

OH MAUREEN

Ronald Reagan really fucked up my sex life! At the time, like many others, I was livin' off my wits in the East Village and paying rock bottom rents. Then in the goldrush 80's, Ronnie's minions began buying tenements, so dilapidated, even the cockroaches had fled. Trumped-up shithouses on Avenue B were goin' for a grand a month.

This wasn't the end of the world, since most of us were protected by rent stabilization. But it did stop the influx of dreamers. Not that people with dreams didn't still arrive from Iowa, Osaka or good old Cultimagh. But, with the price of rents, you didn't have much time to form the new Talking Heads, let alone become the next Sam Shepherd.

Once upon a time, however, you could afford to drop out in Alphabet City and no one gave a fiddler's what you did, as long as you didn't drop dead in front of them. That was when I met Maureen.

Unlike everyone else, she wasn't a poet, painter or other bullshit artist; she was simply on the rebound from a husband in Canarsie. She had an accent that could peel paint off walls, always wore the most violent of lipsticks, had perfect teeth, a long nose and a tongue that wouldn't give up.

I was fallin' down drunk the night I met her in Stephan's Continental Lounge. To this day, I still don't know what dealings transpired between us. I had recently discovered that I got laid more often if I kept my mouth closed, for fear of drooling, and agreed to everything.

She lived up five flights of stairs and I either passed out from the exertion or the altitude. I came to on her unmade bed hog-tied, hand to foot. I tried to move and realized I was naked. "Oh Jesus, I'm fucked!" I muttered.

"Not yet!" promised a Lauren Bacall, whisky voice. She towered over me, riding crop in hand, a vision in black silk stockings and garter belt. She ran her tongue over her magenta lipstick and ordered me to repeat "beat me, whip me, make me write bad checks!" What else could a man do?

She never asked anything else of me and, every month or so, I'd show up for my dose of discipline. I never knew why she left. Someone said the rents got too high and she moved back to Canarsie. Ronnie Reagan, you've got a lot to answer for!