

not zine

#151

Normally at this time each year I write a zine about grief or family or talking about my father's passing, but for some reason this year I'd really rather avoid it. There already just feels like there's too much going on. I didn't really do anything to "commemorate" the date as such, except feel frustrated that it has somehow been five years already and frustrated that I still feel so stuck in time. So this, coupled with my weird job situation, and coupled with this completely fucked up pandemic situation means I've had another week of feeling like I'm in this murky in between space in life. Almost like I'm in purgatory or some other sort of void or in-between area where time keeps passing but I'm not really doing anything.

Well obviously I'm still doing things, just not overly exciting things. I'm spending way too much time on my phone, scrolling through social media, getting angry at everyone's bad takes. Suddenly everyone is a health expert, just like not long again everyone was an expert on the floods, and before that the fires, and before that the droughts. I don't even know why I keep doing this when I'm not enjoying it, and it's not even real/factual news! Most of it is just bad opinion pieces or sarcastic memes. But it's so much easier to lie in bed and scroll through social media than it is to actually do something productive.

I have still been reading a lot. I don't know what else to do. I

really want to minimize how much I leave the house for things that aren't necessary. I can never pick something to watch on Netflix. I swear I could spend the entire length of a movie just scrolling through and trying to PICK a movie. So it's just easier to read. And at least reading feels somewhat productive (which is a mindset I'm trying to get out of because I hate this whole idea of reading = highbrow / tv or movies = lowbrow because that's such bullshit). I know eventually I'm probably going to need to do something more productive or fulfilling or challenging but for now books are my go-to.

I've been going through "themed" periods of reading this year where I read a string of books in a row that have some sort of common connection between them. Most recently it was music memoirs by female musicians. I read "Girl in a Band" by Kim Gordon, "Hunger Makes Me a Modern Girl" by Carrie Brownstein, "Clothes Clothes Clothes Music Music Music Boys Boys Boys" by Viv Albertine and listened to the audiobook of "Your Own Kind of Girl" by Clare Bowditch. I'd read "Girl in a Band" and "Hunger Makes Me A Modern Girl" before. I got them both when they came out in 2015, and I went to see both Carrie Brownstein and Kim Gordon do talks about their books in Melbourne (Kim Gordon even signed my copy of Girl in a Band!). I don't remember reading either of them since 2015 though (another weird 5 year thing? Maybe I subconsciously did this) so I thought it was time to revisit. I

remembered loving *Girl in a Band* and feeling disappointed with *Hunger Makes Me a Modern Girl*, but after reading through them again my positions have swapped.

Well I guess it's so not much that *Girl in a Band* is disappointing, I just found that Gordon's voice didn't resonate with me anymore. It was very factual, and maybe a bit dry. Though that seems to very much be how she is as a person. When I first read it I felt like there was so much Sonic Youth history in it too, but when I came back to it I felt like there were so many gaps. Entire albums and tours that got glossed over. I mean I guess it's a memoir of her own life and not a Sonic Youth biography, so maybe it's my own expectations that are misplaced. I found Brownstein's book so much more exciting this time around though. The first time I read it, I felt like it was so guarded. There was so much she didn't say. But funnily enough, that's what I enjoyed about it this time. I loved her vagueness about relationships and the way she really doesn't delve into her relationship with Corin Tucker before OR after the breakup and the ways that surely would have impacted on the band. I think she gave a really unique perspective on the riot grrrl movement, and I like that she doesn't try to make herself out to be a particularly good person all the time, or make excuses for her actions.

I had been wanting to read Viv Albertine's memoir "*Clothes*

never will because it's SO EXPENSIVE) and the audiobook version of *You Own Kind of Girl* was just great. She's a natural storyteller. She did her mother's Dutch accent and would break out into song and in between chapters there were little bits of her song recordings to show what stories influenced which songs. It was a real treat to listen to. She wrote more about her life than her actual music career, which at first I was a bit apprehensive about, but I think in the end it makes for a far more meaningful story. She talks about how her sister's death shaped her whole life and her struggles with dieting and then eating disorders, and overall just gives a really relatable mental health journey. She's super endearing and fucking funny, and I found myself going on my afternoon walks around the lake listening to this with tears just streaming down my face or literally laughing out loud. It was such a different pace to the other memoirs I'd read, maybe because she hasn't experienced the same levels of "fame" as the others, but I found I enjoyed it as much, if not more.

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I don't know what made me think of this but I remember years ago, after my father died but before me and my mother reconnected and came to have a proper relationship, I bought one of those DNA testing kits from Ancestry.com. At the time a few people gave me flack about it, suggesting that I was just

Clothes Clothes Music Music Music Boys Boys Boys" pretty much since it came out in 2014 but for some reason or other never ended up doing so. I did read her other memoir "*To Throw Away Unopened*" last year though, and I didn't like it at all. I can't remember what I didn't like or why I didn't like it. Maybe it was another matter of expectations not matching up correctly or maybe it was the way she writes that I struggled with, because I struggled with that initially in *ClothesC...* as well. I feel like I can barely even remember what it is was about. Either way, it put me off reading *Clothes...* even more, though I'm glad I finally got around to it. She's not the best writer. Her chapters are short, often just a few pages telling a story. And I get the impression for most of her young life things just sort of happened and she went along with them and it sort of worked out, which doesn't really make for an interesting story. I really loved when she wrote about her older years though. Struggling in a marriage, struggling to conceive, how her relationship with music changed. Even though the Slits have an interesting story, I think she wrote more passionately about these later years.

I've never actually been a fan of Clare Bowditch. I don't mind her, but it's not really my kind of music. So I was surprised how badly I wanted to read her book when it came out. I listened to it on Audible after they offered me a free credit in an attempt to get me to return after using the free trial (but I

trying to find an excuse to say I have heritage from Africa or Asia or some crap like that. What I was doing instead was trying to see if I could find any of my father's side of the family. My dad was never close with his family, aside from his parents, so I never met my extended family (or I did but it was before the age where I could remember such a thing). I had it in my head that I really wanted to try to connect with some of that side of the family even though I knew both my uncle and aunt had died so the chances of this happening were actually pretty slim. I did know, however, that my uncle's widow had a box of stuff from my grandparent's house that I wouldn't mind having but she had since re-married and changed her last name, so my searches proved to be fruitless. Or that side of the family just isn't into social media or DNA testing kits, or maybe they were like my father - completely uninterested in anything to do with the rest of their family.

So I bought the kit but nothing much came out of it except for a woman who emails me every couple of years asking me if I'm related to a certain person because she's mapping her family tree and has got it into her head that I belong in it (even though my surname which comes from my father's side is my American side of the family and she's trying to place it into an Australian context). Every time she emails it's as if she's forgotten she's already asked me. For ages I regretted spending the money on it, thinking about what else I could have spent

that \$100 on instead, especially when I was financially struggling. I'm sure I would have just wasted that \$100 on some other crap at the time anyway, most likely beer or weed. It wasn't until I thought about it again just recently that I let myself off the hook for spending my money on something so stupid, because I was just trying to reach out and find some family. It was more an act of grief than anything else I suppose.

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