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Contributions of original literary matter, and communications of all kinds, are solicited from students of Columbia. All Communications should be addressed to the Managing Editor, and should be accompanied by the name of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

The management is responsible for nothing that appears in the paper except unsigned editorials.

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One spring afternoon last year, our publisher ventured into “Columbiana,” home to a collection of Columbia documents. Amid its dusty volumes lay a history of Columbia composed in 1914 by the Columbiana librarian of that time.

Pouring through this history, our publisher arrived at an account of Columbia’s publications, of the battles of the Philolexian and the Peithologian societies, of the rise of Acta Columbia, and its battle with the upstart Spectator with which it eventually merged.

It was 1891. The Spectator had already claimed her exalted position at Columbia. A new voice appeared on campus.

THE B & W struggled at first to find its identity, printing fourteen issues, looking in appearance not unlike today’s Spectator. In its fifteenth issue, which it renamed its fifteenth “number,” THE B & W remade itself in journal size and switched its ink to a shade of Columbia Blue.

Amid Spectator news and Philolexian debates, THE B & W gave voice to an intan-
gible Columbia spirit: transcriptions of invaluable lectures, professors' valuable words, thoughts of students, poetic and critical, and College happenings snared by astute eyes and retold by talkative tongues. Delivered with wit worthy of frothy beer and intellection worthy of good discussion, THE B & W provided a forum for College conversations of all kind.

The triumphal resurrection of THE B & W attempts to capture its ancestor's spirit, its light feel and weighty goals, while fusing it with a campus situated scores of blocks uptown and a world aged one century. We hope to share, each month, a slice of Columbia always present but rarely seen by all.

Bearing these principles ever in mind, we have decided, after careful deliberation on a format that strays as little as possible from the old numbers. A careful researcher may find that several phrases and even the opening of one piece are adaptations of the words of writers from days gone by.

Far from mere mimicry of those gilded days, THE B & W is looking to a brighter future built on a mix of set sections already well established and essays of general interest.

Several of the set sections, inaugurated in the old Blue and White appear in this issue: Measure for Measure will present a compilation of poems. Alicia Rabens, the Woodberry Poetry Prize winner, is featured this month. Poems scattered throughout the number are most likely penned by the ancient but ageless house poet Bingo.

In this number, we are also joined by Benjamin A. Spinner, winner of the Barratt-Brown Memorial Prize for excellence in literary criticism and Brooke Holmes, the Woolrich Prize winner for excellence in creative writing.

When he is so inclined, Verily Veritas may be found within these pages. Each issue, or, more likely as V. V.'s schedule permits, we will be treated to a meaty dose of V. V.'s observations on life in Told Between Puffs.

Blue J. once again takes up the quill and returns to his post, offering careful criticism of the policies of the administration.

Curio Columbiana, which appeared just once and promulgated the text of the dismissal of a professor with Confederate leanings, appears again on page sixteen. This section presents items of interest culled from Columbia’s obvious and less obvious collections of great works.

The role of chronicling Columbia will be resumed by Campus Gossip. Submissions are welcome, although no guarantee can be made as to their inclusion.

Next semester promises the creation of new sections and the return of old house writers:

Lecture Notes will record some of the more insightful concepts raised in Columbia’s classes and note some of the better upcoming lectures. A series of essays on the Core by members of the Faculty entitled Etchings in Stone will prove stimulating.

Once banished house poet Lord Byroom may return with his withering love poems; discussion of this issue is ongoing.

With this number, THE B & W begins its new era at Columbia. In the coming academic year, the student body can look forward to monthly editions of The Blue and White published for the first Thursday of each month. Variations of this schedule will be publicized.

We hope you enjoy our efforts in this number. We look forward with anticipation to the numbers to come as THE B & W once again rises to serve Columbia.
A TOAST 'ERE WE START

A short time before my freshman orientation, I ran into a friend from my neighborhood, an elderly European architect. I mentioned that I'd be off to Columbia in a few days. He leaned in towards me, raised a finger, arched an eyebrow, and in a conspiratorial whisper chanted, "Columbia! In Europe, we knew. Columbia." I have been hopeful since then that Columbians are involved in a conspiracy.

Just over one hundred years ago, late in February, our erstwhile conspirators, the members of the Columbia College Alumni Association, met one evening. Seth Low C'1870 rapped his knuckles on the lectern and called the meeting to order. The gentlemen began to wrangle. Should Columbia leave her campus on 49th and Madison and move to Morningside Heights, or should she leave Manhattan Island entirely? Seth Low spoke. Abraham S. Hewitt C'1842, mayor of New York, stood and preached the gospel of Manhattan. John Howard Van Amringe C'1860 addressed his fellow Columbians.

Who was John Howard Van Amringe? The idolators among us have long observed Van Amringe's bust, which rests on a pedestal inside a circular memorial made of Indiana limestone, situated outside of Hartley and Wallach Halls. Van Amringe served as Professor of Mathematics from 1865 to 1896 and as Dean of the College from 1896 to 1910. The memorial to the venerable Dean was dedicated on Commencement Day eighty years ago. The inscription on the pediment reads, "The light he leaves behind him lies upon the paths of men." The Van Amringe memorial stands on our campus as a sign of integrity buttressed by sentimentality.

The sentimental pulse beat in the heart of Frederic R. Coudert C'1850 when he stood up at the College Alumni meeting to make the final remark before the vote. Coudert rose from his chair, delivered his address, paused, then made one final statement. "This is the way so many of us feel about the College: we were born here. And dirty as are the streets of our city, to me there is a perfume about them to be found nowhere else." The vote in favour of remaining in Manhattan and moving to Morningside was unanimous. And here we are.

But where are we? We try to locate ourselves on a campus whose sundial tells no time and whose grand library hosts volumes of administrators. We study Art Hum in a building dedicated, in the words of its frieze, "for the advancement of natural science." And we have long ago forgotten who Daniel Fayerweather was, or William C. Schermerhorn, or Harry Carman.

At our Alumni meeting, William G. Lathrop C'1862, waxed poetical. "Columbia is like an old oak, planted a century or more ago. From a very small acorn, it has grown according to its environment, slow, sure, always giving a good account of itself." Columbia continues to grow, sunned by her students and watered by her city. Yet it seems that we are perched on branches too far away from the trunk to study well our own foundation. So where are we?

It is a difficult project, on our campus, to locate ourselves according to any single
lodestar. Each of us carries a different compass. But during occasional moments, we indulge in thinking together about Columbia. Narcissus teaches the danger of such an activity. The Blue and White leaves Narcissus staring into his own pool; we do not simply gaze at our waters. Rather, we dip our goblets into the pool, toast Alma Mater, raise our cups to lips which curl in criticism now and then, and hope the blue waters taste a little like wine.

- Benjamin A. Spinner, C '98

SET UPON A HEIGHT

Standing up there, looking at the world within the city he never sees, he felt an undeniable urge to say his last goodbyes. The chairs spread out across the lawn, the final blue book, the last trip to the Intrepid, nothing seemed to resonate with him, not like taking a peek at a campus full of scars while stumbling between the two meter high glass test tubes stabbing strangely at the heavens. It's been a while, hasn't it, he said to the wind, alone, as always. He walked through this campus all alone these past four years, and now was his time to escape. Freedom, numbing, and relentless self-reliance stretched out before him, almost driving him to early senility. A new adventure to seize and destroy, a chance to recreate himself as the chameleon changes tone, was just a few scant days away.

He could barely wait any longer, and still, reluctantly, he came up here one last time, to say good-bye.

It wasn't the city that he'd miss. He'd forget he lived in the city for days on end, only seeing the stretch from 108th to 113th as he stumbled between the West End, Cannon's and his house. No, he loved the city, and he would be working there still, but it was this campus, with all its sad souls and torn up dreams, that he had to dig out from under his skin. This campus ripped him to shreds and acted as his Muse, like a jealous lover. It drove him to drink, quite literally, and constantly whispered in his ears, promising him that he would never meet anyone within its gates who understood one thing about the world. He watched it kill so many people, turning out machines, soulless elitist baby-eaters, burnt out junkies, and blissful alcoholic fools. Which was he? he asked the sky. All of these and more, was the only answer, depending on whose eyes you were wearing at the moment.

The thought that he may miss the classes brought out a humorless little giggle. He's been to maybe two dozen classes in the past two years. No, the only thing this school taught him was how to sound intelligent and cut all the corners. He read maybe a hundred books while he was here that he never would have read, and he learned to love philosophy, but he never was and never could be an academic. God laughed at him all the time—so
smart, and yet he hated intellectu­
tuals with a passion that could not be expressed, especially not here. No, he would not miss the city, or the classes, he would miss the bitter sanctuary of the cam­
pus, with its grays and browns. He would miss all the other lone­ly people who wandered around, not knowing what they were doing there either. They were his people.

He would miss the few people that he came to love here most of all. He would miss that one girl that understood pain and strength of will, independence above all else. He would miss the men he has loved as brothers, who have held him up whenever he wanted to jump down down down to his end. He would miss the clown who laughed at the world and loved it more than anyone else he has every known, the fool that taught him to see an entire reality he’d been missing until he came here. He climbed up to this roof to say good-bye to them, since he could never say it aloud. It was hard living in this tomb, but he was ready to rise, and come back to life again, and he could not have done it without what he learned at this school...from the few peers he could not help but love and respect.

It was a good four years.

- Joseph M. Macaluso, C98

PUNCTILIOUS

Semicolon; Semicolon;
Cast off thy dot,
you would be so much happier,
as a comma.

- KRUSTY

THE BARD’S GREAT WALL

On a curved, wooden wall on the second floor of Wallach (formerly Livingston), there is nothing. No pictures, no posters. Nothing but a story. You see, this wall was betrothed to Shakespeare. She was to don expansive sheets of oak tag, filled with scattered quo­tations from Macbeth, Coriolanus, and Lear. Dubbed "The Wall of Shakespeare," she once bore witness to our suite’s short lived title as an ashram of Shakespeareans. But we have jumped too far ahead, to the story’s end. Let us return to first semester, early winter 1997.

Seven members of Wallach 2A (or, not 2B), and a suitemate who happened to live two floors up, embarked on an intellectual trek. In the Spring, Edward Tayler was offering Shakespeare II, a course replete with the greatest of Shakespeare’s works. Dr. Tayler, no slouch, was hailed as among the greatest of teachers. Shakespeare and Dr. Taylor made for the alchemist’s combination for golden studies. Yet the study of Shakespeare raises a serious problem. Shakespeare was a play­wright who wrote dramas exclusively for the
theater; reading Shakespeare alone simply does not suffice. Accordingly, we resolved to live Shakespeare together. As only Juniors and Seniors were eligible to enroll in this undergraduate class (thank you, Enlargement and Enlargement), the Sophomoric members of the suite required special permission. In our entreaty for group acceptance, we shared our enthusiasm with Dr. Tayler:

To attend your lectures, to read the plays aloud with each other, to share our thoughts, to discuss your lectures, to participate as a group, morning and night, in this intellectual experience is a possibility that thrills us. Our suite will be transformed into an intellectual arena, our study of Shakespeare into a joint pursuit. We want to eat, drink, and breathe Shakespeare together.

Dr. Tayler replied. First to arrive in response was a voice-mail (the oldest of my saved messages): personal, short, and sober. The next response, a letter addressed to each member of the endeavor, solidified our suite as an "ashram of Shakespeareans." In the first weeks of the semester, we met frequently for group readings: rarely brilliant, often hilarious (as Shakespeare often should be), always illuminating. We examined, under Tayler's tutelage, the hinge on which Julius Caesar turns, "Enter a servant" (III.ii). We invited the Shakespearean maharishi for dinner in the ashram (an invitation kindly refused due to lack of time). We were on the cusp of a new academic experience.

Unfortunately, this epic story ends like a tragedy. The chemistry between the ashram, the professor, and the poet was no marriage of true minds. We fell from heavenly heights down to disappointing doldrums. Our trek was lost at sea.

That the endeavor failed is of secondary import. The nobility (and lesson to be learned) lies in the attempt itself. While Columbia's collection of unsurpassed professors provides plenty in terms of intellection, students can raise the level of intellectual discourse even further. By engaging a class as a group, instead of alone, the classroom can be brought into dormitory common areas or onto the steps before Low.

Kenneth T. Jackson's "History of the City of New York" is often taken in this style. As Jackson takes his students onto bikes and around New York, there is little surprise that students take the class beyond the confines of the classroom.

Special interest housing, at one level, is an attempt at creating the atmosphere we failed to create in our Wallach suite: to participate as a group, morning and night, in an intellectual experience. There is no better way to learn a language than immersion. Accordingly, why not create a little-Italy, or Germany, or China in an East Campus town-house, so that students can live the language a little, instead of just studying it. The same holds true for many of the other special interest houses.

The problem is that, more often than not, special interest housing is little more than a facade for friends living together. The unifying theme of the suite is rarely shared by all of its members. The collection of students is not centered around the pursuit of a common academic or cultural endeavor but, more
often, (though unofficially) the pursuit of East Campus. The special interest of special interest housing is often completely ignored. Unless the system changes, there will be no true special interest ashram.

Yet as Columbia students, we are more than babies left at the locked door of special interest housing. And while no Wall of Shakespeare encloses a Wallach ashram, this wall can be built. The Core teaches us that learning is not a solitary act, but a product of the community. These blue and white pages are one attempt at advancing such a learning community. But a community is not built on print alone. We must erect our own walls of Shakespeare.

- Noam M. Elcott, C'00

BLUE J. - TURN GRADUATION AROUND

The following is a transcription of an e-mail correspondences between Blue J. and Kathryn B. Yatrakis, Associate Dean of Columbia College.

18 February 1998: Blue J.

While I have your ear and I’m talking about graduation, I’d like to suggest that the Class Day, Columbia College graduation ceremony could be vastly improved with one little change.

Instead of placing the podium on the sundial so that the backdrop to the graduation scene is a vast expanse of empty chairs, orient the ceremony so that the podium is directly in front of Butler Library. I think the effect would be far more dramatic. It may also enhance the acoustics, but I’m less sure on that count. Also, I was curious what the thinking was as to turning the Class Day ceremony to face Butler. (The Sundial’s height shouldn’t be the showstopper. If I remember right I think the podium actually comes out at the same height as the steps).

24 February 1998: Kathryn Yatrakis

Dear [Blue J.]: While I also like the idea of Butler as a backdrop, I remembered a potential problem: since the College is, to some extent, piggy-backing on the University’s graduation, we can use the chairs for class day which are being set up for the University’s graduation the next day. For obvious logistical reasons, the chairs are set up to face Low, for us to set them up and then have to turn them around is a significant expense which, at this point, I think we cannot justify. But perhaps in the future.

By the way, are you planning to go to the Princeton game on Friday? It’s all sold out (tickets are being held for students with CUID) and lots of press are coming. It should be great. I think Columbia will win.

Blue J.'s response is printed on page fifteen
PLAY IT AGAIN

CHOOSE YOUR OWN DATING ADVENTURE

You are a sophomore student at Columbia University currently living in Wien. You were woken up by a fire alarm at eight in the morning, and unable to go back to sleep, you decide to take a shower, but all too quickly realize that there is only the coldest of water flowing through the Wien pipes this Monday morning.

After shivering your way through bathing, you get dressed, go downstairs, have a cup of coffee, and then you see her.

She is stunning, long brown hair, tight jeans, she reminds you of girls you used to dream about, before you had given up on love, or given up at least during your college years. You desperately want to talk to her, but then you think that she must have a boyfriend or some sort of significant other, because girls as pretty as this one always have a guy on their arm.

You stare into your Starbucks cup hoping for some words of wisdom to magically come from your coffee. You hear a voice and for a second believe the coffee is speaking to you. You look up and see your friend standing there. You exchange pleasantries and hope that your friend goes away soon because you see her coming towards the register and don’t want him to get a good look at her. The pickings have been slim recently, and you don’t need the extra competition. You can see that he wants you to invite him to sit with you, but his ruining your possible chance with the Wien goddess is an event you would rather avoid:

Option 1. To politely tell him to leave you alone, go to the next page.
Option 2. To invite him to sit with you, continue reading.

You invite him to sit with you, and he proceeds to tell you about his night and his "love conquest" from The West End.

With great pride he recounts the tale of the girl in a Dolce and Gabbano tank top. How he went back to her room in Carman. How her roommate was there. By this point you have long since tuned out and as you notice yourself mumbling something about the Butler Reading Room, you notice the girl walk out the door.

The next day, you wake up especially early, endure another cold shower, all in the hopes of seeing her again. But alas, she does not return, and you are left to your Starbucks House Blend and your sorrows about what could have been.
You politely tell your friend that you are in a bad mood and that you really "want to be alone." He gives your shoulder a sympathetic squeeze and leaves. You see the girl approach the register, pay with dining dollars, and take a seat not so far away from you. You try to catch her eye, but she is intently reading the Spec, apparently engrossed.

Just when you're about to give up on the whole thing, she lifts her head and you catch her eye. She turns back to her paper, but now and then looks in your direction. Do you go and talk to her? Of course you do. You walk over to her and she smiles as you approach. (One good sign.)

"Aren't you in my Lit. Hum class?" she asks.

You're not in her Lit. Hum class and you tell her so, but she swears that she's seen you there before. You assure her you're not in her Lit. Hum class, but she asks you to sit down anyway. (Another good sign) You ask her if there's anything interesting in the Spec. Dumb Question.

The conversation turns to finals, which are swiftly approaching. She complains about L and R. You concur, nodding your head with the deepest of sympathy. Then she whips out her copy of To The Lighthouse and says,

"Did you get this book? Because I really don't get it at all." She bats her baby blues. You momentarily forget the question.

"No, no I didn't get it either. Just remember, stream of consciousness," you stammer.

She thanks you for your advice and puts the book away. You suddenly notice the time and realize that you have to go to your Principles of Economics class.

Option 1. To ask for her phone number, go to page 17.
Option 2. To just excuse yourself continue.

You tell her that you have to run off to class, and she says that it was nice talking to you and that she hopes to run into you again. You leave and are late to class, get a really bad seat and are not only unable to see the blackboard, but are also unable to get her out of your mind for the rest of the day.

You try to run into her again the next day, but she doesn't show, and you even try again the day after, but to no avail. She must have been a dream, a mere mirage in the bleak desert of Columbia University.

As you're walking to class, you decide to give up on girls altogether, but just as you were about to throw in the towel, you see another beautiful girl crossing your path, and decide that maybe you were too hasty in making your previous decision.

She goes and sits down with some of your friends and you decide to join them. Your friends introduce you to each other and it turns out she lives a floor below you in Wien. You say how strange it is that you have never run into her on the elevator. She agrees.

You think things are going great until she mentions that her boyfriend will be in town this weekend. Even worse, he goes to Princeton and they've been together since tenth grade apparently.

You walk back to Wien, thinking about your lonely life. Just when you think things couldn't get worse, you run into this girl you hooked up with two weeks ago whom you haven't spoken to since. You walk by, giving her the casual nod of recognition. She ignores you, and walks by without acknowledging your existence.

In your shame, you do not notice the crack in the cobblestone of College Walk, trip, and fall. She looks back upon hearing your grunt of pain, smiles a little, and keeps walking.

Wallowing in your humiliation, you decide your only option is to go back to your room, take a long nap, and try not to dwell too much on your sorrows at the old West End.
SCHOOLBOY SAUNTERINGS

I am the whitest guy my friends know. They freely admit this to me, and they should know all about the subject, since they for the most part, are white. When confronted with this laughing accolade, I bristle. “There’s no such thing as a white person,” I admonish. “White is a garbage idea used to subjugate people with dark skin. And besides,” I grin, baring an arm, “I’m sort of pinkish-red.”

My point made, the accusers smile back at an idealist. They know that I’m full of it. Truthfully, so do I, but I still maintain that their terms propagate racism (the tightest noose around the American Dream.) That hanging rope, though its intent is manifestly evil, encircles our society, and it seems that no one outside the hermetically sealed world of social scientists and PC-evangelicals sees the world in a shade other than black or white. Who can blame them? This bifurcated vision is an American legacy and, always clinging to tradition, we uphold it.

I suppose that I always realized my whiteness, but growing up in a “positive ghetto” suburb, the color line was moot. Though my high school diligently strove to offer a multicultural education, it never walked its liberal talk. Therefore, I got schooled in Black Manhattan.

Freshman year at Columbia, I decided to explore Harlem. My friend and I walked up Fredrick Douglass Boulevard north from the sharpest color line in Manhattan: 110th Street. It was three in the afternoon, and students poured from their schools onto the main avenue. Suddenly, around 116th Street, I was for the first time in my life, a very conspicuous minority. It was a tense moment, and I reacted just like one Carl Van Vechten’s “jig-chasers” who found himself in an unkind area at an unforgiving hour. I closed ranks with my friend and stepped up the pace, staring intently at the cracked, mica-flaked sidewalk. This alien land, so separate from Columbia that Morningside Park could well be a trackless ocean, was Harlem.

I was scared, but I came back. For me, Harlem was an undiscovered country, and I wanted to explore it, stake a claim, un-gentrify.

There is a strange feeling when one is white on 125th Street. This vein throbs with the blood of almost every nation, yet you feel like yours, Suburbia perhaps, is under-represented. You look up occasionally to see a white face, which often returns your gaze and smiles, attempting a connection. Do they see a brother in my pale complexion and stiff gait? Ha! I am not of their awkward self-conscious ilk. I know Harlem well enough to stroll on.

“There goes one of them now...White boy!”

“Devil!”
“You walk around like you own the place!”
“Keep your white man’s disease away from my granddaughter!”

A bottle shatters inches from my head. Did I do this? Do I still carry the pox that decimated the first Americans? Do I look like the enemy? Am I, the white guy doing service in the Harlem community, a dangerous individual? The answer is clearly, hell yes.

Confronted by this racism, I keep striding, such is the life of a subversive. I’m not sure exactly what doctrine I’m undermining, but I know my credo. Like other Harlem wise-men, Eddie Harris pithily defines my stepping-out, “You cannot ignore the bars and walls of your personal prisons. Otherwise there would be nothing to rise above, nothing to overcome. Nor can you live within the walls of any culture and not be a product of that culture, unless you live encased completely in a cocoon.”

As a living-breathing product of the suburbs, of a white culture ghetto, I need Harlem just like it needs me. Harlem is my way out of a narrow life and narrow experience, but unlike the “jig-chasers,” I’m here for more than a one-night cabaret stand. I am in all my manifest whiteness, investing in the community.

The question remains, asked by those who live on the Heights and those below, what’s a white boy doing in Harlem? Again Harris articulates these color-based queries: “How can you deny the influence of the world around you, deny that it affects you or that it in some way shapes you? How can you separate who you have become from the forces that made you, even as the world around you attempts to reduce you to the stereotype of your smaller world and treat you accordingly?”

I answer by trudging up the Amsterdam hill, bringing more Harlem with me, sometimes in a doughnut bag, sometimes in a friend, sometimes in nothing at all. In escaping my own ghetto, I’m assuming a new segregated place. I do not want Harlem for my own like Donald Trump wants the West Side or how Italy once lusted after Ethiopia. I want to share Harlem with residents, students, people who would never set foot in New York City. For to understand Harlem is to understand the guts of America, the life-blood as well as the tripe of being an American. Only after this cross-ghetto exchange can we move on to new digs, for the moving process is not an easy matter. As every resident knows, the real ghetto lies within.

Benjamin S. Komfeind, C’98

TALES FROM THE DEPTHS

The first time I heard about the tunnels, I thought they were sort of like the Carman swimming pool. Even though I believe in them now, they still feel sort of like a trick that’s being played on me. Ever since I became interested in the tunnels sophomore year, I’ve noticed that the mere mention of them spawns all kinds of theories and myths. They’re forbidden territory, of course, since much of the system (supposedly the third largest in the world, after MIT’s and the KGB’s) has been sealed off. Their status as such makes it hard to see a map of the system (it’s not published with the university architectural drawings, although I’m told it’s possible to piece much of the system together with those blueprints), and hard, too, to figure out exactly why
they've fallen into disuse. No tunnel aficionado I've talked to has ever seen the whole system, which supposedly runs from the river to Morningside Park, although it's possible to see parts of it under campus. But lack of cold, hard facts from the administration is what fuels tunnel lore, of which I've heard plenty, especially theories about why some of the tunnels have been shut down.

My favorite is that during the Manhattan Project, some tunnels were used to transport top-secret and highly toxic materials to our very own Pupin Labs, and that afterwards those tunnels were sealed up (along with the Pupin basement) because they had been contaminated. I brought this up with a group of Columbians at Thanksgiving and was vociferously refuted by one fellow who protested that those scientists would have never handled the material so carelessly. And besides, he continued, even if there was some sort of toxic waste, Columbia wouldn't simply leave it sitting underneath its campus. That may be logical but then no one has ever claimed to have deciphered the decision-making process here. Besides, I like the idea that, just as the UN is built on top of erstwhile slaughterhouses and Washington Square Park is built atop a bunch of bones, our outpost of the Ivy League is perched on top of a truckload of radioactive sludge. That would explain the color of the Wien mac 'n' cheese. Hell, assuming the damage spread, it might just explain Cottage wine. I think it's perfectly plausible. Can't you just see a bunch of slick-haired Trustees sitting around, saying: hey, yeah, it's fine...in New Haven they don't even bother to bury the stuff.

But if you're not into ISO conspiracy theories, there are other explanations. Boris, my friend at the J School (who, therefore, hates facts as much as I do and is fond of hyperbole), told me that they shut down some tunnels because girls were getting raped in them. If this is indeed true, I wonder just how many people were raped before they sealed off the tunnels. In light of how the Administration has been handling the Sexual Assault Policy, I would guess that it was only after an entire floor of Brooks had seen the inside of St. Luke's Emergency Room that they took notice. Perhaps Take Back the Night should be rerouted underneath Broadway (someone told me there was a tunnel between Barnard and Columbia closed because of a rape). And such a theory begs an explanation of what exactly the tunnels were being used for at this point. Hazings? Parties? Getting to class?

The third theory I've heard is that during the 1968 riots, students trapped professors who were on their way to class in the tunnels (sounds like a MacGyver episode), or at least used them for subversive purposes. Just think of what the Ethnic Studies protests could have been with that underground network of communication. I always thought that if I wrote a thriller, I'd have the climactic chase sequence take place in Columbia's tunnels. One can only imagine Sharod X as a cross between Huey P. Newton and Harrison Ford as The Fugitive dodging riot cops in a dark maze beneath Low Steps as, up above, perfectly oblivious students sun themselves and skim Pride and Prejudice.

Finally, in a recent conversation with a security guard with an obvious penchant for the tunnels, I learned that the only large chunk of tunnels sealed off completely were...
the ones running from the river, and the ones connected to Morningside Park because “they were finding dead bodies and stuff in ‘em.” Apparently, the university used to run coal to the power plant under Uris (which you can still see) from the river, and the tracks for the coal cars are still visible in some tunnels. In the 60s and 70s, long after the University had changed its power sources, they sealed off the tunnels outside of campus because “runaways, derelicts, and junkies were getting in.” There those locals go again, ruining our neighborhood, an administrator sighs.

Part of the reason I’ve always been so interested in the tunnels is because they’re like an archaeological stratum of Columbia, something we would see if we were to do a cross-section of campus. It feels as if they are a buried part of the university, a legacy that will never see daylight, that will never make the front page of the Record. And since I’ve never really seen the true tunnels, which are probably piss-spattered, graffiti-ridden and generally pretty prosaic, they hold the sense of the Freudian uncanny for me, the dark space of a history out of which we’ve been locked. The security guard (probably also prone to hyperbole) described the whole system as a labyrinth, where you could get stuck for days. “It’s a good idea to bring bread crumbs, then?” I asked. “Yeah,” he said, “you get lost down there and they’ll never find you. Never.” The quickest way, still, to become a legend is to go underground.

- Brooke A. Holmes, C’98

BLUE J. ELABORATES AN IDEA

27 February 1998: Blue J.

Am I going to the basketball game? AM I EVER. WOW. I just got back from getting tickets. Athletics did a great job building up the excitement around this game and making it a big event.

I’m a little disappointed that the expense of moving chairs is the only thing standing in the way of pivoting class day. I imagine something else, entrenched tradition or something is probably more to blame. If it is chair moving, you really ought to play hardball with the chair rental crew.

If my memory of last year is correct, between class day and university commencement, chair crews went through south lawn and not only did significant work straightening the aisles, they even added more chairs. I can’t imagine turning a chair around is a more difficult task than moving all the chairs back to their pre-class day positions. The chair rental crew should not be able to justify a charge on turning chairs around.

Furthermore, the podium where class day is conducted is removed that night. If class day were spun about, the podium could be left erect until after commencement, delaying this work for a day may also be a savings. If the idea is not feasible for political reasons, or if it just plain isn’t liked, tell me. But if the only thing standing in the way is money, that’s a bad excuse.

No action was taken to turn around this year’s class day exercises. Blue J. will continue this crusade. With luck, the class of ’99 may enjoy a fuller grandeur facing our venerable Butler Library.
CURIO COLUMBIANA
(WITH COMMENTS FROM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS)

Few of the many men who, from day to day, visit the ground floor of our Library have passed beyond the heavy wooden door marked "WOMEN" Here are kept beyond the reach of the unprivileged visitor old records of grievances, banalities, prejudices and slights, printed, scratched and scrawled on the bathroom stall doors. As only a select group are permitted to form an acquaintance with this frank discussion of social issues, it is but fair that one who has seen them should publicly make known the result of her investigations.

Blacks are Mother ______, Racists, Anti-Semites.

Not so, and even if Being a mother ______ is better, that's right, better than what you all are!!

Oedipus?

Like Anti-Semitism is even an issue at this school. Hello 8 million member JSU.

It clearly is.

You all need to calm down. I can't believe Columbia lets in people dumb enough to make some of these statements.

It's true, these discriminations really exist. Ignorance pervades even some of the elite population.

Hey dumb _____, here is your wake up call. Ignorance is often most prevalent in institutions such as this. In fact, elitism often breeds ignorance - imagine that - here at Columbia: ignorance, elitism and capital birthed right out the rotten crotch of Alma Mater. God I feel Good! Why can't we just make clever little dirty drawings such as [several clever little dirty drawings] like the men's room? It is so much more FUN!

I'm absolutely amazed at these comments. The truth of the matter is that people of all races, religions, sexes, and sexualities can be huge bastards. I mean Christ, didn't we learn anything from the civil rights movement, the women's rights movement and Queer rights movement? Is this 1900? Ladies, let's not be blind.

Don't write it on the bathroom wall. Speak out. Say it to another human's face w/o fear, regardless of your belief. Have the balls to have it out face to face.

Why can't we all just be friends? Oh, and by the way, writing on the door like this is vandalism, i.e. bad. I just thought I'd let everyone know. [smiley face]

While some of these comments are shocking they are not particularly original. More interesting than what has been expressed is the fact that so many women have chosen to vent on the back of a stall door. A little over a decade after women first joined Columbia College, the graffiti in the Butler bathroom suggests that women here have unresolved issues to discuss, but lack the courage or the place to do so openly.
Nobody wants to ____ a filthy Dyke.

I do.

Didn't anyone ever teach you to be polite or nonjudgmental? Suck it up and keep your opinion to yourself.

If she can't write her opinion on a bathroom wall, where the hell is she supposed to express it!?

It appears that this remains an open question.

-Christina Olsson, C'98

KEEP PLAYING IT

CHOOSE YOUR OWN DATING ADVENTURE

from page eleven

You tell her that you have to go to class, but ask her if you can call her sometime. Low and behold, she gives you her extension. The rest of the day flies as you bask your glory.

You spend the next two days occupying yourself with homework, drinking Rolling Rock, and watching Dawson's Creek.

After waiting the requisite two days, you finally call and end up leaving a voice mail message.

So you wait. And wait. And wait. When she doesn't call you back that night you begin to worry.

Impossible, you know you're a stud, after all, she gave you her phone number. Friday, she finally calls back. You speak for awhile about nothing of importance, To The Lighthouse mostly. She tells you that she's going to The West End with some friends. What a coincidence.

(Make a mental note: rally friends to go to West End) You decide to find each other later.

After lengthy negotiations, you make for the West End. No sign of your lovely lady.

Your friends get restless at around midnight and want to leave and go to SoHa.

You get fifteen more minutes, but fifteen, then twenty minutes pass by, and she doesn't show. You check your messages, she hasn't called. Your friends give up.

"Come on. She's not showing up. We'll find more girls at SoHa. Let's just go," etc. etc.

Option 1. To leave with your friends, go to page 18.

Option 2. To wait for your honey continue...

You decide to wait for your honey. You order another drink, and look around for someone you know.

Lucky you, your gerrulous friend from this morning comes and entertains you.

"Are you feeling better?"

"Yeah, thanks. Much better."

You sit back and enjoy hearing his routine about some girl, wearing a GAP shirt this time. The story sounds pretty typical and you are thinking about just calling it a night.

Instead, you order another drink, and before you know it, you've nearly forgotten
why you are at the bar in the first place. The Macarena blares throughout the bar, and you think to yourself that the night might actually be salvageable. You order another gin and tonic, and somehow notice the girl you’ve been waiting for arrive. She sits down with her friends.

You buy her a drink and walk in her direction. Just as you are approaching her, a very large, very blond punk walks over to her and puts his arm around her. You stop walking. You start contemplating and before you complete one thought, she calls out your name.

Option 1. If you venture to talk to her with the scary guy standing there, turn to page 22, read the left column.

Option 2. To pretend as if you don’t hear her, turn to page 22, read the right column.

from page seventeen

You decide to leave with your friends and mope. You begin grumbling about girls, until your friends physically stop you. So much for fraternal sympathy.

Hungry from a long night of drinking, you get diverted to Koronets. After practically inhaling a jumbo slice, you decide you won’t be able to make it to SoHa. You say your good-byes and begin the long walk back to Wien. As you stumble in the Carman gates, the girl walks out of Carman and you practically run her over.

She apologizes about not making the West End. She had to go and meet some friends at another bar downtown. She managed a “Yeah, we should get together another time, really we should” before she was run off to hail a cab.

Dejected, you walk the long, lonely walk across College Walk, through the Wien gates to your final resting place. You make it up to your room, and collapse vowing never to speak to another girl again for your entire life.

Instead, you look at your Rolm Phone hoping for messages, no flashing red light. You look again, but not even the glow of the moon reflects off your phone. Great, you think to yourself, on top of everything else, not even a message from the phone mail lady.

TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS

In March, nature offered us great penance for winter, when a crisp blue sky and warm zephyrs slipped through our gates, and planted themselves on the Steps.

I lay indisposed on my bed. Can Eden be reborn amidst our campus gardens without Verily Veritas?

I dialed the Health Services Nurse Hotline. “Help me,” said I. I elaborated on my cold.

“You must take Tylenol. And antihistamine. A hot shower, and much sleep. Gargle with warm salt water.” V.V. remained unimpressed.

“Or if you truly want to cure your cold,” said the nurse, “do this: go to the health food store and buy Indonesian ginger candy. Pound the candy until it softens; then boil it. Eat it with a yam.” Colds make no sense. Our nurse enlightened me. I would enter the field
on a senseless front. Before sunset, I found myself among the Adams, Eves, and serpents on the steps.

First, a short stop in Avery library to praise beauty, even to read a few books. Next, I stepped out the front doors and found a young violinist playing a partita. Shall I review the recital? No.

I strolled to Uris to satisfy my thirst. I merged into the line, acquired a soda, and recited a silent prayer for the souls in the seven circles of Uris. V.V. is not as devotional as he is critical, and within moments, found himself on the Steps.

Did you see the cane dancers? Three Nureyevs strutted and pounced around a red and white striped cane. Bobbing in and out, over and under, the dancers acted as a visual counterpoint to the rough and rhythmic drum beats of the bongo circle that sat a few feet away. I reflected for a moment about art and nature. Would that my Logic and Rhetoric instructor had provided me with such a theme. I might have written one successful piece. But why should I presume?

A tour of prospective students slithered down the steps. I felt deep sorrow. V.V. is a strong advocate of individual liberty. Freedom of choice is snatched from the knapsacks of prospective students who visit the College on such a day.

I believe that my words may be functional. I shall prove my theory in a future number, and hedge my bets against any professor who beats me to a helpful token of advice. Until then, I offer the advice of my predecessor, which I copy as best I can from an 1891 number of THE BLUE AND WHITE:

It is but natural to suppose that many novel excuses have been and will be offered to the professors of various courses for excuses of absences. The novelty of the excuse is necessary to its validity. For instance, I, who have had some experience in the preparation of doctor’s certificates, parental letters, and illogical fabrications, will frankly confess to the professor that I absented myself three weeks from Sanskrit because my tailor was looking for me; I will remind him that it is neither fashion nor ethics to meet a creditor; and I will make my argument unanswerable by some such remark as ‘You know what it is yourself, sir, when a tailor is following you.’

-Verily Veritas

GREEN?

No more will Harvard’s crimson reign.
Or Yale’s dark tones be seen,
the blue and white is donned again,
our fountain’s painted green

-BINGO

AN INTERVIEW WITH
JANITOR ALPHONSE JOHN SINGER

What is the most notable change on campus since ’86?
The descent to hell of the Maison du Punk and the Blu and White’s appearance.
What is your motto?
Laugh and grow fat.

-BING, penned in 18920
These Platzpoems are part of a series in which I try to examine and excavate place. Each was written in the place specified by the title, although later revised elsewhere. I started each poem at the boundary between me and the place and allowed it to meander between both, remaining always attentive, however, to the collaborative structure created by my looking at it and its looking at me.

Several of these poems have been published recently in the Boston Review

MY NEW ROOM ON
W. 116TH ST, NEW YORK

I am a monk. The light barely burns.
I am a mover. The light is packed.
I am a home. What does that mean? I own it.
—Kind of.
But even here, you won’t leave me alone.
You undress in front of me repeatedly,
you draw the curtains shut, you voyeur, peeking from a thousand unlit windows.
Peeking between our relation and the differences that will keep us skating on to the next “you.”

The differences that would lead one to pee on a fire to put it out
or bite someone’s cheek who has kissed you or knock him down,
a monkish fantasy in stone.

Here is painfully white and empty. My boxes are not here.
You are not here. No one else is here. They are
somewhere else, in their homes.
Saturday night hinges into Sunday morning & I don’t even know what a peignoir is!

It is a quilted pigeon? A black stylus?
Is it the couch a wife reclines on while her husband prays?
I have no couch!

What are these wires and how close am I really to the customers
across the street who tell me, “Awake, I am awake.”
I love everyone who is at home tonight with the lights on.
Each layer of lights like the inside of a fly’s eye.
I am in the binoculars and my heart is beating fast, my neck burns.
If I ever meet you, I’ll bring you back to this very bed
and together we’ll look at your dark window.

-Alicia Rabins, B’98
BETH’S LIVING ROOM
WHITNEY AVE., NEW HAVEN

This is the interassured experiment of existence
Knocking cat off table & the plume of the cat’s tail crossing Beth’s leaning arm.

When you’re locked in the city, the bleeping grid of rain-dark streets,
You begin to miss the assurance of trunks & paths—
You who once knew leaves and the percolating future.
And this person and the person and the cat whose forehead of caramel & cream reminds me of caramel
creams laid in two flat sticky rows of six.

Say twenty different beams are converging in the diffidence of now.
They shiver outwards, a dandelion puff of sharp whites.
I am the stenographer of the moment. “Titty.” “MMA program.” “Boon-Ching.” “It’s like
she honestly can’t comprehend.” “I think I’d really like to see it.” Meanwhile
the cat, butt braced on in the air, roots in my bag for gingerbread.

There’s a spreadwinged bat hanging from the ceiling & who sees it? When is the right age?
The three of us in this room see it, do you see it? Do you see Whitman?
Do you see anything? I, tea-weary, twenty years of the solid life,
Centuries of the shadowy hole-riddled fabric filled with all these silly

— Alicia Rabins, B’98

KGB BAR ON

Soviet mirror, mirror of beer—
In which I spy the Intruder
who sends me a telegram with his eyes:
THE DICE ROLL STOP BUT THEY’RE STILL DICE STOP
I roll it up & hold a match to its lip and let it drop into my red ash tray
I hide my face behind a paperback romance

Sometimes I feel, walking beside the river,
that I’m trying to make a stick's stump understand fire.
Or else I’m trying to look at the sun on the river and succeeding.

A tangerine oval stains the water
like a flat orange boat, the sun’s submarine surfaces
like the first kiss of half an inch from the lady spy with the accent you can’t place
like—like—I think these things instead of succumbing to you,
Professor. Nevertheless
this young witch will take off her clothes & demonstrate
the science of optic nutrition, you have only to ask.
For I am a doctor of light, Professor, and my own assistant.
Witness:

Light pulls itself off the river through the healthy frozen air
Light that had to come from somewhere
Light that is something we made up a word for having been banished
from a tower
Light that is the words written after the book has been shattered

— Alicia Rabins, B’98
You walk up to her, hand her the drink. She politely thanks you. She tells you to pull up a chair, but does not reveal the identity of the groper. You try to figure out what's going on in the conversation.

Apparently, Sara has cheated on Rob with John and Rob found out from Heather who found out from John, but Sara denies the whole thing, and . . . .

You give up trying to talk to your girl, but she seems actually interested in Rob, Sara, and John, and yes, a rather large hand, not yours, is now placed on her leg.

Finally, you get her attention long enough to hear about some EC where all the beer ran out pretty early, and well, how was your night?

You tell her that you have just been hanging out here all night, and that it was nothing special, and that you're feeling a little tired and think you're going to just head back to Wien.

You say goodnight to her and then return to your friend who is now talking with some girl you have never seen before, Polo shirt this time, he's stepping up. Why does he get to go home with a girl and you don't? You bid him farewell, good luck and good riddance.

Another worthless evening. You try to remember why you thought going to school in New York would be fun, but nothing comes to mind at the moment. You try to remember what it feels like to have a girlfriend, but that, too, leads nowhere.

Sleep seems like your best option at this point and as you drift into unconsciousness, you try to forget that, tomorrow night, you'll ne taking the same long walk to Wien.
The Senior Class Dinner, held for the first time prior to Senior Week, was a resounding success. The bold move to alter this tradition should be commended. The dinner was well (almost too well) attended, causing long but manageable lines for the food. At first the tremendous turnout seemed to be too much for the limited space of the South Lawn tent. As night fell and the food was served, the mood inside the tent softened. By the time the last champagne bottle was poured, no senior could say a bad word about the event, or, for that matter, a coherent word.

The fierce competition for the Open Division Spring Intramural Soccer Tournament has come to its conclusion. The best team, the "Shapeshifters," representing the architecture school, was forced to concede to the B-School, a far inferior team. The final game was scheduled for the night before the architecture school's presentation of semester projects. The B-school team chose not to follow the route of sportsmanship and took the trophy. THE BLUE AND WHITE offers this year's singular sports prize to the Shapeshifters, truly the best team in this spring's intramural tournament.

George Stade, professor of twentieth-century literature, is in the midst of adding a novel to the corpus of his subject. "I write only in pencil," said the professor. In line at UFM, he added, "I'm almost done with the novel. Only thirty more pages." When will you finish? "As soon as the undergraduates go away for the summer."

Our esteemed graphic artist, Emilie A. Jacobs, will make a pre-finals trip to North Carolina to play the role of a fifteen year old, backwoods girl who survives giving birth in the forest only to be strangled by the baby's father. We offer our best wishes as well as our condolences.

In a failed take over utilizing joint University and B-School capital aimed at supplying widely demanded economic scholars, Columbia retained not only $300,000 in liquid assets, but purity of mind and nobility of soul.

For maximum yield, B&W experts advise, profits should be directed toward Core instructor funds.

The classroom assigned to Franco Moretti's Modern Fiction course at the start of this semester was far too small for the number of students enrolled in the class. The physicists...
were consulted, and the class was moved to Pupin. Mr. Moretti lectured in the room whose chairs climb in rows from the third floor (where the very keen undergrads sat) to the fourth floor, more arena than classroom. So expansive was the room that Mr. Moretti lectured with a microphone.

One afternoon, Mr. Moretti strolled into his classroom. On the desk sat a large oil painting, a group portrait. The subjects? James Joyce, Gertrude Stein (copied from the Picasso portrait), and Mr. Moretti himself in black tie. The title of the painting was marked, in bright letters, "Three Lives." The artist’s signature, however, was absent. The professor glanced at the painting, glanced at his audience, glanced back at the painting, and placed it behind his desk. A modest professor.

Who was the painter? We offer a clue: the same student was responsible for the portraits in the men’s room in Butler, and on the construction wall behind Carman. Indeed, the same student spent much of the previous lectures with a sketching book on his knee and charcoal in his hand (visible to those scholars who sat high in the room). The Blue and White would not be irresponsible to report that almost every person in the room soon knew the identity of the artist. Every student, that is. The enlightening professor, for once, remains in the dark.

The end of the semester theater season began with a minor disappointment as crowds thronged to the epic Varsity Show. The script cried for an editor. While the individual pieces were funny and the acting was superb, the script was attempted too much. There were too many subplots and too many characters.

Special note should be made of Senior Class. President Jeff Cohen’s outstanding solo bit as a Freshman RA.

The King’s Crown Theater troupe graced the Columbia campus with *Much Ado About Nothing*. Braving the rain, cold and PiKiKi, the Troupe came through with a solid performance.

Professor Alan Brinkley has recently given two lectures on our decade in relation to decades of yore. The first, given in Low Rotunda, compared contemporary ruminations about the coming century to the ruminations of the nineties a century ago. The second lecture, given as his final lecture in his course "America since 1945," looked at our decade in relation to the fifties. In the two lectures, Brinkley showed the promise of our decade as a more realistic and accepting one even as the optimism of five scores and of two scores ago has dissipated.

Barnard Girls are debating the subject of a college pin. Some desire a blue and white flag bearing "Barnard" in silver letters, while others prefer the Columbia button. (*December 3, 1891*)

The work of all unsung contributors to this number is here recognized, without whose help the B&W would remain just a memory of high hopes dreamt one spring afternoon.