

# Trials & Tribulations of a twentysomething

by S. Livingstone

**A**s I read through the pages of Douglas Coupland's newest novel, *Shampoo Planet*, simultaneously avoiding the obscene amount of school work that has been crowding my desk, I began to reflect on the present state of the world in comparison to the world we twentysomethings were brought into in the late sixties and early seventies and came to the reluctant conclusion that the world is a frightening place to hold residency. Living elsewhere is not yet an option though, so one must simply persevere in hopes that ours will not be the fateful society to face the end of the planet we call home.

My outlook may seem rather bleak, but optimism is no longer handed out in large quantities any more by those who control it - namely the government and the media. I will not deny that despair has been a force I have reconciled with before, but that was before I realized that in a few years I may be standing in line at a Canada Employment Centre, masters degree in hand. I certainly do not believe I will ever be homeless, but I fear that I will end up settling into a McJob that I abhor and talking of days when a university degree came with certain guarantees.

I do have further proof that armageddon is near, so do not confuse me with one of those crazed "the end is near" placard-wielding voices of doom we have all seen in the larger city streets of North America. My first item of proof is the storm that battered the eastern seaboard just days ago. Indeed there was no blood-red sky to be seen, but who could have caught a glimpse with the multitude of storm clouds overhead? Bizarre, unpredictable weather patterns? Surely a sign of apocalypse. People in the southern United States had "never again" signs in storefronts and there was a mad rush on supermarkets up and down the coast, and Americans, as we all know, never blow anything out of proportion. No drama in America - just the pure unadulterated truth. Congress and the Teamsters are proof of that theory.

Another item of interest to come from the immaculate union to our immediate south is the media event powerful enough to grab the attention away from the World Trade Centre in the aftermath of a terrorist attack to Texas where a former rock musician claiming to be Jesus Christ has barricaded himself and a group of followers in a desert-surrounded fortress. The self proclaimed Messiah, who is actually David Koresh, is the leader of the religious sect known as Branch Davidian which is, according to reports on the almighty CNN, a splinter group of the Seventh Day Adventists. If you believe this guy is Christ than pack your Bible because the end is here, but if you share the opinion with millions of others that J.C. was less of a gun-toting mad man and more of, let's say, a saviour, you can relax. Maybe Mr. Koresh just needs some affection. Any volunteers for a hug fest in a war zone? Just call the FBI. They apparently have everything well under control.

Who is to blame for all of this? John Major? Brian Mulroney? How about Queen Elizabeth II? She has a lot of time on her hands. Perhaps she is in the midst of a conspiracy to save her throne now that she is being forced to live like a commoner and pay taxes. Well, now that I can lay blame on a public person and am satisfied that all world problems are far removed from my small world, I will return to that atrocious mountain of work scattered about my desk. Just a few more pages of Coupland first. A slacker's life never progresses beyond procrastination. ●