

# SADDLESORE



**Oops, I did it again.**

**SS2**

# SADDLESORE

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### **SADDLESORE 3: Oops I did it Again**

2 years later and SS is still going strong. I dissed my car in favor of the bike when gas got pricey and the U.S. went ballistic and freaky in the Middle East. I remember in the 70's when there was an ENERGY CRISIS and people were concerned about saving gas. Now I'm stumped. Gas has gone through the roof, Americans are the fattest people in the universe, and the world hates us for being pig-headed capitalist imperialists. So what do we do? We buy SUVs and go to war so we can support the oil addiction. That seems a bit backwards to me.

I might not be able to change the world, but I can change my own impact on the world and that's a start. Every bike commute or bike errand is one less car commute or car errand and those miles add up to gallons and barrel. I began **Saddlesore** to answer the questions people had about riding bikes in Los Angeles. There's the wacky idea that LA is a car city and can't be navigated by bicycle, but this is hogwash. LA is mostly flat, sunny year-round, and streets are wide. It's a great place to pedal! I don't write about all the rides and I don't ride my bike exclusively (I'm not that perfect!). I take the bus sometimes, and I even drive a car.

See you on the streets!

—LAA, April 7, 2005

**November 3, 2004** A dark day. Rode to USC twice. In the morning, took Jefferson all the way and passed the guard at the McClintock entrance. Earlier in the ride, I had thought about going onto campus this way, knowing that I might get caught by security. I don't understand why it is a problem for bicycles to enter at the same entrance cars use. Normally, I go a convoluted back way which brings me through a parking lot where I have often had close calls with cars looking for parking spaces and not looking for cyclists. I think that it is generally safer to stay on streets the same way cars stay on streets. USC's policy of not letting cyclists use the same entrances as

cars is bullshit, and on this day I was feeling rebellious and at wit's end. So I knew I might be stopped but by the time I actually hit the entrance I was daydreaming about something else. I had forgotten all about being prepared for confrontation. And so the security goon said something to me, which later I recognized, playing the speech fragment back in my mind as I rode away, "Walk your bike." In my reverie, I had replied "I'm sorry," a non-sequitor, an automatic response. What would I have said, had I remembered that I was going to be confronted?

Went for a swim before riding back hungry. Hungry all the way home and thinking about food. Thinking in particular about a sandwich I'd made to eat the day before when I was working as a pollworker, a veggie-salami and real cheese on homemade rye with lettuce. When I got home, I ate a bowl of cereal instead.

Nighttime: another ride. Sun goes down early these days. Rode down Jefferson to Flower to meet Sharon's evening class. At Figueroa, I took the through lane, while other cars merged into a right turn only lane. The woman behind me, in a compact car, didn't crowd me, let me have the whole lane. I beckoned to her that she could pull forward but she shook her head. When the light turned green, I sprinted into the intersection.

On the way home, a palm frond in the street looked like a dead cat, but it wasn't.

**November 4** I used Bikemetro.com to find a bike route to the Santa Monica Museum of Art. I wasn't sure how long it would take to get there or really how far it was. I made it to Culver City fairly quickly and thought maybe I was halfway there. But then I kept going for awhile. I took Jefferson to National to Venice and then rode Venice to McLaughlin, which was soon after I went under the 405. The lawns were covered with leaves and fall was in the air. McLaughlin turned into Barrington and I passed that lame cramped Whole Foods on the corner. I felt kinda lost.

Eventually, I turned left on Olympic and then rode for awhile. As soon as I passed the "Welcome to Santa Monica" signs, the shoulder disappeared and so did the sidewalk. So I was feeling a bit exposed on the street with nowhere to duck to should an SUV get too close. Made

it to the museum in about an hour.

Rode home in semi-darkness. Passed a lot of shady looking people, one who looked like she might be a crack whore.

**November 5** Cat at attention on 30th street. Looked stuffed, mid prance, one paw lifted, on the walkway in front of a house. I hoped it wouldn't break into a run as I approached, fearing the hex of having a black cat cross one's path. I continue to be superstitious about such things. I gave organized religious one last chance a week ago. I went to the cathedral and prayed for the assassination of our president, and barring that particular event, the victory of a more reasonable person. Prayer failed, and now we've taken steps backwards to pre-enlightenment days as a nation, and I've gone back to superstition, which I find is a more reasonable spiritual attitude. So it was that I willed that black cat to stay put and it did, with only its eyes following me as I rode past. On my left, a black and white spotted feline ran towards me in the gutter, its prominent nose half covered by a spot. Reminded me of Sly, a cat I took care of for six months long ago, a big cat. No collar. Further down, a leaf blower wailed from the back of a gardener. I turned left and headed up the hill to Adams. As I reached the summit, a car started backing out of a garage. If I stopped, I might have tipped over. I noticed the backup lights going on and made sure that the driver saw me before passing by.

I made my way north, via streets with names I can never remember, turning from one residential street to another as I felt the urge. Or depending on traffic. On one such street, an Asian woman in a peach blazer and a cream colored skirt stepped off the curb just as I rode by. She almost walked into my bike, but missed me by a split second. I don't know if she saw me and just calculated correctly or if she was just oblivious. I imagine the tangle, had we collided, her cream colored skirt gritty with street dirt and her forehead bruised by the impact. I might have landed on her, remaining unhurt, her taking the brunt of the collision and limping away with the greasy outline of my gear ring on her calves.

Went to Chinatown on the way home. Rode down

Santa Monica until it hit Sunset Blvd. Much police activity; couldn't quite tell what was going on. Sirens, cars. Sunset has a bike lane nearly all the way downtown. I passed a car double parked in the bike lane. That always makes me mad. After dropping off a couple of copies of Saddlesore 2 at Ooga Booga, I visited a gallery which was closed and then a gallery which was open. I rode home through the dark downtown. First went up Hill, then scooted over to Broadway and then turned left on Venice.

Passed the same spotted cat on the way home. It ran out in the street and then disappeared into the shadows.

**November 6** Rode downtown, 30<sup>th</sup> to Cimarron to Gramercy to Washington. Thought perhaps I could cut through the cemetery north to Venice. I've never been in there before. I turned left and went up the hill in the cemetery. It's a nice place. Lots of graves. Lots of people leaving dead flowers on the graves, too. The speed limit is 5 mph. A gold Buick pulled towards me going faster than that. A Mexican man rolled down the driver's side window and in a very thick accent told me that bicycles were not allowed in the cemetery. He had to tell me 3 times before I understood what he was saying. I said "why not?" He said it's the rules. I think that's bullshit. What if I was visiting a dead relative and I didn't have a car? I continued on to the Pantry, where I met Sharon and her students for breakfast.

**November 24** Dead animals. This weekend, a dead dog appeared on the corner. It was beautiful, a little blonde dog, legs sticking straight out, lying on the sidewalk. Looked like it was sleeping, but with a lot of flies. The dog stayed for the entire weekend, weathering a windstorm. I went out to take a picture and there was an acoustical tile on his forehead. I thought maybe someone had put it there to give the corpse some privacy, but later it was gone, the tile just an object blown in by the winds.

The dog was gone on Monday when I returned home from class.

The ride this morning was uneventful. Stopped and mailed a letter. Noticed last week that a fence on

Jefferson appeared to have been taken down by an automobile or maybe something larger. A Hummer? It was a big fence. Today, there was a crew there fixing it. Went to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Market to pick up a bag of yams for Thanksgiving. Rode home and then rode to Target to exchange the ironing board cover I purchased yesterday. It had a slash through it. So I had to go back and get a different one. What a pain in the ass. Rode home before the sun set and it was beautiful and I felt fairly energetic and there was a ton of traffic and I rode around the cars. On Fourth Avenue, just before 31<sup>st</sup> Street, I saw a furry and bloody ball on the sidewalk. It looked like it had once been an animal or a part of an animal. Hard to tell.

**November 26** The day after Thanksgiving is usually thought of as the busiest shopping day of the year. You can celebrate it by consuming or you can observe the date by consciously deciding not to buy anything and not to buy into this economic event. Critical Mass began in Silver Lake and there were rumblings about hassling shoppers or making an appearance at a mall. I began my ride at home and took mostly side streets up to Beverly and then Beverly to Silver Lake north to Sunset and then I was at the starting point. I was afraid I would be freezing cold and so my bags were full of extra clothing, but by the time I got to the beginning of the ride I was already pretty hot and had removed much that I had on. We milled around the parking lot, wondering where we might go. It's a "leaderless" ride in theory which means there is usually some talk about general direction. Maybe someone knows something fun going on that we should ride to. I usually stay out of these conversations. I don't really care. We usually head somewhere west and tonight was no exception. We headed towards Hollywood, passed some people with anti-war signs by the Vista Theater. Wasn't really paying much attention to where we were going. Dan and Sojin and Karen were on the ride too and I was talking to Joe for some of the time. Before too long we were in the heart of Hollywood, and there were lighted Christmas decorations above the street. It was so pretty! Karen had gotten stuck back at Vons somewhere

because she had refused to push through a red light with the rest of the group. It's illegal to go through red lights, but we usually try to stick together when we ride in a big clump, so sometimes we flaunt the law. But not everyone feels comfortable riding this way. We found ourselves at the Grove next. Entered off Fairfax and there was a pedestrian or maybe two who were lying in the street covered in blankets. Looked like one or more had been hit by a car. We got off the bikes and walked into the mass of humanity gathered for the busiest shopping day of the year. The fountains were going apeshit, the water shooting sky high.

From there we rode on Beverly to La Cienega, then left to Burton Way, which we took into Beverly Hills. I'd never ridden on Burton Way before and it's a superwide street, with plenty of room. I felt comfortable in a group there, but I don't know how it would be alone during the day. I think cars go fast there.

Riding down Rodeo Drive was pretty lovely. There was no one around since it was around 8 pm and so we all rode down together in the center. No cars to be seen. I guess all the stores must close much earlier. I thought it would be mobbed. The holiday decorations were lit up, including chandeliers and giant red Baccarat boxes. It felt surreal, the lighting was so bright, like sunlight.

We rode into an area of stores which looked like Universal Studios and then carried our bikes down stairs, to the delight of a couple of tourists.

Riding down Wilshire, the group stopped when a cop pulled someone over for going through a red light. We exercised caution over the few short blocks left of Beverly Hills and when we hit the potholed streets of Los Angeles, let down our guard. I left the group at San Vicente. Rode south, a Hummer limo on my tail making me nervous for several blocks. At Pico I turned left because I didn't want to brave a certain section of Venice after dark. I rode past the Midtown Plaza project, which looks like it's getting built. Then I rode past a large building with a tiny sign which said "year round swimming" and hit the brakes. It's a pool, on the corner of West and Pico! There were no hours posted. I turned right on West and

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went south. I took Adams East and then Crenshaw south and 29<sup>th</sup> east and then through neighborhood streets I went home.

Louis had made delicious eggplant pasta. I was starving!

**November 29** Sometimes a ride seems like it's going to be long when really it's not. I left USC up Vermont to go to PC Color which is near Little Tokyo. The big buildings of downtown looked really far away. I think I took a slightly circuitous route. It seemed to take a long time to get to the corner of Santee and Washington, where I stopped at a curtain hardware store to look at some curtain hardware. It looked cheap and terrible. The brass hardware on display in their showroom was discolored with age and the stuff they were selling looked flimsy. I rode north through the garment district and fabric district and then Skid Row and finally to Little Tokyo. Lots of new "artist's lofts" near Alameda. At PC Color, picked up my negs from Canada and ran into a very friendly woman who was a bit odd who wanted to talk a lot. I was nice and stayed for awhile, but really couldn't wait to get back on the road. I was wearing a thick wool sweater and standing still was hot. On the bike, the sweater was perfect. Ventilated and warm at the same time. Wool has magical properties. I rode west on 2<sup>nd</sup>, south on Spring, west on 5<sup>th</sup>, south on Flower, west on Pico, south on Normandie, west on Washington, south on Gramercy, west on Adams, south on Cimarron, west on 30<sup>th</sup>, south on Arlington, west on 31<sup>st</sup>. Home.

*(went to Thailand for a month)*

**January 21, 2005** James Benning had a screening at RedCat, so I left my house and raced up Cimarron to Washington to Figueroa. There was something going on at Staples Center, and there were a bunch of men waving orange flags at cars trying to get them to park for \$8 in various lots. It felt like a hero's welcome to downtown Los Angeles. They waved their flags and then most of them stepped aside for me to pass. I felt a lot

like Lance on the Champs Elysee. Soonafter, a car started yelling my name and I looked up to see Kate Balug in the backseat with her crutches, her window rolled down and her head out. I wondered if I could beat them to the screening, but figured I was still too far and Bunker Hill was between us and RedCat. Darted up to First Street and then couldn't remember exactly where Disney Hall was. I've passed it a million times but I still don't know the location precisely. As I was trying to remember if it was north or south of Dorothy Chandler and north or south of Water and Power, I looked up and it was right in front of my face. I rode down to RedCat, where there is NO bike rack. I locked to a street sign across the street and then went to stand in the Will Call line. It was a mob scene and very confusing but eventually I found my party and we went and sat down inside. I had made vegan cookies that afternoon, so passed them out to those sitting nearby. It's Michel's recipe, and it's delicious.

The film, *One Way Boogie Woogie 27 Years Later* was amazing, but I think Benning used to be funnier 27 years ago. Also his friends were a bit more sassy. Now his friends are duller and probably wouldn't do things like writhe around on the floor tied up and gagged. I shouldn't say that. What do I know about his friends? Maybe they would love to do that. Anyhow, that sort of thing no longer appears in his films 27 years later.

I took off after the screening to meet a gang of people at Hotel Figueroa. I ran down four flights of stairs with my bike, emerging at the library, then booked south on Flower and then onto the sidewalk of Fig to the hotel. Locked my bike out front, but wasn't sure if I was there first or not. I stood outside for a bit hoping to see someone I knew. I didn't know where the bar was. I went downstairs for a peek and there were people drunk and dancing and it was too loud. No way were they there. Then I stood around for awhile until some people came and asked me if I was a cop. I said I wasn't, that I was here to meet someone for a drink but that I didn't know where the bar was. Turns out they were there for the same reason, and they knew where the bar was, so I went in with them. They were tall and Sharon yelled that I looked SO SHORT. Everything's relative. I'm not a giant. These girls were lanky. They introduced themselves

and I did too and then I said that I was short and one of the ladies looked like she had seen a ghost. Turns out that her fortune cookie last night had said that she would meet an important short person. Or something like that. By the end of the night, I think she'd decided that the fortune cookie was either wrong or that her Dustin Hoffman was yet to enter her life.

Everyone was drinking and it got late quickly. Cindy offered to drive me home, and I looked at my watch and it was almost one in the morning. I haven't stayed out that late since I was 20! I thought it was probably a good idea not to bike home, but then she ordered another drink and some other random people offered me a ride so I said OK,

*My favorite vegan and cyclist Michel Martinez published this recipe on her awesome recipe blog. If you want to keep it truly vegan, ride your bike to Surfas in Culver City and pick up some fancy pants chocolate bricks sans milk products. Put the chocolate in a ziploc and smash it into smithereens with a big hammer. You can probably get dairy free chocolate chips at the health food store too, but any excuse to use a hammer in the kitchen is good.*

## SOY...not "oi!" peanut butter chocolate chip cookies

2 c pb  
1/2 c nucoa margarine  
1 c sug  
1 c bsug  
2 ts arrowroot + 2 ts warm water  
3 c flr  
1 1/2 ts bkg s  
1 ts salt  
splash of soy  
chocolate chips  
cream pb, marg & sug's.  
combo flr, bs, & salt.  
make "egg" of arrowroot & water.  
combo crmd mixt & dry; add "egg."  
Bake, then bike.

but then I realized that I was probably better off riding home solo than I was either getting a ride from someone drunk or getting a ride from someone I don't know who was also drinking.

I think I was nervous because everyone was so against the idea of me riding, but the actual ride wasn't worrisome at all. At 2 in the morning, there isn't anyone on the road but me. I think 3 or 4 cars passed me the entire time. I only saw a few people out and about, most walking to cars. The north-south streets (Normandie, Western) seemed to have some traffic on them, but Washington and Venice were empty. It was so quiet and really a treat.

**January 22** Was feeling antsy. Had waffled all day about whether or not to bike to the farmer's market in Culver City. It looked cloudy, like it might rain. Then it looked nicer. Then cloudy again. I knit the back of a sweater on the machine using all 2-ply wool. It's light weight, but I'm not sure if the size will be OK. I knit it tighter than usual since the yarn was so thin. The wool is nice though. It's a quote from Rumsfeld.

S At 5pm, the sky looked promising and I tangled the  
A knitting machine, so I went to CC. Not a bad ride. I  
D bought some small organic eggplant and a bunch of  
D broccoli from an organic man. Then some hydroponically  
L grown butter lettuce, some "hedgehog" mushrooms from  
E a man who imports them via overnight mail from the  
S Oregon forests where they grow wild. A duo of ladies  
O from Greece sold me olives and roasted peppers. I got  
R non-organic (very gigantic) Romaine lettuce and some  
E fennel from a Mexican guy. On my way out, picked up a  
loaf of 9-grain bread from Breadman. Everything stuffed  
in my panniers, I raced home in heavy traffic. Parts of the  
route are a bit sketchy, and there is no sidewalk to bail  
to. The traffic was slow, so it wasn't really a problem. I  
stopped at **Tha Gumbo Shack** on Jefferson on the way  
home. It used to be **Tha Wing Joint** until recently. Then  
it was closed. A sign appeared last week announcing **Tha  
Gumbo Shack**. A sign on a van parked outside advertised  
FREE GUMBO. I went in but no one noticed I was there.  
Then I poked my head into the kitchen where a chef was

sautéing a bunch of chicken. Two pots of gumbo were on the burners. I asked what happened to **Tha Wing Joint**. He wasn't very talkative. I asked if **Tha Gumbo Shack** was the same owner as **Tha Wing Joint**. He said it wasn't. I was surprised, given that the font and color scheme had stayed the same. Plus the "tha." There are still wings on the menu. The unfriendly chef didn't offer me any free gumbo, and I didn't ask. I took a xeroxed menu, which looks pretty yummy. I look forward to a Red Snapper Nibbler Basket if I don't become a vegan.

**January 23** The front door has been acting up since we returned from Thailand, but we've been ignoring the problem. This morning, the knob broke off in Louis' hand as he tried to open it. We were both running late. It was raining and we'd slept later than we'd wanted to. I figured the lock would probably break at an inopportune time. We were locked in, so we exited the house through the back door. I dressed in head-to-toe Gore Tex on account of the rain, and I brought a pair of Gore-Tex shoes in my bag. By the time we got out the back door (had to move stuff out of the way so I could get my bike out), the rain had stopped. It was too late to go back and redress. I rode to school and a few puddles splashed onto my legs, so I was happy to have the waterproof overpants. I put on the shoes when I got to school and it was nice not to have to wear bike shoes all day. After class, I went to a lecture and then met Sharon and our two spunky interns. I got back on the bike without putting on the bike shoes. It's not really a problem to pedal with street shoes, even with clipless pedals. It's only a short distance home. I saw Kate leave the lot and I took off down Exposition after her. As I was going through the intersection at Vermont, my shoe lace became caught in the bottom bracket. It twisted around in the gears and tightened my shoe on my foot. It hurt. I couldn't stop pedaling immediately, because the bike is fixed. I put on the brakes and pulled over. It was a tangle. I unwound the shoelace from the bicycle and got the shoe off. I suppose the lace might have broken had things gotten worse. Anyhow, I put my bike shoes on and pedaled home.

I called the locksmith and was told to remove the

lock mechanism from the inside with a 3/16 allen wrench. I put a stick in the door to close it and brought the lock in. I bought a new one and attached it. The house must have settled during the time we were in Thailand, because it just didn't move right. I called Adam and he brought over a metal file to fix the problem. He brought over wet shower curtains, which I put into our dryer.

**February 7** On the way to school this morning, I noticed some brilliant green-colored puddles in the gutter along Jefferson, just west of Western. Looked like antifreeze. I couldn't tell where it was coming from. It didn't look healthy for the storm sewers. I thought it was coming from behind a fence which was usually closed. Then I thought maybe it was coming from the car wash on the corner of Jefferson and Western. I kept riding.

**February 8** The KFC on the corner of Jefferson and Western really bothers me. There is a fake owl roosting on the roof, ostensibly to deter pigeons from making the roof their hangout. But the "bucket 'o chicken" on the sign, a 3D fiberglass bucket, is covered with pigeons. So it's like a "bucket 'o pigeons" which is a pretty disgusting idea. The **House of Dimes** was closed today, but it looked like they were cleaning the place up. Their rugs were out on the sidewalk. What's up with that place?

**February 9** At the corner of Jefferson and Vermont, I stopped in lane at a red light. A compact car behind me wanted to turn right, so I scooted out of the lane near to the corner, so she could pass. The driver, a young Asian lady, rolled down the passenger window and leaned over and thanked me.

On the sidewalk I move over to, a staggering man with a red nose holding a bottle of Jim Beam in one hand and a clear plastic cup in another, asked me for a ride. I told him no. He said "why not?" I said that the buses were more clearly able to accommodate him than I. He started in on a rant about the buses, but I just pulled into the crosswalk, then looked back to check for traffic and got into the right hand lane on Jefferson, heading west. The **House of Dimes**

was open and a customer was at the counter.

**February 14** I stopped by the Bicycle Kitchen on my way home from ceramics class. We had been working on pinch pots and rolling slabs to make cylindrical forms. Neither way of working with clay really excited me. I am looking forward to experimenting with the potter's wheel, which should be starting this week. The new Bicycle Kitchen was abuzz with activity. It's right down the street from City College, on Heliotrope, next door to Night In Tunisia coffee shop, where Daniel and I sometimes go for lunch. They have yummy sandwiches and Turkish coffee there. Congratulated Ben and everyone on the new place. It really does look awesome. I have sadly come to the conclusion that I don't really like working on my bike. I just would rather have someone else do it. Is that bad? I can't do EVERYTHING myself. I spoke to someone there about my bike. I have been saying for years that I want to get a different one but of course the gospel at the BK is 'why get a new one when you can fix the old one?' this makes perfect sense. My bike is probably one of the dopest machines in all of Los Angeles. One of the mechanics put it up on the fixing post and made the tire seat into the wheel, which will get ride of the constant bump-bump-bump. He tightened the fit of the chain and the cranks and drew a nice little picture of the bottom bracket spindle that I need to find and order and install. My goal is to have my bike run as smooth as ice. I don't mind helping out, but I just don't want to do all the work. The great thing about having the Bicycle Kitchen in town is that there is always someone there who is helpful and loves bikes and will appreciate the fact that I didn't replace my bike like I've been threatening to do. My bike belonged to my dad. He bought it in 1968, or so he says. It's a Dawes Realm Rider. He used to take it apart every summer and I remember him losing ball bearings on the lawn. I think some of them may still be missing, as I've taken parts apart and found less than there should be. I took the bike to Boston with me in 1985 and rode it everywhere. I didn't ride it as much in Rochester or Denver, but it moved with me. It languished

in Los Angeles for awhile while I rode my Miyata. But that bike got stolen. The Dawes lived on my porch in South Pas for quite some time before I decided to give it a new life as a fixie. That was years ago. I didn't think my fixation with the fixed gear would last, but once you go fixed, it's hard to go back to a 10-speed.

Rode home from the Kitchen, mostly on side streets. There are a few gated areas between school and my house and I can never remember where they are so I'm always expecting to run into a dead end. I didn't.

**February 19** It's been raining cats and dogs and iguanas around here. I rode to the BikeSummer fundraiser in the rain. It wasn't very far, only about 3 miles, and I thought there might be really low attendance due to the rain. I forgot that lots of people drive cars, even though they embrace the bicycle. I personally would have been embarrassed to show up in a car, but not everyone shared my sentiment. There were plenty of people there and most of them did not look even a little bit wet. I rode across 30<sup>th</sup> Street and jogged through neighborhood streets on my way to Crenshaw. There was a pit bull on the sidewalk at one point which put me in a panic but the dog didn't seem very interested in me so I calmed a bit. Turned right on Crenshaw and rode in the street. It was raining quite a bit and there was about a four foot wide puddle spilling from the gutter. Lots of cars and I wanted to bail to the sidewalk since it was raining and night time, but I didn't want to traverse the puddle. I wasn't sure how deep it was and I can't coast so I knew I was in for some super-moisture. At an intersection, I pulled over and rode to Adams on the sidewalk. I noticed the McDonalds drive through on Crenshaw is open 24 hours. Good to know, I suppose, in case I get that craving for grease in the middle of the night.

A woman on Adams was swearing into a pay phone as I passed. I rode on the street, which wasn't too busy, but there were a lot of steel sheets in the road which were probably slippery and often not quite level with the asphalt. An interesting ride. Noticed a Jamaican restaurant which looked inviting. Passed La Brea and started looking for the address. Finally got there and rode around back to the alley, where I pulled into a small patio where a bbq was going strong. I had been looking forward to the bicycle



valet parking, but since it was raining, I don't think they were doing it. Instead, I piled my bike to the side. I put a Trader Joe's bag on the seat to protect the leather from the rain and went inside. The place had two old beauty shop hairdryers, so I sat on one. I was wet, but the dryer didn't work. Or maybe it just wasn't plugged in. I didn't know anyone. A few people looked like they had ridden over, but most people just looked regular. Maybe they have bikes at home. A lady who said she was a hairdresser from Fullerton sat down in the hair dryer chair next to me. She was very friendly and told me how much she likes bike riding. I got a lot of knitting done on a sample hat crown I'm making for the knitting class I'm teaching. I'm making a few different ones which show various methods of shaping. This is exciting technical knitting! I didn't really know anyone in the room and everyone else seemed to know each other. Probably would have been more fun if I'd been with friends, but my friends don't really ride bikes for the most part and the riders I know didn't come. I should learn to be more social, but sometimes it's just nice to have a change of scenery for the knitting.

The ride home was nice. Mostly dry. I was afraid I might see the pit bull again, so I was on orange alert. Around 10<sup>th</sup> Ave and 30<sup>th</sup>, I saw a dog. It might have been a cocker spaniel, but I was taking no chances. I rode down to Jefferson and rode the sidewalk to Fourth. Just before Fourth, I saw two young guys walking towards me. When I rounded the corner, I saw a tall guy picking up a big stick and hiding behind a fence. As I turned onto 31<sup>st</sup>, I looked back and saw the tall guy yelling at the other guys, who were now on their way towards him. It all seemed very sinister, but maybe they were playing. I pulled into the driveway and brought my bike into the backyard and locked it in the illegal unit. I thought Louis would appreciate not having a dripping wet bike in the house. He doesn't like having the bike in the house at all, and dripping wet would not be popular. My aim was to be conscientious. I wish Louis loved my bike as much I do. I think it looks gorgeous in the living room.

**February 22** It's been raining a lot lately. It looked OK to ride this morning, so I left by bike wearing a gore-tex jacket and pink pants. I got one block away and already the weather started to look worse, so I turned around and went

back home to get another layer. I picked up a fleece top.

The traffic was horrible, all the more reason to be on a bike. I was so happy that I didn't drive, even though I figured I might have to take the bus home later. Everything looked beautiful and moist. I rode mostly on the street, but bailed to the sidewalk every once in awhile when things looked bad.

Around Heliotrope and Beverly, it started to rain. I made it to school a bit soggy, but could have been much worse.

When I took off my socks to change into clogs, I saw that my legs were covered in an oily mess. It was black and had soaked through to my panties. Not very attractive.

My bike was also full of this oil, which looked like it had been flung up from the tires. Very sticky and not the type of stuff that should be running into our storm sewers. I wiped the bike with Kleenex and announced in class that I had run into a puddle of oil. I turned around and let them laugh and point, but I said that was it for laughing and pointing. I thought if I called attention to it myself that they wouldn't whisper and giggle.

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Looked inclement when I left school, so I wore my hood under my helmet. When I got outside it actually looked OK. I was watchful for patches of oil, but I was already filthy so I suppose it didn't really matter. I always get pissed off at fat people in cars with giant soft drinks from fast food places. I don't understand why they can't give me the right of way in the rain. There was one such cow on Western just south of Venice. I saw many of those yellow "support the troops" magnets. I have a friend, who shall remain unnamed so not to incriminate him or her, who removes these magnets and rips them to shreds. I admire his or her balls. I wish I could do this too but I am always afraid that someone will see me and they will follow me and run my over with their big stupid truck.

**February 23** Gorgeous on the way to school. The sky was incredible, full of poofy clouds and the light was sharp

and crisp. 31<sup>st</sup> Street's palm trees cast diagonal shadows across our block. So beautiful I had to get off my bike and take a picture. I stopped again at the church that was once a temple on Jefferson to take a photo. I may do a series of photos of these places; there are many buildings that are churches now but used to be synagogues. This one says "congregation Rodeo" on the building and has some Hebrew lettering. My grandmother is taking Hebrew lessons in Chicago so maybe she can translate?

A long line of SUVs were waiting to turn right into USC and I skirted around them and went into the exit of the parking lot and then wiggled around past the pool, dodging pedestrians and making my way to a road. I am forever irritated by the fact that I am not allowed to ride into the main entrance on my bicycle.

On my way back, I stopped by the pool to see if it was overcrowded. Since the 50m pool has been under construction, the dive pool has been the only game in town and everyone has been using it. It looked OK and the area where divers land had been turned into swim lanes. So I headed to lock up my bike and some smarmy piece of shit in a yellow DPS polo type shirt (sweatshop-made) who was stapling bright pink xeroxes to bicycles threatening to impound them if they don't comply with rules, asked if I'd like to register my bike. I asked why I should register my bike and the p.o.s. said I could talk to the boss. The boss was this black guy about 7 feet tall and 7 feet wide. The classic brick shithouse. I asked him why I had to register my bike and he said it's the rules. That the campus needs to have ID on all the bikes, that it's the campus rules and that no one ever reads the rules, etc, etc. He was a big barking pit bull. I of course wanted to tell him to fuck off, but those kind of power hungry people can get really mean and now he'd seen my beautiful bike and he could probably bend it in half with his pinky or just sit on it and it would be flattened. Plus when they impound the bikes, which is something they like to do, according to my students, they charge \$20 to give it back plus they ruin the lock so you have to buy a new one which is like \$70. Turns out though that this isn't a campus registration only; it's actually a State of California registration. I don't know what good

this does to anyone. So it's \$3 and I figured I'd better do it despite it being a retarded and horribly big-brother policy. I can bring my bike into the classroom when I teach, but when I'm swimming, I have to lock it up outside and the goons could surely get their tentacles on it. Obviously DPS (which stands for Department of Public Safety) is not a bike-friendly agency. Exhibit A: they provide substandard bicycle racks which in normal use can only lock one wheel, with the rest of bike free to be removed. Exhibit B: cyclists aren't allowed in the main entrance. Exhibit C: their bright pink notices are littering the campus grounds. Exhibit D: even registered bikes are sporting the wasteful notices, because they are too stupid to actually look at the bikes that they're tagging. Exhibit E: when the bike racks are full and bikes are locked elsewhere, they impound the bikes. Exhibit F: I have never, ever been told to register my bike anywhere, and I have been riding in this city for over ten years. Obviously, their zeal for registration comes from some idea of power and control. A stolen bike will not be recovered because of a sticker which can be easily removed. Exhibit G: The idiot who filled out my paperwork couldn't spell Dawes. Asswipe.

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By the time I got to the pool, the lanes which had been added into the diving end of the pool had been turned back to the divers. The lanes were super crowded and I had to share with 3 other people. I swam a bit but soon left to shower and ride home. I was starving. I hadn't brought a snack to school. On my way out, I turned left onto Jefferson. Some stupid kid on a bicycle was heading towards me at alarming speed down the wrong side of the street. I yelled "RIDE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET!" but I don't know if he could hear me since he didn't seem to care and was probably wearing an iPod. If DPS wants to do something altruistic, perhaps they should stop students who are wearing iPods, riding on the wrong side of the street, or talking on the phone instead of getting all up into the asses of the riders who are actually responsible. Another nice thing they could do would be to provide air for student's bike tires and oil for the chains. I notice many students who ride around on flat tires because Daddy has always filled their tires and they don't really understand

what it means to be a grownup.

The ride home was just fine. House of Dimes was OPEN but no customers.

It's still threatening rain. I will take a quick look at the Doppler before deciding whether to drive or ride to ceramics class this evening.

**February 25** High-tailed it down Santa Monica to Sunset and over to Echo Park to arrive just on time for a 4:30 pm. haircut at Lukas. Alice is my haircutter and she is awesome. They are nice about letting me bring my bike into the salon and the ladies who were embroidering by the register were so excited to hear about my knitting machine. After I got a sassy new doo, I rode over to the meeting point at Sunset and Silver Lake to wait in the parking lot for the CMers to amass. There has been talk about changing the meeting point and so this ride was about looking at the options and voting. I didn't know very many people on the ride and I didn't recognize very many people. Who are all these folks? Missing were several regulars. Dan is on a hot date, so I guess that's as good as an excuse as any. I don't want to name any names, but where was everyone? A former student of mine from USC showed up. Nice to see her. The ride started late. I thought we were waiting for bikesummer stickers but I didn't see if they arrived or not. We rode west on Sunset and then cut down to Santa Monica and over to the corner of Santa Monica and Vermont, the first option. This is right near LACC. There is talk on the CM yahoo list about changing the meeting point in order to attract people who ride the Red Line. So this is a Red Line station. We then went to the second location, which is the Bicycle Kitchen on Heliotrope. A few of us rode through the campus, but most stuck to the streets. I ride through the campus so often it felt like home. Because of the shortcut, we got to the BK early, so I stopped into Night in Tunisia to grab a cup of tea. It fit nicely in my bottle holder on the bike. I've lost my bottle, so it's usually an empty space. There was some sort of musical practice session going on in the BK. Someone commented that it looked like the "hippies had taken over" and there was a ring of truth to that. It may even have been

a drum circle. This was meeting location number 2. We rode down Vermont, which is squirrely even when you are 40 bikes, to Fourth and across for a bit and then down to Wilshire. This is when I was talking to my former student, so I don't remember the route exactly. The stoplights on Wilshire weren't working, so it was a bit mayhem-y with the traffic all stopped and bikes weaving in and out of the cars which were sometimes moving but mostly not.

Wilshire and Western is another option, another Red Line station. It's my vote because it's the closest to where I live. The group went on to explore other options, but I went home. I was tired and wanted dinner. I took Manhattan Place south for awhile, then not sure where I went. Ended up going over the freeway on Gramercy, right on Adams, left on Cimarron, down, down into Jefferson Park. In some books about Los Angeles, this type of neighborhood is referred to as a "horizontal ghetto."

**February 26** My car wouldn't start on Thursday, so today I took it to the mechanic. What a pain in the ass, but sometimes a gal needs transportation. It had been making the beginning sounds of starting but the engine never made it to a full roar. So I loaded the bike into the backseat and called Triple A. Good thing I had the bike in the car before I called because it only took the tow truck guy about five minutes to show up. We drove up the 110 to South Pasadena, which of course costs extra because it was 6 miles longer than my allotted 7 mile free tow. The man who I'd spoken to on the phone earlier had thanked me for my 17 years as a AAA member. Unbelievable. You'd think they'd give an old fogy like myself a break on the extra mileage. So we arrived at Le Car and Jack tried hitting the fuel pump with a wrench, hoping that it might free a possibly jammed motor. I thought that a few hits with a wrench to fix the car would be a good deal, worth the tow, but it didn't seem to work. As I was pulling out on my bike, Sharon drove by and we went to the hardware store where she bought chainsaw oil and I got a metal file and some WD 40. On my way to the train station, I

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dropped by Rhonda's, but she wasn't home. I said hello to Tony, the neighbor. Then headed to the Gold Line. South Pas is full of young couples with young children. How do they afford to live there? Shacks start at three quarters of a million. Gold Line to Chinatown. Rode south through downtown. Detoured to visit Gene Scott's church, to see if anything was going on there. He died last week. Awful news. But there was no indication of his death at his place. Same old sign on the marquee announced that he'd be preaching at 11 a.m. on Sunday, but I'm not sure how he was going to make it this week, due to being dead and all. Headed out on Pico to visit the Compact Space gallery, where some USC students were having a show. Hit the gallery at 1pm but no one was there to let me in. I am not sure if they keep regular hours. The opening was last night, so I thought on Saturday someone might be there. No dice. Sharon called when I was on Venice and Hoover so I walked the bike and spoke to her for awhile. But I had to get off the phone due to being starving. At Normandie, the road got really crappy. Looks like it's being graded. So I headed south to Washington Boulevard. Among the car places and boarded up storefronts, two white people drinking coffee stood out like sore thumbs and turns out one of them was this lady I know who is very "involved" in the community. She is kind of bossy and weird. I yelled HELLO to her and then checked into the center lane and turned right onto Gramercy to cross the 10. Saw Peter driving north on Gramercy and yelled HELLO to him too but in the split second he looked at me I don't think there was a glimmer of recognition. Made it home, unlocked the back gate and booked in the back door straight to the fridge. I was so hungry.

**February 28** On the way back from school, clouds started to come in and I felt a few raindrops. On 36<sup>th</sup> Place there was a lot going on. One man was in his front yard singing "Lean on Me" loudly along with his stereo which was also quite loud. Amazing. I think he was cleaning his garage.

Rode to LACC for ceramics class. Left around 5:15.

The sky was so gorgeous, contrails everywhere, pink poofy clouds to the east, slanting evening light delineating the shapes of buildings, giving life to the colors of the city. I mean, truly so beautiful. Traffic was bad. Lots of people in their cars just hanging out, leaning back, bored. I stopped to take pictures a number of times. It's the light that was nice, didn't really want any of the subject matter but shot anyhow. Took a picture of a locksmith small business in the parking lot of a minimall on Western, but the light was better on the other side of the street. Took lots of pictures of the sky and contrails for old times sake. On Beverly, just east of Oxford, rode by a patch of sand that seemed to be soaking up a spill. I remember going through this sand a few days ago and I think this was the oil that got all over my bike and my pants and soaked through to my panties.

I smelled food the whole ride and I was so hungry I wasn't sure how I could possibly make it through ceramics class. I kept my eyes open for something I might stop and eat quickly, but fast food is yucky and slow cooked food takes too long. Everything smelled delicious. Korean BBQ, tacos. I almost stopped for a taco but it's a bit messy to eat while riding. When I got to school, I went to the catering truck and bought a banana and a bag of Fritos.

Daniel offered to give me a ride home from ceramics but I didn't want to get in the habit of getting rides. I was tired, but the ride's all downhill. Around 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Kingsley, my right brake cable snapped while I was braking. That's not good. I was kind of worried and thought of calling Louis and inviting him to meet me at a restaurant in K-town and then driving home with him. But my bike still has some oil on it and I didn't think he would like that in his car. And I have two brakes. I am very used to braking with my right hand and instinctually, if a car is coming or something, I reach for the right lever. I don't use the brake that much, since I'm on a fixie. But when I need it, it's certainly a good thing to have. And I do use it a lot on downhill areas. I don't want to hurt my knees. So there were a couple of times I reached for the wrong brake, but I will try to remember to only use the left one. Hopefully I can either figure out how to fix this or stop by the Bicycle Kitchen on my way home from school Wednesday.



## **March 1** Happy March.

I forget sometimes that I live in South Central Los Angeles, a section of town known nationwide through the magic of rap music and movies. I don't often go very far south on my bike, but today, I needed to go to Antique Stove Heaven, at 5414 Western Ave, near 54<sup>th</sup> Street. It's not that far away, but the ride is scenic. Western is sometimes a bit potholy near the side of the road, so



I had to take more of the lane than usual. Just checked back quickly to see if there was any traffic coming and pulled into the road. Not a big deal. Passed by two hotels that are across the street from one another.

The Sporty Fox and Mustang Motel. They look very clean and landscaped from the street. I thought a place with a name like "Mustang Motel" would be the very definition of sketchy, but it looked kind of cute. In front of the place was a giant Harley Davidson motorcycle with an even more giant black man on it. He seemed to envelop the bike- that's how big he was! I passed many places that sell fish and chicken and passed by Mr. Angelo's Pizza, which is a place that delivers and often leaves menus on our door. I hear it's good pizza. It smelled good down there but not sure if the scent was coming from Mr. Angelo's or from a nearby Belizean restaurant.

On my way back from ASH, there was a bunch of cops in front of the Sporty Fox talking to a Hispanic lady in pink. The man with the motorcycle was gone.

I stopped at the "Top This" bakery because the door was open and I've never seen them open before. The place is very basic, just a white tiled entry way, totally bare, with a window and a sign above it with the menu. They only sell two varieties of cake- 7-Upper and Shorty Cake. They also have Snapple. The man introduced himself as Tim and said that they had been in this location for only five months, but they have been baking cakes for 15 years. They are on the corner of 36<sup>th</sup> and Western. I got a slice of 7-Upper Cake.

I stopped on the corner of Arlington and Western at Burger Palace, which is right around the corner from my house and I got an order of fries and a Coke.

Now I feel kind of sick because I ate all the fries.

**March 2** Miserable cold and drizzly ride home from school. When I left this morning, it was sunny and crisp out. What happened while I was in class?

A woman with a half bald head scooted out in front of me.

I saw another lady with bright yellow hair. There was a building with a take-out window that said "VEGI-SOUL" on it for awhile, but now I can't find it. I was hoping a vegetarian soul food place might open on Jefferson. But now I'm suspecting that it was there for a movie set and not a restaurant.

**House of Dimes** was open and several customers were at the counter. What is up with the name of that place? It just sounds SO sketchy!

Rode to LACC around 5 p.m. Wore my new sweater, just finished today. It has one of those giant yellow ribbons on it and it says "Steal This Magnet." I don't think it works, though. I felt like I was just wearing some stupid yellow ribbon sweater. On the back it says "Support the American Way" and there is a picture of a flag and a cross and a gun, but again I don't think it really comes through at all. It just looks pro-America and rah rah. Another yellow ribbon is on the sleeve and it says "OIL WAR." But who can read "OIL WAR" when it's sort of caught in a wrinkle at my wrist and I'm on a bike? The yellow ribbons come through but not the text. Anyhow, the sweater fits OK. It's a bit big and boxy but looks good.

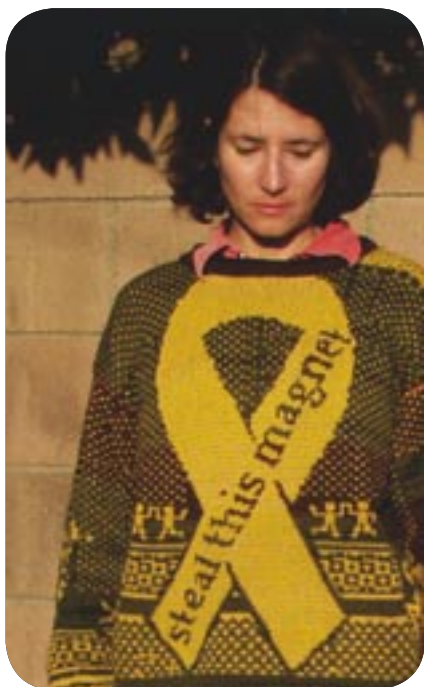
Drizzly all the way to school. What is UP with this weather? I avoided the segment of Beverly I think was responsible for the oil spurting. It was a steady drizzle, never a driving rain or anything, but by the time I got to school there was water dripping off my helmet. My sweater kept me warm and it was just a little bit damp when I got to school.

After ceramics class (my first successful go at the wheel- hurray!) I went over to the Bicycle Kitchen to have my brake cable fixed. The consensus at the Bicycle

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Kitchen is that the joke on the sweater about the magnet is thoroughly confusing. No one knows that those fucking things are magnets. They thought that they were stickers! But that's the whole point of the sweater- that those yellow ribbons are magnets and not stickers. That a sticker may have some idea of commitment behind it but a magnet is just a mood. So to steal the magnet is to call someone on their ideas of commitment to this cause. If you really cared, the sweater says, dare to get a sticker. Or something a bit more permanent. But this message fell on ignorant ears. Because the people that hate the magnets don't know that they are magnets in the first place.

After the Bicycle Kitchen, Daniel and I went to get a drink at Faultline, which is a leather bar on Melrose. At the door, I bought Daniel some raffle tickets for his birthday. He got a length of raffle tickets equal to the length from his crotch to the floor, measured by some bulky young man. Inside the television was on loud. No



music, just TV. We'd been there before together, en route to a party at the Observatory. I was dressed as a safety cone and he was dressed as El Nino. Another time I was there on the set of a gay porn movie, but I don't remember much about it except the figures painted on the walls. It seems that things have been changed around inside the place. We ordered Rolling Rocks and hung out until the raffle numbers were picked. Of course the first

number called was Daniel's and he won a porn tape called "Two Brothers." He rejected the tape, saying that he had plenty already, so he then was given a basket of potpourri and lube. Yuck. But at least he can regift the potpourri. Rode home, still drizzling, but now both brakes are working.

Louis made his "special" tuna salad for dinner but I had eaten a sandwich at ceramics class so I wasn't really very hungry. I think I have to bring sandwiches more often to class because otherwise I get too hungry.

**March 3** I was so tired this morning and the last thing I wanted to do was crawl back on my bike and schlep to South Pas to pick up my car, which has been at the mechanics getting a new fuel pump since Saturday. I dragged around the house for a bit and finally I dragged my ass out on my bike. Colleen the neighbor pulled out around the same time as I, but in a car, and I passed her while she was at the light at the corner. Instead of taking the usual route, I went down Jefferson. I am not embarrassed to say that I went a longer and more circuitous route just to avoid a half-block long hill on Cimarron, just south of Adams. I felt so lazy! I turned north on Vermont and started looking for a pupuseria that Lindsay told me about in class. I passed Olympic Burger, which is where one of my students buys his "Homey" figurines. There is a small peach-colored restaurant near the 10 on the west side of Vermont that has a light-up reindeer on the rooftop. I think that's probably the place. Lindsay says it's open late and is yummy.

I cut east on Washington, then north on Fig, had a short spurt of energy on Broadway because I really enjoy being on Broadway, then east, north, east, north, ending up at Groundwork, where I met Dan. Had a tough time with the bike parking. There is only one signpost to lock to nearby and there was already another bike chained to it. I carefully locked my bike up next to it, trying not to disturb it. Noticed that it also had some grungy oil spattered on it and I wondered if it went through the same spill on Beverly.

Dan couldn't find a parking space and had to drive around for a long time looking. We had sandwiches and I bought coffee, one pound of espresso for us and two pounds of beans for our plumber, who didn't charge us when he

came out and fixed our faucet. He made it crooked, but at least it's working now.

Rode to Union Station, took the Gold Line to Mission, and pulled into Le Car, where a lady was explaining some Volvo problems to Jack. Her car looked way older than mine. I was so happy to see my car since I was feeling SO lazy, and I loaded it up with my bike and shoes and helmet and all that.

So I asked Jack where I should go for a smog test and he says that he should take it instead of me in case there might be problems, so he suggested Monday but I find it a real pain in the ass to go back and forth to South Pas, so I just left the car with him. I was so bummed, since I was feeling so tired and lazy and just didn't want to ride home, but I got my bike out of the car and put it together and got back on the saddle and rode to the train. Got off at Chinatown and rode south and on Spring. Midway down a block on Spring Street with not much going on, there was a shop selling CDs. An old Chinese man stood out front and BLARING from the speaker was this old song I haven't heard in forever.... "so high that I could almost see eternity... you needed me." I couldn't remember the name of that damn song. Or the refrain. What was that song? Somewhere on Pico, under an underpass, I called Sharon and sang it to her voicemail. I was sure she'd have the answer. West on Pico right past the Greek place and south on Harvard to Washington, to Gramercy, to Adams to Cimarron, to 30<sup>th</sup> to Arlington, to 31<sup>st</sup> and home. Venice is still all torn up and unridable.

**March 4** The song was by Anne Murray. I'm taking the bus today. I've had it!

**March 6** Marathon Sunday! The marathon is fun. There's a ton of people out there in the streets whooping it up and another whole ton of people giving it their all and running their guts out. Literally. I began the day by riding over to USC, where the "Acura" bike ride was finishing up. I was volunteering to hand out Bikesummer propaganda. Noticed a pretty black and white cat recently hit by a car. Brains were coming out of its pretty little head. It was kind of a mess. I turned right on Vermont. There were barriers and uniformed police and marathon security

everywhere. I turned left on Expo and found that I was confronted by a lot of hay bales put there to keep riders from flipping into the street when they turned on to the USC campus. This made it difficult for me to enter the campus. I went into the parking lot near Watt Hall and there was a giant fence around it and outside the fence, riders were coming streaming into the campus. I finally found a small hole in the fence and I jumped into the flow of bikes which meant I was kind of poaching the finish line. Not that it mattered. The bicyclists obediently got off of their bikes because there was a 'no cycling on campus' rule in effect. No surprise there. They hate bikes at USC! So I walked my bike with the other civilians and we passed a table full of medals for those who finished and everyone took one (I didn't) and then I got to the quad which was all full of tents and people with bikes and free cliff bars in weird flavors. I saw someone passing out the Bikesummer flyers so said hello and then went looking for the LACBC table, which didn't have a sign on it and that kind of bummed me out. Finally found it and stashed my bike there (who's gonna steal THAT anyhow?) and then onto the business of handing out the flyers. I'm not sure exactly what time I got there, but seemed that a lot of the so-called "elite" riders were already back in their SUVs and the folks coming in at this point were winded and not very used to riding. Cool that they paid \$35 to ride their bike, but maybe it would be great if they would also try riding their bike for free. And even on the same streets! I heard someone say that they only ride once a year. Wow. But great to see so many Angelenos on bikes. All kinds of bikes, from the shittiest with rusty chains to the very fancy "doctor's" bikes which looked as if they'd been spit shined. After all the flyers were gone, went home. Cat still there.

Dan came by around 11 and we took off for Olympic to ogle the runners. He made fun of me because I was riding a rusty old steel fixed gear instead of the gorgeous Bianchi road bike I have stashed away. But it just seemed like so much trouble. I'd have to switch pedals, pump the tires, throw grease on the chain and hook a bag of tools onto it. I can't put panniers on that bike, which is the biggest reason I don't ride it. That and I can't really lock it up anywhere without worrying. But for a Sunday ride, he's probably right. Whatever. He was on a titanium bike

and wearing bike shorts. I used to wear bike shorts more but I just don't go very far anymore so jeans are fine. We went up to Olympic and Western and crossed the route. We were near Mile 23, so people were almost done running. They looked like they would be happy to be in bed. It was still pretty early in the day so most of these runners knew what they were doing. It wasn't like the late-in-the-day death march when all the novices are dragging their battered bodies down the hot street. So it was pretty fun to watch. People just loping by. There is a lot of entertainment along the route. Seems like every vacant lot has a garage band or a radio station or a group of dancers. We saw Native American dancers jumping up and down in feathered headdresses and full regalia, a group of disabled Latino singers, several bands, several radio stations, a Baptist choir from Altadena, and a woman in a kimono offering a tray of peeled bananas to the runners as they ran by.

**March 7** I was starving after class. The new Vegi-Soul place had an "OPEN" sign in the window. I was so excited! The menu looked great. But the OPEN sign was deceiving. They are closed on Mondays. Damn.

**March 8** Rode to school twice, once to print at the lab and again to print at the lab and go to the slide library. On my way home the second time, I noticed that the dead cat I saw on marathon Sunday was still dead and in the road. There was once a dog on my corner dead for an entire weekend. I tried calling to have it removed and the office was closed on Saturday and Sunday. But today is Tuesday and it looked like a fresh kill on Sunday morning. Just a few blocks away from the dead cat were thousands of runners and media and police. I could smell it as I rode by. Dead rotting cat in the middle of Jefferson Blvd.

**March 10** Rode to PC Color to pick up my slides but even though I had called to make sure they'd be ready, they weren't. So I rolled down to Groundworks, where I was going to have an iced tea, but turned out the iced tea they have is some fruity flavor, so I had iced coffee instead. A man at the table next to me was talking about Thing, the exhibition at the Hammer, and the lady he was

talking to seemed bored. I thought it was nice that people are talking about art while drinking coffee, even though he didn't really like the show and the lady he was with seemed bored. There was a couple of gals with a pitbull not on a leash. I rode back to PC Color and picked up the slides and dropped them at the MTA building, then got on the Gold Line and rode up to Pasadena. Went all the way to the end of the line. There was a young couple across from me and near the beginning of the route they were passing notes and it was cute, but as we got closer to the final stop, they started making out and it was gross. I don't want to see that on the train. Took my bike down in the elevator and rode over to see Charlie at his studio. Hung out for awhile and then I took Colorado Blvd west for awhile. I thought maybe I could pick something up for dinner somewhere, but everything was closed. Caught the Gold Line south to Chinatown, stopped by the BikeSummer fundraiser at The Smell. Everyone there was wearing identical black t-shirts and looked "punk." Eighties-style, but in this weird replicant way. I seem to remember the 80's as being a bit more diverse. We couldn't just order our punk outfit from some company online. Anyhow, I didn't stay for the show, but went down to the grad gallery and saw an art show and then rode home. Somewhere along the way, I lost my keys. Mortifying.

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**March 14** Nearly ran into an old Asian lady crossing the crosswalk at Wilshire and Western. I swerved to avoid hitting her and nearly fell off my bike. Instead, I somehow banged my pedals into my flesh and drew blood. Not sure how that happened exactly, but at least I didn't hit the lady. Rode to school and felt pursued at every step. Too many close calls. On the way home, rode down Melrose, turned south on Kenmore. A convertible BMW pulled up next to me as I was riding south and told me that I'm not visible enough, that my bike lights aren't bright enough, and that I need to wear more reflective material. I apologized, I don't know why. I guess I would feel bad if someone hit me and it was my fault for not being visible enough. I will get new batteries.





## Further reading

*Spend quality time off your bike reading about being on a bike, or live vicariously through the adventures of others. You can find a lot of terrible advertising-supported bike magazines on your local newstand, but unless you really need to know about the subtleties between various types of suspension forks, don't bother. There are many cool little self-published gems out there that aren't trying to sell you something you don't need, and the writing is usually more interesting or at least more honest. When was the last time you read about a hooker riding her bike to meet a trick in a mainstream bike mag? That's right. Never. Check [Microcosmpublishing.com](http://Microcosmpublishing.com) (5307 N. Minnesota Ave., Portland, OR 97217-4551) or [Quimbys.com](http://Quimbys.com) for a good selection of small press publications and other fun stuff.*

**CarBusters** (*one year subscription \$16, World Carfree Network, Krátká 26, 100 00 Prague 10, Czech Republic or by credit card at [www.worldcarfree.net/resources](http://www.worldcarfree.net/resources)*)

This amazing mag is published in Prague, where they are socially progressive and not excited about cars, 4 times per year, by the World Carfree Network. Articles in #22 included many updates and notices of activist opportunities and events, a guide to pedestrian architecture, a piece about a woman who walked 80 miles from home to her nearest bus stop, book reviews, notes on recent studies, and an article about the banning of rickshaws in Bangladesh. All very readable and informative and sprinkled with humorous drawings and writing. Subscribe!

**Critical Mass** (*P0 Box 7 1357 Pittsburgh, PA, 15213.*

*Email: [jallayalla@hotmail.com](mailto:jallayalla@hotmail.com)*)

Old school zine (crooked staples, typewriter, arty cover with sprayed stencil and stamps) has wild stories about being a lady with something hard and fast between her legs. Read about a lady bike messenger, a lady who works in a bike shop and a lady who works as a hooker and rides her bike to meet clients. All

very punk and decently written. Kind of self-consciously zine-y in terms of design, but that's not a terrible thing. There is a nicely illustrated how-to piece about creating a blender out of a bicycle so that you can pedal margaritas. You have to know how to weld. And a great list in the back of local bike projects, organized by state. I'm not sure if it's still being published. I got my copy from Quimby's and it says the deadline for the next issue was October 1, 2002, so not sure what's up with that.

**Go By Bicycle #3** (\$3 Scott Larkin, PO box 18233, Portland, OR, 97218, ([www.gobybicycle.com](http://www.gobybicycle.com), [scott@gobybicycle.com](mailto:scott@gobybicycle.com)),

I gotta say that I'm a little disappointed in #3 because 4 pages/ is reprinted from Life in the Bike Lane, an awesome zine about a dude who gave up on driving. I demand that culture is progressive and not regressive. Anyhow, there's also an interview with a bike commuter named Michael and a cartoon.

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

Kate has just re-released issues 1,2,&3 together under one cover! Get her stories about riding the bus as one awesome 53 page tome for only 3.50. Cool beans.

**Chainbreaker#4** (\$3, Shelley, 621 N. Rendon, New Orleans, LA, 70119)

Chainbreaker continues to rule with Issue #4, which has way more dense writing about stuff that matters, more info on how to fix your bike, lots of stories about riding and bike culture and cars and reviews of bike zines I never heard of. Go Shelley!

**Knit In Peace** (\$1 plus \$1 postage or Canadian stamps, Susanna Eve, 2029 Kline Street, Halifax, NS, B3L 2X4 Canada)

Sweet little magazine about knitting and activism, published by a mother of 5 in Canada who believes that knitting can change the world. Good selection of knitting activism resources and lists of books and blogs.

**Slave to the Needles** (PO Box 260224, Madison, WI 53726- get it from Quimby's, Chicago)

Super zine about knitting includes comics, drawings, patterns and lots of book reviews and interviews with knitters including indie rock musicians. Aimee, the lady who writes is, is severely into knitting and makes such great drawings and tells funny and touching stories.

### **Reviewed in SS2:**

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

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

**Dear Motorist** (1.50, available from Microcosm Publishing)

**Leapfrog** (6163 Carrollton Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46220)

## **LOS ANGELES**

**The Bicycle Kitchen** (706 Heliotrope (2 blocks W of Vermont, at Melrose) right by LACC, Mon: 10-5, 6:30-9:30, T/W/Th: 6:30-9:30, Sat/Sun 10-5, 323-NO-CARRO 323-662-2776, [bicyclekitchen.com](http://bicyclekitchen.com))

New location! A storefront! The Bicycle Kitchen is a place to fix your bike, a meeting place for cyclists; the kind of bike-loving place I thought only existed in far away cities like Portland. There is always someone there stoked to help you make your bike run better, and on the 2nd and last Monday of every month, they hold BITCHEN' KITCHEN, a ladies-only night of bike mechanics and mayhem.

**Critical Mass** (last Fri of the month. Meeting place going through changes... check [BicycleKitchen.com](http://BicycleKitchen.com) for updated info. Or try to find us at 6pm at Wilshire & Western.)

CM is a worldwide monthly celebration of bike riding. Everyone is welcome on this slow-ish tour of Friday night traffic. Be there.

### **Midnight Ridazz**

(2nd Friday of each month, 9:30pm, parking lot of Pioneer Chicken, Echo Park & Sunset. Check [BicycleKitchen.com](http://BicycleKitchen.com) for details)

I hear these late night themed costumed rides are more fun than get-out, but since I am lame and live in South Central, I am not a participant. Riding at midnight where I live is exciting, too, but not in the same way.

### **BikeSummer** ([BikeSummer.org](http://BikeSummer.org))

Every summer, a different city hosts BikeSummer, and this summer, it's Los Angeles! June will be full of rides and fun-check the BikeSummer website for info and schedule.

A square piece of black fabric with a red border, featuring the text "Things can only get BETTER." in white cross-stitch. The text is arranged in three lines: "Things can" on the top line, "only get" on the middle line, and "BETTER." on the bottom line. The word "BETTER." is in all caps and includes a period. The fabric has a visible grid pattern from the stitching.

Things can  
only get  
BETTER.