



FINDING

THE HARMONY

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Cory Bordonaro

Psychologists call it "synesthesia" when a person smells color or tastes sounds. It's an involuntary neurological condition, albeit a pleasant one, according to studies. Some synesthetes have reported numbers as having personalities; some swear that months have specific locations in space. Well, write me a diagnosis, doctor, because I'm certain that songs sound like seasons and colors. And each time I hear certain memory-laden songs, I get a visual mental snapshot of their associations.

Last spring will forever be tied to Patty Griffin's "Useless Desires." It was the theme of my days—my mantra. Every time I hear it, I taste the warm air and hear the hopeful anticipation of summer. I was on my way out of a town that had been my home away from home for four solid years, and it had become obvious to me that life would go on without me there. I was just one of thousands, passing through a place that wouldn't miss me one iota. I was grieving. And Patty was singing my song. *Say goodbye to all the streets that never cared to know your name. Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye old friends.*

As I drove off for the last time, leaving my college years behind in the rearview, I blasted the words that had come to embody my farewell experience. The road that stretched before me was long, and Patty was good company. And I needed a good friend for what was ahead.

My best friend and I call them "Patty-kind-of-days." After my move, they usually occurred on Sundays. That's when I was feeling particularly blue. Maybe I was homesick, maybe I was PMS-ing. Perhaps I was just tired. Regardless of its cause, my melancholy mood always sent me to the CD player for some melodic therapy. Her smooth sad voice always struck my deep-feeling chords. Sometimes when I wanted to feel the cleansing effects of sadness, I dialed up Patty. She was my hyssop soap, my journal entry, my get-it-all-out outlet. Her voice still has the power to penetrate to the very heart of my emotions, even when I can't articulate why I'm feeling them.

When I made the move from my college home in pursuit of a dream job in a city where I knew no one, I endured countless Patty-filled Sundays. One minute I was surrounded by friends and family in a place where I had learned to come into my own, and the next—BAM!—I was catapulted away from everything I loved into a land unfamiliar. I was forced to redefine my passions, my hobbies, my schedule. Rather than letting weekend plans just happen, I was now responsible for organizing them and keeping them going. Friendships were no longer as effortless as they'd been.

And Patty understood. So, at each week's close, as I looked back on what my life had been and what it was, I cried. I mourned the loss of my beautiful old life and hoped beyond hope that it would one day become beautiful again.

Subsequent months were sprinkled with raindrops of hope as I began to gain my sea legs, finding my bearings in uncharted waters. I gripped courage and went new places. I forced my INFJ-self into extroversion, joining classes and organizations, planning gatherings every weekend. And then...one fine day, I met another Patty-lover. As we sat in a coffee shop and gabbed over our common obsession, I knew I had hit a major turning point in my post-move, grappling-for-new-life period. I'd found another who had as much zeal for Ms. Griffin's music as I do. And that is a love that binds.

Several weeks later, I sat in a hard plastic chair in a home salon getting the haircut that I declared would give my new life a new look. Despite the rigid seating that forced me into proper posture, my discomfort soon faded. I talked for hours to the young girl who opened her heart to me more with every snip of her shears. Then we discovered the Patty-love. *I need Moses to cross this sea of loneliness; part this red river of pain.* She explained the healing power those words had spoken into her life and the lives of those she'd shared them with.

I left that afternoon with a brighter blonde, a brighter smile, and a brighter hope that through shared sadness, I could find the fellowship I craved to bring happiness back into my song. I can hear it, I can taste it, I can feel this new song welling up.