

A note from the Muse Editor...

Muse Editor, [Emily Taylor](#) on burning goat effigies

Tuesday 23 January 2018

When January rolls around it feels almost obligatory to write something on the new year, the new start and the new me. Well, I hate to tell you that the new me is the same mess as the old me. So instead, let's not do that. Rather, settle down kids, and let me tell you the tale of the Gävle goat.

Every year a giant, very flammable straw goat is built in Sweden to celebrate Advent. Almost every year, it's destroyed. It has been stolen, kicked to pieces and lost its legs, but mostly it just catches fire. One time it burned down, was rebuilt by high school students and then was hit by a car. Another time it was burned down by a flaming arrow shot by vandals dressed as Santa and gingerbread men. When Yeats described the "vast image out of Spiritus Mundi" I can only imagine he was picturing the burning carcass of the Gävle goat.

For this production week, this has been my favourite topic of conversation in the Nouse office. Firstly, it is absolutely hilarious. Secondly, it's incontrovertible evidence that Swe-den is the greatest country, having bought us the holy trinity of IKEA, ABBA and the Gävle goat. Finally, humans are ridiculous creatures. It's great that they build a giant flammable goat in the first place, but true beauty is found in the continuation of this Sisyphean task of building something beautiful that is constantly destroyed by drunk idiots. It's the kind of tale that epic poetry is written about.

At New Year's I often feel less like a new me and much more like a straw goat that's been destroyed thirty seven times over the last fifty years. New starts come and go and more often than not we fail over and over, but nevertheless we still believe that this year will be the new start. This year the goat won't be reduced to a pile of ash. We are ridiculous creatures but we'll keep trying regardless. The most recent Gävle goat defeated the odds and survived, perhaps heralding a good start for the new year. If it's 'new' you want then this is the right issue of Nouse. We have pieces from our new Travel (M18) and Food & Drink (M19) editors. We have the winners from our column competition (M20). A debate on the new Star Wars film (M14). Want some new music? Then check out the summary of the Sound of 2018. (M12). Who knows? Maybe this year I will finally turn over a new leaf and maybe the goat won't burn down again. But most likely I'll still be the same me and the goat will go down in a spectacular blaze.



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