

On Guilford Pond

by Phillip B. Smith

Dear Penelope,

Sweet thing, how are you? Fine? Me... I'm ok... I just wanted to write you a letter, say hell... I know I write too much. Sorry... am I wasting my time? If so, tell me... don't let my affections blabber on. Tell me. Do you like me? I thought you might, after a while, after the few times we went out (I had fun, and you... I can never tell for sure). And when I try to touch you, just a hug, or even my hand holding yours... something is wrong. Is it you? Or me?

Oh well. I can only imagine you now, in that black dress full of pink flowers, or in those baggy pants... in your quiet space, on the run, in the woods, sitting, by the pond... thinking of me? But can I imagine all of

you? Am I leaving something out... are you wearing your glasses today? Or maybe that paisley brassiere? (Thought I hadn't noticed...)

But enough of you! I must talk of me... and only hope you get my letters...

Been a tough day for me—got back a paper that I have to write over... teacher didn't understand me, didn't understand ALL that was going on in the paper... my fault. And in class, and in his comments to me, I don't understand him...his fault? But I guess it doesn't matter whose fault it is, just that I'm pissed off, real uptight. There's something infuriating about NOT understanding and something more infuriating about NOT BEING understood!

Sooo MAD. I am sitting on the bricks, above the steps to the left of Founders. With the ants and squirrels. Thinking of you... I feel a bit better. But really, it is the bag of cookies—my lunch. The grill room is closed, counting money... I can't buy a

bacon cheeseburger. So I buy the bag of cookies, the ones with the lemon cream sandwiched between two vanilla halves. First time for eating sugar in two weeks... oh well, I got to calm down. MAD. So... POP... POP... and POPPOPOP... down the chute, the sugar soothes, calms my nerves. POP. Pop. Gives my stomach something to bite, other than itself. Pop. All 18 cookies are gone. And I can rest. A squirrel scurries close, a visit. Hello, I say. It wants crumbs... I shoo it away.

Later in the day: Back in my apartment. To chill by the TV. Watch M*A*S*H. Laugh. TV... funny the way memory visits... did I ever tell you about the time I was in the Seattle airport, waiting at three in the morning... oh yeah, huh... I forgot, I was waiting for you, wasn't I? To fly in from New York. But I don't think I ever told you about this crazy fella, the long-haired hipster in jeans, with holes. What happened was... I'm sitting at one of those pay TV's, the tiny black and white ones in plastic

boxes, watching a blank screen—I don't have a quarter (if I did I could watch about 15 minutes of—WHAT at three in the morning?), I stare at the blank screen, content in my daze, when this hipster in jeans appears. He comes right up to em, and says, "You got the TV with the worst reception" (they're eight TVs in a row)... then he corrects himself... "No, no, that one, that one there, two TV's over... That one's got the worst reception... The best is at the end." And he sits down at the end of the row, with a row of quarters three hours long. I thank him, the advice being important, coming from a connoisseur.

I know the hipster was wobbly upstairs, but I could also tell that he was serious. That he really cared about my reception, about whether or not I was going to be watching a lot of fuzz... and that's important.

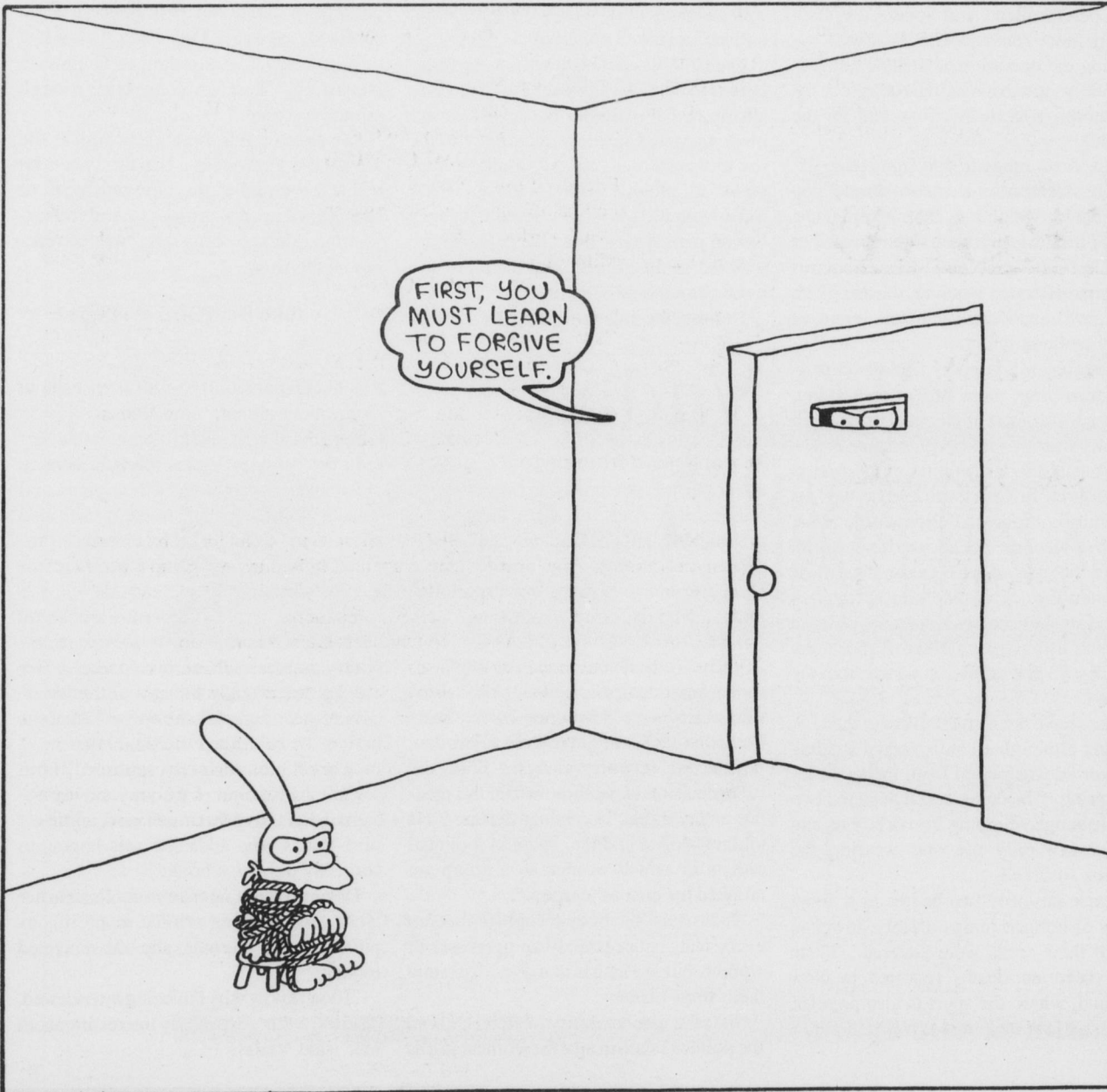
Well love, this letter has rambled on long enough. And I want to get it in the mail before the post office closes... so you can hear from me by the start of the week.

Missing you, Phill

P.S. GOGO RED SOX!

LIFE IN HELL

©1990 BY MATT GROENING



105-1990 ACME FEATURES SYMOUCATE ©1990 BY MATT GROENING

Bungee

> continued from page 7

Lee found out about bungee-jumping from a friend and decided to try it over the summer. His friend's parents had been given a 25th anniversary present of a balloon-ride, which is how they learned about the bungeeing in Charlotte.

The origin of the sport can be traced back to the rituals practiced by the land divers of Penecost Island in the South Pacific. Each spring young men leap from wooden towers, with cords made of vines bound to their ankles. Success is a sign of courage and manhood.

In 1979 Oxford University's Most Dangerous Sports Club began jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge, wearing tuxedos and top hats. This impetus helped the sport become popular in California. Bungee Adventures of Palo Alto operates much as the Charlotte company does, charging \$99 per jump.

The future of bungee jumping looks promising. Entrepreneur Stone of Balloons of Charlotte and his partners are hoping to market a complete bungee system, with balloon attachment and promotional materials to hot-air balloon operators. The proposed price tag of \$5000 may seem steep, but if enthusiasm for jumping continues at a constant rate, the investment may soon pay for itself.

David Lee has already turned at least one other friend on to the idea of jumping, and he would definitely do it again. He says, "It's an experience no person should be denied."