

august 2025
vol. 2 issue 8
free. take one.

the dirtbag times



*inside: a catching breath - creepy horse learns a lesson -
color me calm - reading rocks - its still billy joel to me -
you cant kill rock & roll - enjoy entropy - transcript from a
super secret meeting - micromusing*



**the dirtbag times is a
magazine for dirtbags
by dirtbags.**

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art splendidness
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zuckerberg with tishia jackson & william
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A CATCHING BREATH

I just recently concluded a solo cross
-country drive for work. I drove 36
hours from Nevada back to North Carolina in a
cargo van full of culinary equipment. Across all
three time zones and some 5000 miles I noticed a
country holding its breath in wait for what is sure
to be something awful.

From Las Vegas, where many of my colleagues in
the hospitality industry quietly discussed a 20%
drop in overall business over cigarettes and shitty
coffee. The big spenders are still spending but
everyone else below is holding onto their dollars
this year because no one is sure what's going to
happen with the economy.

In Colorado, where I saw yard signs supporting
local federal workers.

In Kansas where I saw road signs from Republi-
cans against tariffs.

In Missouri where the Airbnb owner I rented from
was super excited to have a tenant because travel
business has been way slower than previous
summers.

In Tennessee where conservative talk radio hosts
grudgingly admitted that the revised job numbers
for Q2 felt right and that all their neighbors were
beginning to be scared of what's coming for the
economy.

All across the country where public radio hosts
alternated between loudly proclaiming that their
stations may be defunded but are not defeated
but quietly laying out the stark financial realities
of a future without the Corporation for Public
Broadcasting.

We all have times in our lives where we studiously
look the other way when we know something
disastrous is lurking right around the corner. I
have been guilty of driving around with the check
engine light on just hoping that whatever issue
that triggered the alarm will just work itself out on
its own. Sometimes it does. Most of the time it
doesn't. We have many more ways these days to
receive information and just as many ways to
ignore it or to alter it to fit our biases and values.
But at some point one cannot keep their head in
the sand and breathe when the bullshit saturates
everything. America is reaching that saturation
point, and those on the right side of the political
spectrum can no longer ignore it.

This is not a feel-good win. It is an awful way to
be right about the current political regime. The
consequences will be devastating. America and
Americans will lose homes, savings, and liveli-
hoods over Donald Trump's indecisiveness over
tariffs and taxes. The numbers do not lie, regard-
less of how many statisticians Trump fires. —
KELLY MENACE

CREEPY HORSE LEARNS A LESSON



I like to do good deeds. They make me feel good. I don't tell anyone most of the time in my day-to-day life, it's just something I do because we are lacking in people genuinely giving a damn. It is funny how we have a personal life amongst ourselves. Our own collection of history we will never divulge, or maybe shouldn't. The space in between. The tree falling in the forest. Whether it's the toilet paper tearing when we wipe, imagining something that makes you cry, something awful we said while jerking off... we all do it. We all have this very personal relationship with ourselves, which comes with our own laws and morals as well as inside jokes and songs. I think a lot about the in between and what it looks like for others. I digress.

One of the "good deeds" I like to do is to save Honeybees. Sometimes they are just dehydrated or too cold, and you find them on the ground. I have always tried to help whenever I have seen a bee in distress. The other day, I was coming back from a walk and happened to see a honeybee on the sidewalk where people were busily walking. I picked her up and tried to put her on a plant, but she was slow-moving. I knew she was either in need of water or she was dying. I took her up into my room and did as I had with previous honeybees. I opened my window so she could fly out when she wanted, and got a small plate with drops of water on it. Never give bees sugar water or honey as they can take this back to the hive and contaminate it. Water is fine. Normally, after a drop or two of water, the bees fly off. This one didn't. Her color was darkening. Her back legs would lock, she'd topple over, with her little legs wiggling to try and get back upright. She was dying. She was dying, but she was dying very slowly. My heart broke watching her struggle. Everything in her being wanted to return to her hive and be with her sisters. She had a job to do. I held her in the palm of my hand for a good 20 minutes, keeping her warm as she struggled to fly and then even walk.

As I held her, I thought of her life and began to cry. She is a machine. Possibly nature's greatest biological well-oiled machine. Her only aspirations ever were her hive. Now, she's dying cold and alone. Like, I was getting really deep and having some philosophical moments about the life and death of this particular honey bee when it happened. She tried one last time to stand up and steady herself as if to fly away on her last breath. Instead she went ass first into a vein in the palm of my hand. The pain was akin to what I imagine an ice pick left on a stove burner with an open flame would feel like. I wish I could say I reacted in a calm and dignified manner. I did not react one bit in a calm and dignified manner. I was very reactionary in this moment. That reaction was to violently thrust my hand up and down

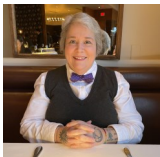
like I was playing a mean one-handed accordion solo. The bee on the third up and down was ejected into the glass of the window with a thud. Her stinger was still pulsating in my fucking palm. I pulled from under it with my fingers, and as it came out, bee venom shot all over my bed. There was an old Bugs Bunny cartoon where a gremlin tricks him into running out of an airplane and he turns into a jackass. Yeah, that's about how stupid I felt.

I realized at this point, I actually don't know if I'm allergic to bees, as I've never been stung by one. I do know I've been stung by wasps and that really pissed me off. I wasn't worried for some reason. No, instead, I looked up the HEALTH BENEFITS of a bee sting. Why wouldn't I? Bees are stupid clean. Their venom has a lot of benefits for non-allergic people. It's a natural antibiotic, it has many antioxidant properties, and it has shown a lot of promise in its work with inflammatory conditions. Regardless, it was fucking stupid of me to do all of this shit. The pain was searing from my hand to my wrist to my forearm. It took a day or two for the pain to fully subside.

The very best part was the fact that I decided to post about it in a short blurb on my social media. THE Jenny Lens came out of a hiatus to scold me in the comments about how incredibly stupid it is to save a honeybee in multi-paragraph form. Why does THE Jenny Lens have THE before her name? Well, if you know her, you'd understand. She is one of the most prolific photographers of early punk rock. She is also the one who inspired the song "Los Angeles" by X. She is very defensive and argumentative by nature. It's her character. Trish, lead vocals for MyDolls, messaged me stating she couldn't understand if Jenny liked bees or not. I responded to THE Jenny Lens that I was sorry for being stupid and had learned my lesson. Then she posted more comments that were in paragraph form about bees and her concern for me and then dashed away to probably not be seen again for another five years. Nothing like having an icon come out to tell you in paragraph form how stupid you are to get a point across.

I thought life was giving me a deep lesson about life and death. I wanted to create a profound moment as this little honey bee was dying. Little did I realize that that honey bee was thug life. She really said Fuck your moment, I'm dying bitch. Learn this! Then she yelled YOLO! stung me and died. After all I did for her, she still stung me, and she still died. I don't know why she stung me. Maybe I was prolonging her death. Maybe she lost her footing as she used her butt for one last stand. In the end, she stung me because she's a bee, and that's what they do. — CREEPY HORSE

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COLOR ME CALM: HOW A DIGITAL COLORING APP SAVED MY SANITY DURING THE PANDEMIC AND IS NOW DOING OVERTIME DURING WHATEVER WE'RE CALLING (GESTURES WILDLY) THIS

If you'd told me back in 2018, when I first downloaded it, that the digital coloring app, Happy Color, would become one of my most faithful sources of peace, joy, and semi-functional mental health, I probably would've been like, "yeah, not seeing it. It's just a freakin' coloring app."

And then... the pandemic happened.

After that, I wasn't so skeptical anymore.

That wildly addictive little app became my lifeline in March 2020 — because everything else in the world felt like it was on fire, and I needed something that didn't involve washing my groceries with Lysol or panic-scrolling through Facebook.

If you've never tried it, Happy Color is a "paint-by-number" app for grown-ups (obviously, loosely defined). You pick an image — maybe a calming landscape, or an intricate mandala, or maybe a unicorn in a spacesuit. Then you zoom in, tap the colors, and bit by bit ... a little masterpiece appears. You don't have to choose the colors, you don't have to stay inside the lines (the app takes care of all that), and you don't even have to commit to finishing in one sitting ... or at all. You just ... color.

Now, before you roll your eyes or chalk this up to a "cute pandemic phase" like sourdough starters or knitting a blanket you'll never finish — let me just say: this app may have actually saved my soul.

See, during those early COVID-months when time was both infinite and meaningless, Happy Color gave me structure. When my brain felt too foggy to read and my attention span was hanging by a thread (probably one of those broken elastic bands from a used face mask), coloring helped me settle. When the news felt like it was being churned out by a drunk dystopian wannabe author, I could open the app, pick a picture, and do something that had a beginning, a middle, and, thank you, sweet cheez-its, a definitive end.

It seems like such a small thing. Honestly, it might even sound a bit silly. But when life is cracking apart at the seams, sometimes the tiniest rituals become the sustenance our spirits need.

Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.
— Thomas Merton



There's something beautifully meditative about watching a flat, chaotic gray image come to life at your hand (and, yes, I'm aware that the app has really done the creating already ... but, I'm the one bringing the color ... however predetermined that may be). It's like magic. Empty swirls and blank spaces transform into something beautiful. And it's not just pretty, it's finished, complete, whole. When everything seemed ready to dissolve into

nothingness, that tiny sense of completion was like a warm hug from someone who didn't need anything from you. One little picture on a screen, a simple, tactile moment, became proof that order can emerge from chaos. One tap at a time.

And here we are again.

No, a global pandemic isn't raging, but some days it feels like the chaos has simply changed faces ... or, maybe it's the same face, just four years older.

Sometimes I color at night while watching new episodes of *The Great British Baking Show*. Sometimes I color during lunch, after a morning of meetings and adulting. And sometimes, when the world feels especially bleak — when politics are too much and we're all just trying to make it

only thing that makes sense.

I know it might seem ridiculous to place so much at the feet of a mobile app. But art always matters, especially in hard times. It's not just decoration. It's a loving hand reaching through the mess. It's resistance. It's healing. It's the audacity to create beauty when the world is hell-bent

on tearing it down.

There's something calm and intimate about it. I don't have to explain myself. I don't have to perform. I just sit, breathe, and color. The world quiets down. My brain stops spinning. And for a little while, I am exactly where I'm supposed to be.

I know it's "just a coloring app."

But knitting is "just two sticks and some yarn."

Meditation is "just sitting and breathing."

Sometimes, what looks simple on the surface is actually doing sacred work.

And honestly? The next three and a half years are shaping up to be a wild ride. Also true of the next three and a half days. But every morning, I open Happy Color, pick a new image, and give myself permission to find stillness in motion.

And that? That's how I remember how to hope.

So if you're spiraling, scrolling, or crying... or some combination of all three, I highly recommend giving coloring (digital or paper) a shot. Not because it'll fix the world (though wouldn't that be something), but because sometimes, one tiny act of gentle beauty is enough to keep you

sane.

And if you ever need someone to compare completed coloring pages with, you know where to find me.

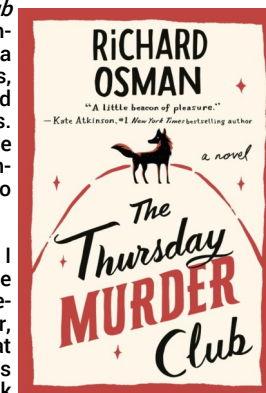
I'll be on my couch, tea in hand, filling in pixelated foxes in a field with a half-smile on my face —

and a little less panic in my heart.

Thanks, Happy Color... you can color me grateful.
— PAMALYN ROSE-BEELER

READING ROCKS

So why is there a review of a five-year-old book here? Ah, the power of the visual resonates. *The Thursday Murder Club* book series by Richard Osman became a streaming series, hence the renewed interest in the books. Anyone who likes the books, or the streaming, can trot over to the other.



Now I must admit I haven't seen a frame of the streaming series, not even a trailer, so I can't judge it at all. However, I was drawn to the book because the streaming attracted such top-notch older actors and actresses. So that gambit worked.

To the book. Osman is British, so naturally the book (his first novel) is set in England in current times at a too-good-to-be-true retirement community. Having only been to England once, I can't say this is not an accurate portrayal of retirement communities there, but having visited a number in Texas, this is an amazing place to retire to. Anyway, the residents are an active group of older adults who are drawing on their skills from their past lives—which are left nebulous-to solve murders.

Osman is a funny writer, so all these characters have great lines and are well-drawn. While humor dominates much of the interaction between the characters, Osman is also skillful at portraying both poignancy and sadness. He manages to walk the line between being too Hallmark sweet and honest emotion, a challenging thing for any author.

Who is the audience for such a book (and streaming series)? Well, older adults who are readers in the UK and the US. Most studies show books tend to be bought by the same audience as always. Fewer young adults are drawn to the printed page (digital and audio notwithstanding), so Osman tapped into a wide-open market ... assuming his audience can stay alive long enough to read the entire series. (Okay, that joke was a bit distasteful, my apologies).

Oh, Osman is a popular game show producer and host in England, so perhaps he had something of ready-made readers.

Finally, *The Thursday Murder Club* is a witty work that is not a bad way to while away a few hours. If nothing else, the ebullient manner in which the senior characters of the novel live their lives offers much promise for those of us who survive into our own aging years. — MIKE L. DOWNEY

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AND THEDIRTBAGTIMES.COM**

YOU CAN'T KILL ROCK & ROLL

1982. I share a bedroom with my older brother. He is six years older than me. He is a teenager and there's never been more pain over our distance of age than there is now and for the next couple of years before he moves out. I have the hero worship hardcore and although we are both over 50 now a little bit of this history still lingers on to complicate our relationship as adults. My brother runs with a gang of suburban juvenile delinquents. Their existence is part *Fast Times At Ridgemont High*, part *Over The Edge*, and the video for Rush's song "Subdivisions." They spend their free time with petty crime, Dungeons & Dragons, playground basketball, and heavy metal on the boombox. My brother and his friends make metal hands at each other, tucking their middle and ring fingers behind their thumbs, leaving the index finger and pinky finger to make the devil's horns. Cassettes by Iron Maiden, Triumph, Rush, Dio-era Black Sabbath, and Night Ranger blare from the speakers. The two cassettes that get the most airtime come from this psychotic-looking dude named Ozzy Osbourne.

Ozzy seemed scary to me in all the greatest possible ways. He sang about wizards, getting high, suicide, going crazy on a train and in some castle dungeon somewhere, voodoo dolls, and this Alistair Crowley dude who might have been a wizard too. The music was awesome with some absolutely mind-boggling guitar playing. But then that absolutely mind-boggling guitar player died in a bizarre accident. Ozzy got the Night Ranger guy and made a live record of Black Sabbath songs (we knew Ozzy had been the singer of that band but we only knew the Dio era stuff). And by then the heavy metal backlash in the Bible Belt was well underway.

Ozzy would go on to make many more albums as a solo artist and with Black Sabbath but by the mid 80s Ozzy's career of being an official disturber of the peace had passed. Metal simultaneously got harder, darker, and faster on one side, and draggier, campier, and poppier on the other side. Ozzy opted for the latter side and being a good 15 years older and drunker than the rest of the Sunset Strip hair band set he just couldn't inspire the sort of groupie worship the way the Poisons and Bon Jovi inspired. Later in the decade Ozzy



took back the darkness and managed to score hits right at the onset of the grunge era. But then all things metal went underground and Ozzy could not adapt. His wife/manager Sharon Osbourne signed the family up for a reality television show on MTV called *The Osbournes* and we learned that the Prince of Darkness didn't drink blood and sacrifice virgins on the daily but instead was a bumbling, affable dad.

Later in the '00s and forward Ozzy would alternate health scares with reunion and farewell tours, culminating in the Back To The Beginning show in early July featuring Ozzy solo, Black Sabbath, and many bands that both Ozzy and Sabbath had influenced over the years. The show raised nearly \$200 million for Parkinson's research (a disease that Ozzy suffered quietly from) and allowed Ozzy to be memorialized while he was still upright and conscious enough to enjoy it. 17 days later, Ozzy died from a heart

jazzy/bluesy at times. I couldn't believe how much tougher Ozzy was. I immediately understood why people would (and did) say that Ozzy was much cooler before he quit Black Sabbath.

I cannot overstate the influence Black Sabbath has had me as a musician. Bill Ward is one of the handful of drummers I listened to most in my earliest formative time as a drummer. I loved that Bill pushed tempo and kept takes with him missing the drum entirely and banging on the rims. The groove that Ward and bassist Geezer Butler made together swung like jazz and R&B and no contemporary 80s metal music had that feel. And who wrote better guitar riffs than Tony Iommi? These dudes *invented* heavy metal as we know it. But Ozzy gave it a voice. He wasn't the most gifted of singers, but he infused the hard-nail blues sound of the earliest Sabbath work with a wide-eyed paranoia that put a manic edge to the band's overall vibe. The lyrics (largely contributed by Geezer Butler) spoke of mental illness, anti-Vietnam sentiment, anti-Catholicism, and generally darker subject matter than Ozzy's solo work spoke of. Sabbath was the real deal, Ozzy by himself was more a caricature

attack.

I could not weep for Ozzy. I believe that pretty much every second he lived past 1980 was on borrowed time and was a gift to him. He drank tanker trucks of booze, hoovered metric tons of shneef, and smoked acres of grass during the Black Sabbath years. Cube those numbers for the post-Sabbath years and add in that he pissed on the Alamo, bit a bat's head off on stage, and survived the airplane/bus accident that killed Randy Rhodes. The man lived many full lifetimes concentrated in one. But the music lives on.

As I mentioned earlier, I knew Ozzy as a solo artist first. It took until middle school for me to find the *We Sold Our Soul for Rock 'N' Roll* cassette that I heard the original Black Sabbath. Ozzy looked evil as fuck on his album covers but Black Sabbath actually *sounded* like Ozzy looked. It's dark, spooky, druggy, psychedelic, and oddly

of Sabbath Ozzy. However, if one had the fortune of seeing Black Sabbath live one would have the dissonance of evil Ozzy on album with the fringed Nixon-fingered crowd-pumping manic that pushed the audience to clap along, show their drugs, and in general have a good time at the show. The band's music was heavy, but none of the members of the band were brooders in the least. Not to mention the biggest cognitive dissonance of all in reconciling the music with Ozzy the reality television star.

It has been heartening to see the world turn out for Ozzy in his passing. I have heard Ozzy and Sabbath tunes playing in places I would have never thought to have heard them, including one of our local Asian supermarkets (with the store clerk singing, nee, *bellowing* along lustily) and a random tchotchke store in Las Vegas selling roller skate paraphernalia. Whichever Ozzy it was that people knew, the people loved that Ozzy and shared with the world in mourning. There will never be another like him. — KELLY MENACE

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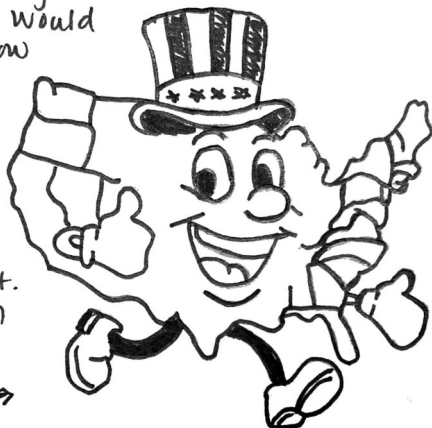


MAREN FARMER. <http://marenfarmer.net>

If I were to write something
Political (which I'm not) it would
be a comment about how
the United States has
become a caricatured
microcosm of what's
happening in the
World.

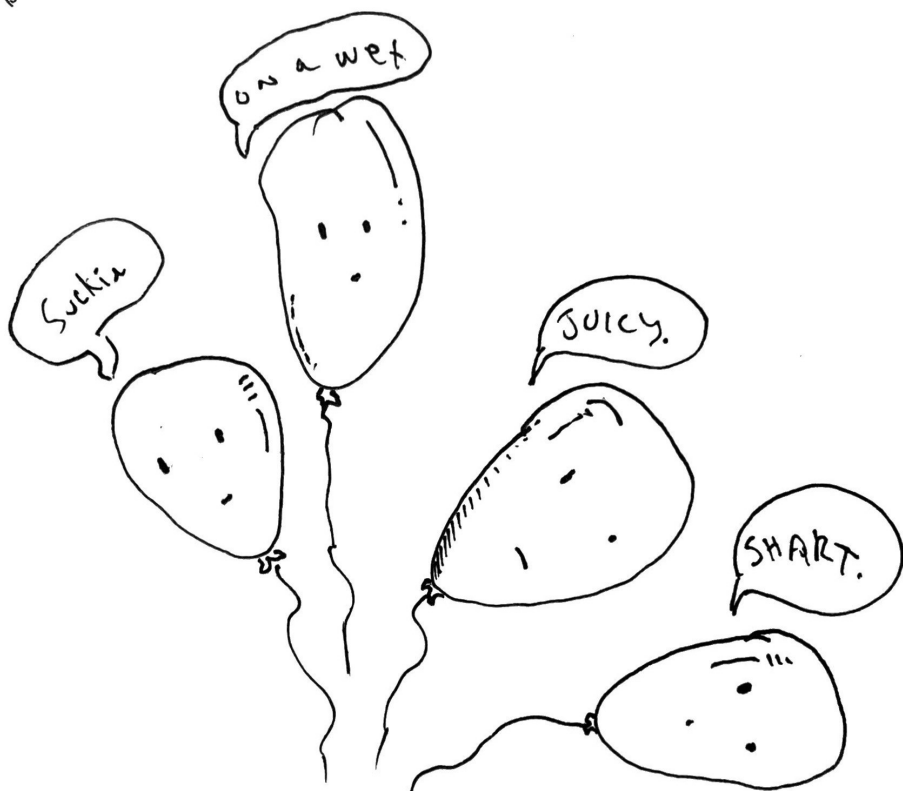
But again, no comment.
Just minding my own
business.

Nothing to see here ➔



TISHIA JACKSON

THEM
DAYS.



WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON





IT'S STILL BILLY JOEL TO ME

Billy, Billy, Billy!
How you linger
— in the cul-
ture, in my mind, on the
airwaves, on the streams.
You're like microplastics!

And I *adore* your music.

It's a guilty admission in some circles. For years, Billy Joel has been labeled a vapid imitator, a musical chameleon, a serial divorcee, the entertainer with bulging eyes.

When I was a musical snob (don't kid yourself, I still am), I sneered at Joel's post-*The Stranger* efforts (well, maybe not *52nd Street*). It seemed like good old Billy was into *money* — losing it and doing whatever schlock he needed to do to get more money so he could lose it again.

In short, he was an idiot just like me.

Except, *damn!* The man can still play, the man can still sing. The dude abides and may have found a cure for being an idiot. (Uh, that cure is *being* an idiot and not minding it — that one comes from personal experience.)

Here's the thing, though — musical snobs can talk about artistic integrity and not bowing to the decrees of the media moguls, etc. Yet, Billy Joel has always been his own self. Yes, a raging alcoholic, motorcycle and car-crashing self, but he paid his dues in the business and refused to settle for anything less than what *he* saw as the right thing to do.

Fer Chrissakes, people! He *fired* George Martin as



his producer. He employed the likes of Phil Ramone and Mick Jones to helm his records. He told the nattering nabobs, "Love me, love my band," and stuck with that roustabout crew till he, um, dumped them, Liberty DeVitto and all.

Dare I say that Billy Joel's about artistic integrity? Look at it this way — the art he's faithful to is *really*, *REALLY* good pop in all its forms, flavored with a *classical* (not blues) flair for anything over the top. There's no sedate, I-just-wanna-mellow-out Billy Joel hit. They're all bombastic ear worms about himself, and it turns out that himself is more than melodic and lyrical enough to super-glue stick in your head and in the culture for 50+ years.

Something's gotta be said for that. The man could write. The man can perform. And in all other respects, he's a schlub like the rest of us (albeit, a schlub who was married to Christie Brinkley). His songs are bad-ass, and I admit no shame for *adoring* them. There perhaps was no more perfectly executed (media and entertainment-wise) album in the 1970s than *The Stranger*. This is a diehard fan of 1970s *Genesis* saying this, but people, there's not a song on that disc that wasn't released to worldwide recognition as an A-side or B-side.

Truly, only the good die young, which may be why Billy Joel has lingered so long. He's better than good. He'll always be Billy Joel to me. — **BETHANY BEELER**



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TRANSCRIPT FROM A SUPER SECRET MEETING

- I hereby call this meeting to order. The first topic on today's agenda is how to distract the world from the colossal crap show that is America 2025. Think hard on this one, everybody. We're kinda in trouble.

-Yeah, so, uhh, I have an idea. It involves kittens in little pants and wearing beanie hats. What if we ...

-Not the kittens again, John. We've been through this.

-But if we also have them rap we could ...

-NO MORE KITTENS! Anyone else? Paul?

-I guess we could do nothing and just wait for someone to tweet something horrible about minorities or women?

-Yeah, that has been effective in the past ...

-It's a rather passive approach though.

-Well, Justice Department just hired a January 6th person. Let's focus on that.

-Ehhh, the "This crazy thing happened involving a Jan. 6th participant" headline is played out. It's hardly "news" when it happens all the time, amirite guys?

-Sections 9 & 10 and part of Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution have disappeared from Congress.gov.

-Shhh, Brad. That's definitely not something we want to bring attention to.

-Epstein Files!

-SHUT UP.

-Smoothie King and Heinz merging to create a KETCHUP FLAVORED SMOOTHIE!

-.... Barf

-WAIT! YOU GUYS! I've got it. UNLEASH KANYE WEST!

-YES! And make Trump say something ridiculous online or on video!

-Texas arresting democrats!

-Those are all great ideas, guys, and we should use them! Also, we should attack NASA in some way.

-Go on, Bill, we're all listening.

-Well, NASA plus Climate Change?

-Bygosh, I think we got it.

-Can we add some stuff about Adult Entertainment and Crypto?

-OF COURSE! This is America for chrissakes.

-Well, everyone, I think we have our plan. Someone get The Today Show on the phone. This is going to be epic. Bill, you just got promoted.

-Yesssss! I didn't even have to buy it!

[End scene]

— TISHIA JACKSON

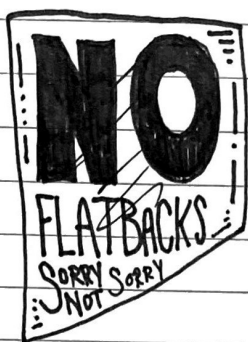


a vibrant coalition of over 280 musicians from western north carolina and beyond has come together to release caverns of gold: a benefit for wnc hurricane relief. this impactful compilation album seeks to raise crucial funds for those affected by hurricane helene, with 100% of the proceeds benefiting beloved asheville, a local nonprofit dedicated to providing immediate assistance and long-term support for those affected by the disaster.

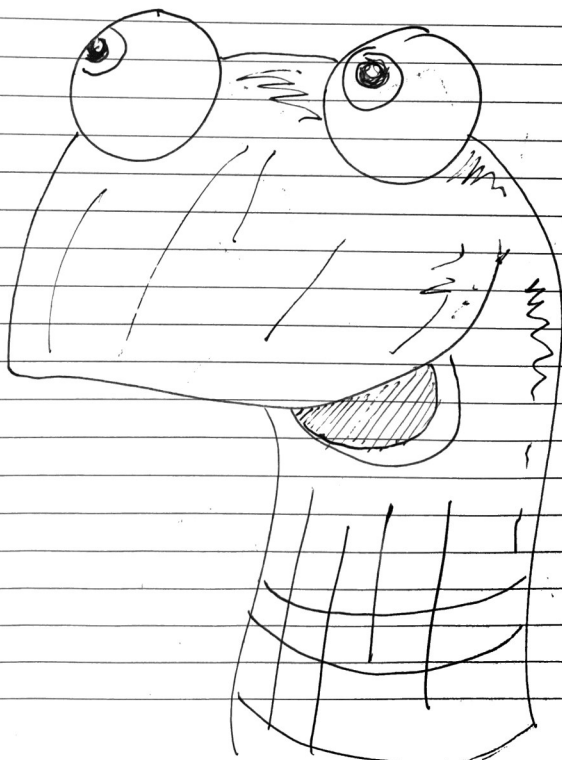
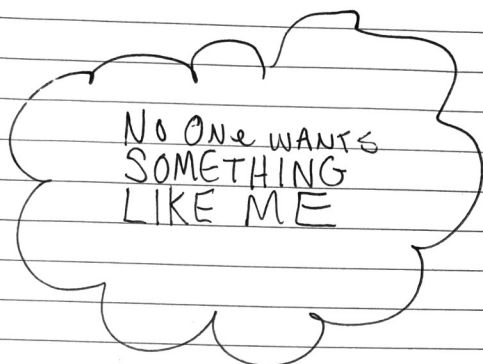
Sometimes you manage to flip the omelette,
Sometimes you make scrambled eggs



TISHIA JACKSON



WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON



WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON

MICROMUSING

Hitler 2.0. Who? Everyone in America knows who this is. Everyone in the world knows. Not Putin, despite International Criminal Court charges for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. No one thinks Kim Jong Un, despite executing political "enemies" (North Korean citizens) with anti-aircraft cannon. Not even minor-leaguers like Turkey's Erdogan or Nicaragua's Ortega, despite opposition crackdowns, controlling elections, and undermining democratic norms (sound familiar?). Nope, it's the Fuhrer Felon. It wasn't enough to bungle the country's pandemic response, pointlessly killing about a quarter of million Americans. Now killing health care for millions will ratchet up the death count. How else do dictators keep score? — **MIKE L. DOWNEY**

=====

- It just occurred to me that future generations will probably think "Trump Card" means doing whatever you want to win.

- For the rest of the year I'm challenging myself to assume everyone is doing the best they can with in the context of their own lives, not mine.

Please don't let this be the year I meet a sociopath with a kitten.

- Did anyone else buy into the lie that eventually, as we grow old, we will stop wanting to spend every single day doing things like riding bikes, running through a sprinkler, going to the park, playing in the dirt, collecting rocks, and eating PB&J and cookies for breakfast? I have never stopped wanting that to be my every day.

- Lately I feel like most newsfeeds, social media posts, and TV reports are endless streams of bad news. Maybe we can flood all of that with good news, funny videos, cute animals, and tales of gratitude and generosity! Anyone want to share their stories? Write us! — **TISHIA JACKSON**



ENJOY ENTROPY

Lemonade parched lips
hot cheeto fingers
and bourbon breath
messy hair and dirty clothes
An alarm sounds for an appointment
never meant to be kept
lights flicker a rhythm
out of sync with the song
but it still works somehow
because that's just how it is.
The jukebox gives us another hero
while another song goes unsung
in the hearts of those busy
singing the song of someone less-lived
than them,
stale beer and cigarettes butts
charcoal conversations
at gas station pumps
Idle ways for idle minds
Bet it all on 42.
Red, white, and blue
corn syrup cough
I'd buy that for a dollar,
and do.
We win the sign says
magazine ads in old papers
with the taglines of tomorrow...
Seize the moment or be seized.
It's all a rouse.
Wake up from the coma
enjoy the aroma
of a new dawn...

— **WILLIAM DANIEL THOMPSON**



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