



SADDLESORE

small adventures in the big city

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SADDLESORE

is another American Homebody publication
by Lisa Anne Auerbach.
Photographs by Mr. Chris Buck.



*Special thanks to
Louis for being patient
with my cycling and
always having ice water
and cake waiting for me
after a long ride.*

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SADDLESORE

When the price of gas hit two bucks, I parked my car and took to the streets on a two wheeled beauty. That was sometime in March, when war was on the national brain and our dependence on overseas oil was once again in the spotlight. I thought I'd try cycling as my sole mode of transportation for one month, to see if I could do it in the big city. But the month turned to six weeks, daylight savings time ended, spring sprung, and I was still pedaling. I was, as they say, "into it." Fully stoked by the feeling of getting somewhere via the power of my own legs, psyched to pass by traffic, intoxicated by hills and left turn lanes. I ate like a pig and didn't get fat. I smelled freshly cut grass and coughed up the smoke from buses and tow trucks. I felt bad for civilians trapped inside their cars, eating cookies and talking on the phone. I listened to other people's radios at stoplights. Most seemed to be playing 50 Cent and Eminem. Maybe it was just that the ones listening to NPR didn't have loud speakers.

After I started riding lots, people began asking questions about the viability of riding and the specifics of cycling in Los Angeles. So I started taking notes.

—LAA

April 1 On the way to LACC, I stopped at 1740/1750 SilverLake Blvd. to take a photograph of a formerly vacant lot now holding the most unattractive apartment building in town. Developed film at school with good results. Left at 4 to Venice. Took Normandie south to Venice Blvd- a good route. A pair of elderly

black men spoke to me about the weather while we were stopped at a light. "Getting cooler," said the driver. "Yup, it was sure hot the last coupla days," I said. Stopped at the Culver City Farmer's Market and bought fish (albacore), 2 tomatoes, lettuce, 2 cucumbers, and a package of sausages from Abu's son, who now makes sausage to sell at farmer's markets. I bought his new flavor, called "pizza" and I suggested the might change the name. The sausage contains mozzarella cheese, pepperoni and chicken. We came up with "pepperella" as a possibility. I continued on to Louis' house, where I showered and picked up his car. At LAX, I picked up Louis.

April 2 Stopped at Samys to purchase 2 pro packs -- 1 of TMAX 100 and one of Provia. Security guard wouldn't allow the bicycle in the shop and I didn't have a lock, so he promised to watch it outside. "People come in here with \$2000, \$3000 bikes all the time," he said, as if this was supposed to be comforting. While waiting for the salesperson to get my film I paced continuously towards the door to catch a glimpse of the pretty bike. It didn't get stolen, thank goodness.

Nearly 17 miles to City College. Saw Hollywood sign from Venice Blvd. Turned up fourth and east on Pico. Shot SW corner of 3rd and Pico, but the building there looked older than 1975, so it may have been the wrong corner. Shot NW corner strip mall (Pico Fish) for good measure, but perhaps the 3rd and Pico referred to is in Santa Monica.

Overcome by hunger, so stopped at Wilshire and Normandie to buy a double chocolate muffin. Alex called to borrow the Volvo, so spoke to Rhonda about letting him into my apartment for keys. Spoke to Daniel about a web design class he's' planning to take in the summer. Stopped at Freestyle to purchase 100 sheets of Ilford Multigrade paper and an adapter to fit my Hasselblad onto a tripod.

Spent the earlier part of the day printing, but left the A-lab because a student was signed up to print. She was a no-show.

Left city college around 4:30 and hopped on a #3 bus heading west on Santa Monica. It's windy and I'm tired. I don't feel like biking. This bus will get me as far as Sepulveda and I can ride to 10th and Montana from there, perhaps even swinging by 3rd and Pico if I have time. I'm meeting Louis at Father's Office for a burger. Later, I'll go to 7 Dudley to see a documentary about Critical Mass.



The ride from the Sepulveda and Santa Monica bus stop was windy, cold and crowded. I almost got hit by an SUV shimmying through a red light and arrived at the restaurant where I was told to leave my bicycle outside. I don't have a lock when I'm on my Bianchi, so I went outside and waited for Louis. He pulled up soonafter and I shoved the bike in this back seat, leaving a trail of bike grease across the upholstery. I nearly started crying. I was cold, exhausted, and had barely eaten all day. It was a fiasco. I must remember to have food with me at all times and eat when hungry. Otherwise, I am a fucking psycho.

We had dinner at a different restaurant, as Father's Office's few tables had filled up by the time we found parking. Louis dropped me at the cinema, where I locked my bike up with a stranger's bike. It was interesting to learn about the history of CM and the giant ride in SF in 1997 which caused a lot of chaos. There were a lot of stupid stoners in the audience. The women sitting on one side of me wouldn't stop touching and stroking her hands. The women on the other side of me sang whenever anyone on the screen sang. The Q&A period was embarrassing, with one guy actually telling a 10 minute anecdote about getting pulled over on his bicycle with marijuana and the reaction of the police officer. Another women wanted to know exactly how many cycles of a stoplight it took for the entire July, 1997 CM ride to ride through. She wanted specifics. She asked numerous times.

April 3 From Louis apartment to LACC is 14.29 miles. I clocked it this morning going the most direct



route (with the exception of a small detour to check out a neighborhood bordered by Crenshaw on the east and Venice on the north-- LayFayette Square- huge beautiful old homes) It was a fairly routine ride with no altercations with the exception of one white panel van driver who asked me to be more "courteous" and to pull up into the intersection slightly so that he could make a right hand turn. I replied that I was in the bike lane, but he said that I was still being rude, regardless of where I was. Because there is a bike lane and I am often the only bike around, I become inordinately possessive of this small strip of street and I become upset when intruded upon. Sometimes I just feel like yelling. "Everybody, out of the bike lane!"

Parking enforcement, tow trucks, buses, idling autos. It's my lane, dammit.



But even though I am an only child, I have to learn to share.

April 4 Back on the fixed gear to ride to school this morning after several days on the road bike. Loaded the saddle bags full and from time to time felt the balance shifting. It was a comfortable ride- beautiful weather and no altercations with cars to speak of. Cotton candy clouds in the sky and over the mountains to the north. Bungee-ed an envelope of 11 x 14 prints on the back of the bike and this seemed to work out quite well.



 A windy gorgeous sunset ride from LACC to Venice. Stopped at Wilshire and Normandie to photograph people waiting for the bus. While loading film, approached by a friendly cyclist. Recognized his bike immediately from CM ride last week, but not his face. A very fancy Italian track bike. Los Angeles is feeling smaller. Fully accessible by the bike and fun to see fellow cyclists out and about.

Venice Blvd is feeling shorter as I become more

accustomed to the route. Though cold and blustery, my heavy bike felt safe and sturdy, unlike my light road bike which felt like it might blow over the other day in Santa Monica.

While in the bike lane in Venice, I noticed an SUV who had pulled into the bike lane in order to turn. When he saw me approach, he actually backed up to let me by. A rare moment. I smiled and waved and he waved back. Louis called soon after and I said I was nearby. I didn't get off the bike to answer the phone, even though I told him that I always, always, pull over to talk on the phone. I stopped at the flower shop on the corner and bought 6 yellow tulips, probably picked by migrant slaves sickened by pesticides, but sometimes it's just nice to have tulips in spring.

April 5 Louis and I rode to the Santa Monica Co-op to buy olive oil and sunscreen and also some chocolate covered mounds of coconut called haystacks which were very delicious and quickly consumed, primarily by me. Rode to the Camera Obscura on the beach which was closed and then swung by the SW corner of Pico and 3rd. I wasn't carrying a camera, but wanted to take a look. The vacant lot of yesteryear is now a parking lot adjacent to a bowling alley.

From there onto the Brick House, where we met Micah and Andrea for breakfast. Micah wanted to know if there was anything particularly good about fixed gear bikes aside from being cool. I tried to describe why they are perfect machines, but was unable to be persuasive. After breakfast, he took the bike for a spin around the block and came back a convert, wanting to know where he could get his hands on one.

April 6 To Palm Court, where I met up with Sojin and Jo and then onto the Bicycle Kitchen for a brunch. Took a bunch of pics for the BK website, ate quiche, watched amazing helmet-cam video shot during April Fool's messenger race through downtown LA. The race included a brief ride on the 110. 6:30 at night so cars not at speed, but still. Just goes to show that with enough bikes,



you can go anywhere. Stopped by Wilshire/Normandie to shoot pics, then back to Palm Court. On the way, as I signaled, changed lanes to make a left on Parkman, a redneck in a white van yelled "IDIOT" at me. Very tired coming home. Stopped to call Louis on York in front of G&R Auto. Maybe that's what Axl's been up to. 

April 7 I think I must stink. Got a whiff of an unseemly odor while pedaling earlier. Have been home working on LACC photo dept. webpage all day, so who cares.

Rode to Pasadena in the early afternoon to drop film at AIM, pick up an ink cartridge at Samy's and to sample a teacake at Honeybaby. Clifford had told me about the place, about how they'd give you a free hot teacake just for stopping by. It's a cute little place with a limited inventory-- freshly made teacakes and other treats made by local African Americans. Pralines, sweet potato bread. A warm almond teacake was divine. I left happy, then came back a few minutes later for an entire box to bring to Cliff. Then went to Gap and Banana Republic to check for pants on sale. My pants are getting trashed from cycling, but I have to look somewhat presentable for work. None of the \$20 khakis fit. May have to try Jcrew online.

Later rode to Cliff's to drop off the teacakes. Around the corner from my house, realized I'd left my helmet at home. There's that awful statistic that most accidents happen within a couple miles of home. It's also true that most people don't go more than a couple of miles from home. I don't know if that's true or not, but in any case I decided to hope for the best. Cliff lives atop a hill I've never successfully climbed and tonight was no exception. Made it to within four feet of the crest before stalling. Close.



April 8 In the left turn lane on York, I was behind a Camry and in front of a landscaping truck. When the

light turned green I pedaled as fast as possible to reach the bicycle lane on Eagle Rock Blvd. When I got there I looked back to see that the landscaping truck, heavy with mowers and wheelbarrows and other tools, had barely moved. They passed me sometime later on Eagle Rock. At a light I passed them. Then they passed me again. Up the hill to Fletcher I pedaled past them. On the downhill portion they passed me. It went like this until we got to Riverside and I lost them.

Hot as blazes out, a beating sun. One of my students commented that I looked "brown as a berry." What kind of berries are brown anyhow? Saw a few others on bikes- 2 boys on BMX cycles on Eagle rock, a dirty looking man on a rusty road bike on Fletcher, and a man wearing yellow spandex, no helmet on a mtn bike or street "hybrid" on York.

Also, heard a middle aged woman swear like a sailor as she picked a parking ticket off of her windshield.

Later cut off the parking enforcement vehicle, in the left turn lane onto Hyperion.

Smelled strong aftershave from the open window of a truck turning right from Rowena.



The ride from home to school and back again can be parceled into sections, and when broken down this way seems even shorter. I left City College at 10:19 after printing in the color lab for 6 hours, minus a dinner break. Didn't get enough done, but that's how the cookie crumbles sometimes. Was having all sorts of funky color problems and in the end everything just looked yellow to me and there was nothing I could do about it.

Part one of the ride takes me up Vermont, right on Fountain, Fountain up to Hyperion, and then a right on Rowena. For some reason, I can't stand riding on Rowena, even though this is a short passage.

Tonight, this section of the ride brought me past many faggy gentleman talking on cel phones outside of bars and restaurants. I suppose sometimes there aren't enough people inside to speak with and so one has to take matters into ones own hands.

I turn left on Fletcher, then under the bridge and

past Star Strip 2, which brings me into Atwater, a very short section of the ride which goes by quickly, past the 2 onramp and the Foster's Freeze and the tile place and then downhill under the underpass, then up to San Fernando Rd, up the hill, up, up. I really love going up the hill, because on the other side, the downside, I'm cruising right into Eagle Rock, which puts me somewhere totally different, and there are no more fags on phones, only taco trucks and random cyclists on the sidewalk. Up Eagle Rock to York, turn right. York is like being home, even though there are probably 4 or so miles to go. It's just a straight shot now, past automotive places and pet shops and bars. Lots of people out and driving and walking and eating. I think about the Spanish words for lawyer and meatballs and how similar they are. Tonight Louis called me on one end of York, so I walked until I lost reception. It's a bit of a hill, but barely so. It's up from Eagle Rock and then it evens out and falls back down towards Fig, and once I'm there, I'm totally home free, and the last part of the ride begins once I've crossed the bridge over the 110 and I'm in quiet, empty South Pasadena. I know the roads from here well, and can zig zag if I feel like it. Tonight I took Monterey straight, slightly uphill, then slightly down, turn left on Windsor Place, then cruise silently down the side path of the house. I lock my bike to the stairway, turn off the flashing light, take of the panniers and the water bottle, and come upstairs, where I'm starving and too jacked up to sleep.

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April 9 Rode to Trader Joes and bought milk.

Took the bus downtown, and then boarded the red line. Stayed on the corner of Normandie and Wilshire most of the afternoon. Wore a dress. Took a few pictures. Hailed Jimmy down as he flew by on the bike. Sad to not be on my bike. Jumped on the 720 to Westwood Blvd and met Louis for dinner. Knit on the bus.

R We ate burgers.

April 10 At 10 a.m. my film was ready so I rode up to AIM to pick it up. Sunny day, not too hot. Took Raymond north as there was much construction on Fair Oaks. After

getting the chromes, I rode a few blocks to Samy's and bought 200 sheets of 8 x 10 color paper. Bungee-ed it to the rack on the back of the bike. My bike felt heavy. Especially heavy when I flew down hills. Fair Oaks south, right on Mission, which turns into Pasadena Avenue. Over the 110, then across York. Left on Eagle Rock, right on Ave 36, up the hill, down the hill, on Fletcher now. Booking down Fletcher, under the train tracks, Foster Freeze on the left, under the 5, up the hill, right on Rowena, through to Hyperion. Get in the left hand turn lane then go, go, go, down the hill, then up, shoot over Sunset, straight on Fountain, past Cuffs (getting a beer delivery at noon- Bud Light truck) past auto body places and tailors and finally to Vermont. Left, on the street today, not the sidewalk, right into the lot and I'm at school and starving.

Daniel and I had pizza for lunch at Vito's. I ate two slices. Didn't think I could finish them both, but snarfed them easily.

Printed, shot.

Back on the bike. Rode over to Palm Court thinking that maybe Dan was back in town. No one was around, so I got back on my bike and then I see Phil, with his bike and a flat tire. It happened just a couple of blocks from home, he says, then starts talking about how the city seems so small when you're on a bike. He's preaching to the converted. He's commuting to Beverly Hills now, and isn't too crazy about Olympic Blvd. He's starving. The number one thing to know about Phil is that if he says, "I'm gonna put some pasta together, want to stick around?," then you say YES. Even louder. You do not refuse food from Phil Macabee. I didn't. I'm not an idiot. Phil whipped up some corkscrew pasta with egg and tomatoes and garlic and olive oil and it was heavenly.

It was also powerful. Back on my bike, I'm whipping down the street. I follow a guy in a day glo jacket from Rowena to Fletcher. Instead of taking the left turn lane, he cuts through a parking lot and down the sidewalk. I catch up with him at Riverside and thank him for the tip. "it's a deathwish to ride on the street," he says. I cross Fletcher and get on the street. It's a beautiful night. It's dusk at 7 pm and the sky is pink. I think I see a cyclist

I know across the street, but not sure. Neither of us stopped, but we both waved. I see more cyclists later who also wave, but I don't recognize them. I am so happy to climb the hill. York is a great street. Coming into south pas, I hit a patch of sand or something and nearly eat it. It's a close call. My Hasselblad would have been toast. I guess that's why you're supposed to have padding in the panniers when you have delicate photo equipment inside.

April 11 Felt a silver Honda Civic come too close on Vermont. Saw the gay pride sticker as it zoomed past. He'd turned left onto Vermont, into the right lane, a very wide turn. Smoking a cigarette too. A dangerous homosexual.

A fast ride to City College. Left the house later than usual, but got in around 9.



Stopped on the way home to see Kate who's in from London for a few days. Stopped at Hyperion and Rowena to photograph the sky. Dan K saw me on the corner and stopped to say hello. He was in a car.

Uneventful dusk ride to South Pas.



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Quick ride up to Pasadena to meet a nice young lady so I could take her picture for the Caltech website. Locked my bike up outside Moose McGillicudy's in Old Town and waited patiently until she arrived a few minutes later. Moose McGillicudy often has an off-putting and very young line outside, but today there was none. I had never been there before. Inside, it was just like being on Rush Street in Chicago during the late-eighties, except it was much cleaner, no one was smoking, and there was an abundance of large men who looked like they would kick your ass if you did something wrong. I shot Anita on the dance floor and used the ambient dancefloor lighting. I drank half a glass of Budweiser and ate part of a brownie sundae.

When I went to retrieve my bicycle, it was surrounded by cops. I asked them if they were trying to steal my bike and they replied that they were guarding it for me. I unlocked it and listened to their departmental gossip. Before taking off on the sidewalk, I asked if it was legal



to ride the sidewalk in Pasadena. They said they didn't know. Even though their badges said "POLICE" they were actually security guards. I rode off to the photo lab on the sidewalk, dropped a roll of film and then rode home where Louis was waiting for me with a pint of Ben and Jerry's Chunky Monkey. It's not my favorite flavor, but there is no such thing as yucky ice cream.

April 14 It wasn't raining when I left home, but by the time I arrived in Pasadena at the photo lab it had started sprinkling. From the lab to the Auto Club, it was a deluge. I regretted leaving my Gore-Tex pants at home, but was happy to have on a Gore-Tex jacket. What got drenched were my hands and face. I arrived dripping, but in good spirits and generally cozy and warm at the Auto Club where I purchased 48 hours worth of Mexican auto insurance and begged the people upstairs to lower my regular auto insurance premiums given that my car was now officially my "second vehicle" after my bike. They didn't buy it. I am unhappy about having to pay 800 dollars a year on a piece of metal I don't really want to own. I am going to drive to Mexico tomorrow.

The rain was still falling, but not nearly as hard when

I rode home. Stopped at the Post Office and mailed my taxes. They were a bit wet.

April 16 Went to Mexico and didn't ride the bike for two days. Missed the bike. Very sad.

April 17 Chris Buck called at one in the afternoon to say that Ozzy Osbourne didn't show up for his close up and did I want to come in and have my picture taken? He'd rented the most giant studio at Fifth and Sunset. I didn't have time to ride all the way to Santa Monica, so put my bike in the car. It's a good prop. I rode around in circles on the cyc and it was just like being at the velodrome except that there were cords and cables and strobes and light stands to navigate around. I rode pretty high up on the wall and made black drawings of my route with my bike tires all over the clean white cyc. I fell down a few times after trying to ride vertically and also slammed my pedals into the wall. I look forward to seeing the pictures



and hope that one may be appropriate for the cover of this publication.

April 18 I half-heartedly rode to the Y this morning. I really want to quit going. It is stupid to spend money on having a place to work out when I am on my bike all the time. I know it's a different kind of working out, but still. The lady behind the desk asked me if I was related to some other guy who rides in. "He looks like you," she said, "wears a helmet, vest..." I said, "does everyone on a bike look the same to you?" I thought it was lame that seeing someone ride to the Y is such a novelty for those who work there.



Beautiful sunset ride to the photo lab. Then loaded my saddlebags at Trader Joes with milk, eggs, cheese, fish, lettuce and more.

It was the kind of night which reminds me why people moved to LA in the first place.

And furthermore, after standing on my bicycle frame at the photo shoot, the gear no longer scrapes.

April 19 I really really miss riding my bike. This morning rode to the lab to pick up my film which wasn't nearly enough riding. It's only 2 miles or so from home to the lab.

Have started wearing clogs while riding and have not had any problem. I wonder if the added inch or so of height on the bottom of y foot makes much of a difference. It didn't feel bad on a short ride and no problems with my feet falling out. Maybe I could permanently attach the clogs to the pedals. But then I'd be barefoot when I was walking.

I so enjoy riding up and down handicap ramps.

April 20 Went to do some copying but Staples was closed due to Easter or possibly Earth Day.

Short around the neighborhood in Venice. Saw a completely decorated yard full of cardboard bunnies and colorful plastic eggs with a family sitting on chairs in the driveway drinking bottled beer while children played

football in the street.

- a woman yelling and cursing at a black Ford Explorer blocking a driveway which had a large sign reading "do not block driveway."
- -a man in a glass house pointing a telescope in the direction of another glass house.
- -the same woman yelling as above, only several minutes later as I rode by in the opposite direction, still yelling at the same black Explorer still blocking her driveway.

Am very much looking forward to a long ride tomorrow. Promoted Saddle sore over a delicious Easter dinner and ate much dessert in preparation for an epic ride.

April 21 When I see a Hummer I feel like a martyr. I want to pound on their windows and shout, "look at me, look at me! I'm on my bike so that you can be a fuel hog!" Hatred for big Americans in big cars. Waving the flag for what?

Overcast when I left Venice, cleared up near La Brea, clouded over again by the time I reached downtown. Somewhere on Venice a pink lollipop fell from a red pickup truck. A tow truck pulled an ice cream truck, a parking cop stood in the bike lane. I'm carrying two full saddle bags, plus a pair of cowboy boots in an orange tote bag tied to the side of the back of the bike.

Downtown, I rode through red lights, rehearsing in my head what I might say if caught. Something about safety, I suppose. Stopped at MTA building, searched labyrinth levels for bicycle parking, dropped an envelope on the 19th floor, then searched again to find the Red Line. Rode almost as far as LACC, but some dude started talking to me about how riding through sand



was very dangerous. And other things. I was trying not to engage him in conversation, while remaining polite. I don't want to piss anyone off, but I don't want to be friendly. He was wearing headphones while talking to me. The red Line Splits at Wilshire/Vermont, going either to North Hollywood or to Wilshire/Western. I wasn't sure which train I'd boarded, so figured I'd go out and look at the outside of the car to check at Wilshire/Vermont. I got out to look and the train took off. It was the one going where I wanted to go, but what the hell. It was a beautiful day and I'm always up for a bike ride. Up Vermont, it was sunny and I arrived at LACC without a hitch.



Riding back home, the old route, the one I hadn't ridden in a whole week. The view was astounding. The mountains shining in the late afternoon light, clouds descending over the LA Basin. Dramatic. On York, I ran over a nail and heard the air hiss out of my rear tire. I stopped and pulled a big bent rusty nail from the tire. Changed the tire on a bus stop bench at Avenue 51. A man digging through the trash stopped and gave me the head of one of the 7 dwarfs to affix to my bicycle. It was "Happy." I thanked him and wrestled with my tire, which is never a straightforward affair. First try at inflating, I had the tube all smashed up in the tire. Finally got it right, but still worried all the way home. Stopped and bought a new tube at the Bicycle Doctor. Still need to get CO2 cartridges. Almost bought some at Supergo yesterday-- why didn't I?

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April 22 Spoke to Stephen who was on his way to the West side. I gave him some money and he got me some new tires. Also gave me a couple of cartridges which he gets in the gun section of Big 5. Told me that wearing cowboy boots on the bike was not a good idea, but I rode to Caltech with them anyhow. A little slippery, but I didn't die. Beautiful day but a little nippy. Aborted a ride to Hollywood due to laziness and the possibility of rain and the abundance of things to do at home. Leaving tomorrow for the desert and wanted to get some work done on the HDTs catalog before leaving.

Wrestled the new front tire onto my wheel in the

afternoon. Stephen had warned me it'd be a tight fit, but damn. Used baby powder and brute strength. Rode to Buster's to see Sharon and her family who are in from Maine.

April 25 Absolutely incredible ride to school. The bike feels great- I think standing on it in the photo studio really cured the chainring scraping problem. And maybe the new front tire helps too. Haven't had time to install the rear tire yet.

Drizzling (barely) when I left the house. Expecting a downpour I went back for Gore-Tex. Wore only the pants but by the time I hit Hollywood the sun was out. Equally nice ride home, sunny and warm, minimal clothing. Perky clouds in the sky and coming over the mountains in the distance. California dreaming.

April 27 I consulted Bike Metro.com for a route to take me from home to the West Adams neighborhood and ended up on an offroad adventure looking for a bike path I never managed to find. Rode down a grassy hill. Smashed a bottle with my tire. Carried bike over fences and concrete barriers. Rode down creepy fire roads. A man walking his pit bull refused to leash the barking nonsense even after a jogger was barked at crazily. Silly motherfucker cocksucker dog owner, I almost called 911 but instead waited for a police cruiser to pass, which didn't happen, so I turned tail and rolled elsewhere. Perhaps the mystery bike path was located post pit bull but I was too much of a pussy and preferred to retreat to a more normal and trusted route. Bailed on Bike Metro, took Fig south to Pasadena, then over the LA River into downtown.

Passed a trio of winded riders huffing and puffing their way over the river, then ran into even more exhausted cyclists in Chinatown. Turns out they were all on a "fun ride" put on in conjunction with the bike show at the convention center. They didn't look like they were having much fun. I told them that I was having a lot of fun, which I was. They said that they were so slow that the police escorts left them behind and that the traffic was just maddening. Other riders a few blocks later

seemed like they were having a bit more fun. Passed by the convention center and saw the Bicycle Valet Parking sign. I think Valet Bicycle Parking sounds like a lot of fun. Recent attempts to have my bike valet parked have failed, but I did manage to valet it once a long time ago at the Ritz in Pasadena.

Blew through a red light on Washington Blvd. A black man in a suit driving a white van rolled down the passenger window and yelled at me. "The police ought to give you a ticket." 2 cop cars with flashing lights were a block away from the red light, which is why I figured I could go through it. After all, they were obviously busy. Louis drove me home.

April 28 Pedaling to Altadena makes me sweaty, but going home it's all downhill. Stopped at the Apple store in Pasadena. The door was open, so I rolled right in. A smooth concrete floor is heaven for a bike. Yet another advantage of a fixed gear specimen: makes no noise when you're sneaking around. Quietly ogled the new G4 powerbooks. The small one would fit in a saddlebag no problem, and boy oh boy, it's tempting. But really, I needed a scanner, so told the humorless apple employee that he'd make a sale if he could attach a scanner to my rack. It's a strong rack, I told him. He couldn't come up with any string or cord or even a useless extra cable. The rear of the Apple store must be as anally clean as the public area. All he could find was duct tape. The scanner weighs like two pounds, if that, and is in a svelte box, so it was no problem to just tape it to the rack. Rode home. The new scanner is a champion. It's not broken like my old scanner.

Later rode to Susan's house and ate cookies. There are roofers removing her roof and it's a bit loud over there.

April 29 I forgot to put my helmet on before leaving and didn't realize it until I was a mile or so from home. I went back to get it, wondering why I didn't notice immediately that it wasn't on. Have I been riding a lot without my helmet and not even



realizing it?

Stopped on Eagle Rock to take pictures of land for sale. Stopped at Chris' apartment to pick up contact sheets from our shoot. At school, I printed black and white pictures from noon til 10pm. I could taste the chemistry while printing. Yum. Turns out the ventilation wasn't turned on. Oops. Rode to Maroush to pick up pita sandwiches for dinner. Bungee-ed them to the rack.

Received email from a friend telling me how they'd attempted a bike ride in Griffith Park after dark and ended up with a court date. Handcuffs were involved. It sounded stupid and ugly.

Left school at 10:30. Stopped by Palm Court and visited with Sojin. Bingo the white fluffy dog would not stop humping Scooter the black scruffy dog and this was disturbing. At 11:30 I took off for South Pas. Every time I pass a taco truck I tell myself that someday I'll stop for a taco, but I never do.

I'm so glad I have brakes.

April 30 Met Louis in South Central at a soul food restaurant. He had a slice of "Sock it to me" cake waiting for me. When I got there, the waitress heated it up and smothered it with whipped cream. Perfect after a ride from home, maybe 15 miles or so. Uneventful, lovely ride. Perfect temp. Took Fig south to Pasadena, through Chinatown, west on Temple. Passed the new Cathedral which had big gray gates shut in front of it. Passed the Water and Power Bldg. One of the most beautiful buildings downtown, it looked like it had a recent addition, a terrible bronze plaza turd, glinting in the evening light. Kitty corner, Disney Hall's shiny entrance panels were glinting. Hard to tell if the girls in the Mini Cooper next to me were astonished or disgusted, but they were definitely talking about it. Passed a conclave of cyclists gathered at 5th and Flower. Turned R on Pico, L on Normandie, R on Washington, L on Western.

Ate cake.

