

Amber's Update



Looking Back

I walked into a cafe recently, and was delighted to hear a song I haven't heard in a long time. It immediately took me back to sophomore year of college, to my dorm

room, and the friends that lived on my floor. I pulled out my phone and texted one of those friends, someone I don't talk to often, just to tell her I was thinking about her. The song was *I'd Like to Get to Know You Well* by Howard Jones. I played this album so many times that year, it became a kind of soundtrack.

Last week I was offered a last minute single ticket to a Bee Gees Tribute show, and after an initial hesitation (I was starting to settle in for the night), I rallied, got dressed up, and went. It was a great time, singing along with the crowd, an experience of collective effervescence that I had not felt in a long time. Part of me was transported back to later elementary school and the disco dancing class I took at the community center. I could picture the instructor with her perfectly feathered blond hair, and the beige floor tiles. I still remember all the words to most of the songs by The Bee Gees.

Hearing *Jamaica Farewell* by Harry Belafonte always brings back the memory of my dad playing guitar and shyly singing to his little girls.
He didn't do it very often, and we loved it.

When I hear mariachi music, I think of my youngest sister and her terror as a child, of being singled out and sung to in a restaurant.

In college, I drove with a friend from the Bay Area to Southern California, about an eight hour drive at that time, listening to the same cassette tape the whole way there - and back. And that is how I know the words to so many Squeeze songs. We were in a convertible without AC and it was very hot along Highway 5, so we stopped in a few places and jumped into motel pools with all our clothes on, hopped back in the car soaking wet, and were cooled off for a few miles. I can still smell the hot dusty air, just by listening to any song on that album.

Anytime I hear the song *All Summer Long* by Kid Rock, I am back in the traffic, stuck on the Chesapeake bridge on a super hot humid summer day and all three boys are singing along.

Music is a great way to travel back in time to events and people and memories. So many of my memories associated with music are related to being in a car. Driving is a time when I am listening to music without a lot of other interruptions.

Next time you hear a piece of music, jot down memories it provokes. You may be

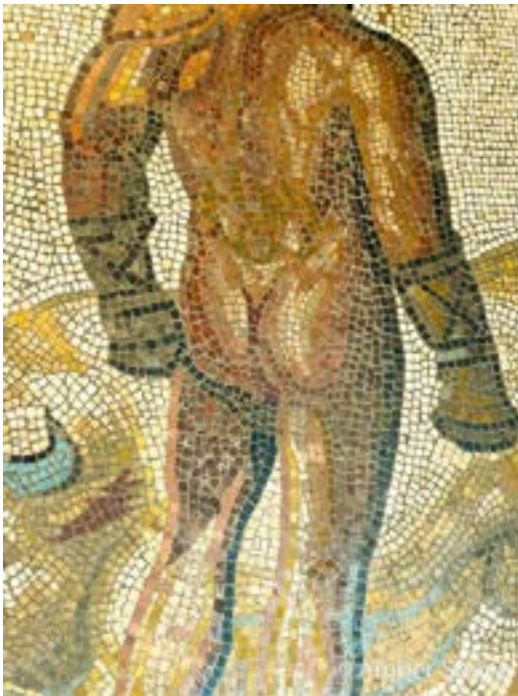
astounded at how much detail you can remember! I'd love to hear about it. If you share with me, I'll add it to a "memory playlist" along with the songs mentioned here, and share the playlist with you!



Three Things

I got behind.

I suppose I am using music to get myself back into writing. You may have noticed there was no March newsletter. February was a dreary month, and my writing inspiration faltered. We all feel this way sometimes. I'm doing all the things to get my creative mojo back. Spending some fun time with family and friends is high on that list. Biking around Santa Monica, scenic drives, paint-by-number party, cooking classes, 8-minute phone calls, taking photos of butts in museums, going to a comedy show, all of these things have put a smile on my face!





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One thing that for sure will inspire some progress on my writing projects is attending the biannual Erma Bombeck Writer's Workshop. Yes, I'll be at Erma's alma mater in Dayton Ohio a few days after you read this newsletter. I am looking forward to learning and spending time with so many talented writers. I am also visiting Chicago on my way back. This part of my trip is connected to another writing project, a project I've had a hard time getting started on, although I've been thinking about it for a long time. An important part of the story happened in Chicago so I need to go there and walk around and revisit some places.

April is tax season! I am related to a lot of accounting-type people, who I cannot relate to at all. Thank goodness I have people to help with doing this horrible chore every year. To be honest, all I do is sign my name. I cannot fathom how people think it's fun. Geometry? Now that is fun.

I'm glad I learned about
parallelograms instead of how to
do taxes. It's really come in handy
this parallelogram season

Do you like this newsletter? Share it with someone!



Cute Dog Photo



How I feel when I have a big writing project that I haven't started on yet!



Best regards

Amber McClain Shaw, writer/artist/ambivert

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