

SADDLESORE



SS4

When the cat's away, it's a regular rat day.

SADDLESORE

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SADDLESORE 4: When the cat's away, it's a regular rat day.

I ride nearly every day, but I don't write about it all the time. When I first started Saddlesore, it was because I was just discovering the city from a two-wheeled perspective, and I wanted everyone to be a part of it. If I can ride all over Los Angeles, anyone can. In the years since this experiment began, I've seen the number of bikes on city streets increase tremendously. It's great! But there are still plenty of people who don't believe that L.A. is the most perfect city in North America to ride. What's their hangup?

I became devoted to riding my bike in the months leading up to the American invasion of Iraq. I thought that conserving fossil fuels was my patriotic duty, but I was definitely in the minority on that assumption. I have learned over the years we have been in this war that most Americans don't seem to think about the consequences of constant consumerism. Our greed has apocalyptic overtones in these days of oil war, global warming, genetically modified crops going haywire, increased allergies and respiratory ailments, bad air, bad water, drug resistant infections, tainted food, the list goes on.

I am not that clueless idealist who believes bicycles to be the answer to all problems, but I do believe that small behavior changes on the part of citizens will add up to big changes in the overall state of the world.

Get on that bike!

Feb 20, 2007 Two dead dogs in the gutter in one week and I figured it's time to start writing Saddlesore again.

Feb 22 Passed a funeral at the Jesus church on Jefferson. I figured it was a funeral because people dressed in black were outside hugging each other and it's also a Thursday morning, so it's probably not church. At the corner of Jefferson and Vermont, it started raining while I waited

for the left- turn signal to turn green. By the time I got back on my bike, the seat was wet. So then my ass was wet. I rode two blocks north and half a block east and by the time I got to class the tops of my thighs were soaked. I had to come home during lunch to let gutter guys into the back and I passed by the church again where the funeral was, and someone was outside planting flowers in the treewells. Impatiens are really ugly, but it's better than nothing. I got to the corner near my house and there was a guy on a big motorcycle with sirens going, and he didn't look like a cop and I figured he was just scamming to make motorists nervous but turns out he was leading another funeral procession. Two funerals in one day, two dead dogs in one week, and two students crying about recently deceased grandparents this week. What's up with all the death?

I didn't believe the Doppler, but at least I had the good sense to wear Goretex when I went back to school for the afternoon. It was bright and sunny, and the forecast called for rain at 3 and rain again at 4. I got to school at 1:30, wondering whether or not to go forward with a digital camera demo. I didn't want it to rain while we were all outside with the equipment, but I also didn't want to postpone the demo too long since I was hoping the students would take the weekend to shoot photos. So at 1:50, it was still sunny. By the time 2pm rolled around and the students arrived, they reported cloudy skies. Of course right at 3 it started dribbling. When I left school at 5, it was a torrent. I got soaked on the way home since I hadn't bothered to bring rain paints. Now I know not to be so skeptical of meteorology.

February 27 Woke up this morning at the grad studios after spending the night doing a project about sleep that took the form of sleeping. Went to class and then after saw JP who said that there were tons of people at Bitchin' last night. She was there to spray the face of Jesus on 3000 tortillas with Jen. Got a ride home from Nick and received a message from a student at Art Center who remembered that she missed a meeting with me last week when she saw a picture of me in the bathroom at the Bicycle Kitchen last night. It shouldn't take seeing your

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teacher in a bikini with a machine gun to make a student remember a meeting. How about a date book? It was super windy at home and palm fronds were falling all over the place, just when I thought there were no more fronds to fall. I put two in the green bin last week, and they were huge. I left the house on the bike wondering if perhaps a palm frond might fall on me. I don't know how this is avoidable, but you can't live in fear all the time, even though most people do anyway. I saw something small fall from a palm tree and drift down and land in another tree while I was waiting at the corner of my street and Arlington. I turned right and pulled into the left turn lane and turned left and rode to school. The wind wasn't as bad as I thought, but on the way home, it was freezing cold and I must have been pedaling against the wind, because I felt like I was barely moving. So hungry on the way home. All I could think of was food and when I got home I ate chips, salsa, hommus, sesame breadsticks and a couple slices of To-furkey. Oh, and chocolate covered espresso beans and chocolate.

Wednesday My car was in South Pas and I had to teach at Art Center today, so I rode to Union Station and took the Gold Line to South Pas. I was just too lazy to ride the whole way and I felt like reading the NY Times in a leisurely way on the train. It took me awhile to fumble for the 1.08 to buy the paper and the thought flashed through my mind that the train could be leaving while I was paying, but I figured another train would be the soon. After all, trains are always coming and going. I got to the platform just as the train was pulling out. I got a lot of quality time with the newspaper.

March 5 It's super hot today, and I left around 8:30 to ride to Los Feliz to meet Charlie for coffee. First I forgot to wear socks when I left the house to go to the studio to get my bike. I have to turn on the alarm and go out the front door, and then walk around the back because the alarm doesn't work if you go out the back door. It is complicated and irritating and when I forget my socks I have to go through the whole rigamarole again. So I came back around the house and turned off the alarm,

got socks, turned on the alarm, went to the back, put on my shoes, helmet, and gloves, grabbed my bike, locked the studio, locked the back gate and rode up Arlington to 29th to Cimarron to Washington to Western to Sunset. I rode past the Dianetics HQ and saw a lady walking past wearing black and fuschia and wondered if she was a Scientologist. Guilty by association. At the corner of the Sunset and Vermont I checked my phone to see if Charlie had left a message, since he thought he might be a bit late. While I was checking my voicemail, he called to say he had seen me on the street and was right at the same corner. He was hidden behind a bus so I was confused. But as I entered the crosswalk, the bus turned north on Vermont, and Charlie was right behind!

We ate vegan tarte tartin and he had tea and I had coffee. We were eating outside on the sidewalk until some jackass's car alarm started wailing in street right next to us. And he didn't know how to turn it off! There was a tow truck driver there so obviously he had more problems than just the alarm. The thing is, the guy didn't even apologize for being an idiot or even for destroying the beauty of drinking coffee in a sidewalk cafe. He just stood there like he didn't even hear the goddamn thing. It drove me nuts. Finally, we moved inside. I had an appointment at MOCA at 11, and I thought I should give myself plenty of time to get there but I ended up staying until 10:35 which only gave me 25 minutes to get there. Wasn't really sure how long it might take, but I booked straight down Sunset and got to MOCA at precisely 11 a.m., not one minute early or late. There is no bike rack at the Geffen, so I brought my beautiful steel steed right into the museum (it is a work of art, after all) and chained it right to the banisters of the stairs leading up to the entrance.

It was even hotter when I got back on my bike at 12:30 to go home. Rode down Central then over on 5th and then down Flower for awhile and eventually ended up on Jefferson and came home. I saw Megan turn off of Flower somewhere and yelled a HELLO. Nice to see people on bikes in the street.

Arrived home sweaty where my bag touched me. It's summer today.

March 26 I went to Italy for a week and then I was home for two days and rode my bike to USC and then it rained on me during lunch and I got damp and then I was super jet-lagged during a screening of art films and I was afraid I might not make it home in the rain. But it wasn't raining and I made it home fine and then Wednesday taught at Art Center (drove) and Thursday morning early, at the super crack of dawn, I went to Canada for a few days.

So tonight I rode over to Trystan's and it was a lot warmer than I thought it would be. I heard a weather report calling for big storms and cold and wind and so I put on a pair of tights and a wool shirt and a quilted vest and a wool jacket and a windbreaker. At the corner of 29th and Crenshaw I almost got hit. I was in the left turn lane and some douchebag was turning left to go south and cut the corner so softly that he went straight through the left turn lane. If I had been closer to the crosswalk, I might not be writing this now. It was pretty close.

By the time I got where I was going I was really hot due to all the unnecessary layers (where was the cold storm?), so Trystan gave me a pair of fancy socks so I could take off my tights and not be so sweaty. We headed to Ethiopia by taking Adams to Fairfax and Fairfax sucked. We almost got hit by the same bus twice and the cars didn't seem to be much better. It really takes a lot to get me to bail off of a street, but we are too close to the Ides of March right now and it seems that everything else is going to shit, and I didn't want to be on that list. So we took a side street, which was much more pleasant and didn't smell so much like Death.

March 27 Rode to school in the morning but turned right on Vermont as if I were going to the main campus and not to IFT, which is where I was supposed to be going. I did a U-turn on Vermont and wondered why my bike was steering me south. I think it might have to do with the fact that my morning class is so painful. It's like going into combat every time I step into the room. To put it nicely, we are just not "on the same page." Here is what my students care about: drugs, "catching the moment," 1988, fashion, "natural," and things other than working

on photography. I think I might have 9 of the laziest students at USC, plus one student who is motivated and driven and smart but rarely talks in class. One of them had the gall to tell me that she didn't know what her project was going to be because she took the images while she was shrooming. Is this a "cry for help"? It is totally painful to be in this classroom; no wonder I steered south!

After class I rode to campus and locked my bike right before the crazy rainy windy weather began. Stayed late at school to work on a project and then to see My Barbarian at the gallery. It was great to see this at school, so much energy and so inspiring. I hope it shakes some of my students out of their malaise... Drank some whiskey at the performance. My throat was hurting a little and I was hoping it might keep me from getting sick. Will keep my fingers crossed.

Rode home at 9pm-ish. I do love riding at night.

March 29 There were a lot of desperate looking characters lurking in doorways as I rode home after Ann's thesis show performance this evening. I saw a bald prostitute in the street and a few people riding crappy bikes without lights on them and other people who looked like they had set up camp on the sidewalk. The weather has been getting warmer. Is everyone moving outside? Or is this a sign of the state of the economy?

This morning I sat through two cycles of the light at the corner of Fig and Jefferson. It never turned into the green arrow until I bailed to the crosswalk. Then of course it changed.

Tad accused me of cheating on my Bianchi today while I was in Italy. I took pictures of light green Fiats, which are similar in color to Bianchi Celeste. I think looking doesn't constitute cheating, but I wonder what photographing something means. Elmer Batters, infamous foot fetish photographer, never cheated on his wife (according to rumors) yet maintained one of the most prolific careers as a foot photographer ever. How does that work?

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March 30 The light was a beautiful shade of amber for most of the afternoon due to a huge fire in the Hollywood Hills. I forced myself into a time of innocence, enjoying the beauty without thinking too much about the cause. I hope some of my students used the light to make amazing images. I rode to school to use the printer. I finally ordered one of my own this morning after much resistance. It doesn't make sense to ride to school every time I have to print a page of text. Ink jet made me angry. Laser printers aren't too expensive these days. That's what I got.

Took some time in the late afternoon to fix my fixed gear bike, which had been languishing. The seat I had on it was too painful and the pedals were flat and it just wasn't fun to ride. Trystan gave me his old seat and an old pair of pedals the other night so I installed all that plus put on a pair of tires that one of the former grad students at USC had given me nearly two years ago. I wanted to ride it, but I didn't have any lights, so had to leave it home and bring the Bianchi. It's too confusing to start switching the lights back and forth between bikes. Just seems better to get another set. My rear light on the Bianchi is already acting fucked up, so it's just a matter of time anyway. Is it worth it to buy the really expensive lights? Is this another inkjet printer scenario? I am a resentful consumer.

Left the house around 8:30 for Little Tokyo. At the corner of Jefferson and Western, an old black guy holding a very tiny white stereo croaked "how far you go?" I had no idea what he said, so he repeated himself. I said, "far enough," but what I really meant is "far away from you." I was not in the mood for questions this evening. I saw a black dog on the sidewalk, running free. The dog looked like Ripley, a dog who belonged to a friend of mine. I remember the day she brought him home from the pound. He was shaking in her bed when I met him. He grew to become a friendly, happy creature. My friend died ten years ago this month. I can hardly believe a decade has passed without her. Ripley went to live with her parents. He got fat. He died recently, a couple of

years ago I think. And I heard the family had him either stuffed or freeze dried. I can't remember which. Wendy is buried in their backyard in a handblown glass urn that her sister made.

I rode downtown via the route I've been taking lately. Jefferson to Main. Main's pretty mellow. An industrial landscape, deserted at night. A few people on bikes or walking, but this is the exception. Another Ripley look-like ran by. Was it the same one? Around Sixth it becomes a mix of dog-walking loft dwellers and the down and out. I hadn't seen this dog-walking phenomenon in person before, just heard about it. But there it was, a guy with two leashed dogs. Trendy restaurants (Blossum, Pete's) were full of people. Two scared looking women walked quickly down the sidewalk. I figure they were going to their car. A man driving a pickup truck full of mattresses yelled at me. I forget what he said.

I pulled up at the restaurant where I went to meet Jen. It begins with the letter H and it's delicious. As soon as I looked at the menu, it became my favorite restaurant.

After we ate, we rode over to Cold Storage for a book launch party. The music was loud. A gang of Critical Massers pulled up. One of them asked both Jen and I for a hair band. She was, like, desperate for a hair band. It was really odd. She interrupted a conversation I was having to ask for a hair band, like she was having some hand band emergency. What's up with that? I didn't have an extra hair band just burning a hole in my pocket and neither did Jen. And if we did, would either of us give it to some frothing-at-the-mouth totally rude conversation interrupting freakozoid? I think the answer should be clear.

Someone at the function confessed that they had been given a ticket for running a red light on their bike. I am always paranoid that this might happen to me someday. Especially when I am in sketchy areas, I often run red lights. I figure it's more difficult for a thug to get a moving target so best to keep going. I always slow down and look both ways and make sure nothing's up, but if there is no one around and no danger at all, I think it's best to keep going than fear what might come out of the shadows while waiting for red to change to green, especially when the light doesn't want to

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change because it's waiting for the weight of a car to set it off. I wonder if I would be able to convince a cop of this if pulled over. It just seems safer to keep moving sometimes, alone, female, in the fucking ghetto where I live.

The ride home was uneventful and always brilliantly beautiful. At the light at the corner of Fig and Vermont, a blond guy in a white t-shirt crossed the street while talking on his cel phone. I could smell his perfume until the light turned to green. Or do they call it "cologne" when it's on a dude? Whatever it was, it reeked. I do love riding at night. With no one around, the city feels small and private and all for me.

April 1 Loaded up one pannier and my bag with fabric and supplies and took off to MOCA on the Dawes around 11 a.m. It was feeling very wiggly and weird at first. Wasn't sure if I messed it up when I "fixed" it or if it was just the unbalanced weight on the rear racks. The first time I forgot it was fixed and tried to coast was the last time that will happen for awhile. The rude awakening was a slight jolt. Oops. It felt amazing to be back on that old horse, but at the same time a bit funky. There is a looseness about the bike. The seat never stays in one place. It is always shifting. This bolt has been tightened a hundred times and it never stays tight. Maybe this is the sign of a larger problem. The handlebars feel weird too. It doesn't matter. I love the bike.

Rode Jefferson to Main again. Sharon called around 6th and I was stopped at a light so I answered the phone. I said I was on my bike and then I dropped the phone by accident and yelled and the phone went dead and then I called her back and her line was busy so I had to keep calling so that she wouldn't call 911 or something. That is the worst- to be talking on the phone with someone and have them shout and then the line goes dead. What was she thinking?

I made it to MOCA a bit early and locked up.

After the workshop, hung out with Jen Diamond for a bit before heading home. Took Spring south to Adams to Fig to Jeff. Totally uneventful.

I was worried that it might be a bit much to ride

that unfamiliar bike far, but really it's not that far and also the bike is not that unfamiliar. I really have to figure out how to tighten that seat. I can't stand it moving all the time.

April 2 I am so in love with my Dawes again.

Rode to the Post Office on Vermont. Just before I turned right on Vermont, I passed a truck that was painting the street. I heard the hissing of the air hose as it sprayed, but I thought it was coming from my tires so I stopped to make sure I didn't have a flat (I didn't). I passed the truck and said hello to the painter man who told me to ride safely. Sent Aleksandra a map of the moon and paid a few bills. A black man in a white Buick (Oldsmobile?) pointed at the rear end of my bike and said something to me at the stoplight at Fig and Jefferson. He repeated himself twice but I still couldn't understand what he was saying (enunciate, people!), so I just smiled and nodded like I knew what he was talking about and then he very clearly said, "well, you learn something new every day." He drove away and I have no idea what he had learned from this experience. Went to the grad building to xerox one page and to make sure the photo lab was up and running (it wasn't), then walked awhile up Fig while talking on the phone and rode the rest of the way up to 4th to drop off a package. On the way back, a Courtesy Shuttle Van ran a light and came to a screeching stop before hitting me. So that was good. Back at school printed for a bit at the lab before riding to campus to meet MNH for an impromptu Lunch Club. We ate fancy at Upstairs Commons. I had a mushroom sandwich and Michael had something with lobster. It is a very civil place to eat, even though they have a sculpture of what looks like a giant chrome buttplug decorating the table in the lobby. That's a little weird.

Rode back to the lab, printed, then rode to the digital lab. Since I don't have lights on my bike yet (I ordered some online), I had to come home around 7:30 because I didn't want to be out after dark. Perhaps tomorrow I will ride the other bike. I would like to stay later at school and get some more printing done.

April 3 The story of today is this: I left the house later than usual and barely made it to school by 9.

At 6:30, when the sun was setting, I headed north on Vermont to meet friends for dinner at El Gran Burrito on Santa Monica. I forgot to factor in stoplights and traffic, which were plentiful, but still made it by 7:02pm. It was a hectic ride. A lot of people just stop their cars near the right side of the road to drop people off or pick them up. Which makes bikes have to maneuver around, which puts me in the faster traffic lane which isn't ideal.

Some people honked, but whatever.

Rode to Scoops which was totally full of people, and had a scoop of chocolate chip cookie dough and one of mocha. Rode to the Bikeswarm! HQ and tried on a jersey. Decided on a vest. Home was quick and a lovely ride. No altercations, no friction, today was a good day.

April 11 Several totally dull commutes to and from school that I haven't been writing about.

Today left the house around 9 and rode to Union Station. Took Jefferson to Main Street again. I am really digging that route. It always seems good traffic-wise, scenic, and fast. I needed to be at Art Center by 11 a.m. and wasn't sure how long it would take so was overly consumed by thinking about time as I was riding. As in, looking at my watch every five minutes to make sure I wasn't yet late. And thinking too much about the ride, and the train trip. Over and over in my head "the train is 15 minutes, no twenty minutes, which should have me in Pasadena by 11:15, if I make it to Union Station in ten minutes (which I think I will) and if I don't miss the train while buying my ticket (which happened the last time) and if the train leaves within five minutes of me getting on the train," etc, etc. The big X-factor was how long it might take to get from the station to school. It's a big hill. The last time I rode it, it didn't seem that big. But when I drive a car, I always think it won't take as long as it does to get there, which does not bode well in terms of translation to bike.

Anyway, so that was the monologue in my head, a constant chatter about time and lateness and earliness

and the train and how long it might take to get anywhere. It was almost as bad to be me in my head as I imagine it is to read this. Actually probably worse, since it was much more of this internal conversation than I have reproduced here and because it was time-based and there was no way to just skip over the boring parts.

Now I can't remember the details completely, of when I actually got anywhere. I sat on the train with my bike (I look at it lovingly; I can't take my eyes off it sometimes) and read the NY Times. When folding it to read the op-ed pages, I dropped a page and when I picked it up I got bike grease all over my forearm, which made me look like something bad might have happened to me. (Thanks, Trystan, for putting so much grease on my chain that I have chain marks on both calves plus one forearm!)

I got to Pasadena, and took a detour though Old Town to look for an organic grocery store that one of my students told me about. I think she said it was across from Tiffany's. TIFFANY'S? Yes, there is a Tiffany's in Pasadena now, right across from where the bagel place used to be. The bagel place is gone. I couldn't find the organic place. I had a taste for a very particular white tea with pomegranite that you can get in NYC from Moby's restaurant Teany. Somehow I had a fantasy that it was available in Pasadena at this place that may or may not exist. I think this particular tea (in a bottle, not overly sweet) is more rare and exotic and luxurious than anything one can get at Tiffany's and that's the truth!

I rode up the hill, which wasn't so bad. Linda Vista is a tiny incline and then the hill up to Art Center kind of sucks and my gears weren't working so well and I was carrying too much stuff as usual. An Art Center student got pulled over for speeding by a motorcycle cop as I was riding up. I passed her by and she looked bummed and I was kind of glad she wasn't my student, but also disappointed, because I would love to give her shit in class about this.

Of course I couldn't find a bike rack up at the school, and the sign I locked to last time I rode up was wet from sprinklers and I didn't want my bike to be sprinkled so I brought it into the building and locked it up to the display cases. Mitchell told me to put a note on it "just in case" so

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I found a piece of greenish paper (it almost matched my bike's celeste) and wrote, "If you have a problem with this bike, please see Mitchell in the Fine Arts office. Do not try to steal or he will crush you." Ridiculous, really, since I would be within ten feet of the bike most of the day and it was chained up inside with a giant heavy chain.

My first appointment blew me off. And my last appointment blew me off!

In between I saw a bunch of students and then at the end of the day walked up some poison oak infested path in my bike shoes to visit Adam's installation up in the woods. I got a lot of dirt in my shoes, but didn't slip down the hill and hopefully did not get poison oak.

Rode home, which is mostly down hill but still took nearly forever. Rode down Lida (fast!) down Linda Vista (fast!) then up Holly to Colorado and over the suicide bridge as the sun was setting. Super beautiful, but also a narrow bridge so a bit scary. I guess it's a landmark so can't really be widened. Anyhow, it's lovely. Then to Avenue 64 to York to Fig to Pasadena Avenue. Suddenly got really hungry on Pasadena Avenue, so ducked into the Gold Line parking lot to eat half a Luna Bar. Saw Daniel's car parked in the lot so left a note on the windshield. The only scrap paper I could find was the Art Center sexual harassment policy. Continued riding to Broadway to 30th Street to Fig to Jeff and then HOME.

The rundown: a black cat crossed parallel to my path. A tortoise shell cat crossed my path but I think that's OK. A lady on her cel phone yelled at a driver who was sitting in the crosswalk while she wanted to walk across the street. A lady in her car had the shadow of the cross hanging from her rear view mirror projected onto her cheek. I saw a guy just north of Chinatown who was carrying a lot of stuff on his bike. It was hard to tell if he was homeless or a commuter.

Also, while I was on Linda Vista, Sarah called from West Palm Beach to report that she had seen 200 cyclists wearing nerd costumes and riding around at 9:30 at night. I said, "oh that's the Nerd Ride." Does anyone know if there is such a thing as a Nerd Ride?

April 12 Rode to USC in the morning and the wind wasn't so bad. At lunch the wind was starting to happen, and Tad met me at the grad building. The plan was to ride to Tierra to lunch. I want to start riding away from school for lunch. It's not that far to go somewhere decent and worth it to get a short ride in during the day too. We headed up Fig and the wind was kicking up. It started to be a pretty unpleasant situation. I nearly was blown over. It was like riding up a hill. Strong wind! Then Tad stopped and something was wrong with his chain. It fell off. He put it on and rode another block and it fell off again. This kept happening. It was annoying since I was all up for veg food, but we had to turn back and we went for burritos instead. After lunch, rode back to school and his chain flat out broke in half.

I spoke to Dan Knapp who asked me about my Brooks saddle and I said I had another one I could loan him. It hurts my ass bad but maybe it will be OK for his ass. He said I should ride home after school to get it, but I wasn't going to have time then, so right around 1:20 I headed home, thinking it was no big deal to get the saddle and be back by 2pm.

Well, the thing is, is that the wind suddenly got even worse. As in scary worse. And there were palm fronds dropping all over the place and trees blown over (I am not kidding!) I got home and all of the plastic chairs had blown off the porch and into the driveway. I didn't bother picking them up since the wind was still so strong. The palm fronds fell while I was in the house. They were noisy. I imagined being on a bike and having a palm frond fall on me. They look tropical and exotic and nice on a postcard. They are large and heavy and full of sharp spikes in person. Ow. It was so windy that it was difficult to close the front door. It was windy and loud and scary.

I got back on my bike and went to school slowly and hoped that nothing would fall on me and nothing did fall on me but it was pretty harrowing just the same. When I got to class one of my students had burns on her arm because a cup of hot tea had blown out of the cup and all over her and scalded her.

After class I rode up to the Standard to meet Walid, but he was up at the Geffen so I rode up there and then met

some others and then went to eat and then rode to the senior undergraduate show and then over to the Standard, and then home. It wasn't as windy at night. I was home by midnight.

April 13 Friday the 13th, but I forgot about it during the day. Spent most of the day working in the studio, then at 4pm got on the bike and went to Culver City to drop off a piece for the Free Speech Auction and attend a reading at a gallery. At the corner of Jefferson and Crenshaw, a man with a shirt that identified him as "LOCKSMITH" told me that he was crossing the street to go to Tasty Q and asked me if I'd tried their BBQ. I told him I didn't eat meat but that I had tried their fish a few years ago. He told me not to get anorexia. I said I didn't think there was a danger of that happening. He yelled at me as I left that I need to get some meat on my bones. I am pretty meaty I think, and I wondered what his idea of an ideal woman might be. Rode up Buckingham to Adams. From there it's a quick ride to the galleries in Culver City. Rainer's reading/performance involved sitting in a circle reading Mao.

April 16 A question I am never sure how to answer: "how far do you ride?"

It's always put that way, not "how far did you ride today to get here?", but using "do" instead of "did" changes the meaning into a more general question about riding. And I never know how to answer. And I always wonder why the person is asking. Is it just conversational curiosity, or is there some sort of ulterior strategy? I guess what I always assume is that whoever is asking me how far I ride is really trying to rationalize the fact that they don't ride. Like maybe they think they live too far to ride, so they want to hear me say that I only rode like half a mile or something. So then they could think, well, she lives close that's why she rides. I live far, so I have to drive. Or something like this. But maybe I'm just projecting my own self-centered behavior on everyone else in the world. Perhaps these conversationalists are really and truly curious about the experience of another person, not to compare themselves to the other person, but just because they want to learn something new about a human they have never seen before. In either case, I'm not sure what to say. I

don't have an odometer. I guess I have a general idea of how far I ride but not sure how to answer anyway. Today I rode to school, which is close, like 3 miles. And then I rode to the fabric store, which is close, too. Maybe 20 minutes from school. I seemed to stop at a lot of traffic lights. And then I rode to Silver Lake to meet Kevin for a drink and to talk about grades. I am not sure how far that was. I think it was half an hour. Deep Silver Lake. There are a lot of hipsters on bikes in Silver Lake and riding down the street in a brown dress with a red naked unicyclist applied on the front I'm afraid I fit right in. I mean, I look like a freak in my neighborhood, but go a few miles north and I'm just another cliché bike chick on a fixie. I rode up Fig and down Sunset and saw someone I thought was my friend heading the other direction. I waved and he didn't wave back. Maybe it was some other scruffy hipster dude with a dirty messenger bag on a black spray painted fixie. (Yo Matt! Whatup?)

Rode up Griffith Park to Hyperion and parked in front of Blair's where I drank beer and ate fries with Kevin. The fries I think had more garlic than potatoes in them. Absolutely delicious but I could taste the garlic all the way home. Rode Hyperion to Vermont and then took my old route from LACC home. Can't remember the exact streets. Some time on Western which I just love dearly. Then to Venice and across Washington and over the 10 freeway and a block on Adams and then into Jefferson Park.

May 14 I haven't written for awhile but not because I haven't been on my bike. I've been building this Unicycle Shop project and it kicked my ass! I also spent too much time in my car which really sucked. But I can't bike with 19 unicycle frames up to the powder coater in Burbank or 6 unicycles to the Kitchen. I am a wuss! Anyhow, I finally changed the tape that had been playing in my car since my CD player broke two years ago, so that was pretty exciting. I'd been listening to some random Earth Crisis tape and it finally dawned on me that I could listen to something else so I dug up an old Black Flag tape and it totally rules. It also has this other SST band, "Angst"

on the there, and they sing a very nice song about Nancy Reagan giving Ronald Reagan a blowjob on the White House lawn. I used to love that song, back in the Reagan years. I still remember when we thought it couldn't get any worse than Ronald Reagan. How innocent and stupid we all were back then. The day I started listening to Black Flag in the car, I was riding my bike in the afternoon and I heard someone else listening to Black Flag in their car. I am so trendy! Nostalgia will kill us all!

This morning I drove a 16 foot truck back to Avon, at the corner of Santa Monica and La Brea. I had my bike strapped into the back of the truck (there's plenty of room!) and the guy I returned it to said he'd never seen a bike in a truck before for the purpose of getting home after the truck was returned. That's so insane. Anyhow, I got rid of the truck and then rode to M Cafe for a very yummy breakfast and then to Icon to drop off my film. I stopped a few times on the way home to take some photos. At San Vicente and Venice, a black guy pushing a bicycle with his friend asked me if I was single and I said no. He said he liked my style (I think that's what he said).

I am totally exhausted but would like to go get my film later today. I can't wait to see the pictures!

May 15 Rode up to the bank and then to Icon to pick up my film, shooting pictures of Grand Opening signs along the way. Went to Trader Joe's to get peanut butter, jelly, and tortillas, and oatmeal chocolate chip vegan cookies. Ate cookies as I rode leisurely home.

May 16 Louis went to Washington DC this morning which means that I brought my bike into the house when I came home from riding tonight. I left around 6-ish to go to the corner of Hollywood and Western. I was hoping to take smaller streets, but on Manhattan, just north of Venice, a black cat crossed in front of me so I had to move over to Western, which really sucked. Usually I really like Western, but I was just not in the mood today. I think I spent too much time staring at the computer today. There was a smallish gathering of riders for the Ride of Silence, which is a ride to commemorate the fallen. Morgan was

there this year, which was a treat since last year he was in the hospital for this ride. So there were a few speeches and remembrances made before we took off. We didn't talk while we were biking, which is kind of like biking by yourself while surrounded by other bikers. Weird. I thought about dead and fucked up friends. We rode past the French Cottage Inn and I was sad to see it's out of business and now for sale. My friend randomly had sex with a tranny there, which is always a fond memory.

We rode through West Hollywood (we were heckled by hustlers) and then into Beverly Hills, which is one of the worst places to bike in the city. We stopped at the corner where a cyclist was killed this year. Eventually we stopped being silent and started whining about food. Everything in West Hollywood smelled really good while we were riding by but the food there is gross so I rallied hard for Ethiopian.

The usual place was too crowded so we ate next door. It wasn't as good but maybe it was and I just don't like change that much.

May 18 Went to meet Sharon and Alex for dinner at Elf in Echo Park and miscalculated how long it would take me to get there. I was 15 minutes late!

On the way, a guy in a red sports car on Adams and Gramercy cheered me on for riding a bike. "I have a bike too" he shouted out of the window of his car. "Where is it?" I asked. "At home!" he said. I said, "get out of that car and onto your bike!" He was having a moment of solidarity with the idea of biking but I was not having any moment with him. Rode north and east and wasn't sure exactly the best way to Echo Park. It's circuitous. My phone made that sound that it makes when the battery is nearly dead, which is ominous, considering I was meeting people for dinner who weren't sure where the restaurant was exactly. "If they don't have alcohol, we might have to go somewhere else," Alex told me. I thought I might have to find a payphone. I passed Megan standing on the side of the road near Eco Village and then some dude I didn't know gave me some sort of secret signal. I'm not sure what it meant but I think it was some sort of bike

love thing. That doesn't happen in my neighborhood. Only a few miles away and I was in a vortex of cool kids on bikes. Yawn.

Made it to the restaurant. Very yummy veg food. A small restaurant felt like NY. A middle eastern menu and a lot of the staff had beards. Which made me concerned about beard hair in the food but I tried not to think too much about it. Went to Scoops after. Tai seems to often be out of some of the vegan flavors. I think he needs to make more!

May 19 Melissa had an opening in Valley Village so I took the Red Line up there to see the show. Rode to the Vermont/Wilshire station. On the way there, the chain came off of my bike while I was going up a short incline. I stopped and put the bike back together but then the wheel kept ramming into the frame and I could barely pedal. I think the chain didn't have enough grease on it, but not sure if this was the underlying problem. I've been back on the fixie for a few months now and it's just kind of rickety. The gear ring is always scraping on the frame and the bottom bracket is loose and the rear wheel is sort of wobbly. But I love this bike! Thought about turning around and going home, but I was pretty close to the station so kept going. It only took about 20 minutes on the train to get the North Hollywood station. Amazing. And the train was totally crowded. I fixed my wheel again and tightened it way down and didn't have anymore problems riding the short distance from the train station to the show.

The exhibition was odd, but Melissa's piece rocked. The idea was that artists would show work in local businesses. The problem was that many of the local businesses were cute boutiques and it was tough to figure out what the art was and what was interior design or product. Melissa was showing at a frame shop, so it was a lot easier for her art to look like art! I rode back to the station and then got off the train early, at Hollywood and Western. Some girl was biting her nails in my vicinity and it was completely grossing me out. Disgusting. I couldn't handle being on the train and it was crowded and my bike was sandwiched between this nail biter and a bunch

of stuff belonging to a homeless person. The homeless person was asleep when I first got on the train and then he woke up and started stretching and I just didn't feel like being part of the web of humanity at that moment so I had to leave.

I emerged into Thai Town where a man who looked reasonably clean and together was asking for money for food. I was thinking of advising him to put on a more pathetic outfit if he wanted to rally sympathy but I kept my mouth shut. I don't really care.

Bombed down Western which totally sucked. I don't think there was one driver on the road who wasn't a total douchebag. In particular, one woman who had a baby in her car and a red and yellow stuffed animal in the front seat kept passing me with about 2 inches of space. Bitch. Finally I took over the lane and then all these impatient idiots would rev their engines and gallup ahead. Then I'd pass them when traffic got bad. Suckers.

I arrived home full of hate and relief.

May 20 Louis drove me most of the way to the Hammer this morning, where I went to see an all day symposium about humor in art. Some of it was interesting and some wasn't. At the end of the day, I rode home, which was a bit harrowing at times. Century City is an unsightly blemish on the otherwise cohesive urban structure. Every road around it turns into a highway full of asswipes. It sucked!

I started down Olympic, heading East. Then it looked like it was starting to get hairy, so I switched down to Pico. My bike feels like it's about to fall apart. It scrapes and squeaks and groans with every pedal. Many people were in a hurry and maybe it's just my paranoia, but I think they might have been trying to kill me! Rode through the Yeshiva Belt and then after awhile I was in a more familiar, more down-and-out, area. An old red convertible with fins was parked on the side of the street with three admirers staring at it and I waved. I'm not sure why. I'm not a big car advocate.

On Crenshaw, there were a bunch of guys wearing blue and riding on blue motorcycles. It seemed

sort of sketchy to me, probably because all my life I've been warned about gangs of bikers and now after moving to this area, I've been told not to wear certain colors. So I got all paranoid again, this time not about the blind old Jewish ladies who were cruising Pico in their Camrys, but about the possibility of street gangs, blue = Crips, right? Then a bunch of fancy low riders and other tricked out late-70's cars like Monte Carlos came barelling down the street. Some of them had "No Limit" cut out chrome signage in their back window. What is going on? Made it home safely.

(Ride your damn bike) **Resources!**

LACBC (Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition) *LA-Bike.org* Works with the city to make our streets more bikable - a great source of info for new LA cyclists.

The Bicycle Kitchen *BicycleKitchen.com* Learn to take care of your valiant steel steed at this non profit bike shop. And while you're in the neighborhood, don't forget to get some ice cream at Scoops and some yummy vegan food across the street !

BikeBoom *Bikeboom.com* Check this online calendar and find all your new bike best friends on rides around town.

Critical Mass CM welcomes those who like to ride every day and celebrate once a month. **CICLE** *cicle.org*
bikenow.org News, gossip, love, and inspiration for all cyclists, from the bike-curious to the yellow jersey.

BikePLague An occasional publication about cycling in LA; pdfsof #1 and #2 can be downloaded from <http://www.archive.org>

RideArc *Ridearc.org* Learn something new about where you ride while riding your bike.

