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### *Day -1: Last sleep before Trans(pac)*

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We start the Transpac race tomorrow at 1 pm. Forecast is for a strong inshore breeze, and consistent trade winds (models right now say somewhere between 14-18 knots for most of the race, completely ideal). Our weather guy (we have a weather guy!!!), says it will be a “sail fast, towards the islands” kinda race - the sailing equivalent of an NBA player who says “we just need to get the ball in the hoop” at halftime.

Elizabeth and Lizzie got interviewed by the race media team, so they’re well on their way to being famous (*“I fear I missed many opportunities to be a fool”* - E).

We’ve got a 26-hour spotify playlist, 42 cans of coke, and Kate has a 10k page PDF of the entire Throne of Glass series on her tablet (thanks Maya!!).

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### *Day 0: we have started*

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Began the morning with one last walk to pet the stray dock cats, one last weather briefing and many last trips to the bathroom.

After extensive speed dating, we’ve signed up for a trisail team - the trisail trophy goes to a three boat team that scores the highest overall in their respective divisions. Our teammates, Ruby (division 8) and Rahan (division 7) are not only nice and silly and didn’t ghost us, but they are also French. We had the very important job of determining a team name - after the inevitable “ménage a trois”, we landed on “le tre fromage”, or “the three cheeses”.

Left the docks at 11 - the most graceful exit we’ve had from our slip thus far (no one’s quite ready to talk about our very shameful 12 point turn in front of a crowd a few days ago). Good omens all around.

Hit shuffle on the 26 hour Spotify playlist and motored out to the starting line about 2 miles offshore. Dale realized he hasn’t gone 12 days without hearing his wife’s voice since 1976.

Elizabeth’s been singing that one 2000s song that goes “I don’t wanna be anything other than what I’ve been tryin to be lately” for three straight days, so we put that on to get it out of our heads.

A start full of big moments - race committee hit postpone a minute from the start because the starting line for a 2 thousand mile race was about 3 meters skewed to the left. A winch on the mast jumped out of its bolts in a last ditch attempt to not go to Hawaii. Kate lost her lens cap overboard. Ruby yelled “let’s go fromage” at us from the starting line.

Passed Catalina island around dinner time - the last land we’ll see for a long time.

## Today's menu

- breakfast: a quiche that Bernt made (thanks Bernt!). Asparagus and bacon
- lunch: Lizzie's current hyper fixation sandwich, pesto with sprouts, salami and provolone on some fancy sourdough from a local bakery that Lisa's friend Marcy brought us (thanks Marcy!!)
- dinner: Thai peanut noodles (thanks Thailand!!!)

## Song of the day

*I don't wanna be* by Gavin McGraw - listen at your own risk.

2,207 out of 2,225 miles to go. 4 hours elapsed. Two hats (and one lens cap) lost overboard.

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### *Day 1: we have made it 1 day in*

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Beautiful night once we turned the corner around Catalina Island. Our weather guy told us several times that the wind would lighten up throughout the night and into the morning and that we'd need to be patient and wait for the northeasterly to fill. We were mostly patient but mostly didn't need to be - steady 10-14 kts of upwind throughout the night. One "extremely mellow" crash tack during a wind shift.

We started our watch schedule after dinner - it's very complicated and we are entirely reliant on a laminated excel table to understand any of it. There's always three people on deck (except for when there's four). Everyone gets at least three hours to sleep when they're off (except for when they get six). All seven of us are awake and on deck for wine and cheese hour at 5pm every day (when we eat neither wine nor cheese).

Cloudy skies throughout the night - only a glimpse of stars and a shockingly bright sliver of a moon through gaps here and there. Short choppy waves. Lisa says the waves will widen out once we pass over the first drop off in the ocean floor. About a hundred miles offshore, the ocean floor drops a thousand feet, about 130 miles offshore, it drops to eleven thousand - do not fact check us, we only have limited Wikipedia access at the moment and we are never wrong about anything ever so we will take it poorly.

Grey ocean, grey sky into the morning and into the day. The boat's locked into a 30 degree heel - slipping and sliding like drunk toddlers down below. Applesauce pouches and pre-crunched cheese-its are the most popular snack. Kate's wearing what she insists on calling coveralls but what's really just a fleece onesie (it has not helped either the slipping or the sliding - both her and Elizabeth have hip-checked Volker in different incidents). A little spit-up and a lot of incomplete sentences.

Elizabeth and Lizzie's charm and poise on camera got them into the official Transpac media highlights.

Watch here: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DLlf4YovyOh/?igsh=MTRuNTF2dTYxZ2xsag==>

We've lost visuals of our competition, but continue to track with AIS and yellowbrick. Another group of boats starts tomorrow. Word below is we'll have a kite up by this time tomorrow.

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast - yogurt and granola
- Lunch - cucumber and cream cheese bagel sandwiches
- dinner - lasagna and garlic bread

### **Wildlife watch**

- A nonchalant pod of dolphins off of Catalina Island
- A few sea lions yelled at us out of the dark at 2am and scared the shit out of us. To be fair, we did wake them up from a nap
- A few far off whale spouts on the horizon in the morning

### **Song of the day**

*She Sheila* by the Producers

2,070 out of 2,225 miles to go. 28 hours elapsed. 1 out of 7 crewmates on the toilet during the extremely mellow crash tack.

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### *Day 2: delivery pending*

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Ate a lasagna, put in a reef. Ate a few round ups, put in a second reef (shortened the mainsail to depower and gain control). A night of 18-20 kts, a few puffs to 24.

Pointed the bow towards a 230 compass heading and hauled the mail all night, which Elizabeth and Kate learned is Bayfield for "8+ VMG". (VMG = velocity made good). Bernt's expedited shipping got us two more places in our division.

A few conversations about the differences in communication styles across genders, sparked by what happens when someone says "I have no more helm!!" (Answer: nothing, regardless of gender).

Woke up to sun and blue ocean - no full sky yet, but the clouds are starting to bake off. We're into ocean swells - big sweeping 4-6 feet waves, that only occasionally make it back to the cockpit, crusting everything in salt. One deposited a very unlucky jellyfish onto the deck, who was promptly unceremoniously poked.

Settling into watch schedules. The main role during watches is driving, leaving plenty of time for contemplation, chatting and chores - goldfish dust is cleaned off the cockpit as soon as it is deposited.

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: yogurt and granola. Running low on dairy milk, Volker wonders why anyone would ruin perfectly good granola with oat milk. Kate and Elizabeth disagree and pledged their allegiance to oat nipples.
- lunch: wraps with cabbage, provolone and deli meat
- dinner: gyro bowls with rice, gyro meat, cucumbers, tomatoes and olives

### **Song of the day**

*The spot* by Your Smith

1,894 out of 2,225 miles to go. 52 hours elapsed. 2 out of 7 containers of yogurt consumed.

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*Day 3: "I cried, I pooped, I put up a kite"*

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A similar night to last - cloudy, 6ft swells of waves, 16-20 kts. The lazy runner fell out of the mast, preventing a kite, but we never really got the wind angle for one anyways. Another dark night spent delivering mail.

Supported physically and emotionally by her extremely capable crewmates, Kate was sent up the rig around 7 am to put the runner back in. It's back in, she's back down, and Bernt's heart rate is mostly back to normal.

Spinnaker went up around 9 am after many, many hours of anticipation. (Spinnakers, also called kites, are large, lightweight, colorful sails flown when the wind is behind us - the Transpac is famous for days of downwind, we're hoping we've hopped on that train as of today). We're currently flying a big red kite named Clifford (Clifford has entered the villa).

No other boats (competitors, freighters or otherwise) on the horizon for the last two days. As far as we know, we're the only boat on the ocean right now.

Mostly adjusted to the sleep schedule - learning lots about how each reacts in the first moments after being nudged awake. Some go right into business mode (Dale), some seem to recalibrate to the entire experience of being alive (Elizabeth, Lisa) and others will wave happily at you from their bunk before promptly going back to sleep (Kate).

We have a pumping head on board with a firm “you clog it, you clean it” policy. The bowl isn’t the sticking point, but the 20ft pipe to the tank is a thing of terror. Some have developed the habit of throwing TP overboard, rather than risk a clog. Twice now, TP has caught on the lifeline on the way down, waving like a flag, while the thrower scrambles desperately to get it down and their crewmates laugh hysterically and unhelpfully.

Rumors of a house elf/boat gremlin are circulating widely - Dale can’t find his flip flops, Kate’s missing a shirt and Lizzie’s lost a pair of pants. Volker’s convinced the missing items were not packed to begin with, and their respective owners will find their things back at home when they return. The respective owners are convinced they’ll find Volker wearing their shirt, flip flops and pants when he comes up for a shift.

In addition to our normal high/low/buffalos during wine and cheese hour (the hour when we do not drink wine and only occasionally eat cheese), today, we opened up a Coors banquet’s in memory of Henry and Jim, two beloved.

If it wasn’t clear from the number of jokes in the emails, we’re having a terrible time. Thanks all for following along. Lizzie’s working hard getting footage on camera and online - we’re working to make sure she gets into the spotlight too. All texts, emails, comments are shared and appreciated widely. We plan on being insufferable when this experience is over.

### **Today’s menu**

- breakfast: yogurt and granola. And oatmeal. Blueberries and cream instant oatmeal with freeze dried blueberries on top was a huge hit
- lunch: warm ham and cheese sandwiches on Hawaiian rolls
- dinner: Mac and cheese with hotdogs. Elizabeth made brownies, and then we had to wait and smell them for an hour and a half. They were devoured, in the end, with hands in the tray.

### **Song of the day**

*Apple* by Charli xcx (specifically the bit where she goes “I’m gunna drive, gunna drive all night”)

1,702 out of 2,225 miles to go. 76 hours elapsed. 7 out of 7 have pooped.

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*Day 4: aw sheesh, darth vader’s our dad??*

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Took Clifford the Big Red Kite down around 10pm last night, in exchange for our A4 (who hadn’t received a fun name of its own at this point).

Stars, finally, in between the mist - we were beginning to think they didn't exist. Half a moon shone through the clouds, enough to see people's faces on deck. By midnight, the clouds had crept back and the horizon disappeared completely - driving became as much a mental game as a physical one.

Top speed was 11.4, top wind speed was 23 kts and Lizzie, Dale and Elizabeth faced down a "monster" wave (which got bigger in each retelling). Kate and Lisa had just gone down for their 4 am off watch after two hours chucking packages directly at people's doorsteps - at one point, Kate saw the boat do 145% of its polars. (Polars predict how fast a boat should move at a series of different wind speeds and angles - useful tool for judging sail choice, trim or driving).

And then, the empire struck back. The still un-nicknamed A4 exploded spontaneously on the halyard, shredding in two places. All hands were on deck instantly to pull it down - recovering the sail and the edges of the sail separately made it immediately clear that this was not a tape-able situation. Ripping a kite in a downwind race was Han coming up frozen. We'd lost our hand and our dad was being a real dick about it.

A somber morning. The on watch did a spectacular job cleaning up the aftermath - the Genoa went back out and eventually Clifford went back up. The crew regrouped this morning and resolved to blow up the Death Star regardless finish safely, having had as much fun as possible.

Spent the morning popping in and out of small cells of mist - nothing worthy of a deck shower yet, but the fresh water feels great on the face.

Still no other boats around - we're north of the fleet and fielding questions about it. Namely, what do we know that they don't? Answer: nothing. Are we betting against local knowledge? Yep. Are we waiting for the shoe to drop? A little. Was this the fastest and most direct course? Given the information we have!! (Again, general reminder that we're prohibited from receiving outside help - if y'all are shouting at your screens for us to do anything differently, save the "I told you sos" for when we finish).

The bathroom adventures continue - the lore of lifeline TP has created a new game. Toss from the cockpit, you get 1 point. Top step is 2 points, three steps down is 3 points. Out of the hatch, directly from the head, you win the game. 6ft+ tall mailman Bernt has been given a handicap.

Shamelessly copy and pasting Lizzie's excellent reel caption:

*Last night was one of the hardest yet—one of those moments that tests you, humbles you, and reminds you just how small we are out here. But it also brought out the very best in this crew. We leaned on each other, we listened, we learned, and we came out of it closer than ever. Everyone is safe, the boat is sound, and we're still headed for Hawaii—maybe a little saltier, definitely a little stronger, and deeply grateful to be in this together.*

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: yogurt!! and granola!! Nutella might have made a surprise appearance
- lunch: bagel sandwiches with turkey, pickles and cream cheese

- dinner: pasta with kielbasa, sun-dried tomato pesto and some broccoli

### **Song of the day**

*All my love* (live version) by Noah Kahan

1,526 out of 2,225 miles to go. 90 hours elapsed. 4 out of 7 have rebraided their hair.

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### *Day 5: thank you for sunshine*

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Relatively quiet night, thank goodness. 12-18 kts, flew our reaching A3 and staysail (no idea how to spell, don't tell us, no outside help) through the night before switching to the A2 in the morning. The highlight of Lisa, Kate and Bernt's watch was fixing a particularly loud squeak in the vang with some McLube. People slept. And brushed their teeth. And drank tea while driving. We discovered we have both caffeinated and decaffeinated green tea. Lisa discovered the decaffeinated is worse. Real high-octane stuff.

Everyone agrees it took three days to calibrate. We're more awake now than when we started, even with less sleep. We're slamming into each other down below less and less. Watch changes are now associated with a descent into giggles. A well-timed funny voice can reverberate for half an hour. A poop joke lasts for over an hour. We've left TMI in the dust. And pooped on the dust.

If it wasn't obvious, we're eating incredibly well. Dale brought some truly excellent, chewy black tea (Yukon Gold from the imported section of Woodman's), particularly good with a little fancy maple syrup and a lot of oat milk. Kate flew to LA with some goat Gouda from Wisconsin that was devoured with an apple and some ritz crackers around lunch time. We made a spontaneous shepherd's pie for dinner out of what we had stocked in the freezer.

The sun came out today. The cushions dried out on the deck, socks were changed, solar panels were charged. We washed kitchen towels and underwear and wiped down the wheel. Boomer tech support office hours were held. Bernt connected with the official Norseman 447 owners Facebook group, who had been cheering us on, unbeknownst to us. Kate's shirt and Lizzie's pants have been recovered from the boat gremlin found, tragically, where they were last left. Dale's flip flops are safe at home in his closet. A champagne day.

Someone dear asked if we feel lonely out here, so far away from the rest of the fleet. Alone, maybe, but not lonely - Andreas is our whole world right now. And our status as the only boat on the entire ocean has let us focus on that world. It's a pretty good world.

## Today's menu

- breakfast: We ate our last orange this morning. Scurvy's probably only a day or two out from here. The 'Lizabeth's discovered we had oranges literally today while reviewing the email before it went out ("Fake news")
- lunch: charcuterie - cheese, crackers, and pickles and leftovers. A jar of blue cheese stuffed olives made a divided appearance
- dinner: shepherd's pie, made from ground beef, frozen veggies and instant mashed potatoes

## Song of the day

*Polly* by Dora Jar

1,369 out of 2,225 miles to go. 90 hours elapsed. Times Volker's been asked if we're at the halfway point yet: 1,112.5

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### *Day 6: sorry for party rockin*

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A beautiful evening after a beautiful day. Full boat zoomies around sunset, culminating with Oreos dug out deep from where they'd been stashed below a bunk. The moon, still several days out from full, bright enough to prevent headlamps on deck. And stars!! Finally stars!!

Moved through small cells of rain throughout the night - the first of the squalls. We're still learning the difference between Pacific and Great Lake squalls. On the Great Lakes, a squall is a wall of wind, sometimes 40-60 kts, hitting hard and sometimes without a warning. Sheets of water on the ominous horizon, torrential rain, often lightning. Sails need to come down, and come down fast.

Pacific squalls are a new species to us. We've yet to encounter one at full size, but last night was a cautious, controlled introduction - wind that grew from 12 to 14 to 18, mist that turned into rain. We watched and waited before pulling a controlled plug at 20, taking down the kite and switching to the Genoa.

Full boat zoomie hangovers in the morning. The consequences of our own actions!!

The rains help a bit with the salt - we're in full crust territory. Wipe a finger across the deck, and you'll pick up a pinch of flakes. We're using ocean water to boil pasta and thicken instant mashed potatoes. Surfaces are oily to the touch - we spray down key mechanics with a mix of water and vinegar, to keep them from sticking. The floor down below gets washed every other day or so, to keep down on sliding.

A race has developed within a race - Lizzie and Elizabeth are race committee co-chairs of the 2025 Andreas TransPoop Log Log. An official scoreboard (to remain confidential, per crew request) now lives on the back of the bathroom door. Suspiciously, race committees chairs are tied for first. Volker's declared the whole thing rigged.



## Today's menu

- breakfast: Chia seeds in everyone's oatmeal and everyone's teeth
- lunch: quesadillas! Cheese, beans, corn, green chilli
- dinner: red beans and rice, with some kielbasa

## Song of the day

Missing you by LEISURE (Elizabeth's sappy song of choice - careful, don't play around her without warning, she's already over her under/over cry estimate)

1,235 out of 2,225 miles to go. 138 hours elapsed. 69 people on the email list. (nice)

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### *Day 7: halfway day*

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We've had extensive philosophical conversations about what defines the halfway point to this race - and by extensive philosophical conversations, I mean: most of the crew assumed halfway occurred when the yellowbrick showed 1,112.5 miles to go, and Volker vehemently disagreed. We compromised. Volker drew an elaborate arc on our map to determine halfway based on our overall trajectory and then drew a vertical latitude line, making halfway as the point in the expedition software where we cross the line. And then he made a waypoint where yellowbrick would show 1,112.5 miles to go.

All to say: we hit halfway a little before 7 am this morning.

A 24-hour celebration has kicked in. Beer bread has been made out of a pouch of bisquick and a coor's banquet. Pancakes have been consumed. Elizabeth busted out a full volume impression of Bruce Springsteen covering Bon Jovi's *Livin on a Prayer* at 7:08 in the morning. A single balloon has been blown up.

Surprising absolutely no one, Lizzie is doing the absolute most as social chair and party planner. In addition to her roles as queen of the foredeck, social media extraordinaire, and co-chair of the TransPoop race, she orchestrated surprises within surprises for halfway day. Pulling a fast one on all of us, she distributed letters from our loved ones she'd collected over the months. Everyone wept. Thanks a lot, loved ones. Thanks a lot, Lizzie (we'll get you for this!!!).

We floated the idea of following up the celebrations with a 3/4 day, a 7/8 day and a 11/12 day, but realized it might break Volker. And we only packed so many balloons.

Time has been moving in funny ways. Three hour off-shifts in the middle of the night pass by in three minutes. An hour off at 6pm crawls. It's somehow never 10:30 am, but it is always 3 in the afternoon.

We gain 20 minutes of sunset each day as we move west - golden hour in the evening creeps slowly into 10 pm. Everyone prefers a different hour - some love the sunny, warm 2 pm, others like the 4 am before the sun is up. The stars in the middle of the night are a clear front runner. We've discovered Dale will declare whatever hour he's currently in as his favorite. Both 'Lizabeth's announced their favorite hour was an extra hour of sleep.

Other recent highlights included a record-breaking 26 kts spotted in the night (naturally right as a kite was about to go up), flying fish, and a squall line that gave Bernt and Kate the chance to wash their hair on deck (they're now feeling morally superior to the rest of the unwashed).

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: pancakes and fancy maple syrup
- lunch: peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with bacon
- dinner: breakfast for dinner! Bernt's beloved egg bake and some breakfast sausage. Also beer bread (you only make it halfway once!!)

### **Song of the day**

*Livin on a Prayer*, but if Bruce sang it instead of Jovi

Our [email archive](#) now contains a glossary. Today's entry was written by Elizabeth Hayes, zoomie expert:

#### *full boat zoomies*

*inspired by overly excited puppies running around the house at odd hours, full boat zoomies are the technical term for all-hands-on-deck silly goofy hour, often characterized by belly laughs, happy tears, and extensive poop jokes. And no sleep.*

1,041 out of 2,225 miles to go. 162 hours elapsed. 3.1 Chicago Mac races left.

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*Day 8: soak safely*

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A quieter night. We switched from 3 people on deck to 2 during the night to give everybody a little more rest.

In less quiet news, we've jibed for the first time in over 1,200 miles. Somehow, we remembered how. For a chunk of the night, the boat heeled to starboard (right), instead of port (left). People rolled in their bunks, drivers put their weight into their right knee instead of their left, shit fell out of cabinets. It was a strange, brave, beautiful new world.

And then we jibed back.

Clifford, Big Red, went up in the morning. Surfing down a particularly well-timed wave, Kate broke the boat's record with a 10 knot VMG, testing Andreas's definition as a non-planing boat (gross weight of 39,700 pounds who?) and waking Dale out of a nap.

We've been emailed some excellent questions. A few (less excellent) answers:

*How does freshwater on board work?*

We have a 50 gallon tank onboard that we refill with a watermaker that uses reverse osmosis to make ocean water safe to drink. The water maker, also referred to as the "noise machine", can make about 17 gallons in an hour. To avoid any hint of a water shortage, we run it about once a day. There's two faucets in the sink in the kitchen - one fresh, one ocean. The ocean is often used for dishes, and occasionally for pasta.

*What timezone does the boat operate on?*

We've stuck to pacific time, but talked about adjusting - each day, we get a little closer to Hawaii time, 3 hours behind PT. To avoid confusion (we barely know the day/time as it is), we'll switch when we get there.

*Have the flip flops been found?*

The flip flops have been found!! Allegedly, they are in Dale's closet, at home.

*What point did Volker determine to be the halfway? Before or after the Yellowbrick line?*

In the end, Volker drew a circle centered on the starting line, with a diameter of 2,225 miles, making the radius 1,112.5. Halfway occurred when we crossed that radius. He has neither confirmed nor denied how that point lined up with the Yellowbrick line, making Kate a little suspicious that they might've been one and the same. More to come.

*Do you know what place you're in at any given time? Do you get to view the live maps, too?*

We do! Previously, the Yellowbrick tracker used a 3-6 hour lag to prevent people from seeing competitor locations in real time. The advent of AIS, the automatic information system that tracks boats and their movements, and the subsequent requirement that racers have their AIS turned on at all times made the lag obsolete.

In other words, every time we make a decision directly different from the rest of the fleet (couldn't be us, we've literally never done that, what do you mean we went north), we are extremely, painstakingly, aware.

*Why are you going so far dang north??*

Kate's Alaska start date got moved up. Our models of wind and the boat's characteristics have shown this to be the fastest, most direct route for us so far. The dreaded high pressure system that usually lurks north of the rhumb line in this race was a little further north than usual this year (as far as we can tell). But now our prerogative is to start making our way south. Hence, soaking.

*Who is currently winning the TransPoop?*

Elizabeth is currently leading the TransPoop pack, with a score of 7 poops and a throw score of 32. Given her long standing habit of logging logs (3+ years), she can assert with real data that she's become more regular on the boat than on land. We've decided the only takeaway is to go on extreme offshore sailing voyages more often (it couldn't possibly be the extreme amount of oatmeal, chia seeds, or dried figs consumed...)

Volker is currently refusing to participate based on two objections: 1) anyone could take Metamucil (outside help), immediately cementing their lead (and maybe the head...), and 2) there's no verification system. Given that he hasn't volunteered to create one, we're pretty sure he's joking (he's German, it's hard to tell).

*Are you all ever coming home?*

While the idea of continuing on to Fiji is tempting, so is the idea of a shower, a real bed and seeing our loved ones. Plus, at these throw rates, we'll probably run out of toilet paper.

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: well into oatmeal land. Dried cherries and blueberries have made an celebrated appearance, as have fruit cups
- lunch: scavenging leftovers
- dinner: cowboy caviar (beans and corn and rice and tomatoes), eaten with tortilla chips

### **Today's glossary entry**

Soaking - in our world, up and down are used to describe how close the boat is pointed towards the wind. "Up" means turn the bow closer to the wind, "down" means steer it further away. Naturally, this has evolved into more and more flavorful ways to describe the same action. You can pinch it up, sail it hot, or feather up. Or, you can foot it down, sail it deep, or even "soak it like you've never soaked before". These are all totally normal, very appropriate, ways to talk about very serious, specific, maneuvers. Stop making it weird.

### **Song of the day**

Gone by HAIM

916 out of 2,225 miles to go. 186 hours elapsed. 1 party balloon still hanging down below. Still party rockin.

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### *Day 9: flossing with pool noodles*

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Hours and hours of 20+ knots today, dodging waves, Clifford the Big Red Kite leading the pack. Driving completely to true wind angle (the angle at which the wind hits the boat), our world has shrunk to a window of 148 to 154 degrees. Touch 160, and you're slapped in the hand immediately. In Volker's words, drivers bold enough to brave 158 are "making friends on the wrong sides of the tracks" (what can we say, those kids are cool!!). Waves built up to 5ft, but not in steady swells - every 15th wave or so knocks you on your side, into said tracks. Challenging, impossible, exhilarating driving. Drivers switched every 20 minutes, originally to keep hands fresh, but eventually because anyone behind the wheel started to hog. Catch us in Hawaii with enormous forearms, still talking about that one time Dale hit 11.8 kts of boat speed. Not bad for a Norseman from 1981 (a classic vintage).

After nine days at sea, we're starting to do maintenance on a lot of our systems. Several different crew braved the crawl spaces in the back of the boat to check on the rudder. Soft shackles have been replaced. Lines have been whipped. A set of 6 hot pink pool noodles purchased at a Walmart in San Pedro have been put to any imaginable use. There's one taped to the forestay to prevent the jib sheets from fraying, one taped to the companionway to prevent head bonks, one taped around the lifeline to prevent the spin sheet from chafing. Chunks of nood keep our water bottles from rattling and keep the propane secure. We're slowly becoming more pool noodle than boat.

Lizzie's eagle eyes spotted Rapid Transit, an Antrim 49 from division 4, passing 6 miles behind us with a blue and white kite. Our first sailboat on the horizon since day 2 and our first reminder that we're allegedly in a yacht race or something.

Wildlife watch continues. We lost sight of most of the charismatic megafauna (are whales, dolphins and sea lions megafauna?? Can't be bothered to google) once we left the coast behind, but we're still keeping our eyes peeled.

Every once in a while, we'll catch a small black or white tern sweeping the surface of the water. Jarring to see birds this far out away from land, even ones evolved for this (aren't you a little lost, little dude??). Flying fish skitter across the waves in little packs, though Lisa says not as many as she sees in the Caribbean. Several have landed on the deck, to be safely returned by Lizzie. No one's been hit yet, but Elizabeth threw a wet yogurt at Kate in her bunk and she's pretty sure it's the same experience.

While we're not near the dreaded Texas-sized plastic island, we're spotting nets, plastic balls, plastic pallets drifting by on the open ocean - and shaking our fists.

Temperatures are downright hot. Weather gear makes an appearance only in the darkest hours of the night, and is paired more often with sandals than with boots. Shorts rule the day. Sunscreen is slathered on, greasing most touch points, though everyone's noses remain a little pink.

### Today's menu

- breakfast: granola and yogurt!!
- lunch: tuna salad wraps
- dinner: a truly spectacular lasagna made by Bernt and brought painstakingly across the country. Some consumed with a can of fanta, which we've started referring to as aperol spritzes

### Song of the day

That one bit from school of rock where Jack Black goes "the legend of the rent was way past due, and then Samantha comes in with the bass - rididididididididi"

But also *Nice to Each Other* by Olivia Dean

734 out of 2,225 miles to go. 210 hours elapsed. 1 video of Dale and Tally's dog Winnie with dog zoomies watched repeatedly.

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### *Day 10: choo choo*

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A sporty, spicy night. The next mark in our GPS routing is Hawaii - as the DTM (Distance to Mark) crept below seven hundred around 10pm, we all agreed it looked like a squall-less night. The squalls disagreed, and showed up a little after 1 am - Clifford came down, and was eventually replaced with our reaching A3.

We held a contest to name the A3 - some submissions stuck with the dog theme (Spot), others were mail related (USPS). In the end, votes were nearly unanimous for Thomas, the Little Kite that Could. Thomas keeps trucking.

An albatross (or atleast a big bird that we've decided was an Albatross) circled the boat lazily in the morning. We're assuming we smell like a fish dinner to the birds - the flying fish have been dying on the deck with a vengeance (and the rest of us smell worse).

The 15-20s sustained throughout the day, and so did we. Managing sun has been key - clouds in the morning often keep the heat down, but the boat bakes by around 4 pm.

Our day is now centered around the diurnal shifts from the trade winds - following the sun's trajectory, the wind clocks back and forth on a remarkably regular pattern (must be nice to be so regular, Elizabeth). Twice a day, we notice the wind direction change a whopping six degrees and jib accordingly.

There's now a post-it note on the nav desk that tells us what tack to be on during every hour of the day (we're very light and breezy we promise!!)

Some more questions (because Kate is running out of ways to say “we put Clifford up and then took Clifford down and it blew 15 to 20 and then it blew 15 to 20”)

*How do you sleep?*

Mostly okay - we've got three official bunks: one sleeps two in the back with a net strung up in the middle so we don't snuggle too hard. The “mega bunk”, created by filling the gap in the couch with a box and a cushion, also sleeps two. One extra long bunk with a hammock lets those of us over 6 ft (must be nice) actually lay down fully. Naps are taken everywhere and often - snuggling on the sails in the v-berth is particularly popular, but public. Pictures will be taken, and it will not be a good angle.

*Do we ever fish?*

Other than Lizzie's side hustle tossing flying fish back overboard (for her troubles, one smacked her in the face last night), no. We're using the excuse that we're usually going too fast to fish successfully but really it's because we forgot to pack soy sauce.

*Are we allowed to send you dog videos? Is it outside help?*

Please send us dog videos!!!!!! And cat videos. Just no fish videos for the time being, we're a little over it.

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: the very last of the yogurt!! RIP to our gut microbiomes.
- lunch: bagel sandwiches with the last of the deli meat and the last of the cabbage. RIP to our gut microbiomes.
- dinner: Elizabeth made a mean veggie fried rice, eaten with a sriracha mayo. RIP to our gut microbiomes.

### **Song of the day**

*Eminence Front* by The Who (Kate thought it was “imminent front” until literally this email, and had been singing it in her head every time a squall rolled in)

574 out of 2,225 miles to go. 258 hours elapsed. Days since shampoo has touched any of our scalps: 10.

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*Day 11: break shit, fix shit, eat shit*

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A silken night, sans squalls. Clifford made it all the way through the night (a very good boy!).

Now the miles are moving in funny ways. It feels like we crossed halfway yesterday, and like we'll finish tomorrow. The numbers slip down, but we're still further offshore than many of us have ever been before. We crept below 500 miles a little before 7 am this morning, and should clear 400 this evening, but still have over a Mac Race left. Eager to be done, dreading the end.

This much time on the boat, and the sounds become familiar. The second step past the galley creaks. Sometimes the traveler squeaks like a bird. The wheel has started to groan like an old man. Most of us can identify exactly which cabinet wasn't fully secure by the sound of the door slam alone.

As a driver, the water whooshes past you on either side, drowning out the conversations in the cockpit. We've developed a series of hand signals: a thumbs up means "ready", an upright closed fist means "hold". Spinning a single index finger in the air either means "pull that line" or "please for the love of god ease that line". No fingers yet, miraculously.

In a clever bit of foreshadowing, the morning was spent fixing the groan in the wheel. Volker was sent so far down into the bowels of the boat, we lost eyes on him completely. Dr. Bernt armed him with a scope and declared him ready to conduct a colonoscopy (Volker: "that's not in my scope of expertise"). Never have our poop jokes been so medically sound. The diagnosis was a loose shive in an axel, and the patient is resting and hydrating and in much better spirits. Volker's doing great too.

We spotted three boats on the horizon at once this afternoon - naturally, after an ocean alone, we determined it was the perfect time to get naked in public. Filling a camp shower with freshwater, we took turns on the bow stripping down to swimsuits and scrubbing. A patch on Clifford failed mid-bath hour (he wanted to get in on the fun!!), so we can add "indecent kite douses" to our list of accomplishments as a crew.

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: Lizzie made an excellent beer bread in celebration of sub-500. The boat smelled like a brewery at 7 am, which was pretty ideal honestly
- lunch: we are in our tuna era and have mixed feelings about it
- dinner: coconut curry with chickpeas and rice

### **Song of the day**

*May Ninth* by Khruangbin

419 out of 2,225 miles to go. 282 hours elapsed. 3 days since anyone has worn boots. 3 toes with bruises caused by not wearing proper footwear.

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*Day 12: breaking news!! still on the pacific ocean*

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The wind shifted on us as the sun was setting, and for five glorious minutes, we could point the boat directly towards Hawaii. Another silky night - Thomas the Little Kite that Could came out, and defying all logic, allowed us to sail a little deeper than Clifford (our running kite).

Our nightly dance is pretty much the same at this point. The women (Lisa, Lizzie, Liz and Kate) are paired off in three hour shifts. The Dads (Volker, Dale and Bernt) have their own coordinating cycles, overlapping, so there's never a moment with completely fresh people on deck. Some nights there's time to brush teeth or make a cup of tea. Others, it's all you can do to slump your life vest off your shoulders and grab your camping pillow. Incoming watches are silent, shoulders shrug as they hug a sullen thermos of hot chocolate. Outgoing watches are downright chipper, hovering eagerly for an empty bunk - there's exactly as many bunks as people. Nudge someone awake and you wait for them to gather their wits and gear before claiming their spot, still warm.

On quiet nights, it's a downright ballet of bodies and their belongings: pillows and blankets and eye masks and noise canceling headphones. On spicier nights, it's a frenzy: off watches lay awake in their bunks, captive audience to the chaos above, equally hoping and dreading hearing the words "all hands" float down through the hatch.

We're celebrating every possible mile mark - we slipped under 400 before sunset, crept by 333.33 during the night, and made a berry crumble out of frozen berries and some instant oatmeal packets for 314 (314, as in pi, as in pie day, do you get it we are math geniuses). 250 is next, then 222.22, then sub 200 and then we're basically done (again, very good at math).

Eager to finish, but not eager to be done sailing. We're hoping for more wildlife as we approach the islands (sorry to the birds and the flying fish but you can't sit with us anymore). Land logistics have already reared their head: even with over 200 miles to go, we're starting to make lists of repairs, lists of shopping trips, lists of things to remember (every 20 minutes someone says "we can't forget to take everyone's passports out of the evac bag!!!") Stay tuned to see if we remember). There's a welcome party to coordinate, a race party to attend, mai tais to drink, friends and family to hug (we will be stinky sorry).

In the meantime, we're still sailing to 150, still tossing TP over the rail, still covered in salt and sunscreen and still truckin.

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: berry crumble!! Kate took the maple and brown sugar instant oatmeal packages that no one was eating, mixed them with some browned butter and threw them on top of a bag of frozen berries
- lunch: leftovers
- dinner: pasta with red sauce and as much garlic as we can bear. Lisa swears it makes us smell better

### **Song of the day**

Just the entirety of *Hamilton* is stuck in our heads (the man is non-stop!!)

271 out of 2,225 miles to go. 306 hours elapsed. 67 1-mile twice-around windward leewards to go.

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*Day 13: if we had ham, we could make ham and eggs if we had eggs*

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We're down to it now. Everything's a highlight, a first or a last. Heard our first radio transmission in about 12 days, headed into our last night watch tonight.

Sailed through a downpour this morning, the hardest rain of the trip. Volker, who doesn't sing, erupted into a version of singing in the rain that woke the off watch. A double and then a triple rainbow emerged - the colors were so saturated, it bled into the water.

Traditionally, a gold coin tied to the mast goes to the first to spot land - lacking any coinage and any gold, we taped a hundred grand bar instead. Whoever spots land first will have to slurp it out of the wrapper.

After 2100 hundred miles, and hours charging, the drone committed immediate suicide after its first takeoff, flying directly into the radar in the back of the boat and falling into the water. We were not laughing about it this morning. We are mostly laughing about it now.

We were too somber to report this in earlier emails, but Clifford suffered a 3 foot horizontal rip in one corner a few days ago. An early patch failed, and then the repair patch failed. Fueled by rainbows and coffee and the promise of a melted 100 grand, we scraped off the repair patch and started fresh. Now held together by three different colors of spinnaker tape, Clifford has risen again.

A dark horse has emerged from the back of the poop race (sorry). After 12 days, Kate threatens her sister's rock solid lead (sorry!). Elizabeth threatened the use of metamucil, but decided she (and her poops) had too much integrity. Former frontrunner Lizzie is still in the running, and could still pull out all the stops. sibling rivalry for the ages - stay tuned to hear who clenches the win (sorry!!!).

Each night during wine and cheese hour (the hour where we eat dinner that occasionally contains cheese but so far has not contained wine), we share highs (something good), lows (something bad), and buffaloes (something wacky). Being so close to being done is a high, a low, and a buffalo all at once. Other buffalos from today included the TransPoop upset, the rainbow, and an elaborate extended inside joke about Volker's kidneys being both too hot and too cold (don't ask, none of us understand).

### **Today's menu**

- breakfast: granola and milk
- lunch: leftovers
- dinner: the last of the lasagnas, eaten in direct sunlight. Batch 2 of brownies, this time with some Nutella mixed in

## Song of the day

*French Bay Hotel* by The Ocho

122 out of 2,225 miles to go. 330 hours elapsed. 7 post-race beers in the fridge. 7 post-post race beers in the fridge.

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### *Day 14: we have finished*

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2,225 out of 2,225 miles. 343 hours elapsed. 1 sibling relationship left intact.

More to come (included, per overwhelming popular request, a detailed recap of the TransPoop). We need a Mai Tai, a shower, and a nap first.

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### *Day who cares: Thank You!*

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How do you describe an experience you're still in? How do you describe the highs, the lows, the buffalos while you're still riding all three, still clinging to the back of the buffalo?

Yesterday morning, we blew into Diamond Head, screaming through 27 knots of breeze - the most we'd seen after 330 hours at sea in the last five minutes of the race. Nick and Angela (Kate and Elizabeth's parents) saw more wind on a mooring ball in Milwaukee after a Friday night race than we saw crossing the Pacific. An hour out, we spotted a six inch tear in Thomas. Forty five minutes out, we put Clifford back up, and hauled the mail one last time.

Everyone wept when we passed the red Diamond Head buoy, and everyone wept when we spotted friends and family on the Sea ninja, the spectator boat that led us into the harbor.

We rolled into a world of people and loud music and pork sliders and a gallon of Mai tais. Thank you especially to Suzie (Mrs. Mailman) for coordinating the welcome party, for feeding us dinner, for passing each of us a bottle of champagne and a bag of Hawaii snacks. Thank you to David and Nancy and Dave and Kristin and Tate and Sri and Grady and Jaz and Ben and Tim for giving us leis, and taking our pictures, and enduring the awkwardness as we recalibrated to having conversations about anything other than Clifford and VMG and poop.

Today we're washing salt water off of sails, and digging belongings out of cubbies and tracking down missing sailing gloves. We're still walking with sea legs, still wobbling around (we didn't even have that many mai tais we swear!!), still waking up ready to be on watch, still not quite ready to be done.

Thank you to the rest of the crew for tolerating me observing and cataloging your idiosyncrasies, describing them in detail in public emails to your friends, family and loved ones. Thank you for fielding

my questions, for letting me sit in the comfy nav desk chair once a day to write. Thank you to Elizabeth for copy editing each one before I pressed send. Thank you for laughing at my jokes, especially the dumb ones.

I have loved writing these emails. If I had known this many people would be reading them, I would've written better jokes. Your compliments and comments and love have gone straight to my head (if I start a substack, you're all to blame). Thank you for following along, for forwarding, for sending questions and well wishes and jokes and dog videos. Ask us more about this experience the next time we see you - we will be insufferable (as promised), full of joy and eager to share.

Thank you for sharing this experience with us, and with me - it has made a bucket list experience infinitely more precious. Maybe the real Trans was the Pack we made along the way (sorry).

Love,  
- Kate

PS: by popular request, a TransPoop FAQ. Trigger warning for poop.

*Okay how did this race actually work?*

There were two categories - number of poops and throw scores. Throw scores depended on the difficulty of the throw position and the success toss. Number of poops was more esoteric.

*Who won??*

In the end, Elizabeth and Kate tied. They win the privilege of telling a 300+ email chain of friends, co-workers and strangers exactly how many times they pooped in two weeks.

*How many poops?*

68 poops. An average of 9.7 poops per person, median of 11. Min 4, max 15.