Out in 2021
Using the actual number 2021. Did that actually even really happen? Can anyone actually prove it? Come at me bro. Cause I need proof.

Anti-racism: that was cute. Everyone came together for approximately 8 months, 2 weeks, 12 days and 4 hours to actually look at the beast that was white supremacy. It was like, someone yelled “hey! This entire country is built on/profits off of whiteness” We cracked open the door and saw the flaming eye of Sauron and was like whoaaaaa. And promptly closed the door. We know people didn’t pick up the antiracist books they bought in 2020.

Masks: whewwwww we’re free! We really thought that. Like, we really did.

Image: From The Boston Globe. Person in black and white with images of masks behind them while the put a blue surgical mask on.

Working in an office: finally someone said it. Why do we do this? Is this necessary? The answer is: NO

History: remember when documented facts were put down in a place where everyone could see? Or when we would turn to people who’s job it is to keep account of public memory?
Skinny anything: jeans, tops, shirts, *menus* all of it went by the wayside as the coronavirus changed eating habits. I mean if you’re never seeing friends/family then no one will notice right?

Disability Pity: the narratives for disability people not having lives is getting reaaaaaaaaaaaaaall thin and Netflix, AMC, HBO and a whole host of other networks are really starting to get off that train

Bodyshaming: the move toward a more equitable public continues as our new normal shifts perspectives on whose body is considered worthy. At the forefront, trans rights and gender norms continue to be hot topics as queer identity and acceptance rise, as people start to realize the value of self-love.

White creative copyrights: As black digital media trends exploded over the latter half of 2021, creators from TikTok, Instagram and various other places brought exploitation and clout culture (using someone else’s work to become famous) to the front. So they struck. And the internet was more boring as a result.
Binging: remember when you just to commit to the couch? No work. No chores. Just….Game of Thrones. All of it. Now. However, everyone’s favorite past time of the last 5 years is now starting to slide back and I’m upset. But perhaps maybe now Netflix and Disney Plus won’t crash every 10 minutes.

Pandemic Baes: You saw the tidal wave coming in 2020, so you went outside and got a life jacket and a raft. In the words of Bart Simpson, you tried. But clearly shaking up with a complete stranger for the unknown duration of a global pandemic just...isn’t all that exciting to everyone, as divorces, splits, and breakups skyrocketed after the great Hope of 2020.

Resolutions: did you hear anyone make one of these? I definitely did NOT.

Betty White: this one hurt. But what is better comedic timing than making everyone throw you a 100th birthday party that you don’t even show up to? She’d rather be having cheesecake.
In 2022
Calling it what it really is: 2020(too). Don’t fight it. Let’s just admit that we are all Bill Murray. It is Groundhog’s Day and we just need to accept that. Get ready to the timewarp agaaaaaaaaaaaaain (oh wait.)

Accountability: what Kyle Rittenhouse didn’t get, Ahmaud Arbery did. So did Kim Potter and Derek Chauvin.

Masks: oh wait. We’re not free. And that’s ok.

Remote work (and thereby longer hours): studies everywhere are pointing out that employers are actually getting more work out of people as boundaries become fluid or disappear.

Alternative Facts (again): remiiiiiiiiix! Say it with me. Just because you have an opinion, doesn’t make it a fact. Fact: racism exists. America has a racist past. Opinion: Critical Race Theory is seen as a tool of reverse racism that bad mouths America. If only Kellyanne Conway were back. We could hit rewind and do 2017 all over again.

Disabled Sex Lives: whether it’s Lauren Spencer in “The Sex Lives of College Girls,” Jillian Mercado in “The L Word,” or George Robinson in “Sex Education” actual disabled people were getting it on all across streaming and network television. And we are here for it!
Crocs: I...I’m not sure how this happened. But crocs went from the brand everyone loved to hate to...decorating the holes with Lisa Frank charms? In our rush to embrace comfort, apparently good taste (and palatable restrictions on neon) disintegrated.
Feeling your feelings: as the Great Resignation continues, people everywhere are taking stock in their own lives, their jobs, and in friendships and relationships to wonder whether they’re necessary. Employers may not like the results, but from a mental health standpoint, we’re overdue.

Auto captioning social media: somewhere over the last year or two, a shift was made and I missed it. But captioning on TikTok is basically like the norm now. And #DisabilityTwitter rejoices. Finally. Just having captions on videos should’ve been a thing long ago. But here we are.

Weekly Waiting: shows like Amazon’s The Wheel of Time, and others are bringing back the weekly wait...in digital form and I am upset. No! We didn’t violently cut the cable dependency of a generation only to be fed bite sized chunks in a new format. Give me my seasons!
Being Single: do you need a partner? Really? Like really? With the Omicron variant just playing hopscotch with everyone, such a question must be asked, and people are saying hell no. Like the X-Men Rogue who can’t be touched, stay away from me. Which leads me to...

Convent Life: Thinking about Maria in the Sound of Music really has taken on a new meaning. Like living in a convent might not be too bad. A covid negative bubble that you wouldn’t have to worry about; seclusion away in the Swiss mountains with lots of fresh air and an optional mask mandate; no one to argue on Twitter about; endless singalongs of Taylor Swift’s re-released Red Album; gazing up at the stars without having to feel the existential dread of Netflix’s *Don’t Look Up* and annihilation of the human race from an ignored asteroid....its actually a nice thought.

Gratitude: people are just more willing to accept what they’ve got and working from there, which is a much better framework than assuming everything is fine. In 2022, we’ve got to do better at learning this and helping to ensure that others are here too because the year is young and the party is just getting started.

*Written by ECNV Ford Foundation Fellow, D’Arcee Charington Neal (he/they). D’Arcee is an award-winning professional storyteller, and third year doctoral candidate at The Ohio State University in English and Disability Studies where he focuses on the intersections of black digital media and disability erasure within Afrofuturism. D’Arcee is the 2017 recipient of the Tony Coelho NBC/Universal Digital Media Scholarship and winner of Best English Graduate Research at Ohio State University for 2020.*