

SADDLESORE



The Passion of the Bike

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SADDLESORE

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SADDLESORE 2: The Passion of the Bike

I may look carefree to the casual observer or motorist as I make my way through the fresh Los Angeles air on my steel horse, but I'm feeling inside like the whole weight of the world is resting on my stooping shoulders. **Saddlesore** was started last year when the gas prices inched past two bucks. The first issue was hatched as an experiment to gain freedom from the pump in a time when a war was just initiated in Iraq. Was L.A. possible by bike? In the two months I spent car-less last year, I experienced the city in a whole new way, and what began as an trial run grew into a habit which I hoped might catch on to others dismayed in big or little ways about a number of issues affecting their wallets, their conscience and their health.

The war continues and this week marks the beginning of the United States' second year in Iraq. Gas prices have started rising again, and two dollars per gallon now seems like a bargain. Rumors abound that the price may continue to escalate, and with summer on its way, perhaps more and more people will take to the streets. The more of us out there, the less cars we'll have to deal with. And more bikes equals more fun!

June 1, 2003 Louis made ricotta cheese in the morning and packed a baggie full for me to take home. I wrapped it up in a skirt and started home in the early afternoon. Slathered plenty of sunscreen on and headed up Venice Blvd. Left his house feeling sluggish, but after a few miles got into the rhythm of things and sailed along. One of the gates on Venice to LaFayette Square looked like a car had smashed through. Downtown, I locked up outside of Michael Levine, where I saw Angelyne parking her pink Corvette in the lot. I had to call Daniel to tell him that she was out buying fabric, and he wasn't surprised. He'd seen her there the previous Sunday. Daniel told me that he'd heard on the news that a MTA bus had killed

a cyclist on Saturday. He was glad that it wasn't me. He said the cyclist was dragged by the bus on her way to death. It sounded awful. My cel phone battery was dying so I hung up and went back to stalking Angelyne. She was wearing a very tiny tight pink minidress and her boobs were humongous. Her face looked very sculpted. Her legs were skinny. She went straight to the fake fur section and asked the girl working to cut several yards of several different fake furs of different colors. Since they were not all pink, I will assume that they were not solely for her. She only wears pink. I headed to the notions section and picked out some reflective tape for my clothing, so that cars will be better able to see me at night. Unfortunately, the most beautiful and expensive ribbon I bought turned out not to be reflective once I got it home and tested it with a flashlight. The lady who cut it had obviously been given wrong information. Also bought some day-glo zippers and was sad to hear that they have been discontinued.

I was really tired on the way home and stopped at a few more places looking for reflective tape. Then I rode up to Olvera street to see the Aztec dancers one of my students had been photographing. The man at the information booth was drawing a very detailed floorplan of the historical house in the area for an Asian couple. As he went on and on, I became impatient. Finally I butted in and asked him where the Aztec dancers were and he told me to look for the feathers. You can't miss 'em. Later I thought perhaps he was slightly autistic. There was something about his precise detailed floorplan that just wasn't right.

The dancers were on break, so I headed home. Up Broadway to Mission and then Huntington. Just after entering South Pas a cyclist in spandex on a bike with gears passed by. I caught up to him at the next light. Turns out he was in from Santa Cruz and was on his way home from an event in Korea town. I gave him a copy of Saddlesore 1.

Showered the minute I walked into my apartment. The cheese was delicious.



June 3 Walid was speaking at the Hammer, so I met Dan and Kate at Palm Court after a breezy ride from South Pas and we drove from there. Read in the LA Times online that the woman who had been hit by the MTA bus was walking her bike across the street as the bus was making a turn. It happened on the corner of West Adams and Figueroa and she was 20 years old. Read in the Daily Trojan that she was a recent USC graduate, with an MFA in film and television, that she was Canadian, and that her name was Tania Trepanier. Her most recent film was titled "Seahorses" and was about a woman who wakes up in the hospital with amnesia.

Rode home at 11:30 and arrived home around 12:30. It's nice to be out on the streets late when there are few cars around. On York, 4 cars were damaged in an accident. The police was on the scene.

A man in black shorts walked across the street in South Pas.

A Mexican man carrying what appeared to be a heavy black grocery bag shouted something at me which I couldn't understand.

I arrived home unable to go right to sleep. A late night ride is problematically rejuvenating.

June 5 Coldy and cloudy when I left home to go to city college around 11:15. Huge bummer when I saw a Hummer parked right behind my Volvo in front of where I live. I started to get boiling mad and wanted to call the police and then remembered that it's not illegal to be a jackass in America. The Hummer was almost parked to block a driveway but not quite. I just stared at it for awhile, then turned and went back upstairs to get a parking ticket, a big dayglo orange ticket that said "VIOLATION" in huge letters and had a list on the back of why SUVs suck dick. Speaking of which, isn't Hummer just another word for blowjob? And if this is the case, doesn't that make all Hummer drivers necessarily cocksuckers? Guess the Hummer factory probably has room for a cunning linguist on staff. Maybe I should apply.

The ride to school was uneventful, which is good. Took a right on Myra from Fountain, which is a nice way to avoid that sketchy intersection at Sunset, which is up a hill and has a right turn lane, making it necessary for the biker to be going up a hill in the middle of the street. Stopped on Santa Monica Blvd at the Armenian market, where I bought a tub of sesame seeds and one of poppy seeds. Eyed the olives, but couldn't get a two gallon can strapped to my bike without being absolutely ridiculous. Took the Red Line from school downtown to meet up at the Bike Coalition offices to discuss the newsletter. Fare checkers came on board and checked for tickets. First time that's ever happened to me. After the meeting, rode up Spring, past a lot of people sitting around, including a couple who was making out on the ground in a doorway. Sort of sketchy and vaguely obscene. Then went to the LA Times building to drop off an envelope, but was told this was impossible. Envelopes cannot be accepted at night. Something about needing to x-ray them. Rode up Broadway, through Chinatown, and up to Pasadena Avenue, where I turned left. At the LA River bridge, 2 young Latino men were listening to a boom box playing the radio. It was set on a rock and the two guys were looking into the street. At Figueroa, a golden retriever crossed the street towards me and I felt scared. I looked back to make sure it wasn't chasing me and it wasn't. If it was, I was planning to duck into McDonalds, bike and all. Rode up Fig, up the hill, past a bar that was loudly playing music, then to York, turned right, up, and home. Didn't notice the usually spill of sand on my way up to the tracks in South Pas. Maybe it was cleaned up?

Received a dismissal of a parking violation notice from the South Pas Police. Why did they ticket a yearly parking pass holder in the first place?

June 14 Louis and I rode downtown. His first "urban" biking experience, he said, although he's ridden around Venice and Santa Monica, and even in the bike lane on Venice Blvd. We rode down Huntington, beautiful day, such a pleasure to ride on a wide boulevard. Turned right onto Broadway, up the hill, then descended into East LA,

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with all the hustle and bustle of the Big City. Across the river to downtown, past the Gold Line station, and went to a few galleries on Chung King Road. Back on our bikes, down Broadway, which was super-congested, to the public library, where we hid out in the stacks a bit and left with a book, a cassette, and a CD.

When you're riding a lot, distances become immaterial. What matters is time. Distance only means something because of its relation to time. How far? becomes "how long?" And bragging rights, physical fitness triumphs, diminish. How far one can ride is not the issue. A cyclist can ride anywhere. What matters is how long it takes. We have to be somewhere, sometimes.

After the library, we rode down to Angelique Café and sat on the patio, right at the point created by two streets coming together. Watching the streets, our city felt citylike, even though there was barely anyone out and about. And after draining our Cokes, we rode a few blocks over, to Santee Alley. Parked our bikes on Maple and walked through the hubbub. Pushed through crowds and oohed and awed at clothing fit for whores and ladies.

On the way home, a man in a white pickup truck thanked me for moving into the intersection at a stoplight so he could turn right. The man appeared to be talking on a cell phone. He called out, "you're a good driver" to me, and I thanked him. He said, "watch out for idiots, sweetheart," and turned the corner. I yelled, "you too," but I doubt he heard me. We stopped at the new ice cream place on Huntington but it was disappointing. We stopped at the liquor store and I got a coconut popsicle.

June 25 (London) Bicycles are allowed on trains in London, but not on the Underground unless they are folding bicycles. This is just one of the many difference between cycling in Los Angeles and in London.

I picked up a cycling map of London at the Tube station yesterday, having heard that there was a bicycle at my disposal on Musgrove Road. Kate had said that the Pic-Nic was handy for small runs around the neighborhood, but until I actually met this venerable cycle in person, I

had illusions of saddlesoring in the UK.

This morning, I half-rode, half-wheeled the Pic-Nic to the petrol station, where I filed the tires to 45 psi and rode away grandly down the sidewalk. Kate's Pic-Nic has dwarf whitewalled tires, a wide seat, a squat but full-height frame (as if all geometry had been mashed into the lower third of the design) and upright handlebars. The rear brake does not work at all and the rear tire has some serious bulges. On the right side of the handlebars is a rusty chrome bell. I rode to the market and bought a cucumber and then locked her up outside the coffee shop, where I listened to terrible jangly jazz music and drank filtered coffee. Not bad.

Afterwards, I rode up a hill and down another, ending up at Nunhead Cemetery, an overgrown jumble of trees, weeds, and graves. People have been getting buried here for centuries and it seemed that a disproportionate number of them died at age 57.

Though I had planned to bring the Pic-Nic to London on the train, I decided instead to leave it safe and sound on Musgrove Street. I can barely manage to cross the street on foot without getting hit; can hardly fathom the same on a sketchy bike.

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June 28 Found a Brooks saddle at a crowded bike shop somewhere on the way to London from New Cross. Got off the bus when I saw a bike shop, but they didn't have any Brooks saddles so they sent me on another bus ride and a short walk. There was one Brooks saddle in the store. Someone had special-ordered it and not picked it up. The man in the shop said it would "bruise my arse" and take months to get comfy. Since I make this publication called "Saddlesore", that's perfect. It's as if I have a signature saddle.

The leather is black. I would have preferred honey. But when the company's just been sold and the future's unknown, one takes what one can get.

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July 2 (South Pasadena) Rode over to Stephen's house. Where he installed my new bike seat. His friend, he said, has one of those leather seats and claims that it's pretty

uncomfortable. But, said Stephen, this guy is only 110 pounds, so maybe he's not heavy enough to break it in. What a sad story.

Stephen is always very thorough and it's difficult to ask him to just do something simple like installing a new seat without expecting that he'll do some extra lubing and oiling elsewhere on the bike. I asked him to raise my handlebars a touch and he ended up completely cleaning and lubing the handlebar tube. When he removed it from the bike, a clump of dirt fell out. I wonder if that dirt was Illinois dirt, Boston dirt, Colorado dirt, New York State dirt, or California dirt. The bike is well traveled.

July 9 An evening ride south.

For various reasons, including the fear of excessive saddlesoreness, I rode the Bianchi, which I haven't ridden in awhile. It felt squirmy and wiggly and just a little wrong. I remember the days when we were one together. When we were in love. Or at least, I was in love. Being back on the Bianchi is like being with an ex-boyfriend. Comfortable but awkward. We've grown apart, but are still fundamentally the same. So it was a very emotional ride on the blue bike. Also, it's weird to have to use the brakes so much. You can't just slow down the pedaling when the situation isn't fixed.

Almost got hit by an Asian man inching out of a driveway on Huntington. Yelled expletives but felt bad when I saw his face. All innocence and surprise. I tell myself that no driver really, deep down inside, wants to hit a cyclist. But I don't really believe it.

Later, more close calls. Hispanic in pick-up truck pulling out of the McDonalds. The #78 bus. This is not a ride for my mother to read about. Took Broadway south into downtown. Skirted through Chinatown and took Hope south to Flower south to Venice west. It's a bike route, whatever that means.

A near miss head-on collision between a white sedan and a silver van. Don't know who was in whose lane. A squeal of brakes, children screaming from the sidewalk. A swerve. My head quickly moving back and forth, trying to assess the situation. Rode on.

July 10 Louis drove me up Venice Blvd to the 10 freeway. I rode up Venice to Broadway and then up Broadway to First, where I turned right to Mission. I took Mission to Richmond and down the hill to the Richmond Institute, where Dan was drawing up plans for a set of steel letters to spell out "Albacore Los Angeles California" on the back of his 30 foot steel boat. It's good news that he's decided to keep the name Albacore for the craft. There was a worry that it might float under a different name. After a visit, I rode up Mission to Huntington and headed back to South Pasadena. I returned home very sweaty. It's very hot.

July 14 Scott had told me that Pico was a good street in the morning, as cars are not allowed to park on the street in the morning, leaving an extra lane and alleviating the problem of drivers opening doors while I am pedaling by. This parking regulation is only good until 9 a.m. and I went by a half hour later. Too bad. Anyhow, it's a good route. I sped downtown from Venice and arrived earlier than expected. The saddle is wearing in nicely and there is no problem with being too sore over long rides. Very hot day, but while riding the breeze feels good. It is only after I stop that I feel the sweat pooling on my chest and dripping down my body. The key is to keep moving. With summer in full effect, I am not able to enjoy other people's radios as much as in past months. The windows are closed up and air conditioning shelters drivers from the real world. I didn't know it as I rode, but this was one of the worst smog days in recent years. After many years of a reduction in smog levels here in Los Angeles, the air quality has begun to decline dangerously this year. Studies of losers in Los Angeles have shown that, although the number one health concern is air quality, that most people do not see themselves or their driving habits as a contributor to this problem. With one in three cars in LA an SUV, it's easy to see why the pollution is worsening. SUVs emit much more terrible stuff than cars. Duh.

After a brief meeting downtown, I climbed back on the

bike and rode back home to South Pas. It was a very warm ride and I looked forward to returning home in good time, which wasn't a problem. Crossing under the Gold Line, I got very excited thinking about how I will soon be able to be lazy and just take the train.

July 15 Rode up to Caltech to work for much of the morning. When I left, my seat had baked in the sun and was extremely warm.

(Please excuse this lapse. Between the last entry and the next, Louis and I bought a house, began renovating the house, and started moving in. During this time, I drove way too much, carting around supplies and boxes. In August, I began commuting to USC twice per week from South Pasadena, and once per week to LACC, taking the train occasionally, sometimes riding from Venice, and other times leaving a car at the new house and riding from there. It was confusing, and I didn't take notes.)

December 1 Have been riding, but not writing. Last week rode to USC Monday & Wednesday from South Pas. Huntington to Broadway, through downtown to USC. Or Huntington to Mission. Great ride and only an hour plus ten minutes, which is about what I allow for taking the train halfway and riding the rest from Union Station. All downhill, too, which is a real plus.

But today I woke up lazy and late, and figured I'd wake up on the train. So paid my fare and climbed aboard. All fine until motherfucker officer shithead came and told me to get the fuck off the train. Bikes aren't allowed during certain hours. Of course I know this, but I flaunt the rules anyhow and hope for the best. It's in the interest of the MTA to allow bicyclists on board, after all. Encouraging multi-modal transportation increases their ridership and decreases dependence on fossil fuels, pollution, obesity, etc. I am a citizen who owns a car and has the choice to drive or not. Seems that folks like me would be the ones to sway towards public transport. But with uniformed sheriffs enforcing rush hour bike rules on nearly empty trains? Where were

they last week when Freddy was mugged on the bus on Western? Kicking cyclists off the Gold Line?

December 2, 2003 Spent the night at the new house for the first time! We slept in the illegal back unit and in the morning Louis walked down the street to the Mexican bakery to get watery coffee and a pastry that was like a very eggy cheesecake. Kind of delicious.

Rode to LA City College. Up Western, then jogged across smaller streets. Can't recall which ones. Ended up at Vermont right below Wilshire. Most of the bigger North/South streets are scary to ride in this area. Western, Arlington, Normandie, Vermont. They don't have much in the way of shoulders and cars ride nearly to the curb.

At Wilshire/Vermont, I stopped at a light to take off my jacket and a black guy with long wavy hair and a square diamond earring who was sweeping on the corner started talking to me about biking. Says he tries to ride 20 miles each week and he does his errands at work on his bike. Once a week he has to drop something on the west side, then rides downtown to do something else. He's 53 years old, he said, and god's blessed him with the ability to ride a bike.

Had to jump up to the sidewalk to avoid being hit by a minivan.

December 3, 2003 After being kicked off the Gold Line on Monday, I've decided not to try taking it in the morning anymore. So I loaded my bike panniers up with cream cheese and cookies (both carnivorous chocolate chip and vegan chocolate crinkle) and tea and coffee and milk and other treats, and I rode to USC for the last day of class. Took Huntington south to Broadway, where a very fancy road bike overtook me. I tried keeping up, and almost did on the hill up Broadway, but on the downhill he sailed and I didn't. Through downtown—took College through Chinatown, South on Hill, right on Olympic, south on Fig. Arrived at school right on time and gorged myself with cookies.

December 4, 2003 Rode from the new house to USC

for a brief amount of time. I had to clean out my photo locker, #33, which I barely used this year. It didn't work too well. The first time I used it I found out that I didn't need a key to open it. Instead, I could just pry it open with the end of a key! So I couldn't really leave anything I cared about inside it, which made the whole idea of having a locker kind of silly. After cleaning it out (two boxes of paper and two packages of neg sleeves), I rode up Fig all the way to Cesar Chavez and turned right to arrive at Union Station. Fig all the way is great during non-rush hour times. Near Cesar Chavez, it turns into a very narrow street which has no shoulder and is a bit scary. So you gotta really make sure no one's going to run you over. I don't usually trust the cars there as it curves a bit, but during the day it's not super crowded. Took the Gold Line during authorized bike hours. There were two other bikes on the car including a very pretty red bike belonging to a guy who recognized me from the Bicycle Kitchen. He was reading a William Burroughs book. I was reading the NY Times. SUV manufacturers are redesigning SUVs since they cause too many injuries to those in passenger cars. These modifications will not go into effect until 2007 and is expected to save thousands of lives in the future. Only 4 more years of death machines proliferating all over the world.

December 5 Rode to City College this morning from Jefferson Park. Most of the major North/South streets are problematic. Vermont, Normandie, Arlington and Western are narrow streets with no shoulder and speeding vehicles. So I usually ride sidewalks sadly for safety. This

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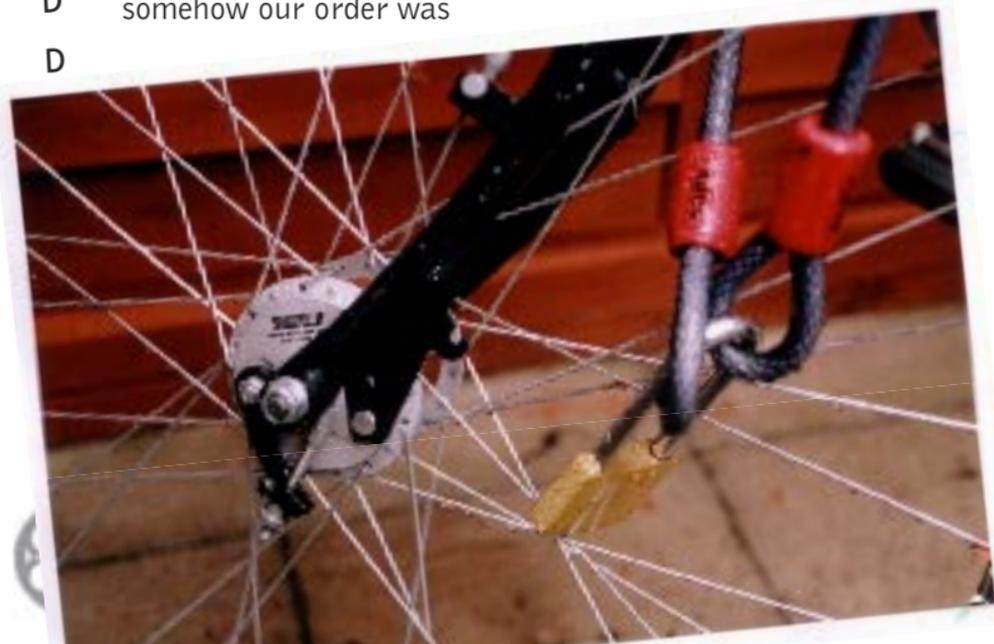
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morning I rode across Jefferson Park on 31st and 28th. Rode by Aunt Rosa Lee's to see if they were open for breakfast, but couldn't quite tell. Didn't look as if anyone was eating in there, but the doors weren't covered with metal bars, so maybe that means it's open.

Right on Washington, left on Oxford, stopped by Eric's to see what time I'm supposed to be at this benefit thing I volunteered for on Sunday. 3:30. Rode up Oxford, can't remember where I jogged over and up exactly. I can see the big buildings of Wilshire from a distance and when I get up there I feel near. Eventually ended up going East on First, then turning left on Vermont. I took sidewalks up Vermont over the freeway after having a very close call on that bridge one time. Almost ran into a smelly man on a bike who stopped short in front of me. I cursed.

On the way back, took Melrose across to Hobart and turned left. Turned right on Olympic. Left I can't remember where. I'm terrible about remembering routes. I just wanted to get home where Louis was removing bricks from the attic. I eventually ended up on Western heading south and then wound through Jefferson Park. There is always a homeless person in a camo poncho on Western by the vacant lot. I had very little interaction with anyone all day on my bike. At lunch, I rode to Marouch and picked up sandwiches for Daniel and I. He had chicken kebab and I had falafel, but somehow our order was

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messed up so it took awhile. I didn't lock my bike up and was nervous and kept watching it out the window. My bike is so beautiful I sometimes can't believe it.

February 11, 2004 A German artist named Erik is in town and invited me to go on a bike ride. He's been all over Los Angeles already on bike (and via car), and has visited more places in the last few months of his stay here than I believe most people who live here have. It's most impressive!

I have been having some problems with my bicycle as of late. Since moving to the new house last month, I have been unable to find my bicycle pump. It was one of the first things to be moved to the house long ago, but after being shuffled around from closet to closet while the workers were here, it seems to have gotten misplaced. I have been tearing my hair out for weeks looking for it and have searched every corner I could find. Last week, I was riding home from USC during a windy downpour. Somewhere along the way, my rear tire blew, but I'm not sure when. The conditions were not ideal for riding. I was wet and cold and just trying to make it to the next block, each block one closer to home and a hot bath. Anyhow, once I noticed that my rear tire was flat, I walked the rest of the way, which was only a couple of blocks. But when I got home, I was unable to do anything about the tire, due to the lack of pump. So I took the bus to school for a couple of days and continued searching for the pump. There is no bike shop within walking distance, unfortunately.

After planning the ride with Erik, I changed out the tube and filled it from a cartridge, then went to the bike shop near USC and filled it to the appropriate pressure.

We rode past USC (after stopping for a coffee) through the southern edge of the garment district, over to Central and south down the "jazz corridor" to Vernon. Erik stopped many times along the way to photograph buildings, including a company specializing in burglar bars, which had metal doors and rollup doors festooned along its exterior.

Near the entrance to the Los Angeles River, on a

very industrial corner, a young good-looking man was walking his Chihuahua and talking on his cel phone. We crossed the street and entered the bike path. The view is top-notch. Factories and warehouses on one side and the concrete riverbed on the other. The path was generally clean, though through underpasses there was often broken glass. My tire blew on the first underpass and the gash was apparent. I put in a new tube and we rode on, past the Bell Foundry and all the way down to the 105 freeway, where we decided to turn around so we wouldn't be caught in the dark later. I began walking my bike when we went through underpasses, getting worried that in the late afternoon light, I'd miss the devilish bits of glass. We passed a group of kids playing in the river, having marked out a court of some sort with chalk. A man nearby was making carne asada in a hole in the side of the river over which he'd lain a grate. A pair of ladies was walking their Chihuahuas. A family was out with bikes and strollers. We left the river and visited a store selling decorative plastic (fleece) blankets. A whole huge shop of super-cheap shitty merchandise. All disposable and poor-quality, but selling like hotcakes. I watched, agape, as a family from Nebraska stuffed their van full to bursting with comforters and sheets. Perhaps they own a motel. Soon after visiting the blanket store, my tire went again. I rode over a train track and it just burst immediately. I always get flats 3 -in-succession, so I should have known to bring another tube, but this time I didn't have another with me. I brought out my flat kit, but was out of glue. Basically, fucked, in the middle of nowhere. A bus stop nearby said "611," a route I hadn't heard of. I half-walked, half rode on the wheel rim to the next stop, where I asked someone waiting if they knew when the bus would come. He just shook his head. At the next stop, we asked again. Again, the response was negative. But they must be waiting for the bus! I don't think any of them understood the question. I called 1-800-COMMUTE and was put on hold for 6 minutes before hanging up. My cel battery didn't have much life left in it. So I urged Erik to go on ahead, to bike back to his car. It was getting dark and it seemed easier for one person to navigate



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home via bus than 2. Buses could only carry 2 bikes, and if there was someone else traveling with a bike, it would be impossible to both board. So he left me there, in Vernon, on the 611 route, and I waited. When a bus finally arrived, the driver was friendly and knowledgeable. He told me to take his bus to 105 bus and then board the 209 at the corner of Arlington and Vernon. But the bus had no bike rack! The driver insisted that it did. I looked again and went back on. I think they've changed the design, I said, I can't quite figure out how to attach my bike. It's easy!, he said, and he got off the bus to show me. He seemed genuinely surprised to find that his bus lacked a bike rack, and so—very generously—offered to let me aboard with the bike.

The 105 cuts across Vernon Blvd and is extremely crowded. I sat near the front wearing my yellow bike helmet and orange reflective vest and feeling like a real idiot. A softspoken black man asked for my phone number. He was wearing sweatpants. I said I didn't have a phone. He left at the next stop. At Arlington I disembarked and stood at the dark bus stop across from the liquor store. I was right up against a 6 foot spiked fence. A man in a light gray shiny suit walked crookedly down the sidewalk wearing bedroom slippers and clutching a can of iced tea. He

came close enough to me that I could see the whites of his eyes, but they didn't look white. They looked veiny and bluish. I could hear a loud stereo in the alley. I

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didn't feel very comfortable. I was carrying a switchblade, but I doubt I'd be able to use it in defense, if it came to that. The man in the suit kept walking back and forth. I moved to the corner and looked down the street. There was another convenience store to my left and people were coming and going. Kitty corner from me was a scary looking motel. I'm standing her in bright orange holding a broken bicycle and hoping that the bus would get here soon.

February 14, 2004 Rode from home to the west side.

Took neighborhood streets to Crenshaw, right on Crenshaw, left on Venice, veered right on San Vicente. Up two short hills, right on Fairfax. At Wilshire, I visited a couple of galleries. Saw some photos and ate an orange and coconut jello at Brian Butler's place—part of an exhibition called Social Pudding. Looked at paintings at Acme and drawings at Marc Foxx and some very light color prints across from 1301PE and then rode up to Samy's where I bought a smartcard reader to replace the one I can't find. It's somewhere in a box. But which box? Rode to The Grove, got asked to leave Sur La Table, which makes sense I suppose. It's a cramped store and a bicycle is a bit unwieldy. No bike racks nearby though, so they lost my business (all I needed was an O-ring for a stovetop espresso maker anyhow). The Grove was a zoo,

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so went across the street to Kmart to look for a drill bit (unsuccessful) and then to Whole Foods where I bought coffee, olives, and 2 Pippin apples. Locked bike separately for each store, to racks made to accept empty shopping carts. There was a bike rack at Whole Foods, but one of those shitty ones that you can't really lock the frame to with a U-lock, so fuck it.

Stopped at OSH on the way home to pick up a drill bit and some varnish. The assistant manager said that I couldn't bring my bike inside the store. He pointed to a rail 6 inches above the sidewalk and said that people usually lock their bikes on it. I said that there was no way to lock my bike to that, that I would only be able to lock my wheel there. I said that the South Pas OSH always let me bring my bike inside. He said that someone could get hurt. I said that no one would get hurt. He said that that's what the last person said and that then they were sued for 25K after she wasn't watching her bike and something happened with a kid. I said I was sorry that he had such stupid people as clientele and that I depend on my bike and wouldn't take my eyes off of it and that if he didn't believe that and if he refused to put bike racks in front of his store than he could lick my ass plus lose me as a customer forever. I actually didn't tell him to lick my ass because of course if he had taken me up on it I would have puked right then and there. So I left without the drill bit and stopped by an Ace which I had never noticed near 29th on Crenshaw. They had just closed for the day so I asked if they knew of another nearby store and the employees told me about the OSH which I had just left so I told them of my trauma there and they said that I could come back tomorrow, that they would be open from 8 to 3 and I asked if they'd allow my bike in the store and they said of course. Next door a party with balloons and soul food was being set up in an empty parking lot. Sure smelled good.

February 15 After running errands by car in Mt. Washington, I arrived home at 2pm in time to get on my bike and go to the Ace store on Crenshaw. I left my bike at the entrance to the store with an employee and bought a drill bit. The employees were all very friendly and helpful.

After paying for the bit I got back on my bike. I was told to ride safely and was asked how far I'd ever ridden on my bike. I said I'd never gone a hundred miles at a time but had gotten close. I found out that the hardware store is open every day with the exception of Christmas, New Year's and Mother's Day.

February 17 Went to the Bicycle Kitchen to fix my bike. Had to drive because I'm lame, or maybe because my bike was lame. Jimmy convinced me that I didn't need to get a whole new wheel, that I just needed to sand down all those burry spots and all the crappy crags that came from riding my bike around Vernon without a front tire. So I sanded for awhile, until the rim was smooth, and then Jimmy busted out some huge ass tube and a tire all hairy with rubbery spikes. It was a pretty over-the-top setup which I was excited to have as a part of my bicycle. So I struggled to get that tire on my rim, and then Jimmy helped to get the damn thing on, but it just didn't fit, even after we took all the air out. Too big. So took that tire off, and Jimmy threw another tire at me, which I again struggled with, and then I pumped it up and it looked a little weird, so I showed it to Somerset and he confirmed that it was a bunk tire, so he handed me #3, which was just right. My bike rules!!!

February 18 Rode the Bianchi to school and parked it right on top of my desk, which looked real nice and wasn't in anyone's way. Sometimes Daniel complains.

February 19 Rode to school for an opening at F-Space. Gears are cool, even if I don't use them ever.

February 20 First day of school at LACC. Thought it was going to rain and drove. There was a brief drizzle.

February 23 Rode to USC. Thought it was going to rain so wore gore-tex head to toe. It didn't rain all day, but I was prepared. I'm enjoying riding the road bike.

February 25 Prepared again and this time it paid off.

Rained on the way home but I stayed so cozy and dry due to waterproof clothing. Wishlist: clear glasses to keep rain out of eyes, waterproof gloves. I worry about the brakes. A fixie seems safer.

February 27 Rode to LACC.

March 3 George W Bush is in Los Angeles and there was a celebration of dislike event near the Shrine Auditorium, which is conveniently right near school. Rode to school (fast), pulling into my office at 8:45. Passed a car accident. A schlumpy white wagon had smashed into a light pole. Two guys stood on the sidewalk gawking. The front bumper and a bunch of debris was sprinkled over Jefferson Blvd. The driver got out as I rode past, a young dude wearing headphones. Yo, what up. After class, high tailed it north through campus to the Shrine. Lots of cops. I asked one where the anti-Bush protest section was. He pointed across the street. Traffic cop directed cars to turn and to go straight. Waited 3 light cycles and she gives no access to cross the street for cyclists or pedestrians. I ask and she lets cars go again. Cycle begins. I'm pissed. I yell. Then I ask another cop if there's a way to cross the street. He gallantly volunteers to escort me across the street. Could he be serious? I say, I don't want to get arrested for J-walking on the way to the protest. He says that he appreciates my courtesy. I just think its weird. Is there any possible way he's one of us? Later, as the rally moves around the corner, heading for the back exit of the auditorium where rumor has it that GWB is about to leave, another man in uniform distinctly and unapologetically gives us the thumbs up. When we get as far as we can go, we are greeted by a line of cops in face masks and helmets brandishing those sticks. It's overkill. Still, I put on my bike helmet (just in case). I've ridden, so am ahead of the pack. The crowd breaks into whose streets? Our streets and this time I join in and I feel it in my gut and all the truth of those words suddenly sinks in. We're in this shitty side street and aren't allowed to go any further and there's really no reason for all this drama. It's our street, everybody's street, and soon after we hear that Bush has left somehow. Snuck out the back

like a rat. The discussion turns to Haiti and people start chanting about that and I'm outta there. I gotta go grade papers. I stop by Sharon's class and give her shit for keeping her students late instead of letting them go to the celebration.

I saw 3 of my students out and one from LACC. Not too bad but there should be more.

Back at the office, picked up computer and a heavy wad of photos to be graded and rode it all home.

March 5 Started up Arlington, a street which I normally avoid. It's narrow and cars go fast. But I thought I'd try it, since it later changes to Wilton, which is a nice street that I'd been meaning to try out on the bike. The city lacks good north/south corridors in this part of town. When I hit the hill on Arlington, I got sketched out and got off my bike. It's very steep and the cars whip up quickly. I was riding slowly and I was scared. The curb was high on my right and there was nowhere to bail to. I looked behind me and the coast was clear so I rode up to Adams, but this is not a route I will take again. I turned right on Adams and went to Western. The homeless guy who is usually sleeping by the corner of Western and 27th greeted me at Adams and Western and said something garbled which I couldn't quite understand but it was the kind of conversational tone which suggested that I should say something in agreement so I did. Crossed the freeway on the sidewalk. stalked a family of three until they moved out of my way. Rode for a bit with a kid on a bike with no brakes. He said he loaned his bike out to someone and it came back with no brakes. said the last time he loaned his bike to the same guy it came back with the seat gone. I said, why do you keep lending this guy your bike? he says the guy pays him. Then he tells me about the LA Bicycles, on the corner of Oxford and Venice. The guys there don't speak much English, he says. But you can point to what you want done and name a price. Two dollars, three dollars. Bike maintenance isn't too expensive. He stops at the check cashing place and we say goodbye. I tell him to get his brakes fixed and I turn down Venice, pass the bike shop, then head up Harvard.

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I am nearly hit by many cars. Koreatown is no picnic. One was a white van. Another was an Audi driven by a confused looking man in a suit trying to parallel park. Also, a linen truck. sometimes I yell at them. They can't hear me but I don't care. I like being the crazy yelling cyclist.

Buck calls. I pull over when I feel the phone vibrating in my pocket. He's coming to town to photograph Hef in the mansion. How exciting. I continue on Harvard. Somewhere I turn left and head east. I head north on Kenmore. On Kenmore and Fourth is there the linen truck wants to turn into me. I say no way and cut him off. fucker. At one point I get to a stop sign and there's a cop car at the left side of the intersection, also at a stop sign. I stop, visibly, even taking my feet off the pedals. I don't want a ticket. The cop doesn't move. After a moment, I get up and go.

I don't know if I mentioned this: last week, my rear tire fell off my bike as I was riding. I'm not sure why. An old man passed by as I was fixing it and started to talk to me about lubricants. Royal Purple, he said, that's the kind to get. Make sure it's synthetic. He used to sell lubrication for a living.

On my way home, a guy with a blue mask across his face yelled "Nice Bike!" I couldn't tell if this person was being facetious or genuine. He yelled the name of my bike and that it was Italian. "I ride a 1980 Fuji, Olympic edition" he yelled. Sometimes I feel a bit ostentatious on my Bianchi. It is not a shitty bike. It's gorgeous.

March 8 At Western, 3 firetrucks drove south, sirens blaring. They were going so fast I could feel the air displace. Later that day, found out that one of my students had been on the last truck, riding with the firemen for a project he's working on for my class. Way to go, Matt! Was supposed to leave class at 5 and ride directly to Silver Lake to meet Chris for an early dinner, but at 4 pm. got a message that he was going to the movies on the west side and that he wouldn't be home til at least 7. This changed my plans and I felt adrift. So I went

home instead and waiting for him to call. Frankly, I was a bit pissed. He finally called from the Grove and I left to meet him there at 7 p.m. from home. I headed towards Crenshaw down 31st, turned north at the end of the block, headed west, then north, then west. I turned on Crenshaw and went up the hill towards the freeway. But I never seemed to hit the freeway and I was sort of spacing out and dealing with the bad asphalt and not paying attention and soon I was back at Arlington. Turns out I had turned right on Adams, not Crenshaw, and I had basically taken a 2 and a half mile ride around the block. OOPS! So I turned north on Arlington, stuck to the sidewalk til Venice (cars suck on Arlington), then left on Venice to San Vicente, up a couple of hills, hit the west side and turned right on Fairfax to the Grove, where Chris was on a bench waiting. We had a nice dinner at the Farmer's Market, then Louis met me at Whole Foods where we bought some food and then he drove me home. Chris took a cab. His ankle is broken and he is on crutches and cannot drive. Louis' car is broken and so he's driving mine. It was nice to see my Volvo at Whole Foods and even nicer that I didn't have to drive it there. I don't like loading my bike in the back seat of Louis' car, as I am afraid of getting bike grease on his upholstery. But I don't give a shit about the Volvo's upholstery.

March 11 Pleasant trip through Jefferson Park. 31st to Cimarron to Adams to Gramercy to Washington to St. Andrews north nearly to Wilshire. Little traffic but many baby strollers. Got on Red Line at Wilshire/Western. It only took about 20 minutes to get there.

Rode to Union Station, then walked to the still poorly marked entrance to the Gold Line. Sat down on the train and was dismayed and disgusted to find that I'd sat in a puddle. The liquid was hidden in the festively decorated upholstery and I could feel it soaking through my pants and panties. I was on my way to the gynecologist. I had been so careful to bathe and put on clean clothes. And now this. It could be anything. I shuddered to think. What if some little kid peed on the seat? There was nothing I could do, so I sat on a magazine (The Believer) which was in my backpack and seemed absorbent.

Arrived in South Pas and went to the gyno. I didn't tell anyone that my pants were potentially pee-soaked.

Went to Trader Joe's on the way back, then rode the Gold Line to Chinatown, saw Matt Greene's awesome art show, then down to the Geffen Contemporary to see Street Cred. Couldn't find a bike rack, so asked if I could lock to the banister of the inside staircase. The guard told me to park my bike off to the side and said she'd watch



it. I was not happy about this. I asked her if she'd be there the whole time. She seemed offended that I would ask such a question. Against better judgment, I left the bike unlocked and hoped for the best. I checked

on it a couple times during my visit. I didn't see the guard either time. When I left to go around the corner to see the Dead House show, there was no guard there at all but there seemed to be some sort of security person. The Dead house installation was full of guards. That guards followed you into every nook and cranny was downright creepy. I don't think the artist had this in mind. At one point, I tried to ditch the guard but no dice. I went into a small dark room and stayed there too long. Then outside I heard the guard talking on his walkie talkie to another guard about someone (a "she") being in the "secret room." When I finally exited, there he was. I'm glad I'm not involved in organized crime. I do not appreciate being followed.

Picked up my bike and walked next door to see if Sojin had eaten lunch yet, which she had but she walked across the street with me anyhow and I got a rice ball stuffed with salmon. Yum.

Got back on the Red Line at Union Station and spaced out. There were quite a few people on board and at Civic Center I gave my seat up to a lady traveling with three children. I had boarded a Wilshire/Western bound train but at some point this must have changed, perhaps even while we were still in Union Station. I didn't notice this until we were at Vermont/Beverly, at which point I'd already added a few miles to my ride home. Whatever. I rode south to Wilshire and then over to Western, which is where I thought I'd be leaving the train. I tried to go back from there the way I'd come up in the morning, but I ran

into a gated area and couldn't get through and had to go around. I thought that at least there would be pedestrian gates, but these were locked. The other side of the gate was Pico and full of trash. I rode to Arlington on Country Club, and then backtracked to Gramercy, south. Back where I started from.

Somehow my tire is slashed on the side and the tube is making it bulge out a bit. Brand new tires. Nothing lasts forever and most things don't even seem to make it a week.

March 12 I've finally found a bike route to City College that I can live with. It's even nice, for most of the time. Cross to Cimarron, up to Adams, over to Gramercy up as far as possible, then jog to St. Andrews, up up up, jog over to Serrano, keep heading north, then east on Melrose to Heliotrope, game over. Not bad. Morning was great, made it to school in half an hour. The only problem with the route is waiting to cross busy streets (Pico, Olympic, Beverly, Wilshire, etc) without a stop light to help out. At Wilshire on the way home I passed an accident. Van and truck. Three cops on bikes were there helping out. When I first pulled up I was worried that a bike had been involved in the collision, but I was assured that this was not the case. "You gotta watch out around here," said one of the bike cops. He got hit a couple weeks back. "Boom," he said, "just like that." I didn't like the idea of going boom and also wondered if he meant "around here" as Los Angeles or more specifically Koreatown, an area known for confused drivers.

Lots of people were nice and gave me the right of way. I made it home just after Louis pulled up in the driveway.

March 14 Daniel and I shot the cover photo in the LA River. The theme is The Passion of the Bike. Originally I was planning to have tire tracks criss-crossing my body but Louis convinced me that this was bad luck. Instead, I was dirty and unkempt and my bicycle was toppled onto me. I wonder why it is that Daniel and I always like to show bike wrecks and not the blissful riding of the bike. After all, which is more passionate?

March 15 Rode to the paint store, back on the Dawes. Had problems with my rear wheel again. It kept sliding over and jamming into my rear fork. It seems to have an uneven quality. Perhaps it's bent or warped? This bike seems very heavy.

March 16 Back on the road bike, rode to City College to develop the film Daniel shot on Sunday. Left City College at 7 which was a little later than I would've liked but still enough times to make it to the Getty by 8:30. It's only about 12 miles, but 12 terrible miles, and the last few would have to be bussed due to the inhospitable nature of Sepulveda. And this adds time.

Struck out West on Santa Monica Blvd., through the hustler-belt, past the new Targay at Santa Monica and LaBrea. Almost got hit at the crosswalk theme by overzealous driver revving big engine. Nearly flattened by a Domino's car delivering pizza to the Pleasure Chest who pulled to the curb and cut me off. SM sucks through Bev Hills and thought Wilshire would be a better bet so headed south on Fairfax (nice), right on Oakwood, through a quiet neighborhood, jogged down to Beverly. Almost fell off my bike ogling the Aeron chairs in the window of Hermann Miller. Lots of time on sidewalk. No shoulder on streets in this part of town. Rule of the jungle, and the jungle here is populated by SUV drivers who lack real knowledge of their cars actual size.

Made it to the edge of Bev Hills and found out that the event was to end at 9. I'm pissed. I should have left earlier. I'll never make it. I press on anyhow. At Santa Monica, Wilshire becomes a superhighway with no sidewalk. Instead, there's a dirt road. You can't really use it as a bike route; each time it crosses as street, huge curbs. Not for the handicapped either. I remember getting pissed off about this before—I'll never learn. Santa Monica—potholed with no shoulder, Wilshire a superhighway. A 720 passes me and I think to jump on too late. I'm fucked and I feel fucked up about it and I remember the last time I felt this fucked up was when I tried to meet Louis at a restaurant in Santa Monica and it was such a miserable trip and I was so upset and

miserable just like now. I asked a Mexican reading the paper by a fountain at Wilshire and Santa Monica how to get to Westwood and he said it's tough. He usually rides the center of Santa Monica, but not at night. I turned tail and gave up on the Getty. Now I'm in Beverly Hills and Louis will meet me here and take me home. In front of Saks, 2 people are pushing a Corolla.

Bike Metro had a crazy nonsensical route. When I called to find out if there was a doable back way to the Getty, I was told that it was only for Fedex. I just feel so defeated. There has to be a route.

March 19 The ride to school was filled with the usual crosstown craziness. Didn't have a cup of coffee before leaving the house so felt a bit dim. Reached City College around 9-ish, and took off with my students on a field trip to MOCA at 1:15. We took the Red Line and I brought the bike so I could leave directly from the museum. There were many strollers aboard and it was crowded and the strollers seemed to take up more room than my bicycle, which made me wonder why their weren't "stroller hours." At MOCA, I saw a Motobecane with gorgeous black leather handlebar covers at the bike rack, but when I went back with a note to inquire as to where these might be found, the bicycle was gone. After visiting the museum, which was showing the "Street Credibility" photo show plus a bunch of installations, I went to the Japanese market with Daniel and one of the Japanese students, who recommended some food items. When I emerged with my rice crackers, I found a security guard staring at my bicycle which was locked to a metal fence surrounding a small tree. I was told that I was not to use that fence to lock my bike to in the future, and when I inquired about the location of the nearest bike rack, I was told that he didn't know. This seems to be a common answer to this question. I rode over to Dan's shop which is not too far from Little Tokyo. I crossed the LA River on the First Street bridge, then turned left on Mission, past the new low-income housing and the salsa factory to Richmond. The Albacore was parked out front and I was greeted by Bingo the white fluffy alpha dog and Pancho, the new little black dog from the pound. Dan noticed that

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my tire had a slash in it and that my tube was bulging a bit, which I had been ignoring for a week. He didn't think it was a good idea for me to ride with the bulge and slash, despite the fact that I had been doing just that for a number of days already. He had an extra set of tires at the shop and gave me one. It's a yellow Michelin, which is the kind of tire I'd previously had on my Bianchi, which I just recently replaced. We pumped up the new tire and then I took off back through downtown, this time taking Cesar Chavez across the LA River and riding through Chinatown, then down Hill, then turned right on Pico. Downtown was super congested and I inhaled a lot of exhaust. Repeatedly got stuck behind buses and due to the heavy traffic had a hard time getting around them. Was whistled at exactly once. At one point, I saw some sort of bike cop riding a Smith and Wesson bike called a "Tactical." He was wearing a pair of combat boots and looks sort of gay and stupid. I tried to ride with him-- safety in numbers-- but he didn't seem interested. His rear bag said "safety" but I guess he didn't mean that kind of safety. Rode by many storefront churches serving food. Turned left some where and continued riding west on Venice. Left on Gramercy. Right on Adams. Left on Cimarron. Right on 30th. Rode on sidewalk down Arlington one block and crossed when there was a break in the traffic. Home.

March 24 Crash landed to the sidewalk on the way to school-not sure exactly what happened. Line of cars at a red light- I rode between curb and cars and went down next to a van. May have lost my balance due to the heavy bag I was carrying. Hit curb on the right with my wheel and flipped down onto the sidewalk. Bike was still in the street. Lady got out of her van to see if I was OK. I told her to go away. I dragged my bike out of the street and stayed for a few moments. I was out of breath. I guess this is what it means to have the wind knocked out of you. I got on my bike and rode to school. I had landed on my computer and was eager to get to the office to see if it was still working. It was. But the upper right side of my torso hurt whenever I took a breath or moved.

March 31 Collided with a pedestrian on Normandie and

ran over his foot. We were both startled. I had turned south on Normandie from Jefferson to avoid Jefferson narrowing and losing the shoulder on the east side of Normandie. The pedestrian left a store and was looking at something in his hands, the size of a lottery ticket. I felt his foot under my tire and his body collide with mine. He was a big solid guy in a striped shirt. We both continued on. I looked back half a block later and he did not appear to be limping. Soonafter, I passed a dead calico cat on 35th Street. Its paws were facing west and its head rested in a pool of blood in the center of the street.





Further reading

*If you think Saddlesore's the only bike zine out there, you've got another thing coming. While the chosen creative outlets for road trips in cars seems to be literature and cinema, bicycling lives appropriately modestly, in the world of zines. Don't get me wrong- we'll always have **Breaking Away** to legitimize the love of cycling in mainstream culture. And Lance, of course. But if you really want to see what's up with the passion of the bike (and you vomit at the idea of spandex Sunday morning warriors), you gotta start small. Lots of these publications are available through Microcosm Publishing, a Portland zine distributor with an entire section of their catalog dedicated to bike zines. They also have "Fuck Cars" t-shirts, "Fuck Bush" stickers and other necessities for the self-proclaimed "radical" or those looking to reclaim lost youth. Other publications are available straight from their creators. Microcosmpublishing.com or 5307 N. Minnesota Ave., Portland, OR 97217-4551.*

Life in the Bike Lane: Breaking my Automobile Addiction (\$2, Dan W. 1709 S. Jen Tilly Lane, #91, Tempe, AZ 85281 or order from Microcosm)

Dan's a guy in Arizona who discovered the joys of cycling everywhere after his truck broke down. The zine is a beautiful love story between man and bike. Dan's full of observant revelations like, "If you pedal long enough in the right direction, you can get everywhere." Well

written, with attention to grammar and punctuation.

The Constant Rider (PO Box 6753, Portland, OR 97228)

Kate rides the bus everywhere and writes about it. Sometimes she also rides about biking in conjunction with busriding or on its own. Issue #4 contains a list of books spotted on the bus, which route, and who was reading them. Seems that Portlanders are reading more on public transportation than those of us in Los Angeles.

Away with All Cars (\$2.50, available from Microcosm Press)

Vehement anti-car manifesto from an anarchist "organization" calling itself the Pedestrian Freedom Front. Advocates lighting cars on fire to improve the quality of the earth's citizens. Condemns traffic. Contains tragic facts about the evilness of cars and a reading list for the car-hater. Should be required reading for those brainwashed by corporate consumerist culture, which is pretty much everyone.

Chainbreaker (\$2, Shelley, 621 N. Rendon, New Orleans, LA, 70119) Shelley's a bike mechanic in New Orleans and she writes about her number one love- bikes. And also about New Orleans.

Dear Motorist (1.50, available from Microcosm Publishing)

Another caustic car-hating diatribe, this one dating from 1973. Sadly, 30 years later, the situation described is unchanged-- oil dependence, misery, traffic, the disintegration of community, urban hell. The author notes, "In some American cities, the act of strolling in the streets at night is grounds for suspeicon of a crime." Pathetic.

Go By Bicycle (\$3, Scott Larkin, PO Box 18233, Portland, OR 97218)

Kinda spanky looking zine and very serious, with articles about-- you guessed it-- bicycling, how cars are terrible,

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why fixed gears rule.

Leapfrog (6163 Carrollton Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46220)

Another zine about bicycling, this one from Indiana. Publisher Scott rides a single speed and sings their praises in addition to reviewing other zines, interviews with the bike-centric, and tech notes on bike repairs and maintenance.

AND DON'T FORGET:

The Bicycle Kitchen

will teach you and yours to fix your steed

Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30-9:30 P.M. Sundays 1-4 P.M.

213.386.1002 . bicyclekitchen.com

Last Wed of every month is Bitchin' Kitchen for the ladies.

And Critical Mass- last Fri of the month. Meet in LA across from roach-infested Tropical Bakery at 6:30.



While much is known about **Daniel Marlos'** exploits as a bug expert, a gardener, and a photographer of the beautiful and well-connected, little has been recorded about his past as a Los Angeles cyclist. For many years, Daniel was a car-free and carefree cyclist. I asked Daniel to write about his experiences biking in the old days. But, although Daniel could recall snippets of his colorful past, the exciting and scandalous bits were mired in a fog of erased memory brought on by too many late nights and too much fun. Following is a rudimentary assessment of his exploits and a self-portrait dating from 1987. It should be noted that Daniel now drives an SUV to the MTA station, from which he commutes to his various jobsites via bus and train. It should also be noted that the roll of film containing photographs of Daniel and his bike also contained photographs of Daniel bathing naked in his backyard under the hose.

Memories of an Eighties Cyclist

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People always talk about Los Angeles being the hub of car culture. If you don't have a car, you can't get around. Twenty years ago, things were much worse. At least now, the MTA has built a rail system that links many parts of the city and that rail system is somewhat bicycle friendly, though most people who go to work by bicycle do need to travel during rush hour, when bicycles are not allowed on trains. The busses do have bike racks and there are bike lanes on many of the main surface streets. Recreational biking hasn't been ignored either. There is an amazing bike path along twenty odd miles of the scenic Los Angeles River that includes bridges crossing busy streets. Cyclists of today probably shudder at reading that I find modern Los Angeles to be somewhat bicycle friendly, though I must confess to having given up riding a bicycle nearly twenty years ago. In the eighties, there were no bicycle lanes clearly marked with broken white lines and ignored only by the most rude of drivers. In 1987, before IKEA was built, I had to ride past the Golden Mall in Burbank on my way to North Hollywood to work in a photography

lab. Crossing all those entrance and exit ramps to the Golden State Freeway with all those speeding motorists was something of an ordeal that could take as long as ten minutes. If I really had far to go, I couldn't count on taking my bicycle on one of those crazy double busses with the accordion joints in the middle that used to ride down the main boulevards in Hollywood. And then there is that hazard that every cyclist worries about, the oblivious driver who opens a driver's side door right in your path of travel. I was knocked off my bicycle twice before buying my \$600 Rambler. I survived, and I never even wore a helmet.



