

IN NEWSLETTER ILLIASS'

I liked this cover + had
all the letters I needed so
I just kept it! Sorry!!

JUL
2024
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MÄR
2025

vol. 4

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some ducks we saw
on our kayak ride
around the
arboretum in
September



In late September/early October, I made the whole Summer section of this newsletter, but never quite got it together to print/ship. And then in Autumn I did not to any thinking about this project at all. So the Summer pages were designed and made at the end of the summer, but the Autumn pages are entirely reconstructions of memories. I don't know what happened this past Fall + I cannot be held accountable for it!!!

NOTES FROM SUMMER QUAR- TER

Monthly Mountains



In July, Juno's family came to Seattle to visit and they drove us out to Mt Rainier. We took the Skyline Trail to Panorama Point, but I don't think we made it all the way there? The trail went through a number of snow fields, and it was

very hard to tell where we were supposed to go without any trail markings or ability to see the ground. Juno did this hike 10 years ago, but in August rather than July, and apparently that month makes a huge difference in landscape. She remembered a lot of beautiful flowers, and we did not see any flowers. :(



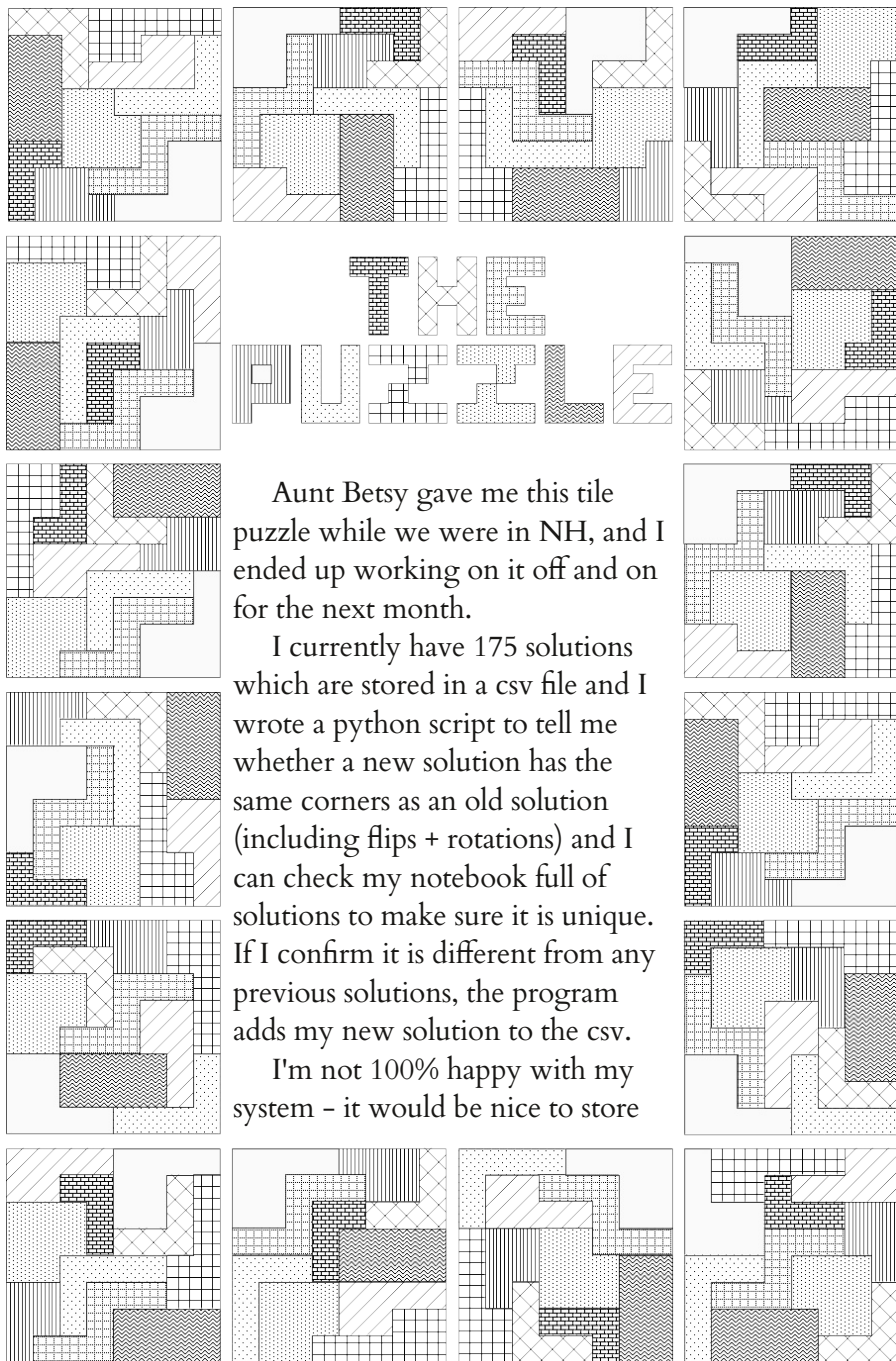
In August, we went to visit my family in New Hampshire. While we were there, Juno wanted to climb Mt. Monadnock, and my father agreed to come with us. It was hard! We took the White Dot trail, the most direct route to the summit, and it was

2 miles to the summit with 1,700 feet of elevation gain. There were a lot of places where we had to use our hands to scramble up rocks. It was also pretty hot + made my ankles and knees and hips and calves and thighs hurt. But I'm glad we did it. It was a nice time. Almost all of it was in the woods which was very beautiful.

Little Si is not its own mountain, but a bluff on Mt. Si that you can climb to the summit of. Juno climbed it earlier in September with her partner Ness, and she wanted to go back, so we went up via the Trailhead Shuttle on the last day



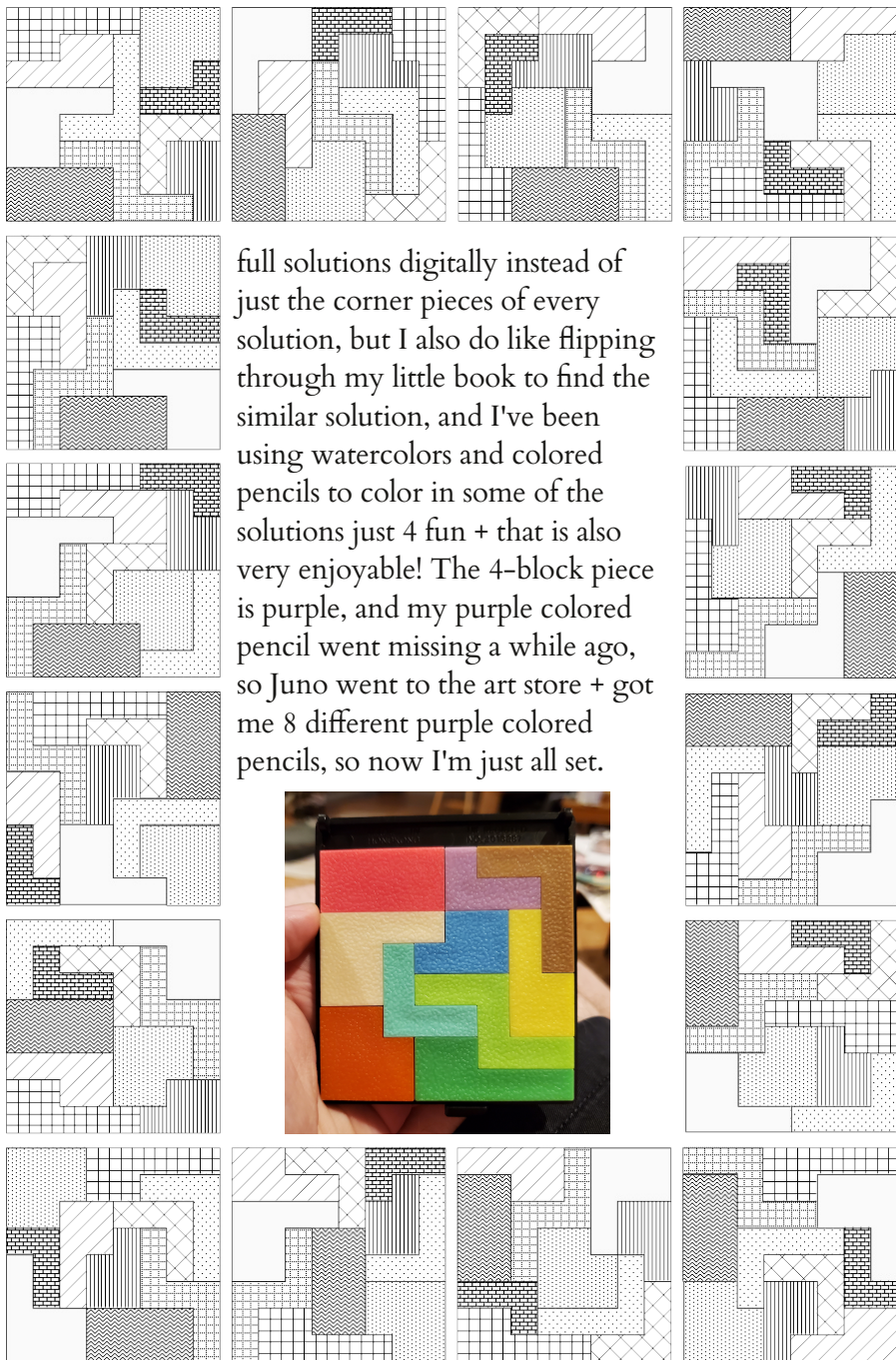
it was running. It was a very beautiful overcast day, and unlike Mt. Rainier, the whole thing is below the tree line so there were so many beautiful mosses and ferns and trees and decomposing stumps. Also I used a branch as a walking stick which did help with balance, though certainly by the end my feet hurt a lot.



Aunt Betsy gave me this tile puzzle while we were in NH, and I ended up working on it off and on for the next month.

I currently have 175 solutions which are stored in a csv file and I wrote a python script to tell me whether a new solution has the same corners as an old solution (including flips + rotations) and I can check my notebook full of solutions to make sure it is unique. If I confirm it is different from any previous solutions, the program adds my new solution to the csv.

I'm not 100% happy with my system - it would be nice to store



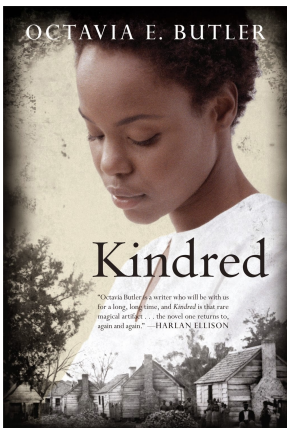
full solutions digitally instead of just the corner pieces of every solution, but I also do like flipping through my little book to find the similar solution, and I've been using watercolors and colored pencils to color in some of the solutions just 4 fun + that is also very enjoyable! The 4-block piece is purple, and my purple colored pencil went missing a while ago, so Juno went to the art store + got me 8 different purple colored pencils, so now I'm just all set.



This is a short one because honestly this summer was rough! I went to the Seattle Municipal Archives every week and worked on a fun project cataloging the city's published budgets. They had most of the budgets in the collection already, but they were all titled "Budget" or sometimes "Adopted Budget" or "Proposed Budget" without any indication of which year's budget they were. I went through and fixed the records for all of the existing budgets and capital improvement plans - probably around 100 in all - and then added a bunch of new budgets from the budget office. It was a tedious process, especially because the budgets already in the collection were spread out in at least 25 boxes. But it was more focused than the rest of the work I've done there. It felt good to have a project that was smaller than "catalog all of these documents." I was able to measure my progress better. But doing that once a week, while fun, did not provide enough stimulation. I made a focused effort to leave the house every day, but I still spent a lot of time lying on the sofa feeling bad.

NOTES FROM AUTUMN QUAR- TER

SOME BOOKS I READ IN AUTUMN



Kindred - Octavia Butler

Juno watches a lot of movies that are disturbing and violent and sad, but which she likes because they're good. I am not a person who feels that impulse. I don't like to be sad and I don't like to be upset and it is extremely rare that I think a work of fiction is good enough to overcome that instinct in myself.

Obviously this book is very good + also gut-wrenching + disturbing. I felt bad basically the whole time I was reading it. "I have had a supernatural experience that no one will believe" is a trope that makes me Extremely anxious, and that was the least upsetting thing in this book. Both that feeling as well as the lack of control which the time travel imposes on all of the characters are powerfully evocative of the book's themes. I dunno - I feel like there's really nothing new for me to add to conversation around this book.

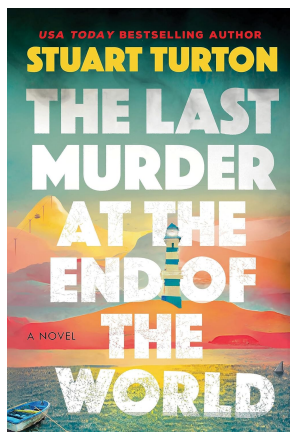
It was really up in the air whether I would finish it or not and I am glad that I did, though I'm also glad I stopped halfway through to read a plot synopsis like for a horror movie.

The Friend Zone Experiment – Zen Cho

Very different from *Sorcerer to the Crown*, the last Zen Cho series I read, but very fun! It is a rom com abt SE Asian immigrants in London and their relationships to their families back home. I was surprised by the change in tone + genre from the author's previous work, but it's very straight down the middle for This genre + I had a good time.



The Last Murder at the End of the World – Stuart Turton



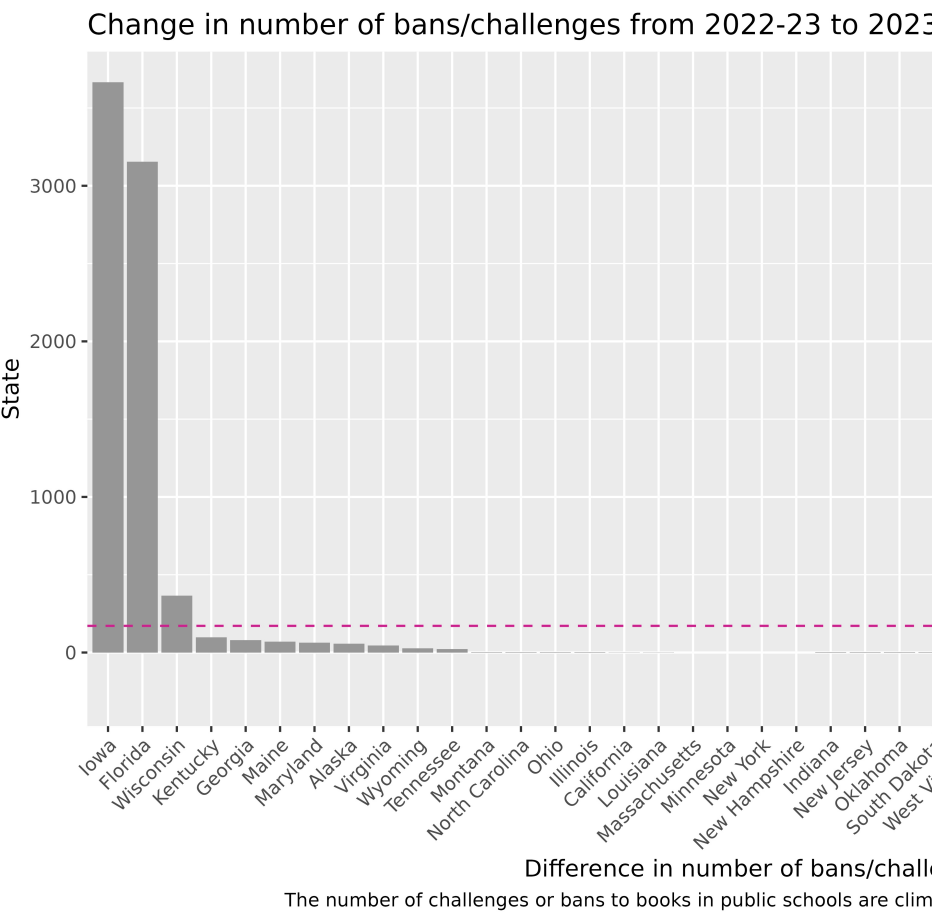
1. I did enjoy this book – it's a little too complicated: a lot of "well yeah this person did stab this other person but it wasn't the Killing Blow."
2. Juno + I just had a conversation about how she thinks apocalyptic stories are fundamentally cowardly, which I get + she's probably Right, but I enjoyed this one anyway.

3. Extremely bold to have your murder mystery narrated by a narrator who literally lives in everyone's brain + is the only person who knows what happened. It does mostly work, I think, which is! Impressive!

4. This book is Weirdly heteronormative for a utopia where they are Constantly talking about their in vitro gestation process.

Here's a Graph I Made

I took a data science class this quarter where mostly we learned how to use R, which I hadn't done since, like, my second year of college. I really enjoyed messing around with the data, but mostly I learned that data visualization is Extremely Hard Actually.

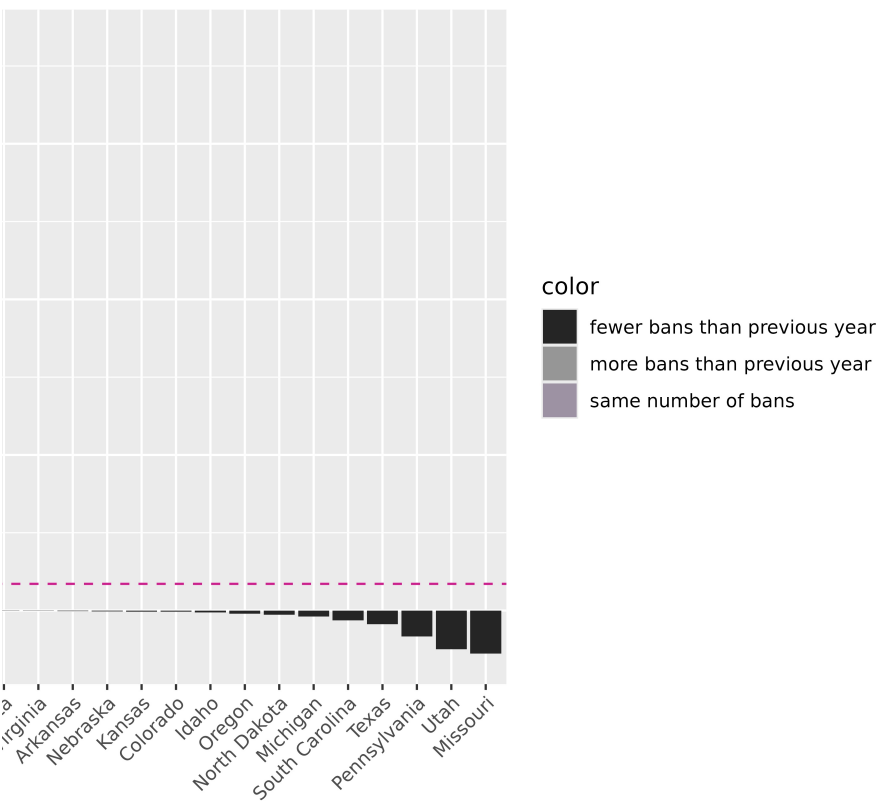


This is a graph I made for my final project - a blog post analyzing some banned book data from PEN America. The most interesting thing about the data to me was how the things that were happening in Florida, etc., were wildly out of proportion with the rest of the country.

This graph hopefully should be self explanatory, but the blog post I wrote with my classmate Sasha is here if you are interested:

<https://medium.com/@sashapow/what-did-pen-america-leave-out-0ddd2511138e>

3-24 school years



enges
bing more slowly than average in all but three states.

Ilias's tea recommendations for any time of day:

Morning:

In the mornings I have what Juno calls Early Grey - it is Earl Grey but I have it in the morning so it's early. Any black tea will do, really, The ones I usually have are Cream Earl Grey which includes some vanilla flavor (apparently. I couldn't tell you) and also some cornflower petals but I have heard that is just for looks. I have it with milk. It is the tea I have most consistently bc Juno drinks coffee every morning + we use the same water for tea.

Afternoon:

At any point during the middle of the day if I want tea it's Genmaicha time.

Evening:

I have never noticed any particular reaction to caffeine, but I'm always telling Juno that she shouldn't drink coffee at 5pm so for the sake of consistency I usually drink herbal tea at night. We often like mint tea, but I've been getting into Greek Mountain Tea now that I have some that is unflavored otherwise. Our previous teas that are primarily sideritis include specifically licorice flavor which I'm not into!

NOTES FROM WINTER QUAR- TER

CAPSTONE

This past quarter, I mostly worked on our capstone project. I am working with 3 friends (Alina, Alex, and Josh) and the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library (WTBBL) to inventory and create a digital preservation plan for the Evergreen Radio Reading Service (ERRS) Archive.

WHAT IS WTBBL???

The Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) is a program of the Washington State Library, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State. Located in Seattle, WTBBL provides library services state-wide, at the library and by mail, to any Washington resident unable to read standard print material due to blindness, visual impairment, DeafBlindness, physical disability (cannot hold a book or turn pages), or reading disability.

from the WTBBL website

WHAT IS ERRS???

The Evergreen Radio Reading Service (ERRS) was a 24 hour radio program that ran from 1973 to 2011 and provided a variety of services. They would read several Washington State newspapers on the air every day for people who couldn't read a print copy. They had a variety of shows where volunteers would read magazine articles about a particular topic, and call-in shows where community members could call in to discuss something. They also played music and did interviews with authors and community leaders.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING???

WHAT IS THE ERRS ARCHIVE???

When the ERRS was shut down in 2011 for budget reasons, all of the materials used in the show's production were put into storage, where they have been living ever since. The archive consists of 928 open reel-to-reel tapes, 60 audio cassette tapes, and 1714 optical discs as well as several years worth of born-digital materials (~10,000 files). While it's currently housed in climate-controlled shelving, much of it spent some years in a parking garage, and there is substantial risk of loss due to material degradation as well as the obsolescence of the formats. WTTBL are also thinking about any way to republish this material for their current members, and any republishing would require digitization.

So we're creating a digital preservation plan. The physical collection has been largely inventoried, though because of degradation none of the tapes have been played, so the current catalog is based entirely off the tapes' labels, which are not bad but also far from exhaustive. Step one is to inventory the digital collection and determine if there's any overlap with the physical collection. Then we need to research the process of magnetic tape media preservation to determine exactly how the digitization process will work, estimate how long it will take and what resources will be required. We'll be identifying grants that could facilitate the digitization process, and looking into copyright restrictions on the materials

Did you know?

There are radio reading services all over the country, and probably one near where you live!

WRITING ABOUT

Professional Book Review

In 1899, on the eve of the Great Exhibition in Moscow, the Trans-Siberian Express begins a journey across the Wastelands, an alien terrain of unspeakable wonders and horrors that covers much of what used to be Russia. The crossing is dangerous and fraught with superstition, but the train is an impenetrable fortress comprising the only direct route from Moscow to Beijing for cargo and passengers. On its last journey, however, something went wrong and no one can remember what happened.

Now, the passengers and crew must solve their own mysteries while grappling with the truth of the last voyage and whether the train is as impenetrable as they've always been told. This thrilling debut from Sarah Brooks is an exploration of the

world beyond our understanding perfect for fans of Piranesi and Roadside Picnic.

 a review you might see in an industry magazine

an annotation you might find in a book list 

a review you might make on a social media site 

 a tweet or social media caption

Social Media Post

The Trans-Siberian Express carries passengers and cargo across the alien Wastelands, where it has always protected them from the environment outside. When its defenses are compromised, passengers and crew must work together to survive.

BOOKS

This was an assignment I did for my Adult Reader Services class, where we had to write several different descriptions of a book in different styles.

Annotation

Sarah Brooks' *A Cautious Traveller's Guide to the Wastelands* – Journey by train across the hostile and alien Wastelands of Siberia with a colorful cast each seeking to solve their own mysteries.

Informal Book Review

When the Trans-Siberian company announced plans to build tracks and a train to cross the Wastelands that used to be Siberia, no one thought it was a good idea. The landscape is alien, home to strange plants and animals hostile to human life. The Trans-Siberian Express, however, is a great success, and the company profits enormously from controlling the only direct route from Beijing to Moscow. Now

it carries passengers and cargo back and forth, and the journey attracts all sorts of curious tourists and scientists as well as people who want to move quickly between the two cities.

But the Wastelands are always changing, and the defenses that protected the train in the past may not be effective much longer. The latest journey from Beijing to Moscow, on the eve of Moscow's Great Exhibition carries a cast of passengers and crew with secrets of their own, all of which threaten to penetrate the train's formidable defenses.

I really liked this one! Not revolutionary by any means, but it's fun and suspenseful. Love a book set on a train, + the characters are fun and varied. Very inspired by *Roadside Picnic*, which I am always glad to be reminded of.

Some Juno Updates:

She had a birthday in March, and a party where we watched the 1998 Tsai Ming-liang movie *The Hole*, which is her favorite movie she's watched recently, and then the spiritual sequel, the 2003 adaptation of Louis Sachar's book *Holes*. It was a very good idea (of Ness's) for a double feature, but we ran out of time to finish *Holes* so we will have to find another time to do that. It was a nice party, though, and now she is 31! Very old!

Otherwise, she is much the same. Working at the climbing gym and watching movies. She's been getting into weight-lifting to improve her rock-climbing performance. We've been playing puzzle-based video games together, including *The Roottrees are Dead*, *Return of the Obra Dinn*, and *Lorelei and the Laser Eyes*.

BREAKING NEWS:

In her ongoing attempts to ease her digestive distress, Juno has almost completely stopped drinking coffee. She moved the coffee grinder off of the counter into the back of the pot cabinet next to the blender where things we don't need very often go. It's worth noting that she was previously not just drinking a cup of coffee, but ~40 oz from the French press every day. This is a huge lifestyle adjustment + we are very proud of her. She definitely complains less about her stomach hurting now than she used to.

I'm going back to posting a
full-color version online –
there's just a number of photos
in this one that look much
better in color! Please see:
countmein.neocities.org/zine

THANKS 4 READ- ING

please direct all feedback to

[redacted for online
publication]