



Hi Friend,

The rain is cold. The days are short. Are you embracing it? Try letting your tea go cold while you watch the fading autumnal sunset. Pop open some gamay. Make [these](#) mashed potatoes and slow roast some short ribs. And if you need a soundtrack, here are some of my favorite (mournful) live versions of songs on Youtube.

- [Smother - Daughter \(live on KEXP\)](#). "I don't know what to say. I don't really want to talk after that." - THE KEXP GUY AFTER THEY PERFORMED THIS.
- [Photobooth - Julien Baker \(Death Cab for Cutie cover\)](#). Even the feedback at the beginning does not dampen this A+ cover.
- [Killer + The Sound \(mashup\) - Phoebe Bridgers and Noah Gundersen](#). Yeah, yeah, a little on the nose.
- [St Vincent w/ Andrew Bird - Black Rainbow](#). I think I listened to this recording every day my first semester of college.
- [Somebody Else - Gracie Abrams \(the 1975 cover\)](#). If you're into frail voices breaking over every other note.
- [Miley Cyrus - The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face \(Roberta Flack cover\)](#). Don't let the set design—or the name—fool you. This is one of the best covers of all time.

## LET'S CONSUME MEDIA

### Movies and TV

To be honest, friend, I am in a rut, and this rut is because I finished *The Leftovers*.

Wow was this some top-tier television. To lift from my favorite critic's analysis, it is "the apocalypse, taken personally." Mild spoilers ahead, but allow me to wax poetic: I love the torturous grief ever-present in Justin Theroux's eyebrows. I love the symbols they use throughout, and how the writers flip those symbols on their head and adulterate their poetry to prove that no one has the answers, that the universe is cruel and indifferent. For a show that is heavy-handed on religious metaphors, it has an artful way of making the profound feel frivolous and the mundane feel monumental. I love Nora Durst, everything about her. I love the scene with the burning book in the sink. ("We don't talk... about anything!") I love how two characters with so much chemistry have the worst sex scenes ever filmed in TV history. (like much of the rest of the show it's awkward, bracing, and fraught.) I love the music choices. I love how purgatory is a hotel lobby. LOVE.

Little is helping to snap me out of my mourning period, that is, when you read or watch something so good, nothing consumed afterward compares. I'm watching *Working Moms*, which is good but beginning to flag a bit for me... I tried watching *Vampire Academy* because I am (pun incoming) a sucker for teenage vampire drama, and I love Julie Plec a la Vampire Diaries, but the pilot ep was such a snooze fest I couldn't finish it. If you have recommendations for getting me out of this slump, please let me know.

## **Books**

- ***On Immunity*** by Eula Biss. Endlessly fascinating that this was written pre-Covid. Did she know something we don't? A delightful deep-dive into inoculation, disease, and political metaphors. I feel lucky to be alive reading lines like this:

*When a friend asked, years ago, if my son's birth was a "natural" birth, I was tempted to say that it was an animal birth. While his head was crowning, I was trying to use my own hands to pull apart my flesh and bring him out of my body. Or so I have been told, but I do not remember any intention to tear*

*myself open—all I remember is the urgency of the moment. I was both human and animal then. Or I was neither, as I am now. “We have never been human,” Haraway suggests. And perhaps we have never been modern, either.*

***The World*** by Robert Haass. This was basically a long Wikipedia page about geopolitics. 2/5 stars?

## **Podcasts**

- **We are in a housing crisis and it is fucking dismal!**