

Excerpt – Marina Keegan, “The Opposite of Loneliness”

<https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2012/05/27/keegan-the-opposite-of-loneliness/>

We don't have a word for the opposite of loneliness, but if we did, I could say that's what I want in life. What I'm grateful and thankful to have found at Yale, and what I'm scared of losing when we wake up tomorrow and leave this place.

It's not quite love and it's not quite community; it's just this feeling that there are people, an abundance of people, who are in this together. Who are on your team. When the check is paid and you stay at the table. When it's four a.m. and no one goes to bed. That night with the guitar. That night we can't remember. That time we did, we went, we saw, we laughed, we felt. The hats.

Yale is full of tiny circles we pull around ourselves. A cappella groups, sports teams, houses, societies, clubs. These tiny groups that make us feel loved and safe and part of something even on our loneliest nights when we stumble home to our computers — partner-less, tired, awake. We won't have those next year. We won't live on the same block as all our friends. We won't have a bunch of group-texts.

This scares me. More than finding the right job or city or spouse – I'm scared of losing this web we're in. This elusive, indefinable, opposite of loneliness. This feeling I feel right now.

But let us get one thing straight: the best years of our lives are not behind us. They're part of us and they are set for repetition as we grow up and move to New York and away from New York and wish we did or didn't live in New York. I plan on having parties when I'm 30. I plan on having fun when I'm old. Any notion of THE BEST years comes from clichéd “should haves...” “if I'd...” “wish I'd...”

Of course, there are things we wished we did: our readings, that boy across the hall. We're our own hardest critics and it's easy to let ourselves down. Sleeping too late. Procrastinating. Cutting corners. More than once I've looked back on my High School self and thought: how did I do that? How did I work so hard? Our private insecurities follow us and will always follow us.

But the thing is, we're all like that. Nobody wakes up when they want to. Nobody did all of their reading (except maybe the crazy people who win the prizes...) We have these impossibly high standards and we'll probably never live up to our perfect fantasies of our future selves. But I feel like that's okay.