

Dear Family and Friends,

Season's greetings from the Yano household! Apologies for missing last year—here we are with quite a few updates. Since my little sister typically takes the reins on the holiday letter, this will be my attempt to swing par for the course. Here we go...

2016 was a difficult year. We lost our matriarch, Grandma Miyako Yano, in late May after an emotional battle with surgery complications. Though we miss her dearly, she made certain to wait until three grandchildren had graduated before her passing; we were all at her bedside that sunny, Sunday morning.

The succeeding winter unleashed record-breaking snowfall upon the Treasure Valley, demolishing three of the farm's storage sheds. Then, just as the damages had been assessed and plans had been drawn to rebuild, Dad lost his bestest, four-legged friend, Ellie, to the wears and tears of time. His empty truck bed is still an unfamiliar sight.

Now here we are at the end of 2017 with some new changes under our belt. Dad had a good harvest and the construction of his new storage shed is nearly finished (I may not know much, but I think it's rather impressive). And, after some pokin' and proddin', some wranglin' and tanglin', he's recently adopted the newest Yano: baby Gracie, a tri-colored border collie puppy. She gives us reason to laugh...and swear...

Mom had her own eventful year by deciding to go back to work full-time after 25 years. She's started teaching the 2nd grade class at Pioneer School this fall, and while she's enjoying the experience, handling nearly thirty students inevitably has its ups and downs. Also, she is going on almost five years cancer-free!!!

Education must run in the family because Jenny is all grown up and teaching Spanish at Ontario High School. After receiving her Masters of Arts in Teaching last year from George Fox University, she and her partner, Jack, have moved back to town where she's running the classroom, and coaching both boys' JV basketball and girls' JV softball. Also, Jack's been a wonderful and bright addition, and we are so lucky to have him as part of the family.

As for me...I'm unemployed. Okay, backing up a bit. Last spring, I also finished my Masters of Fine Arts at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and was fortunate to be hired back as an Undergraduate Academic Advisor. While I'm forever grateful for the NYC experience, I've recently returned home to work on some personal projects that have been simmering on the stove but never quite had the energy to come to a boil. Hopefully I'll find my way to another metro area next year—and if not, there's always farming, right?

For the first time in 7 years, we're all home. Personally, after wandering around a crazy city like a feral coyote, I'm even more grateful for a chance to take a ride out the farm with my dad or to have my mom teach me how to cook (yes, you read that correctly), or to hang out on the couch cracking jokes with my sister and Jack. I'd be lying if I said everything is peaches, but after our recent experiences with impermanence, with absence, and with change, a couple slow moments with loved ones mean that much more.

And on that note, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. May your coffee, beds, and hugs always be warm. Have a happy, healthy, and safe 2018!

Love,
The Yano Family