



spark

THE GAY SAINT
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Editor's note

BY JACK TRAVERS

The night has begun to close in on St Andrews, and the cold set in. If you haven't already ridden out the numerous storms that have battered St Andrews this past month by wrapping up warm in your favourite knit, scarf, hat, gloves, and blanket (see Editor's Note in Volume 7 Issue 2), it is definitely time to dig them out and go full cosy-core for November, and everything the month has in-store for us.

To help get you through the much shorter days and the encroaching darkness, The Gay Saint is here with a welcome alternative. It's something warming, something bright — A SPARK.

From a literal spark: a warming bonfire, the click of a lighter, the strike of a match; to something more personal: a touch, a connection, the electric feeling when you hold hands, brush fingertips — picture the Heartstopper animations. A spark can also be subversive, destructive, violent; it can be a shock, electric or otherwise, it can hurt, it can be an act of opposition, much like the violence attempted by Fawkes in 1605, which Bonfire Night remembers.

Come, sit, and enjoy the warming glow of the campfire, read some poetry, some stories, take a breath and relax.

Cover art by Pawel Czerwinski (via Unsplash)

A Song For Sunlight

BY TRINITY GÖRTSCHACHER

*it's been so long
since the clouds last saw reason
but today I'm basking in it
as the sky looks down in envy
at the sun dancing in my living room*

*and it was only yesterday
my dearest friend was heaven sent
but I feel I've known her
shining since creation*

*how we laugh ourselves silly
the sun and I
as we drive where fancy leads us
singing until the dawn catches up with us
on the road to some destination
chosen moments before*

*and I can't tell you how long it's been
since I felt like a child
but now the sun is in my living room
and we giggle about nothing
while we play dress-up
in our very own fashion show*

*and every night feels like a sleepover
braiding each other's hair
until the morning dove stirs
to find us still awake
and all our lunches are picnics
what else could they be
when the sun chose to live with me*

*but I know the clouds will come back tomorrow
when the world decides to call my sun away
still I'll smile as she dances across the sky
with the piece of my heart
that sprouted in her light
because I'll always remember today
when the sun chose to shine
in my living room*



By Mikare Todd

Feel The Spark

BY A.

*the moment i saw you, i felt that spark
the tingle
the desire
to glow
to shine
to reflect the beauty of your light*

*that spark was electric
it shined so bright in your presence
but now you're fading
wavering
disappearing
dying*

*i blow on the embers
try to keep it glowing
to resuscitate a dying dream
but you fade
further and further from the warmth of
that first spark*

*it's cold without you
i miss your warmth*

Assemblage

BY K.

*Bright wings, momentarily concrete,
flicker in the turning concentrated
within the branches' fever - there is no grace
but this, traced in negative: wind's imprint
and world's reply. One trunk's cry;
the broken promises made
to all which strains, becoming
toward light's cradle, sprung from time's
coiling
consequences beneath bark.
Live hands, live sinews
and a bird skull crying its name
- calcified reason, stripped of the callings
of feather and flesh. And we are what is left
A pulse of symmetry caught
between lichen's bleached quarantine
and ocean's answer. I feel the magnetism
of my loaned sea-metals, whole-sick,
but I must defend the vital narrowness
of my cave's nervous tissues. Cohering
here, against the beating root-womb woven
and the premature harmony of siren strings
quivering, huddled by green embers,
afterglow of the blood-spark's attempt,
Shadow of the shadows rolling round,
For by degrees, I am.*



Diet Coke

BY SUE DE NYME

*god, I fancy you
no matter how hard I try not to
or my friends advise against it
Veto! Overruled
it drives me wild*

*lord knows if you mean to
but when you look at me like that
with your pretty dark eyes
all warm and sweet
like your diet coke left in the sun
maybe flash a smile
and I'm done*

*you leave me aching
to feel your breath on my neck
it's just the way you talk to me
the things you say
the way you say it all*

you set my skin alight

*but I can't be certain
if it's simply your nature
or if you do that shit on purpose*

and it drives me wild

the way you leaned

*all nonchalant, slightly dishevelled
against that fucking door frame
flush-cheeked and grinning*

*if only I were a braver man
I might've tasted you then
in front of all those people
decency be damned
I'd kiss you all the time
how could I not
if you were mine for the taking
and I was there to be had*

*instead I remain here
forever drowning in your eyes
and counting the ways I'd die in
your lap
as your hands find themselves
in my hair
on my waist
pulling me in —
but I'm torn back to reality
every time your gaze leaves mine*

*how I wish for a clue, a hint
anything
because you drive me wild
every time I drive you home
and you don't invite me in*

Would That We

BY SUE DE NYME

*I wonder if you know
how easily my mind fell to your
occupation
how at night I drink you in like holy
wine
and dream of all the things we
could do
would that sweetness rush from
me to you
through wanton veins and
famished lips*

*and maybe I'd like it if you knew
how I lie and savour every word
that leaves your honeyed mouth
there in the dark I'm set alight
skin burning to touch yours
whenever I feel you by my side*

*my fever, I can't break you
god, I don't want to*

*I want to be the ill-timed memory
laying siege to your propriety
feel the blushing saints turn head
as you
your fe:
and he:
see ho:
name*

*let us die a thousand ways
then raise our effigies anew
only to burn them across your
thoughts again*

*should then Minos find me guilty
and cast me in with Achilles
where tempests rage for an
eternity
I'd remain unrepenting
and should I run across a
wasteland
until the fiery rain has robbed me
of every name but yours
god could still keep his forgiveness
nothing would ever taste as sweet
as the bliss I could know with you*

*and maybe you'll read my works
and see
the map I hid away for you
if fate smiles on me, then
my words find their welcome
and lead you to the X
marked*



By Holly Ward



By Lucy Westenberger

What would I do?

BY TEIGAN AITKEN

*What would I do if it wasn't your green,
eyes I wake up to each morning?
If I couldn't see the green of the spring grass in
the autumn,
Or the autumn moss in the spring.
If your eyes wandered away from mine.
If only I understood.*

*What would I do if it wasn't your hand,
held in my worst moments?
If I couldn't feel each day's history with my
fingertips,
Or be caught by the bluntest brush of your thumb.
Maybe I would feel like stone .*

*What would I do if it wasn't your words,
I heard on my darkest days?
If my joy didn't stem from our shared words,
Or if I didn't succumb to your soft adoration.
Perhaps it would leave me alone.*

*What would I do if you weren't you and I wasn't
me,
If my kisses weren't yours,
And yours weren't mine?
I might be okay and survive.*

*I don't know what I'd do.
Since I gave all I could give.
But I hope you gave too.
If you didn't, well—*

What would I do?

Flight to Fire by M. J. M. Norwood

This is the third in a series of fantasy short stories following the lives of Harriet and Evelyn. Each instalment can be read as a standalone, but they tie together to form a richer whole. If you enjoy this story, then make sure to look out for more in future editions!

Harriet entered the flat and closed the door behind herself, leaning back against it with a heavy thud. She tilted her head to rest on the wood, closing her eyes and taking a long, deep breath. The smell of the gas lamps filled her nose, mixed with wood polish and old carpet.

Evelyn must have heard her come in, because she came up from the kitchen. Harriet knew her tread, the sound of her shoes on the stone steps that separated the basement kitchen from the rest of the flat. Harriet opened her eyes and greeted Evelyn with a slightly pained smile.

‘Is it turned in?’ said Evelyn, wiping floury hands on her apron.

‘Yes. I handed it in to the office.’ Harriet still couldn’t quite believe it—after a year of work, long days in the laboratory and the field, three notebooks filled, and nearly a week of sleepless nights writing a neat copy of her report on Evelyn’s typewriter, her final project was finished. All that remained was to find out whether the esteemed assessment board of the university thought ‘On the Relationship Between Flight Bladder Gas Discharge and Fire Breathing in the Common Cliff Dragon, *Draco rupes*’ was worth a damn. Her stomach churned, and she felt cold, shivery, and sick. ‘What if it’s not good enough? I could have done with more samples, and I rushed typing it up, and—’

‘Calm yourself,’ said Evelyn, with a smile. ‘You worked yourself to the bone on that report. It is good enough.’

Evelyn was so infuriatingly unbothered. She had turned in her own final project—a comparison between two different library shelving methods and a proposed way of synthesising both into one—two days ago and seemed to have put the whole thing thoroughly to the back of her mind. Harriet knew she herself would be fretting ceaselessly until results day.

‘How do you do it?’ she asked, giving Evelyn a pleading look.

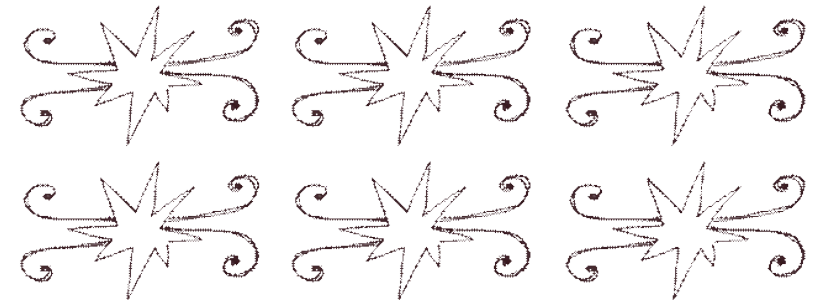
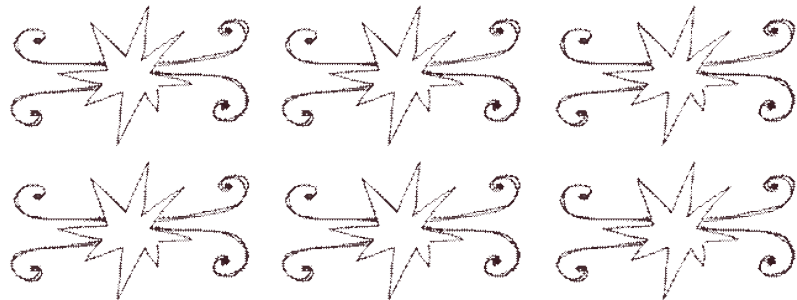
‘Oh, love, I know my work is good, and you should know yours is too. If the board can’t see that, it’s on them.’ She tilted her head on one side. ‘But then, I think I’ve had rather more practice than you at putting aside what other people think of me. Come on,’ she said, untying her apron and reaching for her coat, ‘we’re going out.’

‘Where?’ said Harriet. At that moment all she wanted to do was get into her wrapper and sit in front of the fire.

‘You will see.’ Evelyn turned off the gas, then took Harriet’s hand and towed her out of the door before she could protest.

As it turned out, where they were going was the tram stop. Evelyn paid the conductor so that Harriet still couldn’t deduce their destination and insisted they sit on the top deck, so they could enjoy the crisp evening air. Harriet had to begrudgingly admit that it did help, a little.

They rode the tram for a long time. A large contingent of people boarded, the gentlemen in their crispest suits and the ladies in their widest hats, and got off again at the theatre. Slowly, the number of other passengers around Harriet and Evelyn dwindled, until they were the only people on the top deck. The bell rang for the final stop, and Evelyn stood up.



By Mikare Todd

Flight to Fire by M. J. M. Norwood (cont.)

‘Wait a moment,’ said Harriet, ‘why are you bringing me here? I’m all too familiar with this stop; I did half my fieldwork here!’

‘I know,’ said Evelyn, and refused to elaborate.

They alighted the tram. By now, it was well and truly dark, and there were no gas lamps out on the edge of the town. Evelyn had brought a lantern, and she led the way down the road, which was really just a cobbled lane.

They turned off the lane and onto a muddy path through the woods, and it became abundantly clear that they were just making for Harriet’s fieldwork site. Why was Evelyn bringing her here? Work was the last thing she wanted to think about.

They emerged from the treeline, and the black sky was obscured by an even blacker cliff. Black, that was, until a flame lit up the air, incandescent as it rent through the night. Harriet gasped involuntarily. It was as beautiful as every other time she had seen it, perhaps more, for its contrast with the dark.

Another dragon’s flame answered the first one, lighting up a shifting mass of wings as the colony scuttled around on the cliff.

The first dragon shrieked, and the pair flew off to squabble, occasional goutts of fire illuminating scuffling claws.

On the cliff, a small, wet flicker flashed as a young dragon, probably one of the first of this year’s clutch, tested its fire. Harriet found herself smiling as she gazed up.

‘See?’ said Evelyn, softly. ‘You don’t do this for approval, or a grade. You do it because you love them.’

Harriet nodded, and together they sat on a fallen log to watch the dragons.

‘Thank you,’ she said, leaning her head on Evelyn’s shoulder.

‘Of course, dear heart,’ Evelyn replied, and they shared a kiss before turning back to watch the dragons wheel in the sky, a fireworks show for an audience of two.

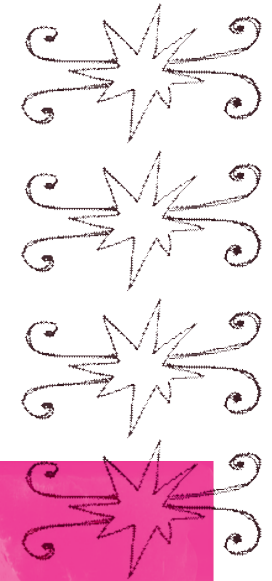
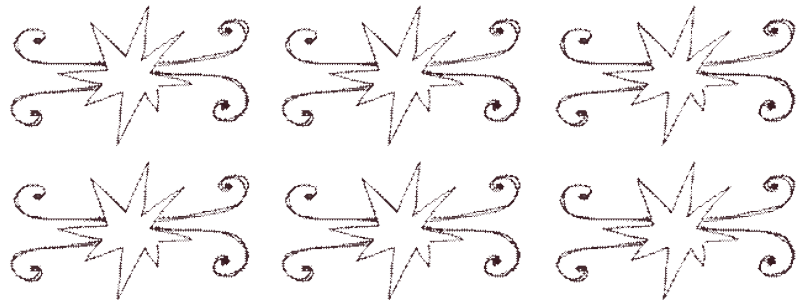


Image by Ali Müftüoğulları (via Unsplash), colour work by Jack Travers

The Ridge Grave Girls- The Newest Addition to St Andrews Student Film

BY GEORGINA PARBROOK

The first time I saw the instagram page of *The Ridge Grave Girls*, I was hooked. ‘A queer and feminist short film in the making’ the profile said, co-directed by Junko Kwok and Tatiana Coleman. Having read some of Kwok’s work before through creative writing and editing workshops, I knew that her style and ideas were firmly rooted in a spectacular combination of macabre, queerness, and adolescence. I immediately hit the follow button and waited with bated breath for the film to be finished.

It certainly did not disappoint.

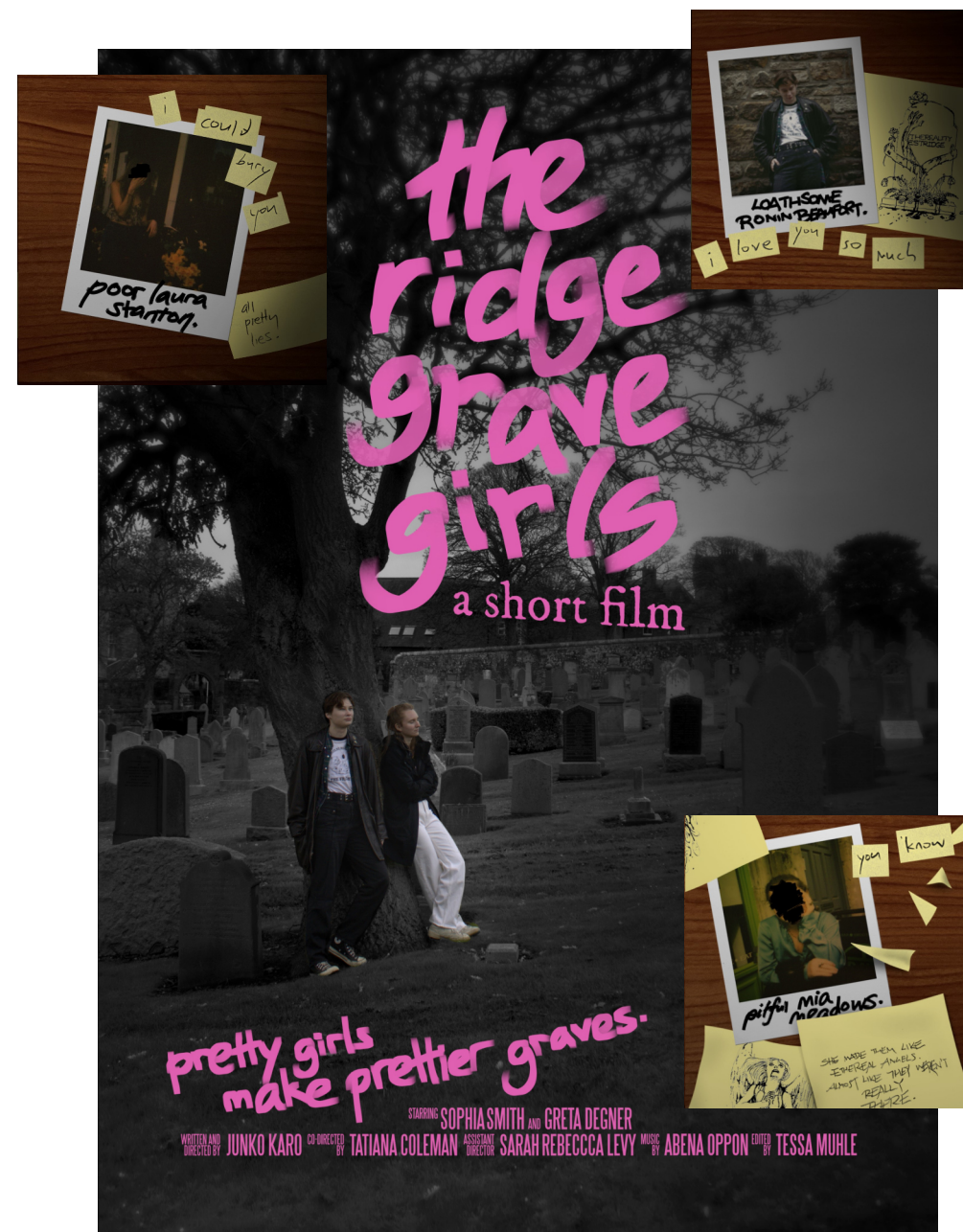
The Ridge Grave Girls follows Ethereality “Ther” Estridge as she becomes the prom queen of her town’s small Christian high school. Most girls in her position would be overjoyed, but there’s a catch – each of the four prom queens before her have died. Filming on an old camcorder, she explains each of their deaths and the legends surrounding their memories. With help from her transmasculine boyfriend Ronin, Ther has to find a way to break free from the curse of the Ridge Grave Girls, or risk being buried with them.

Setting the film up as being a found film documentary, it circumvents one of the critical problems with student productions: budget. Kwok paid out of her own pocket for the production, which meant that the team had to get

pretty creative. They filmed scenes in university buildings such as the Buchanan lecture theater and used what has been described as a blue lightsaber to create the ominous lighting that characterizes the whole film.

However, just because finances were tight, doesn’t mean that the film is lacking in either its acting nor its cinematography. Sophie (Ther) and Greta (Ronin) were both incredible leads, and delivered Junko’s rich and wonderful voiceovers in a compelling and believable way. An honorable mention has to also go to the corridor scene, filmed in a point-of-view focus. Not only must the coordination for this have been next to impossible, but it also fully brings to life the claustrophobic and slightly threatening situation of being drunk in a frat house. Both dancing scenes, the one in the graveyard and the one in the field were incredibly well done, and the scene of the dead girls on East Sands toward the end of the film gave me shivers.

Although one scene on the swings could be seen as slightly cliché, overall Kwok and Coleman have created a masterpiece together that will not be quickly forgotten in the St Andrews arts community. I for one, cannot wait until the short film is released on YouTube. Instead of counting time in Taylor Swift ‘All Too Well,’ I’ll be measuring it in slots of *The Ridge Grave Girls*.



The Ridge Grave Girls Promotional Material by Aldwin Li

Pirates in Love: A Review of *Our Flag Means Death* Season 2

BY THOMAS SCOTT

Before I begin this review, if you haven't watched season 1 of *Our Flag Means Death*, I urge you to stop what you're doing and watch it, trust me.

Our Flag Means Death, created by David Jenkins, is a pirate rom-com featuring the highly fictionalized Stede Bonnet (Rhys Darby) and Edward Teach/"Blackbeard" (Taika Waititi) which fully and lovingly embraces its queerness. The centre-piece of the show is the romantic relationship between Stede and Ed as we first see them meet and grow close together throughout season 1, then confessing their romantic feelings at the end. However, being weighed down with guilt for the family he abandoned to become a pirate and the "defilingly" of Blackbeard, Stede runs back to his previous life and breaks Ed's heart. Season 2 begins with the two separated as Stede does everything in his power to find his love (including writing endless love letters and tossing the bottles in the ocean) and Ed falls back into his Blackbeard persona, committing murder after murder to cope with his heartbreak.

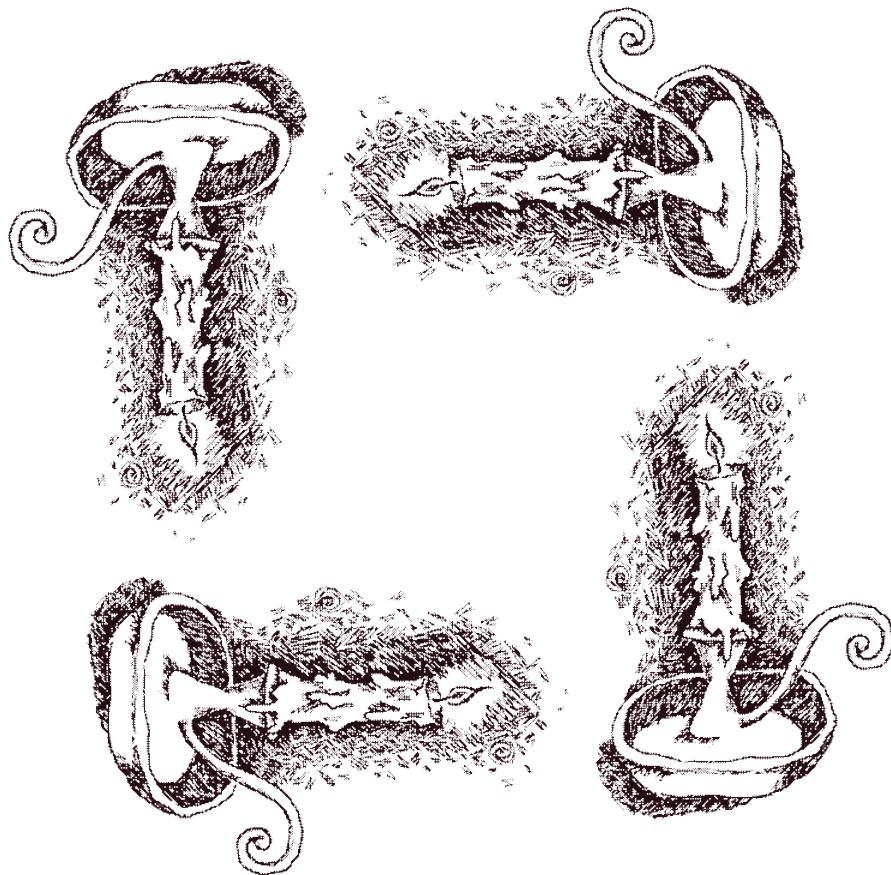
As a queer person, watching this romance feels almost impossible. How many of us have experienced ridicule for wanting to see ourselves on screen or even mentioning a queer possibility within characters? Yet Jenkins and the incredible writing team uplift our community with their characters and story – not only having the main plot being the love of two middle-aged men, but also including queer love and identity in the ensemble, such as the nonbinary character, Jim (Vico Ortiz). Queerness is never seen as strange or bad, it's simply life and it is so refreshing.

Season 2 exemplifies its genre – jumping from perfectly-timed comedy to the warmest romance – yet never shying away from drama. It is especially intense before Ed and Stede are reunited when Ed is fully acting as the murderous pirate captain with a genuinely terrifying performance. I must say, the vast range Ed in particular experiences illustrates the phenomenal acting of Waititi.

The one fall back I have for season 2, however, is it often felt rushed and desperately needed moments to breath and clarify pieces of the story. This issue though is not one of the writers but instead that of Max, who only gave them eight episodes with just half an hour each (season 1 had ten episodes). The season was crafted along the same time-frame as before, yet were forced to cut down. But I have to emphasize that, regardless of this factor, the writing team did a phenomenal job.

The acting and chemistry between everybody was electric. I particularly want to highlight the performances of new characters such as Mary Read (Rachel House) and Anne Bonny (Minnie Driver), an intense ex-pirate Sapphic couple with life-threatening kinks, as well as the badass pirate queen herself Zheng Yi Sao (Ruibo Qian).

In conclusion, while I wish the team had more room to flesh out the season, this second season of *Our Flag Means Death* was beautiful and hilarious and heartbreaking and, of course, very, very queer. I absolutely recommend this wonderfully unique show.



By Mikare Todd

From Hidden Flames to Open Waters: Piracy as Queer History

BY ANNA PILGRIM

Soul-mates

Within pirate subculture, there was a means of 'legally' joining yourself to a partner of the same gender, a practice called matelotage. It allowed one partner to inherit the other's property if they passed away, one of many policies of insurance enacted upon pirate ships, or to take the others' punishment on their behalf. Matelotage was most often entered into by two men, and involved the exchanging of gold rings. The partnerships were respected by an entire ship's crew, and any interference in the monogamous pairing would be punished. Some historians have even suggested that policies of acceptance upon pirate ships helped convert sailors into pirates once their ships were attacked, as same-sex relations were punished by lashings and hangings in the Navy. No pirate code (binding pirate law upon a ship) prescribed anything against homosexuality, whilst every maritime law actively condemned it. As such, gay marriage was legal, encouraged and even the norm upon pirate ships during the 'Golden Age' of piracy (1650-1750).

Lesbians!

Having been dressed up as a boy when they were a child to defraud a family member, Mary Read had to retain their ambiguous gender identity throughout most of their nautical career in the Navy. Upon joining the crew of a pirate called Calico Jack, they continued to identify as a man. After meeting Anne Bonny upon the new pirate ship, Anne sought them out romantically, under the belief they were a man. However, as things began to spark between them, Mary came out to Anne as a woman, although we must remember the stricter gender binary enacted in that time obscures true reflections of genderqueer identity. Mary Read, the initial inspiration behind the character of Jim in *Our Flag Means Death*, often dressed as a man, causing the show's writers to conclude that they were probably non-binary.

The pair were famous in both the pirate and civic worlds. Contemporary pirate sources tell us the pair were lovers; artists depicted the pair together, guns toed, and baggy male clothes blowing in the wind; American newspapers reported about them in fear; and finally the trial of the pair in Britain grabbed international media attention. On trial for piracy, the pair jointly attested they were pregnant, and avoided execution, although Mary died in captivity, while Anne escaped and disappeared from the historical record.



Image credit: Anne Bonny and Mary Read, two 'notorious & bloodthirsty' pirates. Both were convicted of piracy in Jamaica in 1720. From the 'Histoire der Englische'. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Welcome to My Island

Formerly a Spanish colony but divided up between the British and French in the 18th century was the island of Tortuga, modern-day Haiti, where the number of pirates outnumbered 'normal', law-abiding citizens by three to one. It was here that most people had their matelotages officially recognised, and most of the population was male. In fact, the population on the island was so queer that the French governor, in a scheme paid for by the French government, Jean le Vasseur shipped out 1650 female prostitutes to the island in an attempt to tempt the men there back into a heteronormative lifestyle. This obviously did not succeed, and these new additions to the island co-existed with the men in this novel homosocial society.



Allyship in Formula 1: Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel

BY TOM WILSON

Formula One has never been a beacon of morality, in fact, one can argue that it actively pushes against it. Partnering with tobacco companies, racing in an active conflict zone, and various cheating scandals, nothing seems too low for Formula One Management (FOM). Recently, its association with repressive regimes, particularly regarding LGBTQ+ rights, has come under scrutiny. With races in Saudi Arabia, Miami, Qatar, Hungary and more, many queer fans and allies within the Formula One community have been left feeling let down.

Enter world champions Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel, two drivers classed among the all-time greats. Both have not only talked the talk, but also walked the walk. On top of being vocal allies for the LGBTQ+ community, they have also protested openly against many host countries, using their status and success to their advantage.

The Arabian Gulf hosted the final races of the 2021 season in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Abu Dhabi. While the sport was engrossed in the battle for the championship, Hamilton made headlines for another reason: cutting through the middle of his helmet was a pride flag. A statement of support and show of allyship with our community.

Displaying any pride flag in the Gulf is not only illegal but can also place you in danger. This was notable during the FIFA World Cup in Qatar last December, where any display of a rainbow by fans was met with anger from officials. Hamilton knew that his status and draw would guarantee his safety.

The rainbow helmet was not only limited to the Gulf, making an appearance at this season's Miami Grand Prix. Talking to the AP, Hamilton stated 'I stand by those within the community. I hope they continue to stand firm and push back,' referencing the ongoing crackdowns against the LGBTQ+ community in Florida by its governor Ron DeSantis. 'It's no different to when we were in Saudi.'

Towards the twilight of his career, Sebastian Vettel began actively campaigning for humanitarian causes. In a sport where "political" gestures are discouraged and punished, the four-time champion has made it his mission to protest for various causes. Whether it be climate change or the war in Ukraine, no issue was too small for him to take a stance on.

His most impressive protest came at the 2021 Hungarian Grand Prix. As the drivers took the knee before the race, Vettel was seen with a 'Same Love' t-shirt, a rainbow-coloured mask, and custom sneakers painted in rainbows. The flag of his native Germany which adorns his helmet had been replaced by a pride flag. It was an overt statement of support for not only queer F1 fans, but the queer community of Hungary who for so long have faced terrible repression led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. After being reprimanded by the FIA stewards for the gesture, Vettel simply responded 'I'm happy if they disqualify me. They can do whatever they want to me, I don't care. I would do it again.'

Such a show of overt alliance and support from two legendary drivers is not only necessary in a sport dominated by privilege but also provides role models for young fans to look up to. Unlike other sports where teams are made up of usually over a dozen players, the Formula One grid is made up of only twenty drivers (two per team). This allows for a closer connection between fans and drivers unlike any other sport, as fans are familiar with drivers from all teams. For Vettel and Hamilton, two pillars of the sport, to outrightly challenge the host nations and FOM, they are creating a platform and forcing the community to take notice.

Will these protests bring about change? It is highly unlikely that F1 will move away from holding Grand Prixes in oppressive nations. Cash is king in this world, and the ball is in the FIA and FOM's court.

This doesn't mean the situation is hopeless. The drivers have a significant amount of power, and recently almost refused to race in Saudi Arabia as missiles from Houthi Rebels rained down near the track in Jeddah. They can have an impact. Hamilton and Vettel showed that they were willing to challenge the officials, demonstrating the status quo isn't unshakeable, and having prominent voices within the sport is crucial for changes to be made.

But they are only two among twenty. With Vettel retiring at the end of last year and Hamilton at the end of his own career, will the younger drivers step up and make their own voices heard? Will they use their own platform to try and make a difference? One can certainly hope.

She Think She Nicki M – How Doja Cat followed the pinkprint to success

BY ASHVIN GUPTA



By Mikare

The rap industry currently has a lot of prominent female rappers making their mark. Viral tiktok audios primarily consist of rappers such as Saweetie, Latto, Coi Leray, the list goes on. The two most notable voices, however, have been consistently dominating trends and charts alike — the Queen Nicki Minaj and the fiery Doja Cat, both of whom fascinate the world. Minaj’s mark on rap and pop culture is undeniable; she said it herself — *50k for a verse no album out*. Doja can now be seen to replicate this phenomenal success through her retro sound and a careful imitation of the Greats before her.

Doja Cat’s ‘Moo’ was undeniably the start of her career as a worldwide popstar. However, her discography before the 2018 hit was studded with gems like ‘So High,’ ‘Nunchucks,’ and ‘Go to Town.’ With *Purr!* And *Amala* Doja laid the foundations for an iconic career; her experimentations with a nursery-rhyme style melody — ‘Go To Town’ being a prime example — mimic some other artists on the scene, such as Melany Martinez. However, making this form of singing fit into her rap style, with a cohesive sound to not appear shoehorned in, was a truly remarkable skill, and continues to be part of Doja’s playful yet determined and assertive personality. Not only were the projects remarkable on their own sonic terms, but they also displayed the same range that Minaj adorned to garner critical acclaim. Having the energetic singles such as ‘Go To Town,’ ‘Cookie Jar,’ ‘Tia Tamera’ (with another icon Rico Nasty) on the same project as singles with an ethereal and tranquil feel such as ‘So High,’ ‘Casual’ and ‘All Nighter’ was a massive success. These records, aside from the gigantic success that was ‘Moo,’ earned Doja the status of rap caviar. Like Minaj, one may argue, debut projects cemented her position as rap royalty, displaying a talent in performing ballads such as ‘Dear Old Nicki,’ ‘Girls Fall like Dominoes,’ and ‘Marilyn Monroe’ whilst also producing rap such as in ‘Trini Dem Girls,’ ‘Stupid Hoe,’ ‘I’m the Best,’ and countless others. Both stars — from the very

first project — have been consistently innovating their genre and exploring their artistic limits. Both artists have an awareness of the uselessness of awards, with Minaj saying “I ain’t gotta get a plaque, I ain’t gotta get awards” and Doja agreeing that “I don’t need another hit ‘cause it’s useless really.” This acknowledgment of the futility of being recognised by bureaucratic organisations is key in allowing both artists to continue honouring their art by producing sounds true to themselves.

Doja and Minaj are also similar in their rollout cycles. Whilst Nicki Minaj’s *Queen* was released almost as a response to the “hate train” against her, with Cardi B being pitted against her as competition started to rise. Minaj addresses these events in the record, laughing at the industry’s attempts to replace her (*tryna make a new Nicki where the factory*) as well as others commenting on ongoing doubts at her artistic dignity (*we don’t pay them to come write my shit*). Due to the lack of controversy surrounding Doja, she chose to garner controversy, standing her ground against fans commenting on her personal life, tweet rash comments at others, claiming her albums were cash-grabs, and so on. Whilst this was an artificial and sudden generation of anger, it gave something for Doja to address in a fashion like that of Nicki Minaj. Doja addressed allegations that she hated her fans (*fans ain’t weird but extremists are*) as well as choosing to laugh off comments about becoming demonic (*how my demons look? I am on to bigger things*).

Another aspect of Minaj’s career Doja is getting behind is the importance of feature verses. No other act — Megan Thee Stallion, Cardi B, City Girls, etc — have displayed the variety and domination that Doja and Minaj possess over the tracks they feature on. Doja’s career has seen innumerable masterpiece verses being gifted to others’ records.

‘Make That Cake’, a feature on Lunchmoney Lewis’ record, displays Doja’s control over songs which do not even belong to her. This is a key area where artists can gain major attention by producing adjacent sounds to their signature one. They are able to display their range as well as reaching new audiences. Doja’s contributions to records by Lil Wayne, Young Thug, Post Malone, Ariana Grande, and French Montana, display how she is not only a formidable rapper, but also a beautiful singer, with perfect word-play and storytelling skills. Minaj, of course, invented the game of springing to success by murdering a beat on a featured verse. ‘Monster’ saw success not even Kanye or Jay Z imagined it could, and it can be argued that the verse that made the song famous was not the well-crafted work of either male rapper, but the marvellous and flawless deliverance by Minaj. Since then, Minaj has continued to save songs from flopping (any Takashi 6ix 9ine song which features her, for example), and now Doja has evidently mastered this skill as well.

It is curious to see how Doja Cat will age with time. If she follows Nicki Minaj’s legacy, she is guaranteed a long-living career. Minaj has been in the industry for more than twenty years, Doja for less than half that. It is already evident that both artists have unimaginable levels of creativity and charisma, so it will be even more interesting to see how the eager student compares to her mentor (of sorts) as time goes on.

Queer Orgies Blessed by Lord Mountbatten's Wild Deer

BY TANAISTE

Having spent July at a lively, outdoors, hands-on, community-run, educational team-building exercise, I needed a recuperative break and decided to attend Queer Spirit festival with my dear, hot, northern English, 1960s wife. Between my epilepsy and her high maintenance, we booked a room instead of camping out. The very friendly pub hotel was much better than my childhood-informed prejudice against Devonshire villages expected; Uffculme's leftover post-Coronation Union Jack bunting was cute and charming, like Christmas lights in February or Free Derry murals.

Led by the Radical Faeries, Queer Spirit's fourth outing was a delightful, deeply welcoming experience. The almost-camp-pagan spirituality of the ceremonies allowed even the more curmudgeonly types to join in with a true sense of communion, of diverse individuals consciously coming together. Materialist cynicism is hard to maintain when a wizard invokes anthropogenic destruction of the planet and then proceeds to bless the fire we are dancing around. Going with the flow is the key here.

Bards, druids, hippies, punks, naturists, painters, gender oracles, musicians, sex workers, and anarchists provided a fascinating array of educational workshops, discussions and events. We discussed founding that queer commune so many of us dream of: queer landworking, radical relationships, what it means to be cisgendered and queer — the kind of thing university should be about. The festival provided many

opportunities to connect on both light and deep levels, with healing circles, speed-meetings, semi-naked wrestling, and bonding over the shared experience of pissing in a hedge whilst massive-antlered deer watch.

Entertainment ranged from sound baths to cabaret ("You might have watched Drag Race on TV / But that's not gay enough for me") and the musical offerings were eclectic. The wife's shyness was abandoned when she heard the call of her people, gay punk rock. She departed for the mosh pit while I prayerfully walked to the Temple.

Distortion by omission is a favourite journalistic technique. I enjoyed Tatler's Chandler Tregaskes, whose article revealed that "the Sacred Sexuality Temple offered deeper thought-led discussions and seminars." To quote former Dundee MP, amphetamine enthusiast and much-admired war criminal Winston Churchill, this is a terminological inexactitude.

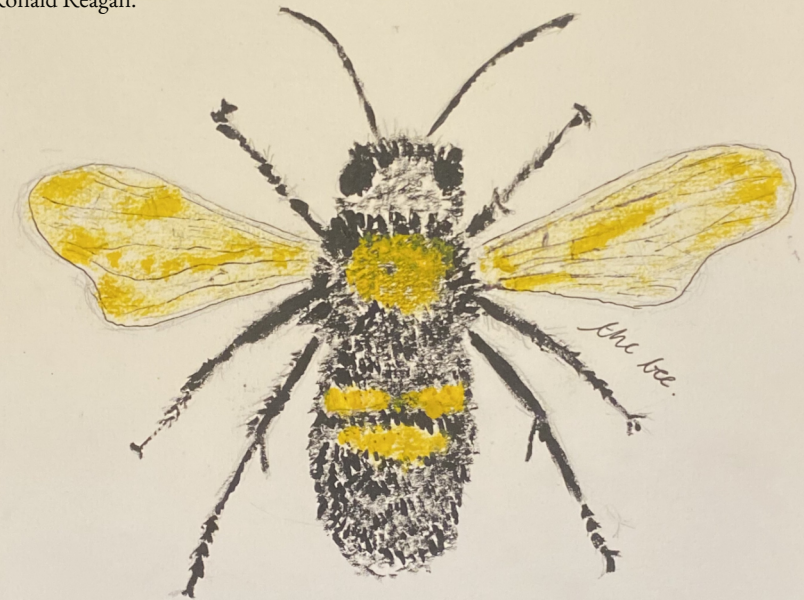
Perhaps Tatler wanted to spare blushes by depriving readers details of the orgies, which, for me, exemplified the "unbridled sense of community and love" the festival created. (Hey, Love Society, I've got an idea for a future event.) Where else can you watch dozens of fellow queers soberly pretending to be bonobos whilst fucking? I decided this was the moment to listen to my current obsession from Evangelion, Komm süßer Tod, on my headphones. Voyeurism is participation and perhaps even a form of meditation ("Dear Ajahn, I have an idea for a meditative practice...").

Speaking of participation, there were a lot of us spectrum-y people about, so my offering was to lead a discussion group on neurodiversity at Queer Spirit. We provided many ideas around accessibility, which would be of use not just to our people, but be of universal benefit to the entire festival. Take note St Andrews — making your events, whether at Freshers or elsewhere, more accessible for

neurodivergent people, will benefit everyone. Incidentally, why is there just an autism group run by the Disability Team but not a Neurodiversity Society? Answer to be created by an enterprising student :)

As someone whose kinky boots go with a lovely khaki suit, it's not my usual habit to praise a Lord Mountbatten. I must credit him for his generous hosting of us and being a decent normal human being happy to talk to folk, and his daughter and her straight friends were also lovely and a nice reminder that cishets are valid. Personally I hope this is the beginning of his transition to full class traitor — perhaps next time I piss in his cafe urinals I'll be watched by something other than a signed photo of noted pro-AIDS activist Ronald Reagan.

Jokes aside, Queer Spirit has been one of the most sincerely lovely LGBT+ gatherings I've been part of. I'd particularly recommend it to those of us who have experience of finding we don't quite click with some queer spaces. Alas, they seem to be biennial at this point — it takes a lot of organising and the dream of a spiritual community queer festival is manifested through love, volunteering, and last minute panics. Perhaps there's space for a wee Scottish gathering in 2024?



By Camille Crozat

Agony Auncle

“I really need to break up with my partner - any advice on where would be best to have the chat? St Andrews is so small and part of me doesn't want to ruin a place i'll have to go back to”

Sticky situation(ship)

Dear Sticky Situation(ship),

I'm really sorry to hear that your relationship is coming to an end, but good on you to recognise and want to do something about it. It takes a lot of courage to move on from a relationship and you should feel proud of wanting to take this next step. This is not to say that breaking up is the easy part, if anything, it's probably more difficult, but you've taken the first step by writing to your Agony Auncle.

My advice for locations to break-up:

A Public Break-Up:

- Outside Sally Mapstone's House. Sally has the power of a thousand Gods and we really shouldn't be near her anyway.
- The park between Kilrymont Road and Warrack Street. Accessible via Lamond Drive, this small park has a gravel path and also benches. Considering I couldn't even find a name on Google maps, I think you'll easily avoid this one in the future.
- Hallow Hill. If the weather is nice, this has plenty of grass to sit on and you can walk Lades Brae afterwards to help clear your mind.

A Semi-Public Break-Up:

- Baker Lane - also known as cat alley. It's semi-secluded from the world, easily avoidable, and also has benches for you two to sit on. There

might even be a cat to help you both process.

- Botanic Gardens. Plenty of more secluded places, free entry, and with the Gardens changing with each season, it might be less hard to return to them.

A Private Break-Up:

- Your flatmate's bedroom (with consent). In this case you get to be in the comfort of your own home but in a room you probably spend the least amount of time in.
- Your partner's house. This one might be the best case. If you two are breaking up you probably won't be going back around to their place anyway, so why not? Plus, you can leave at any time and not worry about them.
- A phone call. While not the best option in my opinion, a phone call is always on the table. You can take the call literally anywhere, preferably away from St. Andrews, and not even have to worry about ruining a location in town.

I hope these options help, and best of luck. Make sure to prioritise your mental health and well-being. Student services and Night Line are always there to help, and Jannettas is never that far away.

All the best,

Your Agony

“The story is this: I saw a girl in Tesco about a month ago. I just love her style! Blue boots and a colourful tote bag. I wanted to say that I love her style but I'm such an introvert so I walked around for a solid ten minutes. She left when I finally got the courage. 😬”

Fast forward to last night. I saw her again at the main library and she was wearing the same pair of worn blue boots. This time she's wearing a long brown coat. Oh that style 😍 but I still didn't get to speak to her.

I wish I had the courage. 😬 Now I'm afraid that I might not see her again and conquer my fear.”

Penny

Dear Penny,

As a fellow introvert, I completely understand the agony (pun intended) of having your words stuck in your throat. It can be so frustrating when in the simplest of situations – passing a friend on the street, seeing your last Hinge date in Main Bar, etc. – your anxiety eclipses your courage and you're left dazed with regret settling in mere moments later. These days, we are quite aware of ourselves and the people around us, so much so that we sometimes let possibilities pass us by. And while self-awareness can come in handy, too much can also keep us blinded from new friends, relationships, and meet-cutes, such as this one.

Now, I don't really believe in fate. I think the choices we make in life make up 100% of what comes because of them. However, Penny, I don't think it was a coincidence you saw this girl again a month later. And the fact that you remembered those boots shows that she's stuck in your mind for a reason. I believe that the chances of you seeing her again

after the second time are comfortably high, and I encourage you to tell her she's got good style. Even if nothing becomes of this interaction, you will definitely make her day with that compliment. We truly never know how big or little something will impact our lives, but we will never be able to explore those possibilities without trying.

I know it's hard to gather up that courage. I spent so many years letting life pass me by because I was so afraid of what other people would think of me or what I would think of myself later on. But I promise you, Penny, that you are your biggest critic in life. Once you jump over that hurdle, you will breathe a sigh of relief and everything after will come easier. Someone once told me that you should try to talk to a stranger every day, even if it's the smallest of interactions. Maybe then the world will feel a little less strange. I try to live by that.

Love,

Your Auncle

Horoscopes

BY JACK KENNEDY

Who you are, impulse, pleasure. In no particular order.

♈ *Aries*

(21 MARCH - 19 APRIL)

Energetic Trailblazer, Spicy Jalapeño,
Margarita

♉ *Taurus*

(20 APRIL - 20 MAY)

Reliable Rock, Comforting Candlelight,
Chamomile Tea

♊ *Gemini*

(21 MAY - 20 JUNE)

Curious Explorer, Bubble Bath (or long
shower), Lemonade

♋ *Cancer*

(21 JUNE - 22 JULY)

Nurturing Guardian, Warm Flat,
Chicken Soup

♌ *Leo*

(23 JULY - 22 AUGUST)

Confident Luminary, Full of Vitamins,
Bold Espresso

♍ *Virgo*

(23 AUGUST - 22 SEPTEMBER)

Meticulous Organiser, Crisp White
Wine, Apple Salad

♎ *Libra*

(23 SEPTEMBER - 22 OCTOBER)

Harmonious Diplomat, Crisp Rocket,
Iced Oat Vanilla Latte

♏ *Scorpio*

(23 OCTOBER - 21 NOVEMBER)

Intense Mystic, Red Wine, Dark
Chocolate Truffle

♐ *Sagittarius*

(22 NOVEMBER - 21 DECEMBER)

Adventurous Wanderer, Mango
Smoothie, Northpoint Wrap

♑ *Capricorn*

(21 DECEMBER - 20 JANUARY)

Ambitious Architect, Combini Bowl,
Love for the world

♒ *Aquarius*

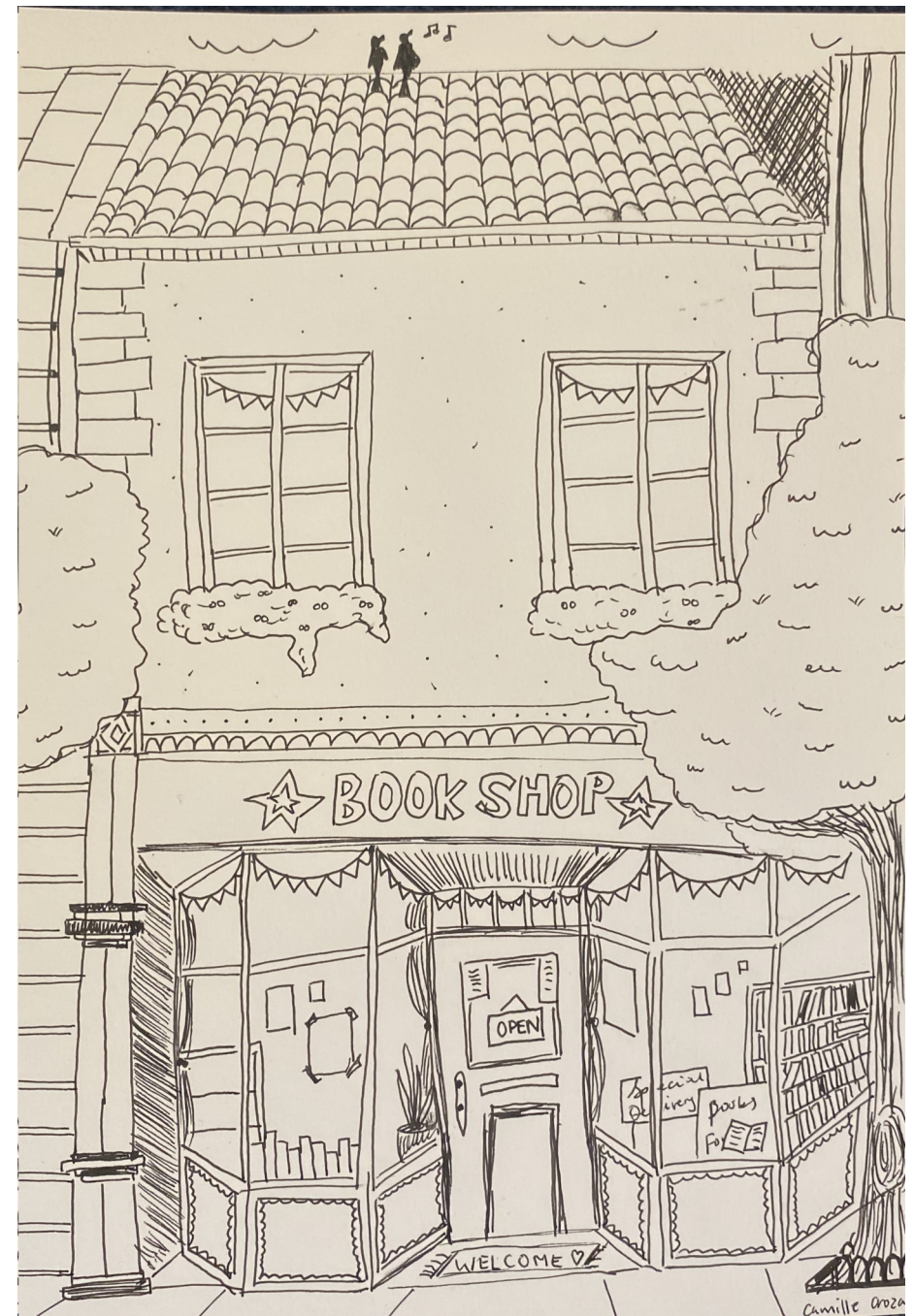
(21 JANUARY - 18 FEBRUARY)

Innovative Visionary, Soy Chai Latte,
Visit to the Shell Garage

♓ *Pisces*

(19 FEBRUARY - 20 MARCH)

Dreamy Dreamer, Soothing Lavender,
Soup and a Sandwich



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the gay saint