

THE GRAIL

VOLUME II SEPTEMBER 11, 2014 ISSUE I



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SACRED GRADE

PURSUING ARETÉ

Think getting an A at Reed is difficult? Try getting a Double A. Follow our Hum 110 survival guide to find out how.

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GRACEFUL GREETINGS!

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The Garden by the Co-ops isn't the first to grace the Reed campus. The original community garden now lies beneath the Grove.

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ISSUE I

www.reedthegrail.com

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome back!

The Grail returns for another semester. The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the rains have yet to come. By now freshmen are either enamored by or annoyed with their Hum 110 conferences. We're here to help. Read our guide to Hum 110 (1) and you could earn your very own Double A. Residents of the Grove may be settling into their air-conditioned rooms, but few know what came before. The Reed Community Garden, a fixture of Southeast Portland for 30 years, was demolished to make way for the four dormitories in 2007. See

what lies beneath (4). Have you heard the good news? Graceful Grousings returns for the second year, and things are as crazy as always. Read about the Crank House (3) and feel better about your grandparents' life choices. Charlie's Cultural Calendar begins its encore performance (6), so stay tuned for more Portland events, near and far. We'll be coming out with more Grail in two weeks time, so stay updated by liking our Facebook page and checking out our website, www.reedthegrail.com.

Love,

Brendan, Brian, Grace, Jordan, Maddy, and Vikram

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Front cover by Jordan Yu.

How to Get a Double A in HUM 110

By BRENDAN SORRELL



Back at Olde Reed, the story goes, professors would occasionally hand down a letter grade known as the Double A. The AA was only awarded to the true scholar, to that one heroic student in a generation whose insight truly stunned the faculty. My friends in the Registrar's Office claim the AA no longer exists — but can a legend ever really die? I think the Class of 2018 is ready to rise to the challenge. If you're prepared to find out for yourself whether the prized grade persists to this day, here are my suggestions for a truly transcendent Hum 110 experience.

Gilgamesh

Immortality may not be achievable, but there's still an entire year's worth of masochism awaiting you as you begin your own quest for the undying AA. You will learn from many sages, although their names will be easier to pronounce and they won't give you flowers.

The Egyptians

Because you're in pursuit of the impossible, I suppose you could just listen to the Bangles or talk to your own soul. Yet even more absurd than thinking the Egyptians walked as their one-dimensional pictograms depict them as doing is the story of Horus and Seth and they pondered being and death enough for you to not do that on your own.

Herodotus

The rains have arrived. Be sure to ride your dolphin to class and prepare to be swept away by the sands of time as eminent 20th century bards ask you a very important question. Having not read the *Odyssey* you won't know the answer.

Iliad

As Reedies, you're already honorable; so, a note on translation: For those of you who have made it this far on your quest for the great and honorable AA, the elegant and state-ly Lattimore translation will serve you well. For those of you who have long ago abandoned the quest and are in Hum for the enduring battle at the conference table, the epicness of Fagles will force you to fight against your know-it-all Lattimore-ites. And for those who have spent their first month huddled in your nÓg common room playing Sega, there's an audio-book edition of the *Odyssey* bellowed forth by Gandalf that will provide you with a fool's hope as you smoke the halfling's leaf.

Genesis

He didn't know what it was to have immortality snatched away by a serpent. He didn't know what it was to cross into the realm of death. He didn't know what it was to impregnated by lettuce. He didn't know what it was to have conversation with his

own soul. He didn't know what it was to love. He didn't know what he was doing in Hum 110 at Reed College as he picked up the book of Genesis but thought suddenly "this is good." And it was good.

The Book of Job

Maybe it was good because he didn't know it was good? Know that you are suffering for the unachievable AA.

Theogony

Everything might seem like Chaos, but the world will attain superficial order for a while. You'll return to the void second semester.

Works and Days

As Reed students, you will come to learn the meaning of these two words well, but Hesiod is here to help you not be a useless man as you continue to study well into the night on your quest for something that no longer exists.

Greek Lyric Poets

"I think I'm beginning to look down on all poets except Sappho" —Franny and Zooley. You'll have to

remember all the rest though...if you want a AA.

Presocratics

The world is water. The world is air. The world came from some primordial substance. The Greeks thought of some weird stuff before Socrates realized we don't know anything, have fun remembering all of it for the final. Socrates, knowing nothing, would not have gotten a AA.

Iran

Nobody said getting a AA was easy, and now you have to make sense of the entire Persian Empire in 50 minutes. The clock is ticking.

The Oresteia

You know you are on your way to achieving the great and honorable AA. Too bad nobody believes you. Still you shouldn't view yourself as being confined to the fate of your current reality, unless you end the curse of the House of Atreus you will be greeted with no mercy.

Antigone

It is not right to mourn the death of the AA as a Reed tradition, for it can live on inside you. The divine law of Olde Reed is surely more important than that defined by our current realm.

Thucydides

You are not acting out of self-interest in your quest for the AA, but for Olde Reed, in which your true self should be contained.

The Bacchae

The AApolonian path will be diverted by Dionysian interludes. This is as it should be. Embrace madness — it is an undeniable part of the world which we inhabit — yet ensure this revelry doesn't tear you limb from limb.

Medea

Emerging from your winter slumber, you find yourself to have grown quite barbaric. It's okay, this play took last place too and it's part of your renewed quest for the AA.

The Clouds

Now well established at a great and noble Thinkery, the type of place the vaunted Wikipedia calls "a school for wasters and bums that no self-respect-

ing, athletic young man dares be associated with," you can understand what a comedy of ideas your quest for a AA is.

The Trial and Death of Socrates

The unexamined life is not worth living, but is the AA examinable? You understand youthful corruption, but must know nothing if you wish to drink the hemlock and live on forever as the honorary recipient of the AA.

The Republic

The quest for the AA is not just, nor does it appear so. However, being the Platonic Form of all grades, matters of reality and appearance should not concern you, for you must know wisdom, honor, and desire to choose to be he who earns the AA in the afterlife.

Nicomachean Ethics

Your quest may seem insensible now, but virtue of action is an extreme of goodness from which you will gain complete happiness. Virtue may indeed be an absence, but you still have to attend class in order to know what that means.

Politics

The AA is not democratic, for that would make it a constituent of the fourth best structure of government, but monarchical. It is right and just and you must follow its commands in order to call yourself the king of Olde Reed.

Theocritus

The cultural domain of the AA is the mighty empire of Olde Reed, but you must embody the belated character of that magical past and not stray too far into frolicking on the front lawn just yet.

Polybius

If you are a conqueror of the unconquerable you must drive your pila into the heart of Olde Reed, to become the highest-ranking Reedite, then give it a loving funeral that it must be publically awarded before you can earn the spectacular.

Lucretius

Perhaps we are all atoms and void and our souls will return to nothingness when we die. The AA, however, transcends a mere physicalist conception of the universe and it is up to you to make that a reality.

Cicero

The highest and most honorable duty is to Olde Reed. You must cast off all other obligations, desires, and concerns for health in order to achieve the AA.

Livy

You have been provided a great exempla from the past, the emblem of ultimate achievement in the mighty realm of Olde Reed. Do you have the courage to face great love and strife in order to achieve it?

Augustus

Build upon the Olde order to create a new one, avoiding all titles pertaining to the present, and you will become Princeps: he who holds the AA.

Aeneid

It is a truly pious man who has made it this far in pursuit of the impossible, but you didn't know what the gates of hell were about. Abandon all hope, ye who enter here. (Yes, this is from Dante's *Inferno*, but one on a quest for a AA knows their translator.)

Ovid

The quest for the AA is quite similar to turning what is believed to be a beautiful piece of stone into a living, breathing embodiment of the Doyle Owl. Can you achieve Metamorphosis?

Philo

The writing from the realm of Olde Reed clearly states that the Form of Good is AA. You cannot think yourself to be this if you wish to earn it, but will be cast down into the realm of Nu Reed where you might be doomed to receive an A.

New Testament

Gentiles, you must bow down before the AA, for it is giving you a chance at immortality. It is a teacher, miracle worker and the object of the greatest miracle and could make you the heir of the covenant.

Apuleius

Your soul has suffered greatly on your spiritually absurd journey. If you have proven yourself worthy, you are now ready to receive the intense revelation of the AA, full of mastery and wonder. ♣

Crank House Just Got Crankier

By GRACE FETTERMAN

A Tootsie Roll with a twisted mind: debauched, debased, and disturbed. Inch by half an inch, four pieces total, their name evokes the mascot of the Pokémon franchise.

“Cheeba Chews,” says my Grandma Rea, holding them in her venous hands. “America’s favorite edible.”

On Thursdays, after therapy – which I’ve started for the first time this summer—I drive to my grandma’s to help her with various chores. By the time that I’m done, all the progress I made in therapy that day is undone. Tasks include but are not limited to: standing outside the bathroom as she washes her hair, plucking eyebrows, chin hairs, and ghostwriting disparaging notes about the quality of her neighbors’ parking.

“Do you and Casey [my shrink] talk about how TENSE you are all the time? Because if you don’t, you should. You’re one tightly wound ball of wax, Grace.” She says this standing before me, in nothing but a towel, holding out a comb for me to tease out all her tangles. I don’t get paid in cash, but backhanded compliments, like, “You’re carrying all that weight you gained at school so well!”

On July 17th, she threw me a curve ball.

“I think my pot is defective,” Rea told me.

“What?” Since when did my grandmother smoke marijuana?

“My POT! My wacky tabacky!” This makes her snicker.

Blimey.

“You smoke pot?”

“No, no, they are edibles for my pain. See?”

Cheeba Chews. America’s favorite edible.

“So, I need you to eat one, and tell me if they’re defective.”

I’ve never done a single recreational drug in my entire life. I don’t, however, want to tell my grandma; because this is something no grandmother should ever hear. I take the Cheeba Chew from her, unsure what I will do next. I ask if I can use her bathroom, and when she says yes, I do, close the door, and call my mom.

“This is Martha,” she answers.

“Grandma wants me to eat one of her Cheeba Chews. America’s favorite edible.”

“And I assume you don’t want to.”

“Of course I don’t want to,” I whisper to her, staring at some strange, slightly sadistic health aid that I don’t even want to know what body part my grandma uses it for. “She’s claiming they are defective, but I think she just wants to try and get me stoned.”

“OK, well, first off, stop whining,” my mom replies.

“Where are you?” I plead. “Can you come over?”

“No. I can’t. I am taking your sister to get new underwear. Leopold [The Corgi] ate through all the elastic.”

I look up at the skylight in my grandma’s condo bathroom. Maybe I can shimmy through there onto the roof, but then what? She will hunt me down like a sniper.

“Grace? You’ve been in there awfully long. Watcha doing? Makin’ a dookie- doo?”

LAKDSJFALKDSFJLKADF, I think.

“I got to go,” I say to my mom. “Just a second!” I tell my grandma.

I look at the taffy toke in my hand. Hmm, there are only thirty-five calories per Chew. Not too shabs, not too shabs. I unwrap it bit by bit, with caution and a feeling of foreboding. There is no golden ticket.

Am I really going to do this? After all these years of just saying no? My

memory is already going, and I’m paranoid enough as it is. Won’t this do more harm than good? I gaze in the mirror, imagining what I would look like with no teeth, my porcelain skin replaced with a lacerated, wounded complexion. I don’t think I can pull it off. *What a shame*, they’d say. I had so much going for me.

The doorknob rattles.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. I won’t do it. I won’t. This is not who I am! I don’t want to do it, and therefore, I won’t!

With a flush of the toilet, the Chew is gone. I pat my cheeks.

It’s show time.

I will go out there, and persuade my grandmother into thinking I am a lotus-eating, Cheeba-Chewing, cool granddaughter.

I open the door. Rea looks me up and down; her eyes are slits.

“Well, it seems pretty effective to me, grandma.”

“Are you sure? How do you feel?”

“Oh, I feel very elated, thank you.”

“Really?”

“Yes, yes. I never noticed how, um, expressive your wall paper is.”

“Well, you do seem more relaxed.”

I smile. After a very, very long pause, Rea speaks again

“I guess I just have to keep trying them. Anyways, now I need you to write a note for the anal bead with the Honda Civic.”

“What color is it?”

“White.”

I write, re-write, and edit the scathing review:

“The way you pulled in makes me wish your dad pulled out.” Not my best.

I walk down to the parking lot. There’s only one White Honda. I call her “Betty White,” or, “my car.” ❧



HALLOWED GROUND

By JORDAN YU

The Grove dormitories are an integral part of the Reed campus. Sleek and modern, these beautiful structures house some 120 Reed students, and are a symbol of Reed's ongoing march into the future. Like Naito, Sullivan, and Bragdon, the Grove is a fixture in the College's recent developmental push, which has been creeping northward to SE Steele St. since the middle of the last century. While the current landscape of the Cross-Canyons seems immutable and natural, the development of land north of the Canyon has been a decades-long process, fraught with legal controversy, clashing interests, and environmental concerns. In particular, the land beneath the Grove has undergone some of the most dramatic transformations over the last century, most recently, in 2007, with the destruction Portland's greatest community garden.

For 30 years, Reed's campus was home to one of the oldest and largest community gardens in the city. Managed by Portland's Bureau of Parks and Recreation, Reed was selected to participate in the burgeoning Community Garden program early in 1975. In all, the two acre area was formed on what is the current site of the

Grove and extended from what's now the North Fields to the RCA's.

The story of the Garden's establishment at Reed is far from straightforward. In the '50s and '60s the Northwest campus was home to a tree nursery run by Lambert Gardens through an agreement with Reed College. Before that, berry farms and orchards dominated not only the landscape of Reed, but much of Southeast. When the Community Garden program began in 1974, city planners quickly eyed the Moreland neighborhood as a location for a large garden. The Parks Bureau selected Reed after ruling out a myriad of other unsuitable locations. Originally city planners wanted to turn a section of Oaks Park into the garden, but the local Audubon Society believed it would negatively disrupt the land. The next possible location was at the foot of the Sellwood bridge, but the proposed area was in the middle of the railroad right-of-way. Ultimately, when the city approached Reed, the administration readily took up the offer.

From shaky beginnings Reed's Garden quickly rose to prominence. Managed by the Bureau, participants

had to pay five dollars for one 20 foot square plot, and in return they were allowed to plant any legal fruits, vegetables, and flowers they desired. This was in 1975. Over the decades, Reed's Community Garden earned a place in the hearts of gardeners, most of whom were nearby residents. Over 300 gardeners tended to 155 individual plots located within the garden. Wealthy residents would keep a seasonal plot to grow herbs and vegetables to supplement their meals, while poorer residents used the plots as a primary source of food. Even by the end of the Garden's tenure—when plots cost 45 dollars and the waiting list was three years long—residents of many socio-economic strata enjoyed the shared space and sense of community created by the garden. Excess produce was donated to local charities like the Produce for People program. By 2006, the garden was donating 3,000 pounds of fresh produce per year, more than any other garden in the city.

Through most of its history the Garden faced little outside threat, and enjoyed an uncontentious existence courtesy of the agreement between the Reed administration and the

Parks Bureau. But by the beginning of the new millennium, the garden's very presence threatened Reed's expansion plans. With the centennial of the College looming in the next decade, the architects of the future Reed sowed the seeds of the garden's destruction. As early as 2001, the Campus Facilities Master Plan stated: "An eventual conflict between this use of the [garden] land and the needs of the College seems inevitable..."

When the Eastmoreland Hospital was razed in 2004, many gardeners became aware, for the first time, of the temporary nature of their shared space. The beloved vegetable plots lay on lands only made possible through a tenuous balance between the desires of the city and the desires of the College. When the College announced plans, to bulldoze the garden in favor of new dorms, both community activists and Reed students alike protested. However, the legal framework for

both the founding and removal of the garden was unambiguous. In 2006, the City of Portland Hearings Officer approved of Reed's Master Plan. According to the Officer, "there is no evidence in the record to suggest that Reed is legally obligated to continue providing space for the Community Garden." The will of the College prevailed, and the garden that had been a centerpiece for the community for 30 years was scheduled for demolition in the end of 2006.

As the date for the end of the program crept closer, gardeners began to cope with their loss in different ways. Some participants threw a festival potluck at the end, others abandoned their plots months before the closure. Joan Moore, a participant for over 20 years, said at the time "There's no point in planting a fall crop, no point in pulling weeds, It's not going to make any difference to the bulldozer."

Today the Grove stands tall, and

residents enjoy the central air conditioning and the amenities of modern architecture without a second thought to the history of the land on which they live. The once massive plots have now been catalogued in film, and there are only a few students at Reed who remember a time when the garden flourished. The Library archives has a great catalogue on the life of the garden, an entire folder filled with Oregonian articles, picture cutouts, and local news ramblings concerning the forgotten space. These fragments are closest ties current students have to the past. There are stories of land development, stories of bright beginnings, stories of slow declines. But there is one story, one which somehow contains within it all the others. It begins with a woman, kneeling in soil, searching for a reason to pull up the weeds. ♣



Photographs courtesy of the Reed College Library's Special Collections

Cultural Calendar

By CHARLIE WILCOX

Welcome back, cultural dilettantes and devotees, and greetings to the new young freshfolk (who may not have even learned how to get off campus yet). I'm excited to be writing a cultural calendar again this year and encouraging you to get away from Reed for a night (or twelve) every month and enjoy some dope happenings around PDX. One major change: 'lil baby yours truly is celebrating a very important birthday next week, and y'all better believe that I'm gonna be hitting up that 21+ scene and perhaps even sampling some fine alcoholic drinks along the way. I know that in the past, I only focused on All-Ages events, but that's because the draconian Oregon liquor laws made it impossible for me to experience a significant portion of Portland's cultural life; but now that I can and I am vibrating with happiness. If you are still a youngin, though, never fear; there are tons of events for you to go to (plus you can always check out the recorded materials of bands playing those 21+ shows, which I concurrently endorse.) So let's dig in, shall we?

September 14

Concert — Tim Hecker at PSU (AA)
God bless the PICA (Portland Institute for Contemporary Arts) and TBA (Time-Based Arts) Festival. They put together a killer lineup of visual arts and performance (and tons of other goodies) and Tim Hecker is one of their master-strokes. The noise/ambient artist has never performed in Portland before, so this is a pretty special opportunity. Check it, and also listen to his album *Virgins* from last year, definitely one of the most evocative and atmospheric releases of 2013.

September 17

Reading — Charles Burns at Powells Downtown (AA)
Charles Burns is the mind behind one of the most disturbing (and best) graphic novels ever, *Black Hole*, a work that you probably read in 10th grade and *totally* knew was about STDs and what-have-you. His new trilogy is perhaps a bit more surreal and hard to follow, but no less excellent. I'm very intrigued to see what he'll talk about in this reading.

September 18

Concert — Arca at The Works (21+)
Another TBA show, Arca released the really dank mixtape, *££££££*, which plays with the concept of club electronic music and brings

it to a cerebral level rarely seen before. Also, he did producing work on Kanye's *Yeezus*, so bonus.

September 19

Concert — Oneohtrix Point Never at The Works (21+)

It makes sense that TBA would get Oneohtrix to perform in a roster with Tim Hecker, they've often been experimental electronic bedfellows, even sharing the stage before. Oneohtrix is fresh off of a series of dates opening for Nine Inch Nails and Soundgarden (replacing Death Grips [natch {also, RIP and have a sad cum bb :(}]). I caught OPN early this summer, and his set was pretty darn good (and I live-streamed his Boilerroom set from a couple weeks ago, his live show has only gotten better). Better catch him now, he's a once and future legend of bleep bloops.

September 21

Reading — Sean Wilsey at Powells Downtown (AA)

Sean Wilsey has a new essay collection, *More Curious*, which examines various facets of America, from the Marfa TX artist compound to NASA to urban skateboarding, and it is brilliant. He's hilarious, he's interesting, and he made me want to start skateboarding (which, if you know me, is a terrible idea-- I've never broken a bone before but

give me 5 minutes on a board and I can guarantee you something will be forever damaged). *More Curious* is one of my favorite books of the year, and I would recommend it if you have a passing interest in the weirder bits of American culture.

September 26–27

Concerts — Guided By Voices w/ Stephen Malkmus and the Jicks and Built to Spill at Crystal Ballroom (21+)

Like some beer-soaked messiah, Pabst has descended from the woods of Wisconsin to grant Portlanders a wonderful gift: a cheap-ass music festival with a pretty good lineup and absolutely insane night shows. Project Pabst, as it is so called, is PBR's "love letter to Portland," the city in which "Pabst was reborn" (I'm not even kidding, this is from their website). Of all the PBR-endorsed goings-ons, I'm recommending the two nights at the Crystal Ballroom, which brings together three legends from 90s indie rock royalty, GBV and Steve Malkmus (9/26) and Built to Spill (9/27) for a weekend that will promise to deliver at least one thing: me drunk-enly singing "Carry the Zero." You know, if PBR really loves us they'll be supplying free tallboys across the city all weekend as well.... 🍻