

WENDY MOTT

Easter baby has signs of aging

I was an Easter baby. When I was born, the hospital dressed me in a fuzzy pink bunny suit that brought tears to my mother's eyes. On my 11th birthday, I hunted eggs and found clues and gifts at every stop.

This year, I asked for a huge basket filled with presents. Instead I'll be getting money.

Now, I need money far more than I need chocolate bunnies and marshmallow chicks, but the last thing I want to be on my birthday is practical.

Expectations of practicality are a symptom of a larger disease. A disease that eventually will lead to my death — chronic aging.

Exactly when I contracted this illness is unclear. But I've been noticing it more and more lately.

It's a subtle change, but certain things give it away: worrying about the repercussions of your actions, listening to your mother's advice, buying Oil of Olay.

I never thought it would happen to me, but I'm afraid I'm becoming one of them.

I'm turning into a grown-up. A childish, young-at-heart grown-up, but a grown-up nonetheless.

Right now, I'm in the denial phase of the disease. Not me, I think, I still get presents from Santa. I still wish on stars. I avoid stepping on cracks to spare my mom any back pain.

I'm just a baby. I'm only 263 months old. I'm a Toys R Us kid.

When you're little, you have everything to look forward to. Solid food, the circus, the zoo, being able to drive — it all lies ahead of you.

What do I have to look forward to now, other than being able to rent a car and retirement?

It's been hard, but acceptance is gradually sinking in. It's difficult to



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avoid when clerks call you ma'am and children look at you with the same mixture of fear and condescension you used to look at grown-ups with.

Most recently, B104's transition to an alternative station hammered home my stage in life. The station, fast becoming a campus favorite, plays a mixture of recent and "classic" alternative songs.

Some say alternative music is the voice of a generation. Some say alternative music cannot avoid becoming mainstream when it has a commercial radio station. It won't be able to pass as a musical undercurrent or maintain its underground status.

But it's the classic alternative bit that bothers me. I can revisit music from my high school days simply by pushing a preset button. Then it hit me that I was, in essence, listening to a retro station. I probably felt about this station the way my mom did about KGOR — nostalgic.

The Smiths could be to me what the Shirelles were to her.

AAAUUUGGGHHH!

I guess adulthood gives me the right to reminisce about the good old days. The days when Scooby existed without Scrappy; when "Alice" kept you up a half-hour past bedtime; when

a busy day meant fractions, naps and playclothes.

Grown-ups have to worry about mortgages, promotions and supporting their kids.

I'm not that grown-up yet. I worry about tests, papers, my GPA and getting a job. But the reason I worry about that stuff is because if I don't do well, I won't be able to pay my mortgage, get a promotion or support my family.

Little kids worry, too. But there isn't that much stress involved with wondering when the streetlight will go on or whether you'll get pegged in the dodgeball game.

The final, and perhaps the most tragic, symptom of the aging disease is decreasing honesty for the sake of propriety.

Little kids, in their purest form, haven't learned to lie. Honesty is in their nature.

They'll point at a pimple and ask innocently, "You got a ouchy?"

Pull that as a grown-up and you'll be called insensitive, blunt, rude. Etiquette dictates that you overlook facial blemishes, or anything else that might make the person to whom you are speaking uncomfortable.

Adult conversations may be more pleasant, but they aren't nearly as entertaining.

I'll be 33 the next time my birthday is on Easter. I'll probably have coffee mugs with my name on them, wear matching shirts with my husband and say things like, "Because I said so, that's why."

And my kids will look at me and swear they'll never be that way when they grow up. Suckers.

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GARY YOUNG

Talk of trial full of racial biases

Though it is standard popular prattle to complain about being called for jury duty, the seeming brutality of the verdict in the first Rodney King trial has made us all relish being on the jury for the second one.

With 81 seconds of video facts, we hand down an obvious verdict. Case closed. Hence the shock of the first trial's verdict to us armchair jurists: "not guilty." Pictures supposedly don't lie. How could any jury vote to acquit these men? That is a fair question.

Regrettably, apart from the video scenes, the press have supplied little insights about the trial that may provide an answer. Nevertheless, everyone still assumes that they know what happened: The jury was full of white, racist, police-loving people who were ready to excuse such a heinous crime because of the skin color of the defendant. Whites protecting whites.

Justice in such a simple, imaginary world is like team sports: The jurors supposedly picked sides before they began playing. Though the charge of racism is the prevailing explanation of the King trial, it houses incredible prejudices against blacks and whites alike. For example, claiming that the jury being all white presumes a verdict against a black defendant is to hold incredibly simplistic assumptions about the character of white racial opinions.

The same assumptions are made against blacks as well. Blacks supposedly would be more likely to judge on the side of King, simply because he was black. Though it is said by blacks, it smacks of anti-black racism of the past. Not long ago, racially charged white prosecutors used the same argument to keep blacks off juries when a black was being tried.



The principle that all accused have the right to a fair trial has been sacrificed on the altar of race politics in the second trial of the officers.

The argument implies that blacks are unable to be impartial; they would have been unable to consider the facts without reference to the color of the victim or the accused. Though it claims racial righteousness, the claim is in fact much more insidious: It is an accusation that blacks cannot be impartial, that they cannot see beyond their skin.

To be sure, in politics, reason is the first thing to go. In the trial's most glaring example of nonsense, Los Angeles Congresswoman Maxine Waters looked down upon the fires burning in her district and equivocated on the riots, labeling them "righteous anger." Jesse Jackson urged that the policemen should have been tried by a jury of Rodney King's peers.

The principle that all accused have the right to a fair trial has been sacrificed on the altar of race politics in the second trial of the officers. Waters and other self-proclaimed voices of urban blacks warn that if the decision in this trial does not

come out with their demanded verdict, South Central Los Angeles will burn again. Many have noted that this is tantamount to extortion or terrorism. True enough.

But in light of the costs of the first riots — 57 innocents dead, more than 1,000 injured, 1,000 fires and nearly \$1 billion ripped out of the economy of that part of the city that so desperately needs it — one would expect that those who are truly concerned about that community would be doing double time working to avoid more rioting. When South Central burned, it was South Central's poor who suffered most. Surely compassion demands that the riots never happen again.

Given this, Water's approach to the second trial is disturbing. Waters is tacitly encouraging South Central residents to riot again. But this is the greatest of crimes: With an eye on her own political objective, Waters is asking that an entire neighborhood of human beings to attack themselves.

Surely South Central Los Angeles deserves more. It is only one example of the massive human failure to address the plight of the urban poor, and, in particular, the suffering of the black underclass.

To be sure, in the wake of the LA riots, there has been some hopeful speculation. All the frustration with the state has caused many black leaders to rethink their belief in the government as a means to uplift their communities. After all, who would expect that the giant, blunt and impersonal state would ever care deeply about inner-city blacks?

No great society will ever flow from Washington — whether liberals or conservatives are in power. We must build it ourselves, one neighborhood, one family, indeed, one person at a time.

Young is a first-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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