

2021 - Happy New Year from the Brotherton's - 2022

I think it's hard to imagine that all of the experiences we've shared as a family really happened in the same year. To think I've only been an adult for 6 months is kind of wild. All in all, though, I think that I'm ready to say good-bye to the year that I graduated in and start this new year.

My mother is teaching music and is going to retire about the same time that I finish my undergrad. She is also happy to share a fourth Christmas with Chiqui, or as I call him, 'The prick', who she adopted just a few days before Christmas in front of an American Furniture Warehouse - funny story. Once she sets her mind on something, she surely sees it through. Similarly, the same thing happened when she decided she wanted her own camping trailer a few years back, and we were sad to see it sold last summer. Somehow more sad than she was. She's already set her mind on getting a class B or drivable camper—what she wanted from the start, really. Over the summer, to my demise, she left without me to see North Carolina and spent time with her old bass professors from the HARID Conservatory. I'm always impressed with how well she keeps in touch with all of her old colleagues. It's something that she kind of shines at, I guess. Additionally, she went off to Washington (can't tell you which one) to see her older sister Uchy and her cousin. Apparently, they tried the best ice cream that Washington had to offer, because as soon as she got home, she bought Häagen-Dazs raisin rum ice cream for me to try. It *was* pretty good but, you know, I'm sure I could have more of a cultured opinion on the ice cream if I went and tried the real deal. In Chicago on another trip, she visited her younger brother Antonio. Especially exciting news is that her baby sister, Lore, is pregnant. I have to admit that I am very curious about what kind of a person they will be. My mom will be travelling to Colombia this coming summer to meet the baby.

Meanwhile, my father seems to be living the dream. He's the kind of guy who's happiest when he's planning something, and *has* he been planning something. Full of light in his eyes, my mom and I listen to his daily updates on the house he's building Pueblo. He's pumped to build out a studio for his racing games and music, a small air strip for his radio-controlled airplanes, and what he seems most excited about, his *sewage tank*, he is just joy all-around... He's especially proud of the research he's been doing into making the house net zero. He's found this hemp concrete, or "hempcrete" as he likes to call it that sounds especially promising. Our boy, Lucky the Golden Retriever is out with him every other weekend, and they keep each other warm in twelve-degree weather after a good day's work. Besides that, he likes to take pride in all of his *life changing* kitchen gadgets he finds on Amazon. I'll give him some credit, his vision for the instant pot might just go somewhere. Besides that, I got the three of us tickets to see one of my favorite comedians, Fluffy, at the Ball Center (Pepsi Center). He and I are returning there in March to see Dua Lipa. I mean, how exciting, right? Otherwise, I do my due diligence as a daughter and nudge him to see his old buddies more and call his sister. I like seeing him happy, and I can't wait to do more than picture him on the deck of the future home, reading, building, planning...

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Enough about those boomers and let me tell you about myself. I just started college at University of Denver as a major in Computer Science and Music Performance - which is honestly a miracle considering my indecisive personality. I couldn't be more ecstatic than senior year is over. Not because of what COVID did to it - sleeping right until the minute before school started and eating breakfast in my bathrobe while listening to the lecture? Wouldn't trade it for anything. The amount of hoops they get you to jump through to land a college application from when school starts to December even was enough to break more than one's morale. Now, I'm a hard worker - applied to free application day, FAFSA, all my scholarships, and the Common App all on time. I did my due diligence emailing these admissions people. That was all hard and good, but I knew the college spirit was really testing me when I had to reapply financially and academically for the music departments along with all of the audition tapes and rounds. Luckily, every place managed to figure out how to run virtual auditions, and in my experience, it was pretty smooth. In my opinion, I think it just made prom and graduation much more deserved. I had the coolest time putting together a senior video. But anyway, I'm loving my time at DU - the food is great, the people are great, and I've made great memories in all of the ensembles.

Hope to hear from you,

Annabella Maria and Jeff

