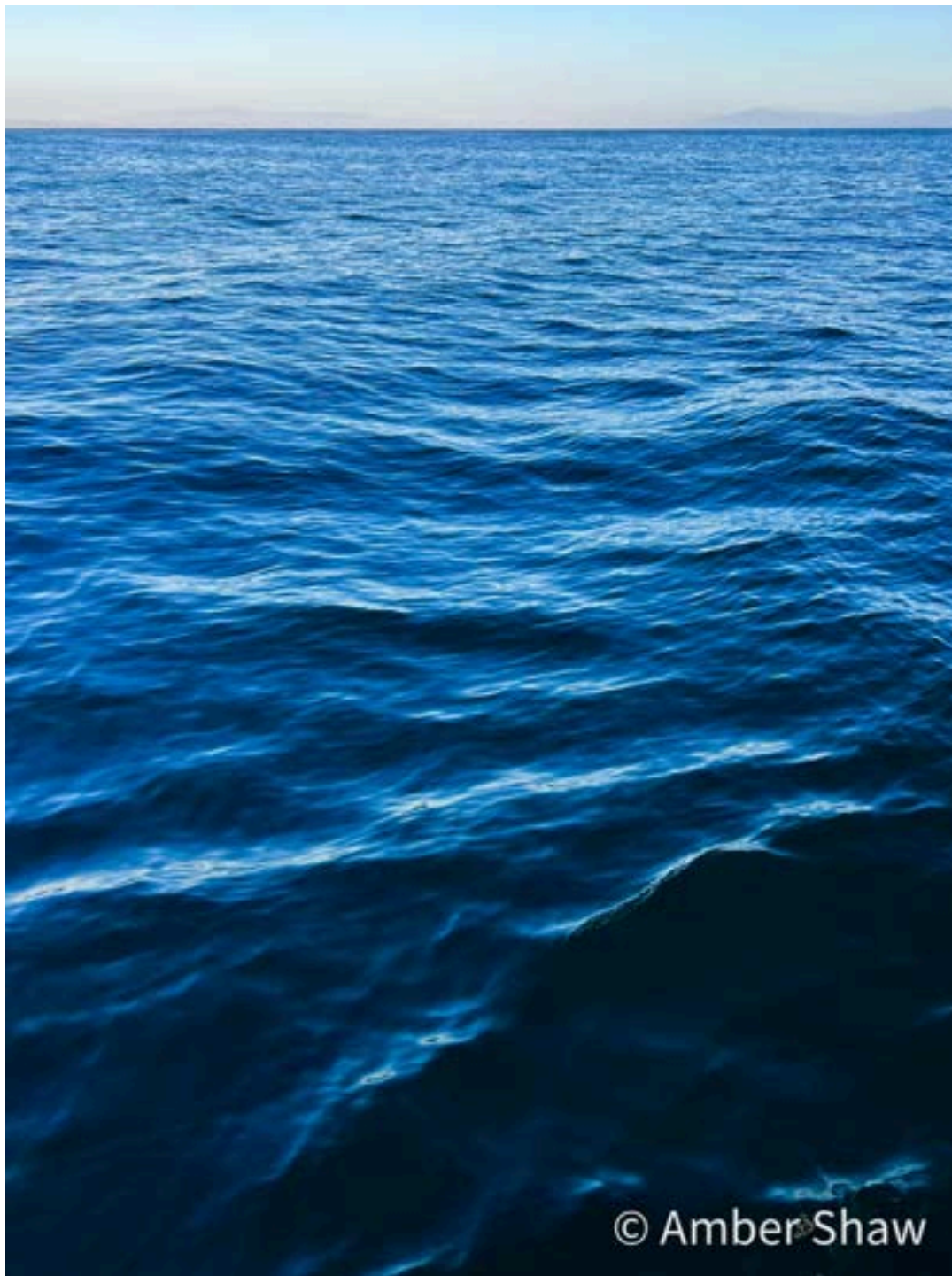


Issue 26

# Amber's Update



© Amber Shaw

## Rock On, All You Earth Signs

Virgos unite, it's our birthday month! Happy Birthday to my Virgo buddies.

I have a lot of houseplants. It's a fairly recent hobby that I really didn't have the time or interest in until my house was an empty nest and I needed something to talk to. I jest. Well, kind of.

One of my houseplants is more accurately a tree. Margaret is named after my boss who gave her to me when she moved, more than 30 years ago. I've lost touch with Margaret the boss, but Margaret the plant is a wonder. She has survived five moves and a whole lot of neglect, spending at least a year on the side of the house without regular watering. I almost left her there but somehow she made the last move, scraggly and ugly, but resilient, into a crowded condo with three boys and a large dog. For a long while she was the only plant in the condo. Once I started adding others, she started to thrive. She started to push against the ceiling. I had to move her to the family room area with a taller ceiling, and she is very very happy there, transplanted into a bigger pot, surrounded by other plants and the right amount of light, water and fertilizer. I'm quite fond of her, and the conversations we have. She is wise. We have shared a journey. She is nine feet tall and at some point she will reach the ceiling of the family room and that is when I know it will be time to move.

I also have a completely different kind of houseplant, a terrarium. It is a closed system, in a jar with a lid, that is supposed to be self-sustaining. In theory, it has everything it needs within the jar to thrive, without opening it, for years. Only it is not thriving; the plants are turning black and rotting. It is hard not to see this as a metaphor. For myself and for humans in general. We are not meant to live in a terrarium, our own little world, sealed off from the forces of our environment, with no outside influence, our growth stunted. Like Margaret we can thrive in a bigger and more diverse environment, grow stronger and bigger and even reach the ceiling.

I think this metaphor is pretty great until I think about my condo being a large terrarium.



---

## Three Things

### 1

I learned from my youngest son that there are all kinds of interesting YouTube videos about terrariums. I don't understand how he knew this, but I did a little searching and yes, actually watched a couple of them. As interesting as these videos are, I've decided terrariums are not something I am going to pursue, as hands-off as the hobby may seem.

I am not including a link here. If you do a little search yourself, you will be rewarded with enough terrarium videos to keep you occupied for hours.

---



## 2

I haven't been to a concert in a long time and then thanks to my sister, went to two concerts at the same venue on back-to-back nights. One was a very last-minute opportunity, the other planned months ahead. One was by the artist I saw at my first concert, age 14, with my mom tagging along and wondering why it smelled so much like skunk. I was so worried it would be depressing to see Rick Springfield after all these years. Rick just turned 75 in August, and looks good with his guitar and converse high-tops. He performed with Richard Marx and much to my delight (and relief) it was wonderful. My sister and I laughed, sang and danced. Then the next night, we saw my sister's all-time favorite, Rod Stewart. He also put on a fantastic, energetic show despite it being the first performance since he recovered from laryngitis and Covid.



*Rick Springfield on stage, a visual for the fun and crazy mash-up he sang of Jessie's girl, Stacy's Mom, and 867-5309, and a photo of what I look like singing to Rod Stewart, taken by my sister because I was trying to photograph her awkwardly singing to Rod Stewart. She won.*

---

### 3

And now, I share with you the joy of finding a flattering and comfortable swimsuit.

We all know how rare this is. This swimsuit is so great that my mom, one of my sisters, and my lifelong family friend/aunt/sister Mary (who found and purchased these for us) all posed for a photo at the summer pool party.

My youngest sister is still a holdout, claiming she is not ready for the romper suit.

She might be getting one as a gift soon (shhh don't tell her).



## One More Thing!

One more thing: have you seen these stamps?  
Yes, they are real stamps, from the post office.

They are inspiring me to send some mail!  
Do you want a quirky postcard from me



with one of these cool stamps on it?

Get a friend to sign up for my newsletter and I'll get one in the mail to you!



**Share this newsletter with someone!**  
**Add something fun to a friend's inbox.**



# Cute Dog Photos



*Golden hour dog portraits*



*Best regards*

Amber McClain Shaw, writer/artist/ambivert

**Follow me!**





[Website/Newsletter Signup](#)

[Blog Articles/Past Newsletters](#)

**Velvet Fig, Inc.**

15700 Winchester Blvd, Los Gatos  
CA, United States of America



You received this email because you signed up or I thought you should have signed up.

[Unsubscribe](#)

