

RED

MARSHALL'S VERSION

THE LAST TIME (supply chain version)

I find myself at your store
 Just like all those times before
 I'm not sure what they got there
 All roads they lead me here
 I imagine you are in stock
 In the container, all alone at sea
 And you put your chips into my Rav4
 And ever given, you better come back to me

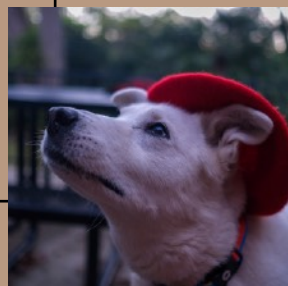


STATE OF GRACE (steeler nation version)

This is a team of grace
 The AFC North is the worthwhile fight
 Football is a ruthless game
 Unless you play it good and right (listen up Chase....)
 These are the hands of fate (heal up Ben...)
 You're my Achilles heel (Watt???)
 This is the golden age (way to go Najee!)

WALK (kodie's version) (from the park)

Get the leash, and bring
 the little waste bags
 We shouldn't be
 in this house
 I need to bark at all my
 friends, you don't know
 I'd walk away
 before I let you go



I KNEW YOU WERE EXPENSIVE WHEN THE FLOOR FELL IN (marshall's version) dedicated to our tiny 5ft by 8ft, 60 year old master bathroom and our contractor Randy Lent who spent a month in June rebuilding it from the ground up

I knew you were expensive when the floor fell in (back in 2018)
 So we just avoided walking in
 Took me to places (under the house) I'd never been (never been)
 'Til you put new floor joists and tile down,
 Oh, oh, oh money, money, money...

WE ARE NEVER GETTING BACK TOGETHER (lea's version) dedicated to Zoom teaching theatre virtually and in the classroom at the same time

We are never, ever, ever getting back together
 We are never, ever, ever getting back together
 You go talk on Zoom, talk to boxes of students not in the room, & no one ever talks back to me
 So we are never, ever, ever, ever
 Getting back together
 Like, ever



ENCHANTED (millie's version) dedicated to the long pittsburgh nights of study/writing for her doctorate in philosophy

There I was again tonight
 Forcing laughter, faking footnotes
 Same old tired, lonely place
 Walls of insincerity, shifting eyes and vacancy
 Vanished when I saw your possibility
 All I can say is, it was enchanting to write for you
 Your eyes whispered, "How is your cv?"
 'Cross the room your deadlines
 Starts to make its way to me
 The playful conversation starts
 Counter all your quick remarks
 Like passing notes in secrecy
 And it was enchanting to memorize you
 All I can say is, I was enchanted to meet you
 The lingering question kept me up
 2 AM, what is time?
 I wonder 'til I'm wide awake
 And now I'm pacing back and forth
 Wishing you were a less consuming process
 I'd open up and you would say, "Hey"
 It was enchanting to ask too
 All I know is, I was enchanted to read you
 This night is sparkling, don't you let it go
 I'm wonderstruck, typing fresh ideas on my phone
 I'll spend forever wondering if you knew
 I was enchanted to complete you
 Please don't require a postdoc
 Please don't have somebody waiting on you



SAD BEAUTIFUL BAGUETTE (maxx's version) dedicated to dozen bakery in nashville where he literally is the muffin man

Long hand-kneaded dough
 Deep in your bread van
 Loaves, how little they mean
 When you're a little too late
 I stood right by Whole Foods
 I wait in the parking lot
 For fresh bread,
 hopeful I'll be
 and long I will wait

You bring the beautiful
 fresh baked love there
 What a sad beautiful
 baguette love affair



THE BEST DAY (adam & lea's version) (dedicated to getting the marshall family band back together for the first time in 2 1/2 years)

And now I know why the all the trees change in the fall
 I know you are on our side
 Even when we are wrong (which is often)
 And we love you for giving us this time
 We stand back and watch you shine &
 We didn't know if you knew
 So we're taking this chance to say
 That we had the best day with you today...

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLENECK (lea's version) from someone looking wistfully at instagram photos of london whilst pricing airbnbs for june 2023

How is it in London?
 (lea can't go yet)
 Where were you while
 we're still working
 (in person and remote)
 If I'll ever see you again, airlines, hotels,
 rental cars?
 You could be the trip that I love, mm-mm
 I could be the one that you dream of
 Look at Instagram pictures is all I can do
 Standin' here, hopin' (someday) I'll get to
 you (I'll get to you)

22 (rosie's version)

It feels like a perfect year
 To graduate from college
 And make fun of the caf
 Ah-ah, ah-ah

It feels like a perfect year
 To run a last race
 To backpack this past summer
 Ah-ah, ah-ah



Yeah, we're happy, free, confused and lonely at
 the same time
 It's miserable and magical, oh yeah
 This year is the time to go on all the adventures
 It's time, oh-oh

I don't know about you
 But I'm feeling 22
 Everything will be alright if we play spikeball

You don't know about me
 But I'll bet you want to
 Everything will be alright if
 We just keep running like we're 22



lea's LAST thoughts of 2021...

(which are now her first thoughts of 2022)

perhaps in hope, it is ironic in a year when some things LAST longer than we would care for them to LAST, my word of the year is LAST. can we hope this is the LAST pandemic season? while i am nothing if not lexically ironic, i am going to use it mainly in the verb form. TO LAST. because at 54, TO LAST seems to be a worthy goal. possibly the only worthy goal i have these days. so what do i need to LAST through these long days/short years? let's begin with lea's customary etymological dive into this world LAST...

LAST (verb) "endure, go on existing," from old english læstan "to continue, endure," "follow (a leader), accomplish, carry out, perform," from proto-germanic **laistjan* "to follow a track" from PIE root ***LOIS-** proto-indo-european root meaning "furrow, track."

the lexical root LOIS/LIRA forms part of: *delirious; delirium; & "learn; learning; lore."*

LORE (n.) old english *LAR* *learning, what is taught, knowledge, science, doctrine; art or act of teaching,*

isn't LAST such a lovely & profound word? it brings a certain emphasis to the delirium of the last two years. i also appreciate "learning" and "act of teaching" being a part of the "lasting". the word & work of LASTING has this rooting of LEARNING & LORE (story) beautifully interwoven through its lexical history. i do love a good story. even when the murky middle parts LAST longer than i think they should before the eucatastrophe good and promised ending. TO LAST requires all the parts of the story...

i spend more time thinking about how to "endure and go on" these long days. i still have a cough that has LASTED for almost two years (years when someone with a perpetual cough is not welcome anywhere...) the same lessons show up for my re-education repeatedly. if you have read these cards in the last few years, it is no surprise to you to find my theme never changes. life is hard & the everLASTing God is good. i am not enough, & yet, He always is enough. if you need to save time you can stop reading now. the rest is all on this theme. and eternally will be...

earlier this year i read a book, [it's not your turn](#) by heather thompson day. the title appealed to me because i felt disappointed by the areas in life that "aren't my turn yet" (or may not ever be). i felt in LAST place for things my peers are doing in their lives. while i know it isn't a competition & this is all an infinite game it still felt heavy on my heart, all the things i am missing "now"... when is my turn to travel widely and well? my turn to retire & have an open calendar? to linger over ladies' brunch, stay up past 9pm with no early morning alarm? when is our turn to be with my adult children in their travails or any amount of time longer than these small snippets over school breaks? our turn to take a empty nest vacation with adam? (though if you know him, vacations are the LAST thing on his to do list.) maybe it is our turn for exciting house renovations (we finally fixed our bathroom that was unusable for three years.) so many exciting things fill social feeds and mailbox. will it ever be my turn for some of these moments, for manicures & mimosas? though really, i am not a manicure & mimosa gal, but i would like some things like that to be an actual option to turn down rather than a calendar or bank account impossibility. many times this year i have felt LAST for a race i'm know i am not even running...

*"Maybe it's not your turn today.
Maybe you've been overlooked and underappreciated.
Maybe it feels like your prayers
keep getting delivered to everyone else's address.
What do we do when there is no guarantee of success,
no promise of happily ever after,
and no one shouting well done?"*

*We show up anyway.
One day, I realized it really is not about reaching any
particular destination as much as it's about
living a life worthy of the journey.
You can run to win, or you can run to learn.
You can be intentional about who you are in this moment
because this moment is all you have.
You can live a life that is remembered by how you
navigated what you were given
rather than defined by what you got.
Is it possible we can end up
with something better than a happy ending?"*
{It's Not Your Turn by Heather Thompson Day}

i do have enough english teacher in my soul to recognize the irony of quoting from a book titled [it's not your turn](#) after a year when i won several awards for teaching. these awards might be more indicative of being super vocal on social media about how amazing i am at teaching. i am certainly FIRST in marketing myself well. for a gal who was once rejected 7 times in cheerleading auditions, i was recognized and appreciated in amazing ways this year by so many kind peers. but in typical lea fashion, i often see the LAST & lack rather than the abundance. please, send me the name of an inexpensive therapist, plus prayers that i will see the constant goodness of God in the land of the living. whether i am first or LAST isn't relevant, because it isn't a race. it is a journey. my path, created & marked for me alone. my pace, painfully slow & hopefully steady. but i know the race has already been run in my behalf. my finish medal is from/for the One who become LAST so i could take a place with the Firstborn.

the "furrow, track" aspect of LASTING speaks to me also this year. adam and i changed churches this year. a piece of my heart will always belong to my childhood (and most of my adulthood) church and all who have loved Jesus, us, & the world so well from that congregation. however, in the last few years the roads diverged in the baptist denomination. we felt it was time to follow another path. i love the eugene peterson book [a long obedience in the same direction](#). (the title is based on a nietzsche quote. talk about the power of &.) i realized my long walk was not toward a denomination or a church, but to a Savior who so loved the least, the lost, and the LAST. because of Him, i must be for & with those who have the least amount of power, those He came to exalt, just as mary sings in the magnificat. we now attend a small anglican church, aptly named incarnation. i am terrible at being anglican (one would think c.s. lewis would have prepped me more for this season). i stand when i am supposed to kneel (which seems on brand for me). i never know who is the vicar, who is the rector, or why it even matters. i forget to look at the program for what to say. but i am finding so much comfort in the liturgy itself. (so much so, i almost made liturgical my word for the year.) but i feel like the furrow/track/lore implications of LAST

covers those aspects. i need a script. i need to follow in footsteps of generations who have said these words when they couldn't find their own. for someone who loves improvisation (yes, &), i am finding much solace in lashing my heart to the ancient masts and following furrows well watered by tears of the saints. *lacrimae rerum* (tears of/for things) indeed (from my 2021 words of the year).

but to end with a hopeful LAST verse (& isn't the LAST verse always the best verse?). i will praise a LASTING God who knew our LAST/least/lost lives needed Christmas. a season to restore and re-story our forgetful hearts. the Word became flesh and blood & moved into our neighborhood (the message version). or as my friend, sarah hall put it, Christmas is when Jesus "splashed" into the pool as a lifeguard to rescue our drowned souls. my soul has felt more drowned this year than ever (can one even be "more" drowned?). i am comforted that included in the true Christmas spirt are things like: worried, desperate, sad, unsure if God will show up, afraid of the powers that be/are, longing for Home, & searching for Light. this season we are a weary world waiting for a thrill of hope at LAST. i read in my bible of elizabeth (who knew the feeling of being LAST) joyfully calling mary "blessed" when mary was lonely, scared, poor, confused, and an overwhelmed outcast. showing us the hardest days are the most "blessed" days. the LAST shall one day be first. a life of ease is not my goal. i intend a constant turning toward who God specifically created me to be. with a steadily growing reliance on the One who counted Himself LAST and splashed into the pool so our souls & stories LAST for eternity.

praying for a year of hope-filled LASTING for you from the LAST people to mail out their Christmas cards (oh, the lexical irony continues)...

lea noblin marshall december 2021

*So keep a firm grip on the faith.
The suffering won't LAST forever.
It won't be long before this generous God,
who has great plans for us in Christ,
eternal and glorious plans they are!
will have you put together
and on your feet for good.
He gets the LAST word; yes, He does.*