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Daily Nebraskan

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"Sight"

work is hell, love is hell, hell is hell.

ANOTHER YEAR OF LIFE IN HELL

©1985 BY MATT GROENING

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN UNRECOGNIZED GENIUS

WHAT KIND OF GENIUS ARE YOU? CONSULT THIS HANDY CAREER-OUTPANEL CHART

IF YOU LIKE	BUT YOU DON'T LIKE	THEN YOU CAN BECOME
IMAGES	SECURITY WELL-BEING JOLLITY	A POWERFUL PAINTER
SOUNDS	COMFORT DREAM VACATIONS FUN	A UNIQUE COMPOSER
WORDS	FRIENDS MONEY BEING UNDERSTOOD	A DELICATE POET



TELLTALE SIGNS OF GENIUS

WHAT TO TALK TO YOURSELF ABOUT

BIZARRE CONSPIRACY THEORIES LOWER BACK PAIN HOW STUPID EVERYONE IS HOW THE WORLD CAN GO TO HELL FOR ALL YOU CARE WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO WHEN YOU GET A MILLION DOLLARS

WHAT THE WELL-DRESSED GENIUS IS WEARING

GENERALLY FASHIONS AND HAIRSTYLES THAT WERE POPULAR APPROXIMATELY A DECADE AGO

THINGS TO HATE

- MOM
- DAD
- GOD
- FOREIGNERS
- HIGH SCHOOL
- THE TEACHERS
- THE PHONIES
- C. THE DREAM
- TV
- RICH PEOPLE
- YOUR BOSS
- YOUR FRIENDS
- HUMOR

DON'T FORGET YOUR SECRET PROJECT!!

- MAKE PLENTY OF NOTES.
- RUMINATE.
- TAKE A NAP.
- MAKE A LIST.
- DRAW A DIAGRAM.
- RUMINATE SOME MORE.
- DON'T SHOW YOUR WORK TO ANYONE UNTIL IT'S FINISHED.

NOTE TO AUTHORS: FOR BEST RESULTS, TYPE YOUR MANUSCRIPTS SINGLE-SPACED WITH NO MARGINS USING AN OLD TYPEWRITER RIBBON. USE LOTS OF UNDERLINING AND EXPLANATION PRINTS. AND DON'T FORGET THOSE ALL-IMPORTANT SMUGGES AND COFFEE STAINS THAT SHOW THE CONSUMING INTENSITY OF YOUR INNER TORMENT.

THINGS TO DO TODAY

- GLARE AT SHOPPERS IN THE GROCERY STORE
- WRITE A FROTHING LETTER TO THE EDITOR
- MUMBLE MENACINGLY UNDER ONE'S BREATH AT THE LAUNDROMAT
- WALK OUT OF THE ART GALLERY OPENING IN A HUFF
- MASTURBATE GLOOMILY

PRACTICE YOUR AUTOGRAPH FOR YOUR IMPROVED PAY OF EARN

Binky
Binky
Binky
Binky

THE MANY MOODS OF THE GIFTED VISIONARY

- IRKED
- VEXED
- CRABBED
- PETURBED
- GLUM
- SURLY
- SNAPPY
- PEEVISH
- GRUMPY
- SULLEN
- SULKY
- SOUR
- DEADLY

RAIN-DAY GENIUS FUN PROJECT

DEFACE PHOTOGRAPHS OF MODELS AND CELEBRITIES IN MAGAZINES

THE SECRET MOTTO OF THE SECRET GENIUS (TATTOOED ON ASS)

LIVE SLOW
DIE IN LATE
MIDDLE-AGE
LEAVE AN
ARTERIO-SCLEROTIC
CORPSE

Do you ever wonder why you like to pick scabs? It's not good for you and it hurts and it's messy, but you just keep doing it. Not waiting for the wound to heal, you make it bigger and uglier with every yank — increasing the chance each time that you'll catch some sort of horrible infection and die in agony.

Reading Matt Groening's "Life is Hell" cartoons is a lot like pulling scabs — a not-particularly-pleasant activity that nonetheless holds a strange, irresistible, unholy fascination.

"Work Is Hell" is Groening's second collection of "Life In Hell" cartoons. In the book's first cartoon, entitled "Life In Hell: An Introduction," Groening tells us that "Life In Hell" is "an amusing little trifle of a comic strip starring assorted crudely drawn rabbits." The rabbits are Binky, the book's star, Sheba, his girlfriend, and Bongo, Binky's one-eared illegitimate son. Also appearing regularly are Akbar and Jeff, two imperturbable, identical human annoyances in Charlie Brown shirts and fezzes.

In the first cartoon we also learn that the five major themes of "Life In Hell" are love, sex, work, death and laughs; that the "Life In Hell" philosophies are "your days are numbered," "it's later than you think," "we're all doomed" and "have a nice day," and that the cartoonist's name rhymes with "complaining."

On first reading "Life In Hell," one is tempted to believe that Groening is some sort of satanic illuminatus with cameras and microphones planted in your

bedroom, bathroom, car and place of business.

In truth, Groening's genius is an ability to see into conventions and anxieties of the race so ancient that the rest of us don't even realize they exist. When he drags these primal taboos out into the sunlight and waves them in our faces, our reaction is laughter. Loud, edgy, hysterical laughter that can go on for minutes at a time.

Don't get me wrong; there's nothing gross or disgusting about Groening's cartoons. It's easy to ignore the gross and the disgusting. Groening is much more insidious than that.

This book is not quite as effective as its predecessor, "Love Is Hell," simply because work is not as intrinsically painful an experience as love. Only about one-third of the 45 cartoons in the book actually deal with work. If you're leery about shelling out \$5.95 for 45 cartoons, that's understandable, but reading Groening is not like reading "Dennis The Menace."

So, if "Life In Hell" is so unpleasant, why is it so great? Maybe it's kind of the intellectual equivalent of playing high school football. Most of the kids out there on the field don't want to be there; they don't enjoy being trampled by 300-pound, 15-year-old endocrine freaks. But football is a way to prove you're a man, a way to show you have the fortitude to function in adult society. Maybe literate people need "Life In Hell" to show they don't need the cultural illusions, to prove they can face reality, to show they can take it.

By Chris McCubbin

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