

Amber's Update



Happenings and Some Very Good Photos That **ARE** Related to What I'm Writing

The last two months were momentous, suspenseful, scary, inspiring, maddening, art-filled and expensive. And I am not talking politics or tariffs. I'm sure you are busy staying up to date/avoiding the news, either way I'm here to entertain you with some other kinds of stories.



The expen\$ive event was taking my dog to have some teeth pulled due to her “*doing something stupid*,” an official diagnosis from the animal dentist. The stupid thing she did was break some of her teeth.

I saw my own dentist as well, in the same week, so comparing them was on my mind. I can tell you that the animal dentist is happier and richer and doesn’t have to work as much.

The human dental assistant told me how great it would be to put all their patients out for procedures, like they do for dogs and cats.

I tried not to take that personally.

I just need to keep the sample packets from each dentist separate so I don’t accidentally use the liver-flavored toothpaste myself. You know, this makes me wonder. Why don’t we have Doritos, hamburger, Oreo or other dessert-flavored toothpaste? How did the rather random flavor of mint become our standard? This is something to investigate another time.

Note: I did just find some jasmine toothpaste in a sample size. Jasmine seems more perfume than food, but I bought it, will report back.

Note to the note: The jasmine toothpaste tastes like perfume. At first. But because I was on a short trip and it was the only toothpaste I brought, I got used to it and almost like it now.

2

The inspiring event was hosting a mini writers' conference. Many of the friends I made at the last bi-annual writers' conference I attended came together in Santa Cruz.

We laughed and laughed and told stories and learned from each other. We went for walks, did yoga on the beach, went kayaking, and visited what might be the weirdest restroom in the area. We saw harbor coyotes and shared writing resources and some of our own writing.

We even have a new group name; Five Chicks Who Don't Tip. The name was curtesy of a street musician who could not count and was rather bitter about all of us walking by.

I've wanted to be a part of a writing group for a long time. I adore these women and enjoy having a group of writers as friends.



Some of the writers who gathered in Santa Cruz.

3

The momentous event was Match Day for my son Bennett.

If you've never been to medical school, and like me don't really know what it is, it is the day close to graduation when the entire medical school class, a group of high-achieving, smart, hard-working people, in varying amounts of debt and used to being in control of their lives and emotions, find out the results of a lottery where they are pretty sure they get matched to a job/residency but don't know what the job is or where it is. The students have some influence but no real control over where they match, which is very unsettling and stressful to most of them. They find out all at once on Match Day, by opening an envelope that contains their residency "match" which will determine what their work will be and where they will live for the next several to many years.

The Match Day we attended started at 8am. Emotions crackled and swirled around

in the cool morning air of the crowded courtyard of the School of Medicine. When the envelopes were opened, there was joy, pride, surprise, relief, and yes, some disappointment too, for the students and their families.

Bennett was very happy to get his first choice of program and location. One of his friends was in tears over her residency placement at Stanford — she got a great residency but her partner has a career in Los Angeles. Within the hour, as families scattered to celebrate, students were already thinking ahead to logistics of where to live, unexpected cross-country moves, and who will adopt their houseplants. By 10am I was exhausted. By the end of our boozy celebratory lunch I had gone through enough emotions for an entire month. It was an extraordinary experience as a parent. Hopefully the actual graduation will not be such a rollercoaster!



Cute Dog Photo



I fell in love with this dog who was shopping an outdoor sale of French linens with his owner. He's a Spanish Water Dog. I immediately looked up how much they cost.

I might start a GoFundMe.

I'd probably name it Fregona (mop in Spanish).

Other Fun Things



Me after Yoga Happy Hour in Carlsbad, California with my friend Nicole.
If I lived closer, I would go every Friday.



Barbie public art at sunset in Venice Beach, California

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Amber McClain Shaw, writer, artist, and temporarily un-empty nester for a few months this year. And happy about it.

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