

**BACK TO SCHOOL
THUS MEANS:
FORGET THE STUPID
SPONTANEOUS
PLEASURES OF SUMMER
SPORTS, OF READING
BOOKS, WATCHING
MOVIES AND LISTENING
TO MUSIC. PULL
YOURSELF TOGETHER
AND **LEARN SEX.****

all our
secrets
are the
same

holdings
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Story:

Sem Lala

Photos:

A and F Quarterly

Back to School 2003: The Sex Ed Issue

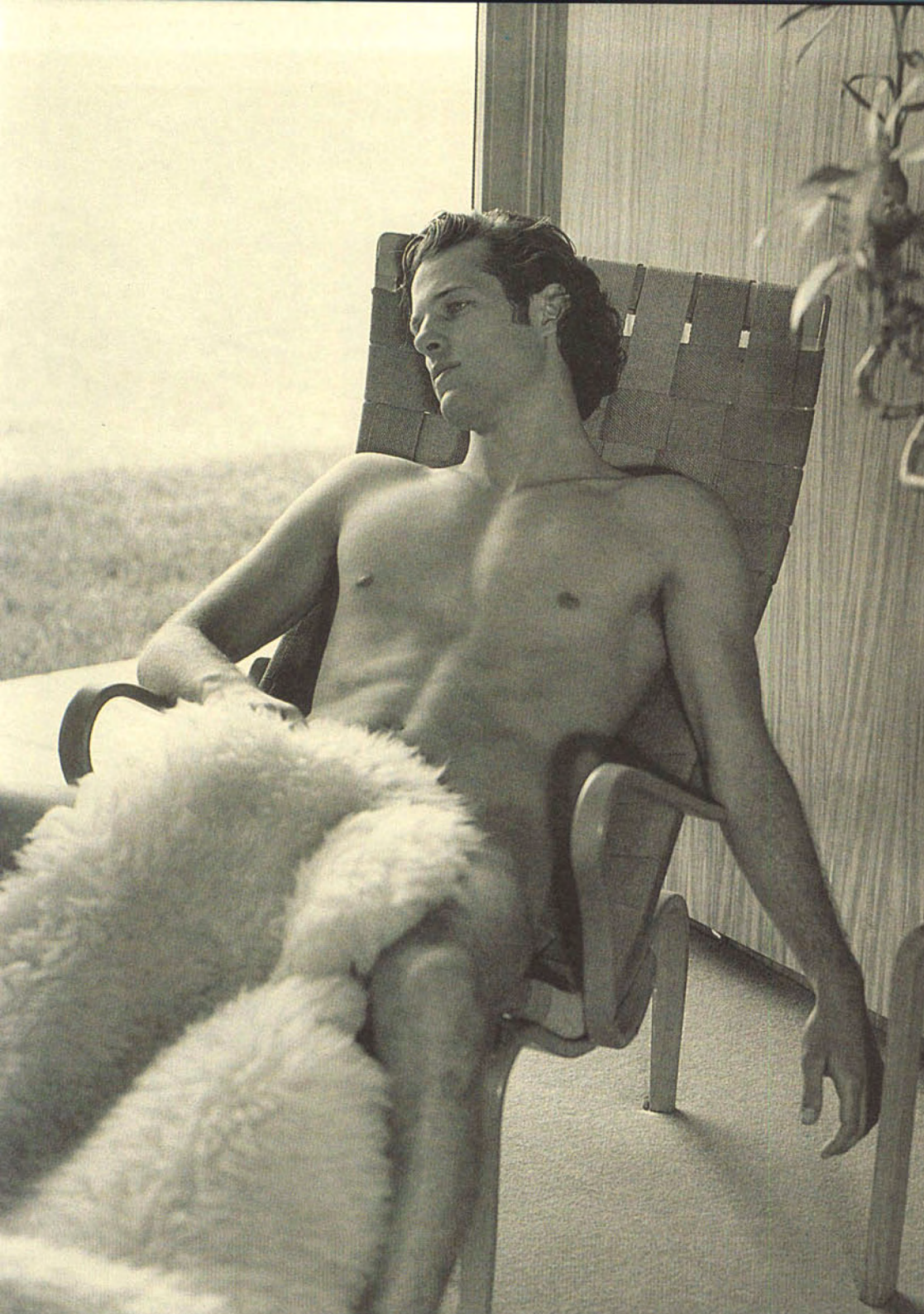
I went to church in the morning and I attended Mass. At Mass I ran into a friend whom I like. When the priest offered communion I didn't go because I felt scared. I suspect that I went to church because I saw my mom in a dream and she was kneeling in front of a statue of Mary. I went to the gym and I did four sets of squats and five sets of pull-ups, each set containing twelve reps. I got hard while looking at a guy whose legs I found attractive. He looked strong. In my dream, my mom was being derided by other people for being overly pious. She was oblivious to the fact and I find that endearing.



I went to the cafeteria where I was accosted by a guy who wants to have sex with me. We chatted about homework for too long. I stretched my arms and I caught him looking at my exposed stomach. He noticed that I saw him looking at me. He complimented my belt in a flirtatious manner. In my dream, after praying, my mom ran toward the altar. She intended to offer something to it. Another woman, who was her double, did the same. A play took place before the altar; it was titled "When Is It Coming?" The play was in German. She playfully skipped to the altar, like a child would. It felt inadequate, but innocent. I felt humiliated, but I also felt a sense of parental care. Her double fell apart and left in her place a mass of blood and snot. The woman came apart in a very matter-of-factly way and it didn't scare me awake. I'm unsure why I identified the substance as snot.



After finishing my meal at the cafeteria I went to the chapel so I could use one of the two single-vacancy restrooms in its basement. I sat down on the toilet and eased my bowels while I read about the Oxygen Catastrophe on my iPhone. I read that experts estimate the catastrophe happened between three or four billion years ago. Geologic timescales are vertiginous. The Oxygen Catastrophe, while killing most anaerobic life that then populated the earth, also laid the groundwork for marine life to emerge from the ocean.





I recently read that this emergence from the ocean was the mythic event that, in psychoanalysis – and for Freud in particular – would come to be considered the birth of neurotic sexuality. Atmospheric oxidation was succeeded by landward migration and the interiorization of fertilization meant that genetic material, which before was fertilized externally, now required insemination and penetration, and the recognition of others. Mass oxidation and mass extinction is followed by mass sexual violence.



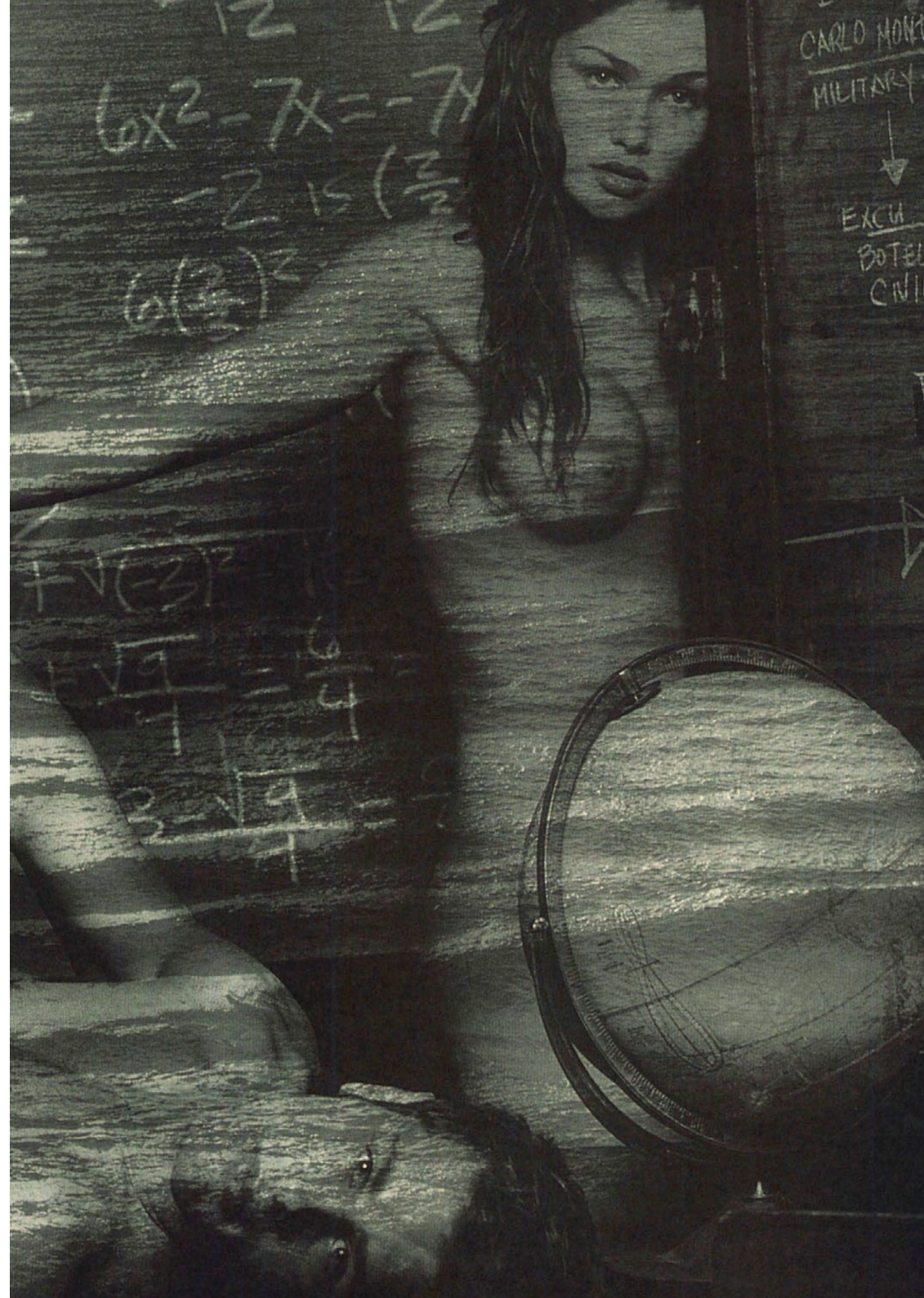
I inspect my shit inside the toilet bowl with the flashlight of my iPhone. Its consistency is firm and the form sausage-like. I was somewhat relieved because a series of loose bowel movements had been worrying me at the time. I had been on a number of antibiotics for some months because of a misdiagnosis. Pharmaceuticals exacerbate my anxieties.



My cell provider notified me that from now on I would be disconnected from the Albanian network. I had been living in the US for six months at the time but I was clinging to an Albanian sim card that did not function. Not out of some sense of emotional attachment but because I had no use for a phone number. I had Wi-Fi and I was content with that.



At one point, during those six months, my literature teacher had recalled in class, a memory which I found to be moving: her mom had once told her that the reason blood smells salty is because life emerged from the ocean. I had never found the smell of blood to be particularly salty. She followed up by saying that it's for the same reason that we conflate the circulation of our pressurized blood upon placing our ear on a sea conch with the sound of crashing waves at the sea.



Jackson texted me that he wants me badly. Before exiting the chapel, I stopped by the altar and said the Lord's prayer. I took the bus back home and I was the only one in it. The bus driver tried to make conversation with me but I politely navigated my way out of having to talk with him. I got back home and prepared myself for bed. I texted Jackson that I wanted to see him again. His pictures made me hard. I tried to masturbate but I couldn't come so I stopped. I did some reading for class, and then started looking for new shoes online. I gave up after a while. I must have fallen asleep.

Note: The photos are full pages from an issue of A and F Quarterly that originally ran with copy written by Slavoj Žižek. Me and Sem had both separately discovered this issue as a pdf on Monoskop and found out after he posted screenshots of it on his story.

Thanks Sem.



