

2017

arts & culture

the
free press



december issue

free

masthead & letter from the editors

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by *Kevin Sussy*

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To our amazing readership:

It has been a fucking YEAR, let's get that straight. As New Year's Eve approaches, it's easy to look back and laugh, but let's not forget the absolute shitshow of a year we all struggled through. But struggle we did, and here we are, almost through to the other side. We're so proud of you, reader, for fighting fiercely and not giving up, and for looking great doing it.

As we near the end of 2017, it's time for us to reflect on what was (possibly) an even worse year than 2016. Through the political turmoil, the devastating natural disasters, and the recent wave of sexual assault accusations, we must force ourselves to look in the mirror and redefine what it means to live in America. We've seen ourselves pushed to the very limits of our humanity and been expected to bounce back and carry on, because we have to.

So let's take 2018 by storm. Keep talking, keep sharing your art, and keep reading. Don't let the overwhelming trials of 2017 overshadow all the good that happened, too. Surround yourself with people who support you and force you to live your best life. Don't take anybody's bullshit, because you're better than that. You deserve better than that.

-Allison Young
& Michael Sugarman

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staff

Allison Young

Publisher

New Year's Resolution:
alien abduction

Michael Sugarman

Editor-in-Chief

New Year's Resolution:
god fucking dammit stop biting
your nails its been like 13 years

Kevin Sussy

Photo & Layout Editor

New Year's Resolution:
use a full tube of chapstick before
losing it

Plamena Diulgerova

Layout Editor

New Year's Resolution:
be a dirty girl with clean pores

Conner Torpey

Treasurer

New Year's Resolution:
meeting The Rock

Cassie Armon

Illustrator

New Year's Resolution:
committing to homosexuality



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To quote The Binghamton Review,

"The Spooky Issue was actually alright... I like their layout!"

what 2 get ur friends 4 the holidays

January: Snow-covered
February: Cheap AF
March: Ugly
April: Offensive
May: Seasonal
June: Expensive
July: Funny
August: Cliche
September: Broken/torn
October: Re-gifted
November: Sticky
December: Glittery

Favorite Color

Blue: sweater
Green: teddy bear
Black: pet fish
White: money
Red: card
Yellow: framed photo of you

Orange: book
Purple: makeup
Pink: clothing in the wrong size
Glitter: soap
Grey: Jewelry
Brown: candle

Favorite Genre of Music

Pop: that they can't return
Rock: that they pretend to love but you can tell they hate
Indie: that you bought from them last year, hope they don't recognize it!
Hip-Hop: that you wanted for yourself and knew they wouldn't like so they'll just let you keep it
Jazz: that they'll cherish forever
Country: covered in rhinestones
EDM: that smells like yellow snow
Punk: drowning in ribbons and paper AND tinsel

by sophie miller

the starbucks cup debate

The holidays are a time of celebration, joy, and most importantly, public outrage about the new Starbucks holiday cup design.

In 1997, Starbucks released the first special cup for the holiday season which featured shades of red, blue, and green, and has been a yearly tradition since. In 2015, the cup was just plain red with a slight ombre, which Starbucks claimed reflected simplicity. However, American evangelist Joshua Feuerstein was outraged by the cup. In a video that became viral, Feuerstein claimed that Starbucks was attempting to wage a “war on Christmas” by excluding Christian symbols from its holiday cup. As a sort of “trick” in retaliation, Feuerstein asked the barista at the register to write “Merry Christmas” as the name on his cup. Feuerstein called for a movement which he referred to as #MerryChristmasStarbucks, and accused the company of playing too much into the idea of political correctness.

I worked at Starbucks in high school while all of this was going on and I have to say that the Christian conservative outrage about the holiday cups is ridiculous. First off, I’ll address Joshua Feuerstein: in the opinion of a former barista, writing “Merry Christmas” as the name on Feuerstein’s cup was not in any way a step of defiance towards Starbucks as a company; I have written “names” ranging from “Prom?” to “I love you, Stacey.” People literally write any name they want-- you pretty much have to write whatever the customer says even if it’s

by charlotte monsour

not actually a name. The barista at the register probably didn’t think anything of it at all. Besides, Starbucks is not a Christian company! There is no reason why they would or should employ Christian symbols on a cup when that isn’t part of their values as a company. The current political climate is a perfect breeding ground for this type of trivial debate, as there is a focus by liberals and much of America to shift towards political correctness, and a huge backlash by the conservative Christian community against this idea.

Maybe the Christian conservatives who oppose the holiday cups should step back and think about the effects that this movement has on the public view of Christmas as a holiday.

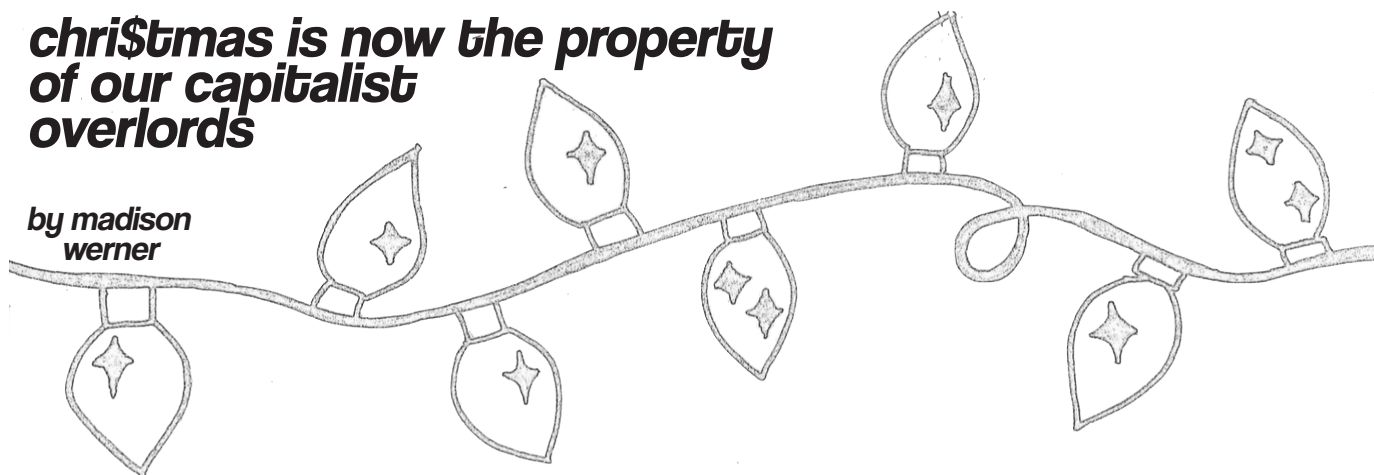
By playing into such a commercial view of Christmas and focusing on something as simple as a cup, they trivialize Christmas and the Christian aspect of the holiday itself.

This year, the Starbucks cup is white with black illustrations, and hints of red and green. The cup is meant to encourage customers to use their creativity and customize their own cups (probably a marketing strategy by Starbucks to try to minimize the controversy). This year’s opposition is either calling the cups lazy, a “cop-out,” or just simply pointless because no one wants to color in a cup that they will just throw out later. Long story short, Starbucks can’t seem to do anything right when it comes to their holiday cups. I know that I, for one, am looking forward to the day when something as petty as a cup will not spark controversy. Until then, I’ll be drinking my Starbucks with no complaints.

illustration by nicole paolillo

chri\$tm\$ is now the property of our capitalist overlords

by madison werner

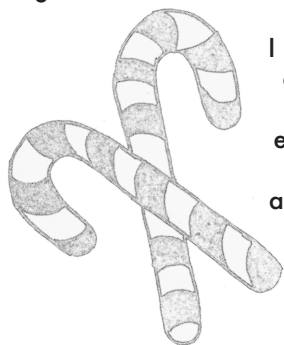
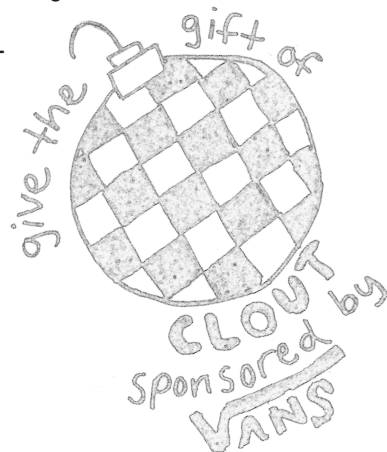


Records indicate Christmas was first celebrated around 336. Even then, it was on December 25, despite the conclusions of various biblical scholars, who placed Jesus's birth between March and August.



Modern Christians love to protest how dirty dirty capitalism, the enemy of Christianity, has ruined the sacred nature of their holy celebration and replaced family lessons on Christ and morality with unwrapping mystery boxes while sitting around a tree and telling tales of a magical red-nosed intruder, but the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that Christmas wasn't Christian to begin with. Early Christians are recorded complaining on the backwardness of pagan winter festivals--complaints that stop right around the rise of Christmas itself. The similarities between Christmas when it began and these festivals are well recorded, to the extent that this narrative is given by my Catholic church at home with the overall implication that pagan festivals served as an origin for Christmas celebrations.

Christmas celebrations have remained predominantly religious for centuries, until our Capitalist Overlords have begun adapting the season for their god, Profit. The ideals of capitalism are inherently anti-Christian, as possession of wealth is sinful under Christian doctrine, but still, the holiday becomes more capitalist yearly. Christmas music as a genre has expanded from mostly old religious songs and weather commentary to songs of romance and that one with the little kid who wants to receive a hippopotamus as a gift, both of these new additions are more widely marketable to less religious individuals. Packaging and advertisements for products without relevance to the holiday invoke it anyway. Capitalism has made specific material things and the act of purchasing Stuff (think gifts) an important component of a holiday once dominated by a religious order that still teaches money is a root of most worldly evil.



I am a member of that religious order, and so to me, this change seems wrong, but I acknowledge it's no one's place to stop it. Christmas wasn't Christian to begin with, and while we've added meaning and tradition to it, capitalism's doing that to an even greater extent. They've earned the holiday. If you're a Christian, it's not an attack against your beliefs when your atheist and agnostic friends reclaim Christmas as theirs, and if you're feeling mildly sacrilegious, join them. If not, just let them live. Go donate some time and money to charity. Hug your mom. Let the kindness and joy this season brings stay, even if it's here for the wrong reasons. Let Christmas become pagan again.

illustration by plamena diulgerova

Aries

You're craving emotional commitment in a new way this month, but that may not be what you need right now. The world has been feeling volatile, and though it's easy to find comfort in others, the only presence you can count on is your own. Harness the power of the moon and remember that you stand alone as a force of nature.

Wear pearlescent clothing. Listen to "Melodrama" by Lorde. Scream as you enter the new year; let them know you've arrived.

Pisces

Emotions may be weighing you down, but that's what happens when you live an open, vulnerable life. Embrace your hurt, and acknowledge the fact that you live your truth by processing pain in an intimate way. Kindness is all you have to give, but it's also all you need to stay afloat.

Wear a soft sweater. Listen to "Drunk" by Thundercat. The start of a new year will always bring new challenges; face them when you're ready and greet each of them with love.

Aquarius

Breathe in and accept that tides change; breathe out and find comfort in the fact that you are the tide. Everything has settled, and the pits of this year are much harder to see when you're standing on a peak. You've forgiven all of the outside forces that have imposed on your life, but don't forget to forgive yourself.

Wear something sheer and blue. Listen to "CTRL" by SZA. Bring in the new year with a profound sense of accomplishment. You are enough.

Capricorn

Sometimes it's ok to spiral out of control. You need to step back and remember that there are forces larger than you working to your advantage. Allow December to wrap its chaotic winds around you, and bask in the comfort of knowing that there is safety in the eye of the storm.

Wear something that isn't black. Listen to "More Life" by Drake. Dance your way into the new year and leave behind apprehension.

Taurus

Don't forget to ground yourself, Taurus. It's been a long year, but your personal growth has made it worthwhile. Chip through the ice and remember that spontaneous life still exists within the depths of winter. Allow those around you to draw out your intrinsic warmth.

Wear a pastel button down. Listen to "Flower Boy" by Tyler the Creator. Bring in the new year with honesty. Don't be afraid to express your inner-most desires, Taurus — take a risk, for once.

horoscopes

Sagittarius

You're feeling restless this month, and that's ok, Sagittarius. Kick and scream and slash your lungs open with the fresh winter air, but don't let your destructive tendencies take control. It's fine to leave if you feel like you no longer belong, but you can't run from your anxieties.

Wear metallic drapery. Listen to "SweetSexySavage" by Kehlani. Enter the new year with confetti and laughter. Remember that the looming darkness of night doesn't dampen your brilliance — it allows you to shine.

Gemini

The world has recently thrown you for a loop, Gemini, but there is beauty in imbalance. You're actively searching for your place in the world, and that made this year tougher than most. It's time for you to float in the ether, and you're more than ready to find a home in between stars and black holes.

Wear sparkles. Listen to "Planetarium" by Sufjan Stevens & Co. Bring in the new year with loved ones and empathy. It's ok to be vulnerable.

by julia carmel

Scorpio

Don't let the dark essence of winter seep into your mind. It's easy to succumb to negativity, but you've always been good at flipping the script. Frozen concrete can be softened with snow and starlight. Things will go your way soon enough; it's just a matter of time.

Wear silk. Listen to "Big Fish Theory" by Vince Staples. Let kind thoughts and fond memories guide you into the new year. Softness isn't weakness.

Cancer

Loneliness may be taunting you, but you can find solace in new friendships. Get outside of your head and try to process your emotions through nature. The world may feel barren right now, but life bears more weight once you accept the absence of it. People come and go, but transient experiences can still be magnificent.

Wear something embroidered. Listen to "Process" by Sampha. Approach the new year with liberating intentions. It's time to be free of your own thoughts.

Leo

While searching for fulfillment you managed to lose your destination. You've been maintaining the illusion of control to calm those around you, but it might be beneficial for you to take a step back. Don't feign confidence if you aren't invested in your endeavours, and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Wear your finest sequins. Listen to "DAMN" by Kendrick Lamar. Compliment and complement those around you in order to bring in the new year with positive intentions.

Virgo

Being in the passenger seat can be more fun than driving, if you let it. It's been a formative year for you, Virgo, and the world may not mesh seamlessly with your new sense of self. Try to balance your organized – and at times, neurotic – nature by opening your heart to the prospect of authentic joy.

Wear patterned pants. Listen to "Trip" by Jhene Aiko. Enter the new year with a sense of acceptance; entropy is natural.

Libra

Though you typically have a flair for the elaborate, you've been feeling subdued recently. Embrace December as a chance to reignite your love for all things absurd. Follow your impulses and instincts without apology, and you may make something profound.

Wear dark velvet. Listen to "Take Me Apart" by Kelela. Bring in the new year with a surplus of body glitter and no inhibitions.

winter solstice

by hannah
burke

the winter solstice
is a time for the 3 R's:
repair, renewal & rebirth

This year, the winter solstice is on December 21st, a Thursday. From this day forward, it is your time to snuggle in blankets with a hot chocolate and focus on your well being. It's a time for charcoal face masks; a time for crafting; maybe learn how to embroider "live fast, die young" into your jeans or how to stick-and-poke a smiley face onto someone's ankle. Perhaps it's time to finally make a Pinterest account. The days are shorter now, but the solstice is as short as it gets. The days can only get longer from here, but they're also going to get colder.

Winter is indicative of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is a type of depression based on changes in the seasons, and may be the cause of why you feel so goddamn sad in the winter. You can like, buy a \$100 light box, or go to therapy. The winter is literally draining the energy from us. Why do you think everyone hibernates?

Hibernation is a real thing that is happening right now! Except for the deer in the nature preserve. They don't hibernate and their eyes will still follow you at night. But soon enough, even the squirrel that took your Jazzman's cookie seconds after you dropped it on the ground that one time will be nestled away in a tree or in an underground network of tunnels somewhere. Your cookie is safe. For now.

Cleanse your house to free it of all the evil spirits that have manifested your home this fall. Forget about how trashed you got on Halloweekend. Burn winter candy apple and the iced gingerbread candles. Burn sage. Write down all the bad memories you've had this fall and burn them. It's a time for burning.

It's also cuffing season. Protect yourself. Specifically from people who wear cuffed jeans.

illustration by plamena diulgerova

a hoe never gets cold

by brittaney skavla

An essential feature of going out in Binghamton is being fucked up enough to not notice how shitty everything is, from the cold temperatures, to the soiled spaces, to the thirsty students, to the infinite song remixes that shouldn't exist. I, however, decided to experience a night on the town free of any substances that would blur my senses, effectively robbing me of experiencing all the sights, smells, and feelings that Binghamton nightlife has to offer! Here's what happened on my sober November Friday night.



Arriving downtown at 1:45am, our only option at this hour was the bars. The line for Binghamton's most premier bar, the Rathskeller, was long. We opted for a more humble establishment: JT's. The bouncer validated my completely legitimate identification card. Heat radiated from the hazardous number of bodies that filled the bar. The moist air was complimented by the lingering scent of a fruit flavored vape. 2011 single "Look at Me Now" played as patrons attempted to mouth the words to Lil Wayne's part, but screamed when the hook came.

As my friends ordered drinks, I examined the older adults in our vicinity. Accessorized with a camo hat, an aged man held a beer in each hand as he observed the mass of co-eds before him. After getting their drinks, we pushed our way to the middle of the room, and the ~~randomized movements~~ dancing began. Three minutes later, my friend asked a fellow patron if he would be more careful, as he kept spilling his drink on my friend. Not comprehending what was said, perhaps due to the obstructive noise, or the abundance of ethanol in his bloodstream, he was unhappy with what my friend said and requested that they go outside and ~~beat the shit out of each other~~ "talk." Luckily, the man's friends pulled him away, and we were safely separated by a dry humping couple. Eventually, he stopped barking at us and resigned to chugging his mixed beverage quietly.

The mid-2000s anthem "Apple Bottom Jeans (Low)" started playing, and I witnessed the girl from the dry humping duo slip onto the grime that forever covers the floor. Similarly, a number of patrons got too low. After 45 more minutes of witnessing grinding, kissing, screaming, spilling, and falling, it was 2:50am. 10 minutes remained as I saw some gentlemen get a fish bowl, perhaps the last one prepared on this Fishbowl Friday. The night's final song, "American Pie," played as the lights began to turn on, and people started to exit. With JT's fully lit, I looked down to see the broken glass that lay around my muddied sneakers, and looked up to see the fishbowl boys frantically drinking their $\frac{3}{4}$ filled bowl. We exited the establishment, and I was able to take a full breath of air that was absent of disease, but full of freedom. The night concluded.

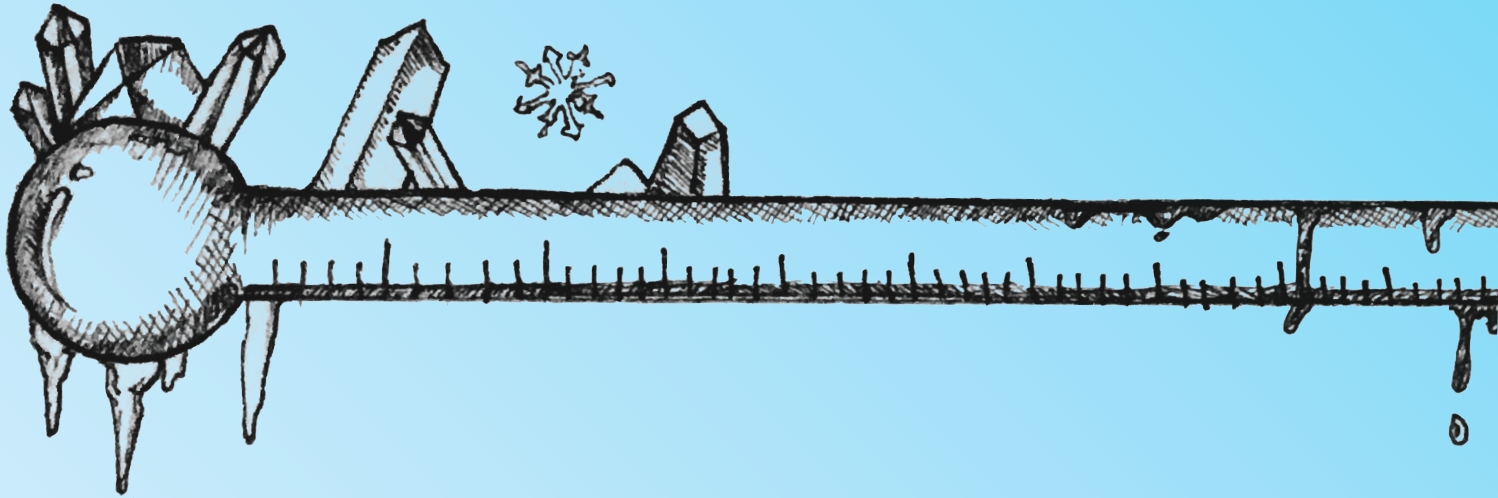
Overall, the night was entertaining, and actually fun/bearable thanks to my friends. Plus, it wasn't a frat or the Rat- I don't hate myself enough to try that. However, it's always best to be prepared.

Be safe: stay pregameing, kids!

illustration by plamena diulgerova & nicole paolillo

free stuff in nyc

by masha morozov



NOT RISKY

Go to a museum

- Free with BU ID: the MoMA
- Suggested donation: the Met, the Cloisters, the Museum of Natural History
- 19 and under: the Brooklyn Museum (and every first Saturday of the month from 5-11pm)
- 18 and under: the New Museum, the Whitney, Cooper Hewitt

Ride the Staten Island Ferry

- No, there are no tickets for this 30 minute ride with a great view of both Governor's Island and the Statue of Liberty

Socrates Sculpture Park

- Large-scale sculpture & multimedia installations

Botanical Gardens

- Staten Island- always free
- Brooklyn- every Tuesday
- Bronx- every Wednesday

Chelsea Art Galleries

- Luhring Augustine - International contemporary, as well as late 19th century painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, photography, and video works
- Matthew Marks - One of the largest galleries in Chelsea
- Sean Kelly - Represents established and mid-career artists, particularly with work based in installation and performance

Comedy and Late Night Talk Shows

- SNL- lottery system
- Jimmy Fallon and Stephen Colbert- offer free tickets to attend live tapings

Ice skating in Bryant Park

- Bring your own skates and the only thing you'll have to worry about paying for is storing your stuff

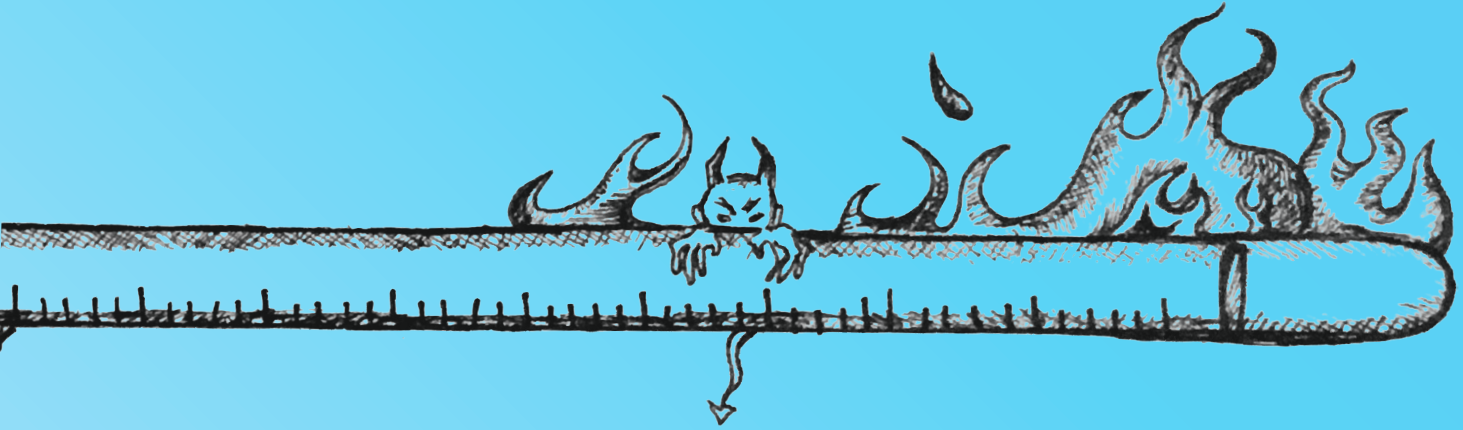
Go to the Zoos

- All the zoos are free Wednesday afternoons

IKEA Ferry (free on weekends)

- Located at Red Hook Ikea Terminal

Having grown up in New York City and gone to a high school as large as Brooklyn Tech, I've acquired the knowledge of how to have fun in the city without going broke, or better yet, spending a penny. Here's a list of things to do within the five boroughs for the holidays without killing your wallet, ranked by risk level of activity. Enjoy!



SOMEWHAT RISKY

- Dress up and strut like you mean it into anywhere fancy
- The NYAC has a wonderful view of Central Park- make it through the lobby and take the elevator up to the top floor and voila
- Loitering in cafes (Not as risky, just frowned upon)

VERY RISKY

Climb Fire Escapes

- Climb up a random fire escape to get to a rooftop to get an awesome view for free

Explore the subway tracks

- While there are abandoned subway tracks, proceed at your own will, knowing the repercussions. Not recommended for those not willing to be quick on their feet

Urban exploring

- This involves trespassing, but there is a plethora of abandoned buildings packed with urban history around the five boroughs

Climb the Queensboro Bridge

- This is EXTREMELY dangerous and illegal!! It is much safer to walk across it for free and imagine you're climbing while looking at pictures others took from the top

illustration by nicole paolillo

2017 film releases rated based on how much 🍷 cannibalism 🍷 is in them

by deirdre delasho

Silence of the Lambs, Delicatessen, Jennifer's Body--some of the best films of our time feature cannibalism to at least some degree. We're deep into awards season, and with all the new releases every week, it's hard to keep up with movies. But don't worry! I watched all the movies that have been released so far this year to let you know which ones feature cannibalism so you don't have to!

Blade Runner 2049 (dir. Denis Villeneuve) 🍷🍷

There was absolutely no cannibalism in this movie. Also all the women were grossly objectified.

🍷 It Comes at Night (dir. Trey Edward Shults)

This one was a big disappointment because it really felt like there was a place for cannibalism in it. Think about it: all these people trapped in a house together, running low on food... it only seems logical that they would have to eat each other to survive! Considering how much this movie otherwise sucked, the least they could have done was let Riley Keough's character consume human flesh. This was a missed opportunity, and is reflected in my rating.

The Florida Project (dir. Sean Baker) 🍷🍷

The film tells the story of a young girl's summer in Orlando, Florida, as her young single mother struggles to support the two of them. The narrative is so quietly beautiful that I didn't realize the emotional impact it was having on me until I started weeping at an otherwise meaningless moment of Willem Dafoe simply typing at his computer. It's visually stunning, and the actors give phenomenal performances so believable that at times you forget that you're watching a fictional film. Rather than following a typical Hollywood story arch, the film is episodic, depicting what should otherwise be boring moments of the endless days of childhood summers without artificially romanticizing them. The Florida Project finds beauty in these everyday occurrences and packs an emotional punch like no other film I've seen not just this year, but my entire life. However, there was no cannibalism.

🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷 Raw (dir. Julia Ducourneau)

We've hit the jackpot! The entire PREMISE of this movie is about cannibalism! Justine eats copious amounts of human flesh in Raw, and there really isn't much beating around the bush. It's gross! It's thrilling! It's French! Raw knows what you came here for and it is ready to give it to you. Apparently other things happened in this movie, but I do not remember them because I was too distracted by the cannibalistic aspects of it. Cannibalistic teenage girl coming-of-age films are quickly becoming my new favorite genre.

Mother! (dir. Darren Aronofsky) 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Now we're talking!! The movie really makes you wait for it, but there is some cannibalism in this one. It was just what the film needed.

🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷 Atomic Blonde (dir. David Leitch)

There is no cannibalism in this film, but I love Charlize Theron.

Cars 7: I Want To Lay Down on The Fucking Racetrack

by ben brandwein

"You've been here for 6 hours, sir."

He's right, I have been. I can't help it. I love them. All of them. Even Mater. But god, that Lightning McQueen. The way he struts down the freeway without a care in the world. He almost glides. Almost levitates. He gives me hope that I can speed away too, away from isolation and spilled boxed wine. Away from dust. Away from tattered cigarette packs that I kick on the way to see her again and yell at her to let me in. Let me in. I won't mess up this time, I promise.

"You can't smoke in here either, sir."

"I know I can't," I tell him.

"Call the fucking manager," I tell him.

I don't even want to smoke anymore; the ashes are getting on my popcorn. It's about principle. It's about the fact that he's blocking my view and I can only see a third of Strip "The King" Weathers say something pompous to Lightning McQueen. I know McQueen will best him but I pretend I don't.

"Rev Your Engines," I mouth.

They do.

They rev.

They speed.

They fly.

Two figures in tandem. Flying past onlookers who gape their mouths open hoping to catch

every wisp of adrenaline-filled smog. Around and around they go, never stopping, never changing, going through the same motions over and over. Speed, brake, turn, drift. Just to make a loop, back to the starting line again.

The manager approaches me. I know the deal. He'll force me to leave. I'll go home, change my outfit, shower the ashes off my skin, switch sunglasses, and arrive back in the same place. Just in time for the 11:30 showing. But this time, I'm tired of the routine.

The manager is too. He just stares at me. He's no longer irritated, like he was on Tuesday. This time I just see pity in his eyes.

He puts his meaty hand on my back, swirling his chubby fingers in a figure 8 motion.

At first I flinch, but then I have to remind myself they're not cold like the hood of a talking and occasionally sexualized cartoon Car.

They're warm. Like hers.

The strokes he makes on the

sweat drenched minimap that is my back are perfectly in sync. His finger presses my neckbone, indicating that the lap has finished and a new one has begun. 8 more until. Until.

Until the part of my brain that thinks about her is cut off and thrown into where they dispose of the used 3D glasses.

7 more until McQueen wins.

"Come on McQueen, 6 more!" cheers that one car with a mustache who everyone laughs at because he is an immigrant but it's not racist because the accent is too vague to tack on to a specific country.

5 more until I stop, I can't stop, Get

4! Me

3! Out

2! Of here

1! I never want to see a car again. I'm going to walk home tonight and pray my demons decide to take an uber.

MCQUEEN WINS!

"It's not about winning the race," the manager whispers to me.

It's not. ■



illustration by nicole paolillo

Topaz Jones & Crumb

by grace polat

If you're a person who goes to a lot of shows, you know not to show up exactly when the doors open. Which was good in my case, because doors got pushed from 7 pm to 8:30. I walk in to see the Undergrounds Cafe has moved away all the chairs and tables, looking more like a music lounge with a standing section. The stage lighting is blue and red, making a purple haze of everyone's faces. I get a glimpse of the stage itself, which is empty except for some equipment. I came right on time I guess, because a second later the musicians from Crumb hit the stage. They're a four piece band, consisting of drums, bass, keyboard, and vocals and guitar, respectively.

They start right off playing these twangy isolated guitar drips, and then tumble steadily into a mix of 60's psychedelic rock, funk, and jazz, with a sound that I can only think to describe as hypnotic. It was my first time hearing Crumb, and since then I've been listening religiously. If you're into psych rock and those exquisite bendy drips, definitely check their semi-new EP called Locket, available on Bandcamp and Spotify. The backdrop hosts a projection of Crumb's visuals: neon shapes whirling around, animals doing animal stuff, kids playing on monkey bars, and random shots from what I think might've been "The Twilight Zone." Before I know it, Crumb is done playing. They're met with a big applause, and the audience is left chattering while we wait for Topaz.

Some ten minutes later, he walks out smiling to a well-hyped crowd. He seems excited to be there, more excited than I'd expect him to be since he's playing for free in Binghamton, NY. At only 24 years old, he has the stage confidence and energy of a well-vetted musician, which is evident from the crowd's feedback. Two songs in and Topaz has everyone jumping around and attempting to dance, despite the majority of the crowd never having heard his music before.

His lyrical cadence provides more energy than his beats, which is a refreshing change in today's production-heavy hip hop scene. Not only can he spit, but he can

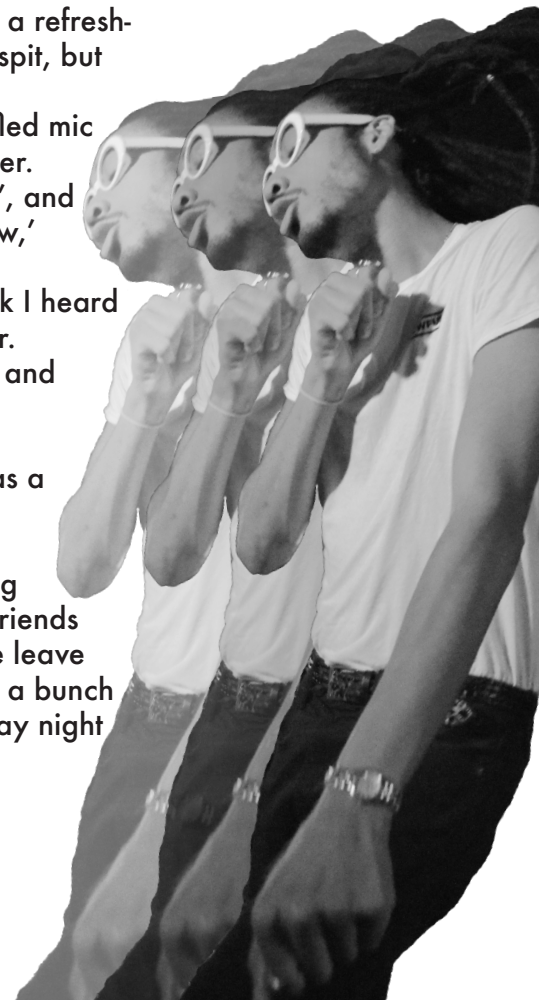
spit fast about shit that resonates, and he can make it resonate on a muffled mic in a basement on a Thursday night. Also, he can croon like a motherfucker. He has a buttery-smooth voice, which he showcases on 'Motion Sickness', and 'Howlin' To The Moon'. When he transitions into a cover of 'Bodak Yellow,' the audience goes wild, singing along to every word.

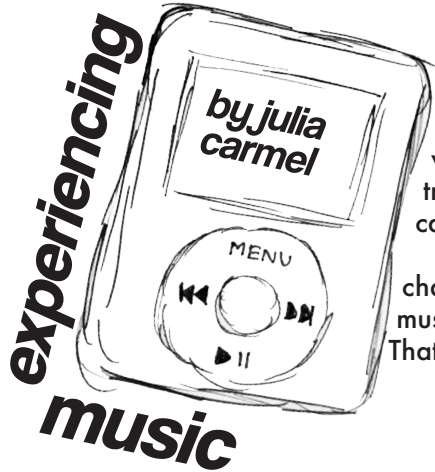
"That was actually the first time we did that," we all laugh, "I think I heard some white people say the n-word though." Some nervous white laughter.

He turns away from the mic briefly, sweaty from jumping around, and the Stranger Things theme starts booming.

"This next song is called Winona."

Definitely one of my favorite moments from the night. The song has a lot of quotable moments, including plays on Winona Ryder's name (use your imagination). He closes the show with one of his bigger songs, 'Tropicana.' Afterwards, the house lights come on and Topaz starts taking pictures with an ever-growing line of students. I walk over to a group of friends who are all talking about how unexpectedly great the show was, and we leave feeling like procrastinating our assignments was a good decision. Thanks a bunch to Crumb and Topaz Jones, for turning a mediocre Thursday night into a really great memory.





The first time I heard "Rivers & Roads," a song buried in the midst of a mixtape that a friend made me, I found myself crying on the Q train.

There's something oddly intimate about crying to music in a subway car — maybe it's the people who look away, almost as if they're trying to give you some sense of privacy in this underground sardine can.

But that feeling, that visceral and sometimes inexplicable mood change, can be unique to music. Emotions can ebb and flow between musicians and listener in a way that other media surely envy at times. That's what makes listening to music such a personal experience.

listening with a music director

Jacob Levine, the current music director for WHRW — Binghamton University's radio station, finds that his mood can change his perspective on a song, shaping the way he listens to it. "Let's say I'm listening to 'Chicago' by Sufjan Stevens," Levine said. "If I'm happy I won't notice the line 'if I was crying in the van, with my friend it was for freedom,' but if I'm sad it'll stand out."

Though he believes the technical aspects of music aren't the most important parts of the listening experience, Levine knows that understanding them can both enhance and diminish from the actual music.

"There's a mystique of music that's removed by learning the inner mechanisms of it," he explained.

On the other hand, Levine knows that if a song can hold up under technical scrutiny, that can make the song even better.

"It's like holding a magnifying glass up to the Mona Lisa and looking at the brush strokes," he said. "If it's good enough, it's good enough."

listening with a music professor

Paul Sweeny only listens to music when he can afford to pay full attention to it.

"I'm not a fan of background music unless it's in an intentional, well-chosen place," Sweeny said. "If you have music on all the time you're not fully listening; you're not experiencing it."

At Binghamton University, Sweeny's class "Pop, Rock & Soul" has become a music department staple, drawing in listeners from a wide range of majors.

Sweeny rarely puts his music on shuffle, opting to listen through full albums instead. This intentionality ties in with his deliberate listening patterns, which often include a comfortable chair and nice headphones.

"I try to focus and make music the main thing that I'm doing at the moment," Sweeny said. "Once you're talking about music you're not listening anymore."

listening with an avid concert-goer

Hannah Burke loves the aura of live music.

"There's no feeling like being sandwiched the middle of an excited crowd," Burke explained. "That electrifying tension when you're waiting for an artist to come on is unbeatable." Burke, a junior studying environmental science at Binghamton University, is a tutor for "Pop Rock & Soul" and has been a DJ at WHRW for the last three years. Focusing on the music more than the conversation surrounding it, Burke likes to do close listenings.

"I love listening to a song once through, with no expectations, and then doing so again and listening for each instrument, each bass line, each melody," Burke explained. "I'll listen to the same song 100 times in a row, and I could probably play the correlating air drums to you if I know it well enough."

Burke prefers to experience almost every type of music in solitude.

"I like to listen alone," Burke said.

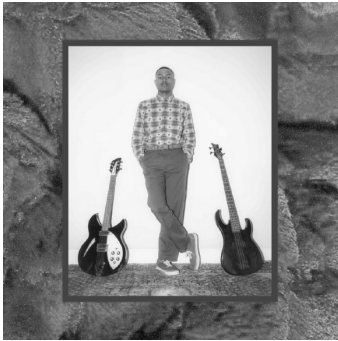
"Unless it's dancing music... then let's get funky."

the key to happier holidays ***music to play so you don't have to talk to your family***

by **damon messina**

1) "Switch Places" by Cousin Stizz

Off this year's album *One Night Only*, this song has a distinct "winter" vibe about it. The melodic beats over booming bass lines make this ideal for the days stuck in the house. When your mom inevitably barges in your room to ask how it is being away at school, or if she's just yelling from across the house about how no one ever cleans the dishes, slide a headphone in and enjoy.



2) *Steve Lacy's Demo*, by Steve Lacy

The six songs on here are perfect if you want to throw on some headphones and zone out. The project is concise and accomplishes what it needs to in only 13 minutes. Maybe you're going to have Christmas dinner in like, 15 minutes, and you need to prime yourself for the inevitable political debate that is about to go down once the ham is done. Take a break and enjoy the few normal minutes you have left. Highlights include opener "Looks," and "Dark Red," which was featured on an episode of Frank Ocean's "blonded wRADIO" on Apple Music.

3) "Stop Draggin' My Heart Around" by Stevie Nicks / Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

Maybe it's Stevie Nicks, or maybe it's just how well they work together, but for some reason, this is the song I've listened to the most since Tom Petty died. Recently, Marc Maron joked in a Netflix stand-up special that Tom Petty could bridge the gap between the political left and right with his music. I really hope he's right. Use this particular song at your discretion around your "cool aunt." She will almost certainly tell you about the Fleetwood Mac concert she went to in 1977, but beware of what you might find out.



4) *Melodrama* by Lorde

The more I listen to this the more I recommend it to people. Unquestionably a top five album this year, Lorde's *Melodrama* is a collection of the best written pop songs I have heard in quite a while. Actually sitting, reading along to the lyrics on this thing and deciphering their meaning was a true joy for me and will be for anyone who hears this album.

5) "For the Damaged Coda" by Blonde Redhead
 Discovered at the end of a particularly morbid Rick and Morty episode, "For the Damaged Coda" does not have any vocals. What it does have is two and a half minutes of an absolutely haunting instrumental. It may have been a better soundtrack to your Halloween, but winter lasts longer and can be just as scary.



6) *Carrie & Lowell* by Sufjan Stevens

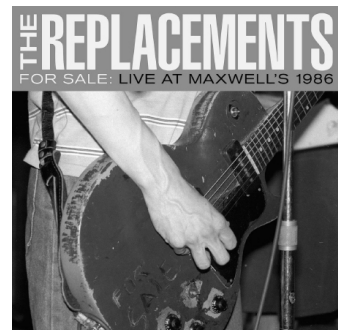
I should have listened to people earlier when they told me how good this album is. This is, and I say this confidently, the most pleasant collection of sounds that I have been able to find in recent memory. Put this on at any time and just look out a window. Pretend you're in an indie movie and your character is having a really emotional moment.

7) *The Ooz* by King Krule
 King Krule finally made a return this year with *The Ooz*, and he did not disappoint. In fact, he exceeded my expectations by a lot. In fact, it's nearly flawless. The London producer has unequivocally given us his best album to date. It is said that this album was produced to be "alien and timeless." It's exciting to imagine anything that is better than this.



8) *Dreams and Daggers* by Cécile McLorin Salvant
 Cécile McLorin Salvant is a jazz singer, one of the finest I've heard, in fact, like... ever. That may rub some people the wrong way when talking about a contemporary musician, but I would respond by simply asking you to listen to this album. If you're especially nostalgic, if you like Paris or the 1920s (or both), or if you find solace in a jazz club more than a bar on State Street, this could be your favorite album of the year.

9) *For Sale: Live at Maxwell's 1986* by The Replacements
 In February of 1986, indie-rockers The Replacements, a personal favorite band of mine, played a fantastic set in Hoboken, NJ. I'm considering this for album of the year – yes, this year – since it was reissued in early October. This is for the angst-ridden points throughout the holidays, god knows there are a lot of them. You don't need to necessarily channel your inner Paul Westerberg and scream "Murder!" at random, but the punk-rock feel of this whole set might help take the edge off.



justifying your winter sweaters

by sophie miller

As the winter season approaches, you'll probably find the collection of sweaters in your closet growing, and you will have to justify it, not only to your mom, but also to yourself. So here's a list of the sweaters you probably own, or will by the end of the winter season, and why it's totally okay that you did that.

the \$79 urban outfitters sweater

You'll probably get distracted from your homework and online shopping is always a good alternative. A few minutes later you have \$478 worth of clothes in your cart. But, you're a reasonable person, so you narrow it down to like... \$150. Yes, you're about to spend \$79 on a sweater, but you need it. First of all, it looks so comfy... But, more importantly, it looks warm. And you really need to stay warm. Winter gets brutal. Honestly, how will you focus in class if you're too cold? How will you even get to your classes if you're too cold to walk there? This sweater is basically the key to your educational success.

the \$49 on sale urban outfitters sweater

This sweater was originally \$79 but it's on sale for \$49. It's a steal. You have to take advantage of that.

the thrifted sweater(s)

You're in [insert name of trendy thrift shop] and you, naturally, find an abundance of vintage sweaters. You need this one because it's Ralph Lauren for only \$7. This one because it looks like straight out of an 80s movie. This one because it's \$4. You don't even like it that much, but it's \$4. This one because it's so big it reaches your knees, so it's like a dress and a sweater in one. It's fine. You come home with 7 new sweaters but you only spent like \$22 so all is still right in the world. Kinda.

the light-up holiday sweater

I don't really feel the need to elaborate on this one.

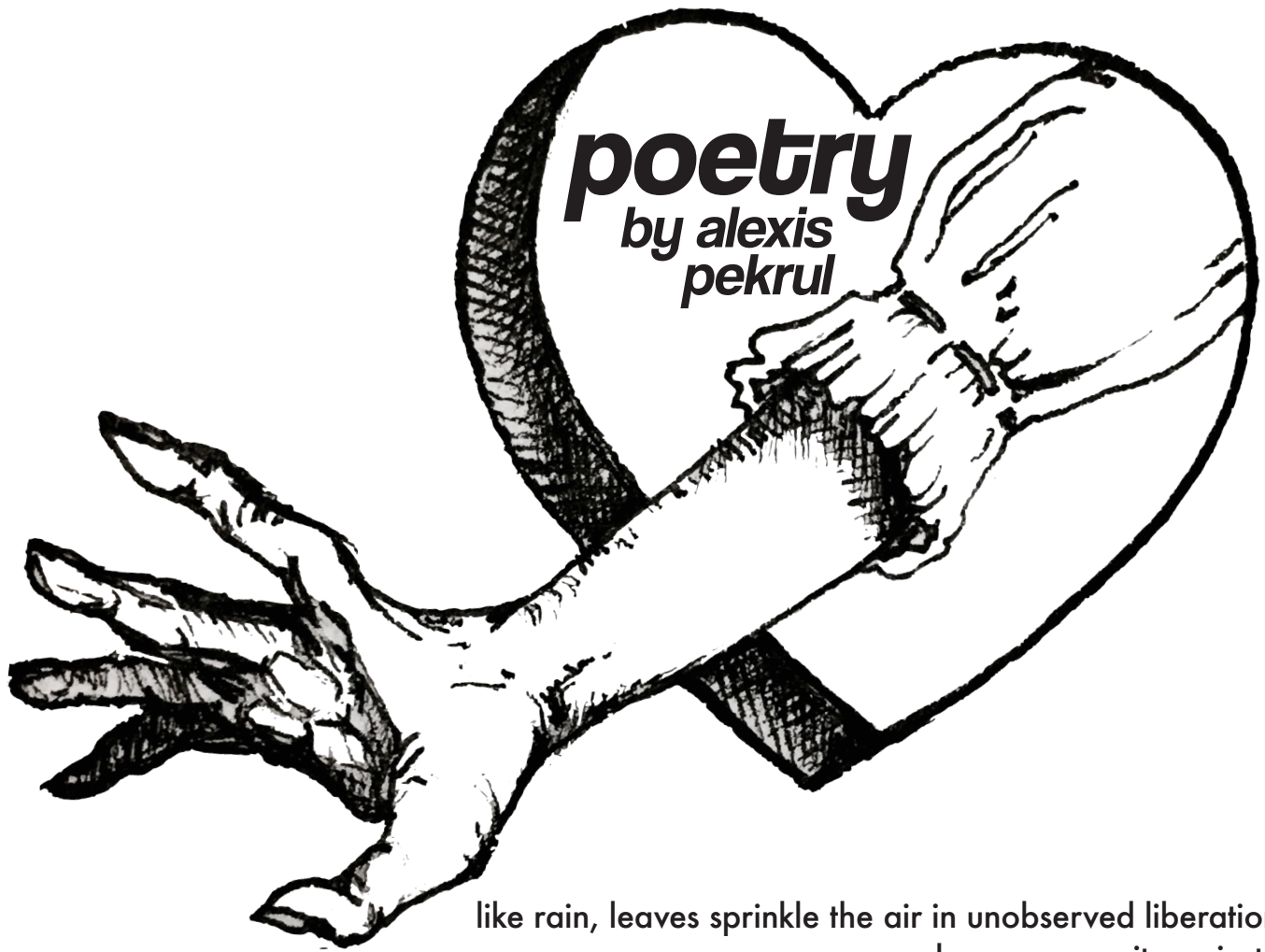


the cardigan!!!

Most of your sweater collection consists of pullovers, so you feel like you need to change things up by investing in a cardigan or two or three. These are very important. First of all, they're open, so if you're wearing a cute shirt underneath, it's still visible. Second, they're great for layering. Honestly, you can wear a pullover sweater with a cardigan over it. Go crazy.

probably another urban outfitters sweater because it's also on sale

Again, you just feel a weirdly strong sense of obligation to take advantage of Urban Outfitters sale prices.



like rain, leaves sprinkle the air in unobserved liberation
commonplace removes its majesty
after so many years, it isn't hard to forget beauty
but if it's just windy enough to make the skin
feel right
if it's just light enough to see the veins
just like how we've seen the bus line and our friends boyfriends that are
wearing the cologne i've smelt somewhere before
in the city streets
where it's always christmas in our sweetest dreams
we remember the taste on our softened palettes
snatch out your heart first
then follow with the eyes
remember how you knew,
i have felt this sweetness in this touch
speaking into my skin

illustration by nicole paolillo

do you really care?

by faith medina

As winter approaches, the temperature will eventually begin to drop and the plants will cease to grow. Much like the trees and flowers, positive social political activity has ceased in action. And much like the weather, my faith (no pun intended) in humanity is declining at the same rate.

I found recently that I've been asking myself the same two questions quite frequently:

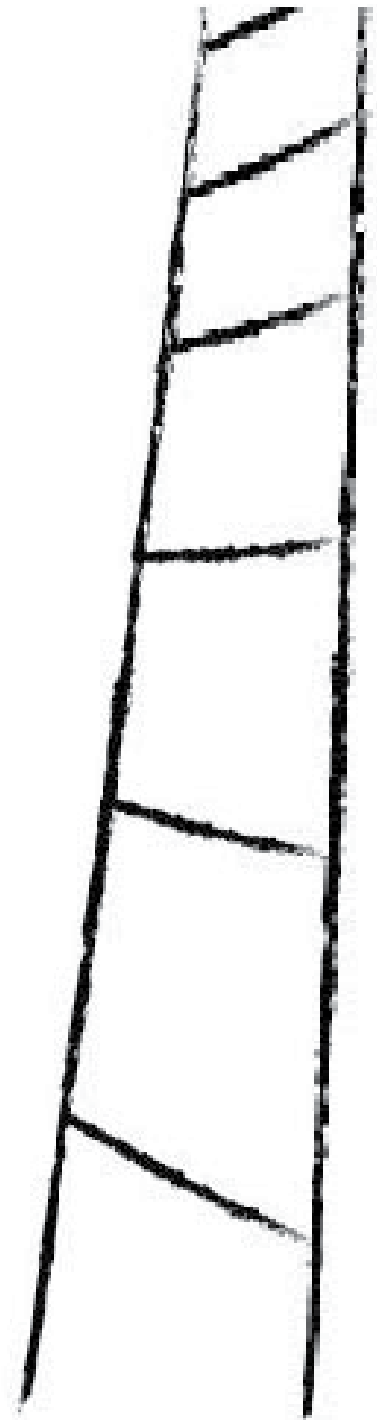
1. *Will I ever experience warmth again?*
2. *Why do people with marginalized loved ones support those who oppress them?*

The holidays are a time we spend with those we cherish- loved ones prioritized in our life. It is imperative that we let these people close to us know that we care for them, especially during this time of year. However, can you really tell someone you truly care about them if you support those who seek to marginalize them? If you support oppressors, go home to anyone amongst your social group who is considered a minority, and do let them know the truth; that you don't care about them.

Many claim that their support isn't about *race/gender/sexuality/class*. It is beyond me that anyone could ignore the prevalent -ism's that oppressors constantly present and place their trust in another subset of their ideologies. It simply does not make sense to simultaneously support your oppression-facing friends and those who essentially control this oppression.

It isn't solely about support either. Each and every individual who enables this behavior has allowed it to be in a position of power. They are the rungs of the ladder which this dangerous negativity has unfortunately climbed up to the top of. Supporters cannot escape criticism by simply stating that their endorsement is for reasons other than marginalization. There is an ability amongst supporters to separate their preferred attributes with those they claim are unwanted. It's easier to disconnect hurtful elements with irrelevant, preferred ones when you are not the person who has to experience the negative side-effects. This also implies that there is an ignorance of these issues to begin with. Being neutral on issues such as these does not put anyone on the dichotomous *good side*. Enabling is one thing, but empowering such dangerous ideals is another.

Maybe there is an agreement with factors that do not trivialize minorities, but there is no ignoring the latter and support should not be extended. Through communication and compassion for those who face such hardships, we, as a collective, may be able to develop more empathy for others who are unlike ourselves.



year in review

by michael sugarman

When we stumbled out of our New Year's hangovers on January 1st, 2017 we found a beacon of hope waiting for us: the Hollywood sign changed to read "Hollywood." Compared to the year before, when the first days of January gave us the arrest of "bodybuilder"/gay pornstar/icon Bryan Silva ("GRATATA"), this felt like a sign, a promise that this year would be better. Instead, it was a promise that this year would be a fucking joke.

We have a clown for a president, every fucking food item is rainbow unicorn themed, and fidget spinners almost successfully derailed the world economy. To the chagrin of literally everyone, Kid Rock is in fact not running for senate in 2018. Millennials have staged a reign of terror against capitalism, apparently ruining every industry from napkins to diamonds. It's important to remember to laugh because so many things are also actually terrible. America is a national embarrassment, and Twitter expanding the tweet limit to 280 characters will certainly not help, when our country is run by a soggy pop tart connected to a smartphone and a potato battery.

All joking aside, there are some real fucking dangers in the world. There was a literal white nationalist uprising this summer, and the government has done nothing to stop it, let alone denounce them (at least no one can claim millennials are killing the tiki torch industry). A recent CNN investigation revealed migrant slave auctions and a slave trade in Libya. "Our president" has been accused of sexual assault by over a dozen women and has faced zero repercussions,

instead choosing to endorse a child predator for senate. I guess being endorsed by gonorrhea personified can't hurt when you're already a pedophile.

However, it's not all bad. Sexual assault is finally starting to be taken seriously, at least in media, as dozens of men have lost their jobs or resigned in disgrace. Danica Roem was elected as the first transgender state legislator in Virginia. This has arguably been one of the best years in recent history for music and television. It pains me to say it, but Selena might actually find true happiness with Justin, if the lupus doesn't get her first. Nintendo released an Animal Crossing game for mobile, and it's fuckin sick.

There's no doubt about it, this year sucked. At times it felt like it would never end, but here we are, just a few weeks away from New Year's Eve. Once you finish your finals, spend the time to make sure you'll be ringing in the New Year in style, surrounded by people you love. With enough positive energy, we might be able to turn 2018 around. I'll see you all in the theater for The Incredibles 2.

