



"Maybe I can get something for the frame . . ."

Myself, I decided I would get dressed and go see about a substitute teaching position at the Board of Education building. It's humiliating, I know, but I'm conversant with the reality of not attaining my dream job right away, so I'm not even bothering to search. I just have this interminable necessity to be in New York. Being indiscriminate about employment is the only path to take; otherwise I could get stuck here forever. And for \$75 a day, I could withstand the humiliation.

I arrived at the building and the woman behind the desk handed me ten forms. If I wanted to baby-sit children, I would have to get a TB test, a drug test, fork over \$140 and wait three months to get on a list where I "may or may not be called into work." Even though three months lingering in unemployment limbo was an intolerable amount of time, she lost

me at the \$140. My plans for substitute teaching, like my motivation for my high school freshman assigned reading of *Great Expectations*, was destroyed by the Toms River School system.

People assume the homebound college graduate has failed in some way, or that they didn't work diligently enough to make a direct move into the "real world."

But disgrace only hovers over the idea of living with your parents; it's a social stigma attached by past generations. Every time I eat at my Grandmother's and am daft enough to complain about my life, she always reminds me that "when I was your age, I was already married with your Aunt and your mother."

"Find yourself a rich man Libby," she then says, "and settle down."

And those last two words, those are the ones that induce ulcers. It can

apply to love, to jobs, to any minute aspect of life. When people say that this generation is an aimless cluster of idiots who refuse to grow up, it's because we've been taught to equate growing up with settling down, something many college graduates just aren't ready for.

There is a whole website devoted to this new mental catastrophe: www.quarterlifecrisis.com. When I first heard about it I scoffed, thinking it was for people who wanted some sort of neurosis to make them more interesting. I figured hopping from job to job in search of the right one was something called "not settling for mediocrity."

I clicked on the member forums. There were post headings like "What's it take to be happy?"

"Am I living to fail or failing to live?" and

"Do I need happy drugs?"

I laughed at these people. It seemed like some pathetic belligerent offshoot of an AA meeting. Some idiot started a new religion and now people were flocking to pray.

Then I started my new temp job. I sat in front of a computer for 8 hours a day typing in payroll figures for electricians and janitors. "What does it take to be happy?" I wondered. "Am I living to fail or failing to live?"

Subsequently I decided that all the happy pills in the world wouldn't keep me from throwing this com-

puter through my cubicle every time I thought how I'd spent sixty-grand to live at home with my parents and work a 9-5 job that primates could handle.

Mostly, I was worried that this was a job I could be stuck doing for the rest of my life—something that I would never let happen, but a scary prospect nonetheless. Then I remembered a masseuse I met the other day. Her name was Amy.

After some light conversation about the weather, I asked her how long she had been doing massage. She was older, and since my parent's lifestyles both dictated that once you had a job, you kept it forever, I was surprised when she said only five years. She'd spent the twenty years before that in accounting.

"It's different waking up to something you enjoy," she said. Thus, she made my entire day.

While the mere thought of doing something I didn't like for twenty years made me a little nauseous, it was nice to know an adult had proven that you don't have to be stuck in a job you don't want. Ever.

She also was the first adult I encountered in my area that didn't give me that sarcastic "your degree got you real far, I'll have fries with that by the way" kind of look when I told her that I'd moved home with my Dad. It's kind of stressful, but I know it's the only move I could have made.

