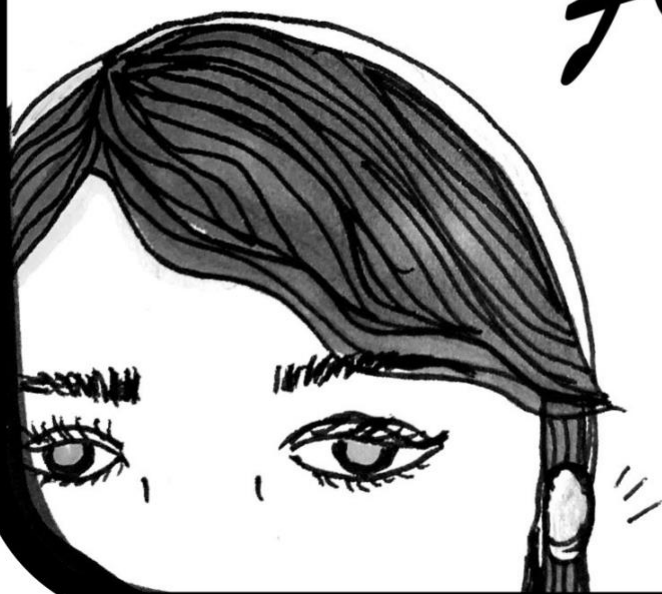


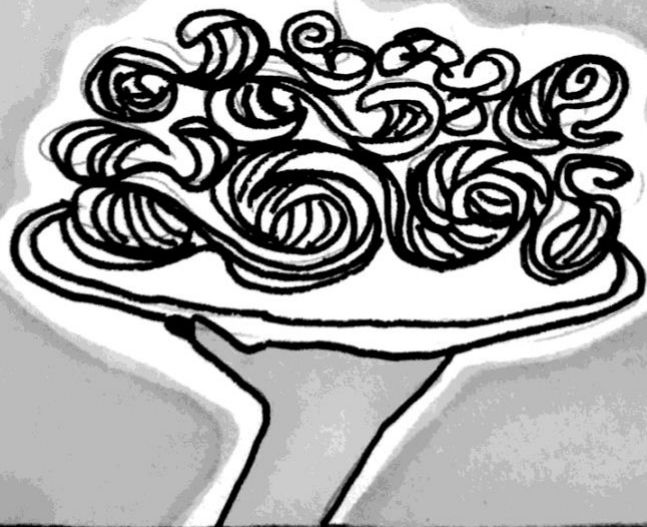
Baby's

on

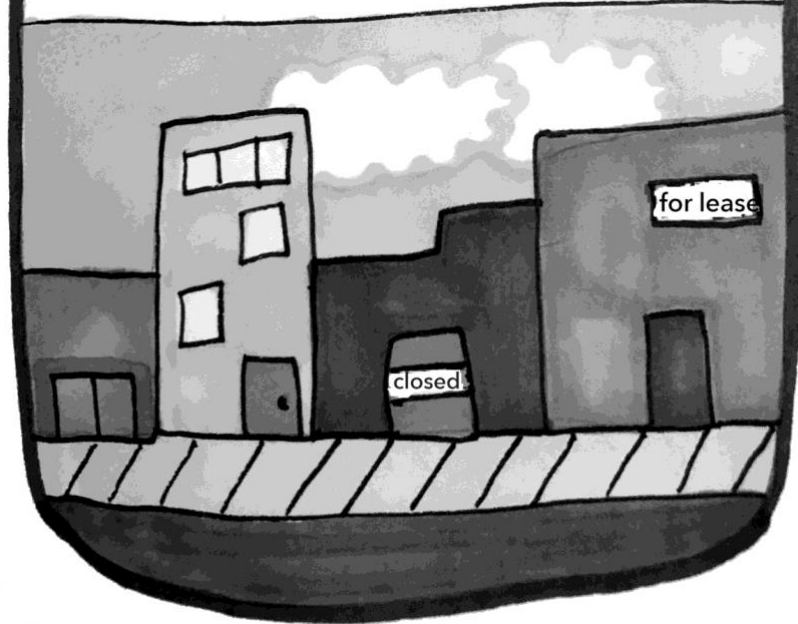
Fire



When I was 18, I had a job as a server at a restaurant called Positively Pasta.



I was on a gap year between high school and college. I'd spent the first part in England, and came back to my hometown, a desolate skeleton of a place that had seen its best days decades earlier.



The breakfast crowd at Positively Pasta was a 70+ mafia of sorts who collectively plotted to reinvigorate the town's spirit with... a carousel. They sipped on tea refills until noon, and left 2 bucks for their 1.75 tabs.



I had a side bangs that I'd cut myself in England, and a subscription to Rolling Stone. That was about it.



My friends were away at college,
and I felt alientated from them
anyway.

AIM
Them: College is crazy,
tons of parties
and clubs and and
and
me: oh cool

I wanted to be where the cool
people were, who knew and cared
about the edges of culture, and
the long history of the
underground.



I was thirsty for the outside world,
and Rolling Stone and Spin were my
portal. The Internet as we know it
was still in its infancy, and I loved
the physical object of the magazine,
in all its gloss.



I loved the possibility that existed
in those pages: that there was a
whole world to create, if you
could imagine it.



I was scared of the confinement of American life— a prescriptive existence that allowed only for working, acquiring and settling debts, starting a family and shopping. I wanted to experience the infinite nature of being: Infinite freedom. Or at least a little fun.



Anyone who
has a heart
wouldn't
turn around
and break
it

I pored over interviews and biographies, recording quotes of artists in my journal.



... you
wait for the
shit to hit the
fan, or the fans
to hit the shit.
After all, it's
only Rock +
Roll.

Keith.

I had nearly no first-hand knowledge of drugs or sex. Reading about them was enough for me, and driving around listening to the Clash was all the rush I needed.



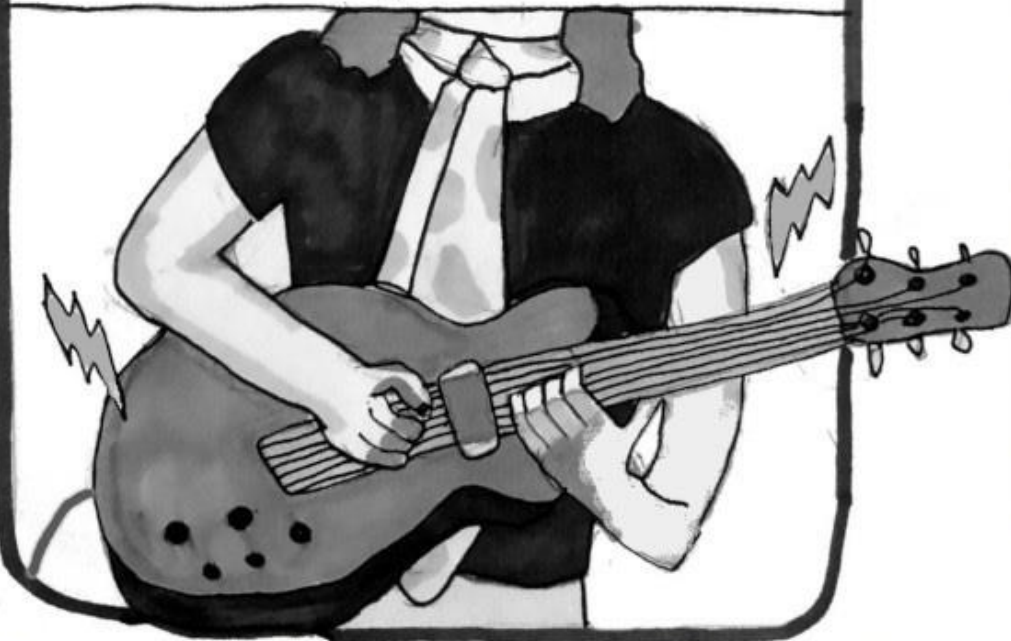
My favorite column in Rolling Stone was David Fricke's "Out There", which explored old and new artists outside of the top 40.



That's how I learned about Brian Eno and his legendary guitarist, Robert Fripp.



I got my hands on *Here Come the Warm Jets* (1973) and I was transported. Fripp's guitar on "Baby's On Fire" ripped through me and pulled me into another reality: one that was cool and infinite in what was imaginable.



I'd been obsessed with classic rock for years, and listened to the local station, WMGK, until I knew every song they played. I learned to parallel park to ELO.



Every Sunday night, WMGK aired Little Steven's Underground Garage, a sort of companion show to Fricke's column. The week Marlon Brando died, Steven dedicated the show to him. I decided to educate myself.



I rolled up to Hollywood Video with my Positively Pasta tips and rented On the Waterfront and The Wild One. I was transfixed.

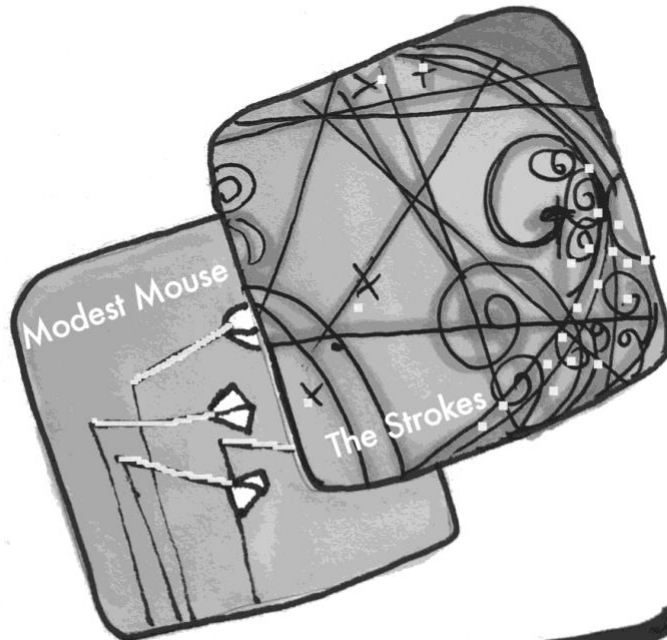


From then on, I tore my way through their (limited) cult section, and anything that looked weird.



The only other space to find
"alternative: culture in town was
the CD section of K-Mart.

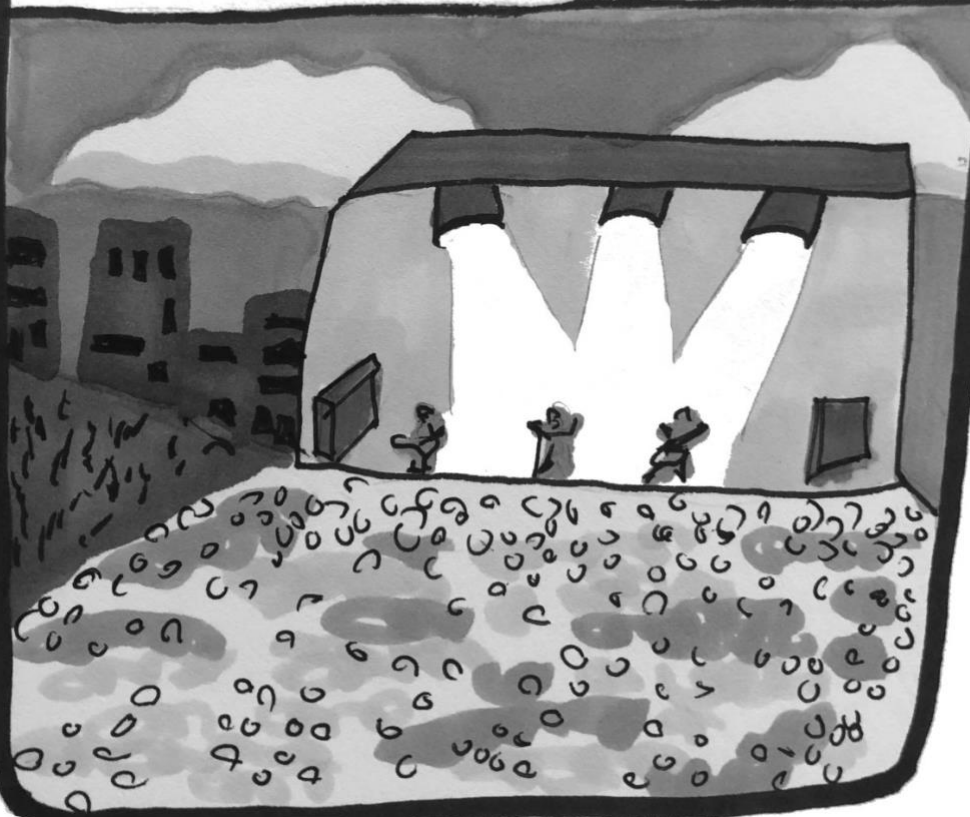
goodbye tips



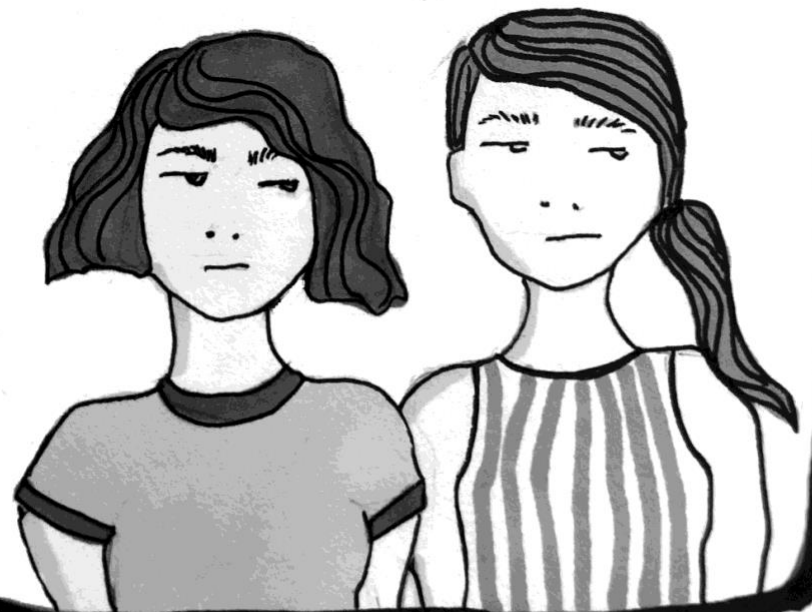
I'd consult my magazines for what
albums to buy. I had The Kills, The Stills,
The Chills...



That spring, I bought my sister a birthday present that was really for me: two tickets to a big radio station festival. The Strokes were headlining.



We sat in the hot sun all afternoon. We were both underage but everyone around us was getting wasted. As we waited for The Strokes to go on, some guy told us to smile.



Finally, they came on. We moved all the way up the front – close enough to see Nick Valensi put his cigarette in the frets of his guitar. It was the coolest thing I'd ever seen.



We listened to Van Halen for the hour ride home in the humid June night, and it seemed like anything was possible.

