



Issue 3
Sept 2023

FUCK
CITY!



Curated by,
Error
Young Frankenstein
The Hidden Cowboy

Fuck City is usually an irreverent collection of weirdo queer art with writing and interviews. (That will resume in the next issue don't worry).

However, on June 25th, Ben Rowe tragically passed away. If you're reading this, you probably knew him. He was a giant of the music scene, king of the punks, and the impact of his loss is devastating. Ben was the DIY scene, someone who could bring people together and make things happen like nobody else. Full of love and care for those around him and an endless desire to see people succeed, nothing will be the same without him.

This issue is a collection of works by friends and community members to pay tribute to Ben and his legacy. We hope that this memorial zine can play at least a little part in expressing our collective grief and helping us heal together.

As Ben sang in Casually Dramatic, they say it takes time for it to feel okay again. We'll hold each other close, we'll handle grief and mourning in all our unique ways. Most importantly, we'll carry on Ben's legacy of making the Albany scene a place where all kinds of art can flourish and nobody feels left out. As the community that he worked tirelessly to build, we'll continue uplifting each other, being inclusive and welcoming, and keeping each other safe.

1 Rest in Power Ben Rowe, 1997 - 2023.

I first met Ben fall of 2019 at Makeout Reef for the Odd Body Reunion Show with The Northway (i think that was the lineup, Senior Living might've been there too) He was one of the first people I talked with and just was super nice. Flash forward to about a year ago (Summer '22) and I show up early at a house show in Troy, and a really familiar face walked in. We exchanged looks and then he said my name, remembering me by name and face from maybe a 15 minute conversation and 2 hours of moshing together almost 3 years before. Felt really cool to reconnect so quickly as if we picked up right where we left off.

- Anonymous

In a world full of takers, Ben truly was a giver. Ben fostered a music scene that any other promoter could only wish for. He created home for musicians to grow and flourish in an area where you have to establish yourself to get a shot, and brought extravagant music to the most unlikely of places. He made his scene a home where everyone could feel comfortable at all times. I never thought I'd be anyone besides someone in the crowd, but Ben gave me the opportunity to prove myself wrong. Ben was a creator, a leader, a brother, and a friend to all those who got to know him. We owe it to Ben to follow by his example. We love you Ben, thank you for giving so much.

- Anonymous





In my mind, I have accepted, by necessity, that “Ben was.” In my heart, I am determined that it remain “Ben is.” I think that’s my way of ensuring, at least for now, that Ben Memories and Ben Stories keep me company the way I wish them to. I have too many of both. Last night, here in Albany, at Lee and Matt’s, I looked through his DVDs and saw Fishing With John, a show I remember insisting he had to watch, and when he did, and loved it, he made sure we watched episodes together, and laughed like crazy. Ben is everywhere, and as sad as that is, I know in time the sadness/comfort ratio will very slowly transpose. I think one memory I’ll always treasure is, last Thanksgiving, I came to my mother-in-law’s house, hugging each niece and nephew one at a time, with Ben and I both knowing he’d be last. Later on, as we’d long planned, we had our 15-minute chat and catch-up, and when I was called away to do something, he nodded and said, “There’ll be time.” With Ben, for everybody, there always was time. That doesn’t make me sad now; it makes me determined. Everybody needs time and deserves time and compassion and love. And that, to me, will always be the best Ben Story.

—(Uncle) Rob Edelstein





Ben was someone I could always count on for unwavering support. He was a light in so many of our lives. Watching Ben grow and discover his passions was such a privilege, from working in the nursing home to pursuing his love of music and helping provide others with a warm and welcoming space to use their voices. He was someone I looked up to and someone I will always look up to. He led with love and held space in his heart for so many others. Our lives will never be the same without him. On my side of the family there are 8 of us cousins including Ben, and as one of my cousins said to me, "it's always been the 8 of us, what are we gonna do now?" And the truth is no matter what it will always be the 8 of us. Ben was taken away from us prematurely, and nothing will make that okay. We will do everything we can to honor him for the rest of our lives and we will always miss and love him very much.

- Nellie Edelstein





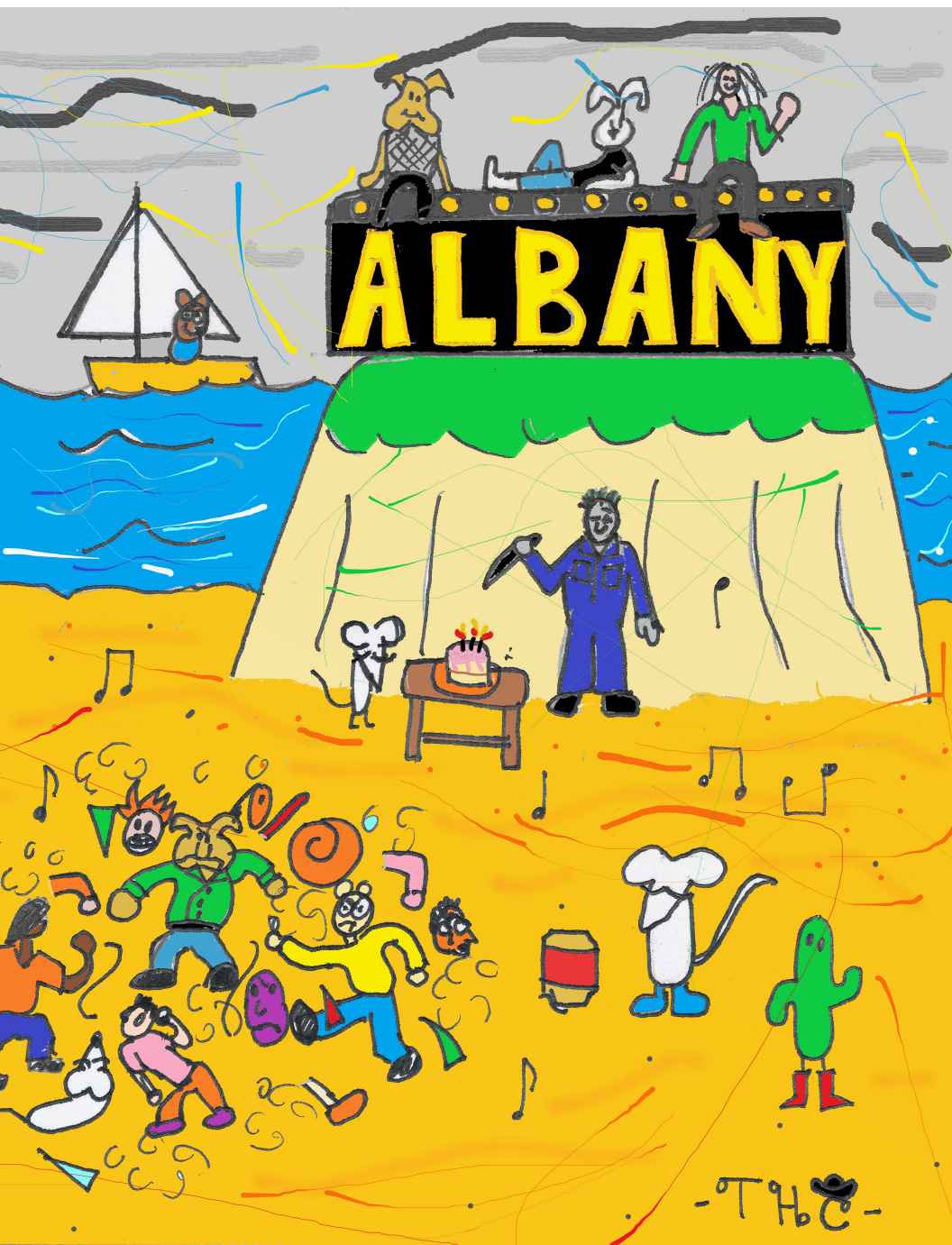
Ben,

I'll meet you at the tire swing,
or somewhere even better.

Your friend forever,
David







ALBANY

-THE-

Like many, a lot of my memories of Ben are about local music. For me, school has always been my number one priority. I like how Ben understood that. There were many Rat Den shows where I worked the door, but had a book or accounting or some shit pulled up on my phone. Sometimes Ben or Frank or Zeke or whoever would join me. Ben like half suggested I do homework while on door as a joke, but I would like- actually do that. I really never minded working door and doing homework, especially on a weekday.

One of the first times I did this was a bigger show and Ben tried to pay me. I was like, “No dude, don’t do this- like it’s not that deep, it’s door” and I gave money to the photographer because I didn’t want Ben to take any money out of the band’s pay to pay me for doing my homework on his porch. I remember Ben’s smile and the conversations about how cool it is to support local arts.

- Ness

RAT



DEN

#40
5/19



Hi Ben,

I keep trying to write a poem or a song or something that manages to say everything I wish I could say to you, but the words won't come. They get stuck in my throat and the tips of my fingers.

I'm sorry the world is so fucked sometimes. I'm thankful it's so beautiful too. You were good at finding what's beautiful. It's funny to have a visionary for a buddy - they'll start making you see what they see. Sometimes when we talked, I felt like I was looking at things through your glasses. I liked to have a peek from your view now and again.

After Jerry Garcia died, the writer Ken Kesey wrote him a letter; and in that letter, Kesey describes the silence left in Jerry's wake as "positively ear-splitting." I think I know what he means now. Your silence is ear-splitting, too. But I think I also know what he means later in the same letter, when he said "this is what we are left with...this golden silence." The silence you left hurts my ears, Ben. Almost as much as it hurts my heart. But goddamit, it reminds me you were here. So let the silence ring. And right alongside it, I'll be there, with all our buddies, screaming right along with it:

You were here.

I love you.

You were here.

The first show I ever worked after moving to Albany was a Rat Den show that Ben put together. After finding out I would be having 6 hardcore bands play in my living room, something I'd never done or even seen before, meeting and chatting with Ben immediately relieved my anxieties. And so 50-70 shows later, some I played and the rest I was front row at, I realize that Ben Rowe shaped a lot of the artist and music listener I've become. He is an everpresent piece of the art I make and the energy I hope to carry in this world. Ben knew how to live fully and passionately in a way many of us could learn from. I will miss him forever, and I hope I carry some part of his boundless spirit for the rest of my life.

Love you always Ben,
Aeron (Drow)





Hey Ben. Feeling weird today. I'm supposed to be writing something for your memorial zine, but I dont know what to say. I still cant wrap my mind around the fact that you're not here, and in a weird way it feels like you're not really gone. I've had too many unexplainable experiences to be able to logic away this feeling like you're still messing with us from somewhere beyond. I still feel sad though, that you're not here with us physically. I feel robbed, like we were just starting to really build a friendship. Living in the Rat Den was difficult for both of us, bogged down by our own shit, we never really got to hang out or talk. And finally moving here to the Lampshade, I could see such a great shift in your personality. I could see how much happier you were. I'd never seen a smile that big plastered across your face nearly everyday. I'm glad we got to experience that, if only for a little while. I have many regrets, but they seem pointless to dwell on. I'm just glad I had you in my life. Always pushing me to do more, to be better, to fight for myself. I'm grateful for that. I try to hold your "Benergy", as Blake calls it, in everything I do now. I know you'd want me to keep making more art and doing the things I love, and not dwell on the things that can't be changed. So I will.

Wait for me man. I'll be coming for that 6th Ben Hug one day.

Love you bud, forever and always.

- Frank

I want to give you a new perspective
To open up minds and discuss the objective

In a world so divided
Why have we decided to look outward rather than
within?
To waste our time fighting over what's out of our control
Instead of letting our character define where our purpose
begins.

It's much more complicated than it seems
To walk our walk, rather than live in our day dreams
To look in the mirror and face the demon,
Embrace the broken child whom we've neglected the
meeting.

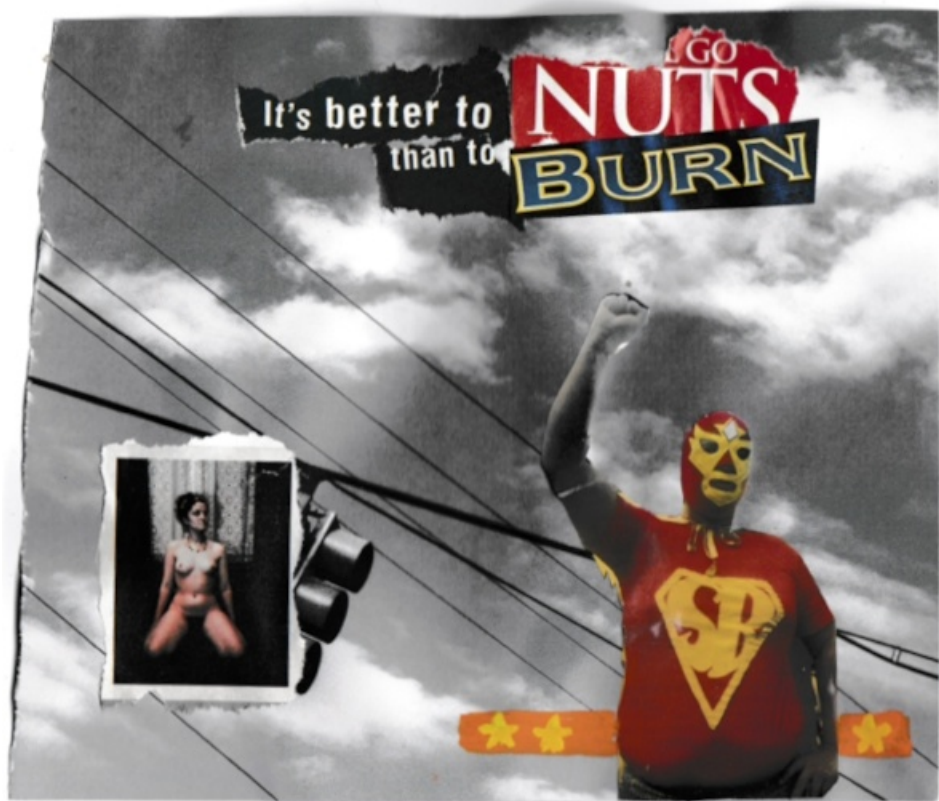
Can't you see, it's both you and me
Who need to do the work to grow
Teamwork makes the dream work but we walk a lonely
road, trying to put blame on one another instead of
fueling hope.

My words have been used as ammunition, freely being
given to those of you who already carry the gun.
So load it while I challenge your traditions, but don't
think you will silence me into submission,
for walking to the beat of my own drum.

If not me then who, if not now then when
Can the kitchen sink be cleaned without piling up again?

I want to discuss this objective
While our minds eye is purely subjective
Towards the contracts we've chosen before we were born
We know nothing at all though we'll all have to fall
In love, in defeat, for risks and to be free.

K.S.





Ben's Music

(all on bandcamp)

Stuart Ullman

Millertime

Medical Board

Boomer Noise

Spooky Hat

Yankees Tadium

Binky's Shirt

Chester

benjaminxavierrowe