

CRAVINGS
Ravings &
MISBEHAVINGS

**CRAVINGS,
RAVINGS &
MISBEHAVINGS**

Tales of how one good girl
can do a whole lotta bad things
and still turn out okay

by Sharine Borslien

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like books and music,
and discourage your friends from doing so.*

For my Mom, Sandra Jane Olson Borslien,
And for my friend, Paul Wadsworth—

*You should be here to see me now.
Or maybe somehow you are here.*

OVERTURE

Or, navigating the terrain of this book and the extras,
and getting to know my Inner Archivist

Allow me to introduce myself. I am a writer. I write poetry and prose, I compose lyrics and music and generally enjoy penning just about anything as long as I can be creative with it. So, I wondered about how I would approach this book since I have not been 'practicing' writing lately. I used to write daily, sometimes in several sessions. But when I took a hiatus from composing and performing music, my writer's brain went on strike.

Oh, sure, I have jotted down a random musing here and there, in one of my numerous and various-sized notebooks throughout the house, but nothing came of those musings after they spilled out onto the page.

The last piece I wrote was an unorthodox autobiography for my music web site. "Not true," my Inner Archivist yells to me from his dimly lit, wood paneled basement library filled with chronicles of my entire life. "What about your blogs?"

Okay, I wrote a few postings for my two weblogs. But not that many. My Inner Archivist disagrees: "You wrote that funky piece for the 'I Make Good Stuff' home page and the initial four 'Misbehavings' for this book!" Yes, but I did not know at the time that I was going to write this book, so do they count? Inner Archivist says, "Indeed, they do. And don't forget about all the writing you did for school!"

Upon returning to college in the summer of 2009, I wrote for my classes. The Public Speaking course I took required outlining my speeches. And the big seven-minute speech necessitated research as well. The American Government and Politics class offered occasional opportunities for written commentary.

Not one to miss a thing, my Inner Archivist adds, "Remember that wine-inspired explanation of the Pluralism Theory you penned by candle light the night the power went out? I am looking at it right now. Wow, Flower Child, you really took that piece over the cliff." Thanks a lot, I tell him in my best sarcastic thought-voice. I happen to think it was one of my more brilliant works. And 'Flower Child,' I mean, for real, Inner Archivist?

Anyway, in the following spring semester, I doubled my course load. I took Beginning French, writing my translations; plus all of our *examens* included writing.

Critical Thinking fell under the English Department, and so I did a huge amount of writing for that class. In addition to a 4-page claims paper, I wrote an in-class paper and a massive 12-page rhetoric paper with something like 18 citations.

"Twenty-four!" I hear diligent Mr. Inner Archivist shout from his library. Okay, I say, whatever. "Exactly twenty-four references, which is a ridiculous amount as far as I am concerned. I think you went overboard there, as well." I just ignore him, patting myself on the back for having three times as many citations as required. He sighs loudly as I continue writing.

So I am forced to admit that, during the period when I said I stopped writing, I actually wrote! Just not like this kind of writing.

My ever-present Inner Archivist pipes in again, “Some of it was like this! Remember that whacky introduction in your claims paper about the Roman conqueror family that built a neon lighted hot dog stand in the park?” Boy, I cannot win against this guy. Voice. Fractured section of my psyche. Imaginary frenemy. Mind cartoon. Whatever!

“All this talk of hot dogs is making me hungry,” he mutters from the vault. I am supposed to be prepping Albacore Tuna steaks for dinner tonight, but I type away as the minutes tick off. Seriously, I already enhanced the salsa with black beans and avocado, prepared asparagus, bell peppers and zucchini for the grill, and pre-assembled a killer spinach salad. What more do you want from me?

“Hot dogs.” Okay, we are *not* having hot dogs, and I am going to ignore him.

But as I launch another sentence to segue to another topic, Inner Archivist articulately reminds me that I am currently enrolled in a Jazz History course that demands of me “a plethora of written commentary, online dialogue, lengthy music critiques and vastly investigated material.”

I thank him in a somewhat snarky tone, adding, You know, I am pretty busy writing the introduction to ‘Cravings, Ravings & Misbehavings’ so maybe you could refrain from interrupting my process for a few moments.

Inner Archivist huffs loudly. “So this is what I get for all my efforts, another ‘check-is-in-the-mail’ kiss-off from my favorite Flower Child?!” I do not respond.

“Break a leg with the book, pumpkin,” he snaps with all the *faux* sincerity of an insecure, out of work, super-competitive, positive-mantra-chanting Hollywood actor. “I’m sure the entire literate world will roll over in paroxysms of giggles, sexy wiggles, and emotional transformations and you’ll be a zillionaire tomorrow.”

Wow. My Inner Archivist really tweaked me with that. I am now anxious and questioning why anyone would want to read about my cravings, ravings and misbehavings.

So I pause. Close my eyes. Breathe. Stop freaking out. And go to the center of my self. Listen “inside” to my heartbeat. Kind of woo-woo, but it works for me.

And the only answer I can muster is that maybe, just maybe there are people (such as each of you, my dear readers) who want to understand my quirky approach to life, my desire to be edgy and non-traditional but still deeply connected to the human condition, to be conscious in fulfilling my personal dreams and joys and global ambitions while actually giving back to the world of my exploratory wisdom (or lack thereof, as the case may be).

Yes, maybe you will find here an idea that is enduring and enlightening, a musing that is perfectly mystical for your moment, or a phosphorescent phrase that seems delightful enough keep as a little charm in your heart.

Or could it be that a delicious concoction of mine goes directly into your recipe collection? Perhaps my recommended wine warms your worldview?

It might just be that one of my accompanying songs offers you a distinct sense of possibility, passion, and deep down peace? Ahhhhhh!

Which suddenly, and kind of frighteningly, brings me to another issue that may be muddling your brain’s normal ability synthesize my written word:

Is this an unconventional narrative, a quirky cookbook cum confession, an egregiously egotistic autobiographical endeavor, or wild fables of a fantasy-musician-meets-messed-up-minx merged with original music?

Truthfully, I was unable decide which genre would best fit my writings so I pooled them all into one quasi-precocious polyphonic paperback!

So what you are getting is an orchestrated literary piece that contains selected personal experiences, inklings and insights plus decadent and healthy recipes, all coalescing with original companion songs.

The music consists of demo versions of songs I wrote. Ron, my husband, had the brilliant idea of leaving them in their rough recorded state to correspond with the unprocessed concept of this book. And while I intend to rerecord professional studio-quality renderings in the future, the songs will remain in their original raw “as-they-went-down” condition.

For example, I recorded the nineteen songs on something like six different machines: some in a garage on the Yamaha MD-8, others in our apartment on the Zoom, some in various softwares on Ron’s three Macs, still others in GarageBand on my Mac.

Most of these are highly unsophisticated as I recorded many of the instruments myself instead of hiring better players. So Ron put a proverbial audio spit-polish on them to make them easier on your dear ears!

The book is divided into three “opuses,” yeah, just like the musical term.

And just like the book’s title, they are called Cravings, Ravings and Misbehavings.

Each tale within each opus is labeled a “movement” with a newsy headline and is paired with a recipe.

IMPORTANT!

Please read through the recipes and wine suggestions, as my Inner Archivist and I engage in witty repartee in every section of the book. We both think you’ll be entertained ;)

And some tales are harmonized with a specific wine or an original song. Visit my web site <http://www.sharine.com> or the brand new site all about the book, <http://www.CravingsRavingsMisbehavings.com>, for details about each song as well as lyrics and commentary.

If you want to purchase the accompanying music CD, you can find the link on my site.

Prior to the opuses, though, you will find another section called Shavings, which is so named because of the nature of its content: stuff you (and by “you” I mean “I”) have to strip off to get to the thing you want to see.

And *no*, this book does not contain pictures of me stripping or naked!

“Thank *goodness*,” yells my Inner Archivist from the basement. My knee-jerk response is to slam out some *über*-witty comment that contains a few favorite expletives to express my frustration. And love. Because I love my Inner Archivist, really I do.

Okay, time to go! Shall we move on to Shavings together? If you feel frightened or the least bit apprehensive, dear reader, I will hold your virtual hand until we get there, but that is as flirty as I will be, for now....

SHAVINGS: APOLOGIES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

APOLOGIES FIRST

“Apologies? What’s up with that?” you might be wondering. Yes, I am breaking with tradition (yet again, as you will soon understand) and beginning my book with apologies.

Why? Because although I am a songwriter and much of the lyrical content of my songs reflects relationships throughout my life, that language by nature is profusely poetic, massively metaphorical, and even, dare I say it, attentively altered so as to vaguely veil exactly *which* relationship is being placed in the spotlight.

In addition, this is my first book, and I am neither famous enough nor rich enough to pay people off! Therefore, apologies take precedence in hopes of dissuading those recipients of any desire for retribution against *moi*.

First, I want to apologize to my Dad, Harris, who may squirm a bit while reading things about his eldest daughter that he might never have wanted to know.

Daddy, you (and Mom, rest her beautiful soul), imbued me with many “good girl” traits. However, it’s not likely that I will mention those particular characteristics in this book!

Second apology goes to my husband Ron, although it reads more a like legal disclaimer:

Honey, I want to brief you that as you dive down the rabbit hole into my torrid existence prior to meeting you, you may experience distinct twinges of any number or variety of discomforts, including but not limited to unpleasant surprise, vexation, chafing, fatigue, dizziness, embarrassment, queasiness, or prickly sensations along the spine and/or the so-called Third Eye.

Those are the two biggies.

Since my sister, my two brothers, and my closest friends and confidants all probably have a pretty good idea at just how my cravings, ravings and misbehavings have evolved, I will refrain from apologizing unless you fit into one of the tales contained herein. (So you will all have to read on to find out whether you really deserve an apology or not!)

Next, and really importantly, I formalize now my apologies to any of you, my other dear readers, who are for any reason turned off by my language (oh, there *will be* some damn language), my looks, my religious affiliation or lack thereof, my political musings, my guileless discussions of sexuality and human exploration, my writing style and selected

content, or the unorthodox way that I have organized this book, whether it be the tales, the recipes or the music.

As a realist, I must also admit that you may find my practice of neologism (making up words) beyond reproach. A strict interpretation of our [already bastardized] English language is groovy from a rule-following standpoint (and by the way, I am pretty sure that 'groovy' is a made-up word). France actually has a government council that determines if, when and how the French can modify their language. But we would *never* be so stuffy as to control the mutation of our language! It just wouldn't be American to tell people what to do, right? So then, can I make up words, freedom lovers, and carry on with my apologies?! Thank you.

Perhaps you are a strict vegan and find it repulsive that my "flexitarian" (Ron made up that one) recipes include eggs, cheese, lamb and butter, to name a few no-no foods. Or it may be that you are a total carnivore who *cannot stand* the thought of lighting the grill for a bunch of frickin' vegetables. A few of you may be "candyvores" (my word!), folks who subsist on solely desserts and candy. You will definitely dislike the salads and main dish recipes contained herein.

It could be that you refuse to listen to female singer-songwriters because their voices are so... *girly*. And when you played the accompanying collection of my music, you got physically ill and/or started hearing creepy voices in your head.

No problem - I have several solutions to dealing with this book if you are already sure that this is *not your kind of book!*

Try this:

Once you have reached your personal threshold of utter disgust, call that girl or guy in your circle of friends who is not necessarily *your friend* because she or he is the kind of person that would read *this book*, and give this book to that person!

Or, donate this book to GoodWill, Salvation Army, or any other used shop that allows such smut, where people - like me, but I am not the only one who actually buys things second-hand - will appreciate getting a quirky book for a buck or two!

Better yet, write "Sorry, Sucker!" inside the book cover and save it in the back of your closet or bottom dresser drawer or *that place about which you tell no one*. When your family, friends, or folks at the office decide to have a holiday, birthday, or random gift-giving party, step up and boldly suggest the ever-humorous "White Elephant" theme. After they lionize you for the light-hearted low-cost idea, go home and wrap my book in the prettiest paper you can find. When the "lucky" recipient sees the beautiful package, she or he will think they are actually getting a *really cool gift!*

Oh, this is another good one:

Insert a few pages at a time through a decent crosscut paper shredder and toss the confetti at birthday parties or family celebrations.

WARNING: CREATIVE IDEA ALERT!

Spread the confetti on a tarp or some old dry newspapers. Spray with neon pink or silver or gold or some other kind of glittery paint. Allow to dry completely. Place confetti in an envelope made from unshredded pages from this book (I don't know how you could forget to shred them all since you detest this book so much, but it might happen). Slip

the confetti package in your wallet, coat pocket or purse for later use. Then, at the local pub, lavishly sprinkle the confetti during your girlfriend's (or boyfriend's) *pole dancing extravaganza!*

Yeah, that was marginally imaginative but I am sure *you* can think of more clever alternative uses for this book. And if you purchased the e-book, you will have to share your book reader with someone. Be sure to charge them double the price you paid for the opportunity to read it on your magical device that turns even the crappiest books into delightful and inspiring tomes.

But allow me, if you will, to continue on with *apropos* apologies to anyone I mention in my book that does not like the way I tell one or more particular tales involving them. Two things on this:

First, you might not know this but I never did heavy drugs and yet I have a sketchy memory.

Think about a 1,000 square foot library in a tiny yet modern town. By nature it must be highly selective, and in order to keep up with modern publishing, stuff ends up on microfiche in rusted cans in the basement or getting donated to GoodWill or pawned off on the Smithsonian Institute, and in any case, the Librarian is a very, very busy person who likely relies on friends and family and the community (which may even extend to the internet community) to care for and reproduce historical records.

My dear friend of nearly three decades, Sandra from Minnesota (a.k.a., Sandy, San, Sandora), is the keeper of vast photographic information about a certain craving, raving and misbehaving period of my life when we both lived in Minneapolis. Sandra also has an amazing memory that retains glorious and dirty details I have cleverly cast aside in my desire to *get on with the next experience*, shall I say. My sister, Susan (a.k.a. Sue, Susie, Susie-Q) also has an incredible ability to recall specifics from even very early years - specifics that I may or may not choose to overlook. I simply defer to each of them.

Suddenly, my Inner Archivist bangs on the basement door. "What about ME? You may be the lofty Librarian, but I am the one who does all the work. Logging facts, detailing experiences, organizing, filing, researching... all for you." Okay, you have a point, but I did not intentionally leave you out. And for goodness sake, I tell him, I practically GAVE the entire Introduction to you!

The banging stops. "Correct. I return to my humble quarters," he sighs.

Second, regarding apologies to anyone who denies or repudiates my story or stories in which you are mentioned, I submit as evidence the "fragility of eyewitness identification" phenomenon.

Studies prove that eyewitnesses to the same event reliably tell slightly, sometimes *radically*, different versions of what they experienced.

And in fact, I will openly admit that because of my aforementioned sketchy memory, certain details are slightly (or significantly) embellished, others facts are missing entirely, and still more minutiae are bastardized and beaten beyond recognition to the actual story. For example, if you know me from any particular period in my life, you may find tales in which I use substitute names without disclosing that fact. This is partially because I do not really remember who said or did what in certain situations, and

partially because I am graciously offering you anonymity in a torrid anecdote. To which I say, in the end, you will thank me.

For those of you who were secretly, or candidly, hoping to be mentioned in my book but for some reason, you ended up on the floor of my cutting room, I apologize that I could not fit every entertaining story about my life in one single book. Also, you will probably thank me in the end. Especially if by the end of the book, there are more than the six readers with me right now.

Lastly, I was either wholly unable to write or organize my tales in any consistent, chronological order, or I just wanted to misbehave again.

“I so totally could have helped you with the sequential stuff, pumpkin,” my Inner Archivist interjects. “I vote that you just wanted to misbehave.”

So you see, I am merely an active observer in my own life and therefore, the “fragility of eyewitness identification phenomenon” is fully in play. I rest my case!

After all, this is *my* book about *my* cravings, *my* ravings and *my* misbehavings. If you don't like it, you can always spend thousands of hours remembering, recalling and revisiting these tales, calling your sources, creating a believable construct and consulting your lawyers, as you write your own version and publish your *own* bloody book!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my one and only sister, Susan:

I thank you from the core of my soul for hanging in there with me during my emotional melt-down in our phone conversation on Bastille Day, July 14, 2010. (It was then that she disseminated her idea that I should write a book and we hashed out the title, basic content and structure for it as well).

To my husband, Ron:

Thank you for “approving” the idea that I would write this book. Especially since you will make several appearances! (I won't spoil the fun now, though). It wasn't a deal breaker if you didn't like the project, but since you did, I don't have to make excuses to get out of the kitchen.

To my dear friend, Sandra:

Thank you for helping me fill in hundreds of details and for having been my brave abettor to oh-so-many cravings, ravings, and mostly misbehavings! Also, for the idea of including music in this project.

To my dear friend, Vanessa from Pennsylvania:

Thank you for giving me the book “Eat, Pray, Love.” Your gift led to a telephone conversation with my sister, which led to the concept for THIS book!

And to Elizabeth Gilbert, author of “Eat, Pray, Love:”

I read your book and it was a truly cathartic experience! Thank you for writing that is so genuine, so human, so refreshing. I will be mentioning it many times in my own stories.

Thank you to everyone around the globe who has legally purchased and enjoyed my songs and poetry books and to those who have read and encouraged me in blogging and other writings, music and creative endeavors.

I really must thank all the characters in my life – every person I have met, even if I do not tell a story about you in this particular book. You all have played and continue to play wonderful roles in my personal drama. Without you, I would never have any fun!

And a final “thank you” to those of you still reading!

OPUS #1:

CRAVINGS

MOVEMENT #1: SOMEBODY ELSE’S JOURNEY?

Let’s get one thing perfectly clear about this craving, raving and misbehaving chick: I am on a journey of interpreting my life, my relationships and myself. That includes deciphering my private reciprocity with my Creator (although I will be declassifying some of that interchange later). And before any other vocation or calling, this is my career: to soul search for my cravings and enact them in my own unique, beautifully bold bastardized way. Recall the old adage:

Good judgment is the ideal consequence of experiences often comprised of bad judgment.

True to many old sayings (except that one that says “ignorance is bliss”), my cravings lead to ravings which almost inevitably, for me any way, lead to misbehavings. After which I learn my lesson.

“Eventually!” shouts my Inner Archivist. “Some of those lessons took decades.” Okay, okay, he is right and I am humbled again. Still, I yell a warning down to him through the vent, Just don’t spoil any of my stories, please! He huffs.

Ah well, sooner or later, I learn... and this is *my* excruciating excursion through life.

So read clearly, my dear audience: I am NOT on an expedition to figure out somebody else’s deal! I dumped the idea of becoming a psychologist a long, long time ago. So unless you come crying to me asking for advice and I happen to *have* some good unbiased advice to offer (not likely) and the *time* to dispense my pearls of predisposed wisdom, I will *not* be solving anyone else’s personal crises, real or imagined.

Now it should come as no surprise that I recoiled instinctively at the idea of reading a VERY SUCCESSFUL BOOK filled with tales of a woman on her spiritual journey through a certain portion of her life.

The book, "Eat, Pray, Love" by Elizabeth Gilbert was a gift from my dear friend Vanessa from Pennsylvania. When it arrived in the mail and I read the title, I set it on the remotest corner of my desk, sure that I would not read it. "What's up with that, Sharine?" you may be asking.

First, the word 'EAT' turned me off.

"That is troubling, Sharine," you might respond. "Are you on a hunger strike or something?" No, but thanks for thinking I could possibly endeavor on such a profound act. The truth is, I am on a vegetable buzz. Vegetables are the foundation of my diet. Yeah, vegetables. Without butter or cheese sauce. What's more, I *like* them that way: NAKED.

And I know that most people think I am a loony-bin reject for this. I can hear their first question now: "So how do you get your protein?" (*Okay, I can feel the book closing now but I ask you, dear reader, to stay with me!*).

Second, I do not like the word 'PRAY.'

While I love the idea of connecting with My Creator, God, or whatever title you might choose, the word 'pray' conjures for me images of religious leaders with Lear jets and people praying to be thin, or rich, or famous, or praying for a lover, or a house, a much bigger house, like a chateau in France (although that *would* be nice) or a ranch in Montana, or praying oh-so-piously to have bigger boobs or thicker hair, a longer penis or bigger muscles, or praying for a more powerful position, or praying to be made more beautiful, younger, faster, lighter, to live longer, to fuck longer, to fight harder, and on and on.

I do not pray. I work. I do. I go. I make. I think. I kiss. I call. I sing. I write. I prep. I print. I play. I meet new people. I try new things. I execute. I expect... nothing. And that is precisely how things come to me in my world.

"Yeah, but what about miracles?" might be the question you are poking me with right now. To which I reply: Miracles for me are the synchronistic culmination of my work, soul-searching self-knowledge, relationships and willingness to successfully deal with a synergy of reality, imagination, change and good fortune.

I remember two spiritual teachers in my life - Deborah and Razz - who used to advocate "high involvement, low expectation" as a healthy approach to living. And it stuck. I still misbehaved my little ass off, but it was still good advice and ultimately I learned this methodology in my own dealings. (Really, it was easier than being bummed out all the time and always blaming myself or others inappropriately!)

Third - and deal-sealer - the word 'LOVE' in a title makes me woozy.

And not in a good way. Because when I see that four-letter word in writings by others (and even my own poems and songs), I feel backed into a dank, dark, cob-webby corner like I'm wearing a sweat-wet flannel nightgown and slippers that are fully shrouded in evil little dust bunnies; my hair is greasy, my face is dirty and tear-stained and a shadowy figure is furiously shaking a finger at me, chewing me out in all my immature senselessness, trying to school me on what love really is, or how to really love, or who to love, or when it's really love, or why love makes the world go 'round, or where and when and how I should or should not make love, or some such bullshit.

So three loaded words in a title ensured that I would never ever read the book “Eat, Pray, Love.” Internally, and very sincerely, I apologized to the author because I was certain she had spent hundreds or maybe thousands of hours on this literary creation that I would probably just bequeath to one of my friends who *does read those kinds of books*.

Then it occurred to me in direct, perfection succession: Vanessa had recently sent me a link to online video footage of Elizabeth Gilbert. And when I had watched the brief video, I was truly inspired by her address. I liked her open style, her fresh and uncensored use of language. I had profusely thanked Vanessa for sharing this video with me.

So, I began to question myself (and this is a good thing to do, readers)... Why *wouldn't* I like her book? Well, there was my issue with the title words. But then I thought: This was a gift from Vanessa, who knows me like a sister. *She gets who I am*. So why would she give me this book if she thought that it would go against the very grain of my soul?!

I laughed out loud. Because she wouldn't. Vanessa is the kind of friend that connects with me on such a deep level, regardless of how infrequently we talk or see each other, since she moved back to Pennsylvania to selflessly be close to her family.

Now here I was on a beautiful summer afternoon in California, staring at “Eat Pray Love.” Ron had taken off on a long bicycle ride and I knew I had a rare couple of hours to myself. What the hell, I thought, I'll give the book a chance. I picked up the book, selected a bookmark, and ventured to our small but cozy back yard to read in the warmth and sunshine of a perfect California afternoon.

I liked “Eat Pray Love” (EPL) from word one. I liked it even more when she explained her use of the term ‘God.’ And I was fully hooked by her first fresh curse word, which entered the text early on.

But now I had to get out of the back yard because the sun was so bright, it felt like my retinas were being burned right out of my skull. I moved myself to the front of the house and planted my ass on the black wrought-iron garden patio set. Shaded. Light breeze. Bubbling fountain. Perfect.

“Eat, Pray, Love” became my new literary craving. I stopped reading articles on all my favorite alternative news sites and chose instead to read the book. I tried to read it slowly, but *no way!* I pigged out with wild abandon on the words like they were decadent *hors d'oeuvres* at a fancy dinner party where the guests will never see me again so I could care less if I slop cocktail sauce on my second-hand store six-dollar gown, or spill my glass of Beaujolais on the bright white rented tablecloth.

Besides the need for sleep, only three reasons existed that would stop my EPL reading time. First, when my ass got sore from sitting on that hard iron chair and even a pillow provided no relief. Second, when it got too dark to read outside (and my ass was probably sore as well). And third, when...

Okay, reason number three falls under a completely different, metaphysical category that I never expected, except that I *might* have expected it if I had let myself in on the little secret going on in me: I am in transition. Big time. This period is what I call “The End Times of My Life as an Under-Utilized Human Being.” I am back in college. I am studying French. I am writing a book.

Also, I realized recently that my life goes in seven-year cycles, although the first cycle actually began when I started kindergarten at the age of five. Every seven years from that time (give or take a few months), a major event occurred in my life to propel me into my next realm, next journey, next phase.

Regular periods. High school graduation. My move to Los Angeles. My first original music CD project and major tour. My simultaneous creation of the Midnight Butterfly CD and calendar project, move out of Los Angeles, career change to teaching music, and marriage to Ron. This year, 2010, is a seven for me.

And I am letting go of who I thought I was and becoming who I was always meant to be, for whatever all that means. Well, it means that I should have known to expect...

Unexpected Emotional Outbursts. UEO.

Like UFOs for fully functional super-sensitive OCD freaks like me.

UEO. You know, crying. Sobbing so hard that I feel my eyes are going to pop out of my head and my throat is being ripped out along with my lungs and snot is running onto the floor which is the grossest thing that I would never allow to happen but now cannot stop or control because I cannot move except to heave in another breath which contains tears and snot and it all coalesces in a burning, stinging, aching hard shove down the steps into my emotional basement while my face is frozen in a terrifying scream-like pose.

Yeah, the shit that *doesn't happen any more and shouldn't ever need to happen any more* because I have a happy marriage to an amazing man, I have a beautiful home with bouncy fluffy cuddly little Persian kitties, good friends, work that is related to my creative abilities and dreams, good health, and a good outlook. I have a barrel of wine in my garage. And I live in California.

But here it is, another "unexpected" "emotional" "outburst."

Fuck.

Honestly, the first UEO did not happen because of EPL and I would never blame an artist for "making" me feel or do anything. Well, I would have blamed her when I was in my twenties. It's a phase thing.

Technically, the book arrived the next day, although one could speculate that the UEO was simply gaining momentum in the same manner as a massive wave starts out in the middle of the ocean as one H₂O molecule bumping into another before it grows as it moves over nautical miles and eventually crashes on the shore.

However, I did start reading the book the day after it arrived, which was two days after the first UEO.

I was sitting at my desk as usual on the Wednesday in question, doing my morning routine. Read email, respond to email, compose new email. Pay bills online. Play with the kitties. Make a meal plan. Make to-do lists. Make business calls... at which exact moment, I received a call from a student's mom, asking to reschedule the piano lesson until next Tuesday. I made the calendar change, kind of bumming out because they were due to pay me today for the month of lessons. But no problem, I have more money coming in today.

Back to my routine. Print music chart and, oh! Another call from another student's parent, requesting to change their son's guitar lesson to next Wednesday. Okay, can do. I make the change in my calendar. Well, I still have money coming from one more student today, so I'll be fine.

An email arrives. Surprise, the student family that owes me money can't make the lesson today because the baby is sick and would I have time on Tuesday instead for her daughter's lesson? Of course, I say, not a problem. Take care of the health issue.

What was going to be a long, well-organized and fruitful day of teaching and collecting income turned into a scattered mess of lesson times... and no checks.

Ah well, I tell myself, this is part of being an entrepreneur. This happens frequently. You just roll with it, that's what you do.

I got up and drank a glass of water. I came back to my desk to finish the routine. And that is precisely when it happened: the UEO.

My life as an artist flashed before my eyes. The dream of being a successful singer-songwriter seemed like it was dying on the desk in front of me. I felt like a complete and utter failure.

The first tear rolled out. I swiped it away and turned in my swivel office chair toward the living room, determined to change my perspective and avert the UEO. But a powerful wave from my sub-consciousness won over my attempted mind control and it came heaving through me like a jet-propelled thundercloud.

I doubled over in pain as I assumed the position. Nilla and Scootie, our Persian cats, each came to check on me, quickly realizing they could do nothing, even in all their adorable fluffiness, to stop the storm that I had become.

When the tempest (which seemed simultaneously to last 12 days long and one-trillionth of a nanosecond) passed, instead of feeling ragged, as if I had been stomped on by crazy imps and kicked around by 'roid ragers, I felt curiously refreshed and energized. Like the squall came in and blew out a bunch of psychological debris and cosmic dust, leaving a shimmery glimmer in my soul.

Not that I knew anything more about where I should go or what I should do at this point than I did before the internal tornado kicked my sweet and unsuspecting ass. I knew nothing, but I felt like a new, freshly washed sheet glistening in the ultra-bright sunlight, waving freely in the breeze while securely anchored to the clothesline, which kept me from falling to the ground and getting dirty. Or some other spiritually uplifting analogy.

But I had to admit: I was wrong a second time about "Eat, Pray, Love." The book, it turns out, was as much about her journey as it was about mine.

Because here I was, having my own thoughts and my own emotions in my own life. Just without the pleasures of pizza, pasta or gelato to *eat*, prayers or om-na-mah-shivas to *pray*, or anyone or anything in that moment but my own broke-in-California, power-washed, skinny-ass self to *love*.

So, I drank some lemon water.

RECIPE: LEMON WATER

INGREDIENTS:

12 oz. clean, pure drinking water

1/2 lemon

METHOD:

Place water in large drinking glass.

Squeeze lemon over the glass until juice comes out. Discard lemon rind.

Drink the entire glass of water.

Get on with whatever it is you need to get on with. Only you will know.