

I think it was Proust who said that smell is the sense most apt to bring back distant memories—especially those we consider insignificant, like a particular feeling we experienced at a given moment during childhood or a gesture made by some adult who might have died not long after. It can even be something as simple as a strong wind, which reminds me of the falling of leaves in autumn and the changing of seasons that determined the way I experienced time and that, since living in a season-less place, becomes a source of nostalgia as well as a dreary reminder of the sort of flat, homogenous time unmarked by those cycles that make you think that something is always about to happen.

But then I think that maybe I confuse this with a sense of resignation that comes with maturity. Isn't the idealization of youthful memories a well-known human construct?

There are certain songs that remind me of those seemingly banal moments—the kinds of memories that make you happy and sad at the same time: *Goodbye Stranger* (Supertramp): diving off the diving board at the JCC pool in mid-August with the local radio station playing over the loudspeakers; *All Cats are Grey* (The Cure): turning right onto Wheeler Road from the back road that led out to the mall and feeling isolated and superior and not realizing that it was all one huge cliché; *All through the Night* (Cyndi Lauper): sitting in my mom's white Volvo thinking about the original *boy* not knowing that it would drag out over the next decade only to conclude in the most insignificant manner that I can't even really remember now.

I still have a box of mixed tapes and until recently (when my tape player conked out), I would drive around (37 to 19, 19 to 26, 26 to wherever) listening to those tapes and thinking how much better the 70s and even 80s were and how everything became predictable and boring in the 90s and how sad it is for all these kids who never experienced what it was like to receive a mixed tape made especially for them which involved hours of selecting and cuing and taping and decorating the tape cover (drawing or photocopying)—all of which constituted a gesture of friendship or, better yet, seduction. And how glad I am that looking back now, everything I thought was so fucked up at the time seems so great alongside how uneventful everything seems now and that it's all just part of a continuous cycle of idealizing the past while regretting the present.

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