

# THE MISCREANT

Vol: I

ISSUE: II

FEATURING:



FRIEND KILLERS

# HOW TO BE A MISCREANT #8:

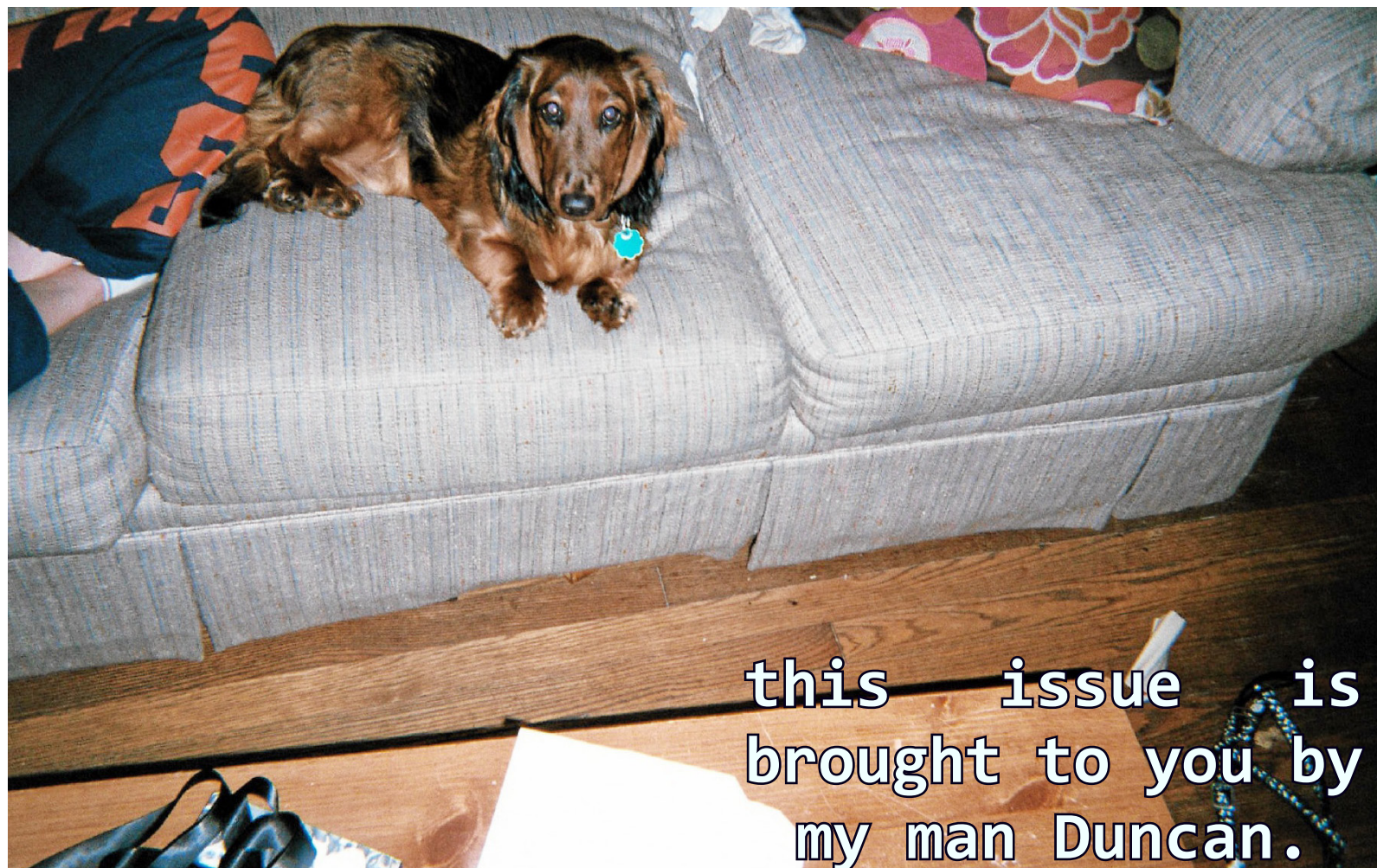
## A PLEA TO WRITERS

by mister matt gasda

So I want to briefly document something I want to call the Dave Eggerization of literature (or the Miranda Julyzation of art more generally) - the total capitulation of writers to the small, mundane, upper middle class (mostly) white worlds they inhabit, without a deeper sense of the spiritual, philosophical, historical, and social forces in which they live and work. I say this after spending the last few months wriggling my way into a literary life, a literary world, and a very literary city, and spending a more than sane amount of time in Manhattan area bookstores- The Strand's "best of the best" section will, for instance, unabashedly mix the likes of Eggers, July, and even James Franco in with Joyce, Woolf, Kafka, and Beckett, as if to say that our postpost modern masters [sic] are on the same level of eminence as the great moderns or postmoderns. Franco and July just can't write and are only there because they are famous for other things, and Eggers is the most cloying writer alive- D.F.W. if you took out the brains and replaced it with a bucket of tears. All of them, regardless of minor differences in style and acumen, represent more or less the same phenomenon- self-satisfied, overeducated, overfamous thirty-somethings writing about people just like them, with a few "underrepresented minorities" who they learned about in critical theory class, tossed in to mask the solipsism. These are the kinds of writers who sound like parodies of MFA theses and are for that reason worshipped in MFA's- where mostly white upper middle class twenty somethings are already salivating over their Fort Greene brownstones and placements teaching composition to community college freshmen. We don't really have literature anymore, we just have lifestyle writing. And it's not that the novels (and poems too) produced by generations X and Y are poorly written in most cases- it's that they are too finely written- the nice, little well crafted gems that come out of years of workshopping and earnest revising. What a writer needs is a soul, but that can't be taught, for obvious reasons- so instead we have thousands of soulless writers working on thousands of soulless novels, some of which will get into the "best of the best" section of The

Strand or a blurb on NPR or a nice review by a legendary white person like Jonathan Lethem or Eggers himself in the New York Times, and so perpetuate the whole notion that it's ok to waste the universe's time with overwritten, pandering, self-absorbed, self-righteous literature. For my generation and socio-economic strata, which has been raised with the constant assurance that we are "special" and "talented"- nothing seems more natural than to decide we are writers (if we haven't already decided we are musicians) and start reaping the adult version of what we reaped as kids- grants, fellowships, and a place on someone's "best of" list. Undergraduate and graduate writing workshops might as well be run by our parents considering that they constitute not much more than an artificial reassurance that someone thinks our writing is good and that if we just try hard enough we can accomplish anything. The truth is that writing is soul-crushingly difficult and while it's fairly easy to be pretty good, it's almost impossible to be real, in the sense that Shakespeare or Tolstoy, or closer to our time and place- Gaddis, Pynchon, and Foster Wallace were real- that is humane and vibrantly alive. Thousands of writers today write like a handful of writers they can't do more than dumbly mimic- yet because editorial boards, MFA's, and culture magazines are staffed by these people, otherwise unmemorable writers are kept alive in popular memory. It's not that we have too much bad writing, it's that we have too much pretty good writing, too much writing that seems too well aimed at a placement in the Iowa Writer's Workshop. So here's where my plea to writers (see the title of this essay) comes in- stop writing unless you are prepared to go it alone, to seek no approval but that of your own heart, and if you can conceive of no other way of life but that of literature. If you are only after the trappings of the literary life, a chance to wear sweater vests and hack away at your macbook in a Brooklyn coffeeshop, a summer trip to Paris, and a classroom of undergraduates who are willing to think you have the right to teach them something about writing only if you approve their preconceived notions of themselves, then please, do something else.





this issue is  
brought to you by  
my man Duncan.



## *Single of the Week*

"Snow Song" by Friend Killers is the Single of the Week! With an eerie intro, reminiscent of the theme of "Twin Peaks," this song has miscreants everywhere melting. Check it out on YouTubezz and enjoy!

# Terms of Enjoyment

## 50/50 Strikes a Balance Between Cancer and Comedy

by sir lance st. laurent

There is nothing sentimental about cancer. It does not care who you are, where you are from, or whatever plans you've made for your life. You can make practical life choices to keep yourself away from risk, but, when it comes right down to it, cancer can destroy the life of you or anyone you know at any time without warning. Is everyone suitably depressed now? I thought so. You now understand the hurdle that writer Will Reiser and director Jonathan Levine faced with 50/50. Reiser, a former writer on Da Ali G Show adapted his own story into the screenplay for 50/50, the story of a young man's struggle with a rare form of spinal cancer. This does not, on paper, sound like the recipe for a winning comedy. I can read the critical blurbs now. "You'll test positive for hilarity.", says The New York Post. "You'll need years of intense treatment to wipe the smile from your face.", says The Boston Globe. Amazingly though, the film toes the line between crass humor and sickly sentimentality and ends up being both genuinely funny and surprisingly moving.

50/50 understands the one big thing about cancer that we don't like to talk about, especially when it touches those near us. Cancer does not make you heroic or inspirational, nor does it make you wise beyond your years. It just makes you sick. Joseph Gordon-Levitt plays Adam, the protagonist and Will Reiser stand-in, with this in mind. Gordon-Levitt is an actor that I've always enjoyed, but has never particularly impressed me. His work in 50/50 is his best to date, never overplaying any of the emotional moments. Seth Rogen, who was a friend of Reiser's during his real-life cancer ordeal, gives a stellar performance as Adam's best friend Kyle. Rogen is forced to walk a fine line between lovable and sleazy and does so with ease. The two actors have a remarkably easy rapport and keep the humor from feeling forced. Angelica Huston and Phillip Baker Hall both give memorable turns as Adam's sometimes difficult mother and a fellow cancer patient Adam bonds with respectively.

The film kind of drops the ball when it comes to Adam's love life, though. Bryce Dallas Howard gives a rather shrill and one-note performance as Rachael, Adam's girlfriend. Howard's a capable actress, but the script doesn't give her much nuance to work with. Anna Kendrick is very good as Adam's therapist, but it felt like there was something missing in the relationship between her and Adam. Neither of these female characters are given quite enough to do, and, as a result, the ending suffers somewhat. That being said, the film shines elsewhere, especially in the relationship between Adam and Kyle.

Director Jonathan Levine gives the film a subdued, but distinctive style, making it more visually appealing than most comedies. The film also has a great soundtrack, but the film has more awesome music cues than it can really justify. It ends up giving the film a little bit of a pseudo-indie vibe that's mostly useless and ill-fitting. Still, the film looks quite striking.

50/50's talented cast and sharp, sensitive script make up for its ultimately minor shortcomings. There are many movies about cancer (50/50 cleverly name drops a couple of them), but almost all of them sentimentalize it into deep Lifetime movie territory. 50/50 has its share of emotional moments, among the most emotional I've seen this year, but it never lets that emotion weigh down what is ultimately a story of personal growth. Reiser and Levine's punctuate all of the emotional scenes with perfectly timed jokes that release necessary amounts of tension without undercutting any of the drama onscreen. 50/50 is kind of a tough sell; the idea of terminal illness and comedy coming together sounds potentially uncomfortable at best and downright offensive at worst. Thankfully, 50/50 beats the odds. Hilarious, smart, touching, and life-affirming, 50/50 is the unlikeliest feel-good movie of the year.



# BORN TO MAKE CHANGE

*Let's take a look at the following mathematical equation: New York + Heavy Metal Lover + Queen of Pop + Leather + Performance Art Extraordinaire + Glitter + Political Activist = Lady GaGa.*



by **abe duella**

While everyone knows Lady GaGa for her intricate theatrical displays and mind-blowing musical talent, people tend to overlook her countless contributions to a number of movements—both social and political. Most recently, GaGa and her mother Cynthia Germanotta announced the launch of the BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION, which will partner with The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The California Endowment (organizations that strive to foster youth empowerment and individuality) and The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University (an organization harnessing the power of the internet to promote and introduce change). A non-profit charitable organization, the overarching tenets of the BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION are to instill equality, individuality, and empowerment into the lives of today's youth. In addition, the foundation seeks to immobilize bullying by promoting topics such as self-confidence, career development, and mentoring—and since we belong to the digital era, all of this will be facilitated with the help of the web! In a statement released by Lady GaGa, she affirmed:

“MY MOTHER AND I HAVE INITIATED A PASSION PROJECT. WE CALL IT THE BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION. TOGETHER WE HOPE TO ESTABLISH A STANDARD OF BRAVERY AND KINDNESS, AS WELL AS A COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE THAT PROTECTS AND NURTURES OTHERS IN THE FACE OF BULLYING AND ABANDONMENT.”

And by now, if you have a heart, I'm pretty sure this woman has already won you over in more ways than one. Her commitment, not only to her fans, but to society, is something to be revered. I can only imagine the fruits this “passion project” will bear from the generations to come. Sometimes, I find it hard to believe that a world without judgment, prejudice, and hatred can truly exist. A world where all humanity can live in simple accord. But who knows? Maybe Lady GaGa and her music that preaches self-realization and liberation from the norm are the beginnings to such a movement. Maybe the BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION is the key, or at least one of them in a series? After all, every society is only as strong as its youth. And if we can teach our youth to be strong, independent, accepting, and ethically minded individuals...well then, the rest is history. More details on the BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION and all of its intricacies will be officially announced early 2012, but until then we leave you to ponder what's yet to come from this landmark movement, conceptualized by none other than Lady GaGa herself!

# HOW 2 B A B0\$\$ L@DY

## #4: Never Pick Between a Boy and Rock n' Roll

by the queen of ego candy, victoria pilar nava

After an agonizingly long summer, I moved to Hollywood with a bang. One offer to hang out led to another and another. I was meeting people left and right, but only after a week of being in town, one particular guy already wanted to take me out. I went with it, but in the back of my mind it felt too good to be true. It was totally like an 80's movie, just a modern, LA version.

New girl in town is swept off her feet by an heir from the Hollywood Hills. It just so happened to be that I was being swept off my feet right before FYF Fest - a two day event with a lineup to please your indie palette. Nearly everyone was there - from Broken Social Scene to Simian Mobile Disco, I had made this the first must-do event of my stay.

Needless to say, having no one to go with to FYF (my prince is into hip-hop\*), I decided to spend my Labor Day weekend with a dude instead of rock n' roll. Conveniently enough, his dad was out of town and left him alone at the mansion for the holiday. He threw a party that got raided by LAPD and their helicopter, fights broke out, and a KTLA reporter was there before the ambulance was. My roommates were scared out of the minds, I was embarrassed out of my mind, and I couldn't even believe what was happening right before my eyes.

Like I said, too good to be true! I've finally gotten my live music fix and still see the prince from time to time. I had to learn my lesson the hard way, picking a boy and a shitty party over an experience that would have been much more uplifting. Next time, no matter how handsome and charming the guy is, I'll know what to do, because rock n' roll will never let you down.

\*clue #1



# *friend killers*

an interview by the miscreant

*Friend Killers have taken the Syracuse music scene by storm, capturing hearts through their stunning live performances. Here, FK vocalist, Cat DiGennaro, talks about this musical project she started with guitarist Dan Powell.*

*The Miscreant: When did you guys start making music together? How did Friend Killers come about?*

Cat DiGennaro: I met Dan when we were sophomores living on the same floor in Watson. Our first conversation occurred around a hookah at a floor party and as we got to know each other, discovered our mutual passion for music. Dan was working on a cover of Portishead's "Glory Box" and had written a cool clarinet part and was looking for a vocalist, so I agreed to help him out. I still have the Portishead sampler CD he gave me way back when, even though we never ended up recording the song.

In the fall of junior year we became more serious about forming a band and would rattle off fake band names to amuse ourselves during rehearsals. "Friend Killers" just sounded right to us and it stuck, but we cycled through a bunch of funny names; I wish I could remember all of them. Off the top of my head "Doomtrain," "Behemoth Whoreslut," "Cat D and the Cool Friends" and "Cosmic Soul" come to mind.

We began to write music and lyrics together that fall and it became a relaxing and cathartic thing for both of us. Also, it was just nice to spend time with Dan because had been close friends for a while and have a lot of fun together.

*TM: How would you guys personally describe your music to people who haven't heard you perform before?*

CD: To be completely honest, I'm not really sure how to pinpoint our style. I'd say we have a lot of jazzy elements to our music in terms of the structure of our songs, but there's definitely some rock influence and an essence of ambience (that sounds like a really shitty perfume, "essence of ambience"). In more simple terms: it's a chick singer and a dude on guitar, haha.

*TM: What made you decide on the style that you've chosen to play?*



CD: I'm not entirely sure, haha. Dan and I just sat down during our first rehearsal and he played me a short riff he had come up with. I tried to improvise a melody on the spot and we added lyrics to the temporary vocal part. Our first song was this depressing piece about following someone, and I think there was a lighthouse involved somehow. We never made a decision to play a certain genre of music, we just shared our ideas from our own musical backgrounds and combined them to form Friend Killers. Dan comes from more of a jazz background (he played clarinet for a long time) and I was classically trained on voice and violin, so it's an interesting fusion between the two. We've also joked about delving into the world of symphonic metal, mainly so Dan can shred away at his guitar while I sing an opera aria haha.

*TM: Who/what are your major inspirations when writing songs for this particular project?*

CD: Like I said, it all started with Portishead. Another major influence of ours has been Beach House, but we're not as "dream pop-y" as they are. I have Dan to thank for introducing me to Beach House sophomore year; we went to see them together in Rochester last fall when we formed Friend Killers. In general, Dan and I are both appreciators of jazz and that's definitely had an effect on our overall sound. I'd say the Yeah Yeah Yeahs are another inspiration, as well as Crystal Castles.

*TM: What music have you guys been listening to lately, in general?*

CD: I have to listen to a lot of classical music for my classes and my major in general ("have to" makes it sound like a chore, it's really enjoyable, I've loved classical music since I was a wee lass), so a lot of opera haha. I'm preparing for a competition in a few weeks and I'm trying to stay in classical mode for the time being. I've also been listening to a lot of jazz; mostly Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Goodman, and Stan Getz at the moment. In terms of more recent bands, I've been getting into this band named "Pelican," and their album The Fire in Our Throats Will Beckon the Thaw. Some of their music is a little too much doom-metal for me to handle, but I've been crazy about this one song "Aurora Borealis," check it out.

*TM: Are you guys currently recording anything? What are the future plans for a release?*

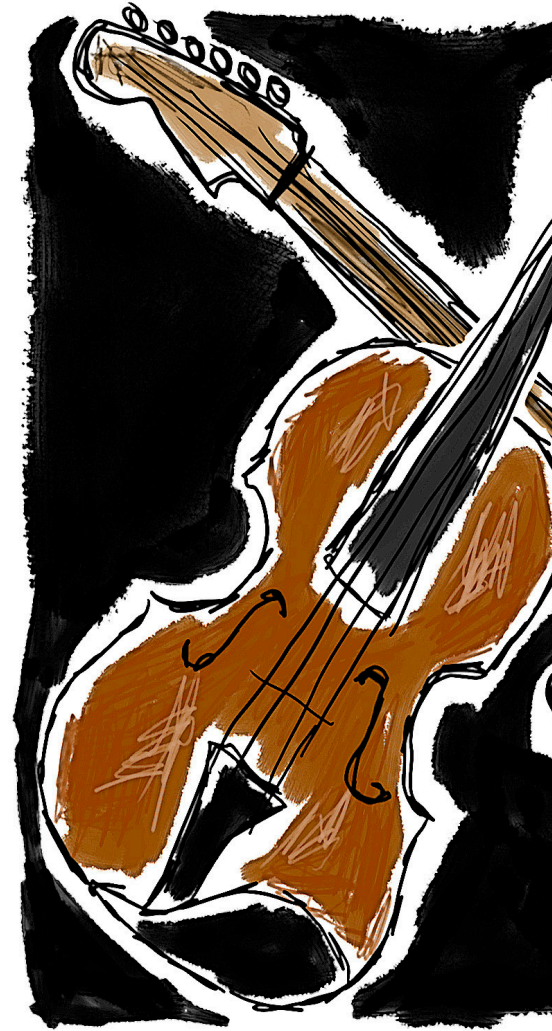
CD: Dan and I have been working on some new tracks recently, which is really exciting. We weren't able to rehearse much during midterm hell, but now we're trying to write some new music to perform the next time we play. We're not recording anything at the moment, but hope to record an EP this winter and maybe some of the covers we've been performing at our shows. Ideally we'll have a complete album recorded by the end of the school year, but we'll see.

*TM: Tell me about the first time you performed together. I believe it was a house party on Ackerman!*

CD: Oh man, being in a band has always been a pipe dream of mine so I was really elated to be accomplishing a major life goal that night. I've always been more nervous performing in front of friends and family as opposed to a huge audience of anonymous people, so I was freaking out pre-show, but once we started our set I felt amazing. I was really overwhelmed afterward and almost cried because of how many friends showed up just to hear us play three songs; their support really meant a lot to me. My boyfriend bought me flowers and gave them to me before the show, which helped loosen me up a bit, and all the other bands were so friendly and instantly made us feel included. I felt extremely exposed while performing our cover of Jon Brion's "Little Person," but it was really satisfying to sing and received a great response from the crowd, so all in all I was very happy with how that show went.

*TM: How much does improvisation work into your live performances (so far)?*

CD: I think it's extremely important to improvise during shows because you never want your songs to sound exactly the same every time you perform them. People are coming to hear something different, something that will pique their interests, and no one knows our music well enough yet, but hopefully someone will hear a part of a song that we perform differently and either love or hate it at some point haha. Either way, I want to keep people in-



trigued. In one of our songs, "Smoof," Dan and I both improvise a bit, him on guitar, me on violin, and it's great practice but extremely nerve-wracking at the same time. The most important thing to keep in mind is if you fuck up, at least fuck up with confidence so people think you meant to play that horribly wrong note, haha.

*TM: Your sound is very new to the Syracuse music scene. How do you feel you guys fit into this scene?*

CD: I really love the Syracuse music scene right now, it's very exciting to be a part of it. Everyone has been so friendly and we've received an incredibly warm reception at the two shows we've done. I don't think we sound like any of the bands playing in 'Cuse right now because there's such a wide variety of performers right now. I'm a huge fan of the Vanderbuilts, so performing with them and hanging out with them was such a great experience for me, they're all ridiculously sweet people. Lately I've been really impressed by The Bird Calls; I heard Sam play at the first show we did and I thought his lyrics were just insanely good. This past Friday I danced my wig off at Ponyta Deathmetal Friends' Halloweekend concert; I'm blown away by Andrew's guitar skills. I'm not sure how we fit into the scene, per se, but all of the bands we've played with so far have been incredibly supportive, which I really appreciate.



*TM: What's coming up for you guys? Any upcoming shows?*

CD: Dan and I want to play at least one more show sometime around Thanksgiving break, and we're also working on something fun for the end of the semester, we'll keep everyone posted! We really want to get into a studio to record, so hopefully right at the start of the spring semester we'll put together an EP for people to download. A website is also in the works, which should be up around the end of the semester as well.

*Keep a look out for more updates on Friend Killers on the Miscreant's Facebook!*



# THE RENEGADES #1:

## CLASS ACTRESS & MOUTH'S CRADLE

by Ibet Inyang and Jasmine Holloway

*\*\*\*Just a preview of more music reviews to come on our new blog! Coming soon, so be on the look out!\*\*\**

Yes, we know, the WERW show featuring Class Actress, The Guards and Mouth's Cradle was a while ago...like almost a month ago, but we Renegades still want to put our two cents in. Enjoy!!



### CLASS ACTRESS

I'm not an 80's baby myself, but I know a band influenced by the electronic sounds of the time when I hear one. That's Class Actress; with a heavy electric beat mixed with an old school synthesizer, this band will definitely take you back a couple years! And the band's performance is no different. They basically had their own laser light show in the background to complement their high energy songs. I'm down with any band that can turn Schine Underground into Studio 54 during their set! -- II



### MOUTH'S CRADLE

Mouth's Cradle....what can I say? Like myself, many people in the crowd were left, well, speechless after their performance. You see, they have this Vanilla Ice, Beastie Boy, Carlton Banks, Super Mario thing going on...which is why I can't exactly put my finger on this one. Let's call them 'indie hip-hop,' or pretty much nothing like anything you've probably heard before. For example, the band's song Demon features lyrics such as "birds in the air, watch me cut off my hair" and later urges the audience to go hide in a tent.... Explanation please! Lyrics such as these and the weird shimmying dance the bands' front man Mouf, does during their performances doesn't exactly tickle my fancy, but I guess to each his own. But don't get me wrong though, whatever they're doing is working because it has earned them quite a bit of iTunes and YouTube attention, a spot on last year's Juice Jam line up and cult following of very energetic very excited fans.... I know, I heard every one of them screaming in my ear at the show. --JH





photo by doris gutierrez

# I.I.

poetry by mirrah stoller

Riding the bike, write  
Towards a setting sun, try  
Catch these penultimate rays, feel warmth.  
Human skin on skin;  
Hearts melding with  
Mind soaring

Sweating the big stuff  
Scared we'll catch flame  
Caught between chaos and all of her names

Bore holes through heavy dirt  
Hard crust mantel metal ride this road, oh  
lord land ho towards Immersive Intelligence  
Hoping on hope that these long days won't leave

I leaf through pages  
on pages  
On scribbles; dabbling  
Minds melding weld into machine which sings the same  
Tune as you and me; we  
Craft bond super glue

Sweating the long haul  
Scared we'll catch flame  
Caught between chaos and all of her names

Riding the sun  
Towards a cooler place, write again  
Try to get back to wet welcome soil, Kids  
Ride old wheels, write  
Ride like the wind, like  
Soaring on ground; grounded  
Under down sunset down black set down don't let it go down slow don't type, write

Silicon glow creeping up from the deep,  
We set down  
We woke up.



# poetry is for assholes

poetry by dylan j shuttles

*poetry is for assholes*

*everybody writes it; no one reads it*

*it brings out the worst in people*

*not the stealing money from your grandma*

*for meth*

*worst*

*the failed high school dreams*

*of suburban girls*

*worst*

*poetry is for assholes*

*you string a few words together*

*and suddenly*

*you see yourself in all black*

*smoking cigarettes*

*drinking cheap whiskey*

*on a rooftop*

*but you're not*

*you're an asshole*

*with a job*

*and debt*

# WANT MORE MISCREANT?

Thank you all for reading issue 11 of the Miscreant, and a special thanks to those who submitted! I hope that you've enjoyed this issue, as always. Please be sure to check out the interview with Friend Killers, and certainly keep your eyes peeled for where you can see them next. They're a special part of the new wave of bands blessing Syraucse.

Anyways, my friends, send your rave reviews, your Rob Gordon channelings, your musings on your favorite bassists, etc to:

[themiscreantt@gmail.com](mailto:themiscreantt@gmail.com).

Love,

the miscreant

