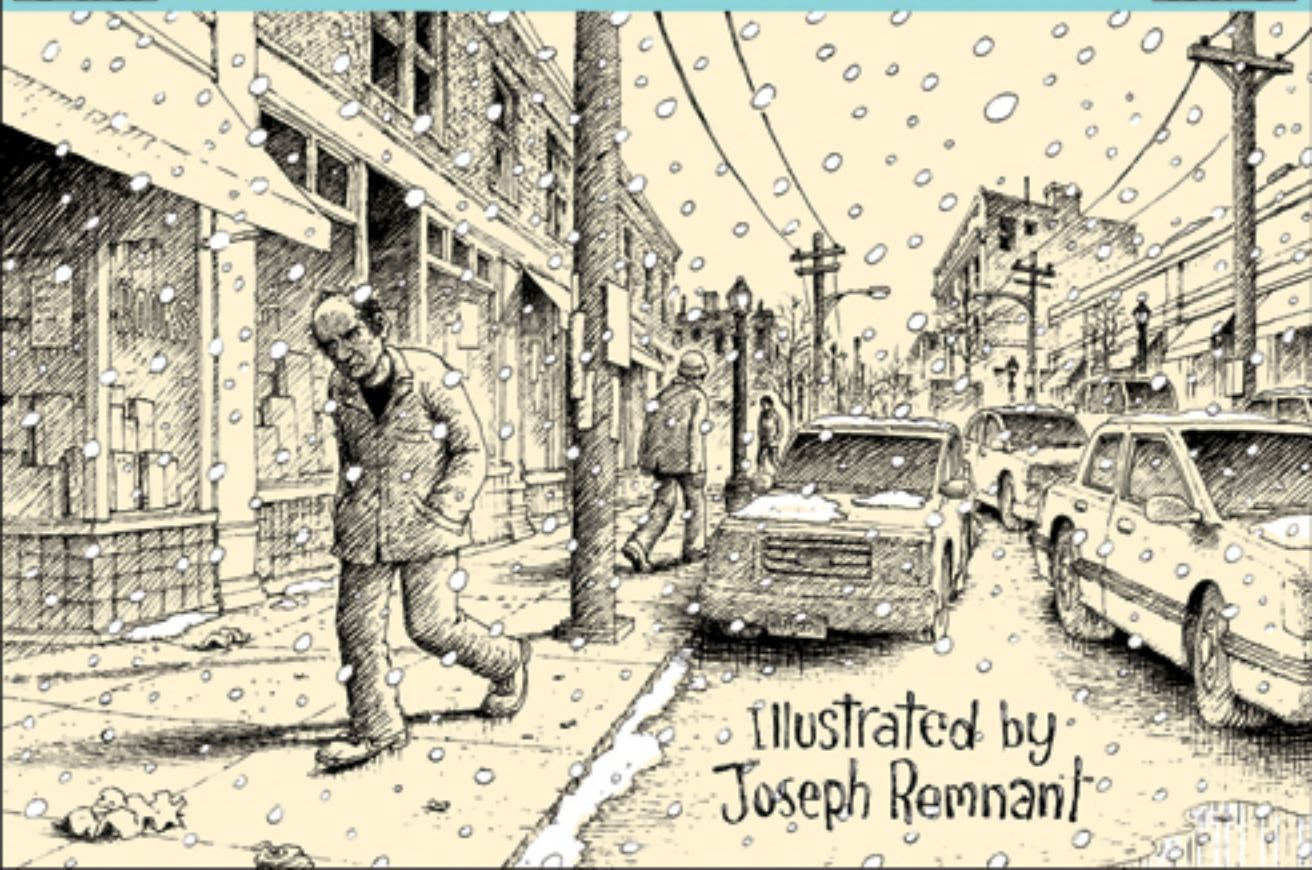




HARVEY PEKAR'S
CLEVELAND



Illustrated by
Joseph Remnant



So after about six weeks of, for me, bliss, I was totally smitten, but I had always assumed that after she got her Ph.D. she'd be leaving Cleveland. So I was psychologically prepared for her departure.



But one morning I wanted to show her I really loved her and I said:

You know, if I thought you were gonna stay around here after you graduated, I could get very serious about you.*



* My job situation was so good and solid that I'd never leave it. It took years to set it up.

SHE said...

Well, I CAN be influenced.



You can be influenced? What does THAT mean!?



Are you saying, if I marry you, you'll stay in Cleveland and try to make it here?

Yes.



WOW, UNBELIEVABLE! Let's go get a LICENSE!



Actually, it **WAS** unbelievable, but after the grim years I'd spent between 1959 and 1977, I figured I had nothing to lose. I was right about that, too!



I thought, though, that at least some woman out there would be interested in hooking up with someone who had so much in common with her intellectually. I mean anything is possible.

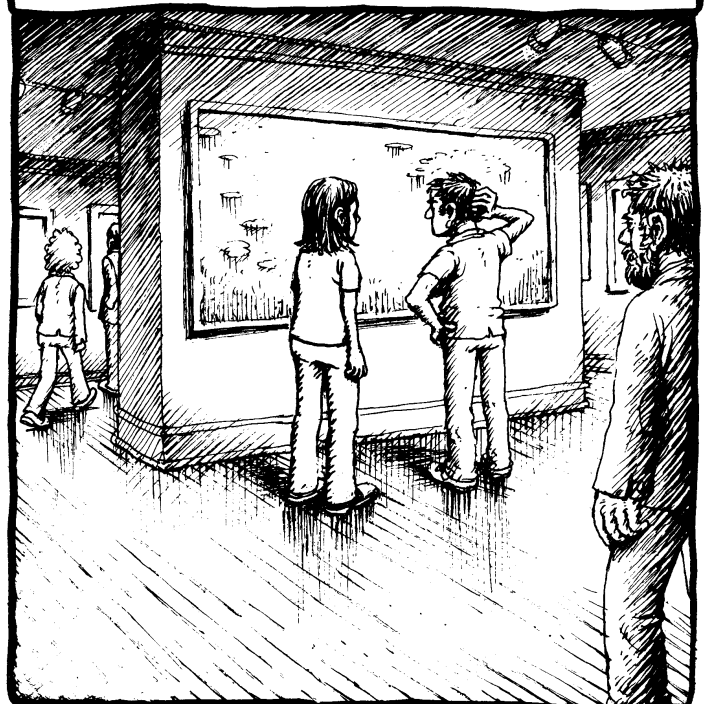


And I already knew more about some aspects of her studies than she did. Like she had, what was to me, an amazing ignorance of history.

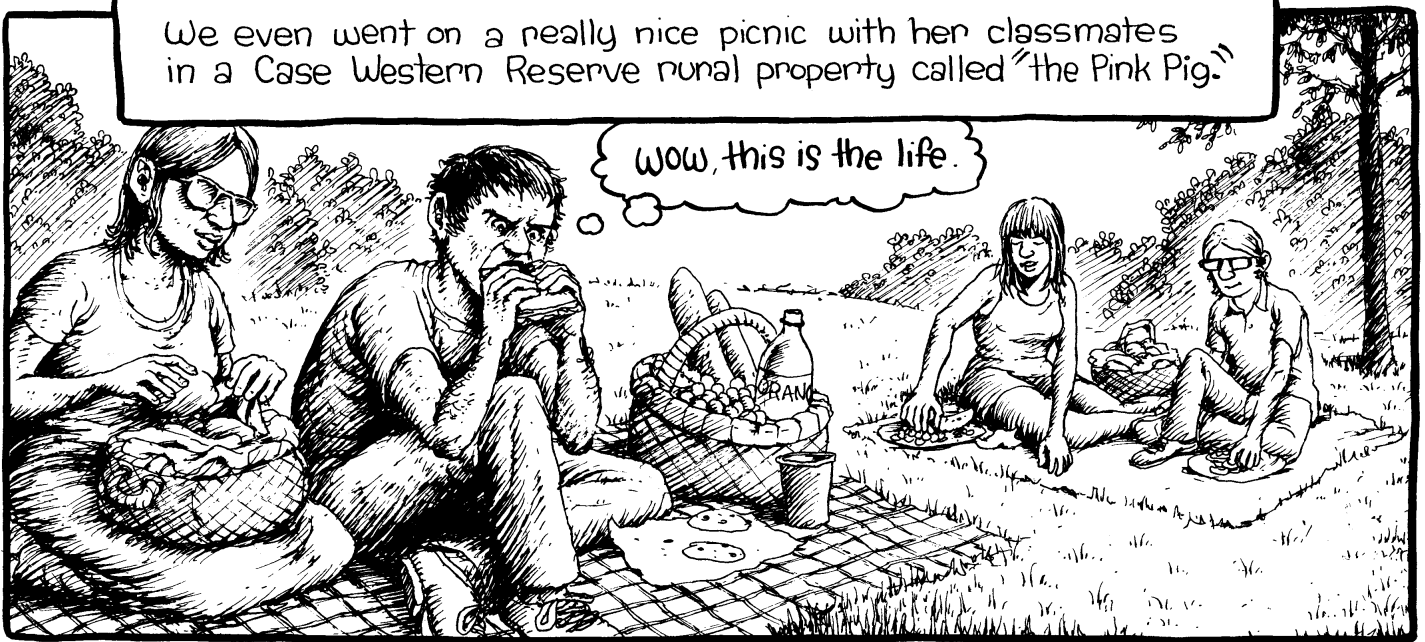


NO, that happened about ten years after that!

But that year we had a wonderful summer. Remember, I told you that even though Cleveland was in decline there were still plenty of things we could do together. Remember what I said about museums and parks.



We even went on a really nice picnic with her classmates in a Case Western Reserve rural property called "the Pink Pig."



Wow, this is the life.

If she dumps me tomorrow, it will have still been worth it.



But I still thought she might leave me after she got her degree and had to face the cold world.

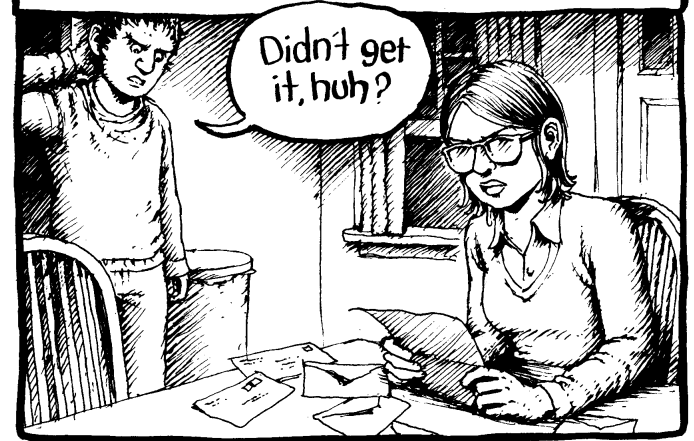


God, I hope she stays.

We both knew that Cleveland wasn't the best place for an ambitious Ph.D. academic to live. Even at its best, Cleveland has never been known as a center for the study of humanities.



Plus, she badly wanted to teach at a prestigious university, preferably in the Ivy League. The only prestigious college in the Cleveland area, Oberlin, turned her down.

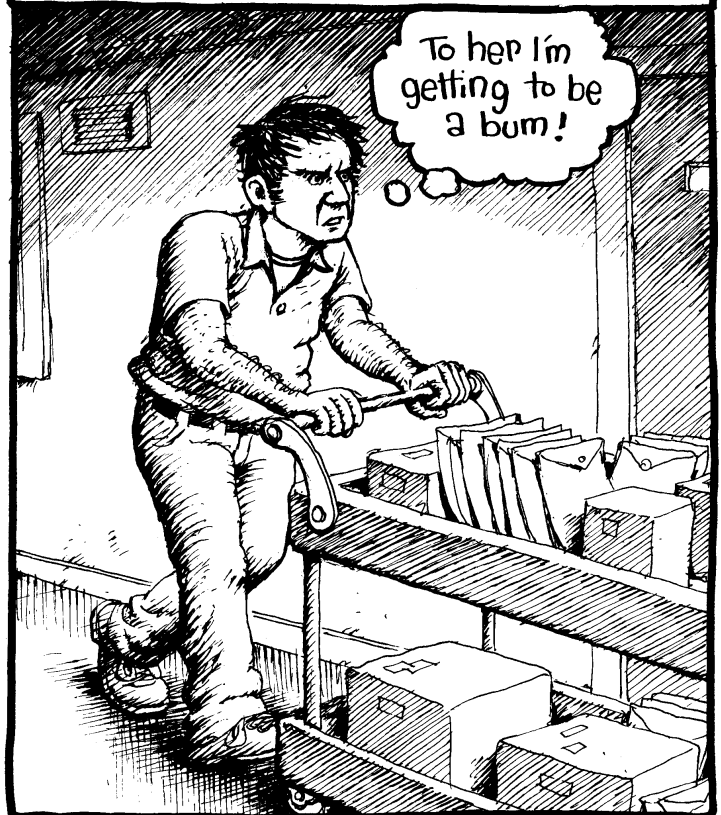


Didn't get it, huh?

Gradually, things started to cool with us. For one, she didn't want to go to lectures with me anymore.



She never told me exactly why, but I think it had to do with my lowly social status.



At that time, I was getting flattering reviews from not only trade publications but more prestigious publications like the Village Voice.



But I was losing money on the comic book, and nobody, aside from comics fans and insiders, knew about me.

