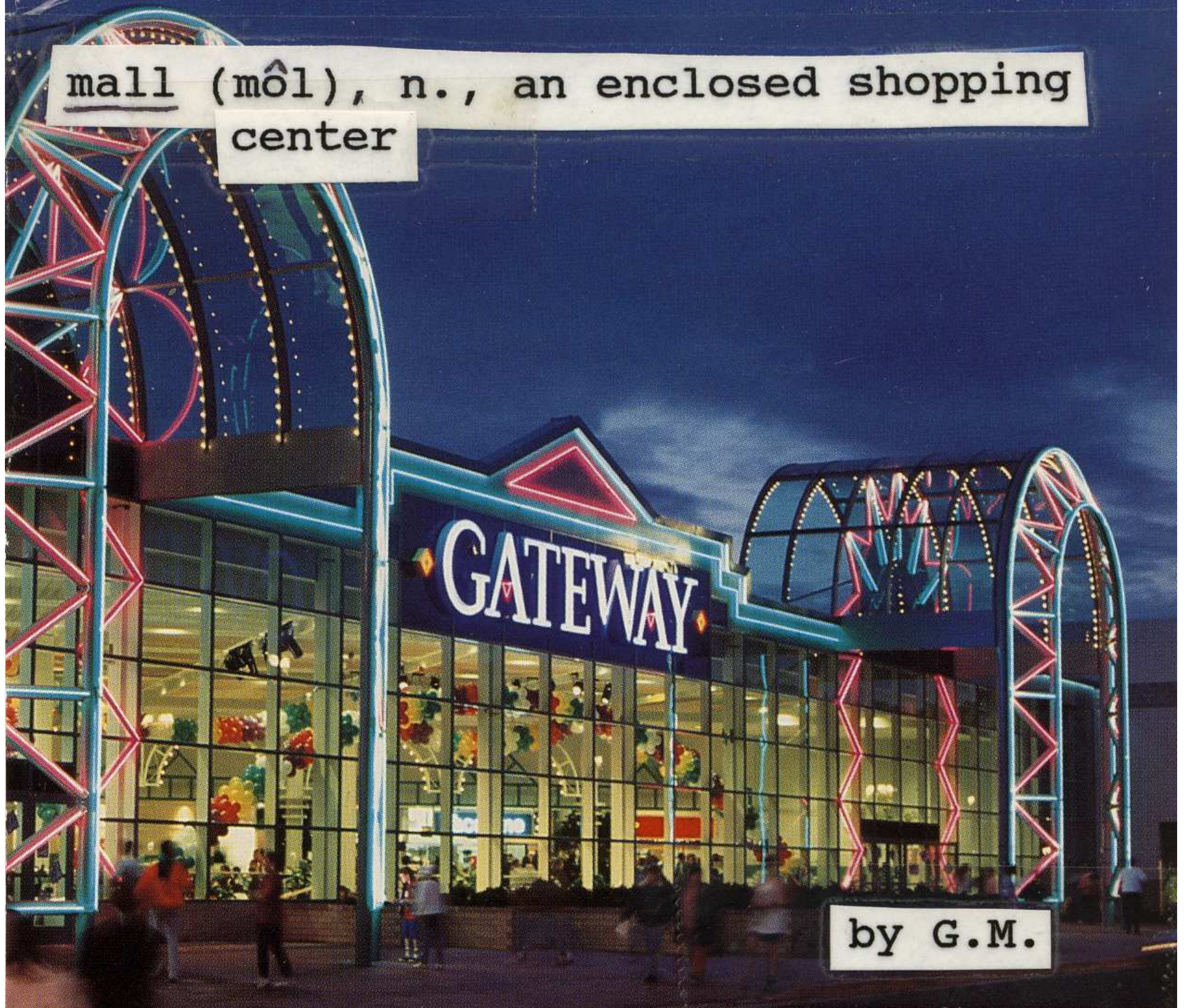


mall (môl), n., an enclosed shopping center



by G.M.

Gateway Mall is my home away from home. If that is the case, I wonder what I can do to get evicted?

visionary

I work about 5 days a week, 7 hours a day. Do the math. I'm at the mall more than I am anywhere else, and I haven't even added up the bus time yet.

That's the main reason I own a walkman. So I don't have to listen to people on the bus. Yesterday I didn't wear my walkman, and this kid was telling these other kids about

how a cop stopped him. Apparantly, the cop searched him, and took the kid's gun, pipe, and pot, and then let the kid go. His stories were greeted with a bunch of other kids saying, "That sucks."

They say that most injuries incurred by gun-owers are accidently self-inflicted. I wish.

Surviving the Brat Pack

I'm off the bus, smoking, trying to ignore all of those rapper wanna-bes calling their girlfriends, "bitches," when this kid that just about came up to the bottom of my tie asked me for a cigarette. The sad part is, I gave him one.

It's better, I guess, than the other ways he could be getting them, like him getting the shit kicked out of himself because he took a few of dad's Old Gold's. For all I know, maybe he really was 18. Maybe I'm the one that's crazy.

I used to get stopped by the rent-a-cops for smoking. "Put that out, son. It's against the law for underage kids to smoke on private property." It used to bother me. Used to.

Most of the time they didn't know that they, not being real police officers, have no actual way to stop me if I refused. But it's easier not to fight them. It used to mean something to just hate, "The Man," back in the day. Now, "To defeat the beast, you must become part of it." I shudder at the thought and try to remember why I wanted to work here in the first place. I know there had to be a reason.

**to sleep perchance to dream
perchance to mess with reality**

It costs \$16.95 at Disc Jockey for a t-shirt that has the Anarky symbol on the front and the slogan,

"Punk's Not Dead," on the back. For five bucks you can get the sticker. As I pass hundreds of dollars in South Park merchandise and listen to Puff Daddy (who the fuck is this man?) remake some Led Zeppelin song, I see "Bedtime For Democrocy" for sale.

A group of kids talk about Green Day's new album as if it were the only record that existed. "Combat Rock" sits for \$2.00 on cassette in the bargain bin.

Please shoot me.

virtual insanity

100 customers come in the store
and ask 100 variations of the exact
same question until I want to scream
and break things, so to pass the
time I compose a list of things I'd

Mind The

GAP

Indeed...

rather be doing:

- 1.) Dental Work.
- 2.) Cleaning The Refrigerator.
- 3.) Having My Toenails Removed painfully.
- 4.) Swim The Bearing Strait Naked.
- 5.) Fluff-Boy.
- 6.) Door-to-Door Salesman In Seth's Movie, "No Sale." (It's worse than the title implies.)
- 7.) Animal Trainer For, "World's Deadliest Snail Chases IV."
- 8.) McManager.
- 9.) Urkle Clean-Up Crew On CBS.
- 10.) Anything (and I mean it, too!).

It really didn't use to be like this.

A new rifle shoots farther,
hits hidden targets, sees
at night, and accurately
fires around corners.

It occurs to me that it might be cool to have a t-shirt made that says, "Don't Make Me Go Thurston On Your Ass." Then I think that I'd probably get shot. Then I think I could hire some test subjects to find out if that really is the case. Then I think that I must be crazy to have just rationalized someone

getting shot to test a theory about a t-shirt. Then I think that I don't care. Then I think that I think about guns at work more often than I ever do. No wonder clerks seem so anxious to take you to the hunting section.

The irony of getting shot in that t-shirt hits me ten minutes later, and I'm paralysed with laughter for a half-hour. That's really sad, man.

fetish

Eventually the mall closes and I go home to my shitty apartment that, at nearly \$7.50 an hour, I can still barely afford. A lot of times I can convince myself so well that I like something that I almost never notice there was something to not like, almost like a hypnotic suggestion. I just don't even think about it until one day it all pops in at once and I snap.

If only I could use these powers for good instead of evil.

fact or *fiction*?

Then again, evil is more fun.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette
Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.

original

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center

Written & Arranged by G.M.

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2032 SE Ankeny
Portland, OR, 97214