

Starlight

By Kendall Clarke

Back in January 2019, there was a super blood wolf moon—the rare coalescence of a certain set of astrological phenomena resulting in a coppery red full moon that appeared closer to us than usual. Projected to be visibly red for an astounding 62 minutes, media outlets overflowed with information on when, where, and how to go about viewing this event.

Our plan was simple: at 9:00pm, meet at the docks on Lake Virginia, bundled in our Florida-thin coats and blankets for our one-week dip into “cold” weather. But for us this wasn’t just about witnessing a potentially “once-in-a-lifetime” celestial event or taking blurry photos of a reddish-brown dot with the front cameras of our phones or even just making an excuse to have a little celebration for the sake of celebrating.

The full moon is a time of new beginnings, setting intentions, letting go of the past and embracing the new. And so, we did what any other group of college students desperately wanting life to be like an indie coming-of-age film would do: we wrote letters to ourselves, burned them, and cast the ashes into the lake. I honestly have no memory of what I wrote in that letter, whatever baggage I was attempting to leave behind or goals I was trying to manifest for the year.

But what I do remember is this: your hand cupping the lighter, protecting the diminutive flame against the wind as we set fire to paper; you and I lying underneath the orange blanket your grandmother made for you, our warmth intermingling at the shared edges of our forms; my eyes sinking further into the pitch black depths of that starry dome, only barely aware of your eyes fixed on the same point, your

breathe receding to the periphery of my senses. Those stars, relics of an old world, a past knowable to us only in the present, light traveling for hundreds of years, only to reach our eyes when it's too late.

It's ironic, isn't it? A night meant for moving forward, and the only thing I remember is looking into the past.