

Birthdays give me anxiety.

Around a month before my birthday each year, I get anxious and panicked. It's my solar return and it seems I always return to anxiety. The fear ends up accomplishing it's own self-fulfilling prophecy. As I descend into the madness of my upcoming anniversary of life, I push away the people close to me.

I don't fear aging or dying (in this instance). I fear not being memorable enough to be celebrated. Perhaps, I've unknowingly been an awful person this year and every is rolling their eyes as the day approaches. Perhaps, no one even remembers. When I post a photo at my lonely dinner, it'll be the first time in a year that they remember when I was born.

I scroll through Instagram stories and every couple of days I am reminded of just how loved some people are. Some people have 20+ slides of stories reposted from their friend's accounts. Each slide filled with paragraphs about memories with this person and the wonderful traits this person embodies. Their comments are filled with birthday messages and well-wishes for their next year around the sun.

I've never gotten many birthday wishes.

Ever since I joined Facebook — far too young, I might add — in the 5th grade, I never got more than five messages. I would see other people's "walls" filled with love from their friends and family and feel ashamed. It felt worse when they would share the same birthday as mine. I'd sit in my room on my mother's laptop staring at the screen wondering why that wasn't me.

This is probably some insane person's ideology. Maybe I should understand that not everyone will have plenty of friends. Not everyone will be well-loved and appreciated by a bunch of people. I'm no one special, so why would I expect to be treated as such? I don't know, really. Even if I have had a year full of good

kisses from girlfriend and late night chats with my good friends. My worth clings to the amount of messages on my birthday.

In the month before, I'll reflect on my year and what I've accomplished. I'll question the person I was and the person I currently am. I'll cry and consider suicide because I'll continue to disappoint myself year after year. While I hope none of the words I type will be true this year, I worry still. It's the beginning of December and I'm not too far away from the end of February where my birthday will be.