



→ THE BANDIT ZINE ←

PRESENTS



LOVE ≠ HEARTBREAK

THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS



ALWAYS FREE. ALWAYS RADICAL.



PRESENTS

LOVE + HEARTBREAK
THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS

Intro03
Platonic Love is Still Love04
True Art05
Robots Vs. Feelings, Comic06
Untitled, Illustration08
The Best Valentine's Day Ever.09
Girl, Put in Work.10
Space Ace, Illustration11
Things I Call Ppl I Love, Illustration . . .12
Michael's Hands13
Discovering Asexual Love.14
Kissing Mergentlemen, Illustration . . .16
Nothing About Loving Girls is Easy. . .17
Something About Hope.18
Open and Raw, Illustration19
Girl.20
The Perfect Girlfriend/Accessory . . .22
Circumference.23
The Eyes are the Windows to the . . .24
Unrelated Note, Illustration34
Non-Romantic Love Story26
Sticks and Stones, Illustration29
Drunk.30
The Night I Was Abandoned By God .31
Sad Tomorrow, Illustration32
Arthur.33

INTERSECTIONAL
WHY LOVE + HEARTBREAK?

Let's talk about love stories.

Most follow the same pattern: Handsome man meets beautiful woman, sweeps her off her feet, and then they get married and live happily ever after.

This narrative is supported by most movies and TV shows, and the wedding industry promotes the ideal "fairytale wedding".

Who's left out of this love story? And what happens when everything isn't "happily ever after?"

For this issue, we're exploring themes of heartbreak and love, from an intersectional perspective. For us, this means featuring work created by marginalized folks, and remembering that there's more to love than romance, and that wealthy white cis heterosexual couples don't have a monopoly on what love should look like.

There are cartoons about robots, essays about platonic love, self-love poems, and laments about lesbian bars.

We hope you love (pun intended) this issue as much as we loved putting it together. After all, the Bandit's mission is a labor of love, too. - Intro by Elena Gormley

TRIGGER WARNING!
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

Trigger Warnings: If you see a "trigger warning" on a piece, that means it may have content upsetting or triggering to some. Trigger warnings of this zine include (but are not limited to): domestic/relationship abuse, body image, problematic substance use, mental health issues, transphobia, gender dysphoria. Please take care of yourself and put the zine down, if you need to. Some articles may contain content discussing these issues.

Platonic Love is Still Love

BY DO NGUYEN MAI

My roommate and I are conversing over morning coffee, attempting desperately to drown drowsiness from our bodies before we part ways for our early classes. She is a beloved critic of my work, and also a close friend. I slide several new poems across the glass table for her to read, and upon reading through the first two, she asks which lucky boy the poems must be about.

"A friend," I say.

"Then these aren't really love poems."

This same conversation repeats itself often when discussing my writing with others. I've written a number of poems focusing on romantic love, but only one or two that are as positive as the popular work of E.E. Cummings. The majority of my love poems, instead, focus on the love between brother and sister, family and friends. These are the bonds which have impacted and shaped my life, especially so because my asexuality has amplified the magnitude at which I view platonic relationships. Asexuality – and in other cases, aromanticism – aside, platonic relationships are a strong influence in anyone's life. Most people have friends, and of those friends, a group of even closer friends that uplift, care for, and love them fully.

"Why wouldn't these be love poems?" I ask.

"They aren't romantic," she replies. "Love poems are supposed to be romantic."

Often, my childhood friend and I share a bed when I return to our hometown to visit her. Our touching skin, still warm. Our willowy legs, still tangled under the same sheets. Our beating hearts, still keeping in time to one another's. Is this not an intimate love?

Platonic love is still as strong, still as passionate, still as life-changing as romantic love. The idea that love must be romantic to be valid not only insults all love between friends, but also all love between family members.

And yet, the audacity to undermine platonic love remains persistent – platonic love poems called inauthentic love poems, platonic love songs called inauthentic love songs, platonic love called inauthentic love.

My love called inauthentic love, as if I am incapable of loving, as if romantic love is the only kind of love to exist validly.

To say I do not love is to silence my heartbeat – a heartbeat which still pounds, which still aches, which still screams, which still lives just as anyone else's does.

TRUE ART

BY PJ CARMICHAEL

The colors of your hair
meet the blackness of
my blue eyes; a curtain
of blonde obscures our kisses

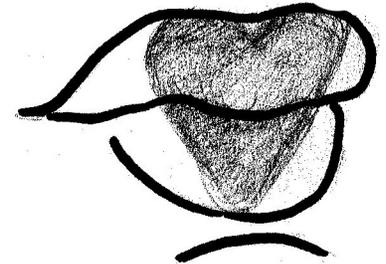
from the world.

(We are the lovers and the dreamers.)

In silent adoration,
I observe
the outlines
of your lips,
breasts,
hips and thighs,

and the imprint
that your heart leaves

on mine.



robots vs. feelings



[heart break issue]

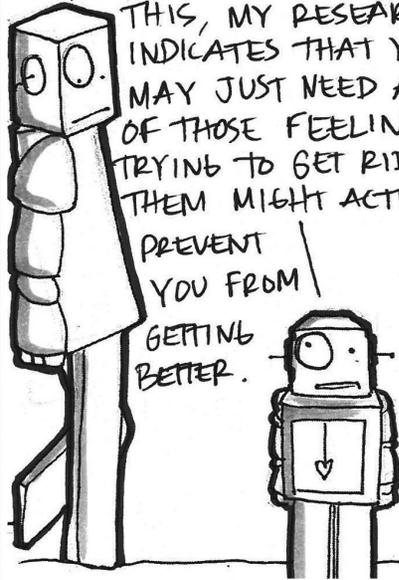
by

DAILY ROBOT SHOP

IT'S PROBABLY VERY SILLY TO THINK I'M ALONE BECAUSE I ASSUME OTHERS HAVE FELT THIS, BUT THAT DOESN'T HELP. EVERYONE HAS SUGGESTIONS, BUT THEY DON'T FIX IT. I FEEL LIKE I JUST NEED TO COME UP WITH THE CORRECT FORMULA TO GET MYSELF OUT OF THIS STATE OF DISFUNCTION.

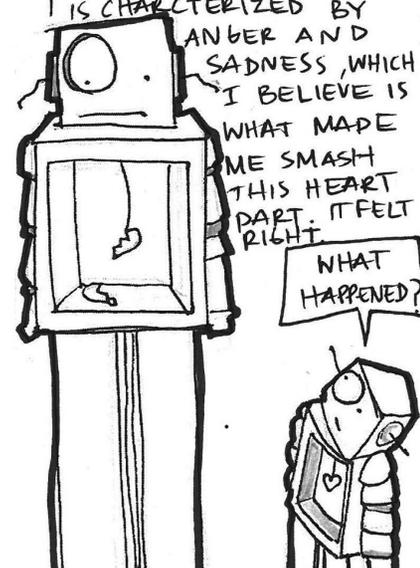


WHILE I UNDERSTAND NOT WANTING TO FEEL LIKE THIS, MY RESEARCH INDICATES THAT YOU MAY JUST NEED ALL OF THOSE FEELINGS. TRYING TO GET RID OF THEM MIGHT ACTUALLY PREVENT YOU FROM GETTING BETTER.

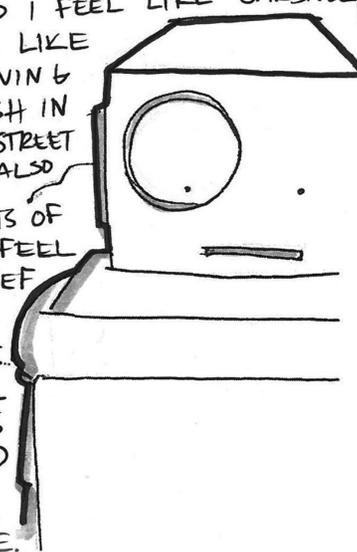


I FEEL LIKE IT IS HEART BREAK. I HAVE HEARD IT IS CHARACTERIZED BY ANGER AND SADNESS, WHICH I BELIEVE IS WHAT MADE ME SMASH THIS HEART PART. IT FELT RIGHT.

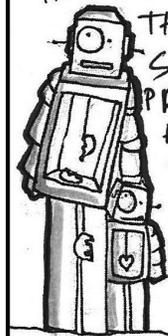
WHAT HAPPENED?



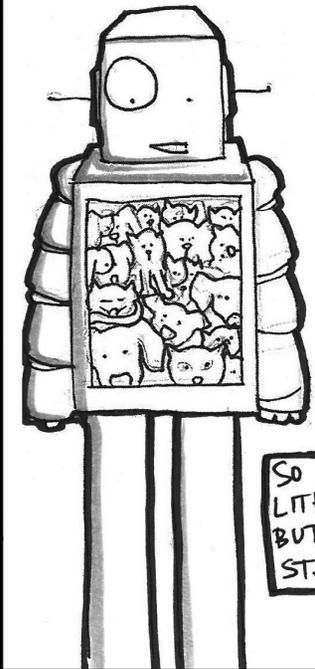
I WAS SO HAPPY WITH THAT ROBOT, AND NOW ITS OVER AND I FEEL LIKE GARBAGE AND LIKE BURNING TRASH IN THE STREET BUT ALSO PARTS OF ME FEEL RELIEF AND GUILT... REAL GROSS MIXED BAG OVER HERE.



I SUGGEST THAT YOU JUST FOCUS ON KEEPING YOUR SYSTEM FUNCTIONING. HUMANS CALL THIS SELF LOVE. THINK OF WAYS TO BE NICE TO YOURSELF. TREAT YOURSELF LIKE A CHILD IN YOUR CARE. DOING THAT CAN KEEP YOU SAFE WHILE YOU PROCESS ALL THE HARD STUFF.



FILL YOURSELF UP WITH THE THINGS YOU LOVE.



SO LITERAL. BUT GOOD START...



BY AVA NGUYEN

THE BEST VALENTINE'S DAY EVER ♡

— BY BEN KLEYN —

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Pizza's delicious
I don't need you

Alone on Valentine's
My heart's on the mend
I've decided at last
To be my own boyfriend

Single for years
But lonely no more
I'm spending the night
With Bastian and Falkor

Roses are red
So is my wine
I don't need a man
To have a good time

Chocolate is sweet
Ice cream is too
Treating myself
Is important to do

Violets are blue
Roses are red
My V-Day solo date
Was the best I've ever had

ME!
♡
I

GIRL, PUT IN WORK

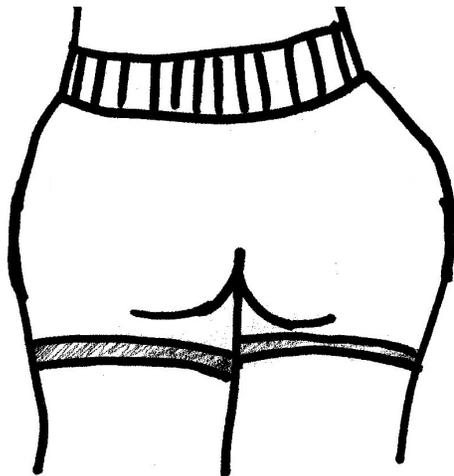
(RADICALLY LOVING YOURSELF)

BY DANIELLE ALEXANDER

I want you to know that I do not consent to being embarrassed any longer. For stretch marks examined and exclaimed over in dressing rooms, ambulances, beds. For breasts told to be smaller; flattened, kept in a sports bra to make them more acceptable. For hair I'm told needs to be brushed, is better straight, pulled back, dark, blonde, curly. For hips called "child-rearing." For a witch's nose, rabbit's teeth. For that time I slept in my car.

I am not that secret scrapbook you've been making all these years. I can wear leggings despite my "Renaissance body." I am not embarrassed by that time in the back of the truck. I am not the conversations you whispered to me over the table at the mental institution.

I will not consent to guilt placed on me like a harness. I love these legs, this hair, this heart. My nose a proud promise, these hips an anthem.



BY ALEXANDRA C

On one hand:

I love space more than romance or boyfriends, but will I end up alone staring up at thin air and dimming lights without a sexuality?

On the other:

Fuck yes, space!

.....THINGS I CALL PPL I LOVE.....

TURTLE LOVER #1

..SATAN.. BUTT PANTS CUTE THING

FRIENDSHIP Ugly BING BONG
FREAKY

TITO PERSON I KNOW BUDDY

BB PAL Buddy Boy

..... CUDDLE PUDDLE

DEVIL BEAST ZOO DRAGON

HANDSOME BEST BOO GHOST

BOOBOO Sleepy Bear BABY
FRIEND.O BEASTLY

Stink — SANG BOI — BUTTY.
SEXY ASS

BY LYDIA VANHOVEN

MICHAEL'S HANDS

BY MARY RAAB

Large, calloused, cracked,

with ragged nails:

A framer's hands

that genuinely loved me.

Fat, clumsy fingers

danced delicately

drawing tender notes

from a slender flute

so that I could sleep.

Two large safety nets

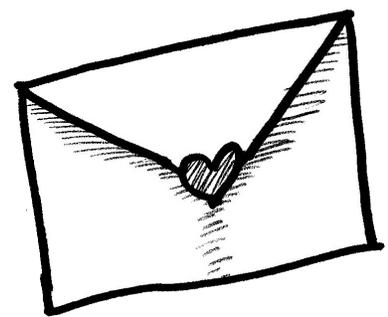
that caught me,

steadied me,

when I fell.

Two debts

I can never repay.



DISCOVERING ASEXUAL LOVE BY OLIVIA M.

I used to be afraid of love. Specifically of falling in love. Because from what I'd been taught in my formative years, falling in love meant marriage, and marriage meant having to have sex I didn't want.

Let me back up a bit. When I was still in my early teen years my mother was a fundamentalist Catholic, and being Catholic at that age meant going to CCD (Catholic Sunday school). The lesson that stuck with me the most began there. We were taught about the three vocations of good Catholics: the clergy/religious life, married life, and single life. Each of us was expected to choose one of these three vocations as we grew up, and each was quite restrictive in its scope. Only one involved partnered love. Though life as a nun involved symbolic marriage to Jesus, it didn't quite qualify. Single life seemed to have been included as an afterthought, and it would involve being alone, unpartnered. There was an unspoken expectation that for most, the single life would only be a step leading up to marriage.

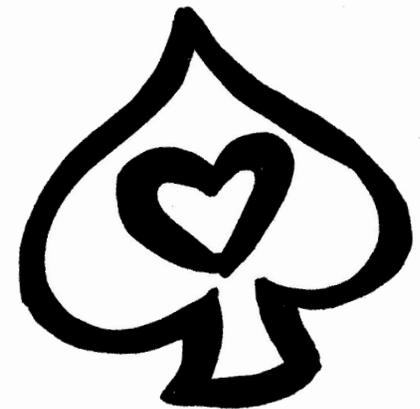
Marriage. It was discussed in the sacramental sense of the "holy matrimony," and the teacher also mentioned that married couples were expected to bring forth more Catholic children, but the CCD class didn't really get into the gritty details of what this would entail. No, that teaching role was fulfilled by my mother, who forced me to watch programs on the Catholic channel about the "theology of the body" and the purpose of marriage. And I was horrified. Under Catholic doctrine, married couples were required to have sex and be open to pregnancies. In other words, contraception was forbidden. And marriage was the only route where love was allowed. Single people were not supposed to experience romantic love unless it led to marriage, and marriage would inevitably lead to sex, which potentially would have the consequence of pregnancy.

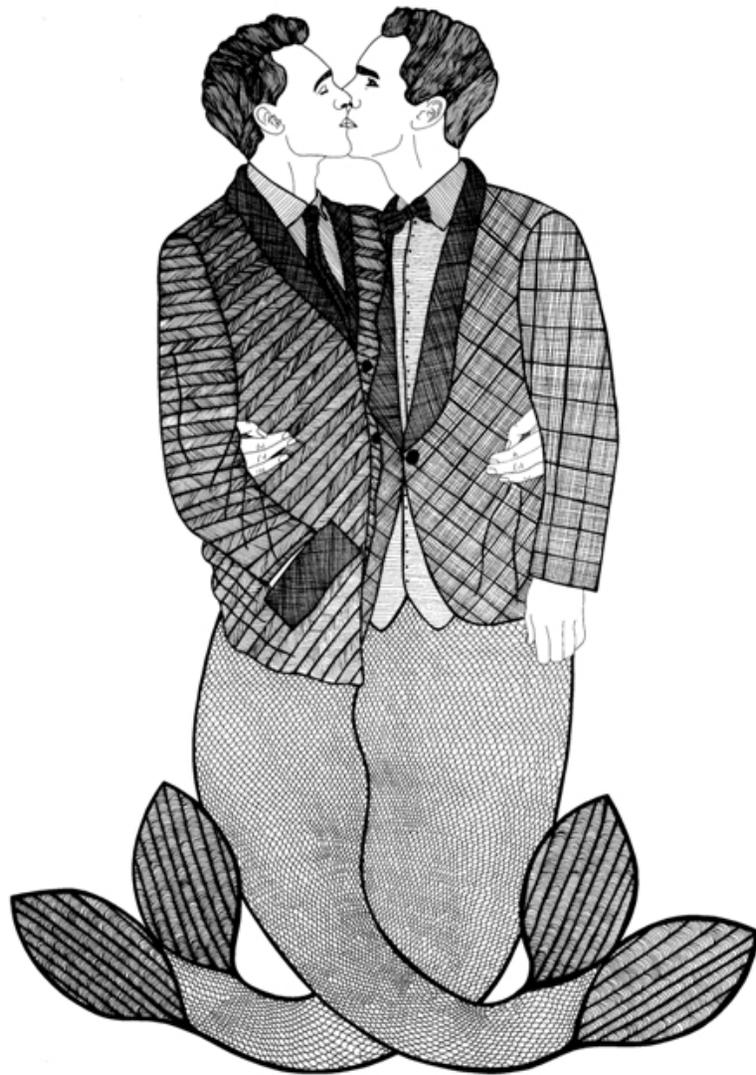
I didn't know what asexuality was back then, but I knew that I didn't want to have sex. I had a visceral reaction against it, and even more so when I thought about the idea of being pregnant. There was a part of me that wanted to experience partnered romantic love—without the sex, without the children—but that desire was dashed to pieces by the requirement for my life to fit into one of three boxes. To my horror, I realized that if I were to ever fall in love, I would have to marry, and if I were to have to marry, I would be required to have sex, and that my husband—it was expected to be a husband—would want it from me. That upset me even further. I didn't have any instinctual connection between sex and love, so the idea that someone who claimed to love me would require that from me in return for love was like a slap to the face.

I was faced with two choices, all of which saddened me. One, I could live out my life alone and never experience love, or two, I could allow myself to fall in love and be forced into unwanted sex and pregnancy. At one point I thought I would have to become a nun to avoid the chance of falling in love. The three vocations loomed over my future, and I didn't know what to do.

A few years passed, and my mother's flirtation with fundamentalism ended, and I eventually left the Catholic church. I still feared love, because I didn't know that there were options outside of the boxes I had been given. Then, I discovered the concept of asexuality. It took a while to realize it could refer to me, since early on the definitions I found conflated aromanticism with asexuality, but eventually I discovered the concept of a romantic orientation. Something clicked in me. I was asexual, and I didn't ever have to have sex if I didn't want to. It was such a relief to discover this, and to learn that it was possible for me to one day have a loving relationship that didn't involve sex or children.

Since then I've gone through a few crushes, learned I'm panromantic, and joined the asexual community, but I still haven't had that relationship. That doesn't worry me now, though, or at least it doesn't worry me as much as it used to. Sometimes I'm still afraid of ending up alone, but now the possibility of love exists on the horizon. I've also met so many ace people and non-ace people who are willing to have relationships with ace people that I know it's possible for me. Time is on my side. I can finally sigh with relief and look hopefully forward.





THE KISSING MERGENTLEMEN BY CHLOE HENDERSON

NOTHING ABOUT LOVING GIRLS IS EASY BY LUCY RYAN



I'm an exercise in disorientation, nothing sitting correctly on the axis of romanticism; so here is that backwards, nameless thing. Bright eyed. Dark tongued. I twist my two inch hair in scalping ringlets whilst boys twist girls around their mouths.

Say love, like it feels something. Like it matters.

I think about thigh highs like an altar. Girl looks down at me through a halo, dousing on the swing of her hair and asking how long it will be enough. The

I love you

disparity like preconceived murder. Two of us, me and her through several face-changes, matching lipgloss from the shared touch - we lie on the sheets. On the grass. We share heartbeats between us as close as I think I can get.

Boys twist girls on screen becoming close to perfect - closer than. Was it my first mistake - not being a boy? Or just not loving her? Not loving him wasn't ever a problem. Hungry, the bones hollow, wanting more than my body allows.

My fingers spread through the fall of her hair and down the pinkish tinge on her throat. That's the colour, I think, and kiss her again. I must be getting closer.

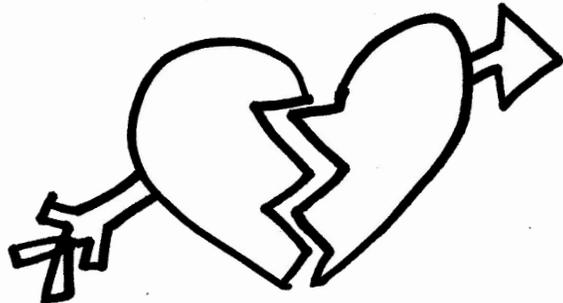
SOMETHING ABOUT HOPE

.....BY ZOEE.....

TRIGGER
WARNING

abuse

something about in my numbness
there are lost children, lost people
shaken, crying, tainted,
beaten,
lying with their eyes wide open,
alone,
hands over their ears...
they move in and out of the
dark.
I am disbelieving
but maybe one of them is
tapping on me,
telling me to turn around.
Please turn around,
turn around to see me.



*Open and Raw
by Andrea Hines*

GIRL BY ALEXIS BRENNER

Stand up straight! Or else they'll spy
life's burdens hidden within the curvature of your spine.
Pretty girls don't slouch.
Sit Pretty! Meaning: knees glued together, ankles crossed,
spine like a rod, hands still as stones in your lap,
so as to take up as little space as possible.
So as to draw as little attention as possible.
So as to hide the diamonds between you thighs. Or else they'll spy
their uncontrollable lust within the folds of your thighs.
We mustn't tempt the boys, you see.
It's our responsibility.
Even better!
Try to be invisible, if you can. It's a neat trick that can be learned.
Learn not to speed up when you spy
a man approaching in the shadows of night;
this makes him feel bad.
He's a nice guy, you know.
They're mostly nice guys, you know.
No need to generalize here.
No need for apprehension here.
Don't walk home alone at night.
Never walk home alone at night!
I told you not to walk home alone at night.
This is what happens when you walk home alone at night.
It's your fault for walking home alone at night.
Respect yourself! Cover up your sinful flesh!
Have you no shame?
You can't receive your education today
because your: ass, breasts, thighs, shoulders, ankles, hair
is a stumbling block for your brothers.
Apologize to those you've hurt.
Apologize for your humanity.
Apologize for demanding, demanding, demanding
Sassy, stubborn, showy, stuck-up girl,
Bitches aren't marriage material.
This is how you shut up.
You have your equality now. The White Man
said so, it must be true.

Ladies don't talk back. Ladies don't ask questions. Ladies do as they're told.
Every morning, paint your face just so
or else they'll spy
the abundance of flaws held within the creases of your eyes.
That's too much makeup! Stop trying to deceive the men who need to fuck you.
This is how you smile through the pain.
This is how you smile to attract a nice husband.
This is how you pose for a selfie to hide life's burdens.
This is which filters you must use to look fuckable for your profile picture.
This is how you mash the potatoes just so
so they are smooth enough
to make him love you.
Smooth as silk! shave your legs, armpits, stomach, anywhere that he might
need to feel, to feel like a man.
No man wants to make love with a hairy woman.
"It was like fucking a dude!"
Disgusting!
Some options: wax your pussy, or
shave it neatly into a cute little shape
a heart perhaps? To show him that you are open to love.
But what are your ambitions?
Ah ah! Not too much! Remember how much the
children will need you someday.
The little angels must always come first.
The poor things, never having a mother around.
But you mustn't compromise your career.
Of course you can have it all, men do it all the time.
Come home from a long day of work
Feed the children
Feed the dogs
Feed the husband in his chair in front of the television
Vacuum, mop, dust, dishes, laundry as whispers of ESPN affirm his masculinity.
Time for rest! Just kidding.
This is how you fuck him so he doesn't leave you.
Doesn't matter that your joints ache.
Doesn't matter that you're drowning in the ocean of black.
Doesn't matter that you've lost yourself.
Not all men are bad guys, you know.

the first time I was told

“It’s not your style”

“Maybe you should wait”

“I don’t know if that would fit you”

I tried to lose weight

after a semester of

binge-eating, sleeping, crying, and cowering

from an obnoxious roommate

who hated my existence and my demands for courtesy.

it was a crop top.

fitted.

snug.

with the potential

to show a slight pudge

in my tummy-area

never mind that it was nonexistent

until half a year prior.

and then it was dresses

jeans

leggings

skirts

then it was

--finally--

a bracelet

“I don’t know if that’s really your style”

a suggestion.

a hint.

a comment.

an “it’s your choice but not really”

Enough!

My thighs

hips

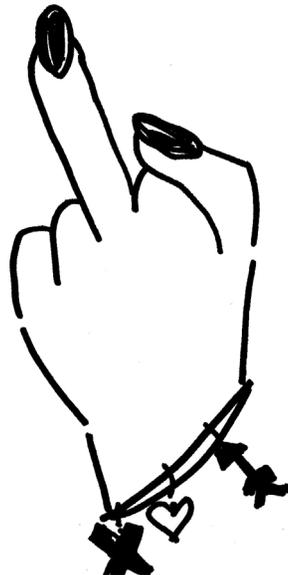
ass

stomach

and wrists

will do as they please.

THE PERFECT
GIRLFRIEND/ACCESSORY
BY MICHAELA HILLIS



CIRCUMFERENCE

BY ALEXANDRIA COWAN



sexual assault, sexual abuse,
incest, eating disorder

I pull out my measuring tape
on a daily basis

Constantly,
measuring the circumference of my waist
hips,
arms.

I use this number as a compass
to see if I need to pull out my cutlass
to shave
off
a few
pounds

It’s a way to enable my numbness
to not become too consuming
when I’m abusing
myself

When in reality,
I know I should be measuring the circumference
of my heart

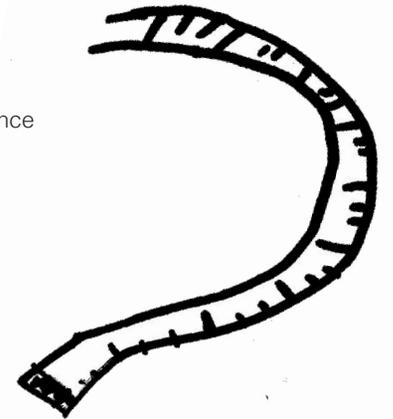
But that too was shrunk
When you decided to take
a chunk
of me

With your hands,
you carved out my plans
that only a child could have

You took my itinerary
even if it was just
preliminary

you took your chance

You caused harm
that’s been sounding an alarm
that’s been beeping
for eight years



THE EYES ARE THE WINDOWS
TO THE SOUL - PLEASE PULL
THE CURTAINS ☺☺

I'm looking in her eyes at the beauty within. The tales and jokes and offhand comments about how I need to pick up some milk on my way home. I want to hear it all.

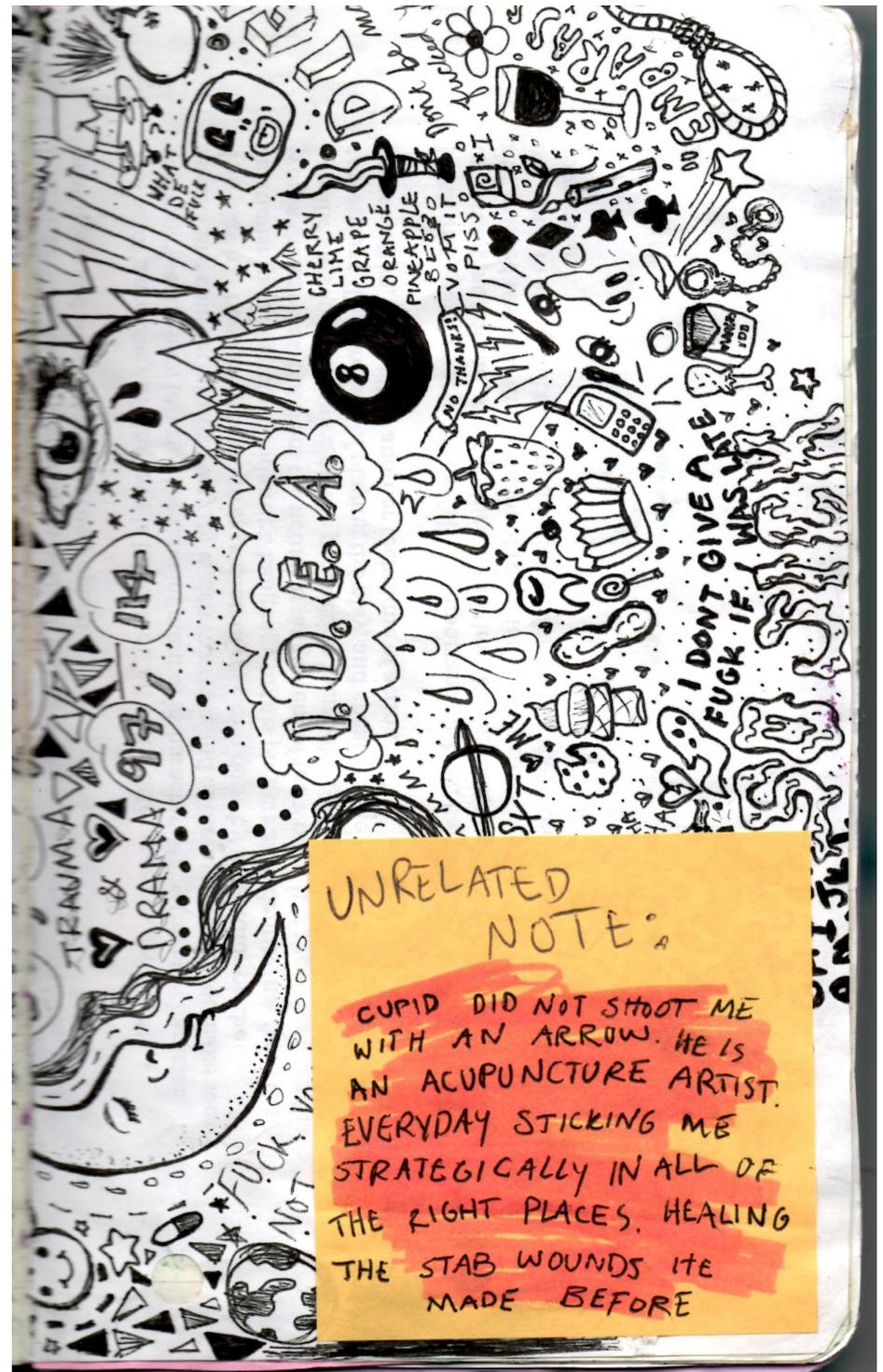
I'm looking in her deep brown eyes at the sparkle within. At the plans we have. At the memories not yet made. Of road trips in a beaten up car with the roof open and her hair fanned out behind us as she sings along to the songs blasting from the radio.

I'm looking in her eyes at the mysteries within. Promises of holding hands at our wedding, our child's birthday, our anniversaries and as we sit rocking back and forth in creaky old rocking chairs when we're one hundred and three as we tell stories to grandkids and great grandkids of the good old days and they tell us they wish that someday someone will love them as much as we love each other.

I'm looking in her eyes at my reflection within. Of a girl who'd do anything after all the times we'd been through together. The alienation we faced daily, being ostracised by the very people we used to call "family". A girl who's 'forbidden' love grew every day in their isolation as they begged for a hand to reach out and offer them acceptance.

I'm looking at the tears in her eyes, at the "sorry" within. Of hours of her telling me that it will just never be how we imagined and promised and planned.

Things that perfect never work out. The only perfection here is captured forever in her deep, beautiful, sparkling, mysterious, wise, sad brown eyes.



BY LINDSEY NORMINGTON

MY NEVER-ENDING NOT-SO-HAPPY NON-ROMANTIC LOVE STORY

.....BY OMNES ET NIHIL.....



emotional abuse, sexual violence, fear of extreme physical violence

Completely non-romantically, she's the love of my life.

That's a recent revelation for me—not that I love her even after all this time, or that I likely always will, but that the good stuff I had with her was probably a once-in-a-lifetime thing...

People are hard for me. If I'm going to interact with people, especially on a personal level, I need the interaction to work. With almost everyone, it just doesn't and just goes spectacularly wrong if I try. But even the rare occasion when it does work, no matter how strongly I connect with someone or how much I love them, I have to be so careful to hold myself back.

I'm very intense, with all the subtlety and power of a bull in a china shop. I also need to do a lot of words to process things and I can't always do it alone. It's a vivid process of give-and-take: I need to explore what I don't understand by arguing with it, pushing it around, seeing how it bends, where it breaks and where it's solid. Sometimes I need help with that. I need to push and I need someone to push back—not as a game, or in search of conquest or domination, but as a benevolent act of collaboration... kind of how two waves moving toward each other collide and gloriously reach new

But that's not how most people work. So I spend my life being so careful, deliberately restrained in every minute in every interaction, to avoid pushing too hard or coming on too strong. It's exhausting, but it is what it is. I never had to do that with her—she's just as intense as I am, and our interactions have always just worked. She held her own with me and we were on equal footing. We reached spectacular heights together. She's the only person I've ever been able to talk to like that without holding back, without having to worry I'd be too much. In that respect, we were kindred.

She's my match. And I doubt I'll ever find another.

Somewhere along the line she started trying to dominate me. It never worked, but it took its toll.

That's not why we split up though. I confronted her about how she'd hurt other people, and that was the end.

Our story isn't over though. I assumed it would be by now. I think at this point I could maybe end it if I really wanted to. I think she might respect finally that. But I'm still scared... just not so much anymore on a life and death scale. And I'm still ambivalent, for my own reasons too: I miss her.

She said it was the greatest break-up letter she'd ever read, and (disappointingly) it didn't even come from someone she was dating. And then she told me she wanted me back in her life.

It had been months since she'd told me that she needed space to think and asked me not to contact her. In her story, I'd betrayed her: I told her it wasn't okay that she'd acted out her sexual agenda on people who weren't in a position to say no. I told her it was sexual assault even though she didn't use force and even though nobody told her to stop. She told me that since I believed that, I was untrustworthy—tainted and dangerous—and that she couldn't be around me. (It didn't help that one of the people she'd assaulted was my other non-romantic “queerplatonic” partner... It was someone she didn't want me spending time with because she never liked having to “share” me even though she always had primary relationships in addition to ours—“share” because people are property to her.) I don't think it occurred to her that her story wasn't my story too.

When she contacted me after months of silence, wanting to meet, I assumed she wanted closure. After more than a decade sharing our lives together, we owed that to each other. I had assumed she'd asked me there to say good-bye. She didn't. She wanted me back.

I said no, and I tried (and failed) to explain. But I didn't manage to give her a reason she could accept.

She told me she had stopped doing the things she used to do that hurt me, and that I just had to readjust my reactions and learn not to be oversensitive—I used to be stronger than that. And she told me I was ridiculous and irrational for being afraid of her. For all

her detailed talk about wanting to kill people and various less lethal but equally appalling and detailed revenge plots, she's never actually “gone after” anyone. But that didn't make me less afraid of her—it just made me question I wasn't afraid that she would try to harm me if I cut ties with her unambiguously. She wouldn't do that because she still loved me and that would hurt her too much. I was afraid she'd try to harm my other non-romantic partner as revenge for “taking me away from her”. And I felt morally responsible for her decisions, for being the only conscience she's ever known and not being strong enough to stop her from hurting people. I felt like I didn't just get to walk away.

At the same time, part of me wasn't ready to completely cut ties with her, to make that choice for myself, even if I had thought she would have let me.

We left things ambiguous—ties severed but with a possibility of reconnection “maybe” in the future.

Violence is a tricky thing and it can be hard to pin down.

She mistreated me for years—I know that, but it's hard to articulate in a way that I believe it.

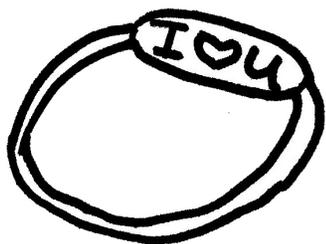
She did treat my concerns as always-secondary and we battled beyond what I could take about “politics”—in particular about disablism, racism and classism—in ways that were not productive. She mis/gendered me and sexualised my (emphatically asexual, sex-repulsed and non-binary) self, in (inappropriately?) gendered and fatphobic ways. She got mad at me for dissociating, or having allergic reactions to her second-hand smoke, and minimised my health issues. She

expected from me massive amounts of (unreciprocated) emotional work and care-taking.

And yet, it's hard to think of particular instances or things she did that were more than trivially not okay. Nothing on its own seems like it matters.

There were a couple years near the end when she was pressuring me intensely to have sex with her, and routinely putting her hands in places I really didn't want them. But I knew she would never try to force me to have sex because she'd never be able to get what she wanted from me that way—she didn't want sexual access to my body, she wanted me to give her sexual access to my body... and that's something that can't be taken by force.

But regardless, that was only her solution to our lingering relationship problem—that after more than a decade, she was starting to prioritise her romantic-sexual partnerships over our non-romantic & non-sexual—queer-platonic—partnership... while claiming to want to avoid that. She pressured me to change and give up parts of who I am (my ace-related physical boundaries, or my political and moral objections to the institution of legal marriage) so that our relationship could remain a primary one, without her having to challenge her destructive sexual-centric, romance-privileging priorities. It didn't work. Eventually she backed off from that, but not before doing some damage.



I believe it's possible to learn not to love people and things that hurts us, or the very least to restructure our lives so that they're no longer relevant. In many ways I've done that with her, but in other ways, I'm still working on it.

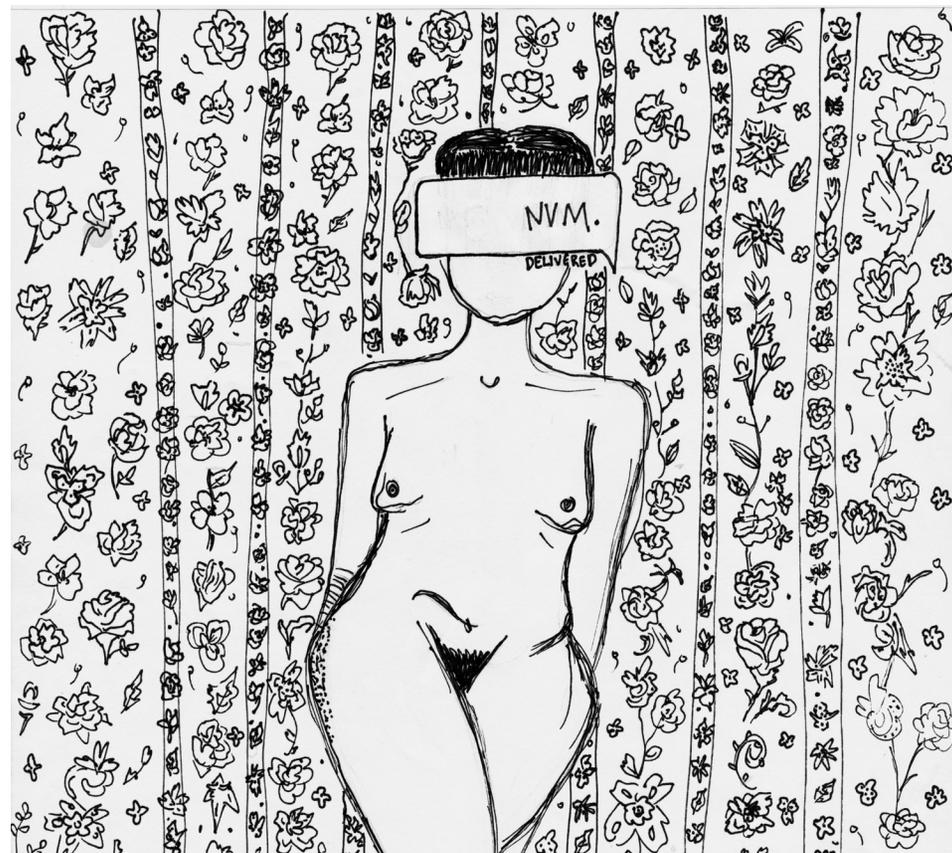
It's been 2 years since she told me she wanted me back in her life and I said no. I miss her. We still interact pseudo-regularly in a community context, when larger political forces put us on the same side. Trans communities are small, even in a big city like this one.

Recently-ish, heading out from a TDoR event, she asked about hanging out sometime, maybe meeting for lunch—maybe with one of her girlfriends whom I've always liked.

I miss her, a lot these days. I don't think she really knows that. And I didn't tell her. Standing on the subway car before parting ways, declining not-too-harshly (in part because I'm still afraid of how she'll react)... I didn't tell her that I still believe she sexually assaulted people and that she needs to be accountable for it for real before I could ever choose to have her in my life. I didn't tell her that

I can't interact with her willingly if there's going to be stuff like that that I can't talk to her about. I didn't tell her that I miss her. I didn't tell her I still love her. I didn't tell her that it's all too hard.

Completely non-romantically, she's the love of my life. And that's heartbreaking.



STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK
YOUR BONES // BUT INTERNALIZED
MISOGYNY WILL KILL U - SCOUT FALLER

DRUNK

BY KARINA SUZANNE

He's drunk and says
He feels numb
That he feels
That love
Is man made
And I'm just a fool for
Fake things

I'm drunk
And I tell him
I love him
And I smile with lips
As red as my eyes
While he nods his head
And I reapply
More lipstick

He's drunk
And throws his keys
And throws his wallet
And throws the mail
And throws everything
But he holds me
And I've never felt a to
As soft as his



TRIGGER
WARNING

problematic drug use, emotional abuse

I'm drunk and
It's raining
But I'm halfway home
So I can't stop walking now
Then I do
And call him
But he sends me straight to voicemail

He's drunk
And can't stand
Without falling
And can't sleep
Without vomiting
So he calls me
And I arrive in ten minutes

I was drunk
And I missed that soft touch
So I called
But his voicemail box
Was full
So now I'm writing him a letter instead
And it says
"You're drunk
While reading this
But I stopped drinking
And even if you did too,
You'd still never check
The voicemails I leave you"

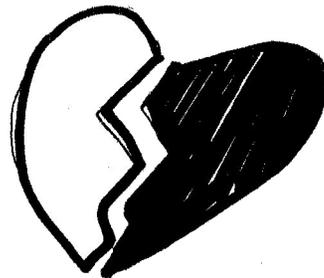
THE NIGHT I WAS ABANDONED BY GOD

BY STEPHANIE T.

I'm driving in my truck
I'm excited to drink with my friend
I've never been drunk before
Antonio's friend Kaleb is here
I'm slamming down glass after glass
The room is spinning
They place me on a couch
A girl comes up to do some shots
They're talking but I can't hear much
Suddenly I hear her say, "that's rape"
"No, she wants it," He says
Those words will haunt me
She leaves the room and I'm left with my "friends"
I feel sick
The feeling of dread is overpowering
I want to run away from this house
But I'm not able to move
I want to scream for help
But I'm too scared to speak
The sound of the TV plays in the background
The taste of apple flavored Bacardi in my mouth
The weight of his body pinning me to the couch
I'm floating and drifting away
So much pain down there
The pain won't stop
So much blood
My trust betrayed
My innocence stolen
Finally it's over
But now the other one wants his turn
Gagging me, biting me
Feel like I'm being torn apart
My body is in pieces
Blood, more blood everywhere
This is a nightmare I can't wake up from
This was only the first night of my time in Hell
My first night abandoned by God

TRIGGER
WARNING

sexual assault and rape



I DON'T KNOW WHY
YOU'RE SO GLAD
WHEN MY HEAD'S
FILLED WITH
SORROW
SO MAYBE IF I
FADE AWAY
THERE'LL BE NO
SAD TOMORROW



SAD TOMORROW (THE MUFFS)
BY JILLIAN MARIS

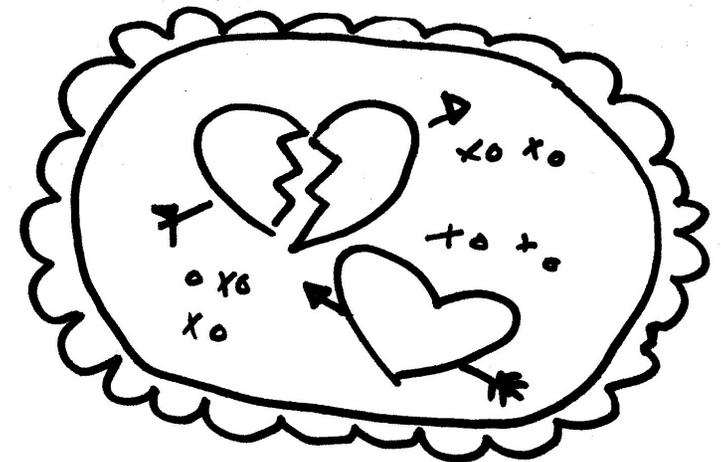
ARTHUR BY QUEY

When asked whether he felt he was at a disadvantage for being black, impoverished, and homosexual. James Baldwin replied, "No I thought I'd hit the jackpot" and then he laughed at his joke. People were shocked. Who in their right mind would be happy about that dealt hand? I don't know what is worse in this society, right after being born you are shot in the foot, or being born black, impoverished and a queer. But it was the crinkle in the corner of James's right eye, and the curve of his full lips that were unhindered and genuine, which got me thinking. And thinking, and thinking and a week later I found myself sitting at the loneliest place on earth...a dyke bar. Contemplating the wonders of that crinkle and the curve of that lip. And To be completely honest, Bandit Zine, I was doing more than contemplating. I was brooding, because my cocktail, one part club soda, and one part the stuff that people think dreams are made of, wasn't turning into a Baldwinian jackpot. I felt there had to be something missing. Some key recipe I had overlooked, but James had found. Because really, what did James have that I didn't? Minus the whole being a man thing, which let's be honest, gave him more of an advantage. I had all the ingredients: Poor. Definitely. Black. Unarguably, Queer. Les-be-honest.

Then how come when I think about those circumstances in my life, the corners of my eyes crinkles like balled up love note at the bottom of a wishing well, and the ends of my lips don't curl but fall like my restraint as I scream into to face. With yet another found pair of panties balled in my fist shaking like craps. The thought makes me want to cry because I thought I had been lucky when we first met. Now, I see the snake in her eyes. I want to cry. I order and take another shot. Tears don't pay the bills so I don't let them spill. But that don't change the fact that like James was and I am gay, black and poor. Too poor to order top shelf. My diet of Ramen noodle and generic off brand Apple Jack cereal, Apple Zingers, didn't stop post-graduation. But I get off track. I was brooding hard into my cocktail. Wondering about jackpot, then my luck changes. A pretty lady, in a red skirt and white blouse decides to grace me with her presence. She sits down next to me at the bar. And gave me that look. Come on Mr. Raccoon you know that look! Everybody in the room knows that look! It was a look that said she wanted some of this. Now as a disclaimer to save face, I am as oblivious and a bit slow in the art of flirtation. So it takes a bought drink, a hand press, and a gentle caress for me to realize she is coming on to me like a light bulb, that finally shines above my head in one of those ah ha! But in this moment my

soul is like a stained glass window, and my mind, is a child with rocks. And right now aint not the best time, and really it's me not you! I am poised to destroy any potential relationship with just the slight of effort.

But I am never one for lost hope, even when the ice has yet to break, I decide to give it a little push with a joke: Two women started to have sex in the middle of a dark forest. I say, after about 15 minutes of it, the one gets up and finally gets up and says, "Shoot, I wish I had a flashlight!" The other woman says, "Me too, you've been eating grass for the past ten minutes!" I laugh at my own joke. My pretty Lady storms away like I just hit her in the face with a whole bag of rocks instead of the coins and doubloons she was wishing to find in my well. But I sit dried up. Alone, brooding in a gay bar. I felt as though I had just shot myself in the foot. Contemplating the wonders of that made James Baldwin's eye crinkle in the corner and his lips curl, in the face of being poor, black, and gay. His middle name was Arthur. I wave my hand at the barkeep to ask for another gin and T. When my phone ring. It's her. I knew it was her. I stare at the vibrating screen without making a move to pick up or ignore. I watches as it rings and rings and rings and rings. I watches as it rings and rings until the display finally goes silent and dark.



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submission info, and check our Facebook, Twitter,
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