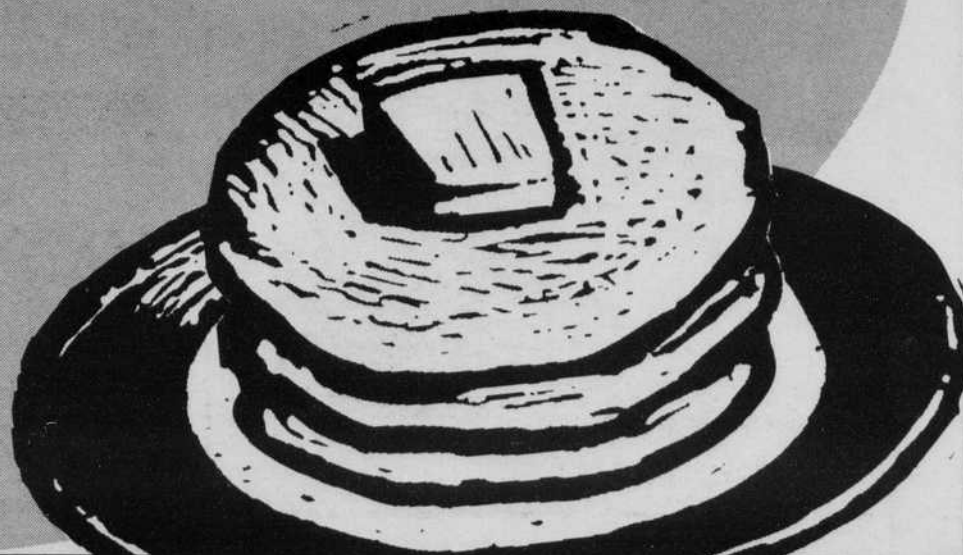
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