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Christmas 2020

It would be an understatement to say that Christmas was different this year, because everything has been different. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I was actually looking forward to a pandemic Christmas in my own house, because that would mean no longer getting up early to prepare for a drive to see extended family in the city. While I do enjoy seeing my family and loved ones, I am not a huge fan of the inability to just relax with my own close family and enjoy the Christmas morning, or day for that matter. Traditionally over the holiday season my family would go to the mountain town of Banff to catch a show, which began with Stuart McClean's Vinyl Café way back in the day, and gradually became more of a trip to the Banff cultural center to catch any Christmas performance. This year, I just stayed home and spent more time than I thought I would with my own family baking Christmas sweets and homemade baileys and homemade chocolate syrup (which the very same day exploded all over me and the kitchen) which all turned out great. My gram would phone me daily and we'd talk about the latest developments in the political world and the new world of Covid, how upset we were with our provincial government and their lackluster response, and those who chose to attend the 'freedom rallies' throughout our province, spreading fear, anger and the virus as each rally grew in number. I'm struggling recounting what I've done because in all honesty, I can't remember, every day has felt the same as in Mondays easily bleed into Tuesdays, then Thursdays, Fridays; you'll think it's Tuesday when it's actually Sunday, it's hard to explain. Yet this isn't really a horrible thing, I mean it really is objectively speaking, but this year I've just been emotionally, physically and mentally dead without the assistance of the pandemic. I had just finished my first semester at ASU online, I had taken two courses per 'block' meaning I had worked over 30 hours a week I think on school work, while simultaneously working at an archive as an assistant archivist for another good 20/30 hours a week, needless to say I was a little overworked.

My holidays may appear to be a little spotty, and hard to make out in this little excerpt, but I feel as if this would be common for many people; I don't feel like my holidays had a beginning or end, they just happened. Yet at the same time I always found myself wondering what the holidays were like for people who willingly chose to break quarantine, to visit their families in large gatherings, to go out in public to see the lights in the crowds, to drive to the mountain towns with little to no restrictions to enjoy all the tourist traps – I always thought they'd be happier, I wouldn't know because I don't know anyone personally who did that. Yet I'd hear about it all the time, my social media was barraged with constant Facebook updates that someone somewhere was 'standing up' to the restrictions, as if they would receive a medal for bravery from the community, or that the lockdown would simultaneously end with their refusal to participate. It would just be a grand-standing ego show for the internet, with no true goal or purpose other than to appear strong to strangers on the internet. One thing I couldn't shake with

this, would be the ways in which society views the holidays, and the values of family. Specifically, my family chose to abide by restrictions for obvious reasons, we didn't want to get each other sick to say the least, because we love each other. It would bother me when people would announce with pride that they were visiting their grandparents, their parents, brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles out of professed love. How could they do this knowing there is a risk they could get each other sick? That they could be the reason one of their loved ones lost their taste or smell, or their life, is that really love? Or is that just selfishness? I haven't really put these thoughts down, or told anyone about these ideas until now – it's just dawning on me how the pandemic has shown me the value of family, and the meaning behind the love which binds us together. Taking that into account, choosing to not go out or take in holiday cheer during these times could also be an extension of love onto the community, what is it then when someone chooses to go out in public, without a mask and gleefully refuse others when asked to put one on. I'm not sure, at this point I'm just go on a tangent.

I almost forgot about New Year's, I honestly did not care that a year was changing, I didn't see the point in celebrating, I just didn't see the separation of 2020 to be anything of value or fun at the time. I think it's really funny how there's this belief that somehow 2021 will fix all of 2020's problems, like the arbitrary number will force all the horrible things in the world to stop happening, it seems like every year this is the case, people bid adieu to the last year with disdain and anger with expectations the new one will be better without any personal input. I'm being hyper-critical here, but I think the pandemic has really done a number on me in this regard. I spent new years on the computer with my friends from around the world, and would visit my family downstairs throughout the day, talking, having champagne, whiskey intermittently through the night. One of the worst experiences I've noticed too is just how much people are drinking more, and believe me I really do enjoy the average drink now and again, but one of my friends online has just been drinking non-stop, it's been months since I played a game with him where he wasn't hammered. I haven't spoken to him since New Years, that night I logged on and he was slurring and just non-responsive to all of us (me and the rest of my friends), it was not a very fun experience.

To conclude, my holidays were nice, I have nothing horrible to say about them, I'm incredibly lucky to have a loving family and a warm home and bed to spend the winter.