Salutations!!

Another year has come and gone, and another Schrobilgen Christmas letter must be written. For some reason (I can only assume it has something to do with my unparalleled brainpower and devilishly handsome cat) I, Erin, have been assigned the daunting task of writing the letter this year. I did not realize until I sat down to write it, then ended up watching the Trampoline Cat video on YouTube and then took the “Which Christmas Tree Are You Based on Your Most Recent Starbucks Order?” quiz on Buzzfeed, and then got started writing the letter, just how difficult it is to compile a year’s-worth of familial happenings into a letter that is concise and clever, so shoutout Mom and Dad for accomplishing this for almost twenty years now. (Parents, “shoutout” is a cool hip thing that kids say when they want to give someone recognition. What I lack in experience writing this letter I promise to make up for in totally rad and #edgy cultural references that will no doubt make your LinkedIn profile totally awesome-sauce.)

My assignment is made all the more perplexing considering that I spent most of this last year in Appleton, completing my freshman year/starting my sophomore year of college, so I don’t even know what the heck has been going on with everyone. What I can tell you for sure is that Bramlet is still as handsome as ever, as my parents are always sure to put him on the call whenever we Skype.

I know Rory is super busy, because during the same Skype sessions he’s always either just leaving or just getting back from some sort of lesson or performance or rehearsal (performance highlights from this year include being a featured dancer in *Anything Goes*, being a vocal captain of the award-winning Noteworthy show choir, and starring as Seymour in an Illinois Theater Fest-selected production of *Little Shop of Horrors*). He’s currently applying to and auditioning at colleges where he plans to study classical voice, once again affirming that he is in fact the best non-sports kid this family has ever seen. Other impressive accomplishments include an 83-day-long streak in which he left every article of clothing he wore or towel he used on the floor of his room, proving once and for all that (1) this family has too many towels, (2) Rory has a lot of clothes, and (3) it is in fact possible for a cat to get lost inside of 83-days’-worth of floor buildup. Thankfully, Simone resurfaced after four days and seems to have made a full recovery.

Malachy, our number-one sports kid, added another All-American honor to his collection of sports kid accomplishments, so he is pretty decent at running I guess. He finished 8th in the 10k at the NCAA National Outdoor Track Meet in Eugene, Oregon in June. If you’ve never watched a bunch of guys run around a track 25 times, oh man are you missing out, and if you have been lucky enough to have this experience, well, you know what it’s like to watch a bunch of guys run around a track 25 times. We Schrobilgens were able to spice up the experience by watching the ESPNU coverage of the race, which focused on the two leading Oregon Ducks for the entire time, so we developed (red shorts!) the fun game of (blue shoes!) trying to spot Mal in the background (brown hair!) for the entire race. The tension of this experience was captured perfectly when we couldn’t even see the finish line after the two leaders crossed, and we didn’t know Mal’s place (All-American! Hooray!) until my hip and #techsavvy dad looked up results on the Tweetersphere (another cool hip interwebs thing). Unfortunately, Mal’s cross country season was cut short by an injury this year, but he has a positive outlook for his recovery and I’m confident he’ll be back and better than ever after his break, just like his hero and fashion role model, Adele. I think he also goes to “class” while he’s at “college,” but he doesn’t seem any smarter to me.

My parents seem to be managing well without me. Well, I mean, obviously a charismatic, fascinating, humble personality such as my own is one whose absence will certainly be felt, but I think my charismatic and fascinating cat makes up for it at least a little bit. “Greg” is doing his best to continue my efforts to teach the cats how to tell time. At this point, they seem to be completely oblivious to the concept, which is actually an improvement from where I left off. He’s still working at IMC, and completed his fourth Relay Iowa in June. At the same time last summer, we lost our beloved Jingle Bells (Greg’s sister Jill), but not lost like we can’t find her. While her loss is one that we will always feel especially painfully, we will forever have the cherished memories of her ever-present laugh and unparalleled levels of sass in our hearts. “Kathleen” has been keeping busy this year with tutoring and volunteering as a CASA. She also confirmed us kids’ fear that Lolly is in fact her favorite child when she paid for Lolly to have a herding aptitude test and later herding lessons, two luxuries which she never seemed to think her first three children deserved.

As for myself, sports kid number-two and middle child number-only, I’ve successfully completed 4 trimesters of college, and so far I can’t complain. I’m thankful for my wonderful family, good friends and teammates, Taylor Swift’s *1989*, and an absolutely magnificent cat (have I mentioned Bramlet?), all of which have been crucial elements of the great life I’ve been able to lead so far. I hope you’ve enjoyed my attempt to recreate/mimic the mastery of my parents’ holiday letter writing skillz. Retweet that shoutout from the beginning of the letter. Here’s to another happy and healthy year in 2016! Live every week like it’s shark week!\*

\*Like 95% of what I say, that is a 30 Rock quote, so shoutout Tina Fey.

Love,

The Schrobilgens

