

Merry Christmas season!

Like others before it, it's been quite a year. To make sense of the world, I make lists. Thus, dear friends, I present to you some lists:

New things I tasted that I think you should too if you haven't:

- Half Acre Guest House beer
- Putting a touch of syrup along with Adobo seasoning onto scrambled eggs
- Mouth Trap cheese curds found at the Minnesota state fair

New things I watched that I loved, and think you might too:

- Summer in the Forest (a documentary about the L'Arche community)
- Nanette (stand up comedy that makes you reflect)
- Capernaum (film set in Lebanon)

New podcast episodes that I listened to and recommended to our other friends already:

- *Mobituaries: Thomas Paine: Death of a Forgotten Founding Father*
- *Code Switch: Political Prisoners*
- *Hidden Brain: You Can't Hit Unsend*

Unexpected delights

- The Trolls at the Arboretum
- Biking from Chicago to South Bend – it's not as urban as you might assume.
- Participating in straw bale races in Mount Morris, IL, at the annual Strawfest
- Baby piglets nursing at the State Fair

Things I learned

- One can only handle the polar vortex for a short amount of time; I'm not special or tough. It is sort of a pleasant sensation to have your nostril hairs frozen for a few seconds, however.
- You cannot take your bike on all the South Shore trains, even if night is falling and you are on your bike in East Chicago and have nowhere to stay.
- Focusing on the small delights is very important.

May the coming year bring you small, medium and large joys – and I hope those joys provide you with the foundation of resilience to bear the inevitable heartaches (also small, medium and large) that come with being human.