

This week, the Nass is prepping for doomsday.

The Nassau Weekly⁵⁰

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IT'S GETTING LATE.



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Dear readers,

The second piece that I wrote for the Nass was a piece about the summer I spent in Iran visiting my relatives before my freshman year at Princeton. It struck me even then as a country on the edge of disaster; it has now toppled off of the tightrope. The US-Israeli war on Iran does not come as a surprise. I wonder, in the last two years of political havoc, how the Nass might reflect a larger American reality, though we so often think of ourselves as isolated and particular.

I must ask how, in the face of war perpetrated by the very country we live in, we are able to conduct our campus lives, thinking of love and homework and jobs. I have not made my mind up yet whether this is a good or a bad thing: whether it is a testament to the human capacity to survive, or the human capacity to ignore what is not immediately in front of us. These days, I tend to turn towards the latter.

I could write here of my devastation. Of the specific limbo of death and waiting-for-death. Of my aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins in Iran, of the way their houses shake and their lives which we have decided, explicitly or implicitly, are worth less than ours.

The Palestinian poet Marwan Makoul said:

*In order for me to write poetry that isn't political
I must listen to the birds
and in order to hear the birds
the warplanes must be silent.*

There are no warplanes here, *Nass*. We have sent them elsewhere. What will you write in this silence?

With love,
Narges Anzali, Co-Managing Editor

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This Week:
Verbatims:
About us:

Fri	8:00p Donald G Drapkin Studio, Lewis Arts Complex <i>God Remembers Setsi</i> by Nadine Alleche '26	4:30p Wallace Theatre, Lewis Arts Complex Now is the Time: Artists Go to Work, Toni Morrison's Atelier and the Importance of Artistic Convening and Collaboration	Mon	5:00-7:00p Robertson Hall 001 Film Screening & Talkback: "Memory of Princess of Mumbi"	2:00p Hearst Dance Theater, Lewis Arts Complex Spring Dance Festival: Resonance
Sat	7:30p McCarter Theatre Sanctuary: The Power of Resonance and Ritual	7:00-10:00p Solley Theater Café Improv	Tue	4:30-6:00p Dickinson Hall 211 Decolonization and the Transformation of European States	12:00-1:15p Aaron Burr Hall 216 Pablo Sanguinette, Rethinking Industrial Policies for Argentina: Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Sun	3:00-5:00p Arts Council of Princeton Pratima: Singularity and Beyond	1:00p Princeton Art Museum Collections Highlights Tour	Wed	9:00a-5:00p Paul Robeson for the Arts Wild Clay	4:30-6:00p East Pyne 111 Lonely Dorothea: The Weakness of Strong Ties in "Middlemarch"

Overheard at Whitman Grill <i>Thesis-addled Senior:</i> "A girlfriend is like a Claude that you can touch."	Overheard in Firestone Caveman: "Who is Claude??? What does he dooooo???"	Overheard in Rocky Girl Who's Lost Her Chance: "Why was he trying to clock me? I wasn't trying to clock him. And I could've clocked him. I could've clocked him so many times."	Overheard on Nassau Street <i>Brokie:</i> "The thought of buying clothes pisses me off so badly."
Overheard in Witherspoon Study Room <i>Flirter:</i> "How do you like your steak?" <i>Flirtee:</i> "I love it!"	Overheard in Yeh Seminar Room <i>Conspiracy Theorist:</i> (At hand sign) "That's some illuminati shit." <i>Realist:</i> "That's sign language for 'I love you.'"	Overheard on Facetime Dictator: "This isn't a polycule, bitch, this is a sleeper cell."	Overheard outside Richardson <i>Girl:</i> "Your grandpa was in TI?" <i>Guy:</i> "No, Texas Instruments."
Overheard in TI <i>Admirer:</i> "I always see you Crunk as hell, bro."			Submit Verbatims Email thenassauweekly@gmail.com

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SOCIAL CLIMBING

Notes on Princeton's Outdoor Action Climbing Wall

BY ALEXANDER MARGULIS

Many Princetonians, watching in dismay as hirings were frozen and budgets slashed like tires, are now heralding an age of austerity on the Princeton campus. Clearly, these doomsayers have not visited the Outdoor Action Climbing Wall. Enclosed in a dreary corner of the Princeton stadium, the Wall—which stretches 32 feet high and over twice that length across—is a site of abundance. Climbers hang and whoop and fall from multicolored grips, they stretch across the thick, pliant flooring, they launch themselves, sans-rope, from hold to fiendish hold on around 30 bouldering routes, which require from their wiry suitors the proprioceptive abilities of a yogi and the raw plyometric powers of a footballer. The Wall is enclosed and air-conditioned—it extends across three sides of a tall, narrow, windowless room. Without the sign out front, you'd never know it was there. It is, by some measures, our campus' finest art installation.

Admittedly, the hours of the Wall are limited, and somewhat unintuitive. Prospective mountaineers can count on two hours of open climbing each weekday, but that might mean 8pm-10pm, 4:30pm-6:30pm, or 10pm to midnight. I showed up on a Thursday, right at ten, and was greeted by a kind-looking, beanie-wearing sophomore named Ty Lipscomb. Lipscomb is one of the Wall's 17 employees, and he looks the part—he's got big arms, softshell pants, and a bright-orange traffic cone of a shirt. If you want to climb "top rope" (on a harness, and up the wall), you come to Lipscomb, or one of his peers. Unlike bouldering, Lipscomb tells me, top rope is "a lot more endurance-based—but there's still a lot of technique, and whatnot." Even so, most of these

top-rope climbing techniques (from the delicacies of foot placement to the platitudes like "keep your hips close to the wall") are designed to help climbers preserve their strength. Climbing, I quickly learned, targets muscles that non-climbers have never even heard of. By my second time up the Wall, my forearms were ready to explode.

"I think that one of the things that's fun about climbing is that it's inherently scary," Lipscomb explained as he fiddled with the straps of my harness. "Your body tells you 'be careful. Like, you're gonna fall.'" And your body isn't wrong—top rope climbers do fall, all the time. Between these climbers and their death or disfigurement is a thick synthetic rope and, at its end, a "belayer," who uses an "Assisted-Braking Device" (which, when clipped to the hip, resembles a beefed-up carabiner) to monitor the amount of slack left in the line. If and when a climber falls, the rope snaps taut, having yanked itself into a friction-powered "pinch point" within the ABD. The climber, hanging like a gangly chandelier, shakes out their arms and tries again.

Belaying is easy, really (sometimes disconcertingly so—the knot used to "tie in" a climber, for example, can be learned in sixty focused seconds), but the consequences for a slip-up are severe. For this reason, Lipscomb and his peers must gather in the summer, like wildebeests, to earn their Advanced Gear Manufacturers Association (AGMA) Certification. "It's two or three days," Lipscomb tells me, "and this guy flies in from California, and he teaches you about the equipment...I mean, this guy's job is he flies around and teaches these courses. And if you get certified, you work at the Wall. And you get pro discounts and stuff. It's pretty nice."

So far, so good—the Wall, which opened in 2007, has yet to see a major

injury (remarkably, the same can be said for the Wall's predecessor, which was built by volunteers in 1983 and served as a charmingly ramshackle community center until it was demolished to make way for the Frick Chemistry Laboratory). The staff of the Wall are an unharried bunch—not cool, exactly, but somehow in the know. They could tell a sloper from an undercling. "One of the fun things is watching people who have never climbed before, and who are super terrified, get really used to it," Lipscomb told me. As if on cue, a breathless cry came from above: "Look out!" Lipscomb did as he was told, just dodging a pair of feet that came swinging from the Wall like a pendulum. Our assailant issued a brief apology before getting back to work. He was dressed in purple, from head to toe, and he'd been climbing upside down.

Besides the staff, a number of climbers have earned a sort of Wall-bound notoriety. Chief among them is Nivan Dhamija, a soft-spoken junior who likes to longboard to class. At one point, a man with an earnest expression and a pair of padded gloves asked me if I "climbed crack." He was talking about a vertical fissure in the middle of the wall, into which experienced climbers learn to jam their fingers and toes (hence the gloves). Upon hearing that I didn't, the man gestured over toward Dhamija. "Nivan climbs crack. He's good."

"Everyone here is too nice," Dhamija told me. "I'm okay." (He is, to be clear, an excellent climber). "I don't strategize too much—I know people who really read the routes, but I like to just try it, and see what happens." When I spoke to him, Dhamija was knee-deep in a new bouldering route: "Bruised My Ego," an as-of-then unrated collection of unfriendly grips marked by strips of brown, pink, and blue tape (the staff would later label it a "V3-," denoting

intermediate difficulty). “I’m not really a boulderer,” Dhamija said, “so this is hard.” Bruised My Ego was set by Sarabeth Yao, a slender sophomore who’s been climbing since she was in grade school. “I’m just starting to set routes,” she said, “so I don’t think I’m great at it yet.” She’d come in an hour early with a tub full of holds, and, according to a pre-imagined series of moves, screwed a select few into the Wall. The route ran across a flat stretch of plywood, and it only ever rose a few feet up, so the installation wasn’t grueling—“the ceiling is a lot harder to set and strip,” Yao explained, “because you kind of have to anchor yourself upside down. I stripped a route there once, and it was extraordinarily difficult.”

Such is the rhythm of the Wall: old routes come down, new ones go up. For life-long climbers like Yao, this shifting field of holds is a training ground, a stepping stone, a stand-in for enduring sheets of gneiss or limestone. The Wall’s best and brightest look beyond it, to the Sourland Mountain of New Jersey, or the Shawangunk Ridge (the “Gunks”) of New York state. The Gunks, in particular, have been shaped by Princeton climbers—many dozens of now-established routes up the bullet-hard quartz of the mountain were pioneered by Princetonians. In 1974, Steve Wunsch ‘69 made climbing history by conquering “Supercrack,” a jagged, perilously narrow fissure that knifes down 70 feet of sheer rockface. At the time, it was

considered the hardest route in the world.

For plenty of climbers, though, the Wall isn’t a stepping stone to the “real deal”—the Wall is the real deal. It’s a destination. It’s a third space, like a

instrumentalists by trade—they play together in one of Princeton’s jazz ensembles—but they come, each week, to jump. Jasper Zimmerman, a bespectacled pianist, watches his bandmates with bemusement. “You get a nice

sense of freedom,” he tells me, as a caterwauling trumpeter comes crashing from the wall. This is Theodore Peebles, the group’s impish ringleader, and he’s back on his feet in no time at all. “I’ve been coming here the longest,” Peebles tells me, grinning broadly. “He’s been coming here the second longest”—here Peebles points at Zimmerman—“and he’s been coming here the third longest.” The newcomer, Marcello Troncoso, is a well-dressed saxophonist who looks like the layman’s sketch of a climber—baggy jeans, chiseled features, curly hair wrapped underneath a white bandana. Troncoso’s been trying at the route for half an hour, now. He can reach the furthest hold (his fingers graze it every time he jumps), but he just can’t stick the landing. No matter, says Troncoso, battered and bemused — after all, “what does the Bible say? The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.” Wisdom thus dispensed, he turns back to the Wall.

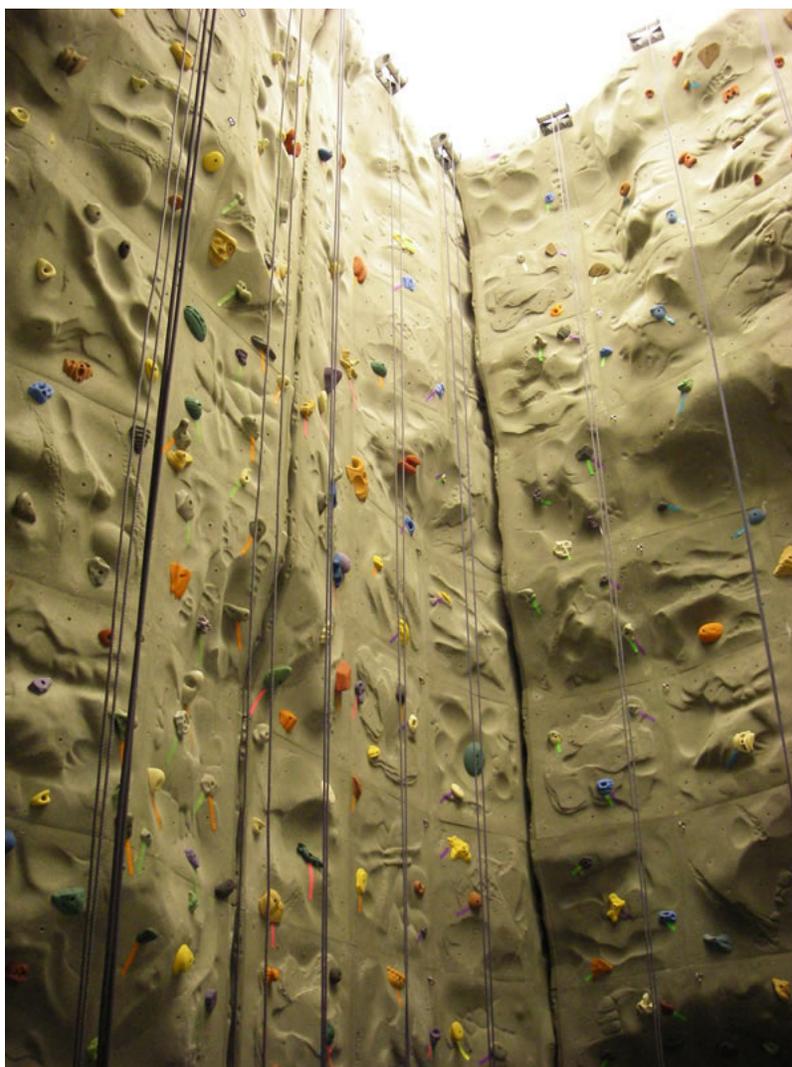


PHOTO FROM [HTTPS://WWW.PRINCETON.EDU/~OA/CLIMB/NEWWALL.SHTML](https://www.princeton.edu/~oa/climb/newwall.shtml)

skatepark, or a library: conversations flow, dream-pop washes by, pizza boxes slant across a weathered folding chair. Do you climb crack? You don’t? Come learn. Come in. Come stay a while.

On the far side of the Wall, a group of students have congregated around another bouldering route, this one marked by peeling strips of neon tape. Midway through the route, climbers must make an awkward, flailing jump from a criss-crossed set of handholds to a roundish, protruding jug. These climbers are

Alexander Margulis is a contributing writer and section head for Second Look.

Kitty

“Penny had now reached the agent. She meowed. He didn’t look down. She meowed again. He said hi, but nothing more. He must not have children, Jess thought. Then, channeling David, she amended: He’s probably had a long day.”

BY EV WELLMON

It was half past six and the sun was rising behind the planes on the tarmac. A woman leaned against the wall closest to the gate. She wore a tight athletic jacket, black leggings with gray compression socks over them, and carried a large purse—nice, but not ostentatious. She held an e-reader, but was not reading. Her eyes were focused on the little girl on the ground.

The girl was named Penny and had just emerged from underneath the row of chairs closest to the woman. She sat on her knees, her weight resting on her flexed toes, and licked the back of her hand. A black-and-white-striped tail fell from the top of her skirt. She meowed. She was nine years old.

Four rows behind Penny sat her parents, Jess and David. David laid his head on Jess’s shoulder. He had fallen asleep just after reaching the gate. Jess

couldn’t sleep in airports. But she had forgotten her book in the car and her service was bad, so she watched Penny instead.

Jess wore a blue oxford shirt, still damp from the steamer. Baby pink ankle socks showed through her cream linen pants that fell over scuffed white sneakers. It wasn’t until after locking up the house that Jess had noticed Penny’s tail tucked inside her skirt, peeking out below the ruffles. Jess didn’t mind it and David hadn’t seen, so she didn’t say anything to Penny. While backing up, she noticed a grin on Penny’s face in the rearview mirror. Penny never got to take her tail to grandma’s house.

Penny was now crawling toward the gate agent’s desk. His navy suit fit well and his button-up looked recently ironed. His tie was neatly knotted. Jess wondered if he could tie it himself or if he had someone at home do it for him. She couldn’t find anything wrong with him until she noticed the bags below his eyes. This reminded her: she had forgotten to cover her dark circles. Jess didn’t like to wear makeup, but she kept a mini concealer in her bag for trips to her mother’s house. When David woke up she would fix her eyes.

Penny had now reached the agent. She meowed. He didn’t look down. She meowed again. He said hi, but nothing more. He must not have children, Jess

thought. Then, channeling David, she amended: He’s probably had a long day.

Ignored by the agent, Penny approached a little boy a few years younger than her. Earlier, Jess had noticed him pointing out Penny’s tail to his mom. Penny unclipped her tail and passed it to the boy.

They crawled together, under a different row of chairs, before Penny stood and held the boy with an imaginary leash. She directed him toward the woman with the large purse. “Don’t you like my kitty?” she asked.

Before the woman could respond, a teenage boy snickered. The gate filled with laughter. Penny’s face fell. Parents began looking for the strange girl’s mother.

The woman caught Jess’s eye and smiled before returning to her tablet.

If David were awake, he would grab Penny and apologize to the boy’s mom. Actually, if David were awake, he would have taken Penny on a coffee trip and hidden her tail before this could have happened. But David was asleep and Penny would recover quickly, so Jess did not intervene.

This week, Ev Wellmon takes the Nassau Weekly to uncharted territory, the Wild West, a real free-for-all—a packed airport gate. So sue me if I wear a cat tail!



moving/dream

BY ZIYI YAN

two things are unique to a home:
writer's block and wetting the bed. in sleep

my adult teeth pushed each other
from my mouth like dominos. you held

me, a wrinkled fetus with long hair—
we can laugh at that. but really, you held

old jeans like a plea. my stomach bulged
from the fabric and i forgot why

we took turns apologizing.

/

whenever my sister wants to play
a board game, i say *i need*

to write. actually i scratch out
my hair and watch videos of celebrities

kissing in the next room. i crawl
to her bed when i'm sure she's crawled

to yours. in a false dawn you nestled
me to your stomach, so i feign deafness

as you open the curtains. 五分钟走,¹ you
snap. in haste, i paw everything

out of my underwear drawer—

/

i never wrangled our knocker to choke
your screaming. instead i sprawled

on the porch, winced at how even wood
whined under me. the time you waste

in driving me has dribbled
down my chin, reaching for taste. mom

we whittle this house
to a pyre. tonight

my mouth has dried raw and i'm sorry
i taunted you for this:

we've locked our keys in the new house.
your jeans in my closet are moving.

1. Wǔ fēn zhōng zǒu — “we leave in five minutes.”

Ziyi Yan is a contributing writer and poetry
section head for the Nassau Weekly.

The Story of Ferdinand and censorship in Franco's Spain.

BY LOUISE SANCHES BARBOSA

Originally published in 1936 by Munro Leaf, the children's book *The Story of Ferdinand* was not well-received in countries that were under dictatorial regimes. Fire consumed the pages of the books that existed in Nazi Germany. In Franco's Spain, the book's circulation was prohibited. What was so profane about it? Its protagonist, the bull Ferdinand, did not exhibit what most would consider typical "bull behavior." Instead of going around fighting, Ferdinand enjoyed looking at flowers, frolicking among the trees, and resting in green pastures, feeling a soft breeze on his face. What many of us would consider to be a dream lifestyle scandalized European censors. And no, that was not because they had a profound disdain for the cottagecore aesthetic. What they deemed problematic was the pacifist message contained in the book.

Ferdinand's life had always been uneventful. However, the routine of flowers and sleep is disrupted when he is captured by men who take him to a bullfight. As the bull enters the ring, he witnesses the excitement of a crowd craving blood. The moment evokes a classic mode of public entertainment that integrated the history of some European countries. In Rome, gladiators battled animals. In Spain and France, bullfighters defied bulls. Different temporalities and locations all converge towards the unique moment where the man fights

with the beast, with the audience holding its breath as it anxiously wonders who is going to prevail. This ancient tradition is broken by our little guy, who decides to just sit in the middle of the ring and smile. By refusing to engage in physical combat, Ferdinand expresses that other modes of living, not centered around violence, are possible. Despite the external pressure, the bull remained faithful to his peaceful nature, refusing to do something that would go against his mode of existence in the world. His behavior, however, could not find space in 20th-century Spain and Germany, considering the rise of militarism in the countries.

Armies of thousands of men, destroyed cities, and the bodies of countless individuals became the scenery of these nations in this period. In times of war, messages of non-violence, such as the one expressed in *The Story of Ferdinand*, were not welcomed, as they ultimately defied the conviction that only violence and virility could conquer victory. Victory. Not peace. This distinction is particularly important when considering that for the leaders of the mentioned countries, war was a strategy for implementing particular political projects, not for achieving a greater degree of unity, as seen in the horrifying policies of Nazi Germany and the persecution of those who were not aligned with Franco.

Pacifism did not have a space within this context, as it allowed individuals to glimpse different alternatives to physical combat. The existing cult of violence in the regimes motivated unreflective action. In such a logic, one participates in war because one is virile, and one is virile because one grew up in a society that gathers in order to see something or someone being killed. In this sense, non-violence questioned the

foundation and the propagation of such systems, something that those who held power were not interested in promoting. At the end of the day, peaceful soldiers do not guarantee victory.

The dimension of virility is particularly relevant in Spain, internationally known for its bullfights. In such events, the bullfighter, with his defiant look, adorned jacket, and red cape, employs all of his courage in combat. The figure becomes almost a humanized bull—or an animalized human—with his strength and masculinity being celebrated by those who watch the fight. Ferdinand's personality, however, is the opposite of the traits we associate with the image of the bullfighter. He subverts what is expected of him and of idealized masculinity, without trying to mold himself to fit into a determined pattern. Through this, Ferdinand reminds readers that, in the same way bulls do not need to follow a certain behavior, men also do not. That is, there are other ways of embracing masculinity without adhering to the violence of the archetypal figure of the bullfighter.

The efforts of Germany and Spain to censor *The Story of Ferdinand*, however, did not suppress its existence. Ninety years after its first publication, the book can still be found right next to us, in Special Collections. The continued existence of the book signals the centrality of libraries in preserving knowledge that would have otherwise disappeared or been accessible to even fewer people. Still, the function of such institutions as keepers of the multiplicity of knowledge produced by human beings is increasingly threatened by attempts to remove a number of books from public libraries. The American Library Association, for instance, tracked 821 attempts to censor libraries in 2024. In some ways, the censorship that impaired the circulation of *Ferdinand* continues to exist. Even though national governments no longer hold bonfire events for book burning, pages still burn when libraries are prohibited from acquiring certain titles or are required to remove a work from their catalog.



Publicado originalmente en 1936 por Munro Leaf, *El Cuento de Ferdinando* no fue bien recibido en los países que vivían bajo regímenes dictatoriales. El fuego consumió las páginas de los ejemplares en la Alemania nazi. En la España de Franco, la circulación del libro estuvo prohibida. ¿Qué era tan profano del libro? Su protagonista, el toro Ferdinando, no presentaba lo que se consideraría un comportamiento típico de un toro. En lugar de pelear, a Ferdinando le gustaba mirar las flores, jugar entre los árboles y descansar en la pradera verde, sintiendo una suave brisa en su rostro. Lo que muchos de nosotros consideraríamos una vida de ensueño escandalizó a los censores europeos. Y no, no fue porque tuvieran un profundo desdén por la estética cottagecore. Lo que ellos consideraron problemático fue el mensaje pacifista del libro.

La vida de Ferdinando nunca tuvo grandes acontecimientos. Sin embargo, su rutina de flores y sueño se ve interrumpida cuando es capturado por unos hombres que lo llevan a una corrida de toros. Mientras el toro entra al ruedo, es testigo de una multitud sedienta de sangre. El momento evoca un modo clásico de entretenimiento público que formó parte de la historia de algunos países europeos. En Roma, gladiadores combatían animales. En España y Francia, los toreros desafiaban toros. Diferentes temporalidades y espacios convergen en un momento único donde el hombre pelea contra la bestia, con el público conteniendo su respiración mientras se pregunta ansiosamente quién prevalecerá. Esa tradición milenaria es rota por nuestro pequeño amigo, que decide sentarse en el medio del ruedo y sonreír. Al rehusar involucrarse en un combate físico, Ferdinando expresa que otros modos de vivir, que no estén centrados en la violencia, son posibles. A pesar de la presión externa, el toro permaneció fiel a su naturaleza pacífica, rechazando hacer algo que iría en contra de su modo de existir en el mundo. Su comportamiento, sin embargo, no podría encontrar espacio en la España

y la Francia del siglo XX, considerando la amplificación del militarismo en los países.

Ejércitos de miles de hombres, ciudades destruidas y los cuerpos de incontables personas formaron parte del escenario de las dos naciones en el periodo. En tiempos de guerra, los mensajes de no violencia, como el expresado en *El Cuento de Ferdinando*, no eran bienvenidos, ya que fundamentalmente desafiaban la creencia de que solo la violencia y la virilidad podrían conquistar la victoria. La victoria, y no la paz. Esa distinción es particularmente importante considerando que, para los líderes de los países mencionados, la guerra era una estrategia de implementación de proyectos políticos específicos y no una forma de lograr un mayor grado de unidad. Basta una mirada rápida a las políticas aterradoras de la Alemania nazi y la persecución de aquellos que no estaban alineados con Franco para demostrar esto.

El pacifismo no tenía espacio en ese contexto, ya que permitía que los individuos vislumbraran alternativas al combate físico. El culto a la violencia en el régimen motivaba acciones irreflexivas. En esa lógica, se participa en la guerra porque se es viril y se es viril porque se creció en una sociedad que se reúne para ver cómo matan algo o a alguien. Así, la no violencia cuestiona los fundamentos y modos de propagación de tales sistemas políticos, algo que aquellos que tenían poder no estaban interesados en explorar. Al fin y al cabo, los soldados pacíficos no garantizan la victoria.

La dimensión de la virilidad es particularmente relevante en España, conocida internacionalmente por sus corridas de toros. En esos eventos, el torero, con su mirada desafiante, chaqueta adornada y capa roja, utiliza todo su coraje durante el combate. La figura del torero se convierte en un toro humanizado—o un ser humano animalizado—cuya fuerza y masculinidad son aclamadas por aquellos que presencian la pelea. La personalidad de Ferdinando, sin embargo, es opuesta a los rasgos asociados

con la imagen de un torero. Él subvierte lo que se espera de su comportamiento y de una masculinidad idealizada, sin intentar moldearse para encajar en un patrón. Con eso, Ferdinando recuerda a los lectores que, así como los toros no tienen que seguir un cierto comportamiento, los hombres tampoco. Es decir, existen otras maneras de abrazar la masculinidad sin incorporar la violencia de la arquetípica figura del torero.

Los esfuerzos de Alemania y España por censurar el libro no suprimieron su existencia. Noventa años después de su primera publicación, *El Cuento de Ferdinando* puede ser encontrado en las Colecciones Especiales. El hecho de que el libro siga sobreviviendo señala la centralidad de las bibliotecas en la preservación del conocimiento que de otro modo habría desaparecido o habría sido accesible a menos personas. Aun así, la función de instituciones como protectoras de la multiplicidad de conocimientos producidos por individuos es cada vez más amenazada por intentos de quitar libros de bibliotecas públicas. La Asociación Americana de Bibliotecas, por ejemplo, rastreó 821 intentos de censura de bibliotecas en 2024. De una forma u otra, la censura que perjudicó la circulación de Ferdinando aún ocurre. Aunque los gobiernos ya no hacen eventos de quema de libros en hogueras, las páginas todavía son quemadas cuando a las bibliotecas se les prohíbe adquirir ciertos títulos o se les obliga a eliminar obras de su catálogo.

Louise Sanches Barbosa is a contributing writer and junior editor for the Nassau Weekly.

Sea Lion Caves

“Every day, people lived and were happy in the aftermath of their mistakes. Eli made plenty of mistakes, lived, and was happy. Danny was careful and made none.”

BY SASHA ROTKO

Danny knew a little about guitar. That’s what he told Eli the first time they met, over a game of pool at the bar where Eli worked. Later Danny realized he knew nothing about guitar; *Eli* knew a little, and was much better than he was. Six months ago, with a few friends and friends of friends, Eli started a band called Sea Lion Caves, named after a business his uncle owned in Oregon that guided boat tours through Oregon’s sea lion caves. Eli spent last summer working for his uncle, earning room, board, and a stack of bumper stickers that said in block letters on a bright yellow background, SEA LION CAVES. Eli put one of these stickers on the

shell of his bass drum, and, while moving into their apartment, Danny suggested that Eli name his band Sea Lion Caves so he would have some merchandise to put out at their first show.

Their meeting at the pool bar was the beginning of a stable friendship. Though they went to different schools, they both liked Hemingway and Hesse and hiking in the mountains outside the city, and both suffered from a dissatisfaction with their lives—or, they supposed sometimes late at night in their living room, a more existential dissatisfaction with *life* altogether.

Danny was not in the band. He had not been asked to be in the band, which didn’t offend him until Eli asked a girl named Mavis, who knew nothing about any instruments and could not sing, to be his *percussionist*, a fancy word for the *tall, pretty, blonde girl in a mini skirt standing on stage with the less attractive but more talented band*. After Danny heard Mavis “play,” he told Eli that he knew how to bang a cowbell. Eli told Danny that they didn’t need anybody playing cowbell.

Despite his not being in the band, Danny went to every show. Most of the time, Danny knew about half of the people in the audience. They were mostly Eli and the bassist Avery’s friends, and Danny had met many of them in the living room of his own apartment past midnight in varying states of sobriety, “jamming,” or whatever. They were not Danny’s crowd. Danny was at a top-rated university studying sociology. He was very organized and *value-driven*, according to both his resume and his girlfriend, Olivia, who he’d been with since high school. Danny did not have any social media and kept a careful journal of his days and habits. His grades weren’t always perfect, but mostly because he spent a lot of time reading books about bettering himself and forgot, sometimes, to do his homework. Danny stopped drinking alcohol at twenty-one. He ran every day, at least a mile, sometimes in his pajamas, and enjoyed reading blogs about productivity called things like *Knowledge Lust*.

When Eli’s friends met Danny, they certainly wondered how the two were



friends. But Danny and Eli never wondered.

The only person Danny really hung out with at these shows was Zoey, Eli's ex-girlfriend. Zoey ended it two years ago, but their group remained intact. And, anyways, everything was fine now. Eli missed her all the time, and had dreams about her often, but he was mostly okay. Zoey didn't miss him at all, but she pretended she did to make him feel better.

The past few months, Eli had been telling Danny that Sea Lion Caves was on its way out. Nobody had been showing up for band practice except Eli and his little brother, Aidan, who was their drummer. Aidan was seventeen, which restricted the venues they could play, but he was a great drummer, better than Eli. After hearing his brother play for the first time, Eli quit the drums altogether. He started practicing the piano and resolved to know more than a little about guitar. His drums were now neatly stacked up, decorating the corner of his and Danny's apartment, the SEA LION CAVES sticker facing outward on the bass drum at the bottom.

Usually, Danny stood at the front and never danced, watching the show through his cellphone screen, worrying the whole time that Eli was going to screw up or that Avery, the bassist and singer whose long brown hair was dyed to look like a skunk's tail, would say something stupid on the mic between songs like, "How's everybody doing tonight?" like this was a pop concert and not a half-full room of college students who'd all be at the afterparty where she could ask them all this question and ascertain actual answers.

Outside tonight's venue, Gavin, the rhythm guitarist, smoked a cigarette and told Danny, "It took almost an hour to scrape the cum off of my guitar," referring, of course, to the word "CUM" itself, which he'd stuck to the body of his aquamarine telecaster in sparkling green sticker-letters, next to two old bandaids he used for pick holders.

Danny laughed. "I liked the sparkles," he said.

Also outside the venue tonight was Gavin's girlfriend, Ruby, who hit her sour apple vape every thirty seconds.

She offered it to Danny a couple of times, who said, politely, no thank you.

Danny checked his watch. It was eight-twenty-five. Sea Lion Caves was supposed to go on at eight-thirty. "Should we go in, guys?" He felt, sometimes, like their manager.

Ruby said, "I'm going to get tinnitus in there."

Inside, Danny found Zoey. She was standing alone, off to the side, smacking gum. She was beautiful, something Danny observed unwillingly and often failed to ignore. She watched Eli not merely without love but as if trying to undo the years of love she'd given him. Regret, Danny understood, was a disease.

"How's it going?" he asked her.

"Fine," she said.

"Do you like the openers?"

"They're fine."

The opening band was fronted by a guy named Ellis Roth, who was older than all these people but who remained unsuccessful enough to take any gig offered to him. He played guitar and sang and had with him a heavily bearded bassist and a sort of awkward drummer wearing a pink earflap beanie. Their amplifiers were turned all the way up so most of the crowd was standing at the back of the venue near the bar. Between songs, Ellis would say, "Hey," pause, "come a little closer," pause, "we don't bite." Nobody would go closer, and he'd do it all again. "Hey," pause, "we don't bite."

Danny listened to Ellis Roth's music online sometimes. He liked a couple of the songs. He liked, especially, when Ellis and his band came to stay after their shows at his and Eli's apartment, how they'd ask him lots of questions about his life and his mechanical keyboard and his girlfriend, like he was an exhibit in a museum. Danny was used to boring most people, because he was neither particularly outgoing nor outwardly opinionated. He didn't mind his fate so much—privately, he knew he liked his life and personality—but he was still a boy who wanted to be liked by people. Eli always told the music guys coming into town that Danny was a freak of nature, that his discipline and intelligence were superpowers to

be watched and lauded. But there was glass between them and a sign that said, "Don't touch." Cross-contamination of the Dannys and the Ellis Roths of the world was dangerous. If we infect our productive people with a little degeneracy and our artists with a bit of healthy motivation, there goes our economy and our music.

Zoey was one of those rare people who were and could be both. She could be like whoever she was with. Danny wondered what she was like when she was alone.

"You seem like you want to kill him," Danny said.

Zoey shook her head. "No." She twisted her upper body to face him. "I just wish my life wasn't already an amalgamation of consequences for my actions. I feel like I'm too young for that."

"You're ahead of the curve," Danny joked.

"I'm moving to California," she said. "Tomorrow."

Danny was quiet. He had several questions, but didn't know what order to ask them in, didn't know if he wanted to know their answers.

"Sorry I'm telling you so late," she said.

"It's alright," Danny said. "I understand." He was unsurprised. This was Zoey. She was the kind of person to move across the country and tell nobody, for the sake of it.

"I'm going to school there."

That did surprise Danny. Zoey had never wanted to go to college. After graduating from high school, she started working for a family friend who sold jams and jellies. She lived at home and made some extra money babysitting. She traveled in the winter, when the farmers markets were off season, to places she picked because she knew nothing about them. She had no interest in any certain path, or in earning any sort of degree or promotion. Ascension of the hierarchy was of no interest to her.

"What are you going to study?" Danny asked her.

"To be a pastor."

"You believe in God? The Christian God?"

"No," she said. "Though I would like

to.”

He envied her ability to leave. Not that she was leaving, or that she didn't have much keeping her here, but the very ability to decide to leave and go. He understood her impulse to reject the life she had built for herself, its foundations and its consequences. Danny felt seen by her, felt he saw her. Cynically, he supposed this was how she made everybody feel.

“You can tell Eli,” Zoey said. “I wasn't going to.”

Eli still danced. His mind must have been totally empty. Better than Danny and Zoey, Eli knew bliss.

“I won't do that,” Danny said.

“He'll find out from somebody.”

Danny left her, and found Eli.

“You go on soon,” Danny said. He didn't say anything about Zoey.

“I can't go on until Ellis is done, though. Might as well stay here.”

Danny wondered if Eli had done any cocaine yet tonight. Eli told Danny a few days ago that he was planning to stay away from cocaine, after snorting a line of what he thought was cocaine at a party. A few hours later, while lying in a pool of his own sweat on the floor of the living room, he learned that nobody actually knew what that powder was, that somebody had picked it up off the street and had been saving it until they had test strips.

At one point in their friendship, Danny had worried about Eli. For one semester, he'd set up all these bumper rails around him and coaxed him into a life of measured substance use and set bedtimes. It worked. Eli's grades had never been better and he'd never produced so much music. But that was all Danny had done, for several months. Keep Eli together. Resentment brewed, and after some reflection (something he did well), Danny decided to focus on himself.

Since then, Danny tried not to worry about Eli. Danny laughed when Eli told stories like the one about the mystery powder and no longer checked his phone's location when Eli was out past midnight on a weekday. Since then,

Danny had been happier, though it was a complicated sort of happiness.

He cared for Eli, but couldn't take care of him. He hadn't self-reflected enough to resolve that tension.

Ellis Roth closed his set with a sad song about being lonely that ended in a lot of sad screaming. Danny understood that this was how men who played indie rock music portrayed their sadness, through phrases that sounded like words but were really an open-mouthed wail.

“Good luck,” Danny said, and hit Eli on the back.

Eli and Aidan's parents were here, sitting at a table in their down coats and baseball caps, probably wondering how two, decent, Roman Catholic anesthesiologists produce this.

Danny once asked Aidan and Eli if it was any different to play in front of their parents. They both gave an uncomplicated answer: “Well, no.” Really, Danny wondered if they were embarrassed to be on stage with the rest of the band. It embarrassed Danny to even watch them on stage. Probably, that was why he wasn't in the band.

Danny went over to Eli's parents and said hello. They asked him how he was doing tonight, and he told them he was well and looking forward to seeing Eli play. They said they'd heard the band hadn't been practicing much. Danny nodded, but said he had faith in Aidan and Eli anyways. “They should form a duo,” he told them, “and keep the name.”

Eventually, the silhouettes of five people all around five-foot-nine started setting up musical equipment. They made up a nice picture, tuning and testing things like a real band would. This was Danny's favorite part of the show, when he could pretend he wasn't here for moral support or to be the only honest reviewer after the curtains closed.

Finally, the band was ready. The DJ who'd been on between sets stopped playing and foggy red lights came up on the stage. Eli pressed his mouth up against the microphone. In a voice that was only vaguely his, slow and deep, he

said, “This is a show.” He strummed a little on his guitar. “We are a band.”

Ruby brought Danny a non-alcoholic Guinness. Danny said, “I'll Zelle you,” and she said, “I put it on my parents' card.”

Avery said into her microphone, “We're Sea Lion Caves.” Her voice was uncannily sweet. She mused, “We're going to start with an original.”

The song they played was alright. Eli sang most of it, making wide shapes with his mouth so the syllables came out all funky like he was Townes Van Zandt. Avery harmonized a little, but her mic was a lot louder than Eli's, so when she sang you could only really hear her, unsure and off-melody, as if, or because, the band hadn't actually practiced the song together.

Eli and Avery had two very different visions for the band. Eli wanted a few people fine enough at their instruments to play his songs, maybe in front of an executive one day, maybe well enough to get him a record deal. But Avery wanted something to do, or something to say she did. She wanted a reason to keep dying her hair and buying the kinds of clothes you can only wear on stage. She wanted to be applauded and shown up for, and Eli didn't mind being ignored by everybody he knew if it meant somebody with real power, somebody who could make him somebody, would pay him a little bit of attention. Eli and Avery were incompatible people. There could be a whole band of people like Eli and a whole band of people like Avery, but to mix the two did not work, was not working. Eli knew this. Avery did not. But they were both skilled pretenders.

If Danny were Eli, he'd drop the band before it decomposed. He'd pay Aidan a nominal sum to spend a week recording as many halfway decent songs as they possibly could. He'd take the recorded demos and send them to everybody he'd ever met. He'd say, if you like this even a little bit, help me out. While everybody's answers were coming back, he'd sit down and write a whole bunch more songs, so that if anyone asked him, “What else have you got?” he'd have

his pick of a few things to show them, depending on what they liked from the demo record. He'd start going to sleep at a regular time, would drop one of his shifts at the pool bar and use that time to write or do the schoolwork Danny wasn't sure he'd been doing instead of getting drunk on another weeknight with the older, sadder bartenders he was scared to become. He'd add back the Economics major and line up a decent internship for the summer that left his nights free for gigs, and, then, he'd stop drinking.

But Eli wouldn't do any of this. This band would leave him, and he'd be relieved for a minute but join another just like it, with people he'd met at school who weren't really serious about the whole music venture like he was, because Eli saw the best in people. Eli once looked at Sea Lion Caves, at Zoey, and saw kin. He'd spend his summer roadtripping again and spend all the money he'd saved. He'd write a few good songs in the backseat of his car, all alone at a rest stop on the interstate. A few of those songs would be good songs, and he'd give them to his next doomed band, and there he'd go again. Every band would be Sea Lion Caves, every job would be the pool bar job, every song he wrote and liked would either get played by people for whom Eli would one day have no respect, or it would sit in the voice memos app on his phone forever. Maybe, one day he'd move to New York. Maybe, one day, he'd even move to Tokyo. But he'd never make a real decision to change his life.

Danny thought of Zoey, and that she was going. He couldn't find her in the crowd. Though there was no reason for her to mean anything to him, Danny catastrophized her departure in his mind. He looked at his life and saw walls, in Olivia and in school and in Eli's understanding and characterization of him. But these weren't walls. Only phantasms, illusions, hallucinations of walls, disguising a more evasive and elusive constraint.

"I'll be back," Danny told Ruby, and found Zoey outside. She put out her

cigarette. It had started raining. Under the canvas awning, each drop was magnified. A little rain became a downpour.

"Are they done?" Zoey asked.

"No," Danny said. He didn't know what he was doing out here. "Why do you come to these things if you hate them so much?"

"I don't hate them at all," she said.

"You hate Eli."

"I don't hate Eli." She was frustrated. "I don't know why you're saying these things."

"Why are you moving?"

"I don't know," she said. "Because I can."

Danny moved toward her. "You could hate it," he said, quieter than before.

"I could," Zoey said, quieter, too. "If I do, I'll come back, or go somewhere else."

"Eli will be wrecked."

Zoey shook her head. "Eli will be alright. He'll probably be better if he doesn't have to see me all the time."

"He's going to miss you."

"No," Zoey said. "He won't."

Danny imagined what it would be like to leave. He imagined breathing fresh air somewhere he'd never been, unconstrained. He imagined leaving every book he was reading and class he was taking unfinished and taking off West like a pioneer or a cowboy. He imagined how it would feel if he just leaned a little closer and kissed Zoey, kissed her deeply under the drumming of the rain on the awning.

Danny did not kiss Zoey. He never would. He did not want to kiss her, or at least did not know what he wanted.

"I'm going to go back inside," Danny said. He didn't know what he expected her to say, if he expected her to ask him to stay outside with her or come with her to California.

She said, "I'm going to call an Uber."

Every day, people lived and were happy in the aftermath of their mistakes. Eli made plenty of mistakes, lived, and was happy. Danny was careful and made none.

The band closed with a melancholy tune Danny didn't recognize. Tall

and pretty Mavis dropped the cowbell about halfway through the song. Danny, who wasn't a particularly reactive person, put his face in his hands. Ruby said beside him, "God, I can't wait for this to end."

It did end. The DJ took back over as Sea Lion Caves packed it all up. Eli and Aidan's parents took their leave. Their mother asked Danny to tell the boys that they'd done great. He said, "Yes, ma'am, I will."

Eli dropped down off the stage and came over to Danny, wiped a little sweat off his forehead with his sleeve. "Want to get out of here?"

"Yeah," Danny said, "no afterparty for me, though."

"Shocking," Eli said. "What'd you think of the show?"

"It kind of sucked," Danny said. "But that's fine."

Eli shook his head, clapped Danny on the back. "Would it kill you to lie a little?"

This is awkward...this week, Sasha Rotko regaled the Nassau Weekly with a story that centered on a character named Danny, which is the name of the person writing this footnote. Is this the life of a celebrity?

At the Precipice of Gugelmania

You want a gugel and you want it now—a fashion analysis.

BY MANNIX BEALL-O'BRIEN

In the West, we are just now escaping the chokehold of the Silicon Valley “Scaling Era”—a time defined by the infamous stained “hoodie and fuck you flip-flops”¹ combo. Critics are quick to decry this kind of ultra-casual, bedroom-to-boardroom behavior as wanton anarchy: a kind of all-too-visible antisocialness that will spike crime rates like broken windows. I say they’re missing the point.

Have we not fully grasped the significance of a society where everyone shrouds themselves? It feels notable that the bourgeoisie suit was defeated² not by the return of aristocratic flamboyance, but by an ancient silhouette that spreads through society as if contagious. Saying “Hoodies will be in next year!” feels so obvious, so guaranteed, that the statement feels like a truism. Why are we so sure? What quality of the hoodie feels so integral to, so cemented in, our culture? I say, the answer is medieval.

It doesn’t take much to be considered a cloak. As one of the oldest known articles of clothing, cloaks include just about any loose cover that hangs from the shoulder. In their most iconic iteration, these long billowing garments drape all the way down to the midcalf, sometimes even further: a durable, sleeveless thing that could be made without as much as a single stitch. For centuries in medieval Europe, this reliability (and lack of alternatives) placed cloaks on the shoulders of both rulers and the ruled. In an unsung stroke of genius—the ultimate rebuttal of the term “dark ages”—Europe saw a holy union between the robe and cowl. Unlike the Roman pallium, the medieval cloak would shroud the head as well.

Just as monasteries became universities, the long march of time brought cowls continually closer to

the beloved hoodie. One particularly strange step on this path was during the early Middle Ages, with the Gugel. The Gugel is a cowl-like head covering that drapes over neck and shoulders, and whose hood is adorned with a long tail called a liripipe. Though jarring to our modern sensibilities, this piece has all the intangibles necessary to be the next big thing in fashion. By tracing the hoodie’s lineage, by steeping the self into its natural symbolism, one can realize we are primed with a secret appetite for long-tailed standalone hoods. This treatise identifies a powerful social force that courses through the collective unconscious and definitively proves without a shadow of a doubt that the Gugel is 1500 years coming.

Analysis of the Hood’s Symbolism:

Medieval monks once had to earn their hoods. A novice³ was only bestowed a cowl after making his solemn vows, lifelong spiritual commitments to the cloth. Even for those not yet fully dedicated to prayer, it was abundantly clear how meaningful it was to cloak oneself. For starters, it wasn’t lost on anyone in or out of the order who else in society wore brown russet⁴ hoods. Resembling the peasants who tilled through the summer mud, these proto-hoodies were how believers left themselves truly humble under God. For both the laborer and the holy man, the cloth walls of the hood acted like modesty-encouraging horse blinders, funneling and focusing them towards their oft unpleasant duty.

And yet, contemporary hoodies have a much more complicated relationship with modesty. Returning to their Silicon Valley sense, a zip-up over a Star Wars tee once read as similarly virtuous. As ceremonial hackathon attire, these hoods once announced a certain aloof genius, the complete prioritization of coding over worldly delights like golf trips or showers. Of course, once the “dialed-in” chief engineer became the white whale of angel investors everywhere, this

image devolved quickly into a parody of itself. Anointed miracle men of the time like Mark Zuckerberg were commended for their uniform grey wardrobe that allowed for an almost Zen “focus on... innovation”—even though said outfits were entirely Brunello Cucinelli (“The King of Cashmere”).

Although the cowl has retained many of its historic connotations, its reemergence in a post-industrial world has inevitably altered them. Walking a similar balance as the “austere” images above, hoods are as much about calling attention from the world as they are retreating from it. Nothing quite captures the silhouette as a medium for both exclusive luxury and accessible comfort like the recent phenomenon of the Essentials Hoodie: a modern streetwear staple uncannily intertwined with the monk robes of old. As the affordable alternative to the premium FEAR OF GOD mainline, “Essentials” hoodies feature a baggy fit, a beige or grey color scheme, and prominent display of their minimalist religious branding. This is a product for the “aspirational”⁵ luxury consumer designed like the outfit for the vow of poverty. The immense success of the design suggests that even when serfs get a little money, something deeper than convenience pulls them toward the form.

The contemporary hoodie at its most iconic is oversized, cozy, and imbued with the scent of a loved one—its all-consuming embrace like a shelter emblazoned with a parent’s alma mater. Pinning down what exactly this coziness entails remains allusive; but what is for certain is that it’s more than merely the spillover of a Haywire endocrine system mistaking clothes for oxytocin-worthy hugs. The hoodie is more than the sum of its warm embraces; there’s some quality to this way of bundling up that far surpasses a sweatshirt and hat.

When one pulls a hoodie’s draw strings tight, they conjure the penultimate moment of birth. At the apex

1. socialnetwork

2. seemingly, subject to change

3. monk in training

4. a coarse, coarse cloth worn by peasants

5. crazy term

of born and unborn, the wearer's coziness comes from fitting snug against the inner lining: head at the gate of a dilating elastic cervix. From an "early contractions" pucker to "successful birth" open, these drawstrings allow the user to bask in the amniotic fluid once more. What feels like 97% of the population is drawn to the hoodie because 97% breached headfirst into the world⁶. The timeless quality of the hoodie is the hood itself because we long to rewind our final unborn moments with different diameters. The truth is that this bundling is a momentary return to the womb.

Signs of Implicit Gugel Demand:

Even without this deeply embedded allure, it's not like hoods have much competition in the barren world of men's headwear. For a male accessory to survive as acceptable dress in this social climate, it is a real achievement that warrants attention. Hats are in a dismal state: the domain of respectable options has regressed so much that at best they feel costume-y (cowboy) and, at worst, remind people of Columbine (the fedora and its ilk). There's no awkward Prom picture of your dad in a Gugel⁷, no fall from fashion grace to hinder its comeback. What the hat scene needs is a fresh start: and what better option than something that has rested dormant for centuries.

The place of scarves presents an interesting case study. Despite their abundant utility and classical elegance, they're all too often abandoned in lost-and-found as some kind of deviant collar. And yet, let that same cloth wrap the head as well, and you've got one of western fashion's hottest phenomena: the Rave Pashmina. Inexplicably, these scarves have become a staple of the mosh pit, icons of the basement venue. Unless we are all overlooking the throughline between Babushkas and raving on Molly, the scarf to headscarf allure upgrade should pose real questions. Again, the answer can be found through the cloak. Like the Hoodie, Gugel, or Cowl, a cloak-like silhouette conjures embryonic sentiments. In a setting like a rave, as bodies tangle and

sway, the environment is sufficiently warm and wet enough to create that specific nostalgia. When one wears a headscarf, or other cloak-like silhouette, a peaking partygoer can return to the precipice of born and unborn: creating a truly subversive kind of cozy.

One common sentiment about men's fashion is that for an accessory to even be remotely acceptable, it must have some utility to justify its existence. I wholly reject this. All this platitude has led to is The Bald and other hat-prone demographics wearing baseball caps for "the sun" at an Italian date night. Worst of all is the case of the watch. In a world of digital clocks, it becomes increasingly difficult to call these bracelets "tools" any longer. This is the illusion of utility; it is a self-conscious justification for dandyism that can be done about all together with a little confidence. Still, its power can't be denied. One trending example is camo print. Once reserved for hicks and hunting trips, these beautiful nature patterns now adorn countless city boys who hope to blend in with the urban jungle. You would not believe what was once all the rage with 14th-century Jägergruppen (hunting groups). That's right: the long tails of the Gugel once read as rugged as the ghillie suit. Even in a men's fashion climate that worships utility, the Gugel still passes with flying colors.

It must be said that the idea that men are shunned entirely from the joys of accessories is clearly wrong in regards to formal wear. Strict suiting standards have cultivated a tradition where the tie and pocket square are the main domains for self-expression. In fact, these accessories are unabashedly for expressing how well one can dress. With the tie especially, great elaborate knots recall the aristocratic Cravats of old. Medieval elites similarly would knot the liripipes of their Gugels into a head-dress—a style they called the chaperon.

Interestingly, ties and tailed hoods have another surprising connection. There's a funny visual trope for drunkenness in the media of the recent past. In stories about suited Bourgeois businessmen, the cliché way to convey a character's letting loose is with a tie

around the forehead. Though its origins are still up for debate, the leading hypothesis for the trope is that of the 3-martini lunch—an attempt to escape the tie but being too drunk to undo the knot. This image is particularly striking because, unlike undone cuffs or unbuckled pants, this visual trope doesn't feel like undressing at all. Though definitely spontaneous and silly, the forehead tie feels like a new accessory all together. With its long liripipe-like tail, this wardrobe malfunction evokes the joy of a game of pretend. It is the bandana of a commando. The Ferronnière of a princess. Something to catch the sweat of the ensuing party. Carnival was a medieval holiday defined by this kind of humor. All walks of feudal life would gather for feasts and festivities centered on the idea of inversion. In the Carnival, up becomes down, nobles become peasants, and peasants become nobles. Handstands, profuse swearing, the spilling of a body's excesses all become the landscape of this temporary release from serfdom. This is the inherent humor of a head with a tail, the inversion of front and back, the switching of both kinds of lips. As the attire of both sterile formality and grotesque celebration, Gugels are intertwined with one of the most popular men's accessories of today.

This lion's mane will make the one who wears it, 1500 years coming, there's not a domain that doesn't reflect its beauty. By taking this risk, aspiring fashionistas have the rare opportunity to completely define a silhouette's associations. While steeling oneself to stick out from the crowd is easier said than done, a true trailblazer can't be afraid of getting a little burnt. We are at the precipice of Gugelmania. Now is your last chance to be an early adopter.

The Nassau Weekly is incredibly indebted to the trend-forecasting Mannix Beall-O'Brien—you can catch us Gugel-ing about town for the foreseeable future.

6. correct birth posture stats

7. unless he's really awesome

Battle of the Sexes

“Eleven was a liberating age because I had no hesitancy. My world was folk rock and grasslands, it was as large as Jackie, and I never questioned those bounds.”

BY LOLA HOROWITZ

I was walking my yellow bicycle to the end of the driveway when, from a cloud of tawny dust, there emerged a sleek Ford Mustang like a chariot from the heavens. Such a luxurious pony car was better suited for flat highway cruising than there in the sun-baked Chihuahuan Desert. On the early morning of September 20, 1973, I was beholding such a staged arrangement of manufactured wealth against the Trans-Pecos West that, for a moment, I was convinced this was all a television advertisement and cameramen were hidden behind the cacti.

The Mustang wheels decelerated, pulling up to the curbside, until I was peering straight through the rolled-down passenger window.

The driver had long, layered brown hair, wore an outdated Hawaiian shirt, and had a silver spoon hanging in his mouth which he pulled out and jabbed in my direction. “I reckon you’re Jackie’s little sis. You remember me? I bummed ‘round your house a lot. Gave Jackie his first taste of tequila. One sip had him knocked out. I threw Jackie in an ice cold bath, sobered him up, otherwise your momma would’ve lost her lid.”

I stared dumbly at the stranger whose roguish presence was nowhere outstanding in my childhood memories. At the time, at least.

“Say, sis, where’s Jackie?”

“Getting ready for school.”

“Oh yeah, *school*.” He winked knowingly at me, raised his wristwatch, swore, then laid on the horn.

My hands flew to cover my ears, abandoning the handlebars, and my bicycle fell on its side.

Jackie came rushing out of the house,

his feet shoved into unlaced Keds, belt undone, flailing his arms in distress. “Dammit Keith, you’re gonna wake up my folks!”

“We gotta hit the road ‘fore all of America’s on the highway.”

I whipped toward Jackie. “You’re cutting?”

“Cousin’s holdin’ the staff door open till seven,” Keith reminded.

“I’m telling!”

“Man, she better not whine the whole eight hours.”

“I’m *not* a whiner.”

“Will both of you just—” Jackie fist-ed his sandy curls, overwhelmed, then picked up my toppled bicycle. I followed him as he guided it back into the garage. “We’re not going to school today because we’re going to see Billie in Houston.” He didn’t seem to want to tell me anything more.

“Billie?”

“You’ll like her.”

The only Billie I knew of was in my sixth grade class, Billie Miller Jr., who once folded chewing gum in my hair on school picture day and descended from a long patriline of wife-beating Billies. I tried to envision my classmate with a feminine face, but the features felt too androgynous and off-putting.

“Is she your girlfriend?”

Jackie chuckled as he leaned the bicycle on its kickstand. “I wish.”

Eleven was a liberating age because I had no hesitancy. My world was folk rock and grasslands, it was as large as Jackie, and I never questioned those bounds. As I child I felt a soldier-like loyalty towards him, one that would lead me off a cliff’s edge, into cactus spines or, as it so happened, into the backseat of a Ford Mustang barreling through an American frontier. I propped my chin on the window ledge and watched as my hometown and its abandoned airfield flattened into sprawling dirt. The sun was hanging over the Davis Mountains and cast all of Marfa into a buttery light. A herd of pronghorn grazed in the distance, but the Mustang outran them.

Jackie was fiddling with the radio knobs but all we heard was static. Only when he smacked the stereo did Frank McGee on NBC broadcasting start blasting. I plugged my ears. Keith promptly changed the station to the Eagles because, as he then declared, three people are forbidden in his Mustang: journalists, Richard Nixon, and any of his momma’s ex-boyfriends. Keith was only nineteen but he regarded himself as a real political pundit. With a pint of almond butterscotch ice cream between his legs, he harped on for miles about Watergate, the Chilean coup d’état, and how the United States’ embrace of real-politik would yadda, yadda, yadda.

Jackie was antsy. He shifted in his seat to quiet his gurgling stomach. “My liver is about to eat my kidney.”

“Have some ice cream—though, you’re better off drinking it.”

“That’s nasty, man.”

“Jackie?” I nudged the back of his seat.

“It’s a refreshing gulp of sweet milk.” Keith rounded a curve. “Don’t be so prissy.”

“I’m not drinking your saliva.”

“*Jackie!*” This time, a forceful kick.

“If we were on a deserted island, would you drink a carton of salt water or almond butterscotch slush?”

“I’m not entertaining your stupid—”

“*Jackie!*” I lifted both feet and slammed them into his seat, shoving him into the hot dashboard.

“Dammit, Jane! What?”

I leaned over the center console and gestured through the windshield at the approaching American flag whipping on a tall pole, below which was an unassuming clapboard diner on an otherwise undeveloped plot of land. Inside the establishment was a gallery of taxidermy protruding from every wall and corner, but the main attraction was the three elk heads mounted above a long cowboy horse ranch mural. The animals’ mouths were gaping, preserved in a bugle, and we briskly ate beneath

them, splitting steak on a bun and a Spanish omelet with three Cokes. The white-smocked dishwashers and cooks had emerged from the kitchen and were huddled around the bar counter, watching an ABC sports telecast.

"I think Billie Jean," answered Rafer Johnson.

All that could be seen of the reporter was the microphone he held up. *"You do?"*

"Yeah, yeah. She's, uh, she plays, uh, a very aggressive game. She's very fast and she, uh, she plays, as some people say, very much like a man."

One of the workers from the bunch sought me out with an owlish turn of the head, upon which a stained toque sat lopsided. "Little lady, you play like a man?"

His comment sounded like a compliment to me, but it aroused profanities and hysterics from Jackie. The kitchen staff assumed a defensive formation like geese in flight. From their standoff, I gauged there was an implicit answer to the worker's question, one I wasn't old enough to take offense at. Sensing a potential bar brawl, Keith ushered us all out of the diner, our food still half-eaten on the table. While Keith topped off the Mustang's gasoline tank, Jackie hurtled stones at an ice machine, denting and scratching its white paint. We merged back onto Interstate 10. Nobody spoke. The dead grass patches and shrubbery whisked away in streaks. With a stuffed belly and wind combing my hair, I became drowsy. Lingering at the threshold of consciousness is where I dreamt of racing eighteen-wheeler pronghorns on limestone roadcuts, white-tailed deer quenching their thirst in oil-spill rivers, and Great Blue Herons at an impeachment proceeding in Washington.

I was roused awake by Jackie hauling me out of the backseat and exhaust fumes from thousands of cars bumper-to-bumper in a tremendous Houston parking lot. Masses of Americans were migrating forward, towards something

behind me, and when I followed their awestruck gazes, I beheld it too: a silvery spacecraft docked on earth. The eighth wonder of the world. While the attendees corralled in a long line that funneled through the astrodome's entrance, the three of us snuck in through a backdoor. Were it not for the rodeo in the winding service corridors—shirtless men in the gilded garb of Egyptian slaves, dollish marching bands, parade floats, giant lollipops, and a squealing

was so much wildlife there, so little distinction between the sexes. Vociferous men and women quarreled and placed surreptitious bets. It was a tremendous event.

On the green turf below, an empress was being carried out on a litter chair by four stripped men. Applause erupted from the bleachers. Keith and Jackie leapt out of their seats and whistled like they were calling the horses home.

"Here comes Billie Jean King!" the courtside commentator announced. "And she's got the fans here tonight."

Billie was a small white figure bobbing in a sea of reporters and cameramen. I feared they would trample her but, instead, they orbited her. She parted a path for herself. Billie's arresting presence distracted me from her theatrical opponent, Bobby Riggs, a tired old man on a rickshaw tugged by women.

There was a tacit spotlight on my sex that evening. Every woman felt it. Many men dreaded it. Billie embodied an advocacy for women I wouldn't fully cherish until I abandoned Marfa after high school graduation to study mammal migrations at Boston University where I bobbed in a similarly oppressive East Coast sea of male entitlement. My eleven-year-old mind didn't grasp that the victor would earn more than \$100,000; that their winnings were beyond financial; that when Bobby sent a volley into the net and Billie tossed her racket into the air, she won, but so did millions of American women, myself included.

Lola Horowitz *takes the Nassau Weekly to a historically significant tennis match, but I'm confused. The first time I heard about tennis was Challengers. Where's the other guy? When do they...?*



male chauvinist piglet—we would have been spotted and thrown out.

As we scaled an emergency stairwell, passing *Sugar Daddy* merchandise and colorful feathers, the structure trembled. My initial thought was a tornado but when we emerged from the fifth floor landing, I was overwhelmed by an onslaught of merging human sounds. Only when I stepped out onto the bleachers, under the intense glare of stadium light, did I perceive a world beyond Marfa. Thirty-thousand spectators swarmed like ants on a hill. There

If I Forget Thee, O Tantara / Im Eshkachekh Tantara

BY SHAYNE CYTRYNBAUM

If I forget thee, O Tantara, let my right eye wither,
For having witnessed the beauty of your beaches,
But not the village that once stood by the sea
Among pottery shards and murex shells
And white lilies and sea-lavender and crimson kalaniot
And little round stones sitting atop big flat stones,
That my people once recognized as graves.

יניע חכשת הרוטנטן חכשא סא
ךפוח יפוי תא יתיארש
סיה דיל דמע סעפש רפכה תא אל לבא
סינומגרא יפדצו סרה ירבש סע
תומודא תוינלכו מידעדעו סינבל מינשושו
סילודג סיחוטש סינבא לע סיבשוויש מינטק סילוגע סינבאו
תורבק סתוא ריכה ימע סעפש

Tantara was a Palestinian Arab village on the Mediterranean coast in the north of Israel-Palestine. In May 1948, the Alexandroni Brigade of the Haganah, a paramilitary organization that merged into the IDF less than a week later, destroyed Tantara and massacred an unknown number of men. Today, there is only a single Arab-majority locality on the Mediterranean coast of Israel, the village of Jisr az-Zarqa, where many of Tantara's women and children were relocated to. What was once Tantara is now the beach of ChofDor, an unassuming rocky shoreline bordered by turquoise waves. I visited almost a year ago, inspiring this poem. When Jews visit a cemetery, we lay a small stone on the gravestone as a memorial that can't wilt or fade. I wish I had left a stone. May their memory be a blessing — Yehi Zikhronam Barukh.

Shayne Cytrynbaum is a staff writer for the Nassau Weekly.

Dead Name Tally

Dead and chosen names—on painstakingly keeping score.

BY JAMES MORALES

Lately, I've been considering a new system to organize trans citizens. The system could be called a dead name tally. This tally, which as good citizens we would track ourselves, would count up and weigh the number of important uses of our chosen name as compared to the number of times our dead names were used across our lifetime. When the tally is in the favor of our chosen name, then everything could just be changed without the paperwork, fees, and letters. With this new system in mind, I started to count up the sides of my tally.

The first point in my favor would be a short, but certainly important, interaction with a pharmacist at the CVS on Nassau. For two years, I had picked up a testosterone prescription under the name "Jazmin" without much of a second thought. However, just one week before this interaction, Donald Trump was sworn in as president on January 20, 2025. That same day, Trump's office declared via executive order that there were only two biological sexes and implemented transphobic policies for prisoners, taxpayer funds, and passports.

I wonder if these same policies or the general "new" ideology was on this pharmacist's mind when he looked between me and the name on his screen and then back at me again. With a look on his face, one that I usually try to ignore, he asked, "Is Jazmin the name you go by?" In kind, I said, "No," and he earnestly responded: "Well, I can change it right now!"

Here's what I wanted to actually say: "Obviously not. Obviously I'm growing facial hair and picking up a prescription for testosterone, so no I don't go by the name Jazmin; I haven't gone by that name in a long time." But, I didn't say any of that. Instead, I gave him my new name and watched as he tapped a few buttons and looked up to signal that he was done. "James," he said, "That's a nice name."

Add one to the tally! This one, unlike the numerous times I had already been

called James for two years, should hold some extra weight. It was the first time that a non-Princeton institution started using my name. In fact, this interaction cancels out the use of my dead name with the correct use of James. If you add that up, that's certainly a point in my favor.

Another point in my favor can be found in my return to Illinois in September. From Newark, where the TSA gave my passport and face the same look the pharmacist gave my dead name, to an Illinois DMV, I carried an ID with a sister's face on it. When it was my turn at desk three, I presented paperwork that would allow me to change my name and sex marker on my license. This paperwork, a corrected birth certificate and a court order, had required more paperwork to even obtain. For months, I had the pleasure of notarizing documents, filing a pro se lawsuit, sending away my state IDs in the mail, and paying hundreds of dollars in fees to the states of Illinois and New Jersey. Finally, at this desk, all of this paperwork would lead to another point knocked on my tally.

"Wait," the clerk said, "I don't think you have what you need." My first thought was of all the wasted time I had spent filling out forms affirming that I did want to be "James" Morales and not "Jazmin" Morales. Wasted time and money and—I had just forgotten to explain the court order to her. When I finally told her that this order connected my old and new birth certificate, she smiled and said "Why didn't you tell me?" Probably because no one bothered to explain much to me as I corrected my name; no one held my hand. Why did I need to hold yours?

"So, James, congratulations," she said with a small smile after sending everything into DMV headquarters. Congratulations for spending all that money, congratulations for explaining your name change for the hundredth time, and, of course, for doing what you were supposed to do, for being a good citizen.

There's another point on the tally for me. Now, I get to travel the U.S. with an ID that has my name and looks like me (albeit with a sty). Now, isn't this particularly meaningful; doesn't this raise my chosen name's tally significantly? The

experience of doing the paperwork and getting my IDs should off-set at least a few hundred of the thousands of times I was called "Jazmin" until I changed my name on Tigerhub.

How do failures affect my tally? I only ask because I did try and fail to go by Jim in elementary school. I asked everyone who would talk to me to stop calling me "Jazmin" and to call me by my initials, J.I.M, instead. My thinking was, well, if I had a daughter I would never name her after a flower. No, I would name her something normal like Juan or Tom or John or Jim. Consequently, I wanted to see what her experience would be like if she—lucky her—was born with a name that was right.

No one listened to me. I was ten. No one wanted to hear about my new ideas for naming children. After a week, I gave up and resigned myself and my future daughter to a life of being named after a flower. Strangely, I never considered that other girls might actually enjoy having feminine names. Every girl I had met wondered what life would be like if her name was Rose instead of Lily. I figured my experiment was the same but with different variables.

If I had convinced everyone in elementary school to call me Jim, the Jim/James column would never have been outweighed by the "Jazmin" side. I would have years of my life, over a decade, that I could look back on in relief. I would see thousands more tallies on the side of my chosen name. My tally would be more than balanced; the tally would be in my favor.

I don't actually want everyone to start keeping score. Trans people shouldn't have to care about the time we spent closeted or dead named or met with confused stares. But, the tenuous nature of changing our documentation puts this pressing tally on us anyways. For instance, last week, Kansas revoked the driver's licenses of 1,700 trans residents for changing their gender markers even though the process was facilitated by the state until February of this year. If our documents can be revoked or denied to us, then what do we have left but to keep score?

James Morales is a contributing writer for the Nassau Weekly.

Prometheus Re-Done

BY CALLISTO LIM

Lift his body, the paramedics tell me. Hold him in your clay arms. When the firemen come, go sit among the planter pots, do not remember the shape of that char-black body bag nor the walls of that lime-white crematorium. Instead

remember the stories he told you, his humid jungle and 12-count brotherhood. Tell yourself his life, his stinking heat and spit-roast fires, and know them as your own. Know his life as a fable, know it as a code.

Attempt confession into a microphone. Stare up into stage lights and let strangers in on your stories, his secrets: your inability to grieve, his purple-red bile you caught in a 32-ounce takeout cup. Look up, now. They are clapping for you. Wipe your tears, then, bow. Leave the stage and fade into the driver's seat.

Once home, go sit before the fireplace and wrap your kindling knees in your arms. Place logs in the fire. Hear them sear, blacken, burn. Burn yourself. Attempt absolution,

become ash. Pour water into your own ashes and knead yourself into clay. Fashion a body, find his bed. Run your finger along the bedframe. Here,

you gathered his knees as your father picked up his shoulders. Here, you watched his hips fold, buckle, and fail. Here, you spread slag and slip and ash across the bedsheets. Here, you lay down his clay arms and sit by his bedside. There, tell yourself jokes. Keep the old man company.

Callisto Lim *kneads our minds from afar, and now, the Nassau Weekly needs a Ghost-style pottery lesson.*



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