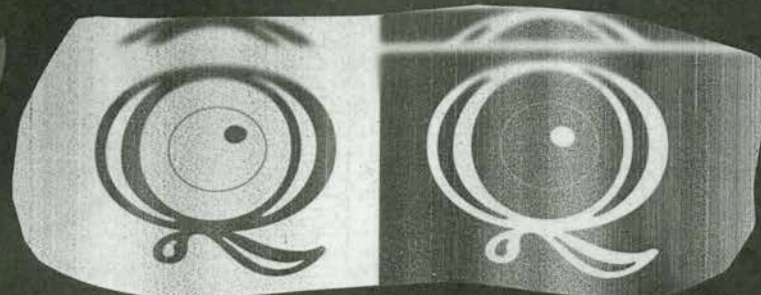




ISSUE 03  
WINTER  
2023

ARTICLES - POETRY - ART - COLUMNS - FICTION - FUN PAGES



QWERTY QUARTERLY

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF QWERTYFEST MKE



SEARCHING FOR HYGGE

# IN THIS ISSUE...

**TELEGRAM/WHAT'S THE WORD?** *A letter from our poetry editor, Peter Burzyński, who is currently in Slovakia. Can we say we have a QQ office in Slovakia now? I think so. Plus a bit about "hygge," this issue's cozy theme.*

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**10 REASONS WHY TOM HANKS SHOULD ATTEND QWERTYFEST MKE '24** *Yes, we've invited Tom Hanks to QWERTYFEST MKE. Molly Snyder made a tailor-made list of compelling reasons to join us. The first round is on us, Tom!*

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**MY TYPE** *Becky Franzel tells us about two travel companions— her trusty Hermes named Uncle Baby Billy and old death, the Grim Reaper.*

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**POETRY** *Poems by Kristen Tetzmann, Franklin K.R. Cline, Sean Enfield, Ana Božičević.*

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**HYGGE RECIPES** *We celebrate all forms of writing and thought this issue was perfect for getting some warm, delicious recipes to try out in the cold winter days. Local food/ drink writers Jeanette Hurt, Frenchie Renard, Kathryn Conrad, and Christina Ward dig into recipes and thoughts on drinks, soup, dinner, and dessert.*

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**WRDSMTH STREET ARTIST DREAMS BIG WITH INSPIRING TYPEWRITER MURALS** *Molly Snyder talks to LA-based artist Phil Brody aka WRDSMTH who has created inspiring clacker themed murals. Will Milwaukee be his next stop? Here's hoping!*

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**SWITCHES, BUTTONS, AND LEVERS: NEW BOOK BY JASON PUSKAR EXPLORES THE EVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY TECHNOLOGY** *A Q and A conducted by Tea Krulos with Professor Jason Puskar, author of the new book The Switch: An On and Off History of Digital Humans.*

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**FICTION: CARDIGANS AND THE GALAXIE** *Andy Tyra, author and illustrator of Caverns Under Milwaukee, gives us this delightfully warm story that takes place in his fantasy world version of the Brew City.*

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**ASK ANJA** *Sage advice from Anja Notanja Sieger for someone who seems to be having an issue with the undead.*

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**QQ FUN PAGES** *Art Director Alicia Krupsky created paper dolls of our hygge cover characters. as well as a snow day idea list.*

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## TYPE TO US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Andy Tyra

Anja Notanja Sieger

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Nick Berg

Andy Tyra

### COVER ART

The wrap-around cover is by our art director Alicia Krupsky, whose favorite season is winter.

ALICIAKRUPSKYART.COM



## TELEGRAM

FROM: QWERTY HQ



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Dear QWERTY Friends,

I write to you during one of the happiest times of my life. I am currently living in Košice, Slovakia doing research for my next manuscript of poetry where I examine the Cold War in the world and in my own head from this side of the fallen Iron Curtain. I have had the incredible privilege to travel across Slovakia and the Czech Republic as well as make several trips to Poland. In these places I have explored the dark histories of different wars and genocides, but also art, history, and culture. Especially poignant was the museum of Roman Culture in Brno. Studying these often dark and devastating things has been amplified with wars raging in Ukraine and Gaza on my mind. Despite my current happiness, I must acknowledge the pain and suffering occurring in places not so far. My poems of late have asked readers to consider the past atrocities and how they are being now repeated despite the lessons we hoped humanity had learned from our past.

I also focus my time in Slovakia engaging with undergrads and graduate students, who have been without any doubt the best part of my time here. Most of my students are Slovak, but there are also a significant number of students from neighboring Ukraine. Others hail from Jordan, Pakistan, Spain,

Vietnam, Georgia, and the United States. This group of 125 people from all over the world make the darknesses and lonelines I feel somehow lighter.

It is in small moments that we find comfort and as the season changes from pumpkin spice to *mintier* I hope that we can embrace the lifestyle of hygge, if only for a short while. I chose this issue's poems with that theme in mind, though at times the comfort we can draw from these poems is hard-won and even uncomfortable. It is my feeling that by simply reading poems, no matter how heavy or light, we can slowly move closer to finding true hygge in the warmth of our selves.

I broke the precedent of choosing work only by local poets for this issue. One of the poets used to live in Milwaukee and another has only ever visited but keeps a special place for MKE in her heart. As I write these words, I think of the place MKE holds in my own self and know that I will soon return, perhaps only briefly, to the friends, family, and cats that make MKE a truly incredible place.

I miss you all and I hope that these words find you well, warm, and finding that comfort that we all so deeply need.

With Sincerest Regards,  
Peter Burzyński  
QWERTY Quarterly Poetry Editor  
QQ Slovakia Office

## WHAT'S THE WORD?

"HYGGE"



You're never too old for a snowball fight before dinner!

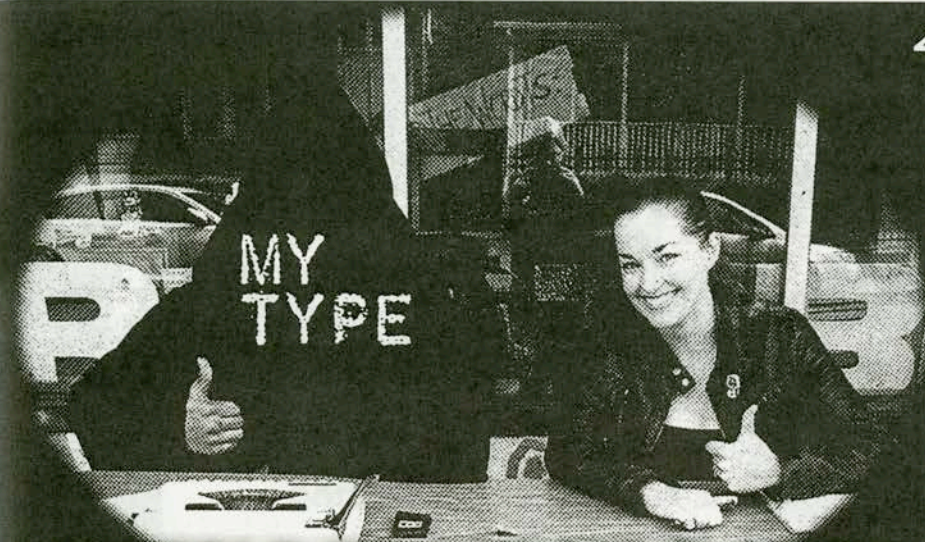
Our word and theme for this issue is "hygge," something we should all try to embrace in the Midwest winter. Hygge (pronounced HOO-GAH) is a Danish word to describe finding coziness and contentment. Hygge is wrapping up in a blanket with a delicious, hot beverage and a good book. It's a snowshoe adventure followed by a sit in the sauna. It's cuddling up on the couch with fresh popcorn and a movie marathon.

See? Winter's not all bad.

# 10 REASONS WHY TOM HANKS SHOULD ATTEND QWERTYFEST '24

BY MOLLY SNYDER / ILLUSTRATION BY NICK BERG

- 10 BECAUSE HE DIGS CORRESPONDENCE. #HESGOTMAIL
- 9 WE HAVE AMAZING LOCALLY-MADE BOXES OF CHOCOLATE IN MILWAUKEE. #MAMAALWAYSSAID
- 8 WILSON WOULD WANT IT THAT WAY.
- 7 MILWAUKEE HAS GREAT PARKS AND MUSEUMS ON LAKE MICHIGAN THAT REALLY MAKE A #SPLASH.
- 6 'CUZ IT'S GONNA BE #BIG!
- 5 BECAUSE WOODY EVER HAVE A GREAT TIME! #TOYSTORY
- 4 BECAUSE IT WILL BE A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD!
- 3 HE LOVES TYPEWRITERS SO MUCH THAT HE REALLY OTTO GO. #AMANNAMEDOTTO
- 2 MAYBE HE'D FIND HIS OTHER RED SHOE. #MANWITHONEREDSHOE
- 1 HE MAY HAVE BEEN SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE, BUT HE'D BE WOKE IN WISCONSIN.



## AS TOLD BY BECKY FRANZEL

Uncle Baby Billy is my prized road dog, my petite baby boy, my portable ride-or-die.

Uncle Baby Billy is a cream colored Hermes Baby who was born in Brazil in 1977. He's modeled off the more refined Swiss Hermes Baby, but as far as I'm concerned, is no less reliable.

I bought him on eBay at 2:00 am when I decided I needed a typewriter to tour my latest book, *Death's Intern Derrick*. When I tour, I tour with someone dressed as the Grim Reaper, and they use Billy to write the Grim Reaper's memoir. It's a bit cheesy, but I love a good gimmick. It's also nice for my grims to have something to do if people get weird with them, which happens. For example, in Buffalo, NY, a very persistent passerby kept asking my Grim if they was into "that weird shit". I was happy they had something to pretend to be busy with.

I fell in love with Uncle Baby Billy in part because of his **R** key, but I also couldn't get the image of an all-black Grim Reaper typing on a tiny all-white typewriter out of my head.

As soon as I saw him, it just made sense.

Becky Franzel's latest novel is *DEATH'S INTERN DERRICK*.  
More info at [AWSHUCKSPUB.COM](http://AWSHUCKSPUB.COM).

## USE IT OR LOSE IT

i cant speak  
 for the last chip in the bag  
 but id rather be crunched  
 than left alone  
 purposeless amongst no peer  
 stuck inside where my process  
 led me to wind up  
 destined for what i am not  
 in charge of it  
 no mind no soul  
 why not at the least  
 let something bigger than me  
 figure it out  
 for me

- Franklin K.R. Cline

## poetry

Ode to Staying  
*After Ocean Vuong*

holy, beautiful spark,  
 ease your thunder.  
 wake in a hazy parking lot,  
 drowned from too much joy—  
 or was it desperation?  
 some call this human,  
 but even saints resemble  
 claws.  
 brother, name the april air,  
 neon suburban towns  
 & their sweet little trees.  
 remind us  
 when you scraped  
 for daylight  
 and found it  
 empty.  
 don't be afraid  
 to be so radiant  
 that the bullets  
 think they've found  
 the sky.

- Kristen Tetzmann

## Rapture

Comets will erase the sky into TV static,  
jagged but silky trails reminding us below  
we, too, can reach Neverland. We click  
our heels, close our eyes, lick our lips,  
prepare our bodies for the rapturous  
ascent. Be it aliens, God, some benevolent  
disembodied claw, we are convinced—  
you in the pea-soup-green quilt  
hand-stitched by your grandmomma,  
the one thing you couldn't leave behind, and  
me shivering in a baggy pair of khaki shorts.

We fix our eyes for the celestial shower  
as we await the sky's unraveling.  
We have been waiting since science class  
when Mrs. Tigert told us to watch the skies.  
Like climbing vines bumped with brown  
buds not-yet-awake, your fingers wrap  
around mine. Suddenly, we are cold.  
Shivers quake our bodies.  
A hazy glow spreads over woody darkness.

Before the sky opens, your father calls you home.  
His voice rattling the trees,  
spring leaves reverse course to fall  
while I scurry into the night, now convinced  
a comet will flatten me into dirt.

- Sean Enfield

## Song

When I sent you that song  
I wanted the chords and the beat  
To stitch themselves into your heart  
Like tiny painless  
Little points of light  
And when you walk around under the  
Apple trees you would feel  
How I feel for you right now  
Under the apple trees

- Ana Božičević

## OUR FEATURED POETS

**FRANKLIN K.R. CLINE** is the author of **So WHAT** and **THE BEATLES' SECOND ALBUM**, both available via V.A. Press. An enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation, his work has been featured in **POETRY**, **FENCE**, and is forthcoming from **PASSAGES NORTH**. He is an educator in Kansas City, MO, where he lives with Six and Olivia.

**KRISTEN TETZMANN** (née Tetzlaff) is a poet and painter from Wisconsin. She received her BA in Art Therapy and Creative Writing from Mount Mary University. She is a first-year poetry candidate in the Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts program. Her work has appeared in **BODEGA MAGAZINE**, **FURROW**, **RESPECT YOUR MOTHER**, and elsewhere. She knows how to say "watermelon" in twenty-six languages.

**SEAN ENFIELD** is an essayist, poet, gardener, bassist, and educator from Dallas, TX. His debut essay collection, **HOLY AMERICAN BURNOUT!**, is forthcoming from Split/Lip Press in December 2023. He is a PhD candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and received his MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks where he served as the Editor-in-Chief of **PERMAFROST MAGAZINE**. Now, he serves as an Assistant Nonfiction Editor at **TERRAIN.ORG**. His own work has been published in **BLACK WARRIOR REVIEW**, **REED MAGAZINE**, **HAYDEN'S FERRY**, **WITNESS MAGAZINE**, **TAHOMA LITERARY REVIEW**, and **THE RUMPUS**, among others. His essays have twice been listed as Notable in Best American Essays. He was the 2020 recipient of the **FOURTH GENRE'S** Steinberg Memorial Essay Prize and was featured on NPR's **ALL THINGS CONSIDERED** as a finalist for their Three Minute Fiction contest. You can find his work at **SEANENFIELD.COM**.

**ANA BOŽIČEVIĆ** grew up in Zadar, Croatia before coming to New York. Her new book **NEW LIFE** is out from Wave Books. More at **WWW.ANABOZICEVIC.COM**

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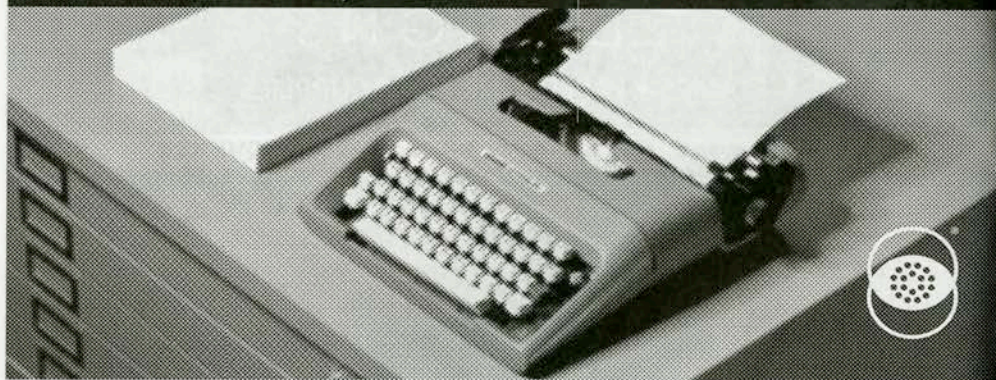


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# HYGGE RECIPES

A hot oven cooking away some delicious food sure helps with the winter blues. QQ asked some local food writers for some recipe ideas. Thanks to our contributors -- JEANETTE HURT, author of *Wisconsin Cocktails*; FRENCHIE RENARD, author of *Frenchie's Soups*; food stylist and recipe developer KATHRYN CONRAD; and CHRISTINA WARD, author of *Holy Food: How Cults, Communes, and Religious Movements Influenced What We Eat*.

## CHAI SPICED CIDER

FROM WISCONSIN COCKTAILS BY  
JEANETTE HURT (JEANETTEHURT.COM)

1 1/2 to 2 oz	Twisted Path Chai Liqueur
5 oz	fresh apple cider
glass	mug
garnish	rim of chai spices and sugar and lemon wheel

Heat up apple cider to warm, but not boiling. Fill mug with hot water, then discard. Then, run a wedge of lemon around the edge of the mug, then dip into a mixture of sugar and chai spices. Pour chai liqueur into the bottom of prepared mug, then pour warm apple cider on top, stir with a bar spoon two to three times to combine, then add lemon wheel.

# FRENCHIE'S FRENCH ONION SOUP

BY FRENCHIE RENARD

***"Do you have a kinder, more adaptable friend in the food world than soup? Who soothes you when you are ill? Who refuses to leave you when you are impoverished and stretches its resources to give a hearty sustenance and cheer? Who warms you in the winter and cools you in the summer? Yet who also is capable of doing honor to your richest table and impressing your most demanding guests? Soup does its loyal best, no matter what undignified conditions are imposed upon it. You don't catch steak hanging around when you're poor and sick, do you?"***

***- Judith Martin aka "Miss Manners"***

Wanting to avoid the widely hated, indulgent story times usually included in recipe websites and blogs, I opted instead to feature famous people talking about soup and to make the recipes accessible and inclusive of dietary restrictions and allergies, without sacrificing the luxury of an outstanding homemade soup. The hallmarks of an outstanding

homemade soup are fresh ingredients and patience, really, and the beauty in the homemade is in taking a basic recipe and tweaking it to your personal taste and preference. For instance, I'd reckon there are as many different recipes for Chicken Tortilla Soup as there are fans of that soup. Yet I know some are adamant about original recipes and won't tolerate any weird nonsense in their bowl. Much

respect for originalists and for them I will always recommend the original soup (or sop), and the earliest recorded recipe (circa 14<sup>th</sup> century): French Onion.

While onions are native around the globe and various cultures have their own take on onion soups, probably only the French insist it be made with onions, butter, and champagne. At heart, this is peasant food, shared among the poor in the market of Les Halles in old Paris and served at Grand-Mère's house. The ingredients, typically, are onions, beef stock, day-old baguette slices, and a lid of melted cheese.

Today, this standard of supper clubs and soup du jour menus is usually a little stoneware crock, bubbling over with scorched cheese covering a fragrant broth of seemingly endless murky, buttery depth, the slippery melted onions sliding off your spoon as you raise it greedily, blowing furiously in the hopes of it not searing the roof of your mouth.

Making it at home is much less fussy than you may think it is. That said, it does require patience and some careful shopping. I prefer a mix of

purple, or "Bermuda" onions and yellow onions for caramelization purposes, high quality beef stock, day-old baguette, and a mix of Gruyère and Emmentaler cheeses, shredded, for the lid. After achieving a nice caramelization of the onions in my cast-iron pan, I'll add them along with their "juices" to a stock pot and throw in the stock, minced garlic, a bouquet garni of bay leaves, tarragon, sage, and rosemary, and a glug of wine. Bring it all to a boil, turn down the heat to low and walk away for about an hour. When ready to serve, prepare stoneware crock by placing a thick, lightly toasted wheel of baguette slice into the bowl and pour broth into the crock. Pile shredded cheese on top and broil just until cheese is melted and slightly browned. Do try not to burn off your finger skin in the process: use potholders and place the crocks on a baking sheet. Serve with a simple salad and a hearty glass of wine. Bon Appetit! \*

*FRENCHIE RENARD is the author of  
FRENCHIE'S SOUPS.*



## VEGETARIAN RED BEANS AND RICE(LY YOURS)

These next three recipes are literary inspired dishes by food stylist and recipe developer KATHRYN CONRAD. KATHRYNCONRADFOODSTYLING.COM



Inspired by LOUIS ARMSTRONG who often signed his correspondence "Red Beans & Ricely Yours" - and favored a Remington 5 portable - this is a vegetarian version of a NOLA classic. Traditionally made with dried red beans, this version builds in the convenience of canned beans while still delivering on flavor.



- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 vegan or vegetarian sausage links, chopped
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dry rubbed sage
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 (15 oz) can dark kidney beans, undrained

- 1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 bay leaf
- hot cooked rice
- chopped parsley
- chopped green onion
- hot sauce

**1** Heat oil and butter in a Dutch oven or large pot over medium-high heat. Add the celery, onion, and green pepper: sauté 7 minutes or until vegetables are tender and just beginning to brown.

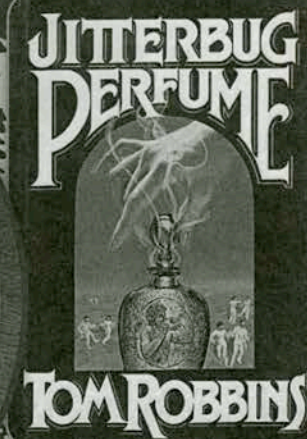
**2** Add sausage; sauté until browned. Add the spices (garlic powder through red pepper) and sauté 1 minute. Stir in water, scraping the bottom of the pot to loosen any browned bits. Stir in beans, tomatoes, and bay leaf. Bring to a simmer; reduce heat to medium-low, cover and cook 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Uncover and cook 10 minutes. Remove from heat and salt to taste.

**3** Serve over hot, cooked rice, top with parsley, green onion, and hot sauce as desired.

YIELD: 6 CUPS

## JITTERBUG BEETS

Inspired by Tom Robbins' JITTERBUG PERFUME - a book so fun to read it feels like you're getting away with something. "The beet is the murderer returned to the scene of the crime. The beet is what happens when the cherry finishes with the carrot...The beet was Rasputin's favorite vegetable. You could see it in his eyes..."



**1** Preheat oven to 375°.  
**2** Wrap beets in foil and place on baking sheet. Bake at 375° for 1 hour or until tender. Remove beets from oven; remove from foil and let cool.

**3** Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat until it foams. Add the shallots; cook, stirring, 2 minutes or until butter is golden. Stir in lemon, sage, and salt; cook 30 seconds, remove from heat.

**4** Cut beets into 1/4" wedges and add to pan; stir to coat. Salt to taste, top with toasted hazelnuts and a sprinkle black pepper. Serve with fresh lemon wedges.

YIELD: ABOUT 4 CUPS

- 2 pounds medium beets, washed, root and stem trimmed
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 medium shallots, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped lemon (flesh only. No rind or pith)
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh sage
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons chopped toasted hazelnuts
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Lemon wedges

## GONZO CRAB RANGOON CREPES

Inspired by Hunter S. Thompson, father of Gonzo journalism, who loved many things including excess, typewriters (IBM Selectric in particular) and the first meal of the day. "...anybody with a terminally jangled lifestyle needs at least one psychic anchor every twenty-four hours, and mine is breakfast."

His list for a single sit down included Bloody Marys, cocaine, eggs, meats, music, margaritas, pie, and "Rangoon crêpes".



Though not as flavorful, purchased crepes work well with this recipe

### SWEET AND SOUR DRIZZLE

- 1 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon cornstarch

### CREPES

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

### FILLING

- 1 8oz pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 6 green onions, trimmed and thinly sliced.  
keep white and green portions separate
- 1 5oz pkg. baby spinach
- 6 oz. fresh jumbo lump crabmeat, drained

### SWEET AND SOUR DRIZZLE:

1 Whisk together all ingredients in a small bowl until smooth. Loosely cover and heat in a microwave on high for 30 seconds or until slightly thickened. Remove from heat and set aside.

### CREPES:

1 Combine flour and salt in a bowl. Whisk together milk and eggs; slowly whisk milk mixture into flour mixture until smooth. Whisk in melted butter. Cover and let stand 30 minutes.

2 Heat a lightly oiled 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Measure a scant 1/4 cup batter into center of pan and quickly tilt so batter coats the bottom in a thin layer. Cook until set and just beginning to crisp at the edges, about 1 1/2 minutes. Turn and cook for 20 seconds; transfer to a plate. Cover with a paper towel. Repeat with remaining batter to form 8 crepes, layering with paper towel to prevent sticking.

### FILLING:

1 Stir together cream cheese, garlic powder, red pepper, and milk until smooth. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add white portion of green onions; sauté 2 minutes or until softened. Add spinach. Cook, stirring, 2 minutes or until spinach has just wilted. Add reserved cream cheese mixture; reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring, until mixture is hot. Gently fold in crab; cook, stirring gently, 1 minute or until crab is warm. Remove from heat and adjust with salt to taste.

2 To assemble, dollop one side of each crepe with about 1/4 cup filling and roll jellyroll style or fold into quarters. Drizzle with Sweet and Sour Sauce (thin as desired with water), garnish with remaining sliced green onions, and cracked black pepper.

YIELD: 8 CREPES

## CHERRY TARTS (FAIRVIEW, PTA)

BY CHRISTINA WARD, CHRISTINAWARD.NET

This recipe is peak early seventies fake-haute cuisine. They are neither tarts nor tortes. While descended from traditional Viennese nut desserts, these are wholly American in execution.

### Cherry Tarts (Fairview PTA)

3/2 cup butter or oleo. 3 oz. cream cheese  
1 cup sifted flour Water-1 Tbsp. or more

Mix together like pie crust. Sprinkle water as needed. Shape into 24 small 1 1/4 inch balls. Shape into tiny muffin pans or cupcake, fill about 2/3 full and top each with large maraschino cherry. Bake at 375 for 18 minutes.

### Filling:

1 beaten egg 1 cup chopped nuts  
1 cup Brown Sugar 1 tsp. Vanilla

Or any filling you like, lemon, cherry, etc.

Years after my grandmother Ward died, I visited the semi-abandoned farmhouse where I spent the best days of my life. The house was used by uncles, cousins, and friends as a bolthole during hunting season before it became a nuisance and had to be torn down. Farm folk know that it's the land and not the house that holds the value. Much of the house remained as it was the day she died, as if encased in aspic to slow the eventual decay. I rooted around packing up odd items that flooded my brain with happy memories: the homemade refrigerator magnets, incomplete crocheted and sewing projects, the saltbox that was supposed to have come over to Salem, Massachusetts, with Capt. Miles Ward in the 1620s. (It's not that old, early 1800s at best.) I also took her recipe box.

The box was filled with hand-written recipes exchanged among neighboring farms and through letters sent to friends and relatives scattered across the country. Some were typed onto a notecard. Those were the special recipes. The good recipes. The ones that earned their place of honor and rendered into type, not scrawled on the back of an envelope. I know where Gramma got this recipe. It came from--Clara Swenson.

Mrs. Swenson lived about a mile down the road. We'd walk there and sit in the Swenson's kitchen while the ladies talked and smoked cigarettes with their coffee. Mrs. Swenson was considered a Very Good Baker and while these particular mini-pies were popularized by Kraft-branded cookbooks, Mrs. Swenson's version is a little different. Note the crust isn't a pre-made, roll-out crust, but an actual pastry crust. The recipe is versatile. It has to be because isolated farm wives often had to punt and find creative substitutes for missing ingredients. Any nut will do. This particular recipe makes me smile as experienced bakers will recognize it for what it is: an invocation, a suggestion, a map to a potential dessert. No nuts; use fruit. Make a lemon curd. Make a pastry cream. Whatever, you'll figure it out. Just make sure it pairs well with coffee and cigarettes. \*

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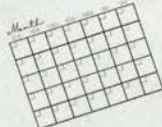
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**WRDSMTH STREET ARTIST DREAMS BIG  
 WITH INSPIRING TYPEWRITER MURALS**

BY MOLLY SNYDER



For years, L.A.-based street artist Phil Brody - known for his murals of typewriters and uplifting messages - went by the moniker "WRDSMTH."

"After a while, I decided to stop hiding my name because I believe in what I do so there was no reason to be anonymous," says Brody.

Brody, a professional writer, approached street art knowing nothing about it. He just knew he needed a break from spending six to 10 hours a day in front of a computer screen and wanted to pursue a new hobby.

"I was always in awe of street art, but never saw myself doing it," says Brody. "When I decided to try visual art, I thought I'd make something small and word-based. I immediately imagined a vintage typewriter in my mind."

Through the internet and practice, Brody taught himself everything he needed to know to create street art like spray painting techniques and stencil creation.

"I started falling in love with the idea of very big, very bright pieces of art," says Brody. "All I want is for people to stop, think and maybe put a smile on their face."

Today, Brody has thousands of art pieces and several hundred large-scale murals located all over the world. Much of his work includes a typewriter with positive messages on a piece of paper like "Give it your best every single day and don't be hard on yourself come nightfall" and "Aspire to inspire others and the universe will take note."

"The funny part to me is I'm now getting read every day, all over the world. I'm living the writer's dream as a street artist," he says.

Brody was born in Cleveland and grew up in Chicago where he later worked in advertising. "I was a cliché: I was getting paid a lot but I wasn't happy and it was eating me up," he says.

Thus, Brody decided to move to California and work on creative writing projects. His family was initially perplexed by his decision, but soon after he published a novel and a short film script and they stopped questioning his career change.

But when Brody told them he was going to be a full-time street artist, they had concerns again.

"They thought I was going to end up in prison," says Brody.

But, alas, Brody was not incarcerated, instead he was invigorated and says he's happier than he's ever been.

"I'm enjoying the journey now. That's how I measure success these days," he says. "When I'm old and sitting on my porch someday I won't think to myself, 'I really shouldn't have chased my dream when I was young.' You have to take chances; dream big."

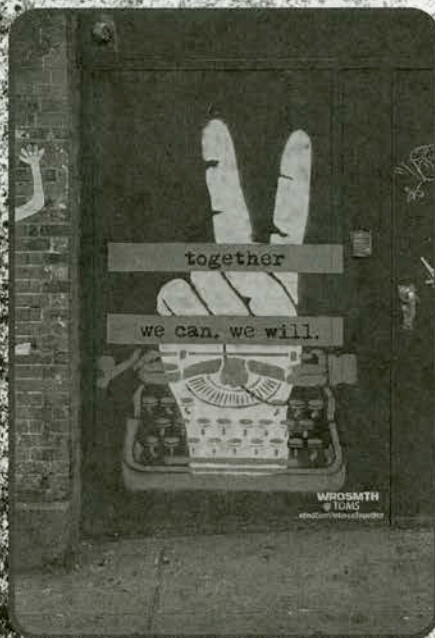
Brody attributes part of his success as a street artist to the creation of Instagram, an image-based social media platform that is ideal for exposing his work.

"Instagram has helped us live in a time when street art is finally applauded," he says.

Brody currently has 113,000 followers on Instagram ([INSTAGRAM.COM/WRDBMTH](https://www.instagram.com/wrdbmth)) and enjoys corresponding with page followers.

"I love talking to people and pondering what we're all doing to make the most of our lives on this big blue marble," he says.

QWERTYFEST MKE hopes to bring Phil Brody to Milwaukee in the summer of 2024 to participate in the festival as well as create a Milwaukee-specific typewriter mural.



## SWITCHES, BUTTONS, AND LEVERS: NEW BOOK BY JASON PUSKAR EXPLORES THE EVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY TECHNOLOGY

by Tea Krulos

*Professor Jason Puskar of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has been a great friend of QWERTYFEST MKE and QWERTY Quarterly. He gave a presentation at QF on the history of the QWERTY keyboard and Christopher Latham Sholes, the Milwaukeean who configured it. In our last issue of QQ, Puskar analyzed a letter typed by Sholes in 1869 on a typewriter prototype and he's been helpful in brainstorming and making connections.*

*We're thrilled to talk with Puskar about his new book, The Switch: An On and Off History of Digital Humans. This fascinating book delves into technology from telegraphs to touchscreens — technology we don't really think much about, but that we use constantly in everyday life.*

**QQ: What started you on the path of researching switches and buttons?**

I think it was probably having kids, and watching their strange attraction to switches and buttons. They would have murdered each other to be the first one to push the elevator button, but when you think about it, just pushing a button or flipping a switch is not really a very interesting activity. It's undramatic, and the same thing happens every time. But it was clear that it meant something important to kids, and I wondered if it meant something important to adults too. And I think it does.

When a child pushes the button to summon an elevator, it's true that not much happens right away, but they understand that after a few seconds they have somehow summoned a magic room that can transport them to completely different places. Now



*An On and Off History  
of  
Digital Humans*

JASON PUSKAR

that's something! And if you think about children and what they can do—well, they can't do much. They can't drive, cook, they're uncoordinated, their drawings basically all suck (let's be real here), and the few things they can do well, like destroy stuff, we forbid them to do. And anything they try to do takes huge effort too, so it's all very hard work for them, with very low returns. Then suddenly here's this magic room that they can summon instantly, with no effort, and transport the whole family elsewhere! What kid wouldn't want to experience that little jolt of mastery and power? And in the long run, I eventually thought, what adult wouldn't want that too.

**QQ: The QWERTY layout happened so long ago— why do we continue to use it in this digital age?**

It's like the four-foot tall front wheel on a tall Victorian bike, except that in this case we're still using it. There are undoubtedly better ways, but even though we figured that out with bicycles we never quite did with keyboards. There's always a temptation to talk about keyboards in utilitarian terms, as if we had no choice to use the most efficient option. But why should that be the case? We don't do that with fashion, after all. Why do men wear neck ties? It makes no sense from any practical perspective, but we do it because our fathers did it, and their fathers did it, and their fathers did it. It became part of our culture, so we keep transmitting it forward. Or women's high heels are another example. This is the worst

possible shoe a person could imagine, but for some reason we decided we liked them, so we keep using them. Or wine glasses with tall stems. We'd be much better off without them! I think QWERTY is really part of this world of aesthetic expression, and not really a utilitarian machine destined to find its most efficient form. I love the irony that aesthetic forms are the most changeable of all – they never have to be any particular way – but like ties or wine glasses, somehow the non-utilitarian nature of the form is exactly what ensures that it stays.

**QQ: Other than the QWERTY, what have you found to be some major milestone key, lever, switch developments?**

It's hard to identify a first switch, but the Morse telegraph key is close. But even before that there were two really crucial sources that are something like the great, great, great (and so on) grandparents of all of our switches: gun triggers and musical keys. Gun triggers—and crossbow triggers even before that—are also binary, in that they release stored energy in an all-or-nothing way, all at once, and with the touch of a finger. Early organ keys dating back to classical Greece are similar: they retrieve a pre-programmed musical note from the full array of possible pitches, instantly and with no groping for precisely the right pitch.

So guns and organs – these are the violent father and artsy mother of many of the switches we know today. And you can still see the family resemblance. In photography, we press a shutter button and “shoot” a photograph, or “trigger” a flash, and many early cameras were shaped like guns. The first wireless TV remote control was shaped like a pistol, and you had to aim and fire it at the set. The organ, on the other hand, influenced the keyboards we use today, and in fact most nineteenth-century writing machines before the Type-Writer had some sort of musical keyboard for an interface. As for other milestones, electrification allowed for huge leaps in automation and ease of operation. So did the virtual buttons that started appearing on Graphical User Interfaces in the 1980s and 1990s. But mostly what impresses me is the wide range of applications of switches throughout the twentieth century, especially.

**QQ: We think of technology development as being good, but did you encounter cases where**

**that might be questionable?**

A lot of it is really regrettable, actually. This book is not a love story for the switch, I'm sorry to say, though switching does have many beneficial functions too. On balance, though, I think switches fuel fantasies of mastery and domination in the people who use them, because they start to take for granted the apparent extent of their own power. I also think they're hyper-individualizing, in that they make it seem like action is less an interactive process involving lots of different people and things, and more like a single result coupled to a single person who compels it. So in that way, switches are ideological or political, because they shape our consciousness of how people are, and how they should be. They're little engines of individualist doctrine, by helping us take our apparent but not actual independence for granted. After all, we're dependent on switches to feel independent a lot of the time.

**QQ: Can you tell us a takeaway you hope people get from the book?**

Our technologies act back upon us, shaping our conceptions of ourselves so profoundly that they even help define what it means to be human. For example, I wear glasses, have a mouth full of dental fillings, and a knee held together by titanium screws. Without these mechanical aids, I couldn't read, wouldn't have many teeth for chewing, and would struggle to get around on my own two feet. But with them, I feel great, and as long as I forget that I'm dependent on these mechanical helpers I feel really independent, strong, and capable. My point is that switches do something similar for us, but even more invisibly than the prosthetics that make me into an able-bodied human. They're like mirrors that reflect back an image of ourselves at twice our actual size. So even though we think switches just sit there passively, waiting for our touch, they're always acting back upon us too.

*The Switch: An On and Off History of Digital Humans* was published in November 2023 by University of Minnesota Press, [www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/the-switch](http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/the-switch)

## Cardigans and the Galaxie

Story and illustration by Andrew Tyra

We stared at the cobbler's shop through the passenger's side window. The lights were on and the shopkeep was moving around inside wearing a thickly knit cardigan sweater. The sign still read closed as it had for months but there he was, sweeping the floor under fluorescent lights. In fact, Aral's Shoe Repair had been closed for nearly two years. I knew because I looked on my route to and from work. Now there was smoke coming from the rooftop flue.

I turned down the heat and tapped my foot on the floor mat uncontrollably. Miguel handed me a Pica Fresa candy and unwrapped one for himself. He seemed uncharacteristically calm. Delighted even.

“I drove past yesterday and he waved at me,” Miguel confessed.

“The cobbler?!”

“He came outside waving all wild and we talked for a long time.”

“I can't believe you're *just now* telling me this. You could've told me at The Gyro Stand.”

“David...”

“You could have texted me a million times!”

“You would come if I told you where we were going. Aral needed some things and I wanted to help him.”

He paused and looked away.

“And his sister wants to talk to us.”

I feigned laughter as I brewed up a massive panic attack.

Miguel unbuckled his seatbelt and lifted a paper bag from the back seat to his lap. It made a clinking sound like bottles tapping.

“It's alright,” he said and opened the door to the cold.

He was already talking to the shopkeep, Aral, on the stoop by the time I got out of the car. The vapor from their breath puffed and faded.

“David! Come inside!” the sweated shopkeep said when he saw me.

The place smelled good with whiffs of wood smoke. The boot shelves and the coat tree were bare. Only the muffled sounds from the next room and the cobbler himself — with his long white hair and green trucker cap — remained the same.

He grabbed my shoulders and smiled but his conviviality didn't soften my anxiety about what happened before and what might happen next.

Miguel set down a handful of cash and coins on the countertop.

"Here's your change," he said, "I got pretty much everything on your list."

Aral was inspecting a smaller cardboard box containing narrow black spools I knew to be typewriter ribbons.

Miguel continued, "I bought all the ribbons they had but I couldn't find Gnorkle Wax. I don't think we have that here. Also, they didn't have the kind of bourbon you wanted so I got a different one."

"This is perfect. I thank you much much," Aral said, beaming at the spools and cradling the bourbon, "Keep the change."

On a shelf below the counter was a vintage typewriter that I recognized as a Smith-Corona Galaxie Blue, only it had been customized to type multicolored symbols with its keys. On the next shelf was a tall stack of board games and puzzles with a box of dominoes on top.

"Hot toddies!" Aral the cobbler said as he hustled the cargo into the next room, leaving the door open.

From the open door drifted the perfume of caramelized cheese, bergamot, cinnamon and baking bread complemented by the sweet sound of Leon Russell. Walking into the room I recognized a small elf-like female I'd seen before. She was in a hammock with three green-skinned goblin friends, snoring under layers of blankets. Near them was a crackling wood stove that supported an iron pot of bubbling cheese and a tea kettle. Beside that was a long table stocked with nearly everything worthy of being dipped and devoured. I might have sprinted for the cheese cauldron had I not seen my nemesis standing there.

Verda stood over a table crowded with pastries and strange fruits, cutting a slice from a crumble-clad pie with a silver dagger. She paused when she saw me. Her expression was lighthearted but the rest of her

still resembled the lithe assassin — with her spikes of silver hair and menacing eyebrows — who hunted me in my nightmares. I was sure she was reaching for my throat when she cupped my face in her hands. Miguel braced for impact when she did the same to him.

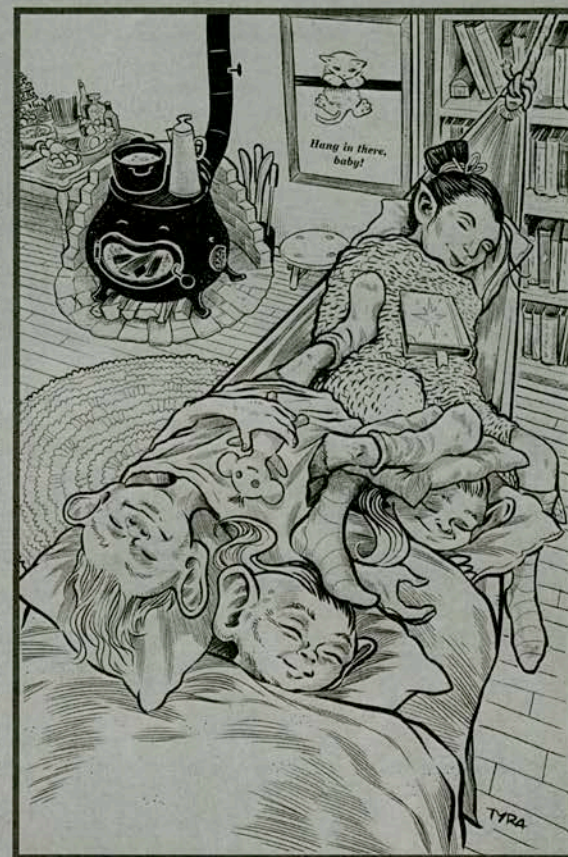
"I am...regret... that I troubled you. I no longer wish to crush your bones or reshape you into dogs," she said with a surprising amount of tenderness.

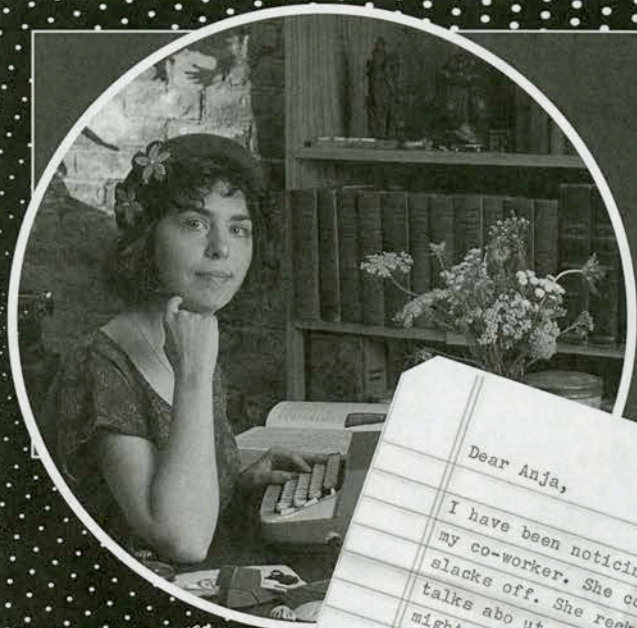
"Or worms," she added.

"But she might tell you the story of the blood ogre who burned their warclub in the campfire," Aral chimed in with an inside joke that drew a smirk from his sister.

That night Miguel and I were treated to our own hand-knit cardigans and an ample amount of what Aral called *hygge*, the act of healing each other with friendship, comfort and cheese.

*Andy Tyra is the author of Caverns Below Milwaukee, an illustrated fantasy novella that takes place in a mystical realm underneath the Brew City. More info: andytyra.com.*





# ASK ANJA

Dear Anja,

I have been noticing some odd behavior from my co-worker. She constantly disappears & slacks off. She reeks of copper. All she talks about are necks, mainly mine. I might be overthinking things but when I offered her some garlic bread she complained to Jenny in HR. They took her side and now I am locked in the basement with a lot of caskets. Can you help me?

Goodness gracious!

You send me a pigeon with a note but you don't provide a name or an address? What the heck am I supposed to do exactly? Follow this bird by drone? Microchip its neck? (Sorry, I sounds like you're in it deep but good thing you have a typewriter down there. Maybe you should try using those ciphers as a typing table during the daylight hours? Your chatter will give those blood suckers some serious insomnia and soon they'll be way too tortured to think about food. If they get aggressive tell them you're writing a memoir about your time at the company and they will grow way too curious to hear what you have to say about them.

Manipulate, manipulate, manipulate!  
Now lose my address,  
Anja

*need advice?*

WRITE: DEAR ANJA C/O VOYAGEUR BOOK SHOP  
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## QQ FUN PAGES

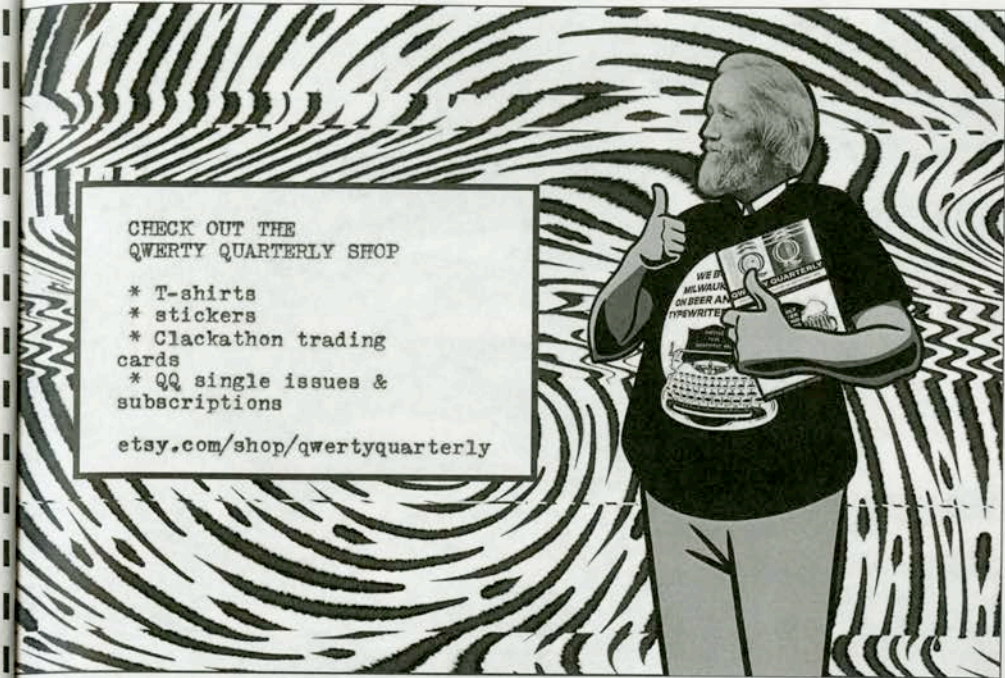
SNOW DAY EDITION



Paper Dolls & Snow Day List by Alicia Krupsky

# SNOW DAY IDEAS

- |                          |  |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | snowball fight                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | paint your nails                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | build competing snow forts                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | change the strings on your guitar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | twilight marathon                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | start a living room dance party   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | read one of your many unread books         | <input type="checkbox"/> | draw a comic                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | start a fight over a board game            | <input type="checkbox"/> | make hot chocolate                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | make snow angels                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | watch a documentary               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | catch up on a favorite show                | <input type="checkbox"/> | polish the rocks you collected    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | invent a new language                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | plan your summer festival list    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | dungeons & dragons                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | take a nap                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | catch up on late homework                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | do yoga in the hallway            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | reward yourself with video games           | <input type="checkbox"/> | clean your shower                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | create a box castle                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | thumb wrestling tournament        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | teach your cat how to shake paws           | <input type="checkbox"/> | sit under a sun lamp              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | bake sugar cookies                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | cuddle with your dog              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | paint a painting (or a wall...)            | <input type="checkbox"/> | film a comedy sketch              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | take a hot bath                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | meditate                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | plot mischievous schemes                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | call your representatives         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | put on your favorite socks                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | play a few rounds of chess        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | do your laundry                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | update your devices               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | charades                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | play some vinyls                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | powerpoint party                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | fix the buttons on your coat      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | surprise pillow fight                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | call your mother                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | clean the fish tank                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | hang up that artwork              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | fire up jackbox                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | send your friend a cursed meme    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | make a snowman                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | trim your beard                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | work on your passion project               | <input type="checkbox"/> | start a jam sesh                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | crochet some doilies                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | write a letter                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | knit a scarf                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | have breakfast for dinner         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | embroider a sweater                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | give your partner a massage       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | cross-stitch profanities                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | howl at the moon                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | organize your magic cards                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | put on a face mask                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | finally learn how to play pokemon          | <input type="checkbox"/> | pull a playful prank              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | update your calendar                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | call your friends and go sledding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | live stream a dj set                       |                          |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | steal stuff from your sibling on minecraft |                          |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | try a new makeup look                      |                          |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | do a handstand against a wall              |                          |                                   |



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## SAVE THE DATE

**QWERTYFEST MKE, JUNE 21-23, 2024**

**Friday, June 21:** Opening Night Gala at  
Turner Hall Ballroom

**Saturday, June 22:** Presentations and  
Workshops at Mitchell Street Arts

**Sunday, June 23:** Activities at Various Locations

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