

IMPLOSION

Implosion #11 is the local monthly fanzine of Arnie Katz (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). Everything is exacty as it was, except that You Are There. It is produced for the 11th Distribution of Apa V, the Las Vegas apa, which has as this month's theme "Education, School and Learning Experiences."

Today is September 3, 1994, **Implosion**: The Fanzine that proves anyone can publish a fanzine. Member, fwa.

When I was a high schooler, I had a recurring dream. It wasn't quite a nightmare, because at no point was I terrified. Yet it was not a vision I relished.

Frustration was the central motif. In the dream, I arrived at a nameless college for the Big Test . Unfortunately, I'd stopped attending the course some months earlier.

"What was that teacher's name?" I wondered in my dream as I cruised the halls looking for the right room number. It would have been easier if I could've remembered even one of that all-important trio of digits..

I tried to visualize myself walking to that class the last time I had actually put in an appearance. It was all so long ago, all so hazy. How much easier it would be, my dream self scolded, had I bothered to write down either the teacher's name or that of the course itself.

I wasn't a complete dummy, even in my dream. I knew the course had *something* to do with English Literature.

None of the halls looked familiar. I edged up one and down the next searching for my classmates. That would've been easier if I could've remembered any of their faces.

Fear sweat trickled down my sides as my quest continued. Finally, I saw a knot of students clustered promisingly around a classroom door. I strolled up to them, my cheery smile and hearty greeting at maximum amplitude. Since I couldn't recall any of the other pupils, I reasoned, maybe they would recognize me.

They were all madly flipping the pages of a textbook, caught up in pre-exam frenzy. I hastily inspected my briefcase. Yes, I had the very same volume!

Paydirt!

"So," I said to a blonde girl who was flailing at her book with a yellow highlighter, "what do you think the test will be about?"

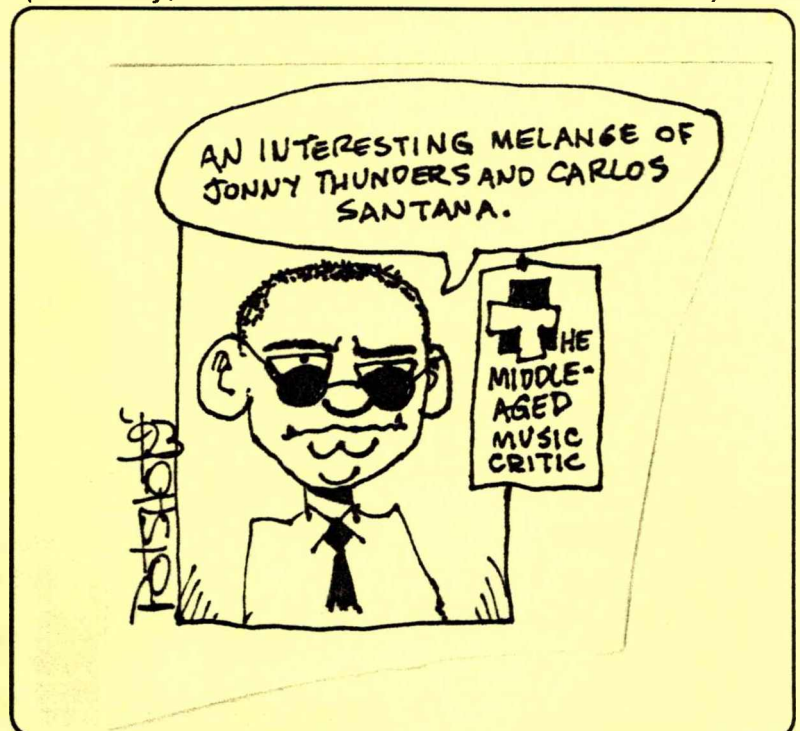
I'll spare you the rest of my dream narrative. Suffice to say that it involves me questioning the other students about the nature of our course and the material apt to be included in the do-or-die exam.

You may think I am telling this story because this month's Apa V theme is "Education, School and Learning Experiences" and this is a dream about school.

Wrong.

I'm writing this anecdote because the theme is "Education, School and Learning Experiences" and this is a story about one of my learning experiences.

Or maybe it's not, after all. You be the judge. (Ordinarily, I would have said "You make the call," a



baseball reference. The National Pastime is on strike as I write, however, I don't want to be accused of crossing the picket line, even in cyberspace.

This dream reoccurred periodically over the years. It never progressed beyond locating the room, grilling the students and entering to take the examination. I never found out whether I passed or failed.

I graduated high school, spent four years in Buffalo at the State University of New York there, and then returned to the New York metropolitan area to attend Brooklyn College Graduate School in 1968.

There was laughter in the cafés at night, revolution in the air. The counterculture was flying high, fighting against an immoral war overseas and exploring Possibilities at home. I got an apartment in Brooklyn Heights with Andy Porter and began to explore those possibilities, fannish and otherwise.

Sometimes I went to school. All my classes were in the late afternoon and early evening, and I attended them devotedly for a few weeks. I'd get on the subway at the Court Street-Borough Hall station and ride it for an hour or so, all the way out to the end of the line in deepest Flatbush. Then I'd walk a couple of blocks to the Brooklyn College campus.

Between the distractions of life and a growing disdain for the pedagogic prowess of my professors, it became increasingly harder to psych myself into making the trip to school.

I completed the first year of graduate school with decent grades and swung into the second. If anything, my professors were even less interested and interesting. They favored monotone lectures and regurgitation over original analysis.

Not that the students were a prize package, either. Most were teachers, forced by law to attend graduate school to keep their jobs. They ripped into the material with all the gusto of an anorexic at an all-you-can-eat dessert buffet.

One day it finally happened. I rode the subway to the last station on the Flatbush line, got out and looked around.

I thought about the particularly odious teacher awaiting me that night.

I thought about my mother's injunction to "be a good boy and always do your lessons."

I thought about visiting rich and Colleen brown. Maybe in time for dinner.

I got back on the train. I read fanzines all the way back to Brooklyn Heights.

After that, I went to some classes devotedly,

but not to all. And in the second semester of my second year of study, I finally hit a course where "sometimes" became "never."

And one warm Spring evening, I found myself arriving at Brooklyn College for the Big Test. Unfortunately, I'd stopped attending the course some months earlier.

"What was that teacher's name?" I wondered as I cruised the halls looking for the right room number. It would have been easier if I could've remembered even one of the three digits..

I hate to tell you, a generation weaned on "Unsolved Mysteries," but at no time did I feel that my recurring dream had any predictive facet. It was more that life had imitated my imagination.

Granted, I wasn't smart enough to learn anything from my repeating Big Test dream. Here I was, after all, caught in almost the same predicament. But all the nights I'd logged finding my way to the Big Test turned out to be time well spent. I knew just how to track down the forgotten course.

I took the test, which was on pre-Chaucerian Middle English or some sizzling topic like that, and I guess my innate cunning and intelligence saved my ass.

Actually, I don't know how I did. Before I could take the rest of the Big Tests, a bunch of trigger-happy Ohio National Guardsman shot up a bunch of students at Kent State University. Brooklyn College went out on strike in sympathy, and the school year lurched to an abrupt, and inconclusive, end.

There were no finals, and no final grades. I was completely off the hook.

I may not have learned from that dream, but the real life experience had a much more profound effect. A month later, I started working as an Editorial Assistant at **Quick Frozen Foods** magazine, my first full-time professional editorial job. Having my dream come true had taught me something important: It was time to quit being a student and start doing something.

"So," Joyce asked me when I was about half-way through this narrative, "what did you write about?"

"It's a little hard to explain," I said.. "You'd better just read it."

Then she got to what was really on her mind. "Does it mention me?" she demanded.

Well, no, it doesn't," I confessed, because it didn't. "But it could..." I added hopeful that this would stop her from punching me in the chest until the next issue.

And now, by Ghu, it does.