

THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

RANTING & RAVING

BY CHRIS LUNDGREN

I had finally decided it was over. The letter from her hadn't come. It wasn't going to come. The only thing left that I could do was pack away the painful memories of my beloved and forget.

I started with the drawer. I opened it, revealing its precious contents. One last time, I beheld a bundle of plane tickets. I had thought they would be my savior; perhaps they were my undoing instead. There was a pair of soiled Panties she had given me, to help satiate my savage addiction. I began to wonder if she even remembered having made such a thoughtful gesture. And there were the journals I had made from those days. I had written so fastidiously, until somewhere it all went sour. I picked up the one she had given me before going away, the one covered with the brightly colored frogs. At a time it had smelled of her, but the scent had long since passed away.

The memories came flooding back and I began to recall that fateful night on the stairs. I never expected she would be so bold as to kiss me suddenly, or how rapidly that kiss would change me inside. From that day on her mark was on me, and I belonged to her.

That became her day.

I placed the objects in a small box and continued my search. I started to peel the pictures from my wall, that grand monument to her which I had continued to add to until the bitter end. I paused for a moment to listen to the song I had set to play again and again as I worked.

It was her song.

Since the first hearing, it had reminded me of her. I'd listen to it, sometimes for hours at a time, and it would soothe me. Or I would burst into tears.

I turned to face my table. A bag of stones, a cheery yellow origami flower, and a pair of small photo books were all I had been left to love. I removed my glasses to wipe away the stinging solution from my eyes. It was almost done.

Finally I grasped at the cross on my chest. I held it tightly and continued crying. Before going, she'd given it to me. It became my treasure.

It was her cross.

I would wear it at any occasion. I was proud to wear it. To me it was like wearing a promise--to wait for her. I would've always kept that promise. As my grandmother had lain dying in the hospital, I'd placed that cross in her hand. Perhaps I was hoping that in her last hours with me she could bestow some kind of silent blessing on that cross, so that my situation might have a positive end. Of all the loved ones I was losing, perhaps I could at least retain one. Maybe I put too much faith in the power of a dying woman. We buried her, and now in a way, I was burying another.

I've imagined my own death more times than I can count. I wonder if she'd be at the funeral.

ROGER

BY APRIL YOUNGLOVE



The Dreadful Bumpy Girl Shelle

Hi there, Shellee.

Uh oh, you look awfully happy... Where'd you get all of that money?

Well for Pete's sake, Shellee! That's no way to make a living. Don't you know it's wrong to sell your body? Shame on you!!

FREE MILK!

I think, perhaps, you missed the point...

BY CHRIS LUNDGREN

Jack & Staples

by Joel D. Cunderson



THE WHITE MR. T & THE TWO DRUNK HOTTIES

BY TIMOTHY A. BELL

