watery, domestic

November 17 – December 22, 2002
Downer’s Groove

"Forget things... Have A Nice Decade..."

That headline appeared on the cover of the September 1991 issue of Esquire. Unfortunately, it makes as little ironic given that the September 19th article took place exactly a decade later, not to mention that throughout the 1990s irony was anything but forgotten. As Dylan’s world was enough, NATO many took irony as a definitive characteristic of the present moment to the extent that Grayson Perry, publisher of Studio Gay, declared the September 11th attacks “an end to the Age of Irony.” Broadly defined as a discrepancy between what is expressed and what is meant, irony is inherent to the act of specification, making it anything but unique to a given era. Having made announcements no different than sentiments expressed after two World Wars, Carter can count himself quite far down on the list of individuals who have waited for civilization’s delivery on an event of truth and moral clarity. What distinguished the species of irony to which Carter refers, however, is that it’s no longer discernible from a motley of imitators. Although we are a full generation and a half removed from the flais administration, those years still serve to remind us of the degrees to which great expectations have been blunted by disappointments or circumscribed by the fatigue of unfulfilled aspirations. Under these circumstances, there is little wonder as to why the rock band Pavement adopted a mantra of negative hope—"Don’t expect, don’t expect, don’t expect!"—as the rallying refrain on the recording from which we have built to hide our sadness. This event is FREE and will take place in Cobb Hall, room 307.