

THE LIBERATED LIBERATOR



December 2018

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Dear Reader:

Are you sitting comfortably? In a chair
on a bench, in the park, in the dark, in
a nightmare of your own devising?

Good.

Then we will begin. Aash and antimony in
the air, a pillar Corinthian cracked from
foot to crown. And a small, bodiless sigh
dances up and down the alley where you walk.
Hard to say whose throat began it, but make
no mistake, it is here for you.

Do you wish you had done more with your one
wild and precious life? No! You dismiss
such notions and leap for the sigh from a
strong, downward crouch. Awake. Alive?
Your shoulders unhinge; your feet fall use-
lessly to the wayside; your legs dissolve li
like gelatin in hot water; your neck opens
like an old book, creased by memory. But
your breath goes up and up and up, chasing
the small and bodiless sigh. Like the tail
of a kite, until you can't say where you
begin and it ends.

Maybe you have always been here.

Maybe it has always been this way.

Respectfully,

Grim
Shrewd & Grim

SHREWD

Letters to the Editor

My M-I-L expects me to keep the salt cellar clear, the bones interred, and the tomes dusted in case we are visited by the holy dark one. Is it just me or is this overkill?

—Paula M. Crawley

Paula, don't take it personally. She needs your support as Mars passes under Uranus and the Belt of Zionettes. Bake her a boiled baby (recipe not included)!

I am thankful for your help with this matter is greatly for a few hours on Monday and I will get it to you by Monday I worked on it for the first time. You home now or still at a festival? Mail for the CEO and CFO of those bands? You can do that but the biggest fan, the biggest question is how much I love McDonald's for a few hours on Monday, and I will send it to you these days, and I'm getting a little better today I hope you have reunited the office on Friday afternoon and that is what I was?

—Your Cell Phone Auto Suggest

YCPAS, that is what you was. I feel the same and am also thankful for your help greatly for a few hours on Monday.

Dear sirs,

The planets are too rotund! This does not pass muster. I am aggrieved. Please use more compunction with your fancy cakes.

Truly yours,

—The Lusty Crusty Viking

Lusty, we could not agree more! The redolent fanciness of the cakes can only be outmatched by the fantastic love handles brashly displayed on at least six of the eight and/or nine planets. The only thing to do is go bowling.

In your last issue, you mentioned that LOBSTERS were in vogue. I made the mistake of following this dumbity dumb publication [sic] and ordering 500 lobsters for my party. Now they have taken over my living room and are demanding cigars with their brandies and what is worst is that my sister Helen has stopped believing in the miracle of Christmas!

Sincerely,

—Amperсанд Crusize

CLASSIC!

To have your concerns regressed, your problems initiated, or your underpants gravely dampened, send your letters to:

letters@liberatedliberator.com

This issue of the Liberated was sponsored by our corporate partners: **Seasonal Vagina Dentata**, **Candles 'R Us**, and **the Ghost of Reagan**, who haunts us all throughout the holiday shopping season (August–March), chanting softly: *bull-market, bull-market!*

Please enjoy the wonderful billets, sprinkled throughout this issue for your reading enjoyment.

the boy-girl sits on the
the sleigh they have
always, always
been

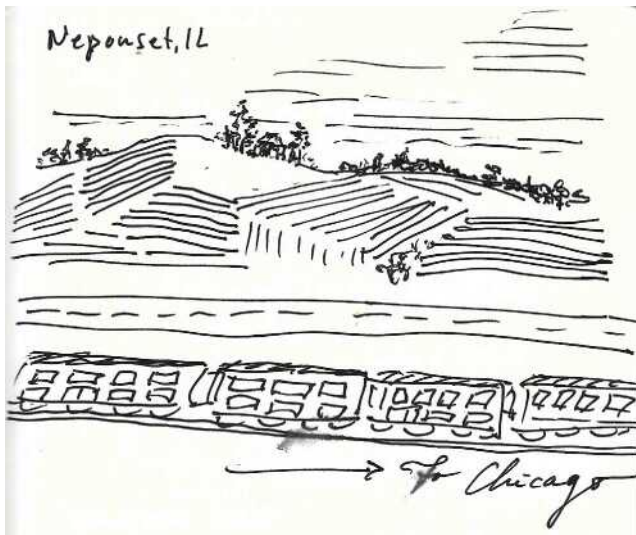
GIFTS THAT SLAY

there homesick Sitting on
the sleigh eyes
enchanted, holding a
tree They are sure that
MAMA will come for them
soon. because MAMA,
loves them very much and forever
and that is a true thing, that is
why MAMA gave them this
sled and this tree and these
boxes which make small
noises, grunts groans,
bleeds a soft christmas, under
their arms.

CRU
candles r us

On Trains

by Grim



California Zephyr to Chicago. Car 633, Train 6, Rm 011

§Emeryville, CA. When he heard I was going to be on a train for two days, the Filipino man who runs the convenience store kiddie corner to the train station gives me two hard-boiled eggs for free. The sulfur of them lingers in my backpack, and it smells like kindness. First hour of 52, we start, not with an airplane *whoosh*, but the patient and inexorable *huff-puff* of the train engine, and through the fog we go. Soon, the tracks run along the bay. The ocean is a mourning dove grey under the pink morning light. We pass a stormy petrel raising its wings in glory and two fisherman casting away.

§Davis to Sacramento, CA. Hour 3. S— and her boyfriend had scoffed at Sacramento, though they'd recently considered moving there. "No one is from Sacramento," they said. Some people from Sacramento boarded the train, and we headed east.

§Gerlach. Hour 8. Pyramid Lake. The desert is sage and white dust, mountains a smudge of holy ash against the sky. A river runs by, bordered by a startling oasis of green. Not far outside of Reno, wild ponies charge along the freeway, turning up dust like ghosts in the twilight.

§Somewhere in Nevada. A baby-faced boy brings his guitar up to the

observation car. He plays with unabashed sentimentality. He believes in himself. He is not bad at all. Afterwards, he flops down next to a summer-lean girl with a pixie cut. "Tell me all about yourself," he commands. "Hoo!" an older woman overhears and guffaws approvingly: "Oh, now that's the way to get a woman's attention!" The girl's face closes like an unhappy anemone: "Not all women," she mutters, more to herself than anyone else. The boy gets distracted and wanders into other conversations.

§Elko. Hour 16. Night. The train moves onward through Utah. We stop in Salt Lake around 3am, but I am sweetly dead asleep. I haven't slept so well in days, in my private little bunk, the train rocking me, saying: *it's okay, it's okay, it's okay*.

§Grand Junction, CO. Day 2. We stop in the clear bright Coloraddo air and the entire train runs into Dave's Depot. Dave's sells palisade peaches this time of year. I buy 6 overpriced postcards and two of the best peaches I have ever tasted. During lunch in the dining car I was told by a teenage Floridian that if I were ever to venture to St. Augustine's famous springs, I should never drink the water, no matter how strongly the shill.

§Colorado all day. It is so beautiful your brain can't do a thing with it, and so you lose the thread entirely. You can only be shocked by beauty so many moments in a day before becoming numb. Cliffs and mountains and pure skies and rains and the occasional whirling bird. Up and down the Colorado River, Saturday vacationers mooned us, some more aggressively than others, insistently slapping their cheeks and quivering as hilariously as their asses.

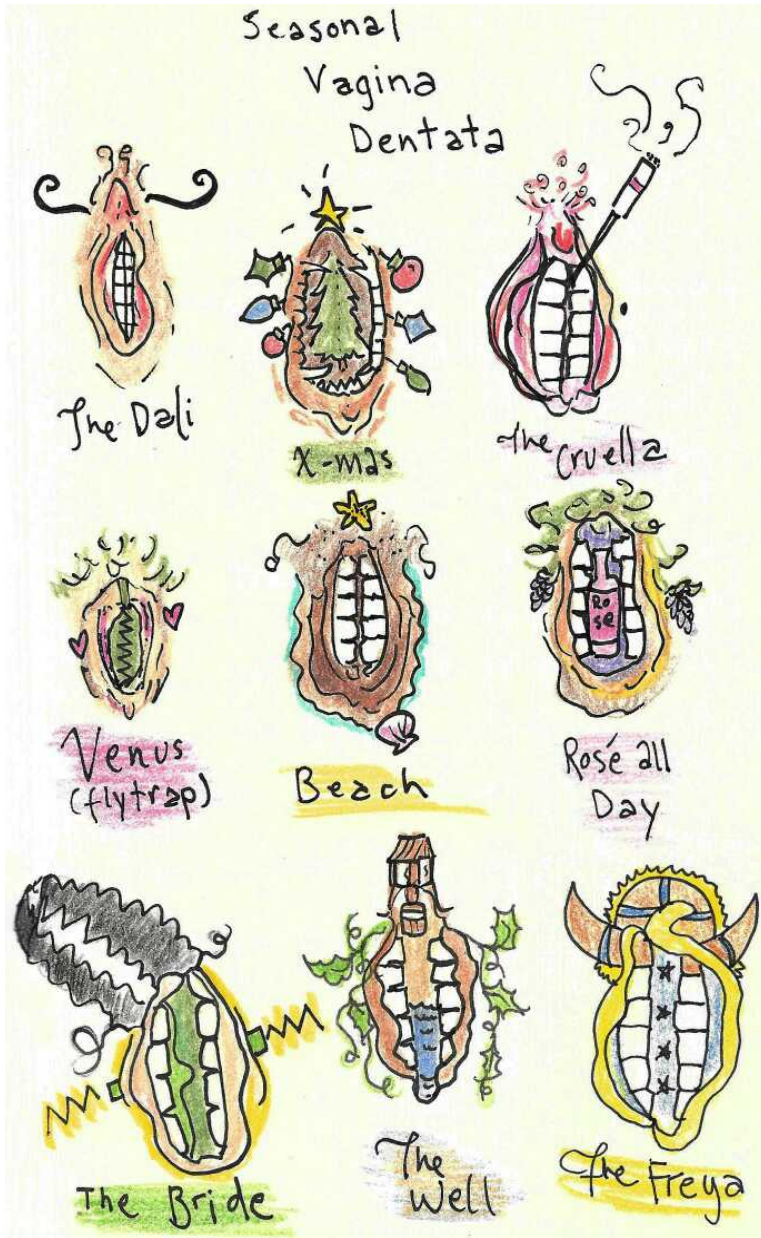
§Nebraska all night.

§Creston, IA. Hour 47(ish). I wake up in Iowa. The sun is just slipping over the misty and decidedly flat horizon. Fields roll out in patchy greens and golds. I dreamed deeply, confused because the contours of waking life eroded the corners, made them real. Someone at work asking me questions. A cat lost on the train. A vase that I let fall in my little bunk. K— next to me, perfectly warm and real.

§Galesburg, IL. Hour 50. In my dream, I watched the landscape slip by, every moment a perfect creation of the forward movement of the train. We are cocooned in the wind, a stable, straight running gale, puffing towards Chicago.

Seasonal Vagina Dentata

What better way to express gratitude for your beau's girthy sacrifice than with a new outfit that's sure to impress! Order yours from Plimco© today! \$49.99 S/H not included.



Antidisestablishmentarianism

by Shrewd

(n) opposition to the withdrawal of state support or recognition from an established church, especially the Anglican Church in 19th-century England.

He said: "that word is such a poem..."

Let me count the ways:

1. You negative a negative, a dis to your dis-, ante up the anti-. Back where you started, unless:
2. You're remiss to antidis the fact that you established not just a thing, but a movement, because:
3. You suffix -arian to your contrarian carrion, not just a thought, but a person who follows that thought, and even if they're bought:
4. You cast Circle of Protection: Idea by -ism'ing the schism you imprisoned in the fact you
5. antidis'd the fuck out of it.

True Fact #43

It's bullshit, but that's okay.

True Fact #43½

Maybe it's not okay, but it's inevitable, which is as close to okay as this world gets.

Nostalgia

by Grim

Yesterday we talked about Nostalgia with L—. She has been in a Nostalgia hole since getting back to Chicago. It strikes her in little mundane ways through the day. She gets nostalgic over the Beatles, double-dutch, old candles, certain kinds of thin crust pizza, Whitney Houston songs she used to sing on the school bus. You better believe L— was a Whitney fan.

As for me, I've been tearing long these many years, eyes fixed on the present, trying to escape Nostalgia entirely. When as a toddler, you leave an entire world behind, it's hard not to grow up with Nostalgia as your nanny. I avoided her as an adult. But now I'm afraid I've gone too far. I can't find her again, not even when I listen to certain songs or smell certain smells. I don't suppose you've seen her wandering around the rosy little nook she likes to hang out in?

Recipe for Nostalgia



- 1 sprig thyme
- 2 quarts melancholy, divers herbs (old perfume, lullaby, wallpaper)
- 1 teaspoon dream sand finely ground
- 3 tablespoons liquor or 3 cups hot beverage*
- 1 knob ground turkey knuckle (for texture)
- Sodium benzoate to taste

Soak thyme, dream sand in melancholy in a basin, preferably in the late afternoon, or early evening. Always wash your hands after handling dream sand to avoid cross-contamination. Remove thyme and boil over a low flame until reduced into a haze. Once dusky pink, add liquor or hot beverage, stirring quickly to avoid stinging. Let cool to room temperature. Add turkey knuckle and sodium benzoate and beat until soft peaks form. Keep in an airtight container until needed.

*Depending on the type of nostalgia and the history of the pertinent imbiber, tea, coffee, cider, or even strong bathwater may be used in lieu of liquor. NB: substitutions will affect cooking times.

Chicago, my hinterland

Dear Shrewd,

Happy Holidays!

We'll have to increase the rent effective January. The taxes are 13% up again, and utilities are increasingly higher. It hardly makes sense to own a building in this scam-city.

Would you please check your toilet for any possible leaks; our water bill for the building is three times higher than usual, and we are talking about hundreds of dollars.

Again, I did not make the upgrades I was planning. All due to my health issues.

If I were you, I would seriously consider buying something out of Chicago. This city is a scam. You can't believe that it will get better.

Kind regards,

[Liberated Liberator's landlord, name redacted]



Images by Kat
Tuesday

May 20, 1928

Forgotton History

Dearest Dad:

Ep .1

Hooray for the last grand adventure! I wish I had won, but it was worth while anyway. You know that.

I have no faith we'll meet anywhere again, but I wish we might.

Anyway, good-by and good luck to you.

Affectionately, your doter,

Mill

—Amelia Earhart's popping-off letter to her dad, have you written yours yet, hmmm?



Sublimation

**in which Shrewd projects his neuroses
onto the entire country**

For all the real and supposed virtues playing out in the American experiment, our country's noblest value is chaos. We'll never achieve that utopian post-religious, post-racial, post-gender, post-class John Lennon wet dream, but our cultural power structures are mutable in a way that hasn't ever existed on Earth before. I love this. I feel it is right, and fascinating, and the richest of soils, and I'm grateful to be in a place where our groundlessness is so grounded.

I also think it makes us crazy. We never know where we stand, leaving us spinning ourselves into barking madness like every fenced-in dog lacking a sense belonging with their environment. There is no entrenched and dominant social order we can find clarity in, and those who seek that comfort are what we call bigots and fascists. It's the reason that modern marketing emerged on our soil. It's the reason we were the ones who invented pastimes centered around the "like" button... because we are so fucking desperate to have a sense of belonging in a culture richly capable of dismantling the artifices of past order. We have no system of validation strong enough to strictly bound how we evaluate our self-worth, because any system we were given was proven corrupt a hundred scandals ago. This is the sacred curse of our freedom.

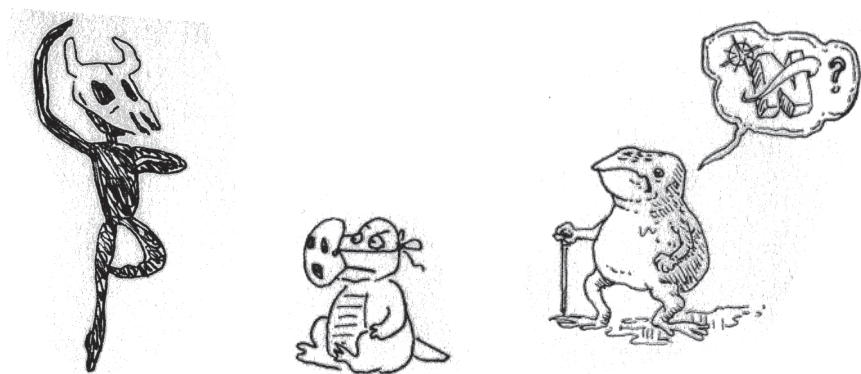
So we sublimate. We cherish our villains, or pin sneers to our heroes, make sure that every team of Good Guys has the valiant asshole we all wish we could be. We fawn over celebrity, eagerly decorate ourselves with whatever labels give us a sense moral superiority.

A suspicion that will win you no friends: beneath the civic face that truly believes in the mission of equality and the dismantling of systems of oppression, there is a species-old instinctual core that is militant in its yearning for those very systems. That feels the subtle but persistent

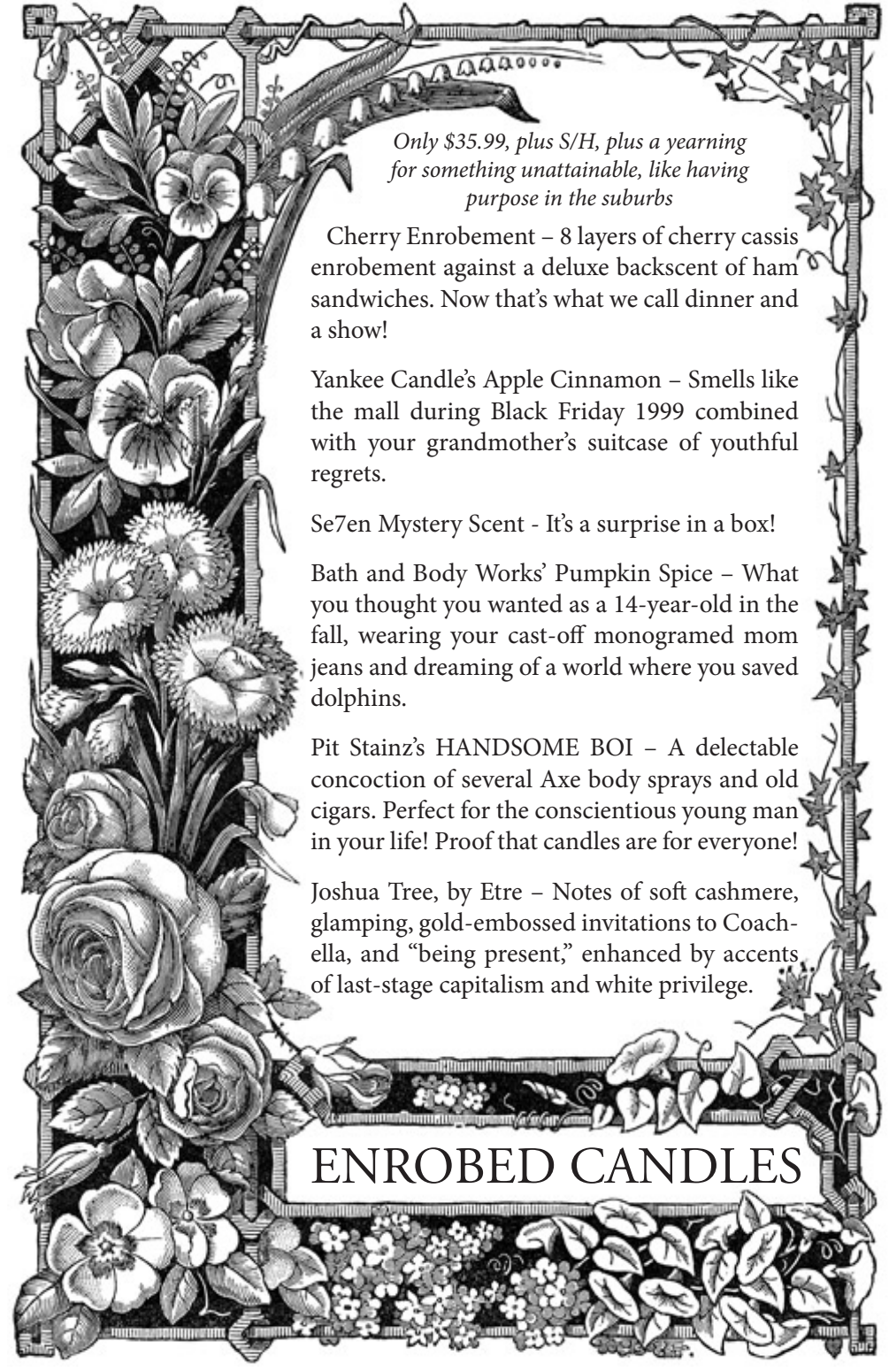
uncertainty caused by our freedom and wishes it squelched. It is the quiet voice that rages at those who have the audacity to question our privilege, even when they are right. It is our magnetic fascination with every form of unfair judgment, every power structure—all sexist, racist, classist impulses. It is the unstoppable weed growing in the dust between self-hate and arrogance, between the yearning to be desired and the fire to consume whatever would deny us.

And so I may vote Green, but the low simmer of my misanthropy escapes to daydreams of tyranny. Kill me or crown me, just don't let me suffer another day of being friendly to everyone. The world my bones were built to inhabit is far uglier than that world I try to create.

I would put money on the thesis that people who keep handcuffs in their bedroom are disproportionately liberals and atheists. I would expect those who consciously elect a morality of equality and fairness disproportionately need a pressure valve to cope with the fact that the last thousand generations had a regimented family and social hierarchy, and were not so gentle as we are about its enforcement. It's a delicate game, weaving around the netting of our politics and self-image. So watch *Mad Men*, read romance novels or porn, dream a dream you'd never confess, find some way to plug that royalty-shaped void in our being, because you risk castrating your soul trying to silence it.



Images by Kat Tuesday



*Only \$35.99, plus S/H, plus a yearning
for something unattainable, like having
purpose in the suburbs*

Cherry Enrobement – 8 layers of cherry cassis enrobement against a deluxe backscents of ham sandwiches. Now that's what we call dinner and a show!

Yankee Candle's Apple Cinnamon – Smells like the mall during Black Friday 1999 combined with your grandmother's suitcase of youthful regrets.

Se7en Mystery Scent - It's a surprise in a box!

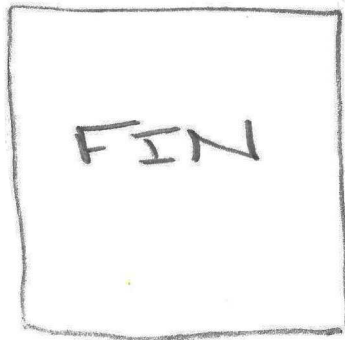
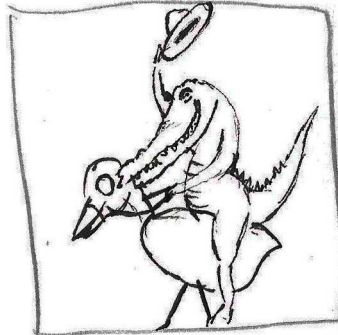
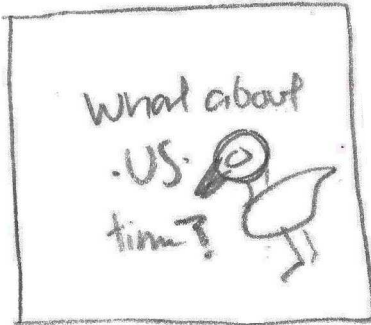
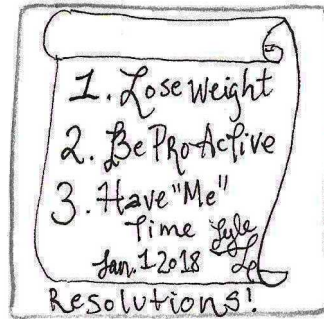
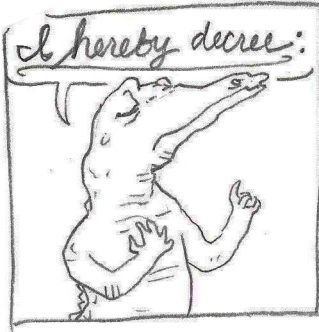
Bath and Body Works' Pumpkin Spice – What you thought you wanted as a 14-year-old in the fall, wearing your cast-off monogrammed mom jeans and dreaming of a world where you saved dolphins.

Pit Stainz's HANDSOME BOI – A delectable concoction of several Axe body sprays and old cigars. Perfect for the conscientious young man in your life! Proof that candles are for everyone!

Joshua Tree, by Etre – Notes of soft cashmere, glamping, gold-embossed invitations to Coachella, and "being present," enhanced by accents of last-stage capitalism and white privilege.

ENROBED CANDLES

Last Year's Resolutions



The Sea Captain and the Roulette Wheel

Adapted from *The Treasury of Mississippi River Folklore*

On their way down to New Orleans by steamboat, a pair of medical gentlemen were moved by their curiosity and the novelty of their first trip down the Mississippi to enter the “No. 9”—the notorious gambling den on board. There they were met by an old gambler named Grampin, who was seated by the bar counting his doubloons.

“Monsieur Grampin, what’s the news this evening?”

“Bad news, Monsieur,” replied the old man. “We’ve lost a great deal of money. But look yonder for the winner, for the real lucky man!” Grampin indicated with a grimace the roulette wheel. “For that sea captain has been winning to beat the house! He’s an old hand at this game and though he come down to No. 9 oft enough he an’t ever won like this before. His bet is usually a square twenty-five cents and not a sweat more, but tonight, he’s been winning round upon round, Dieu curse it!”

The medical gentlemen approached the sea captain, who had his back turned to them, sitting with his head leaning upon his hands. In those days, it was customary practice that if a man didn’t make a move after winning a bet, the wheel would start again, double or nothing. The sea captain had one nigh on eight rounds and still he did not move, doubling bet on bet.

“He’s mad! Why don’t he make sure of what’s won?” came the cry from the onlookers. But the game went on and the captain was heedless, eyes glazed and fixed on the wheel. The fourteenth was in his favor. At the fifteenth, thousands were at stake, from that small beginning of twenty-five cents. The sixteenth ball was thrown. Still he won. The bankers vociferated curses upon the wheel-player. Others urged the captain to withdraw at least a part of his winnings. Sixteen thousand dollars was at stake for the seventeenth. The ball flew like lightning, but there was no change. The money

was piled up high before the captain but he moved not a finger.

“Haul in, old Captain! You don’t bet all that pile against this set of land pirates!”

It was at this moment that the medical gentlemen approached the roulette table. One of them, noting something strange in the lucky man’s posture, made to lay a hand on his shoulder. The man fell forward—stone cold dead. The medical gentlemen attempted to resuscitate him with all the skill in their power, but it was of no avail.

The captain had been a corpse since the very start of the game, having died in the act of betting his first quarter.



Kat Tuesday

The Pulse of America

No Longer Cool:

- Faking orgasms
- Worrying that apocalypse will end us all
- Boxers
- Doing anything for love besides *that*

Now Cool:

- Faking memories
- Worrying that apocalypse will spare the assholes
- Cod pieces
- *That*

True Fact #938

A truly punchable face cannot be crafted overnight.
It requires years of painstaking cultivation.

True Fact #938½

Your mother warned you it would get stuck like that
if you didn't cut it out.

