

THE WAKE

fortnightly student magazine

volume 23 - issue 8

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Art by Lauren Lindenbaum



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VOLUME 23, ISSUE 8

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The Wake was founded by Chrin Ruen & James DeLong.

Disclaimer: The purpose of The Wake is to provide a forum in which students can voice their opinions. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not representative of the publication or university as a whole. To join the conversation email eic@wakemag.org.

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Eliminate, Welcome to Samdali, Palenstine Concert, Grammys review and Tom Odell from original sources

Like to do art, poetry or anything creative ?

Send it to us!

We are looking for more creative submissions! Art, poetry, DIY coloring pages, photography or anything else you want to submit. Email art@wakemag.org for any of your fun and/or freaky submissions :)

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wink! one page magazine

What the Wake staff think you should do for leap year!

Use the extra time to write heartfelt letters of love and admiration to your friends!

skip class ;)

dua leap a

the purge (the day basically won't exist after)

Go for a walk if it's nice out fr

Doll Brawl Concert at Seward Cafe, a "night of Transsexual glamour and rage..."

Sleep, hermit, rot in bed :D

Forget that it is a leap day and be completely surprised that this is a leap year!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB 28 - MAR 17

Hells Canyon

Set in a cabin in the Oregonian wilds, a friend group's weekend trip is disrupted by hidden resentment, then disturbed... by supernatural forces. This is the horror-themed world premiere of Theater Mu's newest production.

Jungle Theater

2 pm or 7:30 pm; \$10-\$60 (pay as you are)

MAR 7

Otoboke Beaver with Drinking Boys and Girls Choir, Scrunchies

With headliner Otoboke Beaver, a Kyo-to-based "punk-rock-garage quartet", Drinking Boys and Girls Choir is a perfect compliment, offering three-piece punk-rock from Daegu, South Korea. And who could forget Radio K's favorite local "post-everything rock n roll" band, Scrunchies?

First Ave

7 pm; \$25

FEB 29

The DOLL BRAWL: A Night of Transsexual Glamour and Rage

With music by local trans hardcore punk bands Prison Ruin, transitioner, and S.L.O.G., Doll Brawl will be the ideal spot to show up, let loose, and get mosh-pit-based bottom surgery. All proceeds made will be donated to the Autonomous Yurt Union.

Seward Cafe

7 pm; \$5-20

MAR 7

Northrup King Building: First Thursdays

Believe it or not, on the first Thursday of every month, hundreds of artists congregate for "First Thursdays." Under this gigantic roof, you're likely to get lost exploring every artist's workshop, ranging from local legends to up-and-coming amateurs.

Northrup King Buildin

5 pm; free entry.

MAR 1

Haze Gazer, Psylo, Mystery Meat, Mold

A night of local "sludgegaze", shoegaze, "gay punk rock", and post-hardcore respectively, sure to leave music scene veterans stunned and first-timers slobbering. Bring ear protection or lose your ears.

Cloudland Theater

6:30 pm; \$12

FEB 22

The Black Market: Black Business Is Beautiful

A merged monthly market of beautiful Black- and BIPOC-owned businesses, offering an array of handmade art, live music, food trucks, and a community-based cultural education.

The Lab, St. Paul

2 pm; free entry!



Letter from the Social Media Manager

Dear reader,

I write to you with what many before me have deemed the “winter blues.” However, it’s probably not the blues you’re thinking of—one filled with dark mornings, too many layers, and days without seeing the sun—because this season has been full of sunny days, runs in shorts, and more rain than snow.

Most people seem happy, if a little concerned, to skip the cold and enjoy a long spring, but Winter has been one of the great loves of my life. As she grows more inconsistent, I become more distraught, tightening my grip on a melting past. On unseasonably bright days, I sit anxiously awaiting a call and the words, “It’s not you, it’s me.” The day we part ways for good. Maybe this day will never come, or maybe the apocalypse has already begun, but either way I’m not quite ready to let go of my love.

I grew up in northern Wisconsin, in a tiny tourist town most famous for its gaudy celebration of apples and its proximity to Lake Superior. Every summer the population quadruples as wealthy landowners from downstate migrate north to escape the city heat, sail around the islands, and indulge in dripping ice-cream cones on the beach.

I always spent summer in fever—overworked and hot yet confused with what to do with the endless time of unstructured days. And I love summer, I do. I love the freedom, the possibilities, the memories of lying in the sand until my skin burned and then diving into the ice-cold lake until my lips turned blue. But by July, when the heat had reached its peak and the streets were overcrowded with sun-burned families dressed in red and blue stars, I would lay on the floor underneath my window fan and tell myself “You are cold. It is Winter.”

Winter is the shock that helps me hold onto the world. That reminds me of the passage of time and the beauty in death and change. Winter gives me the silence to think and courage to feel. The time to create unwearable knitted sweaters and inedible sourdough bread. Winter is pain—numb toes, wind-bitten cheeks, hours spent shoveling the driveway before school, and darkness by 5PM. But it’s also a temporary, controllable pain, one blanketed by time spent lighting fires, running outside to see the moon, and breathing through frosted eyelashes. It’s a reminder that pain is ubiquitous but fleeting, that the warm exists because of the cold, and that sometimes they can be equally beautiful.

It won’t be Valentine’s Day when this comes out, but it is right now. So, thank you, reader of the Wake, for reading my unabashed love letter to Winter. I hope it was cheesy enough to make you squirm.

Yours truly,

Caroline Ray



Art by Lauren Lindenbaum

Molecular Conversation

Our lives are random jumble of electrons and protons

BY MARIE RONNANDER

Van der Waals theory states that, for only a few spontaneous moments, molecules can become charged. Within these split seconds of polarity, they're able to pull other molecules into their field. They're able to interact. These reactions are weak and relatively pitiful next to the mighty hydrogen bond of water. Yet, they are random and constant. They hold this beautifully ephemeral phenomenon that allows for otherwise estranged molecules to encounter each other. Perhaps even to make something greater.

While humans do not have mythical clouds of electrons dragging us every which way, we are constantly cast into the throes of random chance. For brief moments each day, our lives wrap around that of a stranger's with all the potential of a lasting interaction. There's the curly haired barista who serves you your first cafe miel, or that tall boy with shiny, round glasses who sits next to you on your first day of class. They crash into us, and we're pulled into each other's magnetic field with an opportunity for meaningful change.

I used to be afraid of these chance encounters with strangers. Social anxiety carved herself keenly into my backbone from a very young age. I burned with fear that each word out of my mouth was the proverbial nail in my social coffin. As a result, I quietly ebbd around the corners of my parent's interactions. Adults seemed to have this ease about them, which, though I didn't understand at the time, was simply something that came with age. Listening to their mellow voices and gentle laughter lightened the tension behind my lungs; someday talking to strangers wouldn't feel like swallowing fire.

For instance, when I was eleven years old, I started working on a strawberry farm run by an older couple. Kathy and Duane followed the common prescription that opposites attract. She was the

friendly buzz of bees: sweet as honey, bright as the sun. He was the silence before dawn: soft as cotton, constant as time.

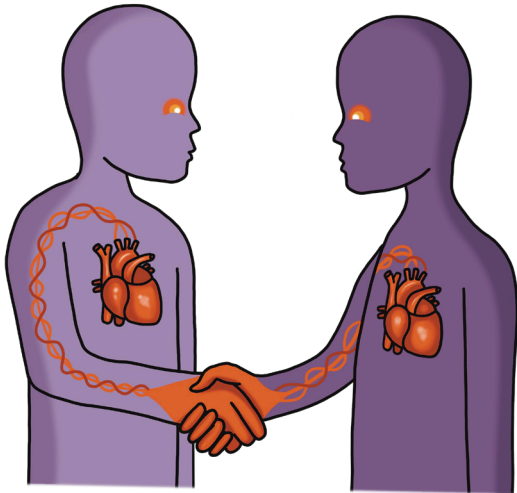
I think, here, it's important to note that once two molecules collide, their gravitational force doubles. There are molecules on this planet who have a connection so strong that they can dent time and space. Kathy and Duane pulled each other in with a force that shook the dew drops off the strawberry plants around them. Visitors couldn't help but fall into orbit with Kathy's dramatic stories or Duane's subtle jokes. Even within my introversion I could feel myself wanting to nestle into their conversations.

Their energy glittered around me. I smiled like the sun when customers wandered my way, and I chuckled at the (warranted) complaints about the weather. I learned that conversations weren't tests of integrity and wit, but small moments where I can be a part of a world other than my own. They were reprieve from the endless chatter in my skull. They allow the person I'm talking to becomes more important than my own string of thoughts. Not every interaction needs to make an earth-shattering impression for me to enjoy the experience –molecules don't stick together indefinitely. But some half-lives are longer than others. That barista with the curly hair knows my

coffee order as soon as the bell dings and I step through the door. The tall boy with shiny glasses started asking questions for me in classes because he knew I was too nervous to speak. These two relationships are very different, yet they each hold a very important place in my heart. These people understand me deeply through the context in which our two worlds collided.

Those who met me on the farm grew to know me as the smiley blonde child of the strawberry fields. My barista knows me for my intense caffeine addiction and habitual cafe miel. And my best friend knows me by the thoughts pounding behind my eyes. These people all started as strangers to me, yet a small exchange of words, and maybe a giggle or two, catalyzed perception. We pulled each other in. They changed my life in lovely, meaningful ways.

I'm still terrified of judgment. There are many moments I would still rather sit in corners, watching the world unfurl sbefore me, than play an active role in conversation. But if chemistry has taught me anything, it's that we don't have control over what, or who, is thrown in our paths. All we can do is cross our fingers, open our hearts, and react. 👁



5

Tales from 2100

Chronicles of an ending civilization

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

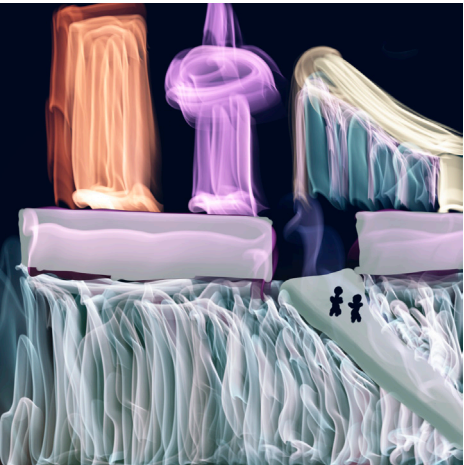
The 90s were one of the greatest years of human history. It was when humans first stepped on Saturn's moon Europa, when the flu was finally eradicated, and when the first person reached the age of 150 years old. Wait. You didn't think I was talking about the 1990s, right? Of course not! How could you possibly confuse the two?

Now that we are in the 2100, humanity has reached its peak! Color is everywhere. When people noticed just how boring their cities looked with those old-fashioned, gray brutalist buildings, they demanded for a change in design—and so did fashion: a combination of creative texture patterns and vibrant colors took over the industry. And, believe it or not, artists are finally well-paid. Besides the Lunar Resort built in 2080, we have not established colonies outside of Earth yet, but we are on track to do it by 2130! The International Space Agency currently is constructing the first outer space rocket base—through using the existing infrastructure of the EISS (Expanded International Space Station). Soon we will be constructing rockets directly in space, a much more convenient—and cheaper—method, as it skips the necessity for additional stages and decoupling processes that could result in many catastrophes.

Culture has not changed much. When I said we reached our peak, I meant it. Population reached its peak pretty fast. Now, there is a much lower fertility rate worldwide, and efforts by governments to implement boosts to birth rates have either failed or resulted in mass rates of rapes and violations in women's rights. Everybody was very excited when we reached 10 billion humans in 2060—when new cities were built to accommodate the growing population and different food production techniques were developed evenly distributed. Nobody was excited when we reached 9 billion in 2099. With higher life expectancy rates and a lower number of kids, culture has stagnated in time.

Nevertheless, recent breakthroughs have been seen throughout the globe, and soon humans will be able to legally clone themselves. Scientists and government officials are working together in the hopes that this will be the solution for humanity's demise.

The future looks...the same? 👁



4



3

Success is What Everyone Else Has

Success is irrelevant

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

Over time I have pondered about what the meaning of “success” really was for me. I internalized onto others what success meant, seeing my friends and other people as role models and collapsed under agony when I was not capable of reaching my desired state of wealth (the psychic variety of wealth, of course). In short, I defined success as what everyone else but I had. Every once in a while when I bring this “success” to anyone, I am reminded just how toxic this mindset is. I am aware, after all, this could be my fatal flaw.

But this is what the city does to someone, I believe. My whole life I have lived in big cities, where everyone around you is doing something that you would love to do, and all you can do is know about it, being incapable of doing the same thing in the same way yourself. It is not as if university life is any different (if anything, it's worse). As a first generation student, watching everyone around you so easily embody their careers makes you rethink your whole life—“If I am a journalist, why the hell do I want to make music and write stories in a magazine?”

Success became having a purpose, and blurring this line that connects the “you” to the “your purpose” indicated a clear digression from “what you were meant to achieve.” But if being successful is to embody an idea that is heavily appraised by society and academia, then you are the clown who is losing your entire life to live someone else's. Create your own path, live your own passions, and don't let the imposed feeling of “you have to be this” overpower you. Success is irrelevant. 👁

Finding True Romantic Love

A socio-philosophical approach

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

Valentine’s day passed by and, once again, I was alone.

That should not be a shocker. It is not as if I was actively seeking love in the first place.

In fact, I believe this variety people call “romantic love” does not even exist. I may have given up on believing in it quite long ago.

Decades have passed by, and humans have already discovered that not everybody gets their “happy end”. It is unfortunate, but people are still born and they still die in wars, children are still implanted with the ‘money’ bug (and made to believe life matters more if you have more of it) and governments still strive to deepen social and economic ravines. All of this to end up at a time when preserving the integrity of world-ending bombs is a necessary evil.

But still, people claim they have “found their true love”. How are they getting to this point—even when, with social media bombarding us with information about our society collapsing, we know every bit of what is wrong in the world and get stressed about it?

Where do we find love in all of this? Where do we find answers?

Some have tried to explain why we have become like this. The Genevan Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, on the origins of the existing inequality in society, once wrote “from the moment one man needed another’s help, from the moment he realized that it was useful for one man to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, work became necessary.” He argued society was equal when people did not need any help from each other to do anything.

But love, according to this thought, would be truly impossible. If people were happy by themselves and only found new problems when interacting with

other people, imagine what would happen if you interacted with the same person for a long period of time?

Let’s go somewhere else then. Maybe the answer is within theories of social interactions.

In sociology, for example, love is a real debate.

Nineteenth century French sociologist Émile Durkheim argued social integration resulted from the “collective consciousness” (values, norms, and beliefs), and that, without it, society could not function. Those values, norms, and beliefs were supported by what he deemed as “deviance,” as it elicited the population to discipline such deviant actors, increase internal social support, and discover its own social flaws. Those deviant norms, values, and beliefs thus generated the boundary for the collective consciousness—anything different is marked as deviant. Thus, the collective consciousness is markedly egotistical in nature for Durkheim.

Even though devoting only a few pages to love, Durkheim describes romantic (or passionate) love as the eternal antithesis between passion and duty. He also describes it as the outcome of “spontaneous private sensibilities.”

As a result, romantic love for Durkheim is nothing ethereal, it is purely egotistical, resulting from the needs of a single individual projected toward someone else. Love for him is also a reflection of society as a whole.

But we tell ourselves that romantic love is much more than that. Shouldn’t romantic love be mutual, full, and equal?

Recently, Nicola Montagna, an Italian sociologist, asked for a new definition of romantic love. He wrote that its empirical indeterminacy made romantic love difficult to observe in sociological



methods, relegating it to the margins of sociological investigations.

Cataldi and Iorio describe it as “an action, relationship or social interaction in which subjects exceed (in giving, in receiving, in not giving or not doing, in neglecting) all their antecedents, and therefore offer more than the situation required in order to make benefits.” Love is irrational according to this description, and it changes behavior in an unexplainable and unexpected way.

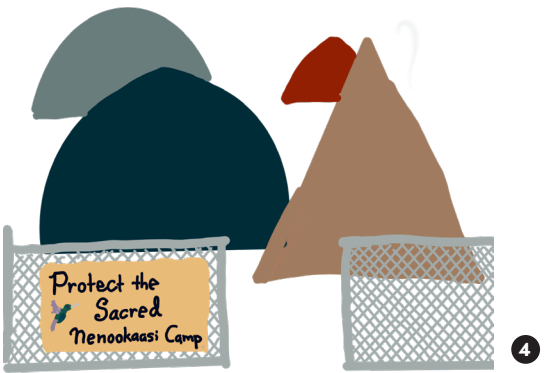
So, romantic love truly does exist for those Italian sociologists, and impacts society. But love is still one-sided, bound by the barriers of the human body. It is not a two-player game where both parties agree they are in love. It can be, but, according to this definition, it still originates from private interests.

My argument for how it differs from “platonic love”, the secondary assumption for when a person proclaims they love someone, is it is always used in a context where two people are involved. In fact, it is not unlikely for someone to claim their couple relationship was “platonic” and get surprised when it is not reciprocated: they expected it to be mutual already.

So what is romantic love after all if not a result of our private needs?

So here is the only time when “selfish” is not used pejoratively:

“Enjoy holding hands, you bunch of lovely, selfish couples!” 🧐



Contrary to popular belief, being unhoused is not a crime. However, since 1492, there has been a long history of state violence against “unhoused” people, in Minneapolis and otherwise. These are the folks who bear the brunt of this country’s interlocking systems of oppression; it is not their fault that they may suffer from addiction, poverty, violence, unemployment, or disease, no matter what the media may claim. And, no matter how much community support (or anarchist resistance), unhoused folks always eventually end up evicted, on the street, and dispossessed, having all of their shelters, possessions, and food confiscated. Separated from community and shelter, exposed to the harsh Minnesota winter, where will they go? How much more additional trauma will they carry? This brings us to Nenookaasi Ikwe Healing Camp, an encampment of Native American unhoused individuals, created to house, protect, rehabilitate, and traditionally educate Minneapolis’ most vulnerable unhoused populations. Current camp organizers claim they have helped house over 100 ex-residents in the last year and have helped countless others recover from addictions and overdoses.

Nenookaasi didn’t pop up overnight, but is the result of years of mutual aid, grassroots organizing, state violence, and communal resilience. Over the three years since Nenookaasi has been established, it has been swept four times. In 2021, the city evicted the camp for 20 months until its reestablishment in August 2023. The other three (Jan. to Feb. 2024) saw nearly the entire camp relocated and rebuilt overnight.

How is this possible? Repeditately moving roughly 100 folks, their belongings, and their shelters within the same day? Aside from community aid, the humble yurt aides indefinitely. As designed and mass-produced by a grassroots organization of neighbors-turned-carpenters, the Autonomous Yurt Union (AYU), these circular shelters can span

up to 7 feet tall and 14.5 feet in diameter, one being more than enough to provide an entire family with shelter and warmth. Materials are cheap, made entirely from tarps, slats, two-by-fours, a barrel (the stove), and a whole lot of paracord. As for construction time, a group of about a dozen folks could theoretically erect nine yurts within an hour. And they take far longer to take down, expending significant city resources during evictions.

Nenookaasi is the first of its kind to utilize yurts in this manner, prompting AYU to rename themselves to the AYU Minneapolis Chapter in hopes of spreading the model nation-wide—the practice of yurt-building has already extended to Saint Paul and allegedly Chicago. Hopefully, the more the yurt model spreads, the more diverse its utilization will be, potentially serving as emergency housing post-natural-disaster or for environmental advocates.

As of Feb. 8, supporters of Nenookaasi proposed three ordinances to Minneapolis City Council’s Introduction & Referral calendar, one to regulate “safe outdoor spaces” for unhoused folks (modeled after Denver ordinances), and the others to codify “humane” and “regular[ly] report[ed]” city responses before and during evictions. Though there are no announced dates for further action yet, Nenookaasi is in a somewhat advantaged position: pressure builds against sweeps from the camp itself, the aforementioned ordinances, and the city’s own exceedingly discontent budget committee. Regarding the latter, the city has likely spent over \$650,000 on the last three evictions alone (interpreted from the Council’s 2023 presentation “Homeless Encampment Closures Report 2023-00368”).

Despite the mounting pressure, it wouldn’t be surprising if MPD or Public Works retaliate soon, extending fewer warnings and more cruelties. The

The evicted, their yurts, and a state-funded genocide

BY WINKS

previous two evictions (Jan. 30, Feb. 1) had no direct communication with the camp beforehand, and MPD exhibited a willingness to both arrest (at least one person) and utilize crowd control (LDAR, not yet used) against those within Nenookaasi. This is all the more likely given Mayor Frey’s interpersonal deception of camp organizers and police officers’ historic tendency to retaliate against Indigenous folks.

It is clear that the evictions of Nenookaasi are direct continuations of a genocidal settler colonialism from a racist capitalist government; this isn’t something that only occurs in wartorn states (like Gaza), but it occurs here, and never stopped occurring here. The shelters are full, the sanitary resources are stripped away, and, unfortunately, the shootings at Nenookaasi do not compare to the scale of the rest of the city. This is not about the city’s concerns for housing, safety, or “sanitary conditions,” but rather about the control of stolen Native land. And, as far as people are concerned, unhoused Indigenous folks have a mortality rate 5 times higher than the average Minnesota citizen (see “Minnesota Homeless Mortality Report, 2017-2021”).

“We weren’t homeless before the boats came over,” residents have said, and “No peace on stolen land” others—in terms of decolonization and continued existence, it’s clear: Nenookaasi will either find its way or make one. 🗿

Camp Nenookaasi Overview

untitled; withered years

By phinexo

An experience I had that I'd write about in... several years or something,
long after the saved pitted peaches in the back of the fridge wither,
when my poor excuses for pitied memories grow like that gaps between them.
I'm sure it'd come to me far in the future, far passed when I experienced it,
when I would be damn near unrecognizable to myself, probably smoking cigars or
something,
and I'd turn over that old unwritten manuscript in my mind,
the one I trusted to the good hands of short-term memory,
the one he set on the corner of a cluttered table somewhere and forgot it,
but now, with the air thick as cigarette smoke,
all these years and all these burned bridges later,
I'd be looking at it again,
warm and glowing in my hands like three fingers of rum.
And the only part I'd recognize of myself from way back then is the handwriting.
I'd stare in disbelief of how I filled the margins of the page,
laugh to myself the secret prayer of edits made mid-speaking,
savor that I ever recalled it at all, before it begins to deteriorate again.
But I wouldn't write it down still;
I don't trust future-me to write it down—
they'd let it go, let it fade, wave the clouds of memory out of the windows of forget-
ting,
think it all-the-better for it.
Then I'd probably sit down and pull off a real rum glass—
if my memory will fail on me, it'll be on my own terms.
And the liquor will continue to eat away holes in my socks
and tears in my memory
until—

Opioids, Big Pharma and Us

By Maddie Roth



In 2022, there were 1,028 opioid related deaths in Minnesota. 377 of those were in Hennepin County, which is where Minneapolis resides. This is a 3.6% increase from the year before, with Hennepin’s increase being 7.1%. St. Paul, the twin city to Minneapolis, saw 177 opioid related deaths in 2022, a 35.1% increase from the year before. Minnesotans ages 25–34 had 1,557 nonfatal hospital visits for opioid-involved overdoses in 2022, the largest number of all age groups.

While there are several reasons researchers have seen this number increase throughout the years, one question remains: how did we get here?

A dear friend of mine almost lost her life to opioids. Her addiction began with an overprescription of Vicodin, an opioid that contains a combination of acetaminophen and hydrocodone.

When she was 15, my friend, let’s call her Rose (simply to protect her identity), broke her foot. She was prescribed to take three to four Vicodin a day.

Let’s compare this to when I was prescribed Vicodin. Last year, I had ear surgery. I was prescribed to take one Vicodin a day. If my pain had gotten unbearable, I could take another, but it was not recommended.

So why was my friend told to take three to four in a single day?

Let me introduce you to the Sackler family, the owners of Purdue Pharma. The pharmaceutical company’s main drug that they manufactured was called Oxycontin. Nearly all of the states in the U.S. filed lawsuits against the family for the role they played in the opioid crisis. Many have come to claim that the Sackler’s company was responsible

for overprescribing Oxycontin, in order to rob millions of people of their money.

After all, the more drugs they sold, the more profit they saw.

Rose’s addiction to opioids eventually progressed to heroin. She overdosed over ten times before entering a rehab program that saved her life. Although doctors have been told to lower prescription rates, there seems to still be some miscommunication. Where do we draw the line on what is normal and what isn’t when it comes to opioids?

“A dear friend of mine almost lost her life to opioids. Her addiction began with an overprescription of Vicodin, an opioid that contains a combination of acetaminophen and hydrocodone.”

For example, my father suffered from a heart attack a couple of years ago. Since then, he has been in and out of the hospital due to his heart going out of rhythm. The last time he went, they gave him a fentanyl patch. My father described his heart going out of rhythm as “uncomfortable but manageable.” When the doctor told him they were giving him fentanyl, he said he didn’t need it. Despite my father’s refusal, the doctor gave him the patch.

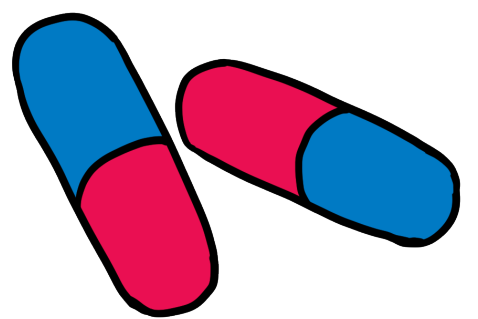
You tell me who’s responsible for the American opioid crisis.

The Wake sent out a survey asking people to give their thoughts and concerns on addiction around our campus. Out of the 20 respondents, 100% of people answered Yes when asked, “Do you know someone close to you that has struggled or is struggling with addiction?”

That’s 100%. I understand 20 people isn’t a lot, in light of the innumerable amount of students the poll was posed to, but that’s 20 people who know someone close to them that has struggled or is struggling with addiction. And if this small sample is representative of our whole school’s population at all, it becomes clear that our campus has grappled in some way with the effects of the opioid epidemic.

When asking “Do you think the U provides adequate resources of support for addiction?”, a majority of the respondents answered No.

The University has been hit in the past when it comes to the lack of resources they provide for students. To our audience, how many of you know about Recovery on Campus? The group meets once a week and provides a place for students who may be struggling with substance use.



The problem, though, is how many of you would go to a meeting like this? So many people struggle to admit that they may have problems with substances and would never go to a meeting because of the stigma surrounding what it means to go to one.

Look around you. There are people in this world who struggle everyday and tell nobody about it. Some of it has to do with shame, another part has to do with denial. As one of our respondents said, “You never think it’ll happen to you, and it’s that exact belief that keeps you from getting help.”

So often of the time seeing somebody struggle with addiction can blur the line between their humanity and their addiction, so much so that we fail to separate the addict from the person. Despite how much it might not feel like it, there remains hope. So, let’s talk about treatment.

Only 1 in 10 people with Substance Use Disorder actually receive treatment in the U.S. Paying for treatment can bleed people dry because of how expensive it is. This is one, if not the main, reason people do not seek treatment.

But that doesn’t mean Alcohol and Narcotics Anonymous meetings don’t exist. There are tons around the Twin Cities area that are welcoming to people of all ages. These meetings aren’t the same as going into a treatment facility, but they’re something to lean on if you’re in need of an ear. To learn more about these meetings, or to find one happening near you, go to NA.org and look up Minneapolis or St. Paul locations.

College is a time where people tend to experiment with drugs. Some of us try certain

drugs once and tell ourselves we’re never going to take them again. Others try them and fall down a rabbit hole of dependency and depression. Of course, trying drugs may seem fun and appealing. That’s why so many of us happen to try them at least once, especially during our time on-campus as undergraduates. But what looms on the other side of experimentation can be dangerous and is always uncertain.

“You never think it’ll happen to you, and it’s that exact belief that keeps you from getting help.”

There has been a significant increase of drugs being laced with fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 50 times more potent than heroin. All it takes is three milligrams of fentanyl to cause an overdose. For comparison, the average dose of heroin to cause an overdose is 30 milligrams.

I wrote a story about a year ago about a woman who accidentally overdosed on fentanyl. She thought she was taking a line of cocaine. She actually took a line of pure fentanyl and overdosed almost immediately.

This brings me to the final point of my headline: us. What can we do to help combat the opioid epidemic?

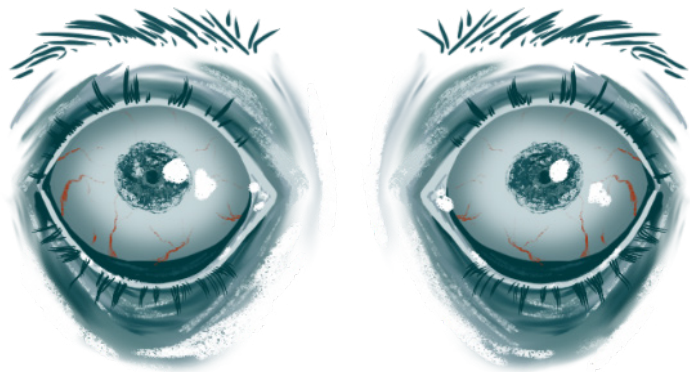
We can advocate. We can spread awareness. We can find solutions. It starts with us.

It starts with getting to know local advocacy groups and learning as much as possible about how we can lend a hand. The University often offers classes on how to administer Narcan and save somebody from a life-threatening overdose, and can be found on MyU. But these resources exist beyond campus, too. Steve Rummler Hope Network is a non-profit organization working to combat the crisis in any way possible. One of their specialties is overdose response training where they teach people how to appropriately respond to an overdose and hand out free Narcan, a drug that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Narcan, or scientifically known as Naloxone, is free in Minnesota. You can get it over the counter at any pharmacy.

Two years ago, I lost a close friend of mine to an opioid overdose. Not a day goes by where I don’t think about him and question how his addiction spiraled out of control. He had been promoted at his job, got engaged and moved out of the sober living house into his own apartment.

He had also recently suffered an injury at his job where a metal pole fell on his arm and sprained his wrist. My friend’s opioid addiction started when he was in his early 20s. His doctor knew he was struggling with addiction from their past conversations. Despite this, his doctor prescribed him Vicodin for his sprained wrist. That prescription was in his hand when his fiancée arrived at his apartment the next morning.





1

Imposition

The absurdity of violence, of existence.

BY QUINN McCLURG

Existence enables awareness. Suffering is the cost we pay for awareness. The more aware we are of our own awareness and the aware of the world we're in, the more we suffer. Action is the salve to suffering; the more aware we are, the more effective our actions can be. However, suffering can breed inaction in those unable to act, and the threat of more suffering often makes those suffering less able to act. Here is the rub.

Starting over, we are neither "good" nor "bad" at birth, we just are, and are "natural" and organic beings. Our traits are predetermined by nature, honed by socialization, and enabled by community. Now, to most people, the most abhorrent thing is to experience suffering. However, being conscious beings with potentially infinite capability, we can induce it in others, despite how much we dislike it ourselves; after all, it isn't you. As infinitely capable beings, we are capable of justifying these actions, usually to the end goal of suffering as little as possible, both physically and psychically. Thus, the ones with the most capacity for violence are the most immediately sustained; they try to bend their awareness at will. This is our origin of "good" and "bad"; we proactively and retroactively apply these to ourselves and our actions. In short: some create more pluralistic suffering to ease their own individual suffering.

However, there are others who are more aware and mindful of others' suffering, and even seek to alleviate it at the cost of additional suffering on their end. They seek to remove the imposer's capacities for inflicting suffering, usually imposing their own violence to do so. This violence may be more justified, but it is still violence, and violence creates those hell-bent on ending violence, whatever the cost—justification in itself. In short: violence breeds more violence, and the cycle is as self-justifying as it is paradoxical. When we are born, we stake our claim within this game; it is far more work than not existing at all, but it is the only thing we can do.

To conclude: this was a rushed article—if you have any complaints, file them in the next issue.

To Be Different But Not Too Different

How To Achieve Your Manic Pixie Dream Goals, Hint: You Can't!

BY NIKITHA MANNEM

The idea of being "unique" has its own culture, fostered especially in Western countries where individuality is praised. Being unique is being something "new" or "fresh". It's impossible for every person to embody that ideal. To be unique, one has to meet certain standards: skinny, light-skinned, and conventionally attractive. Too many times there has been a new trend that burns through the fast fashion industry that excludes those with larger bodies or have darker skin; these people get told that the style "doesn't suit them" when oftentimes the patterns, accessories, hairstyles, and designs have been appropriated from their culture.

On apps like TikTok there have been massive rises and falls of creators with more "outlandish" styles. Those who were more eclectic and bold with choices were initially shunned by the internet, their comments full of negative, unwanted reviews. However, before long, those "critics" began to understand the process and started to love the interesting outfits put together in front of them, hyping up the creator to the point of fame and importance in society, having interviews lined up, are featured in fashion magazines, and eventually have with their own line of clothing.

However, those who garnered fame for having fashion tastes that make a statement often will continue to evolve their styles and once again become an outsider in terms of beauty standards and trends. Their supporters turn around, causing their popularity to plummet into niche corners of the internet again, proving that uniqueness comes with societal acceptance. That urge to be accepted as special and beautiful by society causes many to jump into trends, hoping it makes them stand out and shed their sense of self, but if they fail to meet these standards and expectations, much like the many loved then lost creators, they're left in the dust.



1

Rap beef is back and thank god for that

Nicki vs Megan

BY LAUREN FACENTE

Am I a Nicki fan? As of late, that's been a hard question to answer. I believe any hardship can be faced by blaring Pound The Alarm or Barbie Dreams on repeat for a few hours. However, over the past few weeks, Nicki Minaj has gone on a disappointing series of Twitter rants (I will never refer to Twitter as X. You can't make me) regarding Megan Thee Stallion. The female rappers have a bit of history dating back to their collaboration on the hit song "Hot Girl Summer," which was released back in 2019. However, since that summer the rappers' friendship has gone ice cold. If you are as chronically online as I am, you probably are aware that Nicki Minaj is not one to shy away from a fight. The Nicki Minaj vs Cardi B fight of 2018 at New York Fashion Week is one of my favorite celebrity feuds of all time, mostly due to the photo evidence of the lump on Cardi's head and the alleged moment when Cardi threw a shoe at Nicki. A big reason for her past and current controversy is due to Minaj's "pick a side" mentality. In more recent years Megan has done much more collaboration with artist Cardi B, who has a long standing feud with Minaj.

Fan bases play a very large role in making an artist either an enemy, or a collaborator. Nicki is a huge artist within the rap community, and has amassed a huge fan base. Nicki's fans, whom she lovingly refers to as "The Barbz," are known to be fierce in defending their idol. This seems to be a big reason why cancel culture has yet to take her under, and hasn't harmed her career. The Barbz are a large fanbase with many identifying within LGBTQ communities. Such a diverse fanbase and wide target audience show us the magnitude of defenses behind the "Queen of Rap."

In Nicki's recent one-way feud with Megan Thee Stallion, Nicki took to Twitter to share her thoughts on Megan's new song, titled "Hiss." Nicki was particularly upset by a line where Megan raps about a US federal law called Megan's Law. Megan's Law requires sex offenders to be publicly registered. Ironically enough, Nicki was

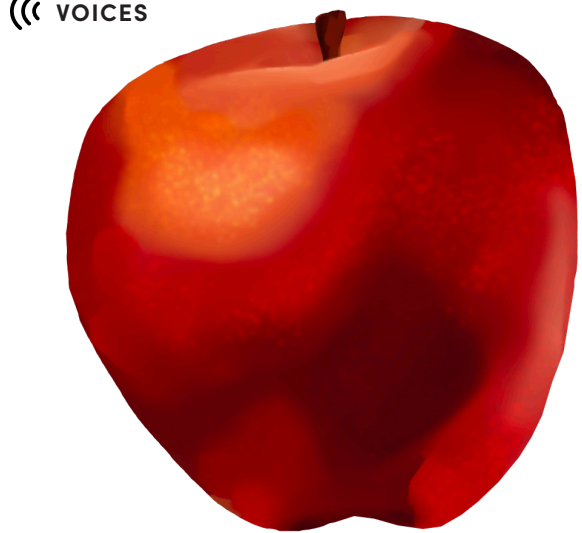


1

the one to explicitly attach her own name to this line when she accused Megan of coming after her family with it. Nicki's husband, Kenneth Petty, pleaded guilty to attempted rape at age 16. In 2022, Petty moved to California. He was sentenced to a year of house arrest after failing to register at his new address. Personally, if an artist came after my husband for being an unregistered sex offender, I don't know if I would take to Twitter to show my loyalty. Nicki, however, went on a Twitter rant for days regarding this alleged callout by Megan. Throughout her Twitter tyranny, she claimed Megan made offensive comments on her pregnancy, and lied about having plastic surgery. This is what made Minaj drop her own diss track against Megan, titled "Bigfoot."

The tables seemed to turn on Minaj after crafting the worst diss track most Twitter users have ever heard. I love a good Nicki verse and have playlists that are consumed with her songs (Va Va Voom has been a personal favorite recently) but I could not get myself to even pretend to enjoy "Bigfoot." The song seemed to particularly allude to the 2020 case Megan was involved in after

rapper Tory Lanez shot her in the foot. This led to further controversy over Nicki's song due to its sensitive subject matter. I thought it was especially distasteful of Nicki to include lyrics alluding to Megan's late mother, along with multiple instances of slut shaming. Megan has yet to respond to anything Minaj posted on Twitter, or to the diss track itself. In fact, Megan has continued to post as normal and even went on Instagram Live a few days ago. During it she completely ignored the drama, and was in good spirits about the success of her song "Hiss." I'm sorry to all the Barbz out there, but I'm going to let Megan take her victory lap on this one.



2

I Feel Like Myself When I’m Eating An Apple

What Comes Naturally

BY BIANCA LLERENA

Everything sounds like it’s coming from conch shells filled with sand. It’s all so muffled and decayed. My body flinches, and I’m insecure again, something has shaken me awake and I feel irregular in my own body. Suddenly, I don’t know what to do with my hands or why my hair doesn’t look right when I tuck it behind my ears.

But That Is Just Routine.

Find me an apple, any variety will do, and so easily will I return to myself. Let my body complete a task and she will breathe a sigh of relief and return to what she knows best. It’s not that the apple is a symbol for anything, it’s the way I’ve been eating apples since I was a child—it comes naturally to me.

And in the same way, I’m myself again as I walk through neighborhoods and turn the apple into an emaciated core. Chewing gum has the same effect. Other simple things work too, like when I’m walking around with headphones in, the volume pulsating through my brain and between my ears, or when I’m sitting in a coffee shop and writing a poem. I’m me again and it’s so simple.

Put me in a black tank top and blue jeans and I’ve never felt more comfortable. Wait for the winter and watch as I slip my hands in my coat pockets. Listen to me tell a good story, read a book in an armchair, or watch me collect leaves in the park; I’m no one else and that is so amazing.

So when the sound wavers again and my eyes turn to the sidewalk because I’m not quite sure where I should look, I know I’ll return to myself as soon as I turn the volume up a little louder. Or as I make my way through a Honeycrisp. 📺

Skills Lost and Found

We are exactly who we are meant to be

BY ASHLEY SUDETA

I can recall the smell of the garage and the sliding of cardboard over concrete. Standing on the stairs in socks, but no shoes. Watching my dad change the oil was a sort of magical experience, the way childhood memories often are. When he finally slid out from under his truck, he always told my brothers and I how, when we were older, he would teach us to change a car’s oil. I loved that promise, imagining myself staring unflinchingly into the mechanisms of the truck and understanding them.

Changing the oil seemed to reach beyond saving money. It was self-sufficiency and strength. To do the task was to appreciate your belongings and good fortune. These were traits passed down the family in the same way my grandpa taught my dad how to change the oil.

I never found out what age was “old enough” to first learn to change a car’s oil. My parents replaced our truck with one that had touchscreen, Bluetooth, and required a special tool to open its metal guts. Oil changes happened at a shop, behind doors. I used to ask myself who I could have been if I could change a car’s oil. Would I be a stronger, more capable person? Would I have been better?

Those were silly questions. My dad wasn’t going to teach me to be tough and determined by showing me how to change a car’s oil. He taught me those traits every day. We don’t become who we are through singular events, we’re built gradually. It doesn’t matter that I can’t work on a car because I show my grit and ambition in other ways. There is no grease when I finish writing this article, but it still contains all the strength and pride I was raised to have. 📺



3

Blue Jeans and Hotdish

The covert beauty of the Midwest, and the question of American culture.

BY GEORGE FASEEMO

In 2022, I fled the Midwest. I felt as though I had gotten my fill of this part of the world and wanted to experience something different, so I packed up and spent my first semester of college at the University of Toronto. I thought experiencing a nearby culture would reveal the deeper character of the Midwest and with that the character of the place that raised me. During my time in Toronto this did in fact happen, but I had revelations that I never expected.

Over the course of those few months, I regularly found myself reflecting on the truly unique characteristics of the Midwest (apparently it’s not always the norm for most people to be blond). I also found that the country and region specific stores that I had become dependent upon were sorely missed. No Target, no Kwik Trip, no Culvers, and unbearably, no Trader Joe’s. For a modern brainless consumer like me, it was unbearable. But beyond my access to Trader Joe’s Chocolate Covered Mini Pretzels™ being stripped away, I was noticing a deeper disconnect from my surroundings. I’ve come to describe this feeling as region-sickness.

Region-sickness is a condition that besets a person who leaves a region that they have become accustomed to. It’s distinct from homesickness in that it isn’t necessarily about your specific house, family, or hometown. It’s more centered around the institutions, weather, aesthetics, and the general vibes of the area that you’re from. Region-sickness does fade as you slowly adjust to the new area and grow to love its unique characteristics. But it takes time — time I didn’t really want to spend in a city that I didn’t want to love. And so, by January of 2023, I was back in the Midwest for good, with many new meditations on the nature of our region.

I think the best way to understand the fundamental character of the Midwest is by focusing on experience that I couldn’t stop fantasizing about during my time in Toronto. Picture this: You’re in a car driving through some rural Minnesota town on the way to somewhere that’s “actually worth going to.” The sky is the pale blue hue of our state flag, and as your eyes drift lower, the color of the ground makes an almost imperceptible shift in the distance into a stark white — the snow that covers the cornfields you pass. It captures what makes Midwestern culture great: an unassuming, unpretentious beauty that’s reserved for those who are willing to see it. Midwestern culture isn’t for everyone. Only those who are willing to still their mind and not ignore the hidden beauty within a dilapidated barn, or of a person down on their luck. I’ve never seen a deeper appreciation for imperfect people than in this land of imperfect surroundings.

I think it’s also important to look at the critiques of American culture overall — or lack-there-of. To many, American culture doesn’t exist. It is but an augmentation of culture from other lands, a land whose “culture” is the pinnacle of capitalism. This is a reasonable critique, but there are 2 important things to note:

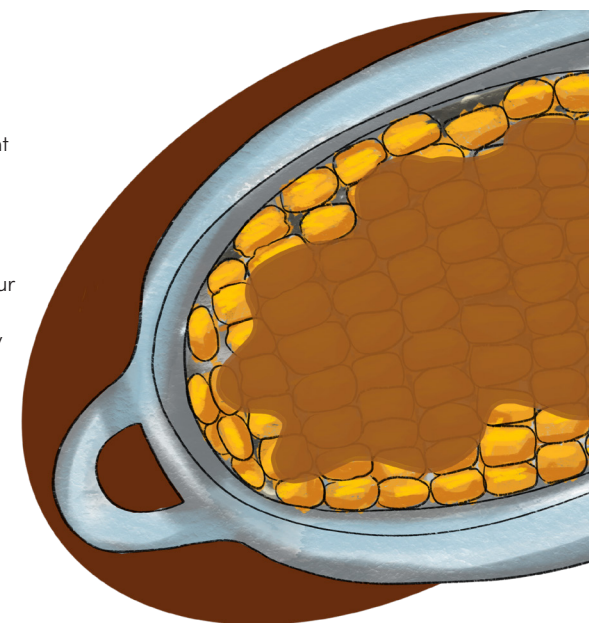
The first: It’s hard to properly define “American culture” because America has monopolized the global market on culture. We export our music, our movies, our stars, our entire culture, to the point where people don’t think of most of it as distinctly “American”. Beyoncé and Michael Jackson are

Americans, but their global stardom has made us not consider them to be “American artists” in the way that we consider an opera singer to be a distinctly Italian artist.

The second: America is huge, and creating one cohesive culture with this many people is impossible. In fact, America to a certain extent breaks down the very idea of a national culture: the nationalist act of having concepts that apply to most everyone in a nation is impossible with a diverse 330 million person population.

There are of course problems with American culture, but there’s clearly so much good here too: especially in the Midwest. We are immensely privileged to live here, and to always be (at most) a few months and a short drive away from a snow covered corn field. 📺

2





FUNDRAISER FOR PALESTINE

PILLAR’s Alt-rock & Punk
BY NAE OLSON

On February 8th, PILLAR hosted a show featuring 7 local punk and alt-rock bands (Mystery Meat, Atomic Nun, Collective Ex, RiGBY, Shit Dumpster, Odd Prospect, Van Was Here). The event was organized by the John Brown Revolutionary Society and raised a total of over \$1000 for Palestine by the end of the night! In addition to donations, 60% of the door fees went to Samidoun, a network providing relief to Palestinian prisoners. The music was fantastic, with a wide range from chill, bass-y rock songs, to high-octane, adrenaline pumping aggressive punk.

A few of my stand out sets from the night include Atomic Nun, RiGBY, and Shit Dumpster. Atomic Nun is a noise rock duo with some earth shattering bass. You could feel every one of their songs rumbling through the ground and up into your chest. These guys were raw, guttural, and one of my favorite noise projects I’ve had the pleasure of seeing. RiGBY, a very energetic and queer punk group, started strong with a song cursing the ever-infamous Elon Musk (which was extremely fun to mosh to, by the way). This group kept up an incredible energy, and you could feel the crowd get hyped up from their performance. This group is very active and plays locally all the time. I highly recommend checking out one of their shows!

My favorite set from the night was Shit Dumpster, which I feel needs no introduction based on name alone. This group brought a very classic punk-rock vibe to their performance, creating the most aggressive pit of the night. This band had me jumping, shouting, and falling directly on my ass in a wild, passionate, rage filled set that has me itching to see these guys when they have a longer set to show off their music. 🙌



Welcome to Samdal-ri:

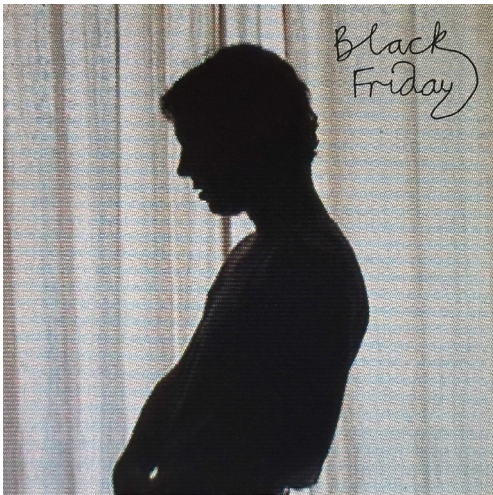
A K-drama worth diving into

BY AMINA AHMED

One of Netflix’s latest Korean dramas, “Welcome to Samdal-ri,” has hit the ground running. With beloved actors such as Ji Chang-Wook and Shin Hye-Sun starring in the series and the age-old heartwarming narrative of “the hometown”, this series was certainly a recipe for success. And surprisingly, I’m at a loss for words to critique.

Don’t be mistaken, this series isn’t flawless or perfect. It’s simple, true. Rather than highlighting dialogue and what is verbally communicated, the audience learns and gathers the story of the main character through unspoken actions and body language. Cho Sam-dal, our protagonist, returns to her hometown in Jeju after her photography career fails due to scandal. Yet, it is the intimacy of the small town that is the crown jewel of this series. Their unwavering devotion in helping Samdal clear her name, protecting her dream and assisting her with her exhibition only to keep her passion alive are a few highlights. The people of her neighborhood surely didn’t communicate their love with their words, but were always there when it mattered.

The icing on the cake was the cinematography and the Haenyeos (female divers). The long shots of the island’s coast with the vast sea beyond were simply breathtaking, but I couldn’t end this review without mentioning the Haenyeos. Not only was it refreshing to see middle-aged women simply existing and having stories to tell, but their words of wisdom hit home as well. One of my favorites was a recurring quote throughout the series, “Only stay below the water for as long as your breath allows, and then come back to the surface where you started.” In a world where we are forced to sacrifice ourselves and work passed our limits, it was refreshing to hear such comforting words. 🙌



“Black Friday”

Tom Odell’s

BY SOPHIA GOETZ

With his groundbreaking sixth studio album “Black Friday,” multi-platinum-selling singer-songwriter Tom Odell has discovered beauty in embracing the uncomfortable. Although he is no stranger to succinct poetry, “Black Friday” takes it a step further by offering his reflections on the complexities of love and relationships. It takes courage to put everything on the line, especially given societal expectations of men.

The 13 tracks have powerful affectation accompanying them. Everyone will be able to relate to “Black Friday” on multiple levels due to its profound themes of loss, fear, nostalgia, and the frailty of human connection. It is analogous to a film that is honest, melancholic, and eerie.

With a diverse range of influences like Luca Guadagnino’s “Call Me By Your Name” and poet William Blake, it is commendable that Odell is delving deeply both artistically and emotionally.

In “The End of Summer” where Tom Odell deftly navigates the ephemeral nature of a previous romance, Odell becomes elevated by his own authenticity and narrative. Though he uses seasonal metaphors to explore the cycle of an ending relationship, contemplating a rueful and world-weary “Can’t believe I used to get to kiss you”, there is still hope towards the conclusion as he celebrates with the line “I’m cold, like the autumn leaves.”

One of the album’s best songs, “Black Friday,” set the tone for Odell’s upcoming creative endeavors and rose to mainstream infamy on TikTok. Tom belittles himself in this melancholic acoustic ballad, saying “I wanna be perfect like all your other friends,” and reflecting on the difficulties of relationships and how we can second-guess them. It is a raw and emotional masterpiece. 🙌



Get Off The Internet Eliminate

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

Nathan Merrill—known by his stage name, Eliminate (or simply Nate), is a hybrid trap and dubstep music producer whose popularity emerged from using meme samples and pop culture references in his YouTube channel. In a rather interesting way, his latest album, named “Get Off The Internet,” tells people to do the absolute opposite. After having released songs with Shaquille O’Neal, playing at Lost Lands, being signed for Insomniac Records, and initiating an entire culture of music producer influencers, I do not blame him.

It starts with “Thinkaboutit,” a highly energetic hybrid trap track. The song screams “I don’t give a sh*t,” setting up the tone for the compilation. A better embodiment of this feeling is the song “f*ck you,” which can come around as a joke for some, but this is literally how Merrill presents himself—a sarcastic and humorous person.

My favorite song from the compilation is “EGOTRIP,” an extreme hybrid trap song that delivers what it promises to deliver, but a special mention should be made to “SMSOU,” a house track made in collaboration with pop New York-based duo Frost Children. SMSOU means “Set My Sight On You,” and the indie elements present in the song makes it much more creative than other disco house tracks. The title song, “Get Off The Internet,” a collaboration with hyperpop artist fussy, dives head first into Merrill’s passion for weird sounds, while also being a very uplifting song.

Merrill’s new album describes in literal terms his uniqueness. One can recognize his productions from afar—one of the many goals of almost every EDM producer. There is more to this album than I have described, so it is definitely a must-listen for anyone who wishes to try something new.

Nate, I SMSOU. 🙌



The 2024 Grammy Awards: A night to remember

BY SHANNA SIVAKUMAR

Music’s biggest night was on February 4th this year, leaving everyone in a mix of emotions—upset, overjoyed, outraged, or maybe just non-plussed (for those who couldn’t care less). But this year’s Grammy awards most definitely gave the people something(s) to talk about.

Some highlights for this year’s awards involve Miley Cyrus and Coco Jones both winning their first Grammys, Victoria Monet receiving three awards for her album “Jaguar II” after almost 20 years in the music industry, and Phoebe Bridgers walking away with the most wins of the night (4 awards!).

But with every award season comes the age-old question: how political should an award show be? 2024 is no different, and the Grammys made sure to weigh in with their politics.

Of course, we have to address the elephant in the room: Album of the Year. This award is one of the biggest honors of the night, and every year, it results in arguments and dissatisfaction. This year, the winner, “Midnights” by Taylor Swift, came as a shock to many—including fans of Swift themselves. Because while the album did well—it charted high, sold records, and played in department stores across the nation—it was nominated against SZA’s “SOS,” an album that everyone expected to sweep the award. “SOS” is easily one of SZA’s best works, combining her gift for lyricism with her smooth vocals and defined beats. The album was a hit for most, if not all, of 2023. So how did Midnights win over an album like that? Additionally, once the award was announced, I couldn’t help but

remember last year’s Grammy Awards, where “Harry’s House” won Album of the Year over Beyoncé’s “RENAISSANCE.” That decision dealt a hard blow to many, because of the significance of “RENAISSANCE” and the quality of the music itself.

Perhaps it’s time to name it for what it is: racism. The last Black woman to win Album of the Year was Lauryn Hill for “The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill” in 1999. That’s now 25 years ago and also the last century, which is something to be said. And I understand, music is subjective. All art and entertainment is subjective. But when the same thing happens 25 years in a row and it doesn’t make sense when looking and listening to these albums that are snubbed, it makes you wonder if maybe there’s something bigger (and maybe more sinister?) happening here.

Prior to Album of the Year being announced, however, was a Sinead O’Connor tribute performance by Scottish musician and philanthropist Annie Lennox. At the end of the tribute, she finished her performance with the words, “artists for ceasefire!” That in itself is a step forward from the (mostly) impartial, passive, or openly Zionist artists that were in the crowd. But in a social media post after the performance caused controversy, Lennox stated that her “stance is totally from a humanitarian standpoint.” So while she openly called for a ceasefire, she did not call for Palestinian liberation—a cause that Sinead O’Connor herself supported for years. She even refused to perform in Israel in 2014 in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The backlash against Annie Lennox simply supporting a ceasefire is a much different response when compared to the 2022 Grammy Awards, where President Volodymyr Zelensky gave a moving speech about the situation in Ukraine and urged the audience to support Ukrainians as they continue to fight against the threat of occupation. He was met with unanimous support, so why was Lennox met with controversy? These events are a stark reminder of where an institution like the Grammys will voice their support, and where they will refuse to give it. 🙌



Q & A

Q&A with Bratty

BY SHANNA SIVAKUMAR

Bratty is an indie singer-songwriter from Culiacán, Sinaloa (Mexico). Their second album, “TRES” (stylized as TR3S), was released on November 3rd, 2023 and dives deeply into their life as they reveal their anxieties, insecurities, and infatuations. With an album that goes from soft indie to garage rock, Bratty brings everything to the table. I recently had the pleasure of sitting down for an interview with them to talk about their inspirations and music.

Q: What inspired you to make music?

A: I think what made me start making music is... I use it as a form of expression — of telling the feelings I can't speak [aloud]. I'm not good at speaking in general, so I think with music, it lets me do like a... I don't know... it's something therapeutic with me? It's therapeutic for my brain. It helps me express [myself] more successfully. And yeah, I think that's why I started making music for me.

Q: How would you describe your musical style?

A: Hmmm... I don't know, I think it has changed over time. 'Cause, you know, music has to... it needs to have an evolution, and with me, as I grow up, my music keeps changing too — the lyrics and the music. But I think it always has the same essence that is like... guitars with the chorus, my soft voice, and my lyrics and my Spanish, too. I think that's kind of — it always has that particular thing I think. I like guitars, so I always sing songs that have guitars — I like them. [laughs] And the melodies with the voice, I like to think about them too, and the lyrics — that's important, the lyrics are my way of thinking, so it is never going to change [the way] I speak through the music.

Q: Do you draw inspiration from any artists?

A: Yes! I think with me, when I was like fourteen or fifteen, I discovered this whole new wave of artists — indie artists — that came from the United States, California, Canada, and I remember going to YouTube and discovering, like, many local bands that were playing the music that we know now, but [back] then it was very alternative. Yeah, I listened to a lot of Best Coast — even my [stage] name, Bratty, came out of a song of theirs called “Bratty B.” And I always listened to Snail Mail, Keaton Henson — he is Euro, European — and I don't know, [I listened to] those, and many random songs I discovered from YouTube that were like, soft rock. I like them a lot, and I just discovered, like, “Why isn't anyone in Mexico making this kind of sound or music?” and I, you know, started doing that type of music, but in Spanish, 'cause it didn't exist here. And people didn't know that it existed.

Q: What does your creative process behind a song look like?

A: This always changes too, but I think it depends on what is happening or has happened to me in real life. Sometimes, when nothing is happening, I try to pick up inspiration from other things, like from my friends, like some things they tell me about their lives. Or when I watch a series and I think about the plot of a relationship or a person or when I read a book and I think [about it]. Sometimes I come up with a name for a song and I start writing from there, like creating a story. But with my last album, “TRES”, it's all [inspiration] from me again. And I think I talk a lot about my identity and my person as I become an artist in real life and what all these changes mean to me — like growing up and being a woman in this industry — being an artist in this industry and discovering myself, what I like and what I don't like. It's kind of like an identity crisis? That's why it became so personal to me, this album, because all the songs weren't from fiction or from other things, [they were] just from me. Even though I didn't know if people were going to understand it, I would like to write again like that.

Q: What do you want your listeners to get from this album?

A: I hope it helps them, somehow, with — I hope they can identify with at least one song. That's a win 'cause I wrote these songs for me, so if they help someone going through a similar thing as me, that's great. I would like people to feel comforted by my song[s].



Q: Last year was your first Coachella performance, how was that experience?

A: Well, for me, my favorite bands and influences came from the United States and California and that was such a goal for me [to see them live]. I didn't know that my first time going to the United States was going to be for Coachella, I think that's something that even now, saying that I've been in Coachella is shocking for me. 'Cause it was such a... crazy thing, to be there. And for me, being from Mexico, I didn't even have a visa, so I've never [laughs] been to the United States. So it was crazy and obviously such a personal goal and professional goal, too. It was like, somehow, more than that — more than, “yes, I've been in Coachella” — I've now been in the same places that my favorite bands have been. And my music and my sounds, they came from here — from California, from Los Angeles — and it was such a special moment for me, I realized. I'm just really happy to have been there, it was such a great time. Obviously, I was nervous to be there, but I think we did a great job. I'm proud of it, I'm proud to say that I have been there.

Q: What future performances can we look forward to?

A: I think, just playing the songs from this new record means so much to me because, like I said, this record in particular is really personal, like each song. So playing that live for the first time... I think it's going to be like a new experience or like if — if you're doing this song again, it's going to be a different experience than when you wrote it. And, obviously, these songs don't sound the same as the original record. I think when you're live — singing the song — it becomes more special, more intimate for the people there. And just seeing the faces of the people and seeing them sing these songs — I think it's going to be really special, because it will be the first time seeing those songs being sung by people. I'm really excited to do that. And this show... there's an evolution, always, as an artist, so I always think of getting better at my shows. So that's why I know these shows are going to be different — with quality, with visuals, with more presentation of music. 🎧

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