

# A Love Letter to Iowa City

Mesarah Hnesh

Dear Iowa City,

For as long as I have been able to lace my own shoes, I have struggled to achieve a quiet mind. It has always seemed to be moving a million miles a minute with no end in sight as I attempt to cling onto a single, coherent thought. Very few things that I tried granted me the so-called “peace of mind” I had been searching for—until I discovered music and the way it comes to life. My first distinct experience of music in your city dates back to when I was about six years old. The Indigo Girls came to perform in June 2010. My mom and older sister would not shut up about it for weeks. At first, I was not all too excited about it because of how hot it gets in June. I didn’t even know who these girls were, and the only reason I went was because they promised to get me my favorite homemade lemonade. There I was, sitting on the ledge of the Old Capital, virtually melting into the cement, anticipating the start of the concert. It was not until they started performing “Power of Two” that I truly came to not only hear the music but also feel it in my bones. After this encounter, I insisted from that day on that we attend every Jazz Festival and Farmers’ Market, itching to feel the vibrations all around me. My days and years became vibrant, and, most of all, the music that surrounds showed me how to slow down and exist in the present.

Fast-forwarding to February 2025, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend a concert with my mother once again in your streets, this time at the Englert. We got to hear James Tutson perform alongside many other local artists. The energy that filled the theater was so incredibly full of life that I could not help but be taken back to my youth to the very first Indigo Girls concert. James sang an original song about coming back to Iowa City and how special it truly is here.

This most recent experience with the sounds of your city has really encapsulated my appreciation and awe of getting to call this place my home. Growing up here, you have shown me how music can bring people of all backgrounds together and form communities that defy stereotypes. The sounds that you produce mute hatred and amplify love.

Love, MH

# song of the smoke screen

Shea Winters



feel my heart            staccato  
    steps. trip over            my tongue  
            my feet pulse with the  
    bass, with the drum,            the lights—  
the floor thrums,            comes  
            alive. thrives when it is  
    trampled over. sticky            soles  
peeling off and stomping. I            hear  
            this blood rush like a            chamber  
    choir. move to            match your  
            melody. follow your            one-twos

and chase for three-fours to  
 one more song. un-  
 chained. a sway, a glide  
 far away. to empty humming  
 stalls. find rhythm with your lips  
 here. undulating hips  
 here. crescendos against the  
 walls. this forbidden note tucks  
 itself gently, behind  
 my ear. thinking  
 unclear. stumbling over which keys to  
 play. losing momentum when  
 you say the record scratch truth.  
 we cannot be seen here.  
 lost in the song of the smoke screen, we  
 blink and surrender our fire,  
 cymbal crash and tremble. pull  
 away from desire your hands, your  
 kiss. and reassemble the marching  
 band. conduct ourselves in proper  
 fashion. the tempo stutters, another  
 impulsive passion slants against itself.  
 half rests. and squirms in another muted  
 chest. I find it hard to speak here.  
 can never dream to think here. take another drink here.  
 and let it fade away.

# The Way You Looked At Me Through Music

Katie Henry

I think about the way you used to look at me a lot. It's something I grew to love, but with time, it now sends my stomach swirling in ways that leave me ready to cry for weeks. Crying tears of sadness, hope, and love to the sound of songs both joyful and devastating.

One look I'll never forget was shared between you and I on the Brothers dance floor. Bodies clustered together, hearts beating to the rhythm of the bass. I felt the sweat bead above my upper lip as you flashed me a dimpled smile that made my pulse fall out of that rhythm.

"Red Wine Supernova" by Chappell Roan started playing, and that was the moment I thought you'd be mine. Our excited looks flashed to each other as we heard the quick strums of the guitar, the synth soon humming in tune with how your lips pressed together. Our mouths moved with the lyrics as our bodies danced in sync with the beat. I could hear your voice over the sound of Chappell's—coming out a little raspy but still sounding so beautiful—and I didn't think it was possible to like anyone as much as I liked you during that song.

It felt like we had found our song—and maybe it was—but I'll never get to ask if you thought the same.

During that moment, you shared a look with me I'd never experienced before. It was filled with excitement, affection, and seduction—a look no one had come close to emulating for me before or has neared since. It was a look that made me feel wanted, and I felt it for the first time on the Brothers dance floor, dancing to Chappell Roan played by DJ Jimmy Jim.

Over time, I've seen you give others that same look—also on the Brothers dance floor, or at places like Roxxy. I've feared it, and I still

fear it. It fuels my stomach with the same swirling feeling that every other look I remember you giving me does. The looks you gave me across the aisle in the Asian Market, while getting boba at Teamo, or in my room at night. The looks mess with my head like the songs we danced to on those Thursday nights out and the one I know you chose for your senior year dance solo. The Mitski song we both adored and the one from the movie I watched for the first time with you.

The music, looks, and places we've shared them in have impacted me in ways that cloud my thoughts and make me forget there is still more to experience in places I have yet to experience.

I think about the way you used to look at me a lot, and I only hope that someday I'll be back on the Brothers dance floor, dancing along to Chappell Roan, and I'll feel that wanted by someone else.



# Straight to the Source

## AN INTERVIEW WITH TWO CANES

Maddie Zell

**I**n order to learn more about the culture of music in Iowa City, wanted to go directly to the source: a local band. Two years ago, I recall receiving an invite from one of my friends to attend a “gig” for her boyfriend’s band at Gabe’s downtown. Eagerly, I said yes, not knowing what I was getting myself into. That night was an unforgettable experience filled with energy, dancing, and a LOT of screaming.

Interwoven with brief memories from that night, I have transcribed bits of my conversational interviews with Myles, the lead singer, and Edwin, the guitarist, from the band Two Canes. Based out of Iowa City, this hard rock band captivates local audiences with their intense style, interactions with fans, and obvious passion for performing music that they love.

*Move up the stairs, follow the sounds of clamorous conversation and music on overhead speakers. Star lights twinkle above us as we move towards the lit stage. Abstract silhouettes move around us, buzzing with excitement.*

**MZ: Why did you and your band mates pick the name Two Canes?**

**MYLES:** I showed up a little bit late to the party...I was the last member of the band to be drafted, if you will, just because Chloe and Evan, our drummer and our other guitarist, had already been playing together cause they’re siblings, and of course Edwin and Evan were roommates, and then Jack was one of Chloe’s coworkers; I had just been introduced to Chloe through SCOPE productions at the University of Iowa. They just asked me on because they really needed a vocalist. I think they already had the name in place before I joined, but my understanding is it’s a play on both Two Chains, the rapper, and Raising Canes, the chicken place, so... which I think is...I mean, I can’t explain it, but it evokes the vibe we bring, for sure. I grew up in Peoria, Illinois, and I didn’t encounter Raising Cane’s until I went to Iowa.

**MZ:** When did you realize you had a connection to making music or to music?

EDWIN: I feel like I've always had a connection to music ever since I was a child. My father was really into music. He played in jazz big bands. I've always been surrounded by music. Bands like Chicago... bands like The Who... were really popular in my house. So, I feel like I've always been around music, but I always had the type of music that I liked as well. You know, I was always into heavy stuff on my own, bands like Linkin Park and other stuff when I was a little kid. But yeah, so I took that a lot into me or into adulthood rather.

*"Oh my god! Hi! I'm so glad you could make it!" Ellie found us, greeting me with a hug that jostled the vodka cran in my hand. "They're just about to start."*

**MZ:** Do you have a process for creating music (by yourself and/or with Two Canes)?

MYLES: Before I joined Two Canes, I started—and I still play, in my solo project—a lot more, like, pop-rock oriented, so normally that starts with... when I'm thinking about, like, songwriting and writing lyrics, it starts with some kind of big feeling. And I've been through therapy, it's a lot easier to process something big like that when you externalize it into something you can look at and process, and in my case, that's what I do with music, so it'll just start with writing stream of consciousness most of the time. So, usually when I write, it starts with the lyrics like that, and then I can kind of break it down into the highlights and then build a rhyme scheme off of that and then put it on top of a guitar chord progression or a piano chord progression that I like. It was a lot harder for me to start writing with Two Canes because Edwin and Evan, as we know, are total shredders, so when they write, they start with a riff that's caught in their head or a song structure that they've already written that just doesn't have words or a melody to it. It was hard for me to try and write off of whatever emotions an already existing song or chord progression evokes, but it was and has been a really fun challenge just getting to work with guys—not just guys, excuse me, cause Chloe is also a total shredder on the drums—just getting to work with other musicians who are incredibly talented and also just grew to be some of my best friends when I was in college. So yeah, once we got to know each other a lot better, we really hit our stride with songwriting and all aspects that way. EDWIN: So, with Two Canes, what we really did is we just kind of would come over with some riffs that we wrote for certain songs, right. I wrote essentially the entirety of "Eddie OG," as well as the,

oh, what's it called? "Ace," which are both songs that I wrote when I was younger. I wrote those like, at the end of high school. And we kind of adapted those for our sound, because those were like the less heavy stuff that I wrote, ever since then, I've pretty much mostly been writing disgusting metal riffs. But we kind of adapted those into Two Canes whereas I think Jack generally wrote most of the music for "Ex-Catholic Rager" and "Mouth Shut," and I wrote the guitar parts for "Mouth Shut." So, it's kind of just like we came in with the riffs. And then we kind of built everything up around that. It wasn't as much collaboration throughout the entire song structure process that some people might do. It was more like we had an idea of what we kind of were going for, and then we've kind of built the lyrics around it. And, you know, I only ever wrote the guitar stuff and everyone else can kind of write around it for their own parts, right? For, like, Chloe for the drums, and Jack for the bass, and Myles for the vocals, et cetera.

*Music so loud my eyes pulse. Screams so piercing I can feel them in my own lungs. Drinks are splashing. Occasional smoke clouds pop up in the air around us. Everyone is dancing or jumping or cheering or singing along. This is what it's all about.*

**MZ: Do you have a favorite memory from your time playing in Iowa City?**

EDWIN: There's a couple for sure. I'd say probably the best one though was probably winning the Battle of the Bands. That was really fun, playing over behind the IMU you know, kind of a random location. It was fun having a little mosh pit at the IMU with some dudes there. We also hosted a fundraiser in opposition to a bill for an anti-trans bill that Kim Reynolds was trying to push through. We had that in the basement of the James Theater, which was very fun to do. And I do not believe that anyone's allowed to do shows in the basement anymore... But yeah, we had a show down there, which is very fun, very DIY, very fun. Yeah, I'd say that those sorts of moments were, you know, it's a lot of community. It was the heart of those events, whether it was Battle of the Bands and the musical community or the activist community that we kind of hosted under the James.

*In the middle of one of their songs, the drummer breaks her left drumstick. She is not rattled; she keeps playing with the fragment in her hand. After a few beats, she tosses it behind her and slyly but swiftly picks up another, complete stick. She came prepared. Does this happen often? I wonder.*



**MZ: What makes the Iowa City music scene different from other areas?**

EDWIN: I'd say the fact that it's a college town. It really is built around people who have those sorts of experiences of, you know, being young. Obviously, most music scenes are kind of driven by the youth (to an extent) or driven by people that, you know, aren't necessarily in the latter half of their years. But I feel like in the college town especially, you get a lot more of that fresh type of look at things. I think that the Iowa City scene is also very welcoming and accepting because of that. I think that our scene has been very supportive of queer people, very supportive of people who have, you know, more outward identification that maybe wouldn't be as, I guess, "commercial" in more conservative areas. So, I feel like being in a college town, which has a lot more tolerance and a lot more of that love in that direction, is really a nice thing. And it also allows us to kind of go into places knowing that we already kind of have a community there because we are all students at the university. So, we kind of already, no matter where we are in Iowa City, we kind of have some common ground with a lot of the people who are there.

**MZ: What has been your favorite part about being a band in Iowa City?**

MYLES: Well, I think what I like about the Iowa City music scene specifically is that it's... non-competitive, is what I'd call it, cause I think in a lot of bigger cities, especially places like Chicago and Nashville, there's just an air of needing to have an edge over other musicians in the scene so you can get booked constantly and consistently and things like that. That kind of energy in the music scene can be incredibly intimidating and a little discouraging, especially for newer artists who are starting up or smaller artists. But the scene in Iowa City to me just felt like everybody had each other's backs. If we played with, let's say Early Girl for example—we played a lot of shows with them—all it took was just one show, the first show we played together, and we realized, "Oh, these guys rock super hard, let's make sure we set something up in the future." Or, "Oh, this venue reached out to us for a show, but we can't play it, let me recommend all of these other cool bands that I've seen," and folks did that for us too. So, it's just...Iowa City has a really good, collaborative music scene that made it a little less scary starting out for sure.

*Myles hops onto the shoulders of someone in the crowd. Cheers erupt from all around us as he headbangs on beat and yells into the audience.*

**MZ: If you could choose another local band or artist to collaborate with, who would you pick and why?**

MYLES: Ooh, that is hard. There are so many incredible acts in the Iowa City scene. I'm really loving Sophie Mitchell; they've been playing in Iowa City since around the time Two Canes has been playing, maybe a little bit before, but they just dropped their album within the last couple weeks and it's very, like, alt, indie inspired. Their songwriting and their lyrics are just something that I'm super envious of, so I would love to co-write with them at some point. And it's funny, because they're another one of my really close friends from college, they're just also one of the busiest people alive because they're famous and playing shows and releasing their album. Love Sophie Mitchell. I was going to say I would love to collaborate with Early Girl, but I did; they did ask me for their last EP to do some backing vocals and harmonies. I'd love to work with hem again just because I love Aaron Longoria who is the lead singer, guitarist, face of Early Girl, they're just awesome.

*Adding some theatrics to his performance, Edwin gets down on the stage and lies on his back as the band plays "Into the Void." Everyone loves it, announcing their assent with screams, cheers, headbangs, and hops that shake the floor.*

**MZ: Is there anything else that you want IC readers to know (about you or Two Canes)?**

MYLES: And this is where I forget every thought I've ever had... ever. If I have to, like, give a piece of advice, just from my time in the music scene of Iowa City, it's just if you want to, do it. And it's so easy to just say that, but I really do think that there is no better place or scene than Iowa City to really get started on or dive into a project that you really like. Because, as you and I both know, from living in Iowa City, all kinds of folks come through the music scene, the writing scene, the University in general, and sometimes it makes it difficult cause there's a constantly rotating audience every four years or so when folks graduate. But it also means that there's always going to be someone out there who roots for you, which is something that I'm never going to take for granted about getting started with music in Iowa.

EDWIN: It's that, I don't know. We fucking rock. I'm joking. Stream "Mouth Shut" on Spotify. Yeah. Support your local music. Tip your bartenders. Support, you know, your loved ones, your neighbors, queer people, everyone.

# The Thump of Living Art

Thomas Pate

There's a street beat down Washington. In the square by a Subway sits a man with his cans and a dream to go national. Down the lane in the club there's a ratta-tat-tat of alley cat jazz. The saxophone of a homeless man bounces off the glass-slatted buildings in swing. The students dance in a trance around their convenient well of boom box speakers by the Englert Theatre. By the ice cream shop, a drunk group of friends stumble through karaoke at Roxxy. Down Gilbert Street, there's a blend of voice and art: music on the James and movies on the FilmScene green; raging metal over Gabe's, and drum beat on game days. In the evenings, the restaurants compete with clashing music. The Taco Depot on Tuesdays, Bo-James on Wednesdays, Brothers on Fridays. Tenants blast their music above the restaurants on off days, hard days, sad days, good days, most any day. Music will always fill the streets; this is downtown.

At Voxman, a rich symphony arises; in the basement, mistakes of blood, sweat, and tears fill the space. The musicians forge their tongued steel in the confines of concrete and padded walls, away from the ears of the performance halls above; perfection is demanded. Each note and sound come together to invite the city in for a product of their training. Less than perfect will not be entertaining. The choir joins in with a hymn from the ascending wings hugging the stage. In this building, people pursue their passions for music. They learn how to play, how to groove and jam out, how to soul-search with their ears, and how to write a dream and share its wavelength with the world. This is Voxman.

Across the river sits a wonderous building, filled with demagogues of modern music. Wynton Marsalis came here once to perform the trumpet. Plays of joy and sorrow filled with anguish and vibrato stomp beats into the floorboards of the stage every weekend. Dreams come true in this place, reborn after floods destroyed its predecessor. The exterior of the building

echoes the deep and groundbreaking sound produced from the interior, with slats of steel climbing to the sky. It stands on the edge of campus as a reminder that this is a city of artistic culture. You can hear its voice calling from the highway. This is Hancher.

The students here must eat. And when they do, they eat to a beat. From the ceiling of every dining hall comes the voices of angels from across the nation. The big names of musical prodigies blaze in our eateries: Madonna, Gaga, Rihanna, Taylor. They all blend together into every meal. Food is best enjoyed with music. When we eat, we get a taste of the struggles of the street musicians. When we listen to music, we get a taste of what it is to live a dream, to keep dreaming when you are awake, to transport yourself from this existence into another through the flavors of sound. This is the dining hall.

Within the bones and flesh of our city beats the drums of immortal soul, dreams and wishes untold. The air here breaks the mold. This city is a lasting reminder of what it means for an artist to thrive. It keeps hopeful flames alive. It attracts sound from beyond its borders and amplifies its voice. From the tiny forgotten piano through undusted corridors, and passages to the stage of the all-greats shimmering against the river, music permeates the very fibers of this place. Every block, every hall, every room, every mall, every corner of it all comes with the sound of a healing soul: a beating heart. The thump of living art.

# Rhapsody in Beer

Samantha Hadlock

Sometimes I like to think of my life like a series of scenes from a movie. They don't always line up, and I'm not always the main character, but there's a very distinct soundtrack playing. When I wake in the morning, brush my teeth, lace my boots, tha's "Baba O'Riley". When the raindrops race in little trails down the car window, it's "Chasing Pavements" by Adele. You and me? We're HAIM's "Don't Wanna". Last weekend you asked me to come downtown for something you called 'beer band'.

"Except, don't actually call it that," you reminded me. "This isn't, like, officially sanctioned. We don't want to get anyone in trouble or anything."

I'm not in the band. I'm not in any band. I haven't touched an instrument since my tepid attempt at orchestra class in junior high. My old viola is probably years out of tune and covered in a suitable blanket of closet dust. My brother, however, has a thing for weird little instruments. I called him up and asked to borrow a harmonica or stylophone or something of that sort. He sent me out with a triangle, which tickled you damn near pink when you saw it.

They had started playing long before I got there. I followed your map pin down to the Ped Mall until I heard the music from blocks away. It was loud, and proud, melody mingling with the chatter of the crowd. You had a flush to your cheeks and a jacket tied around your waist. The brim of your hat dipped down over your eyes like you were some kind of musical vigilante: French horn player by day, Mellie by night. You started playing a Lil Nas X song and everyone joined in.

People were banging on paint buckets, climbing up stairs, and weaving through crowds. Everyone knew the notes to all the songs, songs I had never heard. I stuck out like a sore thumb with my feeble little triangle, but you stared at me like I had brought the party itself to you. This was what you had been waiting for. I was what you had been waiting for.

Droves of people in yellow and black flooded through the doors of the nearest bar. They bottlenecked at the entrance, urging each other further forward into every free inch of unoccupied space. They poured out onto the street when they ran out of room. There was barely enough air to breathe, much less play an instrument, but lord did they know how to make an awful lot of sound, nonetheless.

People sitting at the bar top averted their gaze, rolled their eyes, and slumped their shoulders, clearly inconvenienced by the cacophony of instruments. That didn't stop the band, though. They played their trumpets triumphantly in spite of it, "Iowa Fight Song" ringing out over the bustle of bar-goers and the sounds of evening traffic.

Then a guy showed up with an honest-to-God fiddle. You pulled at my elbow to get me to listen, because you know how I'm a sucker for strings. He moved, swayed, danced, played all at once. I can barely walk in a straight line on a good day, so this feat felt extra impressive. I'm still not fully convinced he wasn't some nymph, blessed with supernatural grace and a talent for noise. It was the good old-fashioned strings that finally got me grooving, feet moving, my hand in yours.

They brought maracas, castanets, kazoos. There was a girl with piercings like constellations scattered across her face. The Milky Way itself sparkled against her milky white skin. She played a jaunty tune on a piccolo, and when she stopped, she waved me forward with both arms and a grin from ear to ear. I didn't ask her her name, but we danced like old friends in that fleeting moment.

Maybe I was a little punch-drunk from being beaten over the head with a barrage of band music. Or maybe I was a little lovestruck from the way you played your horn, with dimples deep enough to drown in. I hit my triangle timidly. A nervous giggle bubbled up my throat. I was awkward and out of place and so enamored at the same time. Bewitched by the crowd of people playing songs I'd never heard on streets I'd never traveled.

The people in the next bar joined in. Everyone came together in a thundering chorus, singing like banshees over the usual buzz of Iowa City nightlife. By the time we got to the third rendition of "In Heaven There is No Beer," I even knew most of the words. And, yeah, this place isn't heaven. It's not even all that close. But sometimes you'll catch glimpses of it if you know where to look.

It's in the constellation of freckles plastered perfectly against a piccolo player's porcelain skin. It's in the scribbles scrawled on bathroom stalls, left by strangers meeting at the same place at a different time. It's in the static shock you receive from a stranger holding open the door, between lanky limbs pressed together like sardines in the doorframe. It's in the twinkle of bar lights, the weeds flourishing between cracks in the sidewalk, the soaring notes of a saxophone.

Slices of heaven, served up with greasy bar food and a live show. Crumbs of heaven, scattered over brick-paved streets and canvas sneakers and spilled beer. Hints of heaven, smeared with mascara and sweat and beer stains. A dose of heaven between two drunk friends do-si-doing to an all-brass rendition of a Lil Nas X song in a dimly lit alley.

I don't remember if we won the game the next day. I don't even know who we played against. What I know is that you brought me music, and in that music you gave me the city itself, and in that city I saw a handful of heaven.





# "In Heaven There is No Beer"

## THE ANTHEM TO EVERY HAWKEYE VICTORY

AASRITH VEERAPANENI

There are dozens of moments that have been etched into the canon of Hawkeye Sports, memories that fans continue to talk about years after they occurred. The football team upset top ten teams throughout the 2010s, Caitlin Clark and her buzzer beaters helping lead the women's basketball team to back-to-back National Championship games, Iowa women's soccer making back-to-back tournaments and running all the way to the Sweet 16 this year. All of these and more have two major things that tie them together. The first is the obvious one: the logo on the jersey and Herky the Hawk running around in support. The second is less well known, yet the tradition plays the best backdrop in all of collegiate sports. Whether it's in the open air of Kinnick, the rafters of Carver, or any one of our many sports venues, this song blasts for all the faithful in every Hawkeye victory. This song is the simple, yet beautiful, "In Heaven There Is No Beer".

Also referred to as the "Hawkeye Victory Polka," this song has been in Hawkeye canon since the 1960s. Whether it is the Hawkeyes Marching Band, Pep Band, or even just a recording over the speakers, it seems to spark joy anytime it starts to play. It's a song that represents not only a victory, but also the struggle to get there. The hours and hours of hard work, dedication, and overcoming obstacles that lead to each and every Hawkeye victory. That is what the song represents—the ability to finally rest and celebrate. And celebrate the Hawkeyes shall, especially in the last few years. Here are just a few examples of exceptional Hawkeye play that has warranted the tune to be heard around Iowa City.

The Iowa Hawkeyes women's basketball team has had plenty of experience listening to the song in the last few years. Led by Caitlin Clark, whose jersey banner now hangs in the rafters of Carver-Hawkeye Arena,



the Hawkeyes made two straight National Championship appearances, as well as having won three straight Big Ten Conference Championships. As the drums beat away in tune, and Clark drained buzzer beaters, the success of the Hawkeyes could not be understated. As the team hopes to grow after the departure of four of its starters, there is hope that “In Heaven There Is No Beer” will continue to play, because “when we’re gone from here, all of our friends will be drinking all the beer.”

How about some love for the smaller sports? The loudspeakers over at the Iowa Soccer Complex and Grant Field field hockey pitch have heard the song plenty of times over the last few years, and the “no beer” chant has flooded over the seats of loyal Hawkeye fans. Iowa’s women’s soccer team got themselves a ring after winning the Big Ten Championship in 2023 and stomped and danced to the song on their way to the Sweet 16 in 2024. Field hockey has earned themselves a couple Big Ten Championships over the last few years and have consistently taken “In Heaven There Is No Beer” across the country, threatening to beat anyone.

One can’t discuss the success of Iowa sports without bringing up the wrestling teams. Wrestletown, USA has not stopped playing the victory anthem—it has fostered the undisputed top five teams in the country and many of the best wrestlers around the world. The women’s team won the NCWWC National Championship in 2024 and looks to continue the momentum as the NCAA moves to add women’s wrestling as a sanctioned sport. The men’s side took home a ring in the NCAA’s National Championship of 2021 and continue to be in the top echelon of collegiate wrestling. The squads have also fielded Olympians, both Spencer Lee and Kennedy Blades taking the anthem overseas to Paris in 2024 and earning themselves silver medals. Brittany Brown of the University of Iowa’s track program also represented the USA in Paris, coming home with a bronze in the 200 meters, with Iowa rowing member Eve Stewart helping Great Britain to a bronze medal. In total, eleven Hawkeye Olympians competed in Paris, with the “la la la” following right behind them in the summer of 2024.

How about the place where the song became famous across Iowa City: Kinnick Stadium? Here, where the chants can be heard from miles away and the swing dance moves everybody, the song has made a name for itself. Hawkeye football has had successful stretches over the last few years, making it to the Big Ten Championship in 2023 and beating AP Top Five teams on their home turf a handful of times over the last decade. In the halls where trophies like Cy-Hawk, Floyd of Rosedale, Heartland, and Heroes are housed, the subtle horns that make up the favorite song for Hawkeye fans is found blaring.

The University of Iowa will continue to build upon the success that their sports have earned, and the “Hawkeye Victory Polka” will continue to play. Whenever the coveted words, “In heaven there is no beer, that’s why we drink it here,” are heard, all Hawkeye fans feel the winning surge that it brings. The drums will continue to beat in the background of all the games that come down to the wire, the horns will accompany all the tournament runs, the bands will continue to learn the tune for every ball game, and the fans will cherish every word throughout every win. In the wise words of *Field of Dreams*, “Is this heaven? No, it’s Iowa.”



# Ourselves Sound, Ourselves Full

Kathryn Schultz

## i. "In Heaven There is no Beer"

In heaven There is no beer  
(No beer)

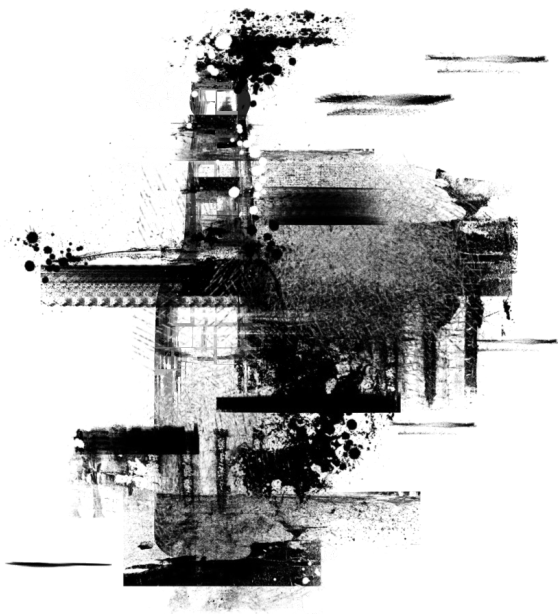
That's why we drink it here,  
And when we're all gone from here,  
Our friends will be drinking all the beer,  
In heaven there is no wine,  
(no wine)

So we drink till we feel fine,  
And when we leave this all behind,  
Our friends will be drinking all the wine,  
In heaven there is no fear,  
(no fear)

So we worry too much here,  
And we drink ourselves full of beer  
To help us when we deal with the fear.

ii / "True Blue" /

we leave, selves full, strung  
over low, baritone, microphone  
street-song screech, or the  
dumpster-jungle-alleyway-graffiti beat,  
or even the  
passerby pastime of  
emptying ourselves  
to true blue madonna  
muse-croon  
on topped-off side  
walk chalk walks  
to target, to  
probably—  
Paradise.



The timer has locked all posts, but your nerves are pulsing in your fingertips for a different reason. The Bread Garden wine and shower playlists have sparked new inspiration. A chorus of blow dryers and JBL speakers. A melody of compliments and laughter. The new femininomenon of pop fills the walls of you and your roommate's apartment. Surrounded by a non-diatonic note of bright overhead bulbs, you yearned for a low lit center stage, or at least a notably good videography project of your best sets. Accompanied by the new band of missteps you created when you just weren't fancying *The Bachelor* anymore. Hearing a kind of music that is embarrassingly high on your Spotify Wrapped. Watching fellow residents mouth the words of the last song, you begin. A few pairs at a time, swaying interlocked hands to the beat. Your lips utter the same 2000's pop in Iowa City as you did in your childhood home. The lyrics of betrayal stinging a little more after a few years of musical chairs. The drinks you promised to stop at nine are coursing through your veins just right. A wall made up of worrying that you'll end up on the community Snapchat story and hoping your group of friends, that you convinced to come on a weekday, engage the crowd in the same dream you all believe in. The wall beaten down by an off-key riff flows between crescendos of overly loud conversation. Replaced by the surrounding sound of out-of-tune voices created by your fellow Hawkeyes. Your same music fills the Carver-Hawkeye Area. The rhythmic moves of friends and family alike enjoying the Homecoming concert. Appreciating each main act, not for their genre, but from how joy can be heard like music to your ears. That same song can be heard on repeat any night that is over fifty degrees. Lyrics sung on a stage are also sung through the airpods of students not quite ready to fly from the black and yellow birds nest. This is what made the *five* streets of the ped mall a familiar face when you carry your instruments to the next bar, the *two* dollar drink specials working in your favor, the *two* social media interns that promoted a show on a twenty-four timer, the *four* floors of the English-Philosophy Building looking much higher tomorrow after a couple hours on your feet, the *zip* of glances made around the room wondering what genre is about to grace the crowd's ears. That is what makes the music worth it. Knowing that when they hear you performing karaoke, they also hear an Acapella of college students, friends, and loyal Hawkeyes.

# KLING

## ON THE IOWA CITY MUSIC SCENE, BIG DECISIONS AT DAIRY QUEEN, AND BAND THERAPY

Jillian Abreu

I knew I had to interview Penny Peach when I saw her perform at Gabe's. I was with my friends. We were talking out the alcohol in our systems the same way drunk crowds often do, and then her voice cut through the crowd like a hot knife through butter. She was performing alone that night, just her voice and her guitar. All of the top floor of Gabe's held their breath. It was as intense and quiet as when I watched Julia Jacklin enter stage and immediately sing *To Perth, before the border closes* acapella when opening up for Mitski in LA. Except it wasn't some big theatre or some big name. It was Penny Peach, in Iowa City. She stood under the stage light with beaming bleach-white hair and blue eyes. She spit out pithy, clever lyrics, and people hung on her words. I made the decision to reach out in the middle of a Woody Guthrie cover.

When I got my response, I learned that the name behind the voice that hushed the college drunks was Elly, and that she was in another band called KLING—a band with all the same members that *normally* played with Penny Peach. KLING was their collaborative project, all three of them, and they had just released their first EP last summer. I agreed when she offered an interview with KLING along with her. The night of the interview was sandwiched between their soundcheck and a performance at Gabe's. I waited nervously in the seating area of Bread Garden after buying a bad slice of Tiramisu and a cup of drip coffee to feel busy. I pulled out my copy of *Paul takes the form of a mortal girl* out of my back pocket—a tactic to look cool, collegiate, impressive. I tried to read. Ironically, in the book, the main character was on the phone with his friend, failing to convince her to ditch her homework and go to a show at Gabe's. The book was set in the 90s, in Iowa City. Even then, college kids gathered for shows there.

When the three members of KLING emerged, I sprung up in an awkward greeting and welcomed them all to the concrete-wall corner I had set

aside for us. Elly smiled and waved me down across the stretch of tables. Her hair was the same glowing white as a lightbulb, passing her shoulders onto her fluorescent blue hoodie. I shepherded them back through a maze of chairs to our cozy table of four. Lex complimented my book, which had definitely not been left out to impress them. They recommended I read *Detransition, Baby* next. I beamed. I already had a copy in my room. They too, dawned a hoodie and a fresh haircut, brown hair resting right above the round frames of their glasses. Aaron, who was in an all-black hoodie (I decided to myself that this was their informal band dress code color-coded to their personality, like The Powerpuff Girls) settled in diagonally across from me and we began.

JA: I was wondering if you could all tell me your names and your pronouns, so I refer to you correctly, and then, what role do each of you play

LL: Lex Letourneau, they/them. I go by Lex Leto in the scene. I sing and play bass, and we all write the music.

AK: I'm Aaron Knight. He/him, and I play the drums.

EH: I'm Elly Hofmaier. She/her, and yeah, I sing and play guitar and write songs.

JA: This might be prying, but is your full name Eleanor? I was listening to the Penny Peach Discography this week and heard you sing this line, "maybe I should start going by Eleanor" and wondered...

EH: No, no, but I used to tell people it was sometimes.

LL: She had me fooled too, when we first became friends.

JA: Were you all friends before the band? How did you meet?

AK: I was in a band called The Megababes with some high school friends, and Elly was playing in Anthony Warden and the Illiterati. I think that's how I met you.

JA: Was that during college?

EH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So it was like six—five or six years ago, right?

JA: And the wonderful timeline begins there! For [Elly and Lex], when did you two become friends?

LL: So I moved to Iowa City for school—I didn't know either of them, and was in like, Boxman land. I didn't really know about the music scene but I had seen Elly perform with Anthony Warden and the Illiterati, randomly on the Ped Mall, so I knew about Penny Peach. And then we met on Instagram—me and Elly did. Elly had like, DMed me—



EH: Oh my gosh...

LL: And then that's when we became friends.

EH: I slid into your DMs...

LL: We just started seeing each other around town. And then I started sitting in on Penny Peach practices.

EH: At some point, my band became just us three. Penny Peach had been many different iterations of many, many different people, but us three locked in a special way.

LL: We had a moment.

EH: And so from that, we were like, okay, we all need to be writers and collaborators. We had such good chemistry.

JA: Lex mentioned there was a moment. Was it something specifically?

EH: It was our first show ever, at Gabe's.

AK: By that point, it had gotten boiled down to just being a three-piece, and Lex moved over from flute to just playing bass and singing, and we finished the show; we were like, Wow, that was really, really good.

LL: We were kind of buzzing, and it felt like everybody in the crowd was like, Whoa. Somehow, as a three-piece, you guys are even more powerful.

JA: With those first shows, and just getting started musically, how did you all first find your place in the Iowa City music scene?

LL: So there's a really good experimental scene here. I was kind of involved in it, but not in the rock scene, like, the non-music school—I don't know how to divide these things. I had no idea about the townie shit aside from the experimental stuff. The only way I really got into that was literally because of Elly and I connecting. I had always wanted to play in a band like this that wasn't like an experimental band, and then there I was. That's how it started for me.

JA: I didn't even know that there was a big experimental scene here.

LL: There's a huge legacy there. And there are really cool experimental shows going on— just not as frequently as the hardcore stuff or indie scenes.

JA: Elly told me about your album, *I am here but I must go* that you just released with The Christine Burke Ensemble. I listened to it and I was blown away.

LL: Thank you!



AK: I'm from Iowa City. I played with some friends, like, bands in high school that didn't play any shows and just got together and jammed. It wasn't until I started working at the mill, which was an amazing venue that shut down during COVID, and now it's like, torn down. It was a staple, kind of like Gabe's. I worked there and started to meet people that played music, started to make bands with kitchen workers. And any night the mill didn't have shows going on, they would let us just set up on the stage. So that's kind of how I got into my first big boy band that actually played shows. That wasn't until I was probably 20 or 21. I got back together with some high school friends, and that was The Megababes. I was starting to meet people out in the music scene, but it was cool because most of my connections came from playing in the band with my high school buddies, and then we started playing with a lot of local bands. That's how I met Elly—that's how I met pretty much everybody that I've been in a band with.

Whether they notice it or not, the three of them move as one as soon as they start to play. There's a rhythm in their motions, leaking out of Elly's guitar, Lex's bass, Aaron's drums. The sound of KL!NG can carry you a bit like an ocean. If you're caught in the current, you're moving with them. Everyone in Gabe's is moving with them—awkward college kids, friends of the band members, Gabe's regulars who pop upstairs to listen. Lex and Elly's voices twist together to form one body of sound, one massive wall the listener wants to climb, has to climb, can't help but climb.

Between songs, Lex makes an announcement about the local election. It's about Oliver Weilein, a member of Iowa City based band Bootcamp and a pillar of our community. He is running for City Council, with the election only a few weeks away. Lex's voice is still on autotune, which should make it a bit funny, but the sincerity of their call to action overshadows the effects on the mic. People actually listen.

When the music picks up the pace again, there's something electric, fast, rabid, alive in their performance. Aaron has entered his own realm on the drums. He's completely gone, running through the landscape of the sound, his head thrashing around with the beat. Compared to members' other projects and solo work, KL!NG has a high, fun energy that reminds me of Shirley Temples and pulling pigtails in the backyard of class. The three feel something like super-sonic Powderpuff Girls. At the same time, the sound is intimate, visceral, honest. It feels like cutting your bangs in the bathroom mirror at four in the morning. It feels like raw emotion trapped in rhythm. Lex and Elly sing *I've cracked wide open* in overlays, their voices stretching around like beautiful yodels. It's not as simple as pretty or harmonic. It feels like the moment you find the courage to scream into a blank, open, pitch-black sky with your friends in the middle of night. Like a howl humans can understand.

By their last song they have completely found the flow of things. It's a full wave, a nonstop tsunami of sound—all the individual, bubbling personalities that surrounded me at our table at Bread Garden, wrapping around me through song. I feel grateful in that moment that whenever I want that small corner of the world, I'll be able to just put on my headphones, and play *KLING'S FIVE SONG SWEETIE PIE!* (and whatever they make next) and go back to those three people and I in the corner of Bread Garden drinking coffee, laughing, and arguing about DnD placements.



graphic sourced from KLING's bandcamp

# Sterling or Silver

Te'a Ritchie

**M**y sister's boyfriend is a conflicting man. But, there is nothing to use to imply this about his stature or his cadence or his attitude. Harrison carries himself with a slouch. Is as tall as every other man. Unremarkable in his speech. A student in the digital arts. He has grown his mousy-brown hair out to mimic his idols: unwashed metalheads and old rock stars that can't make good music anymore. He wants to appear fierce, butut falls short— dressing only in the everyman's clothes: t-shirt and jeans. Famous Footwear sneakers (can be colored grey or beige depending on the lighting). Harrison spices up this casual attire with a gnarled band logo plastered cheaply upon a Gildan basic tee. Maybe he would be inclined towards the sterling shine of a metalhead's pointed jewelry to perhaps ignite a sense of emanating power. To intimidate the onlooker. But according to my sister, "he is scared of piercings and body-metal." I wonder how Irony dresses.

It just so happens that her boyfriend is the lead singer and lead bass player of a thrash metal band based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He will be moving to Iowa City soon. It might be because he wants to be closer to his girlfriend, my sister. It might be because there is no audience for thrash metal in industrial, close to the ground, pothole infested, smells like shit but only sometimes Cedar Rapids.

If you ask Harrison, there is absolutely an audience for thrash metal up there. After all, he's sold out several of the festivals he coordinates. I told him: try hosting down in Iowa City. There is a bigger market for metal music. He argued that his shows are evidence that there is a plentiful, untapped market that needs to be fostered in Not- Iowa-City. Besides, he's played plenty of times at Gabe's.

Now. Imagine you are me. And it's your friend's friend's birthday. Everyone is at Studio 13. The basement specifically. It's loud. Very loud. From what? I'm not quite sure. Just about everything. The music from

upstairs. The music from downstairs. The blending of it all with the voices of all patrons oozing together like drunken sap. The floorboards that construct the ceiling are exposed underneath and rest upon visible support beams. It doesn't take a very tall person to knock their head against one of those. Or one of the loosely flung metal-coated pipes leading from upstairs transporting fluids of all calibers. Some of these hang dangerously over the karaoke stage with two large limelights. The stage is much more orange than the rest of the basement. It glows.

And there is an older man preparing for his turn. This man wears a battle jacket. His hair falls wavily past his shoulders. His pants could be crust-pants. He might just be a nasty guy. You don't remember the band logo strewn across his shirt. If it's unique enough, it tends to look like the rest. It's a bit hazy in the room, but that might be due to the glimmer of silver studs along his shoulders and his knuckles. He tosses the mic that works between his black-leather encased palms. The other remains dead on one of the two wooden stools. His song request begins.

There is just so much *noise*. His voice is a nauseous concoction of what could be screaming. It might as well be the itchy sound that microphones make when they attempt to amplify every noise in a single, ear-bleeding screech. At some point the man begins speaking the lyrics in an attempt to match the cadence of Primus's "*Too Many Puppies*"— a sardonic song meant to capitalize on metal's threatening sonic qualities by juxtaposing it against cutesy lyrics admiring puppies.

It is humiliating to watch. After all, you are there for a birthday party of a friend's friend, not for this old gentleman to vocal fry for an uninterested audience. If only the microphone was a professional one. And if only the amps were *Marshall* brand. Yet, a group of bystanders in the corner adore the singer.

They each have their own get up. A consistency across each outfit is an overwhelming saturation of the color black. Some have silver hair clips. You know, like the snap ones you used to wear when you were a little girl. But these ones are shinier. And legit. Some of the people in the group wear chunky leather boots. The only way to know if they were steel toed would be to start some shit. Their hair is meticulously untidy. Chains. Belts. Battle jackets. Piercings. Eyeliner. Hairspray. They are party people, living it up in their metal-head uniforms in the same way that Mötley Crüe used to. Sometimes Motörhead. Back in the day when music was at its most *refined*. Here they are now. Admiring a man that admired the nineties.

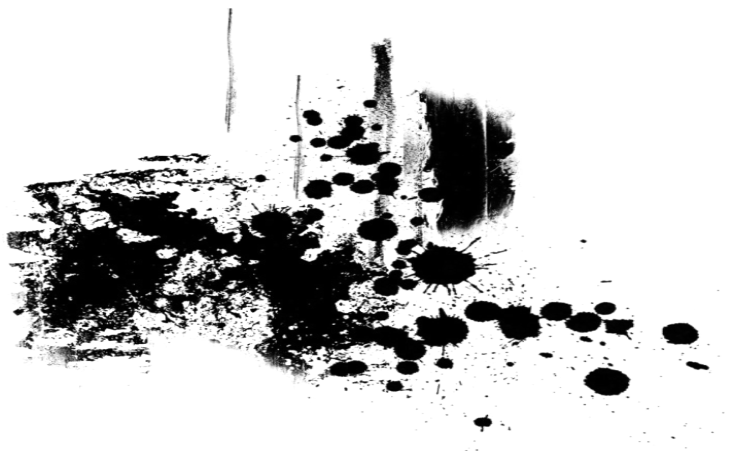
And these people are an integral unit of Iowa City's hardly underground metal scene. They are everywhere— haunting decomposable posters or tucked away in the corners of the Old Capitol Mall, minding their own business.

Now. Imagine you are Harrison. And you've dragged your band to a gig at Gabe's. This is the second performance you have endured at the

bar as the lead singer and lead bass player of a Cedar Rapids based thrash-metal band. And your girlfriend has front row seats to share with all three people that came by to see you play. But she is the photographer for your show. And also the merch guy. And the crowd coordinator.

Luckily for you, she is good at photography and manages to capture the moment when you flick your head back upon landing an alright set of rhythmic cues. The image captures the strict blue lighting. Your hair is tossed through the hair in a commercial display of elegance. But you know you look good in pictures. After all, you're the one that picks out all of the best ones with the camera you two share and posts them to Instagram (making sure to tag Gabe's as a sign of thanks, especially since you can see a little chunk of the surrounding building in the background). Is it any wonder that triple the amount of people show up to your third show?

How can he not see it? The community that boils obviously below the surface beyond Cedar Rapids and into Iowa City. An entirely underutilized group of people that band together in their own little bundles. He stands a much better chance here, where the scene is immersed into the population, flickering in waves of momentary hidden events in the hazy corners of bars. Hinted upon little signs hammered into the wood of aged telephone poles and bulletin boards. There is something waiting to surface. Hard and fast. Waiting to emerge and crystalize in a visible display of outright disruption. He will be moving to Iowa City soon. It will give him a chance to look closer. Give him a chance to see things for how rich and vibrant they are.



# The Fear and Freedom of Growing up

Jayli Carmichael

The process and idea of aging can be an extremely scary thing to think about. In fact, Gerascophobia is the fear of growing up or aging. However, it's a process every living thing must conquer. There are those fantastic, divine, everyday memories that make life better. The ones where you just got out of school on a Friday afternoon, and your friends all hop in your car and aimlessly drive around talking about nothing and everything at the same time, while turning the song you love up so loud you can't hear each other.

But growing up is also a bittersweet experience. The moments where you step into your new dorm room at a new school for the first time ever, where you make your own decisions and have your own independence, without any guidance. Those moments where you pull an allnighter for an exam in one of your classes but still failed it.

Thinking back on those memories, I feel the urge to wince, laugh, and cry. I miss those moments attached to that age and that time in my life, but that doesn't mean that I won't make more memories in my lifetime.

The song "Ribs" by Lorde embodies all those feelings of anxiety, pain, and fear of growing up. Listening to the frantic beat of the piano and the strumming of the guitar makes you stare into space and experience those very same emotions again. Lorde talks about the feeling of growing older, having to experience it without a choice. Life rapidly changes and progresses; it doesn't slow down or speed up because you want it too. All of the accomplishments and pleasures eventually outweigh the uncertainties and difficulties of life.

*"The drink you spilt all over me  
"Lover's Spit" left on repeat  
My mom and dad let me stay home  
It drives you crazy getting old"*

The feelings and situations she writes about are extremely mundane, but relate to teenagers becoming more individualistic in their own lives. Constantly repeating the same song over and over again shows the anxiety Lorde feels when it comes to growing up, but how the song provides safety in knowing what comes next. Just like how I rewatch the same shows and



movies over and over again because I like knowing how it ends, Lorde and I share the same sentiment of being scared of the unknown.

*"We can talk it so good  
We can make it so divine  
We can talk it good  
How you wish it would be all the time"*

This verse has a very slow melodic build up as Lorde's lyrics have an angelic tone to it. It reminds me of remembering the good memories, but then thinking I can't relive them. But that's all a part of growing up. Just because I made great memories, doesn't mean I won't make more and better ones.

*"The drink you spilt all over me  
"Lover's Spit" left on repeat  
My mom and dad let me stay home  
It drives you crazy getting old" x2*

The frantic flurry pace of these repeated lyrics shows the anxiety Lorde feels when she thinks of growing older and finding herself.

*"I want 'em back, I want 'em back  
The minds we had, the minds we had  
How all the thoughts, how all the thoughts  
Moved 'round our heads, moved 'round our heads  
I want 'em back, I want 'em back  
The minds we had, the minds we had  
It's not enough to feel the lack  
I want 'em back, I want 'em back, I want 'em"*

In this verse, Lorde pleads to experience all of the good memories she had while growing up. The moments where you are carefree and worry less. It's not enough to relive them in your memories. But if you went back in time, you wouldn't be able to create new memories with new people and friends. You wouldn't be able to experience life to the fullest.

Lorde has Gerascophobia, just like me and so many other college students. She is scared of growing up and aging. However, that is just the process of life. Don't live your life in the past. While the memories of childhood are fantastic, don't let that stop you from living right now. Realizing all the responsibility of growing up can be scary and can make you want to cling to that carefree freedom but slowly let go of the past and that false utopia.

I am scared of growing up, of the unknown. If I could, I would relive my childhood and never grow up like Pan and his lost boys, but I also want to experience life and all the ups and downs of it.

# An Evening with John Moreland

Jackson Randleman

**I**t's clear that Iowa City is home to some amazing opportunities for musicians and music enjoyers alike. And as a music enjoyer I was lucky enough to experience one of my first concerts in Iowa City at Hancher Auditorium on September 25th, 2024.

The musician performing was Mr. John Moreland, who some may know for his recent feature on Zach Bryan's new LP *THE GREAT AMERICAN BAR SCENE*. The song in question is the nostalgic blues tune *Memphis, The Blues*. Moreland's commanding baritone pushes the track to become one of my personal favorites off of the album. This has led me to become a big fan of Moreland's music ever since.

Moreland's performance was a part of Hancher's Infinite Dream Festival which brings in hundreds of artists from around the world and puts them smack dab in the laps of Iowa City's residents. According to Hancher Auditorium's website, "*Infinite Dream* explores the complex fabric of the American Story—our grand accomplishments, disruptive failures, and remarkable potential for excellence".

Through pure luck and the unfortunate circumstances of my friend, I was able to go to Mr. Moreland's performance that warm fall night. To say my mind was blown would be an understatement. I went in expecting an upbeat full band Americana rock concert, but what I got was an intimate evening spent listening to a single artist full of introspection and stories told through just his voice and guitar. The fans sat on the stage mere feet away from Moreland, with many close to touching them. Cool onyx blue and purple lights danced across the floor as Moreland danced his fingers along the guitar.



Moreland's gruff stoic voice reverberated throughout the entire auditorium, each note being felt within the souls of myself and the people around me. A set list that was a blend of old and new songs took on the structure of the evening, with each soft stringed ballad backed by Moreland's powerful yet soft blues vocals. As the night went on, my eyes became wet with tears and before I knew it, it was over. When looking at the time after the show, I saw that two hours had gone by in an instant. An evening spent well, and an experience that I am searching for again.



# Like a Nicotine Virgin

Stella Shipman

I've never smoked before but I imagine  
Smoking is this song.

A few hits of a bass  
Drum and microphone static

Simultaneous speaker spitting  
Black things onto the ground

Volume all the way up.  
Euphoric screams in the back

Crooked fingers in the air.  
The ash smell hits me

From the exit lights to the beer garden,  
Foggy succulent flares.

I sway to the scramble over  
Strings over metal tightropes

Over the dark wet spaces even I  
Don't know how to wring dry.

We're half-dead flies circling a drain high  
On how these gods can hear us. For once.

One last drag.  
The stairs creak as we descend.

# Music of CAMBUS

Sofia Fernandes

**A**s you ride the bus, you could hear anything from Disney or rock to country and j-pop. Even if there's no music, the sounds of the bus make up a concert of their own. What kinds of music or ambience are your CAMBUS drivers listening to as they drive? Let's take a peek behind the driver's seat and see what drivers have to say about the sounds of the bus!

## **Yellow Bus, White Noise**

From the squeaky brakes and rumbling of the engine to chimes of stop requests and passengers' (sometimes strange) conversations, driving the bus produces a variety of sounds.

You'll often hear the rumbles and rattles over uneven pavement or snow and the blast of air from the brakes at the back of the bus, even if you're not the one driving.

Of course, there's also the beeping of kneeling and raising bus, clicking of floor signals, and wind squeezing through cracks in the doors and windows.

Add in the summer overstimulation of every fan blasting and the audiobooks, podcasts, and music people choose, and it's quite a noisy experience!

## **Not Just Music**

Unfortunately, driving the bus is a pretty loud activity. This makes it challenging to listen to other audio forms like podcasts or audiobooks, but that doesn't stop some drivers! Some other forms of audio drivers listen to include podcasts (educational health, true crime, and others), NPR, and audiobooks.

## **Different Genres, Different Routes**

Riding 51 Hospital, 42 Hawk-Pent, 52 Fink-Pent, or 41 Hawk Lot, you may hear more jazz, Bossa Nova, country, or pop. However, around campus, you're more likely to hear louder, more upbeat music, especially of the pop, rap, and musical theater varieties.

## Title of Your Drive

I asked drivers to share what they titled their driving playlist(s).

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| * BUS PLAYLIST   | * cambus                     |
| * Clean Red Hot Chili Peppers                              | * im da bus driver           |
| * a collegiate bus driver                                  | * Bus safe                   |
| * Deutsche Musik   | * CAMBUS [x2]                |
| * cAMbus (because this driver often drives in the morning) | * Cam Butts                  |
| * What's Wrong with Being Confident                        | * Drivington                 |
| * BUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSS                                  | * Whippin                    |
| * Cambus safe  | * Work [emojis not included] |
| * cambus general   | * bus songs                  |
| * bus drivin   | * oldies                     |
|  | * Bus                        |

## RENT Again? (Interview with Mackenzie K.)

*I had queued Tango Maureen from RENT on my playlist while I was driving. I started the next round of 31 Red, but my phone glitched or something and played the song like four times in a row.*

*People from the back of the bus (not the very back but not up front, either) ended up noticing it because since it was Red, they rode, like, the whole time. Also, I listen to the music pretty loud on the bus.*

*And they ended up coming up to me asking "Hey... did you just play the same song multiple times?"*

*It's barely even a song, too, it's mostly just talking with a beat so it's like I just listened to the same conversation over and over again.*

## Pass the Aux

Among the people who answered my survey, there was a fairly even split for how they played their music. Using the Aux cord or bus Bluetooth was the most popular, followed by bringing a personal speaker, or just using a phone's audio tucked behind the driver's seat.

Other responses made up the remaining 16%.

## Method of Choice

An overwhelming majority of people who responded to my survey said they use Spotify to listen to their music. I didn't ask if they pay for the premium subscription, but I assume so. After all, most people aren't as cheap and spiteful as I am!

Fewer drivers chose Apple Music as their method of choice, while radio and Amazon Music users were severely outnumbered by everyone else, with only one respondent each.

## **More Than Meets the Eye**

CAMBUS is more diverse than just the bus drivers you see driving Red or Blue. We also serve as Bionic Drivers, Dispatchers, Student Mechanics, and Student Trainers. These different positions also come with different sounds!

The audio in the life of a Bionic driver includes the click-clack of the turn signal, creaking of the bio bus's frame, and roaring of the A/C. There's also the ramp clanging, music from the radio, and other bionic drivers asking dispatch, "Can you give my passenger a call?" over the radio.

Dispatchers are often listening to the constant beep of the radio, computer mouse clicking, the vending machine's clangs, and people using the radio: "[x route] stepping off" and "[y route] to base."

Trainers' jobs include a lot of office work and all the ambience that comes with it: keyboards clicking, office chatter, and YouTube video editing (shout out to CAMBUS Training on YouTube!). When they're with trainees, they'll often hear the tell-tale sounds of inexperienced braking and tires thudding off of the curb.

Student mechanics spend most of their time at the CAMBUS Maintenance Facility, affectionately nicknamed The Barn. Since their job is very mechanical, they often hear creaking engines, mechanics yelling, and the bus farting as the air is released.

## **Not Safe for Driving (Interview with Ni H.)**

*I didn't know how to use the no explicit song thing on Spotify at first. I played the radio of "NIGHTS LIKE THIS" by The Kid LAROI while I was driving Bionic, but I didn't realize that was an inappropriate artist for work.*

*I went to the radio, and as soon as I picked up my passenger, "Gang Baby" by NLE Choppa played. I don't know if you know that song, but it is highly inappropriate to be playing at work.*

*So I had to turn off my radio and I was like "Oop! Okay, no more music for today." I did play a more gentle song later, but yeah it was pretty bad.*

## **CAMBUS Karaoke**

You'll mostly only hear your lovely CAMBUS driver singing along if it's an empty bus (or at least, if they think it's empty!). Of course, there's some drivers that will sing along to music no matter their passenger count. But what are they singing along to?

If there's Adele, Lana Del Rey, Taylor Swift, Ado, Searows, Alice Stone, Jack Johnson or Billie Eilish playing, you can expect to hear some CAMBUS accompaniment! These were artists that people said no matter which song of theirs was playing, they would sing along.

Favorite albums for CAMBUS driving karaoke were Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess by Chappell Roan, Noah Kahan's album Cape Elizabeth,

Jack Stauber's Pop Food and Caroline Polachek's Pang.

Popular songs to sing along to include "California Dreamin'" by the Mamas and the Papas, "On The Way" by Hollow Coves, "I'm Okay" by Megan Moroney, Uncle Kracker's "Drift Away," "You're so Vain" by Carly Simon, "She's a Rainbow" by The Rolling Stones, and Meatloaf's "Paradise by the Dashboard Light."

### **H-O-T-T-Oh No (Interview with Isabel C.)**

*This was when I was first getting into Chappell Roan. I didn't know the lyrics to many of her songs yet, so when a song I did know came on, I would sing along enthusiastically.*

*I had ODS [on demand shuttle], so it was pretty late at night, but quiet.*

*I was on Iowa Ave. going onto Newton Road when Chappell Roan's song "HOT TO GO" came on. That was a song I actually remembered the lyrics to, so of course I was singing them out loud in my empty bus.*

*The light turned green and I was driving through the intersection when a car just came out of nowhere and ran the red light! They ran the light on Riverside St., and I was so close to getting t-boned, but the car swerved just enough to barely miss me. It happened while I was singing, so it was literally like H-O-T-T-OH NO!*

*I was super shaken up afterward, but since there wasn't actually a collision, I didn't have to fill out accident or incident paperwork or anything like that. It was super awkward immediately after as I contended with my near-death experience while Chappell Roan was just singing like nothing happened. But yeah, that was one of my first experiences singing along to Chappell Roan in the bus.*

### **Sounds Like Driving**

What does driving sound like? Is it work-friend conversations and people talking over each other, the calming sound of air releasing from the doors, or just chaos? What about the blare of the radio, squeaking of the steering wheel, countless creaks, or the hum of the transmission and various pitches of the gears?

Some say driving the bus sounds like the rattling and squeaking of the bus interrupted by passengers talking and music playing. Depending on the bus, it either sounds smooth or rigid, sometimes static.

Loud, angry, and old, bus 95's cranky, old engine rumbles and hums like a slow-motion drumroll. The metal frame of the bus rattles, contrasting with the peace of a particularly smooth section of road, loud music, and old metal parts whirring to life.

Midday Research Park has a cool breeze blowing through the window and past the bus. The gentle resistance of the wheel and the low hum of the engine guides the bus through the beauty of Coralville.

And of course, there's the ever-present STOP REQUESTED. NOW APPROACHING...

### **Playlist of CAMBUS Favs**

In my survey, I asked each driver to give me a favorite song to drive to. This playlist is the result!



### **Stepping Off...**

Without music, driving the bus is still a symphony (or maybe a cacophony). Even still, listening to music helps a shift go by faster and it may be the only reason people can stand driving four straight hours of Hawk Lot. The next time you ride a CAMBUS, I invite you to listen to all the different kinds of music on the bus.

### **Acknowledgments**

Thanks to Mackenzie K., Ni H., Isabel C., Jaimen R., Aiden B., Felicity M., Lee F., Alex J., Paige B., Raven J., Adonis T., Mallory H., Jonny M., Jan B., Cohen D., Iya A., Desmond D., Michelle S., Janessa W., Daniel A., and the others who filled out my survey and were willing to be interviewed. I couldn't have done this without you

# Songs of Iowa City

Sam Smith

Going into dinner time, I step off the bus, head upstairs to my dorm, drop off my items, and head to the dining hall for some food. I grab my food and find a place to sit down. It isn't too busy, which is nice, meaning that it won't be too crowded. I sit down and take in the music as I hear I song that I love, but never hear in public, which is "The Sound" by The 1975. "What does it matter if I lie to you? I don't regret it but I'm glad that we're through." This lyric reminds me of multiple times where I've been disappointed to eat the food. Most of the time, the menu is decent, but this particular visit I remember looking around and seeing nothing that looked good besides a chicken salad I made myself. It reminds me about how much we give up if we decide to live on campus, how much of our health we leave up to other people. They may seem like they care about our heath, but I know that for a fact that they've lied and have never regretted giving us a false sense of hope.

After a long day of homework, I decide to get ready and head out with my friends to experience night life. My song that gets me pumped up for the night is always "Astronaut In The Ocean" by Masked Wolf. It's got a great beat and it never slows down, which makes it perfect for keeping the energy up and getting ready for the night. "Even if I don't get paid for progression, I'ma gets it." This lyric resonates with me given these trying times we're in; it gives me the strength to keep going and fighting for this amazing city and the people that make this the best college town in the United States. We bounce around from Gabe's to Elray's, and end at Studio 13. Drinks have been flowing, the colors seem brighter, and the music is so loud. Classic party songs ring through our ears like "Bad Blood" by Taylor Swift, "Candy Shop" by 50 Cent & Olivia, "Starships" by Nick Minaj, and so many more. They define what it is to have fun when the sun goes down, making you feel like the world is in your hands and you have the chance to just feel good.

Songs exist everywhere we go. They are one way that we can communicate on a global level. Everyone understands music, whether you attach it to a place, a feeling, or people, it is the key to a gateway of happiness; love and support found everywhere in the community. I'm challenging you to look at one building in Iowa City and put a song that you think describes that place, whether from the outside or the inside.



# Clinton St. "Walking to Work"

LYRICS TAKEN FROM "MANEATER" BY NELLY FURTADO

Lauren Wallis

I worked at another bar before this. More formal  
with labeled sections and dinner reservations. Only  
a ten-minute walk from where I live, and the convenience  
was spectacular. A comfortable low tempo cushioned  
position. We served almost better than sex;  
a specialty cocktail. I made more tips with my hair up.  
I learned to take things slow. Careful not to spill, careful  
was so meticulous; *You wish you never met her at all.*  
I think I will refuse to eat leftovers.  
*A maneater, make you work hard*  
*make you spend hard; make you want all of her love.*

Man, eat her.

# Sounds of Iowa City

Olivia O'Dell

Crickets and the rustling wind used to lull me to sleep. Twinkling stars against the pitch-black canvas of the night sky was my nightlight. In theory, Iowa isn't so different from where I was raised; I'm not from the country, per se, but moving to Iowa City was an adjustment.

My first day in the city is a whirlwind. I abide by the instructions shouted at me from the little man in the box at the crosswalk.

## WAIT

I am the only one. Everyone else leisurely struts across the street. Their sauntering footsteps never falter, even when a city bus comes hurtling toward them. I try to blend in with the blob of students making their way through the streets. Despite walking side by side with one another, all our steps are out of sync. My skin itches and my fingers crawl at the sound, like a defective heartbeat or maybe a ticking time bomb as we march to our inevitable doom: class.

*step...step...step*  
*step..step..step*  
*step.step.step*

After my lectures and work, my day winds down. I thought by nine o'clock at night the city would be asleep, but it is still very much alive. Jazz music mixes with the rhythmic tempo of spoken poetry as I pass coffee shops. Laughter echoes out of alleyways. Cars rumble and rove through the streets. Apparently Iowa City doesn't have a bedtime. My walk home is lit by flickering lamp posts. The rush of running river water warns me

that I'm almost back to my residence hall. I've never actually listened to the whooshing push and pull of a large body of water. It's more steadying than I expected it to be.

**Push: Whoosh**

**Pull: Whoosh**

**Push: Whoosh**

**Pull: Whoosh**

I've never lived anywhere like Iowa City. In the neighborhoods where I'm from there are no talking men trapped in little boxes at crosswalks, just a stop sign, a stubby red mat, and white paint. There are no crowds of bustling people on the sidewalks, just a runner here and there and a few kids giggling on their way to school. By seven o'clock, when the sun is setting and the dinner tables have been set, the streets are vacant. The closest thing to the rush of running water is the neighbor's hose while he waters his yard. I miss the stillness of my hometown and occasional barking dog, but I am beginning to find peace in the hustle and bustle of Iowa City.



# The Music of the Market

Bri Brands

A cool breeze lifts the edges of my hair, sending it softly tickling the right side of my face as I make my way east down Washington Street. The worn-out tote bag, purchased from a concert years ago, swings from my shoulder, fabric brushing against my skin. Inside the tote bag sit my beloved headphones, reminders of how the only friend I have had until today was Spotify.

Today, though, I'm not alone. Three new friends walk by my side, talking endlessly, each of us offering up our excitement and curiosity of the unknown as we wander into the heart of the city, all walking to the same silent beat.

The warm, inviting aroma of lemon buttermilk tells me we must be close to the famous pancake stand I've heard so much about. We all quicken our pace, eager to try everything on the menu. The chatter of other market-goers surrounds us, their voices blending into a familiar hum that matches the rhythm of my heart.

We wander through the parking garage, taking in the vibrant scene before us. The market is alive with energy: people purchasing from vendors, the colors of produce spilling across tables in rainbow waves, the mid-morning sunlight casting a disco-like effect as it reflects off the hand-made jewelry. I hum as I go along, my all-encompassing joy spilling out in quiet notes, mingling with the sounds of conversation and the soft shuffle of feet on asphalt.

I catch sight of the local farmer's stand, the tomatoes at the forefront, plump and ripe in every shade of red, orange, green, and even the faintest yellow. Their beauty draws me in, a wide smattering of fruit grown by the farmer whose fields flooded early in the season, wiping out most of his crops. By the end of market season, he'll be lucky to break even. Still, he smiles as he greets customers, his pride in his work never faltering.

A few steps away, I'm drawn to a table overflowing with baked goods, their rich scents of cinnamon, vanilla, and butter teasing the air. I can't pronounce the names of any of them, but they tell their own story. Behind the booth is a young Mexican woman with kind eyes and a heart of gold, eternally grateful for each and every sale she completes. Each sale is more than just a transaction to her—it's one step closer to bringing her family, still across the border, home to her.

Not far from her, another table catches my eye. Crocheted pumpkins in every color imaginable line the edges of a booth. I smile at the sight of them, so vibrant and full of life. The woman behind the table tries tirelessly to get her six kids accompanying her to sit down, if only just for a moment. What the kids don't realize is that their mom has taken them here today so she can sell the creations she stays up all night making, the earnings of which will pay for next week's groceries.

As we step outside the garage and into the bustling green space next to the Chauncey, the sounds of the world around us deepen. I pause, listening. Six musicians, ranging from college students to local retirees, are setting up their instruments. The lead vocalist is the first to catch my attention, standing front and center, his hands wrapped firmly around the microphone, a quiet anticipation in his eyes as he prepares to sing. Behind him, the rest of the group comes together—a drummer, bari saxophonist, clarinetist, acoustic guitarist, and alto saxophonist.

As the first notes fill the air, the sounds of jazz wrap around us like a warm, comforting blanket. The music swells, carrying with it a sense of ease that sinks into my bones. My right foot begins tapping, a natural response to the rhythm, and I can't help but sway along with the gentle beat. The crowd around us is just as entranced, their movements shifting in time with the melody, as if, for a brief moment, the world has been slowed down.

Laughter rings out nearby. A young family, out for an early morning stroll, is caught up in a round of "Ring Around the Rosie." The toddler in their midst is tiny and full of joy, her giggles cutting through the air. The parents, too, are laughing, their eyes sparkling with the kind of joy that only comes from shared happiness and the existence of their Rainbow Baby.

Near them, an elderly couple sways in the grass, their arms wrapped around each other, holding one another in a way that speaks of decades of shared moments, struggles, and love. In their embrace, they are timeless. They move to the rhythm of the music, their faces glowing. For a moment, they are the only two people in the world, and the music seems to only belong to them.

As the notes of the song fill the space around us, a stillness falls over the crowd. For a few brief moments, every single person present— young and old, from every corner of life, stands still, taking in the magic of this shared moment.

Any sense of homesickness or social anxiety that has lingered in my friends and me has evaporated, replaced by an unexpected warmth. In this fleeting moment, we are more at home than we ever thought possible.

I think about the farmer and how, next season, his crops will thrive. His fields will be full, and he'll finally be able to breathe easier, knowing that his hard work has paid off.

I think of the Mexican family—how the few dollars they have saved here will soon close the distance between a mother and her children.

I think of the crocheted pumpkins and how, through her creations, that mother has ensured her children will never know hunger—that they will be fed, clothed, and loved.

I think of the elderly couple, who had their first date all those years ago, and will spend the rest of their lives together enjoying the music of the market.

# Ode to the Gay Bar

Rachel Heaston

I found the gateway to heaven.  
An open door, dance floor's siren song—  
hot breath, liquor, and leather,  
back-lit alleys, the bowels of a bar,  
bass seeping into fingers, buzzing  
on tongues. Sweat-slicked crescendo  
like bodies melting one another.  
Hips yearn in rhythm, sheltered  
beneath ultraviolet fog. Dance becomes  
resistance, becomes the pulse,  
the gasp of lungs. A song becomes  
lips shamelessly loving. You become  
all that you are,  
*but couldn't be.*



# Flutes and Murder

## A HIGHLIGHT ON SOME LOCAL BANDS

Clara Jarecke

While Iowa City draws a lot of big names—through Hancher, Mission Creek, Gabe’s, or the Englert, etc.—a real IC native would know that the grit and wit lies in the calloused hands of the student musicians headlining these stages on weeknights. These talented players work hard to do at home what professional musicians do with a whole team of people; that includes posters, marketing, videography, recording, and so much more. In my hometown, I love to be involved with the music scene, as a photographer, audience member, or performer. And in the transition to Iowa City as I first moved here to start my higher education, I found a talented, ambitious community that rivaled mine. I want to highlight my three favorite Iowa City bands, their albums, their hits, and their crazy quirks that make them unique.

### 28 Days Later

I first encountered this band at SCOPE’s Battle of the Bands performance at the start of the fall semester 2024. They brought so much energy and excitement—the crowd easily picked them as the winner. They’ve mastered their stage presence, audience interaction, and they manage to have so much fun on stage that listeners can’t help but dance along. They love to announce which songs have flute in them by hyping up the crowd before the tune starts. You can follow them on Instagram under the handle @28\_\_days\_\_later.

Most recent release: “Who We Really Are,” (Sept. 20, 2024)

Most recent album: Self-titled, 28 Days Later, (2023)

My favorite song: “Marseille,” on 28 Days Later

### **Dirty Blonde**

This band is the pinnacle of a small indie band. These three guys are frequently found on bills across the city with their slow, satisfying vibes and feel-good music. I first encountered them at Gabe's, where everyone was swaying along to their popular tunes. This is the kind of music you listen to on a Sunday morning with a sweet cup of tea in your hand! You can follow them on Instagram under the handle @dirty.\_blonde.

Most recent release: "Melody," (March 28, 2024)

Most recent album: Get Some (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) (2024)

My favorite song: "Black Swan," on Get Some

### **Lipstick Homicide**

This band is a great example of the punk and riot grrl scene that IC has! They've been around the city for a while as active members of the music community. An employee at the JMC school recommended them to me. They really reflect the crazy, bold, and daring work bands put in here in Iowa City. The artwork for their albums is very classically punk, but reflects the themes of their music especially well. You can follow them on Instagram under the handle @lipstickhomicide.

Most recent album: Out Utero, (2014)

My favorite song: "Call it Art," on Isn't it Glorious (2010)

# Aria to Iowa City

Benjamin Young

There's a certain sensation, in the City's thrumming veins  
It flows through the frontier, on the rumble of the road  
And it's with the whispers of the wind, there's sort of a crunch to it,  
    like grit stuck between your teeth  
    or snow under your shoe  
    Its gruff like the laughter of an old soul,  
    like the low roar of an engine  
And it races through the core of Everything  
It's all moving, nonstop     one-foot-in-front-of-the-other  
And it keeps progressing                     no matter the phase of the sun  
    You hear it too  
There on your street                     In your neighbor's house  
In their kitchen, round the corner     up the stairs, out under the warm sky  
The animals feel it then,                     with the solar waves  
They shake and ache for the coming change  
    The Sensation is Everything to Them  
Should it be for us?                     But what is it?  
It is that baseline                     That low bumping jig  
Doors closing, cars rolling,             People coming and going  
Birds chirping, crows                     cawing, friends calling  
It is in the sound                     In it  
    All of it  
    Everything  
    The Music of the City