

FRIDAY

NIAGARA

WIN  
WEST

CAVANAUGH

# 286

I meant to start writing this half an hour ago and then got sucked into reading stuff on Twitter – enough time to listen to the entirety of Misery Guests by Ostraaly. BUT! This is actually the first time I've written a zine on a Friday in a loooooong time. Granted, it's not Friday night, it's 3.30pm it's a lot closer to the true historic zine writing time than I normally manage these days. I ended up having to work late last Friday and then went totally spreadsheet-blind and started making loads of mistakes, so I had to finish off the work on Saturday morning so I've taken this afternoon off in lieu which feels great (I wish I hadn't just wasted 30 mins on Twitter which is something I probably would have done if I was actually at work). It's hot and sunny today after what feels like a few largely grey weeks which is nice. Hopefully we will have a second wave of proper summer weather although I'm not really holding my breath as the summer over here usually peaks mega early. But anyway, I'm now listening

to the songs that are currently available to listen to from the forthcoming Dream Nails album which I've pre-ordered and which sounds absolutely fucking MASSIVE and surprised me in a really good way. It sounds slick as hell and really muscular and fleshed out – perfect, polished pop-punk – and I'm excited for the full thing, and hoping I can write this quickly so I can go out and enjoy a bit more sun.

### Uneasy

After spending most of the pandemic/lockdown worrying and feeling furious at the government, it felt like my mind and body gave up and had a little breather the past couple of weeks. I've been feeling a bit more relaxed about things opening up and doing some "normal things" I haven't done for a while, but I feel like I'm ready to go back into full on worry/anger mode. Because really, what's changed? I know the R-rate is still low in London, but the

bungled local lockdown in Leicester, which was only enforced 11 days after the news of the outbreak in Leicester started being reported, shows that it won't take much for it to be right back up there and now the willpower isn't there, it will be a nightmare for the shops and restaurants and pubs that have been encouraged to open up again and it will generally just be much more messy and apathetic (I'm predicting). There will be a second winter wave but right now it feels like the country is just pretending everything's OK and there's no virus out there and that you come across as crazy and paranoid if you say something as innocuous as not feeling comfortable going on holiday because you can't get travel insurance and might get locked down abroad and it would be a nightmare trying to get back (me, in reply to my boss asking if anyone was going anywhere nice on holiday in our Zoom team meeting – this particular boss always feels the need to say that it wouldn't be that bad if I caught coronavirus and it's

like, yeah, but that's so not the point, it's about the bigger picture but I'm fed up of going round and round in a frustrating corona-underestimating groundhog day situation. I have been coping fine with "not-normal" life because I'm lucky and can work from home and like the people I live with and there have been some unexpected upsides (I like feeling less busy and not having to use my diary and like my time is being portioned out and signed away weeks in advance, I love not having to commute to work) but I'm not a zealous rule-following panicked lemming like I always end up feeling in these kinds of conversations. There are plenty of things that I miss about pre-Covid times.

### Things I miss

#### 1. Live music

I really miss going to gigs, all kinds – big, small, jazz, punk (the bulk of my gig

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attendance) but especially tiny, rough and ready punk shows at DIY venues where you stumble across bands you've never heard of before and leave completely in love with. Tragically, DIY Space For London has had to close down after not being able to pay the rent during lockdown (I had just started volunteering there and had done one bar shift - the second one was Covid-cancelled, and although I'd been a regular guest over the years, it's made me sad that I didn't get more involved before it was too late). They are hoping to find a new space in London and I really hope that they do but this is my saddest Covid-related closure so far

(although I'm sure there will be more to come).

2. *Band practice*

I live with my bandmate so this is a bit of a cop-out but I also live with other people, in a terraced house, so band practice is also a pretty antisocial activity, which is why S and I have hit on the routine of driving all our gear to our rehearsal rooms in Brockley. We rent a mega day-long session every few weeks (or sometimes squish a few together like when we were recording) and spend the day polishing up our repertoire/writing new songs with a break in the middle to go get vegan fish and chips and Gold bars and cans of coke

and eat them sitting on the floor surrounded by cables and pedals planning what we're going to do next. The beginning of lockdown was a good time for us to work on putting together the stuff we'd recorded and actually get it out there, but I'm missing writing new songs and practicing properly. HOWEVER, we have now our first ever gig lined up (a pre-recorded online gig) and we are running out of time to actually record the set so hopefully this weekend will present us with the kick up the arse we needed to just-fucking-do-it and get back into the swing of things.

3. *Being able to concentrate on*

*making art*

...because everything I was working on feels kind of weird and random and why the hell am I doing this at this point in time? And I feel kind of cut-off and also spending more time being about the take stock of the cesspit that is the art world and my complicity in it and how I should engage moving forwards. But also making art keeps me sane and I start to feel down if I don't do stuff, so I really need to just try and power through and do it and rally my self-discipline because even if I'm just making stuff that no-one's really going to see, it doesn't matter. I've been doing a lot of drawing as having a set project is easier

than trying to puzzle something through/figure out how to make an idea work/write, but I have been getting pretty bad RSI in my right hand so I'm trying to be a bit sparing which is frustrating but The Right Thing To Do. I think we will be able to go back to the studio from August and I've been wondering about whether it's a good idea and what it will be like as we have to come up with a safe-working plan so that only three of us are there at once. But if I can get there without having to cram onto a packed train like normal, I think having a one-day slot might be really nice for being able to work in a focussed burst.

4. *Trying to engage more in cultural/political events*

This one is basically just Zoom fatigue. I spend all day at work on the computer and in a bunch of Zoom meetings and the last thing I want to do when I'm finished is to go to a Zoom screening or Zoom political meeting or a Zoom lecture, even though they are things that I might have tried to get to if they were happening IRL, as I was trying hard to be better at this. I think it's great that things are still happening and that Zoom events are actually a lot more accessible than live events for a lot of people but my concentration span just becomes non-

existent when faced with people talking on a screen, unless I'm expected to contribute (actually, it even happens sometimes in meetings where I'm expected to contribute).

5. *My burgeoning confidence in driving*

The three months without a car were unfortunately enough to undo the breakthrough of my solo Ikea trip. S and I have been doing a delivery run every Saturday delivering food parcels to refugee families via a solidarity group and I have let S drive every time whilst I do the navigating/logistics. But I think the time is coming where I need to get a grip and just get back behind

the wheel.

6. *Germany*

I would normally be spending my grandmother's birthday weekend in Hannover, which isn't happening this year and which I feel really sad about. S came with us for the first time last year and it was really cool seeing the city and my grandmas flat and the surrounding area through his eyes and was looking forward to round two. Hannover will still be there when this is over, but Oma might not be, which is a tough thought.

7. *Having a good answer to the question "what are you up to this weekend?"*

*Am I right?*

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