CHOOSE YOUR OWN HEMINGWAY ADVENTURE!

by Hector Chavez

THE ROAD THROUGH DAMASCUS
by Zachary Bendiner

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR
by Michael Mallow
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Cover by Ajay Kurian

Typographical Note
The text of The Blue and White is set in Bodoni Old Face, which was revived by Günther Gerhard Lange based on original designs by Giambattista Bodoni of Parma (active 1765–1813). The display faces are Weiss and Cantoria.
The Blue and White invites contributions of original work from the Columbia community and welcomes letters from readers. Articles represent the opinions of their authors.

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Campus Characters

You might not know the following figures—but you should. In Campus Characters, The Blue and White introduces you to a handful of Columbians who are up to interesting and extraordinary things, and whose stories beg to be shared. If you'd like to suggest a Campus Character, send us an e-mail at theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Jordan Barbour

Jordan Barbour’s, C’05, earliest memory of singing involves running through his house in his underwear squealing a version of the Donald Duck theme song that he wrote himself.

But when we meet, the gawky way he’s perched on the armrest of a chair in Lerner reminds me more of Big Bird. He’s still sweating from Modern Dance III, a bold move considering he never took levels I or II. “I’m a little ambitious and full of myself,” he says. “I like to jump right in.”

This isn’t an entirely unexpected sentiment, coming from a Juilliard-trained vocalist, improv comic, and regular star of The Varsity Show. I expected arrogance, but more than anything Jordan seems uncomfortable. In fact, he takes a slightly uncertain tone when speaking about himself.

On some matters, though, he is quite forceful. “Tenors are pussies. Write that down,” he tells me. “Or tenors have no balls. That works, too.” Needless to say, he’s a baritone. And yet, somehow, he’s also a big fan of Tori Amos: “[She’s] still very good. Like if you listen to it.” He explains that he actually likes somber stuff a lot, despite his reputation for humor.

In some ways, confounding people’s assumptions is a positive virtue for Jordan. In talking about James Baldwin’s novel Another Country, he remarks that the power of the text arises from the way the reader fits the characters comfortably into tropes that then completely disintegrate. After all, he says, there’s no such thing as normalcy.

Thinking this sheds some insight on the hilarious way in which he played President Bollinger as Prez Bo in a recent Varsity Show, I ask what it’s like as a black actor to play a conspicuously white role. It turns out that the original idea for the character was his: President Bollinger has “absolutely nothing” in common with him, with race the most obvious example. Still, it’s “sometimes weird and sometimes cool” to play characters that he will never get to play on the musical theater circuit. He adds that the joke does wear thin, but as he says, “Hopefully the performance makes up for that. Hopefully that isn’t the joke.”

If that were the joke, the performance would have fallen flat after his second scene. But Jordan’s Prez Bo was a crowd favorite—awkward, goofy, emotionally compelling, and vulnerable in a way that made people look at the then-sophomore president in a new light.

This process, by which a performance changes the way people look at the world, lies at the heart of Jordan’s academic interests. He’s a Media Studies major interested in the way in which the arts have transformed American culture. This semester, for instance, he’s writing his thesis on media portrayals of gay men since the Stonewall riots and the development of the idea of a gay male lifestyle.
His other interests range farther afield. Recently, for instance, he's started talking to his grandmother about her memories of Cuba, Barbados, and Panama in order to learn more about his family history, with the hope of eventually writing her memoirs. In his spare time, he Googles himself at least once a month, writes songs ("somber songs," he says), and watches the occasional movie.

Jordan doesn't know what he's going to be doing next year, besides staying in the city and auditioning for shows. We wish him the best of luck. Whatever he's up to next year, he'll be making things more complicated. And funnier. —MPH

**Katerina Seligmann**

She isn't, she explains, the Nate Treadwell kind of activist. She doesn't "periodically kick bad corporations out of the whole University."

Then again, she doesn't settle. Instead, Katerina Seligmann, C'05, fights "personal, individual battles—with political ramifications." Private fights that make public waves.

She has waged "a personal battle to equalize the apology differential" (go to parties; engage men and women in conversation; convince the women to apologize less and the men to apologize more). She has noticed how much space different people occupy in rooms. She has sent five thousand letters of petition to government officials in hopes of helping to liberate a political prisoner. She has also run Columbia's Amnesty International chapter and Everyone Allied Against Homophobia, worked three jobs at once, and earned a degree in Comparative Literature and Society.

Sophomore year, she shaved her head, in part "as a sort of personal-social experiment in being received differently." "Received differently," as it turned out, was a euphemism for "wanted badly." Since then, Katerina has been told that she is the number-one object of desire among members of the Columbia woman's rugby team, and, separately, the Barnard freshman class. (She is a member of neither.)

Junior year, when she shaved her head for the second time, it was because her head itched and she thought she had lice.

Like their daughter, her parents are both "extraordinarily intense." Her mother, in San Antonio, has been married four times. Her father is a self-described "prolific, manic, insomniac" writer in Little Havana who has been living, miraculously, with full-blown AIDS since 1993. Katerina calls him "Pater."

She has her father's bug eyes and beautiful hands. She's been told, often, that she takes herself too seriously. Sometimes, when she's tired or confused or upset, she whines like a puppy and burrows into people's shoulders. She spends a lot of time in Butler, working and whispering and listening to N*E*R*D. She is an intense, silent, stare-through-your-head listener. Overwhelmingly, she is a wonderful friend.

It is my loss, then—and that of the hundreds of other Katerina devotees between these gates—that she is finished here. Of course, she has plans: "I have a couple of naively hopeful book projects," she says, scratching her head with a red stir straw, "including a collection of essays that would serve as a critical supplement to the Core." After that, she plans to apply to PhD programs and law school at the same time, and maybe even attend both simultaneously. ("It's taken a lot of focus," she breathes, "but now I've narrowed it down to being a lawyer and an English professor").

And so private, political Katerina steps out into the public, political world. Lucky world. —MHG

Illustrated by Ajay Kurian
TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS

Verily Veritas has been called many things, but never a Philistine, at least not until recently. As with his boozing, lechery, and morbid narcissism, Verily blames this on his upbringing. You see, W grew up in a repressive household. His parents, ardent Greenberg Formalists, would punish Verily with hours of Color Field painting any time he displayed the slightest bit of proto-Postmodern impishness at the dinner table. Family Christmas cards were written in a maddeningly Joycean narrative structure. Even his dyspeptic old dog Edgar had a tendency to relieve himself upon the later works of Stravinsky.

In short, the Avant Garde never entered Verily's life as a figure of elegant and liberating Continental mystique; it was more like a habitually unemployed uncle who lived in the guest room. As such, Verily's rebellious nature has often rendered him uneasy to bathe in Barthes and dry off with Dreiser as his mother instructed. Lately, though, his cultural hygiene has become even further debased. Verily realized this the other day after listening to a friend speak fascinatedly about a droll professor who insisted on referring to the television as "the televisual apparatus." Here a younger Verily might have spouted off on how media-obsessed intellectuals after Baudrillard use such unnecessarily formal names to subdue concepts they cannot control. At the time, though, Verily simply found himself wondering when the old televisual apparatus plays Law & Order in this time zone.

This mulish temperament became increasingly unwieldy over break, when Verily's professors and editors removed his lexicographical yoke, and thus giving him free range across the Bravo! Network. VV here experienced what alcoholics call a moment of clarity and what budding post-structuralists mistakenly call aporia. Philistinism was creeping into his soul like the warping influence of serial publication in Dickens novels, and Verily needed to reckon with it. Surveying two paths diverged, Verily decided fatefully to take the one with more catchy sound bites. He promptly settled himself on the couch to watch a small marathon of Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, using that celebrated, and unread, new translation of Svevo as his beer coaster.

What followed for the next few weeks was a gluttonous haze of television, fashion magazines, and Grade-B literature. Eventually VV had so thoroughly washed away his cultural qualms that he found himself spot cleaning. Since he used to disparage Kurt Vonnegut for being frivolous and lazy, Verily spent one week reading over half Vonnegut's oeuvre. He read graphic novels by Chris Ware precisely because they looked a bit like comic books. Of course he had small lapses here and there: the colonialist implications of this coming Spring's infatuation with flowing Mexican folk skirts troubled him briefly. But he told himself that somewhere, some critic had probably de-problematized such cultural quotation, so Verily could await tourist chic on Low Steps in good conscience.

Eventually, though, the party drew to a close with the end of his break. Verily soon found himself borne back from his vacation with Tropic of Cancer to the icy pages of early Modernist architectural manifestos. Feeling bloated and hungover, Verily feared he would be disoriented by the din of once familiar academic jabber. As happens occasionally, though, he was dead wrong. VV had forgotten that the real world loomed dangerously near as a second semester senior, and everything was in overhaul—including the jargon. Bruno Latour's notion of actor networks had been replaced by talk of, well, actual networks. Phrases like "iBanking" and "cutting-edge PR firm" were swirling around the Hungarian Pastry Shoppe. Yes, most of Verily's peers are escaping academia like rats off a sinking ship, job-panicked and winded from all the Gauloises. Verily still doesn't know what to think of this. Of course he might pontificate on the extent to which the goals of socially radical theory are undermined by its willful disengagement from the forces that drive commerce.

And rest assured, someday he will, but right now Law & Order is on.
One hungover morning, Mephisotcheles was rereading the Argonauticae of Valerius Flaccus and realized that the Cosmopolitan by his side failed to illuminate his understanding in the way that bourbon had always shed light on The Sound and the Fury. Still bleary-eyed, he chalked it up to the excesses—literary and otherwise—of the night before. In an effort to give his gin-soaked brain a rest, he took his copy of Mansfield Park from above the toilet and started to read. The cheering misadventures of Fanny Price somehow combined with the mind-numbing effects of his vividly pink cocktail to send a euphoric sensation throughout his entire body. “By Jove!” he exclaimed, “For every book there is a drink!” He proceeded to his meta-ethanolic laboratory for several rounds of pleasant experimentation.

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Tequila Mockingbird
2 oz. tequila
1/2 oz. lemon juice
1 tsp. Creme de Menthe

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, Hunter S. Thompson

Rum and Coke
1 1/2 oz. rum
Top with coke (approx. four lines).
Best served off thigh of hooker.

Lolita, Vladimir Nabokov

White Russian
1 1/2 oz. vodka
1 1/2 oz. Kalhua
1 1/2 oz. Gerber Baby Formula with Iron™

Robinson Crusoe, Robert Louis Stevenson

Rum on the Rocks
3 oz. rum
Serve over ice and pray for quick, tiger-less death.

The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath

Kamikaze
2 oz. vodka
1 oz. Triple Sec
1/2 oz. lime juice

Confessions, St. Augustine

Pear Martini
2 oz. Stoli vodka
1 1/2 oz. Pear Liqueur
Garnish with stolen pear. Don’t enjoy.

Death in Venice, Thomas Mann

Sex on the Beach
3/4 oz. Peach Schnapps
3/4 oz. vodka
Fill with equal parts cranberry juice and orange juice.

The Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Molotov Cocktail
4 oz. vodka
4 oz. gasoline
Garnish with flaming rag.
Throw in face of the bourgeoisie and enjoy.

All Quiet on the Western Front, Erich Maria Remarque

Flaming Shot
2 oz. Jagermeister
Splash of 100 proof vodka
Light on fire and douse on dominant hand.
Consume remainder in company of Belgian nuns. —Mephisotcheles

February 2005
All the great debates of literature have boiled down to a single question: does reading get you laid? In this high-powered intellectual duel, Editrix-in-Chief Cara Rachele and Editor-in-Training-Pants Avi Zenilman squabble over The West End happy hour appeal of literary prowess.

Forget what your mother told you about the sensuous thrill of learning. All learning ever got anybody was existential despair, poor hygiene, and a frosty garret. See France, for example. However, don’t pawn your grandmother’s Harvard Classics for beer money just yet. You’ll need those for a successful college career because, my friends, reading gets you laid.

Of course, most boys are easy marks; a pulse and a ponytail will do the trick. But why pluck bedfellows from the swarming masses of future middle management when Henry James the younger is nursing cheap scotch in the corner? Everyone knows those strapping lacrosse lads will emerge one day from business school finally ready to satisfy their deep, primal urge to support the Republican Party. The discerning young girl about-to-be-gone-wild should avoid such prospects until resigned to over-the-hill tedium—when being able to say, “Oh, [insert current Pulitzer Prize winner here] used to take me out, but he had this weird thing with his mother...” will make you the star of any post-menopausal knitting circle.

Many people don’t associate those little pussy poet-boys with the same sort of sexual voraciousness as their brawnier counterparts, but this is plain ignorance. From Byron to Roth, the canon reads like one frustrated teenager’s dirty thoughts on what he’d like to do to you. The best and the brightest crumple under the unassailable force of exposed breasts—just like Frankie Muniz, or Vichy France. But what girl has the energy to launch a thousand ships every time she needs a date? It’s tiring, and they end up spearing each other and not you. Just a few choice references, however, to Djuna Barnes or The Man Without Qualities, and before you can say, “Darling, it’s so sweet of you to dedicate your first novel to me,” you’ll have your pick of the literary litter to have, to hold, or to dump unceremoniously when someone with better scansion comes along.

College men are vain about their intellects the way real men are vain about other parts of their anatomy. They’re not interested in your wit, but in how they can see themselves favorably in it and your pants. Those with a more generous opinion of the opposite sex, or their own dignity, may find my argument distasteful. Then again, they are also the sort who staunchly maintain that the T.A. in their Early French Literature course has an earnest interest in discussing, over drinks, their unusual insights on Rabelais. So question your motives the next time you choose Mr. Joyce over the perfectly compelling, though less impressive, Mr. Bradbury. Is Finnegans Wake really that much more crucial to your education than Fahrenheit 451? Or are literary pedigree and sexiness really just one and the same? Embrace your aesthetic cynicism, for the truth will set you free—of your panties.

Affectionately,
Cara Rachele

The Blue and White
My Dear Miss Rachele:
Eat your words—or at least your panties—because reading does not get you laid.
As a man-boy whose entire social existence relies on his involvement with journals
of the high arts, I say this with deep reluctance. But dude, reading really does suck,
and it doesn’t get you blown.
Freud said that reading and writing are simply a sublimation of our natural sexual
urges. I haven’t actually read him—remember, reading sucks—but I’m sure he wrote
that, since my mother told me so. In any case, my knowledge of Freud is extensive
enough that I still laugh when an adult says “pencil” or “pickle.” So, logically, my
dear, dear Cara, your quest for a thorough Ezra Pound-ing will only end in repres­
sion of near-Soviet proportion.
So what about that copy of *Slaughterhouse Five* you found in the gutter? It’s not
going to get you laid. And memorizing the streets of Yoknapatawpha County? Not
going to get you laid. What about your street knowledge of Volume II of Foucault’s
*History of Human Sexuality*? Not going to get you laid. (Plus, all the good stuff is in
Volume I.)
Speaking of Soviet repression, let me tell you a story to illuminate my point. For
some fortnights following my graduation from high school, I read like the licentious
fiend you are. Four books a week, two newspapers a day, and countless self-impor­
tant magazines that could use some more circulation. Admittedly, I did feel a little
bit glorious, but I also felt a little bit like a street-side solicitor of oral sex. Every day,
I would search for someone to sell me their mind-body problem, which I would
then exploit for masturbatory purposes.
But then one day I bought two books: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*,
and *Gulag* I had to choose between a boy and his broom, or many enslaved boys
and their many brooms (in a Russian prison camp, of course). The books were of
equal girth, but I just had to pick the *Harry* one. Five hours later, I was finished.
Within days, my rate had slowed down to one book every four months or so, and
the bleak grey copy of *Gulag* still sits unread on my shelf. Undistracted, I can now
pursue my life’s work: cunnilingus. That’s right, I’m generous. I am also well-liked,
well-adjusted, and content with my station in life.
It’s a simple point. Subtle pleasure my arse—you know you’re bored and just trying to rationalize. I do
grant you that every year you should read the new *Harry Potter*, because he’s awesome, and they make
movies based on it, but other than that, don’t waste your time. If you want to get laid, next time you go to
Avery, don’t bring a book. Or underwear.

Truly yours,
Avi Zvi Zenilman

February 2, 2005
You know what I do miss about Swamplandia? Live Chicken Thursdays.

A legacy is what you are GOING to leave, not what is LEFT to you!!!!!!! YOUR BEAUTY IS GOING TO DIE

I could hear my heart thumping against my padded bra. Cold and exposed, my hairless legs shivered. The gold patent leather of my size 15 heels dug into the sides of my feet. Sweat was collecting on the tips of my fire engine-red nails. The end of the overture was rapidly approaching and I knew that there was absolutely no turning back now.

This is what Stewart hopes to understand, the people’s logic of “talkin’ about thangs” and how “talkin’ about thangs” injects meaning and relevancy into both the present and the past.

Blame it on my Catholic upbringing or on a Baroque sensibility: the more difficult the task, the better it feels.

Therefore, not only is The Prince an incomprehensive, brief summary of some of the things that Machiavelli has studied, it's also written for dummies.

Waking at dawn on the coach bus from a heavy, Dramamine-induced sleep, I watched the sun burn through the Poconos; the trees at the height of their colors, today, February 3, 2005, a day already promised remembrance by Bush’s re-election. And so, Heaven and Hell were married, and I, at least for a moment, was comforted, because I knew Bush could not take this vision from me.

If the K-T impact didn't happen, we dinosaurs could still rule the earth.

I would say that my parents fully expect me to marry out of race. I guess it kind of goes that way when the first girl you kiss on the elementary school playground is an adopted Asian girl.

Columbia has a sophisticated public relations staff that has worked hard to create the perception of reaching out.

Fast forward to hear and now, to this computer, to this self-evaluation, to myself in this program, to myself fighting a new battle. And it is fucking beautiful.

There is no Utopia, just a cycle as follows: Rise to power, Decadence, Corruption, Crash, Humble Rebuilding, you know.

Brazilians prize ample derrières and breasts that could fit into a wine glass.

Notes: Jewish with European descent. Broke up with ex-girlfriend a year ago. Dated her for 4 years. She was born and raised in LA, Korean descent. Family values were similar, we were both foodies, somewhat materialistic (we had appreciation for finer things), both quite good hearted and giving. ... Both moderate Repub-
lican. Still main stream American, but hardly without a "foreign flavor", for the lack of a better words. ... Yes, we always thought I was "the driver."


Before the summer when I turned 13, and my sister got possessed, then pregnant.

I have been recendy warned by the administration of Columbia university not to attempt to be funny again, apparently it hurts people. I think sledding down the indoor steps of Butler on a giant atlas is pretty damn funny, but it seems that the woman I injured does not agree.

Ossie was rootng through her drawers in a panic. "Where is it?" she cried. "Where's my turban?" I washed them, I said, triumphant.

I'd say more about scar number two, but self-mutilation is boring.

Writing, you know, he is the reason for my late nights, my tired eyes. He's the reason I started on coffee. And writing, is the reason I now have spilt tea all over my laptop. He is high maintenance and he messes with precious time, my precious sleep!

Today, this attack upon God's order involves Free Presbyterian children.

COME SEE SETH, FANGSOME SEA SERPENT AND ANCIENT LIZARD OF DEATH!!!
We called all of our alligators "Seth." Promotional materials were expensive, and people wanted their money's worth.

I am sitting in the computer lab of the Schapiro dormitories. I am on a brake between class with Nicky and Stage Combat.it is mid February, three quarters of the way through my first semester at Columbia as a graduate acting student. I am here. I am changing. I am changed. I will change. Life, art, theatre, creation, Aryeh. we are transforming.

After taking into consideration the uses and the value of the minerals, I think I would like to own a ton of Hematite.

Objectivity is the white stag of the historian.

Methods: I attended guest lecture on menopause where I saw the film Hot Flash On Menopause.

Here is a list of the historical losers my sister has dated: James Garfield, Spiro T. Agnew, the Ayatolla, Bothius, Thomas Dewey.

-Don’t know (about) Asians in general.
-He wants to come home to a sweet girl.
-Attracted to Jewish-American women—aggressive, but that takes a toll on you.
-Every man’s fantasy? A geisha
-Perception of Asian women: pleasant, more retiring

Mom would have been okay. Dad was an extreme racist, but would have been fine because he was a lover of women.

I just need an excuse to made a black and white film with lots of knives, feminism, and Freudian symbols.

What I find interesting is how long it takes them to realize that Gary is a sociopath.
The Death of the Author
by Michael Mallow

It's easy to get lost in the details in this business, so I tend to leave some out.

...or at least you could've 'til yesterday. It was a messy scene with a self-indulgent culprit. I can't say I ever liked the kid, but no one deserves an axe in the back. Pretty gruesome, but then again he'd likely cut down on the irony from here on...

The Author had been working on a story called "A Mystery Noir in Blue and White."

My gut told me it had something to do with the case, but I still needed more answers.

...but people call me 'the Narrator.'
I deal in the Who, What, and When. The Why and How are trickier. You want thematic development? A witty yet colloquial style? Talk to The Author...
There was a guy who had said some nasty things way back. Maybe he still held a grudge. Round here people call him 'The Critic.'

He laughed. Said it'd been done before, and better.

So I had a serial case on my hands.

"A clumsy mess of one," he retorted. "And trite."

I knew where to find him. He was sitting in the back corner with coffee and a tart: holding office hours, apparently. I told the dame to get lost and we got down to business.

I gave him the story and asked if it sounded familiar.

I spent a week profiling all the usual suspects. They talked to beat the band, but none of them really said anything. All pretty flat characters, but who am I to judge?

I had gone through the whole joint and still didn’t feel like I knew anything worth knowing.

But I was wrong...
Rizzoli had given him the axe.

One day I was picking up some smokes and the new TLS...

I passed out for two hours; the case was over. There was no use...

I ran back to the crime scene and flipped through the story to the place where Eddy the narrator runs back and reads the story.

The answer was right in front of me...

...but then it hit me

Dear Mr. Mallow,

Your story is shockingly puerile. The market for meta-textual fiction reached its apogee in the mid-nineties, yet even then such morbidly inferior work could not have found anything but the most debased publisher. That this was written five years into the 21st century reveals a lapse in aesthetic understanding, the degree of which will shock this office for some time. David Eggers could do no worse.

Yours,
Rizzoli Publishers

PS- The End is here.

THE BLUE AND WHITE
Tragedy is simple. Comedy is hard. The Greeks wrote dramas to make a sociopath weep, but throw them a one-liner and all you got were old men spanking each other and quoting Euripides. In the thousands of years since, comedy has writ no better: Voltaire seems forced, Trollope’s baroque, and those of us who have read Dave Eggers stopped laughing after the picture of the stapler. But don’t be deceived by the skepticism of a skeptical age—that’s why we play the Penis Game and add “in bed” to the end of our fortunes. In that vein, we offer you this list of inherently funny things to clip and save for a lackluster day. Because having spent a hundred years indulging our pretensions and poking fun at everybody else’s, we at The Blue and White know a few things about comedy, and it would be selfish not to share.

cockfighting  minstrels  incest
hedgehogs  marionettes  semaphore
magical realism  mongerers  Richard Wagner
sheep  Choose Your Own Adventure  feats of derring-do
masons  the Pony Express  tridents
badgers  Hugenots  Trident
geodes  ducks  midgets
hunchbacks  Kim Jong-II  defenestration
ninjas  the Russian Revolution  The Diet of Worms
dandies  bowler hats  beard of Zeus
jaundice  dropsy  sporks
toffee  Neptune, God of the Sea  manatees
pandas  lobsters  stigmata
dragons  the Teapot Dome scandal  Czar Nicolas II
dachshunds  Luddites  teddy bear picnics
emus  Labrynth  strongmen
goiters  the clap  seppuku
Visigoths  the Teapot Dome scandal  zeplins
the proletariat  the Teapot Dome scandal  velveteen
duels  Labrynth  Liliputians
rackets  the clap 
sea monsters 
coiffure  
panopticons  
seersucker  
dill  
the Hamburglar  
certain house plants  deus ex machina
fisticuffs  
periscopes  
orphans  
dev  
The Neverending Story  
carrier pigeons  
griffins  
flapjacks  
the M104
Choose Your Own Hemingway Adventure!
by Hector Chavez

Begin as a straightforward, ruddy young man-boy who grew up in a small town in a quiet and rugged state. On the morning of your twentieth birthday, you decide you’re a man, punch your father in the face, and leave home to see the world.

It's fly-fishing time at last, and you've earned it. Spare the reader no details.

A few hours in a Spanish cantina are needed to clear up the old noggin. Strike up a conversation with a local who's missing some facial features. A spontaneous arm wrestling match develops into a knife fight. Grab hold of his one good ear and choke him with your other arm!

Time and fortune have turned you into a callous and wealthy man. With a whiskey-soda in one hand and a trophy wife in the other, you stumble into a midlife crisis. Only the deep satisfaction of killing a majestic African lion can lift your spirits.

So you felt you were ready for the bullfighting ring? Confidence can be misleading sometimes. Unfortunately, the feeling of a horn pinning you to the sand lacks ambiguity.

That was a helluva lion. Kept fighting after several blows to the neck and lungs. Helluva lion.

That was a valiant bull. *Qué toro tan más noble,* they'll say later. The crowd knew it was a valiant bull.

Gangrene: the pungency emanating from your wound is the smell of adventure!

What’s your wife keep yapping about? Actually, she’s not saying anything at all. She openly resents your presence. Tell her to shut up anyway.

Bored? Insecure about your virility? Expand your horizons and join the West European *guerre du jour.* If a fellow soldier’s insolence grows ever more frustrating, take a deep breath, count to ten, and toss a saucer of iodine in his eyes.

You saunter into a local bar for a brandy. The bartender charges too much for a turkey sandwich. You break his nose in the bathroom.

Countless weeks on the front can lead to anxiety. When life deals you lemons, try shooting Hungarians out of their wagons. Don’t forget the horses.

Try listening to the concerns of those around you. When the ranch-hand told you he didn’t like your face, you should have paid attention. Now he’s shot you in the back.

It seems you’ve lost control of your sphincter while the guards lead you to the scaffold! At least your friends are too dead to watch.
CURIO COLUMBIANA

The Blue and White has long tackled matters of gender relations—by which we mean, we have frequently given breath to the great misogynistic tirades of our age. But an exhaustive exploration of the B&W vault has uncovered this one piece, from Vol. III, No. VIII, November 30, 1892, that lauds the advancement of the “weaker sex,” at least in the realm of hosiery.

HOORAY! “The sewing school of Pratt Institute has added a new stitch to its course of study. It is called ‘grafting,’ and is used to join together the raveled pieces of stockinet by reproducing perfectly the original web.” Hooray.

Now, the “college girl” has been a much maligned creature. The funny men of the country had invariably emphasized her peculiarities; they have consistently pictured her as one who refuses to mind the younger children of the family, because she has the “Eclogues” to study, who loses the family’s buttonhooks while trying to find $x$, and who always mistakes the laudanum for the whiskey in making the Thanksgiving mince pie, because she happens to be writing a French composition at the same time.

Now, however, all is changed. Although I should probably be unable to distinguish the new article from a Japanese doormat, or from one of those doilies which The Young Housewife gives to the subscriber guessing nearest the age of the editor, yet I feel that the publicity given the above announcement in last Sunday’s Times must be indicative of the invention’s importance. I am sure that, upon a perusal of it, whatever doubts have existed in the mind of man of the progress of her ability to reform man and humanity, and to sew buttons on straight, must be readily dispelled.

I am no optimist. But may I not safely ascribe great results in the future to the skill of Pratt Institute, as exhibited in its recent handiwork? As the invention of gunpowder marked the downfall of feudalism, and subsequently the depopulation of our great West, so will the “grafted stitch” of Pratt Institute be equally revolutionary in its tendencies. Indeed, the whole system of College life and College athletics will be undermined; and the fragments neatly worked into a glorious fabric, in which Yale will no longer hesitate to attack Harvard’s “flying wedges,” because of the fear of bursting her suspender buttons, in which no College faculty will be compelled to risk a cold in the head by sitting in the front row without a hat-band, and in which no Freshman will cry if his “Ascot puff” is disordered in a cane rush.

Hooray! All honor to Pratt’s Institute’s girl! May their fair fingers never grow tired! May these model Penelopes ne’er refuse us College students and suitors their “grafted pieces of raveled stockinet,” while their Ulysseses sail in steam launches down Gowanus Canal, or drink Rhein wine at Coney Island!
The Road Through Damascus
by Zachary Bendiner

When one of our sage editors went abroad to Cairo last semester, The Blue and White assumed that, upon his return, he would regale us with many a fetishistic saga. He certainly does succeed in relating an anecdote wholly unrepresentative of any Middle Eastern culture; we just expected a bit more drollery.

Without any particular destination, we strolled down the streets of downtown Damascus in the early evening. We were pondering our newfound roguishness, having arrived in Syria the previous night, and only with the aid of a cabby smuggling cheese in his trunk. A nondescript black sedan blasting heavy metal music interrupted our reverie.

"Who is this?" my friend Dan asked.
"It's a German band! Are you from Sweden?"
He turned down the music.
"No. America."
"Oh... then you better come with me."
Only his laugh, postponed, revealed that it was a joke. We continued walking. He pulled alongside.

"Seriously. Let me show you around town."
Should five Americans, three of them girls, accept an invitation from a slim Syrian stranger with a manner not unlike a soft-spoken Midwesterner? We got in and drove to his real estate office to switch cars.

"I prefer American cars," he explained as we slipped into his 1979 Chevy—350 cc in a 300 cc, he said. We turned onto a main street leading up into the hills surrounding Damascus.
"That's a 1979 Peugeot," he said, pointing to our right. "And that's a 1986 Trans Am. Do you have that car in America?"
"Yes."
He turned up the music, and leaned on the gas.
"Do you like heavy metal? Most people don't.

Do you like Black Sabbath?"
"Yeah, I guess I know the basic history... the rise, the fall. Guitarist dies, band begins to suck. Ozzy goes solo."
"Right."
He proclaimed a preference for Whitesnake.
"To soothe the pain of wasted years/ And kiss away the bitter tears / A love to light the way."
Do you believe in the Bible?"
Awkward nods, murmurs.
"You've heard of the Harmajadeen?"
"No."
"Armageddon."
"Yes."
It seemed a bit of a sudden shift in conversation until I realized the lyrics he had so lovingly quoted were from the soothing Whitesnake ballad, "Judgment Day."
"Well, they say that it will come in Damascus. Jesus will descend from heaven to Damascus. It is soon. There are many signs. The holy books say so. First, before the Armageddon, there will be buildings tall enough to reach the sky. Like skyscrapers. Men will put shoes to their ears. Like cell-phones. There will be hypocrites. When a person needs help, no one will help. That is when the Armageddon will come. And days will go faster. Do you not feel it? A year will go like a month, a month like a week, a week like a day, a day like an hour. Isn't it like that today?"
"But haven't there been prophecies like that all throughout history?"
He fiddled with his thin-frame glasses, and continued in his matter of fact tone: "Yes, but look around. So many hypocrites. So much rushing around. Two mountains, one filled with green, the other black. No one helps. I'm not saying that it will be tomorrow, or this weekend. 'So don't you worry / You can ease your mind.' But it will be soon. No one knows what it will really be like. Maybe this is Armageddon right now. Maybe it's right now, but we don't even know. Maybe this is Armageddon. Do you know the word in Arabic? Do you know the word in Hebrew? It's har megiddo. You don't know any Hebrew?"

We kept driving, circling back onto the same streets for the third or fourth time. The car had a close, musky scent, but plenty of leg room. We stopped at a small tea stand in the hills on the outskirts of Damascus. One could see hundreds of green lights dotting the city at night. We got back into the car, and went deeper into the hills.

"Is there a good place for camping outside of the city?"

"There are campsites for groups."

"But is there any good place we can just set down with our sleeping bags?"

"Why? You should only go with a group." He paused. "Let me tell you a story." He paused again, as if observing some obscure rule requiring hesitation. This obeisance performed, he continued. "I went for a picnic one night with a Canadian girl friend of mine. We were not a couple. Just friends. We went just outside of town, near the Vice President's villa. It was dark." He pulled over to the side of the road, and turned off the lights. "It was just like this. This dark. I am there. It makes me hot." We could still see downtown Damascus in the distance.

"So, I'm gathering sandwiches for our picnic, and there is a thump at the window." With his elbow, he knocked his window with force. "Like this. With a Kalashnikov. The man said 'Get out.' And then I see one, two, three, four, five, six men surround the car." He pointed to where they had stood. We were still parked with the lights off. "I tried to start the car, but couldn't. Again and again, he hit the window. The girl was screaming. I tried to calm her. I tried the car again. 'Security!' the man yells. 'How do I know?' I scream. He showed his card. The girl grabbed at me. One guy jumped on the hood and started to hit the window. The window broke and they pulled me out. They punched me here in the mouth. Then in the eye. Then with the Kalashnikov in the stomach. I fell." He turned back on the headlights and continued toward the top of the hill.

"I could tell they were royal guards from their clothes. 'Take him to prison,' one of them said. They pulled out the girl. She was screaming. They started touching her. They took me to a building and questioned me. I told them that I know the Vice President. They called me a liar. They beat me. I begged them to let her go. 'Where is she?' I begged. I told them to give her the keys and let her drive to Damascus. I knew that if they took me to prison, I could get out. So I said, 'You can take me to prison, but let her go.' They ripped her. Two guys ripped her. Then, during the third, she shits herself, and he stops. But I didn't know where she was. There was one officer who seemed compassionate. He did not participate. He just watched. I was screaming, begging him, holding his leg, his arm. The other men had left the room to rip the girl. I begged him. 'What if she was your sister?' I was ready to die. When the men came back, he said, 'Let them go.' One agrees but two say no."

Again, he pulled over to the side of the road, turning off the lights. "They bring the girl out. It was so dark. Just like this. You couldn't see your fingers in front of your face. She was continued on page 81
Clichés

Let's crystallize our metaphors for winter:
The season calls for clarities of tone
Which would seem cold, uncouth in autumn's bluster,
Insensible in spring, in summer brittle.
The world's too cold for what, in spring, we muster
Without a second thought, what passes for
Appassionato in our brighter hinter-
Lands, when we never—well, rarely—are alone.
Let's aim iambics gently down the middle:
Our histogram will not show outliers,
My papers have no footnotes, and if your
Use of MLA citations requires
Some small concessions to the muse of density,
My clumsiness may counter your intensity.
Clichés II

Let’s crystallize our metaphors for winter,
Preserve in cases what will not survive
The heimal light, the snow-blind clumsiness,
And keep it, in this frozen form, complete—
Albeit a little stiff, albeit cold,
Although it less and less recalls the mess
We flattered, in the spring, by calling “life”—
And think not now of what we’ll then unfold,
And worry not if it was still alive,
If all our sharpness rolled into one knife,
If all our shavings, scrapes and falls and splinters
Can be encapsuled in a rhyme’s repeat.
Our leap is this: that when in spring we thaw,
We’ll have forgotten what we thought we saw.

—Cody Owen Stine
The Home Front

A Tale of Love and Darkness
Amos Oz
Harcourt Books
538 pages

"To buy or not to buy Arab cheese?" Early in Amos Oz's childhood memoir, A Tale of Love and Darkness, he reminisces about a debate that always troubled customers at the local dairy shop in his Jerusalem neighborhood. It was the 1940s, Israel would soon emerge as The Jewish State, and the Middle East would never be the same.

In both setting and style, Love and Darkness reflects Oz's status as the preeminent novelist of modern Israel. Oz's story of growing up alongside his newborn nation is nonfiction that reads like fiction. The book's wistful undertone pervades even its discerning observations: the bittersweet sepia tone of Oz's youth is only heightened by his analytical precision. The frequent, intricate excursions into his preadolescent psyche are the lens with which he objectively examines his world and brings the folly of the adults around him into sharper focus.

These recent émigrés from the anti-Semitism of Europe—never more than a generation or two removed from the cosmopolitanism of Vilnius or Odessa—debate (or, more precisely, regurgitate) what they've read in the pamphlets, newspapers, and pretentious journals; they write scholarly books; they argue about Marx and humanism and Zionism in coffeeshops; and, as Oz often points out with gentle mockery, these neurotic nebbishes rarely actually do anything to assist the cause about which they are so prodigiously vehement. Oz's great-uncle spoke fifteen languages and was the first Professor of Hebrew Literature at Hebrew University, with an ego to match his mind. Oz's repressed, rationalist father was an equally talented linguist but could never get a faculty position (his uncle feared the appearance of nepotism), and spent his days as a librarian. They were radical Zionists, brimming with fervent nationalism—when the revolution came, they hoped, they would be the first to get tenure.

But, amidst all this history, Oz has a more personal story to tell. In 1952, when he was thirteen, his mother deliberately overdosed on pills in a Tel-Aviv apartment. Despite the narrative's looping structure—built on vignettes and digressions that are almost aimlessly in time but always manage to edge the plot forward—this loss clearly sits at its core. His father's failure to deal with his troubled wife eventually causes Oz to abandon his home—and the militant ideology of his family—at the age of fourteen for a kibbutz (a uniquely Israeli brand of socialist commune). Even when he was older, they never once spoke with his father about the suicide.

But this unbridgeable gap between father and son doesn't lead Oz to scold or to moralize; instead, it forges a sympathetic melancholy that permeates his prose. "If I started to write down here all the things we did not talk about, my father and I, I could fill two books," he writes. "My father left me a great deal of work to do, and I'm still working."

Oz's writing has a syncopated elegance, and only understandable gaps in Nicholas de Lange's translation cause it to stumble. The combination of rapid-fire Hebrew and expansive metaphor, although well-rendered by de Lange, can sound goofy when put into English.

When a prominent, ideological Israeli writes about his childhood during the birth of his country, many people—especially Americans—will expect a book that deals with the complexities of the historical and political moment; and Oz has previously written and spoken passionately about dispossession, nationalism, fear of extermination, and other serious political issues. However, in A Tale of Love and Darkness, he chooses a different perspective. For all its insight and critical complexity, Love and Darkness is about a thirteen-year-old boy growing up in a sheltered neighborhood and a struggling home, and deals with the political miasma only as it is directly relevant to this story. It's not that the war over the horizon isn't important, it's just that sometimes what is going on at home can have a powerful narrative force of its own—Avi Zenilman
Book Amnesty Day is Here!

It began with a confession.

We, the editors, dragged our seats into a circle. We locked our office door. We gave only our first names. And we admitted to God and to ourselves that we had a problem.

One of us confessed to having spent countless hours debating the pros and cons of the Frankfurt School—without ever having read a word of Teddy Adorno. Another's six years at an all-male prep school had left him wracking his brains over what could possibly have happened in Pride and Prejudice. Two of us wanted to read more drugstore novels about children with leukemia. And one of us was still pretending to his analyst that he'd made it all the way through Portnoy's Complaint.

That night it occurred to us: We were not alone. Hell, it was pretty crowded. After all, the world is full of books that everyone has read, and most of us haven't read them. And once you've fallen behind, you can never quite catch up.

And what do you with a room full of alcoholics? You throw a party! And in this, the best of all cocktail parties, it's time to stop pan-glossing over our faults. Be candide! A dog-eared copy of The Corrections may never have gotten anyone laughed out of the Hungarian Pastry Shoppe, but only because no one's had the guts to try to bring one in. So let them laugh.

Has your Columbia spirit (ha!) led you to poke fun at the Beat Generation without reading Ginsberg or Kerouac? Do you remember feeling like a phony when your friends were reading The Catcher in the Rye? Do you worry that your life is empty and meaningless because you've barely started Sartre? Say it with us. This February 10th, we will read whatever we want. And we refuse to feel sheepish about it.

So lower your brows for a moment—advice you're unlikely to hear anywhere else in these pages—and take a deep breath. What are the books that you've missed? The ones you've felt too cool for—or not cool enough? The ones you've skimmed, skipped, or just downright lied about?

Book Amnesty Day offers you a chance to atone without fear, blame, or ridicule.

From the moment the sun shows up over Long Island till it sinks into the rubble somewhere west of Newark, we declare a moratorium on feeling guilty, at least because of what you're reading. You can read The South Beach Diet or Manufacturing Consent. You can sit in John Jay and read Orientalism without getting a single sidelong glance.

Read Seabiscuit on the subway. Cry through Tour of Duty. Read whatever the heck you want.

Just don’t bother us. We’ll be reading The Corrections.

Illustrated by Ajay Kurian
Phillip and the Wolfe

The Plot Against America
Phillip Roth,
Houghton Mifflin Co. »
400 pages

I am Charlotte Simmons
Tom Wolfe
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
688 pages

Novel-writing has an entrepreneurial element," wrote critic James Wood in The New Yorker several months ago: "to invent a central story that can function at once as a plausible action and as an emblematic or symbolic one is akin to inventing a machine or product, a patent that will run and run." The trick of a novel is to create a premise nifty enough to both serve a metaphorical purpose and propel a narrative. Wood calls this a "grand concept." Ideally, it is a first cause that needs only to set events in motion—the story then writes itself.

But the import of literary structure is often ignored. Accordingly, last fall, Tom Wolfe's fragmented I Am Charlotte Simmons and Philip Roth's more cohesive The Plot Against America received roughly the same amount of media attention: Roth's twenty-first novel would get more if he weren't so prolific, while the six-year wait for Simmons—Wolfe's third novel in seventeen years—primed the hype machine. Of course, Wolfe's dandified ostentation lends itself to coverage. Invariably clad in an impeccably white suit and fedora, he is among the most recognizable writer-personae since Mark Twain. Roth's balding, tan and strong-featured physiognomy—relatively famous, but a couple notches down from Wolfe's—conveys a unique blend of virility, grumpiness, and intellectual fire-power. Wolfe's Simmons is showy and gluttonous, as though it were a vehicle solely for its author's celebrity, while Roth's Plot—assured, quiet, and restrained—bespeaks a confident craftsman.

Simmons tracks the chaotic freshman year of its namesake, a brilliant, independent naif from the North Carolina hill country, at prestigious Dupont University. While Wolfe provides his trademark bevy of interlocking subplots, the book mainly focuses on her descent into the cesspool of contemporary college life, which (naturally) climaxes with the loss of her virginity. When a lovely woman stoops to folly: the theme is tried and true, but mostly tried.

Plot, narrated by a seven-year old Newark boy named Philip Roth, begins in 1940 when pilot and noted anti-Semite Charles Lindbergh defeats FDR for the presidency. His platform: keeping America out of the "European" war. Plot sticks to its ridiculous "grand concept" and succeeds, but Simmons consistently deviates from its expansive premise and ultimately fails.

Wolfe's first venture into outright fiction, 1987's Bonfire of the Vanities, was a well-structured novel. Its "grand concept" takes the form of a seminal moment—Wall Street "Master of the Universe" Sherman McCoy, mistress beside him, hits a black kid with his Mercedes-Benz in the South Bronx—laying the groundwork for several compelling themes and subplots. From this point, the novel unfolds in a logical, materialist structure as if events could not have happened any other way.

Unfortunately, the plot of Simmons is cobbled together without a "grand concept," and thus bounces about aimlessly. Ostensibly significant incidents—for example, the "Night of the Skull Fuck," where frat boy Hoyt
Thorpe espies a co-ed fellating the Republican governor of California—have little to do with each other, and often don’t connect to Charlotte in any meaningful way. Wolfe fails to tie the governor’s reactionary conservatism to anything else; he never mentions it again. My guess is that Wolfe’s rough draft consisted of a list of things to comment upon, and that, rather than selecting a few that had a unifying strand, he simply gave each its own subplot. This desire to pack in as much as possible results in a sprawling, fractured narrative that conspires with lazy plot devices to weaken the novel’s credibility, and, 688 pages later, it’s over, and just like that, you no longer believe the novel at all.

Wolfe’s use of stereotypes doesn’t help, either. There is the neophyte, the frat boy, the jock, the bitch, the dork. Wolfe grants them raging hormones, stirs, and then acts surprised that they are not soluble. Admittedly, Roth sometimes gives only essential characterizations: the nuclear family; a wounded cousin; a collaborationist aunt; a few Righteous Gentiles. But he wisely narrates in the first-person, and thereby naturally limits the perspective. After all, a seven-year-old narrator will sometimes define those tall people around him in rather stark terms.

In fairness, Simmons isn’t boring. Wolfe gets many aspects of current college life wrong (unless we really are all terrible, terrible people) but he gets some right. His nomenclature is a bit off, but there are some doozies: “Mimi was a big-boned blonde with a lot of hair, the type boys at Dupont called a Monet, meaning a girl who looks great twenty-five feet away and not that great up close.”

The Plot Against America actually withstands scrutiny; it isn’t a “Monet.” Lindbergh’s election may be a historical fib, but it is a “grand concept.” And since Roth keeps his narrative extremely disciplined, letting Lindbergh’s election realistically govern events, the novel stays honest despite its outlandishness. It makes sense that President Lindbergh would never publicly say anything anti-Semitic; that many Jews, convinced that their more tribal comrades could use a little assimilation, would support him; that the Jewish gossip columnist Walter Winchell would announce his candidacy for president. Roth’s novel loses plausibility only when, near the end, fascism implausibly reigns in America, conjuring up not the types of crooks that normally inhabit the Oval Office (Nixon) but those types that don’t (Vito Corleone). Until the unconvincing conclusion, Roth successfully sustains the conceit.

The only conceit Wolfe sustains is his own vanity. In his pan of Simmons in the New York Times Book Review, Jacob Weisberg wrote, “Surely [Wolfe] will never write a short story.” But Wolfe should give it a stab. The author of The Right Stuff has lost exactly that, and a story collection might just rein in his writing. —Marc Tracy

Illustrated by Katerina Vorotova

DAMASCUS continued from page 75

half naked, topless but with pants. ‘Have they hurt you? Are you okay?’ I said. She was crying. Her fingers were bleeding and she held them in her mouth. They wanted to clean her up for more sex. Finally, the one officer told us to go. She was still crying. We drove to the Vice President’s home, but it was 2 A.M. and they won’t let us in. The guards told us to come back in the morning. That he will make it right. So we drove to the Vice President’s son’s home. And he said that tomorrow we will make it right. At 8:30 the next day, I drive back to the Vice President, and I tell him that it was a Canadian girl. That was not good. For the public image, it must be covered up. But he told me that they would find the guards that did this. And they did find them. And then they tortured them in front of me. And they asked, ‘Would you like us to torture him more?’ And I said, ‘Yes. It looked like he would die, and I didn’t care.’

We drove down toward the city. He pointed to a couple chatting on the sidewalk.

“No one talks on the street at night. I’ll show you—actually, forget about it.” He assumed a New York mafia accent. “Forgedaboudit. It’s a fugazi. Do you know what that’s from? Donnie Brasco. What does it mean? I don’t know. It’s a fugazi. Forgedaboudit.”
OFFICE HOURS by Michael Mallow
ON RESPECTING ONE'S SUPERIORS:
A concerned student in Hamilton was overheard questioning one of the more enlightening tenets of etiquette: “The Dalai Lama is properly referred to as Mr. Lama, right?

The trials of being an aesthete, according to a history T.A.: “Once, as an undergrad, after I had overdosed on postmodernism, I decided that the 24-hour day was just a social construct. Yeah, that went to hell pretty fast.”

A sign on a desk in Butler proved an effective defense against any marauding seat-seeker: “Breast feeding my baby. Be right back.”

One afternoon, a famished BLUE AND WHITE staffer found himself unwittingly confronted by the iron will of Café 212:

B&W: This is a Turkey Club with melted Swiss.
Cashier: Chicken Club, anything else?
B&W: It’s actually a Turkey Club, with Swiss.
Cashier: We don’t make a Turkey Club. It’s a Chicken Club. With substituted turkey.

To boost student enrollment, Wells College, an all-female institution of higher education since 1868, has decided to begin accepting applications from males starting in the year 2008. “We all leave our doors unlocked now,” lamented one student to the Associated Press. “We can run around in our nighties. All that will change.” For this mercy, the ladies of Barnard College remain truly grateful.

Seen at a Gristedes on the Upper East Side amidst the elite, specialty coffees: “Harvard Blend. This roast is deep, rich, and complex.” THE BLUE AND WHITE proposes our own Columbia Blend: “Many different flavors, but they mostly keep to themselves.”

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF MEMENTO MORI:

Two Barnard first-years enter a ladies room and while one of them washes her hands, the other contemplates an out-of-date Allure magazine with Sarah Michelle Gellar on the cover.

Girl #1: Hey! Did you know Sarah Michelle Gellar is thirty?
Girl #2: Really?
(pause)
Girl #2: Omigod...that means we’re like...old.

The two stand amazed in silence as one girl dries her hands and they leave without saying a word. The magazine is left behind on the counter in order to, we can only assume, crumble into dust and scatter to the winds.

It has been called to our attention that a scout for QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY has been on the prowl for a Columbia male who is sartorially struggling but confident in his manhood. While it is rarely in our better nature to prostrate ourselves before the outer reaches of cable TV, THE BLUE AND WHITE nevertheless implores the casting agents to consider one Avi Zenilman (azz2101@columbia.edu) who can be reached at 212-853-6699 and is anxiously awaiting your call.
Scandal! An overheard conversation between two graduate students has suggested to *The Blue and White* that academic intimidation has emerged at SIPA:

**Woman I:** Did you know that class participation was part of the grade?

**Woman II:** Really? But he hates it when we speak!

A *Blue & White* staffer received a frantic phone call from his mother amidst a late January blizzard:

"YOU DON'T HAVE SNOWPANTS OR BOOTS!" "It's okay, Mom." "NO, NO. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO PLAY IN THE SNOW?"

In a continuing effort to alienate its former clientèle, Amsterdam Cafe has taken to showing a constant stream of Cirque de Soleil on its multiple plasma screens. The boundaries of taste could not be reached for comment.

Comments from a recent Lit-Hum paper on Herodotus:

"Your paper was
A Joy to read.
So, I graded
It with great speed.

However, the
name 'Thespians'
Is for actors,
Not the Thebans.

But your paper's
Merit outweighs
This objection.
So here's an A."

The *B&W*, never stingy with its two cents, offers its own assessment of the instructor's critique:

Effort: B+, Scansion: D,
Grade Inflation: priceless.

Overheard during brunch:

"If I ever had to go to mental institution, I'd want to get into McLean. It's really well-known, and not just because of *Girl, Interrupted*. [does Angelina Jolie throat-stabbing imitation with a fork] "They even have ads in *The New Yorker*."

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUSSY-FOOTING INTERNATIONALISM:

Sign seen inside the United Nations building in Geneva: "Smoking is discouraged."

A *B&W* staffer banged her hand on a chair in the presence of her anthropology professor, and the bruise turned purple in seconds. The professor looked at it and exclaimed, "It's a hematoma! Maybe it'll calcify and ossify just like *Homo Erectus*. She stopped sniffing immediately. Who needs sympathy or ice when you have the possibility of a deformation just like the Trinil femur?

THE BULLIET FILES:

The family farm has often been a proving ground for adolescents. Many young Turks, Professor Bulliet explains, engage in sex with donkeys in an effort to perfect their bedside manner. Tell this to a Greek, and he'll express disgust: "A donkey?!" But ask him about sheep and you'll get an entirely different answer. Bulliet makes yet another penetrating commentary on our age: "We may have discovered the underlying reason for tension in the region."

Shouted in Dodge Fitness Center: "Don't call me Sparky! That's my brother's nickname!"

The Middle East... it's intimidating!