

Inexplicable Light Rail =

Just a little house
on a city street
4 writers in a
blah
blah

1. OPENING NARRATION

NARRATOR

Who lives in this house full of writers? He's the one in the big upstairs bedroom with shiny black hair and an easy smile for everyone... in his hot tub: It's Sam! She lives on the stairs and carries the keys to her demise in the pockets of her Dashiki: It's Steph! Lying on his princess bed, buried in reams of paper, held together by a tight, white man thong: It's Herbach! And down deep in the dark basement, wading in the pungent wading pool of his soul: It's Brady! And who am I? I live in the attic, singing songs and entertaining guests. I'm Dave. I narrate this show.

Politics in the city are sometimes silly. The Lit 6 neighborhood is represented by a big man, Rod King Polmgrensen, who drives a fat Cadillac. In order to get elected, Rod King sold himself as a man of the people, a voice of tool shed logic. Rod King, however, ran for office to change things in the city for his benefit. For instance early in 2007 Counselor Polmgrensen began to push for a light rail stop in the neighborhood, even though it would require a complete re-route of the line. He said:

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN

Listen. People in my neighborhood need a faster way to get to down town and out to the Mall. These are hardworking people. Hardworking people deserve ease.

Southern
not Quimby

NARRATOR

But Polmgrensen's push for the light rail had little to do with giving his constituents ease. Counselor Polmgrensen was over heard telling Clerky the Liquorstore Clerk the following:

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN

Thumpin rap music drives my kid crazy. Sounds like two shoes in a drier. Bumpity Bumpity. Kid drives around playing that junk and he keeps crashing into everything. I can't afford insurance! If he wants to go to the Mall he's gonna have to get on a train from now on. That's why I moved the station!

This honestly
Sucks

NARRATOR

Counselor Polmgrensen would not have been so forthcoming, except it was his third trip to the liquor store in one afternoon. The Counselor loves Courvoissier almost as much as he loves power.

But where would the new station be built? None of the neighbors wanted a station in their yard. One evening, late, while the Counselor stood on his porch watching Herbach accidentally set fire to the Lit 6 station wagon, a Courvoissier-soaked epiphany descended.

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN

We'll stick that station out in those dirty writers' yard. Egg head yahoos won't even notice!

Boring

CUT ALL?

NARRATOR

But the writers did notice. On a hazy September morning, they slowly became aware that a fully functioning light rail station had sprung up in front of their house. Tonight's stories will tell the tale of that Light Rail stop and what it meant to our terrible housemates.

2. BRADY

BEGIN BRADY BERGESON MUSIC

NARRATOR

In the concrete swamp of his basement room, Brady woke and prepared for his day as per usual...with a relaxing hour of morning techno.

[fast and heavy drum & bass (boom-chic, boom-chic)]

BRADY

Ahhh, that's the spot. There's nothing like underground German techno to center you in the morning. Once a month I receive a cassette tape in the mail from my friend DJ Durkheim, whose real name is Tony. He's been living in a basement in the former East Berlin for 30 years. He doesn't even know that the wall is down. And I haven't told him yet because I'm afraid it would take some of the angst out of his music.

After an hour of DJ Durkheim's beats, I dress in my ubiquitous gray suit and one of my thousands of ascots, which I painstakingly select and lay out the night before. Then, properly attired for the day, I climb out the cellar door so as I might get a touch of morning sun.

What is up w/ this tort change? I don't like change!

Start music

No music
Blah = Steph

NARRATOR

Brady began his morning walk around the outside of the house, his wingtips lightly coated with morning dew, only to be disturbed by their neighbor, the Punk Poet Paul D, who was on his hands and knees mowing his lawn with a scissor.

[sound of scissor snipping]

BRADY

Excuse me, dear sir. But must you cut your grass so early in the morning. The noise is unbearable.

[scissor stops]

PAUL D

Oh, hey, Brady. Sorry. I thought it'd be okay since it's almost noon and I'm cutting it with a scissor.

BRADY

And why, might I ask, are you using a scissor?

PAUL D

~~Why? Why? You have to ask why?~~ Because mowing the lawn with a scissor is punk rock, man. That's why. I can't be seen behind a lawn mower. That is so Woodbury.

BRADY

Oh, yes. I had forgotten about your issues with the establishment.

PAUL D

It's okay, man. What are you doing out of the basement anyway? Being kind of adventurous today, aren't you? I thought the outdoors gave you seizures.

BRADY

No, no. I come out at least once a day, but purely for medicinal purposes. Must have that fifteen minutes of sun. You know how important Vitamin D is for the absorption of calcium.

PAUL D

(knowingly)

You don't have to tell me. You've seen my mom's hunch.

BRADY

Yes, unfortunately I have. Well, it's been nice chatting with you Mr. Punk Poet Paul D, but I should be going. I have half the house yet to walk around.

PAUL D

Yeah, I've gotta get back to the lawn. If I'm not done by three mom won't give me my lemonade.

NARRATOR

Brady left Paul D to his scissoring...

[scissor snipping]

NARRATOR

...and continued his stroll around the house. But something the punk poet said was beginning to eat at him.

PAUL D

(as if an echo)
Being kind of adventurous...adventurous...adventurous...adventurous...

(bluntly)
aren't you?

NARRATOR

Brady stopped dead in his tracks.

BRADY

Wait a minute. What was Paul D trying to say? Did he think I was unadventurous?

PAUL D

Um, yeah.

BRADY

Who does he think he is? My middle name is Action.

[sound of light rail pulling up to a stop]

BRADY

What the?

[light rail door swooshing open]

LIGHT RAIL ENGINEER

All aboard! Hey, buddy. I said...All aboard!

BRADY

Ah, no thank you, sir. I don't do public transportation. A bit too...public.

NARRATOR

As the light rail pulled away from the house, Brady watched the faces in the window. What he saw were the strong brows and determined glares of modern day explorers. Like Shackleton before them, they too were headed for great lands of possibility. This made Brady depressed, as per usual. He retired to the backyard and the giant oak tree where his great friend Alan Greenspan lives in the treehouse.

[Greenspan clarinet music]

There is getting too good.

BRADY

He plays beautifully, doesn't he? After Mr. Greenspan retired from his post as chairman of the federal reserve he moved into our treehouse, where he plays his clarinet. I climbed the ladder and poked my head through the hole in the floor. Excuse me, sir.

[clarinet screech]

GREENSPAN

Oh, Brady, it's you. I thought I felt a cold front.

NARRATOR

Greenspan reached for a skewer of meat that was cooking on a small Hibachi.

GREENSPAN

Care for some pigeon?

BRADY

Pigeon? I didn't know Whole Foods sold pigeon.

GREENSPAN

They don't.

Funny, but necessary?

*what's
going
to make
train sound?*

*Toot toot
M. Bradles*

BRADY
Then where'd you get it?

GREENSPAN
Look around, Brady. There are pigeons everywhere,
just waiting for any old retired economist with a
little bit of time on his hands and a high-powered
rifle.

BRADY
(horrified)
Sir!

GREENSPAN
Mmmmm. Delicious.

(lip smacking?)
Brady, the pigeon, like many of today's young star-
lets, is nothing but breast. Here, take a bite.

BRADY
No thank you, Mr. Greenspan, I am a vegetarian.

GREENSPAN
Ah, yes, the guilty educated liberal's diet of
choice. You're loss. That just means more pigeon for
the supply side of the free market. It's a good
thing that when it comes to pigeon I always demand
more. *Ha Ha*

BRADY
May I ask you a question, sir?

GREENSPAN
(lip smacking) (moaning)
Go right ahead.

BRADY
Do you find me to be an adventurous fellow?

GREENSPAN
Let's see: you always wear a suit and ascot.

BRADY
Yes.

GREENSPAN
You don't eat meat.

BRADY
Correct.

GREENSPAN
Fish?

BRADY
Nope. Mercury.

GREENSPAN
Dairy?

BRADY
Lactose.

*Goes
Back
into
action
here*

GREENSPAN

And you don't like people or the outdoors.

BRADY

Idiots and dirty.

GREENSPAN

You might fall on the unadventurous side of the chart.

BRADY

I was afraid of that.

GREENSPAN

What's got your ascots in a bunch?

BRADY

I saw a group of adventurers departing for far off lands. And it's got me thinking I might want to take on an adventure of my own, for artistic purposes, of course. I've always fancied myself a young Hemingway.

GREENSPAN

(angrily)

Brady, I don't ever want to hear you compare yourself to Hemingway again. I don't like to talk about it, but I grew up with Hemingway. One day, out on the playground, he called me a sissy when I declined to box with him. Even as a toddler he was a bastard.

BRADY

I'm sorry, sir. I had no idea.

GREENSPAN

It's okay, Brady. Now, could you hand me that claw, I've got some pigeon in my teeth.

NARRATOR

Brady, stirred by Alan Greenspan's Hemingway tale, decided it was time he too gathered epic stories of his own. He rushed to the basement and packed a satchel full of ascots and then ran out into the yard toward the light rail stop, where he ran into Sam.

SAM

Hey, kemosabe, where you off to in such a hurry?

BRADY

I'm lookin for adventure.

SAM

Head out on the highway?

BRADY

You know I don't drive, Sam.

SAM

It was a...um...you know, from the song.

BRADY

I have no time for your infernal ramblings.

[light rail pulls to stop]

SAM

You know...

(singing)

Ha!
I love Hemingway humor!

Lookin for adventure / head out on the highway / get
you moto...

(trails off)

NARRATOR

Brady jumped on the light rail and sat down on a plastic seat next to a young girl, his satchel of ascots in his lap.

BRADY

Excuse me, little girl, where does this train go?

LITTLE GIRL

The Mall of America.

*Mummy Mummy nose to nose
I canny did*

BRADY

Ah, yes, I got you. Very shrewd commentary on the
capitalization of our country. A country of consum-
erism. The Mall of America. I'm going to ride this
train to the last stop. See every bit of this great
land.

NARRATOR

A tear ran down Brady's cheek as his great journey began. When the light rail stopped at the Mall of America Brady got off. Inside the mall, he ate something the people of those parts called a Cinabunn, and then he rode the train home and wrote in his diary.

BRADY

Dear Diary,
I saw the world today. It was not pretty. I am exhausted. Ate foreign food and now have a stomach ache. Remember to give Greenspan
the souvenir caricature of me and Howie Mandel. Good night, Brady, the Great.

BRADY CLOSE

*Don't we need to
wind Little Man in better?*

3. INTERSTICE #1 - MOHAMMED AND LITTLE MAN

NARRATOR

We don't want to get obsessed with the Light Rail. Other things were happening in the neighborhood. For instance the neighborhood
paper boy, Mohammed, was writing in his diary. Don't we have a song for that?

(singing):

*Delivering papers in the neighborhood
Seeing things that no boy should
Getting where the getting's good
He's the paperboy*

Freakin' Great

Rock'n' Roll

MOHAMMED

(speaking firmly)

My name's Mark!

-end song-

MOHAMMED

Dear Diary,

I am no longer a paperboy. Now, I am a paperman. Today I witnessed first hand the cold reality of death. My hamster, Wentzel, bit my
dad and died. Alas! Poor Wentzel! He was so young! And in a twist of fate, it was my own father who hath him slain. Dad said that
Wentzel's biting him had nothing to do with his death, but I know the truth. Dad is like Britney Spears: he's toxic. At least to hamsters.

I didn't really care for Wentzel, truth be told. He did a BM every ten seconds, and when he wasn't BM-ing, he just sat there. He re-
minded me of the writers at the Lit 6 House.

In related news, I got to see Steph today when I went to collect for the paper. She was wearing her sports bra. O! To be a hummus stain on that sportsbra!

In closing, I know now that I am coming closer each second to the tender embrace of the grave. Thanks for turning me onto that one, dad.

~~Song reprise~~

NARRATOR

The City of Minneapolis hired a band that day, to celebrate the new Light Rail stop's grand opening. As two trains pulled in – one heading down town, the other to the Mall, Counselor Polmgrensen, the man responsible for this stop, introduced the band.

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN

It's my superior pleasure to bring you a great Twin Cities band playing us some great Twin Cities music right here at YOUR VERY OWN light rail stop. Let's hear it for Little Man!

LITTLE MAN SONG #1

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN

What a great band! Thank you fellows... and little lady!

END INTERSTICE #1

4. SAM

FIRST SAM OSTERHOUT MUSIC, THEN...

– TRAIN MUSIC –

NARRATOR

This is the story of how Herbach and the light rail teamed up to bring Sam a Gyr! who would teach him how to love again. It's a complex story, full of adult themes. Like job postings and garnished wages.

SAM

I pay Herbach ten dollars a week to manage my MySpace page. I just don't have the energy to do it myself. And he's so jovial. I actually hired him when he answered my ad on Craigslist. His resume was a little weak, but his cover letter was charming.

HERBACH

(reading)

Dear Mr. Osterhout

Osterhout

SAM

Doesn't get any better than that!

HERBACH

I firmly believe that I can be a great asset to your MySpace management team. As my own personal MySpace page manager, I have experienced virtually no turnover and have garnered friends in the six-digit range.

SAM

What an intro! Powerful!

HERBACH

Additionally, as your best pal and housemate, you can rest assured that I will always work with your best interests in mind.

SAM

It's true. We're best pals.

HERBACH

I look forward to a time when we can further discuss my qualifications...in your hot tub. Sincerely...

SAM

Got to do something about Polmgrensen KILL HIM!

wait for it...

HERBACH

Herbach.

SAM

Booya! Truth be told, as soon as the position opened up I knew I'd be hiring Herbach. Posting it on the Internet was just a formality. I post all of my positions on the Internet. Usually as jpegs.

And since Herbach has taken over my MySpace page, I'd gotten over 3,000 friends, all of whom were beautiful, homebound women between the ages of 22 and 40, and all of whom I was in constant contact with, via Herbach. Herbach set 'em up, and I knocked 'em down. Figuratively, of course. I would never literally knock a woman down. Unless she was in the act of committing a crime, like armed robbery. Even then, I probably wouldn't knock her down so much as I'd punch her in the throat as hard as I could.

Where was I?

MySpace. I love people. I want to be constantly surrounded by people. If I'm not sipping coffee with Yoolie, my yoga instructor, then I'm gabbing on the phone with my dear friend, Gayle. But after my last girlfriend, I have trust issues. She was perfect—so smart and so funny and cute. I forget her name. But, as I recall, it was a very pretty name. Like Gabriella or something. No, that's not it. Anyway, I thought what's her name was the one I would settle down with. Marriage. Kids. House. Furniture. Those Nikes that work with the iPod Nano. The whole bit. But then I caught her in the act of committing a crime. Armed robbery. I would have punched her in the throat but she had bound my hands and feet. What a stinker! So I still wanted to meet women—I love people—but I guess you could say I was a little PTSD, which is no laughing matter. MySpace was the perfect solution. I told Herbach to only befriend beautiful homebound women—women who don't like to go outside—or who were otherwise lazy. C'est Parfait! Girlfriends without any of the cumbersome seeing them all the time. But then Herbach got greedy and suggested we branch out into Facebook, another social networking site. I told him I'd give him one additional dollar per week to explore my Facebook potential.

That's when the shucks hit the fan. Facebook users are not homebound. They are young and springy. You can communicate with them by "poking" them—pushing a button that says poke. And when you poke a facebook user, it's just like when I poke them literally, with my finger, in the tummy. Really gets 'em charged up. In our weekly update meeting, Herbach had bad news.

HERBACH

I poked four thousand women on Facebook, Sammy, and 1,500 of them want to meet up.

SAM

I'm considering having your wages garnisheed, Herbach.

HERBACH

Take a chill, man. I only poked women who don't drive.

SAM

So what if they don't drive?

HERBACH

Lookit! The odds of someone getting anywhere in the Twin Cities without a car are the same as the odds of a light rail station magically appearing in our front yard.

SAM

The next morning a light rail station magically appeared in our front yard.

TRAIN HORN – TOOT! TOOT!

SAM

I had Herbach's wages garnisheed. // Additionally, Facebook had just launched a new campaign designed to facilitate in-person meetings between members. The campaign was called "Get poked on the light rail," and it was a hit. Within an hour of the first train arriving, there was a woman in my bedroom. We sat and talked all morning. I couldn't get rid of her. Her screen name was Pioneer Grrl, but her real name...

GYRL

My real name is just Gyrl. With a Y.

SAM

Gyrl?

GYRL

But you know that from our many hours of online chatting.

SAM

Heh. Sure do. Gyrl.

GYRL

You know, Sam. I'm having such a good time talking, but I have to say that you really aren't anything like how you described yourself.

SAM

How did I describe myself?

GYRL

You said you were a bronzed Grecian God-like man with curly, long, flowing black locks.

SAM

That's why Herbach gets the big bucks.

GYRL

For some reason you also said that you were the best pal a guy could ever have but you didn't pay your employees very well.

SAM

I can assure you, my wages are competitive. Herbach!

GYRL

Am I how you thought I'd be?

SAM

hang on here
Yes?

GYRL

(slowly)

Can I tell you something? Chatting with you online was like chatting with an anxious, adorable little monkey. You were so funny and also nervous. I could practically smell the cigarette smoke coming out of my computer. I feel like I've known you forever. I'm excited about us, Sam. And look, I brought my overnight stuff just like we talked about. I'll get into my swimsuit and you can give me that hours-long full body massage in the hot tub like you said you would.

SAM

Herbach's fired.

GYRL

Her what?

SAM

Listen, Gyrl. I'm just not so sure about us. My last girlfriend took something very precious from me.

GYRL

Your heart?

SAM

My pinky rings. Listen, you are so beautiful and, so far, you seem to be an exceptionally nice and earnest and intelligent person. You're ambitious and athletic and grounded and really, very funny. I haven't laughed so hard in years. You're no pushover and you've got very symmetrical toes, which is great. Your skin gives off an almost angelic warm glow, your hair shimmers and you smell like crushed rose petals. You're perfect.

GYRL
(slightly upset - showing concern)
Then what's the problem?

SAM
I just need more.

GYRL
(Even - happy)
No you don't. I'll go put on my swimsuit.

SAM
Okey dokie. Gyr! went into my bathroom to change. I guess this is the end of my story. And I guess I had a new girlfriend. But I felt uneasy. I turned on my radio for guidance. The wise Mark Wheat was playing a set.

Cahn-tribute MARK WHEAT ON THE RADIO *Car h/c*
John Vanderslice contributed that last number, which was recorded in his garage. This is 89.3, The Current. Mark Wheat here. You know, that song makes think about love in our technological age. If you fall in love online, are you in love with the person, or the persona? And what if you're a guy who's been robbed at gunpoint by previous girlfriends? Can you ever love again?

SAM
Good question, Mark Wheat.

MARK WHEAT ON THE RADIO
Just curious, I guess. Well, at any rate, here's a new one from Macho Puko from their debut album, Purging Titicaca.

5. INSTERSTICE #2 HOUSE MEETING AND GRAVEYARD OLD LADY DICKINSON

NARRATOR
Early, early in the morning, even before she tried out the new light rail train that had been built near her yard, the Old Lady Dickinson, the Punk Poet Paul D's adopted mom, had gone out to the cemetery, as she did every morning, to visit her beloved husband Ronald, who passed now so many years ago.

SUNG -

This goes into two part with Q and Bradles
Old Ronald is gone.
But she talks to his stone.
It's Old Lady D at the Cemetery.
Old Lady D at the Cemetery.

OLD LADY D
Oh, Ronnic, yuh bitter scandihoo, may you rest in eternal peace, today is the anniversary of the first time our little Punky son Paulie D read a poem for us. Remember?

Little Paulie ran in from his room and said he learned about haiku in his Kindec-garten. We waited, and little Paulie took a big deep breath and he said:

Darkness in my soul
Mother, Father, Me, alone
Where's my damn ice cream?

LITTLE PAUL D

*Paul D
lit-boy voice,
then - grown man.*
Hoot! Hoot!

OLD LADY D.
Oh, we were so proud! I knew our adopted son would change the world with his words. And you knew it too, because you said, "Sonny, I'm glad you learned something new, even if it's something that make you a pansy, because women go fruitcake for that pansy crap."

Oh, how little Paulie beamed!

Oh, Ronnie. I still get sad that I couldn't grow your seed in my own belly and we had to adopt that son from that dirty Irish St. Paulie girl. But you were a good poppa, and if you could see him now, you'd be so proud. He turned out to be a real pansy.

6. INTERSTITIAL: WEEKLY THERAPY

NARRATOR

What a touching moment. Before we get back to the light rail station, let's take a listen to this week's house therapy session.

-OPENING JINGLE-

*Put your mind at ease
The wind in the trees
(spoken) Here, have some tea
Weekly therapy*

-END-

NARRATOR

The state opened up a big old can of mandated therapy on these writers. But they're chewing through therapists faster than the state can send 'em out. This week's brand of therapy: talk therapy.

THERAPIST

Thank you all for inviting me into your home. For this first session, I'd just like to...

BRADY

What are your credentials? Harvard? Yale?

THERAPIST

Well, Brady, I graduated from Colorado College.

BRADY

Dear God! And I suppose you only have your masters.

SAM AND HERBACH

(uproarious laughter)

THERAPIST

That's right, in marriage and family therapy.

BRADY

Can't...even...prescribe. Shameful.

SAM AND HERBACH

(uproarious laughter)

THERAPIST

Herbach, why are you and Sam laughing?

HERBACH

Because this is laugh therapy!

SAM AND HERBACH

(Uproarious laughter)

THERAPIST

No, this is talk therapy.

SAM

Last week I saw a dog get hit by a car!

*Steph is out of
here now.*

*Steph refused group therapy
because.....?*

*(I think I
am making
salmon loaf
w/ old lady
D. —)
or I just hate
u guys?
(plausible, but
2 easy....)*

SAM AND HERBACH
(Uproarious laughter)

SAM
It died!

SAM AND HERBACH
(Uproarious laughter)

THERAPIST
Stop that. Can we just get settled here, I...

STEPH
~~I got a problem I'd like to talk about.~~

THERAPIST
Okay, Steph. Good. Good. Steph. What's on your mind?

STEPH
~~The skin on my chests is discolored. Here, have a look.~~

SAM AND HERBACH
(Uproarious laughter)

THERAPIST
For the love of God - that discoloring is your bra - oh, put those things away!

STEPH
~~You're right! I am wearing a bra! You've already saved me!~~

THERAPIST
My eyes!

HERBACH
Hi therapist, I'm Herbach! I light fires.

SAM AND HERBACH
(Uproarious laughter)

HERBACH
It's funny because it's true!

THERAPIST
It's not funny at all - stop laughing.

SAM AND HERBACH AND STEPH
(uproarious laughter)

STEPH
He lit my shoes on fire while I was wearing them!

SAM AND HERBACH AND STEPH
(uproarious laughter)

THERAPIST
I can't take this anymore. What am I supposed to do?

BRADY
Why don't you go back to Colorado College? I'm sure they offer something more your speed, like HVAC, or auto repair. Perhaps you could get a degree in gunsmithing. Good day, therapist.

-JINGLE REPRISE-

This
sort of
sucks
seriously

Put your mind at ease
The wind in the trees
(spoken) Here, have some tea
Weekly therapy

END INTERSTICE #2

NARRATOR

Speaking of mental health, out on the porch Steph watched as passengers got on and off the light rail trains that pulled up to the new station. She sat on the porch couch, thinking, fuming, hating, as is her wont.

~~STEPH MUSIC...~~

No Steph music, just empty sound of my soul.

STEPH

I'd done nothing all summer but sit on our front porch while other people traveled past me, going places, doing *things*, making *life*. Sometime around August I'd dozed off and when I woke up, there was a light rail stop in front of our porch, with four times the amount of people traveling past our house, making an even larger amount of *life*. That's when I started torturing the carpenter ants.

Everyone around me is along on my personal ride. And if my ride circles the toilet in a spiral of uselessness and despair, then too carpenter ants will be disabled to the point that they are unable complete their work. Unfortunately, none of the **light rail riders** ever got on my train to clinical depression. They were too busy.

[SOUND OF TRAIN APPROACHING AND THEN STOPPING]

STEPH

You people are ugly! And your jobs are....stupid!

~~LIGHTRAIL PASSENGER~~

[with sunny optimism, as he boards the train.]

Ha! Ha! Oh, you're funny! But I've got no time for negativity, I've got to get to work!

One Guy—

STEPH

Sure you do, jerk. Then our neighbor Old Lady D. got off the train. She was wearing sweatpants and a sports bra that was soaked with sweat. It was the same sports bra I was wearing. Mine was soaked with sweat too, but only because I'd been wearing it since Cinco de Mayo.

[SOUND OF TRAIN PULLING AWAY]

OLD LADY D.

Ooooooh, that pilates sure smoothed out my hackie hunch! You should try it girlie. They stretch you with a machine so you don't have to use the armrests of your davenport!

STEPH

I should have replied with venom and vinegar. I should have said: "Your life is meaningless, Old Lady D., and your punk son is poet!"

But I didn't. I don't know why, but whenever that Old Lady calls me "girlie," it makes me feel like a little girl.

So I tackled her.

OLD LADY D.

Ooooooh!

STEPH

[whispering] "Help me Old Lady D," I said, "Help me make something out of my life!"

OLD LADY D

Well hell's bells, girlie, get off me and I'll help you make something! [SOUND OF STEPH GETTING OFF OLD LADY D?] My dead husband Ronald always said, when you don't know what to do with yourself, make something, and if you're gonna make something, make something good, so's then I can eat it.

And when I was a young housewifey like yourself and I didn't know what to make, I just made me a salmon loaf!

THE SALMON LOAF SONG FOR OLD LADY D. AND STEPH

→ sounds like rel/cro.
the sound of
co-dependence

[punchy]

OLD LADY D.

You put some salmon in a grinder
And it make a man go "Woof!"
You add some bread crumbs and some brandy
And you serve up Salmon Loaf!

Come on now, you try it girlie!

STEPH

You put some salmon in a grinder
And it make a man go "Woof!"
You add some bread crumbs and some brandy

OLD LADY D. AND STEPH TOGETHER

And you serve up Salmon Loaf!

STEPH

I am folding on myself before this speeding locomoto.
I've a hump on my back like a dead or dying rhino.
On the street where I live I'm the local quasinoto.
I am folding on myself like an empty bill-foldo.

[SONG OVER]

OLD LADY D.

Ooooooh!

STEPH

Old Lady D. didn't like the sound of that. She saved me that day. She picked me up and carried me, using her massive, pilates-induced core strength, straight through to her house. I didn't want to make salmon loaf, I wanted scream obscenities at lightrail passengers, and then kill carpenter ants with my hapless thumbs.

But the minute she dumped me onto the floor of her kitchen, the house got under my skin. Her house is constructed entirely from remainder copies of "Iaccoca!" by Lee Iaccoca. Her Punk son Poet Paul D. even decopaged her countertop using hundreds of book jackets showing Lee Iaccoca's smiling face.

OLD LADY D.

I raised me a good boy. He got off his dirty poet fanny and made something. So why don't you put your stinky attitude-y in your hoo ha and screw that meat grinder to the counter, if you even can.

STEPH

Oh I can, Old Lady!

I clamped an ancient meat grinder onto Lee Iaccoca's disgusting mug, real tight. [SOUND OF GRINDER BEING CLAMPED] so that I rubbed off most of his teeth. Old Lady D took a seven pound slab of salmon and stuffed it into one end of the grinder [SOUND OF SALMON STUFFED INTO A GRINDER]. She emptied a Costco-sized box of breadcrumbs on top of it [SOUND OF BREAD CRUMBS] as well as an entire jar of parsely [SOUND OF PARSLEY], and then a fifth of brandy [SOUND OF BRANDY]. Then she clapped her hands real sharply in my face.

[CLAP, OLD LADY D.!]]

OLD LADY D.

Now grind it, little girl! Grind it like you're at the Sons of Norway dance hall!

STEPH

So I ground.
[SOUND OF GRINDING, progressively louder]
[little under music?]

I ground and I ground and I ground, like I was drilling Lee Iaccoca a tracheotomy! And then... On the other side of the meat grinder, a little something appeared. And then a little more. My bicep contracted and I ground harder, and harder! I was working up a real-live sweat, a work sweat, not a sitting-in-the-sun-smoking-and-crying sweat! And then there was a little more, and then a nice, soft, mixed-up pink thing flecked with parsely and smelling sweet of brandy and fresh of the ocean burst out of the meat grinder

With no heart
Sarcastic

Sad/pitiful.

Salmon
grinding
music
here

[LOUD PLOP]

and Old Lady D. jumped and waved a loaf pan and shouted:

OLD LADY D.
Hooooooooo!

STEPH
....and slid the loaf pan under the grinder so the meat mixture plopped right in! I was making salmon loaf!

OLD LADY D.
You put some salmon in a grinder
And it make a man go "Woof!"
You add some bread crumbs and some brandy
And you serve up Salmon Loaf!

STEPH
I've just done something! I've made salmon loaf!
I put my anger something positive!
Lee Yaccoway you're a genius!
I've altered the attitude of my mind!

OLD LADY D. AND STEPH
Ooooooooooh!

STEPH
I had made something! I had changed salmon into salmon loaf!

*repeat Serve a Salmon
Loaf! Again
Again
Again
end scene!*

INTERSTICE #3 LITTLE MAN AND LETTER TO CLERKY

NARRATOR

Out at the Little Light Rail Station, Counselor Rod King Polmsgrensen, the man responsible for bringing light rail to the neighborhood, filled balloons, kissed babies and helped Steph hand out tiny portions of the Salmon Loaf she'd made with the Old Lady Dickinson. Then it was time to introduce the grand opening band, Little Man, for a final Light Rail Station Grand Opening Song. Counselor Polmsgrensen approached the Mic. He'd been drinking Courvoissier all afternoon.

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN

It has been a great day today, for the neighborhood! The world! Ho Hey Hey! This neighborhood, once a dead end in the transitless cul de sacs of this cold basster water of a fish town, is now a shining, mobile example of what a speed boat on wheels can look like, if it's got a tasty bottle in its wide open man crawl!

CROWD
What!?

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN

Let's ring er out neighborboob for that super-sized bastion of rock... Little Man... atoo! Woo!

LITTLE MAN
Uh... Thanks.

LITTLE MAN SONG #2

NARRATOR

Counselor Polmsgrensen fell off the grand opening stage during that great song.

Before we go back to another light rail story, let's hear a letter from Clerky's father. Clerky owns the liquor store in our neighborhood. She's from the hills. This letter was mistakenly delivered to the Lit 6 house last week. Here's what the letter said:

CLERKY'S DAD

Dearest Clerky,
Them hills are filled with ties. When you was home we had no ties. Now I spend my days hittin ties with a hairbrush. That ain't right. It's been many years, honey bear. It's been a generation, 13 years, since you showed yore face up here to chase away all the sadness. Cappy still picks his banjo near every night as if that would do him good. I have told old Sad Cappy that I will shoot him down if he don't quit. He keeps on pickin. That's what you left behind, sweet pumpkin.

We need you back! Why don't you plan a visit? You might give me spirit enuf to climb off my cot for an afternoon and maybe me and you can head down to the skatin rink for a little of that old-time roller line dancin. Wouldn't you love to see your old papster on his skates once more? Shore you would.

Yours truly,
Duddy bear

NARRATOR

I didn't know Clerky's dad roller skated! Don't worry. The housemates asked the paper boy Mohammed to deliver the letter to Clerky. Not before Steph scanned it and made it her screensaver.

The day of the light rail station grand opening was getting away from the housemates. We haven't heard from Herbach, have we?

HERBACH MUSIC INTO...

(TRAIN MUSIC, TROLLEY)

NARRATOR

Up in his dark bedroom, Herbach listened to the sound of the light rail train

(TRAIN WHISTLE)

He stood up from his princess bed, light from the hallway catching the shining silver of his tear away sweat pants. Herbach was deep in thought.

HERBACH

You know what the light rail means to me? Opportunity! ~~I'm out of here.~~ My housemates are all pretty. Sam, has pretty hair. Gorgeous and he's a great employer - I love running his internet presence. (Brady, looks like a baby seal) I love that. Steph, she's like Flo, that big whacky waitress on the TV Show Alice, and I'd love to kiss her grits. But you know what? It's time for me to pursue my own destiny. I want to be the hero of my own story. I want to see new people. I want to get me some action in the big city. That's right. Downtown. Between Skyscrapers and streetcars I will go to dance bars and pull off my tear away sweat pants and show off my shining man thong and I will do it all disco-style with a whole new set of beautiful friends, ~~who can spin and rock it like Jennifer Beals in flash dance with ripped up sweat shirts and waterfalls from disco balls... that's all going down,~~ because when you say Herbach, what you're really saying is adventure and love... combined. I will make love when I get on that light rail train!

But I'm scared, scared. I'll need courage. Who does the train have on it? Businessmen with nicely cropped hair and exercised physiques. What if they want a piece of me? And teenagers. I can't stand the smell of their pheromones. I remember gym class. I passed out from that smell twice a week. And little kids? What if there are little kids who attend Montessori schools who are super smart and creative and intellectually flexible, what if they make fun of me? I am so afraid to get on that train. I need courage. I want to be a hero at a dance bar. Courage.

(ACTION MUSIC)

NARRATOR

Herbach threw open his bedroom door and ran down the hall then bounded down the steps. His eyes were filled with tears. Was Herbach sad? No, he was filled with the emotion of a young boy about to find his destiny. He tore through the living room, past Sam who primped in the mirror.

SAM

Hey, slow down kemosabe! I don't want you poking anyone from my facebook.

HERBACH

No time!

NARRATOR

Out the door and past Steph who stood on the porch.

STEPH

Stop, Herbach, I have Salmon Louf!

HERBACH

I'll say a prayer for those dead salmon!

NARRATOR

And past Brady who stood in the yard, a little hunched over.

BRADY

I have a terrible stomach ache.

HERBACH

Not now! I gotta get me some courage, baby seal!

BRADY

~~What?~~

woof woof woof

Art! Art!
Art!
(clapping)

NARRATOR

And then Herbach sprinted, fast, crying out, all the way to the liquor store, where he hoped he would find the courage to get on the light rail train.

HERBACH

Running! Running!

(ACTION MUSIC ENDS)

super faster

NARRATOR

Clerky stood behind the counter counting matchbooks as Herbach burst through the store door.

(STORE BELL)

HERBACH

Hello, Clerky, I am Herbach.

CLERKY

Jingle Balls and Creepin Crackers, I know who you are. Why you so out of breath?

HERBACH

I am on fire and need the liquid courage to find my destiny.

CLERKY

Get out of my store.

HERBACH

Clerky, you left home. You left them thar hills to move here! To the big city! To become you! To fulfill your destiny. Teach me how to live.

CLERKY

Aww baloney. I chased a fool man to this godforsaken town. Now I'm trapped in this store. Are you gonna buy something?

HERBACH

Oh oh! Clerky. You chased a man! You came to the big city for love? I want love!

CLERKY

I got no love. I got cointreau, courvoissier, drambui and Malibu, which all taste like love and which are all for sale, but I got no love. This here's a liquor store.

(Music begins)

NARRATOR

Herbach spread his arms and looked to the sky.

HERBACH

Love, Clerky. Love...

CLERKY

You ain't gonna sing?

HERBACH

Yes, Clerky, I am.

CLERKY

Dang it!

HERBACH LIGHT RAIL SONG

Oh I wonder who I'd meet
If I rode on my two feet
And walked between the doors
Of the light rail

*catch front note
it will be ok*

Oh could it be the girl
Light sparks, batons that twirl
She marches out the door
Of the IDS tower

Oh the hours I would wander
Oh the sounds of underground
Oh the snarls of traffic bound
Riding the rails
Oh the timpani resounds
I've shed a thousand pounds
I'm naked and in love
Right on, the rails

Oh I wonder what I'd find
If I took the train confined
With the riders in their khakis
On the light rail.

Oh would it be so hard
To embark with all my cards
Disembark, the nighttime stars
Dancing around her

Oh the hours I would wander
Oh the sounds of underground
Oh the snarls of traffic bound
Until downtown
Oh the timpani resounds
I've shed a thousand pounds
I'm naked and in love
Riding the light rail

I'm naked and in love
Riding the light rail

I'm naked riding light
On rails to you

CLERKY

Boo!
I hate it when you sing. Drives away my customers!

HERBACH

Clerky, give me some liquid courage to get on the light rail! I'm too afraid...

CLERKY

Aw, bull whips. You don't need to get on the dang light rail. Why would you get on some ve-hicle that's stuck on rails and only goes a coupla places and you gotta wait for it and then yuh gotta fight for a seat because it's full'd up with people? Bull whips!

HERBACH

But I gotta get mobile. If I don't I'm going to start petting Brady and kissing Steph's grits.

CLERKY

What?

HERBACH

Sam is pretty, but I don't want to waste my life combing his hair!

CLERKY

What?

HERBACH

I gotta go mobile, Clerky. I gotta find love in the big city.

CLERKY

Love ain't where you think it's at. Love might be in a alley way. It might be down by the river. You can't get in no alley on the light rail.

HERBACH

How can I get there?

CLERKY

If I give you a present, will you promise to leave?

NARRATOR

Herbach stared deep in to Clerky's watery country eyes. He wondered what present she could possibly give him?

HERBACH

Are you going to give me a bottle of couvoissier?

CLERKY

No free liquor, you free loader!

HERBACH

Then what? If not liquid courage, what?

CLERKY

Roller skates.

HERBACH

Roller skates?

NARRATOR

Clerky walked to the front of the store and locked the door. Then she motioned for Herbach to follow her. He did. Back, back, deep into the store they went, through a metal door into an ancient beer cooler. There, Clerky pulled a pair of metal, clamp-on roller skates from a shelf. Herbach sat down on a case of ancient beer. And Clerky clamped the skates to his feet.

HERBACH

They're cold, Clerky.

CLERKY

These are daddy bear's skates. He was a great champion. The best clamp-on free styler them thar hills ever done saw.

HERBACH

A champion.

CLERKY

Now stand up. Get a feel for the possibilities, Herbach.

NARRATOR

Herbach stood, wobbled, then felt the cold metal radiate through his shoes, connecting the skates to his feet.

HERBACH

Whoa!

(DISCO STYLE MUSIC)

NARRATOR

A look of joy and determination set itself on Herbach's face. He hopped, spun, slid into the splits then back up. Then he reached down and tore off his silver tear away pants, revealing a magnificent and bejeweled man-thong that caught light from the naked bulb that hung above. Light reflected from the man thong, firing flecks of colored disco ball light all around the cooler. Clerky screamed.

CLERKY

Oh my Gawd!

NARRATOR

And Herbach spun out of the cooler, shouting, whooping.

HERBACH

Whoa hoo hoo. Check it!!!

NARRATOR

And out of the store, free at last, as if two tiny rail cars were attached to his feet. He skated through the neighborhood spinning and pointing at pedestrians.

HERBACH

Hey o!

MOHAMMED

Herbach has roller skates!

HERBACH

You got that right, little fella.

NARRATOR

Herbach skated and skated through parks and alley ways, past dumpsters and community gardens. He had a goose eating grin glued to his face. He was in love with skates, in love with the tiny rail cars attached to his feet. Herbach found love in movement, love in tiny rail cars that would take Herbach to the moon.

(DISCO MUSIC ENDS)

— END SECTION —

Dreamy, night time music.

NARRATOR

Late at night, the light rail stops running.

TRAIN SOUNDS THAT CEASE —

People went home. Went to bed. Dreamt of the trips they might take. Dreamt of what tomorrow might bring. A fog developed, creating an air of mystery through out the neighborhood. From that fog, wisps of ground cloud curling around him, the Punk Poet Paul D emerged.

PAUL D POEM

NARRATOR

What compels a man to act? Something spiritual? Something sublime? Something self-less and beautiful?

PAUL D

These rails don't belong here. It makes me mad.

NARRATOR

What ever the reason, the Punk Poet Paul D began, very slowly, to dig up the light rail rails in the unassailable dark.

PAUL D

I bet I can get 50 bucks at the scrap yard for this metal.

NARRATOR

By first morning's light, the members of the lit 6 house had joined the Punk Poet in his endeavor. They, too, dug with shovels and pulled out the rails.

SAM
I can't have any more facebook gyrls showing up. One is enough... for now.

IRADY
I've had my adventure. Now it's time for a return to the brilliant status quo.

STEPH
I am making a hole!

HERBACH
I like to roller skate!

NARRATOR
By the time commuters showed up at the station, the Punk Poet Paul D had already sold the rails to the scrap yard. He stood on the cement rail station platform with a barrel of beer.

PAUL D
I purchased this barrel with money from the scrap yard.

NARRATOR
Neighbors were pleased to have a beer. They toasted the Punk Poet then they walked over one block and took the bus. The only neighbor who became terribly upset was the dishonorable Counselor Rod King Polmgrensen, the man responsible for bringing the inexplicable light rail stop to the neighborhood.

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN
What the? Who the? How's my dumb kid gonna get to the mall. Oooh. I oughta!

NARRATOR
The Punk Poet was prepared for Polmgrensen. He bent down and picked up a paper bag. In this bag was a bottle of Courvoissier, purchased at the Liquor Store. The Punk Poet reached out to Rod King Polmgrensen, presenting the bottle to him.

PAUL D
Counselor. Please. Can we all get along?

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN
Courvoissier? For me?

PAUL D.
Yes.

NARRATOR
A tear appeared in Polmgrensen's left eye.

ROD KING POLMGRENSEN
Oh geez. I don't much like Punk and I don't much like Poets, but I gosh darn love a man of vision... and you, my boy, are a man of vision.

PAUL D.
Okay.

Start Polka Music –

NARRATOR
By mid-afternoon the whole neighborhood was having a block party. They listened to polka music produced by Sons of Norway Band and they danced on the cement platform of the former station and sipped beer and courvoissier. It was a beautiful day as so many are in Minneapolis in September. It was the greatest day any of them could ever remember. Let's Polka...

MUSIC... *You have to make love to this polka...*

MARK WHEAT

Hello. I'm Mark Wheat. What lessons have we learned here today? Isn't it something about the importance of having a dream and holding on to your dream? Isn't it something about humankind's need to act in the face of apparent meaninglessness? I think so. Look what's happened: Brady traveled and learned that he didn't like travel. Sam found a girl, a girl named gyrl on the internet. Steph had the doors of perception opened to her because she got off the couch and made Salmon loaf. Herbach found love in motion. Those roller skates, those little light rail cars attached to his feet, gave him an ability to go places he's always wanted to go: quickly down alleys and between parked cars. The Punk Poet Paul D created a beautiful gathering by doing what is most intrinsic to him: scrapping metal. And the neighborhood, although they lost their light rail station, found each other in sunshine and polka music. No, it doesn't all make sense, and yet, it all works out. Rodney King asked us a question: Can we all get along? There is road rage and government ineptitude and loud, dirty neighbors that occasionally drive us all mad. Still, can we all get along? Look at the evidence. The answer, my friends... the answer: Yes, indeed we can.

Thank you so much for being here tonight.

NARRATOR

And thank you, Mark Wheat! Also Thanks to Little Man for providing us their songs. Thank you to our sponsors: 89.3 The Current, Minneapolis/St. Paul Magazine, and Hamline University's Graduate School of Liberal Studies. Check out our other great sponsors in the program and come see us again, Saturday, September 29th when we'll meditate on the Sub-Prime Mortgage Crisis with our special musical guest Haley Bonar. Let's all meet in the lobby for a beer. Good night!

THEME SONG

Dear Mark
Wheat,
I love you, even
though you have
a pretty wife.
Steph