

AMITYVILLE

Did you know that you can't copyright the name of a town? That's why every day outside the city there's another Amityville, assembled piecemeal overnight. Nobody lives in any of them that I can see — ghost towns of old rope and plywood, thrown upon the cheap and stuffed with tax loopholes to lure in visiting horror film productions, like Vancouver but with more fake blood. The film crews shoot and then depart, leaving behind them piles of broken props, torn set backdrops, plastic bodies and trapdoors, flaking rubber masks stuffed away behind the boards of empty houses. Someday Amityville will be the only place on earth.



STRANGE TOWN SERIES



STRANGE HAND SERIES

Have you heard this rumour? If you check into a certain room of a certain hotel and go to bed, a hand will come out at night and start to scuttle around upon the covers like a big spider. If you make it through the night without making a sound, the next morning you will discover a 15% off voucher for a discount glove outlet which no longer exists.

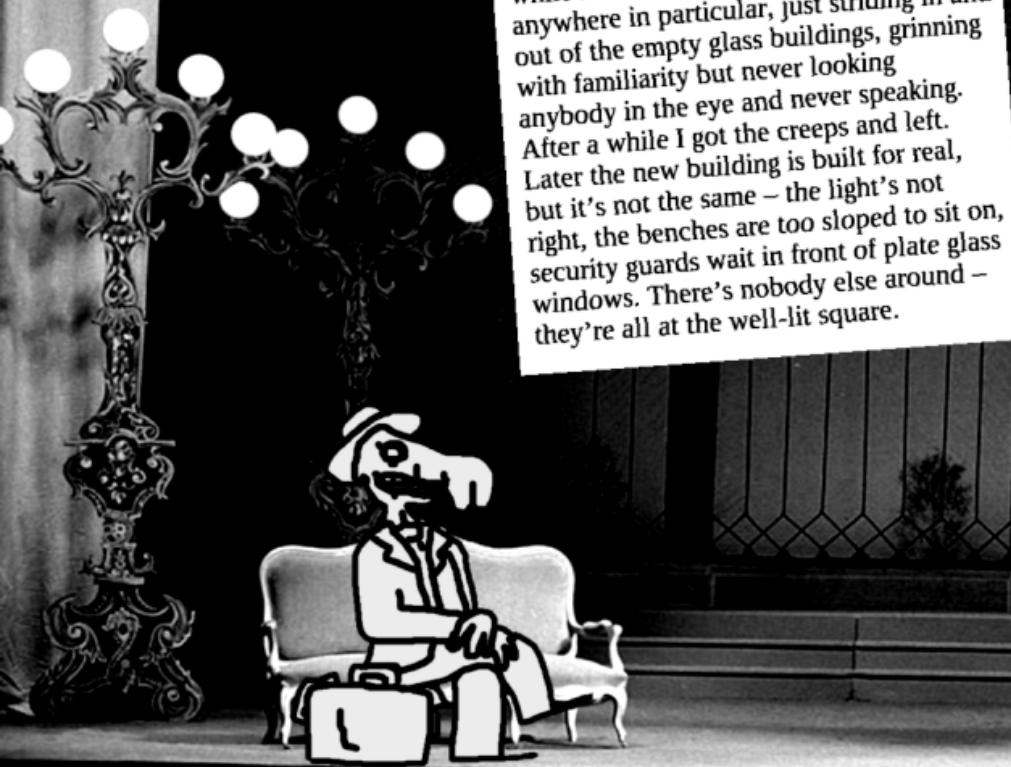
WHAT'S ON? CRISTO

In a beautiful house in the gallery district the famous artist Cristo is wrapping things up in plastic. Dogs, birds, human bodies, a guitar. It seems derivative but nobody is paying me for my opinions! Anyway business seems to be moving as the twitching plastic heaps are spilling out of the gallery and into the streets and the river nearby. They're being taken home or presented to museums, thrown in the back seat of a car on the long drive home to secluded estates, secured somewhere in a freeport vault. Be sure to check it out while you can. There's never been a better time to get into art.



WELL-LIT SQUARE

Did you know? This is the square where they shoot all those billboards – the ones for new housing developments, with smiling, confident people walking around before the glorious façade of some building yet to be constructed, filled with a visible sense of belonging. I'd like to feel that way someday so I went to check it out. It must be something about the light because the people on the square really do seem to have this glow about them, and there are no shadows – but after a while I realised they weren't walking anywhere in particular, just striding in and out of the empty glass buildings, grinning with familiarity but never looking anybody in the eye and never speaking. After a while I got the creeps and left. Later the new building is built for real, but it's not the same – the light's not right, the benches are too sloped to sit on, security guards wait in front of plate glass windows. There's nobody else around – they're all at the well-lit square.



SHADOW ANIMALS

They say on a certain street
there's a time of day you can
see the shadow animals.
They're friendly and playful but
also vague enough in outline
that it's hard to make out just
what they are. Kids like them,
and the older ladies nearby sit
and feed them crusts of bread.
The animals are intelligent and
can be taught to perform simple
tricks. I held one once - it was
like a lamb, or a dog, made of a
kind of heavy smoke. They say
that if you make friends with a
shadow animal it will follow
you home. But nobody knows
what happens to you after that.





THE SECRET COLLEGE

At the bus station somebody hands you a flyer for night school. The courses are wide-ranging but after skimming them you slowly get the sense that they're referring to, or anticipating, some alternate form of society even more dreadful than our own. From the profile section on the back, the red eyes and brittle grins of the faculty peek out from behind their masks.

LITERATURE... TODAY!!

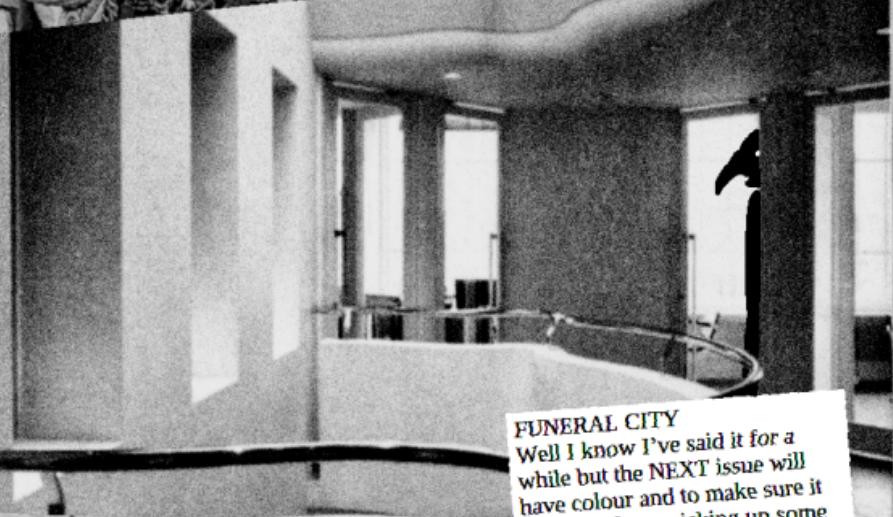
I have been hearing a lot about automatic writing as the next big thing so I wanted to try it out. I'm not sure what automatic means in this context. Maybe it's a labour saving mechanism for the secretary on the go. Anyway it's always good to learn shorthand and maybe this way I can finally get my essays done on time. OK, here I go, switching off conscious BB control... NOW test test test warm fish frigate bark bark desk you yes the red women lachrymose boundary through the wall less kill kill. Where am I? Whose desk is this? Did it work?





NAIL DAY

In the window of the disused nail salon you can see fliers that read "Jessica Manicures" and "Jessica Pedicures". If these weren't real to begin with, they are now - at night the two Jessicas run up and down the street, giggling and scratching people with their long nails.

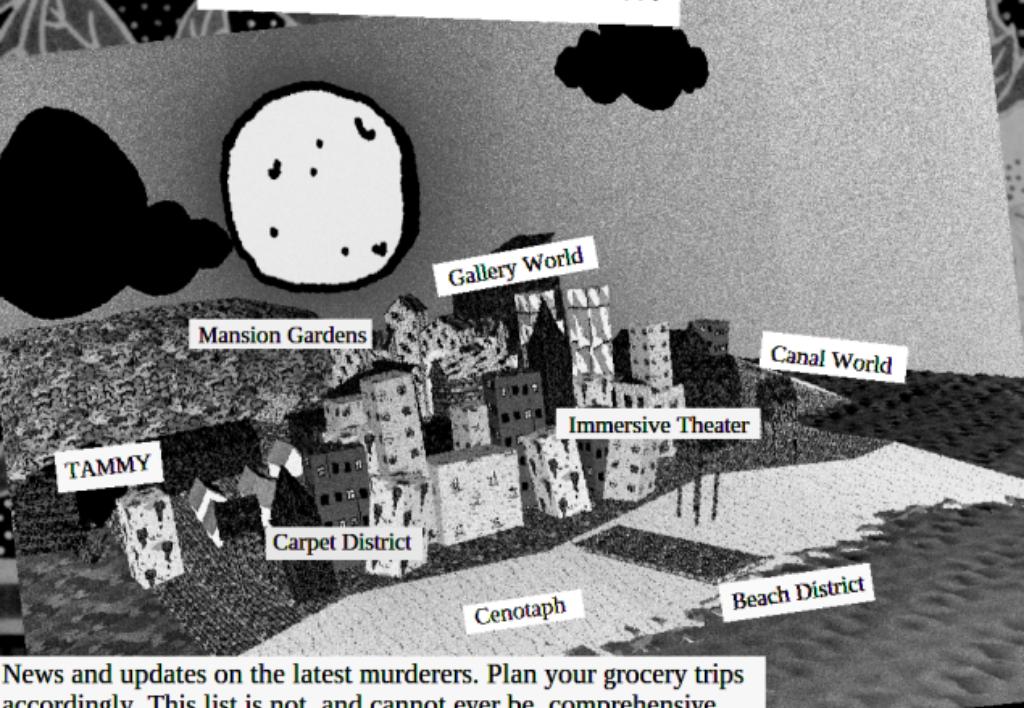


FUNERAL CITY

Well I know I've said it for a while but the **NEXT** issue will have colour and to make sure it does I've been picking up some shifts at Funeral City, the 24/7 funeral service complex. Right now I'm just a sniffler which I guess is the intern-grade equivalent of a professional mourner. With any luck I'll get bumped up soon since right now they keep trying to pay me in certificates. They do have an opening to be one of the guys in foam costumes you can pay to break down and throw themselves on your coffin but I'm waiting for something else to open up. One time I saw a Mickey Mouse break his knees that way.



MURDERER WATCH!!!



News and updates on the latest murderers. Plan your grocery trips accordingly. This list is not, and cannot ever be, comprehensive.

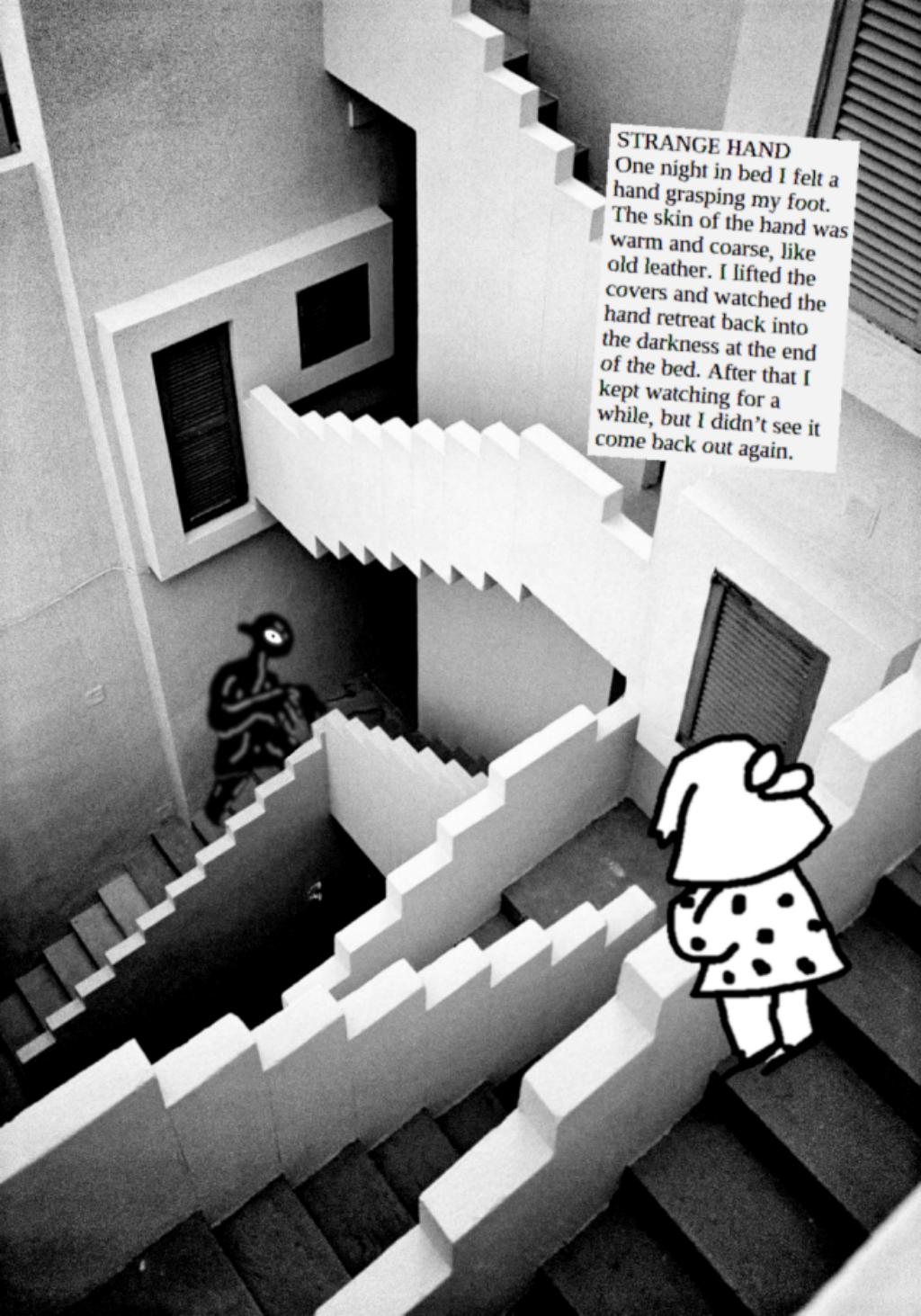
STRANGLEMAN – uses washing line. Seen in the Moss District

CHOPPER-KILLER – we understand this murderer now goes by “killer-chopper”, unless that’s someone else. One or both of them moves from north-south along the Canal Zone every Tuesday

THE KILLER – seemingly ubiquitous and can appear at any time. I’m sorry but future editions of this column will have to leave him out. There are just too many letters.

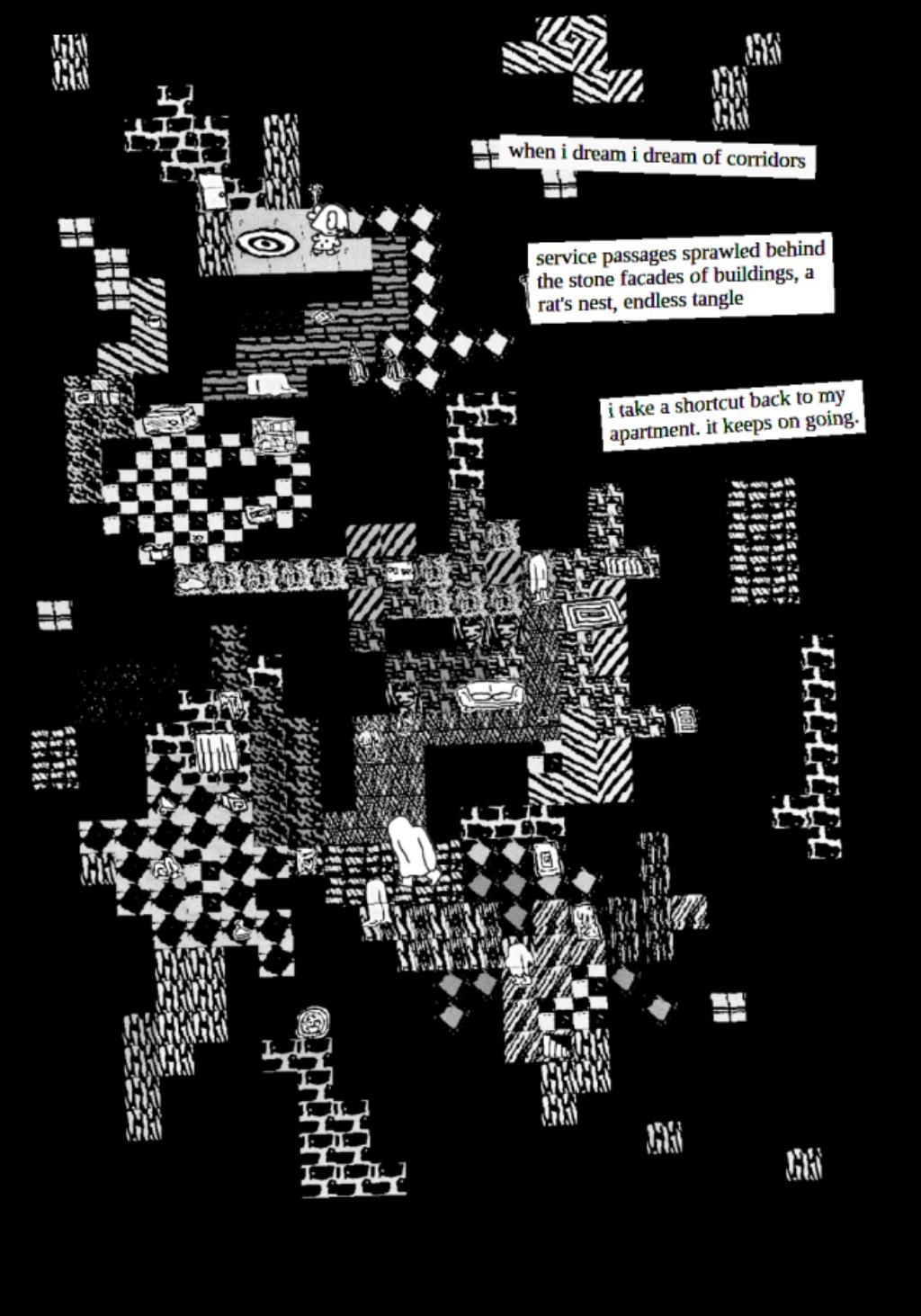
MURDERER X – has he been out of town? Please send tips.

CHILD MURDERER - unclear if this is someone who murders children or a murderer who IS a child,

A black and white illustration of a house with a dark interior. On the left, a dark figure with a single large eye and a skeletal hand is visible. On the right, a figure with a large head, wearing a polka-dot dress, stands on a set of stairs. The house has a prominent white staircase and several windows with dark frames.

STRANGE HAND

One night in bed I felt a hand grasping my foot. The skin of the hand was warm and coarse, like old leather. I lifted the covers and watched the hand retreat back into the darkness at the end of the bed. After that I kept watching for a while, but I didn't see it come back out again.



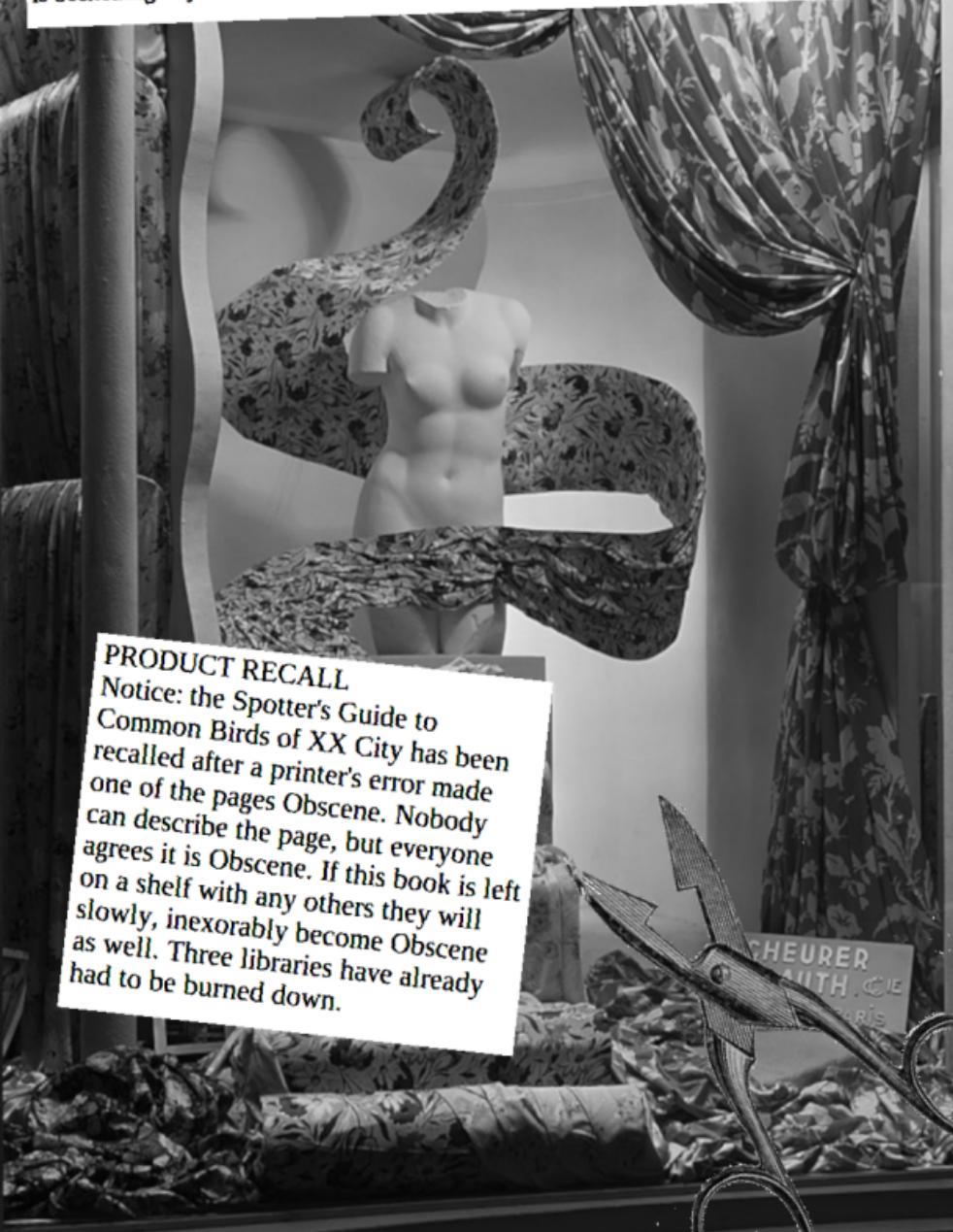
when i dream i dream of corridors

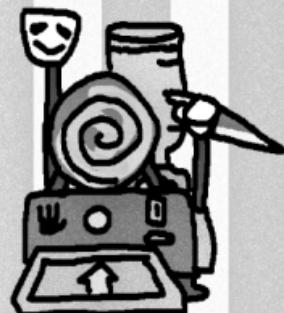
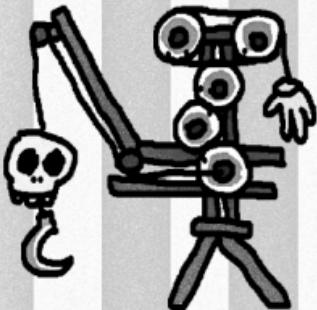
service passages sprawled behind
the stone facades of buildings, a
rat's nest, endless tangle

i take a shortcut back to my
apartment, it keeps on going.

FOCUS GROUP

At the mall they're looking for new members – 12 people sit in a room and are shown slides of 1930s cartoon character "Zoppo". How do you feel about each picture? The owners of the Zoppo license watch as the slides roll by. That night you feel like someone is beckoning to you from inside a dream. Zoppo is back again.





THE MEDIUM OF THE FUTURE

This was happening at the library near my school so I attended in my capacity as culture maven. A smiling man in a suit at the entrance asked me "Did you know? Videogames are not just for kids, anymore." Further in two smiling men stood at an empty booth covered in plastic tarp beneath a sign saying "VIDEOGAMES - THEY'RE NOT JUST FOR KIDS!".

Some low coughs from the sparse attendees were the only sounds besides the standard convention air conditioner hum. I kept going and found some people looking at a TV in a meeting room – the TV showed a camera moving endlessly down a carpeted hallway. A pale, sweating man grunted softly as he hit the buttons to explore the hallway. It was so quiet. Someone said to nobody in particular, "You know, these things don't just have to be for kids anymore." Well I didn't get it but then I'm not much of a gamer. Do they still make that game where you hit the button and the helicopter makes a noise? Do you know the one I'm talking about? Send me a letter if you do.



LETTERS!! LETTERS!! LETTERS?!

A chara,

The spores of "Futureville" will fly into life.
The contemplayer is an estuary!
Be a hearer, you, contemplor!
And be a watcher.

- Futurian Chorus

BB replies: How do I unsubscribe from these

Sigh,

Whatever happened to supporting local talent?
Your review of last week's Weepster concert made
me cry. If I meet you you'll cry too. Yours in
dolorousness,

• W.

BB replies: The concert you discuss was 40
minutes of hitting a small dove with a hammer
followed by a cover of "Tears of a Clown" that I
thought was unnecessarily turgid. I'm sorry but I
don't have capacity for any more scene drama!!

Wow!

We're big fans!! And medical experts!! Please send
more details and reports about your crimes.

• H. / M., c/o River Town

BB replies: I hear a new zine distro is
opening in that neighbourhood soon so it
will never be easier to keep up to date on my
reports :^)

DRAIN VOICE

Every so often the drain in the apartment makes a choking noise and spits out a clump of hair. The building manager just says it's the pipes. Neither me or my sister recognize the colour of the hair.





BLOODY NIGHT II

YES another midnight revival for this so-bad-it's-watchable favourite although I am more of an Evil Bong person myself. There's just something compelling about the notion of a bong, a tool for good, which has been perverted to the cause of evil.. Like poetry, it rhymes.. Anyway I have to admit the dismemberment effects in this were pretty okay. It drags in the middle when it's just ten dudes in hoods talking for an hour but the way they portray the monster of "determinate negation"(?) by waving a crab in front of the projector is good. Are any of these guys still around?



GARBAGE DAY

Wouldn't you believe it!! One of the neighbours keeps leaving their garbage in our bin in that little storage alcove out behind the apartment block. It wasn't a big deal at first but it's happening every week by now. Also, the bags they drop inside are softly moving.



~KROSSWORD KORNER~

DOWN:

1. Oxygenating substance
2. Sea captain played by Errol Flynn
4. "---- red"

ACROSS:

3. Preferred Dracula beverage
4. There will be it
5. Type of bank

This week's puzzle comes from Crosswordman, who vows "I shall crossword again."



GREEN FACE

Sometimes a green face appears in my room at night. I hear it breathing and know that if I turn to look at it, it will start to breathe faster. It sits for hours but eventually starts to fade. By the time dawn comes it's just another pattern in the wallpaper.

