

# Claims Department



## Tears for Fears

This is an experiment that's gonna run five issues. If you don't like it, let me know.

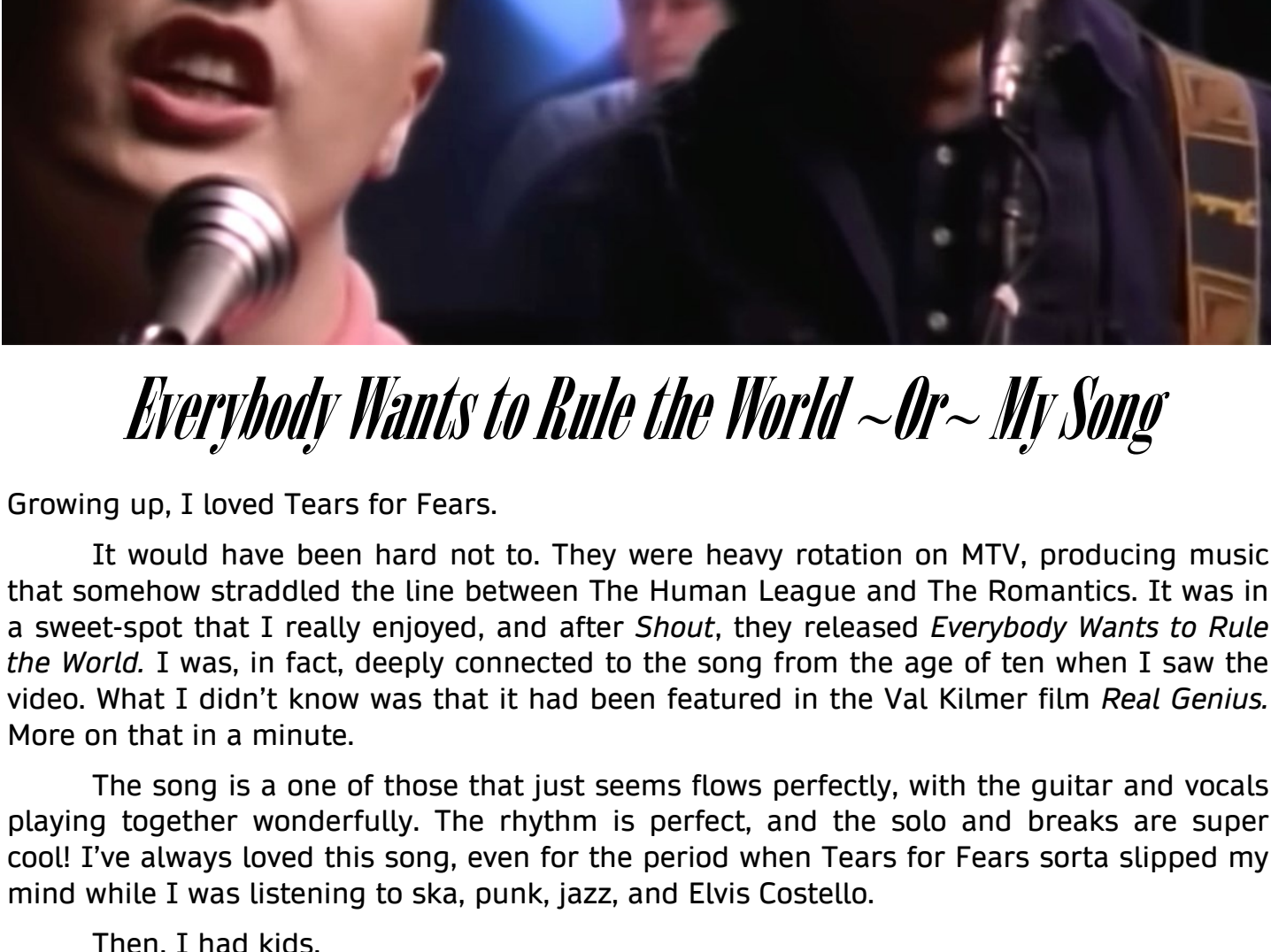
I can say for sure that I loved Tears for Fears at least as far back as the release of *Sowing The Seed of Love* because I was super-psyched for the world premiere of the music video. I vividly remember it coming on and being blown away.

But more on that one later.

All goes well out here. The weather has calmed down, and I'm writing more. I've just sent in the index for my book, so it's looking like July for the release! You will be unable to avoid hearing about it between now and then.

I'll be doing' WrestleMania week down in LA this year! Not WrestleMania itself, but a series of tiny shows from other promotions that will be held in the area. The set I'll be going to will be at the Ukrainian Cultural Center. I really hope there's Ukrainian food nearby!

OK, enough! The eMail for comments is johnnyeponymous@gmail.com!



### *Everybody Wants to Rule the World ~Or~ My Song*

Growing up, I loved Tears for Fears.

It would have been hard not to. They were heavy rotation on MTV, producing music that somehow straddled the line between The Human League and The Romantics. It was in a sweet-spot that I really enjoyed, and after *Shout*, they released *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*. I was, in fact, deeply connected to the song from the age of ten when I saw the video. What I didn't know was that it had been featured in the Val Kilmer film *Real Genius*. More on that in a minute.

The song is a one of those that just seems flows perfectly, with the guitar and vocals playing together wonderfully. The rhythm is perfect, and the solo and breaks are super cool! I've always loved this song, even for the period when Tears for Fears sorta slipped my mind while I was listening to ska, punk, jazz, and Elvis Costello.

Then, I had kids.

Anyone who has read my stuff the last eight years will know how much I adore my children. They're monsters, no doubt, but they are monsters I love with all my heart. As much as I love music, I could never not share that with the little beasts. As early as their time as premies in Lucile Packard's Children's Hospital, I've been sharing music with them.

And Tears for Fears was one of the early plays.

That was made possible by my subscribing to Spotify. A lot of the music I loved from the 1980s was pushed to the side, partly because I couldn't buy all the stuff I really wanted on CD and that was the primary way to get older music. Spotify's older cousin, Napster, was the place where I'd first downloaded *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*, and I had it on my phone at the time we were in the hospital with the kids, so I played it for them. I then added a whole bunch of Tears for Fears to my Spotify playlist and that was that.

I was hooked. Again.

Fast-forward to 2019. The kids are 4, and they're finally able to get the idea of movies. They're OK with the kids movies we show them, *Bob the Builder* and *Thomas the Tank Engine* for example, but they want more grown-up movies. Vanessa is bouncing around the Roku for a while and sees that *Real Genius* is free! She loves that movie and the awkward moment comes when I admit to having never seen it.

We watch it. I love it.

We watch it again. I love it again.

More importantly, the kids love it, especially JP, who quotes it, but more than anything, he sings along to the end credits song - *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*.

It's about this time we introduce them to YouTube, and specifically to music videos. I'd set up dance parties for the kids, which would help them fall asleep faster. *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* was on there, and after a while, it was obviously JP's favorite song.

Then, we went to Dublin. I'd been laid-off from the Museum, but my mom bought us tickets and a hotel, so we could make it to James' WorldCon. It was a great time, and I was super-psyched to get to see things like The National Museum, The Rock 'n Roll Museum, and for me, most importantly, the Guinness Brewery. On one of the last days, we had grabbed a cab to go... somewhere. I'm not sure where, quite possibly to go and walk around the part of town with all the art supply stores and vintage shops. As we were going, a song came on.

"Welcome to your life..."

*Everybody Wants to Rule the World*.

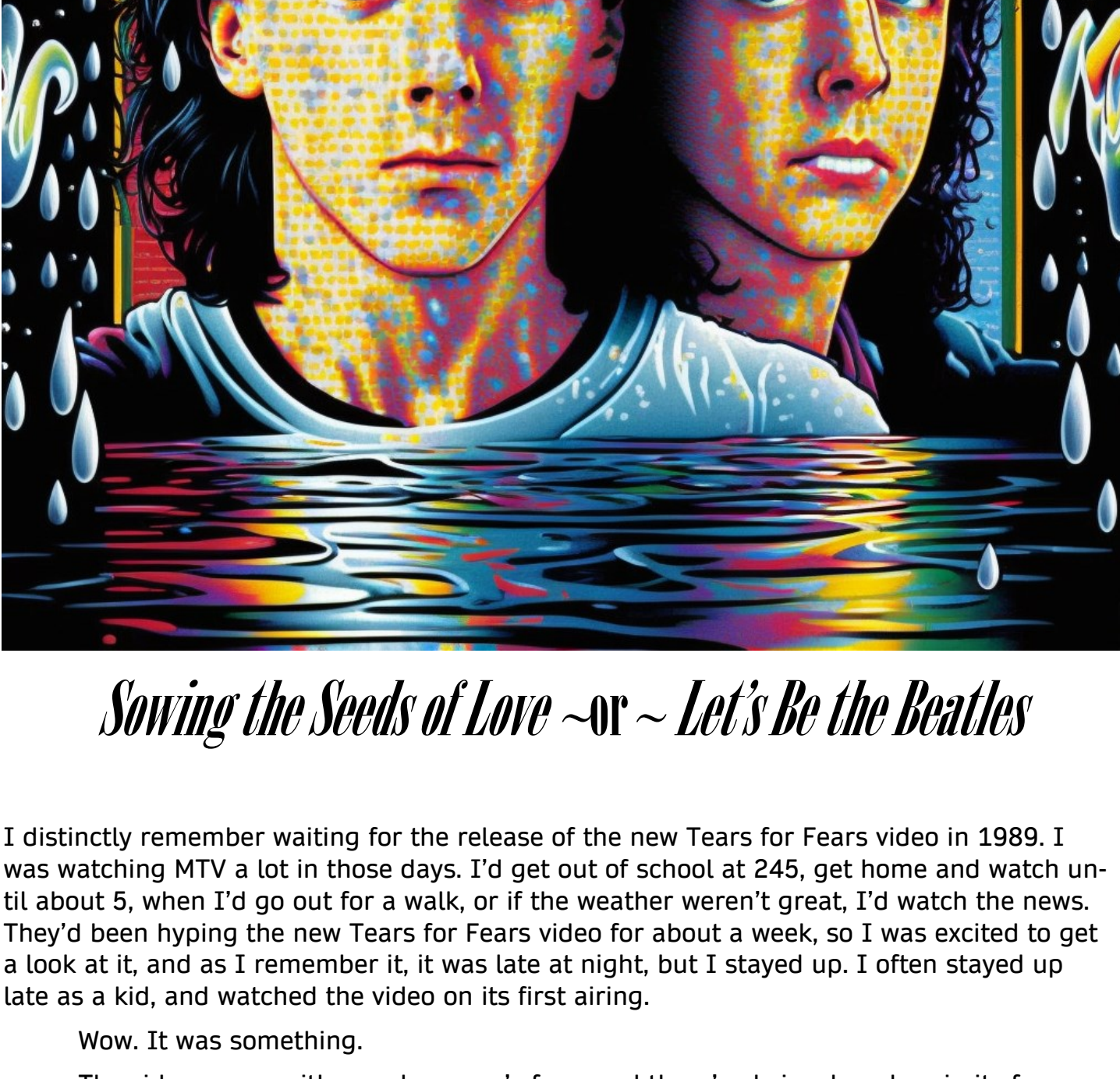
Now, we'd never been away from the kids for more than a night at that point, and instantly, I thought of little JP and his dancing when the song would play. I hadn't missed them much (well, not THAT much...) on the trip, and since we didn't have an international plan, we couldn't call them.

"I miss the kids," I said to Vanessa.

She had a sniffle or two going on herself.

At night, I put the kids to sleep, and lay down on the floor while they fall asleep. It's more for me than for them, it's a nice break, and I remember being a kid, scared of the dark and all alone. I'll put on some music for them, and the start of one of the playlists, the most frequently-played playlist, is *Everybody Wants to Rule the World*.

And I hope my kids can tell the same sort of story about them and their kids when they grow up.



### *Sowing the Seeds of Love ~or~ Let's Be the Beatles*

I distinctly remember waiting for the release of the new Tears for Fears video in 1989. I was watching MTV a lot in those days. I'd get out of school at 2:45, get home and watch until about 5, when I'd go out for a walk, or if the weather weren't great, I'd watch the news. They'd been hyping the new Tears for Fears video for about a week, so I was excited to get a look at it, and as I remember it, it was late at night, but I stayed up. I often stayed up late as a kid, and watched the video on its first airing.

Wow. It was something.

The video opens with a rock person's face, and there's obviously a door in its forehead. The door opens and we see another world inside. Even I, at ten years old, knew that meant we were about to take a trip into imagination!

Or something like that.

The video is a moving collage. I've always enjoyed these sort of films, wasn't new to me early exposure to *Monty Python's Flying Circus* when I was a kid. This also wasn't due to me in execution of a music video because the director, Jim Blashfield, had also directed the classic Michael Jackson music video *Leave Me Alone*. It's amazing how quickly a music video can move into the 'classic' designation in the old days. It was only a few months old, as I remember it, and already a classic.

Now, the song is another story.

At the time, I was obsessed with The Beatles. I mean obsessed. I had their posters on my wall, probably a day didn't go by that I didn't have *Sgt. Pepper's* on my CD player, and certainly I had a few VHS tapes of their movies. I loved it! I knew The Beatles better than I knew any other band in the world.

And I completely thought this was The Beatles.

Most of the commentary you'll find about the song on the album *The Seeds of Love* focuses on the fact that there's a very Beatles vibe about the whole thing. There certainly is, and even a little guy like myself could feel it. I didn't know it, but I could feel it, and that may be how I've experienced music all my life.

The song was clearly a *Sgt. Pepper's* song. It would have fit right in. There was even a trumpet part like in *Penny Lane*. It's so good, and like *Weird Al* in *Dare to be Stupid*, it managed to out\_\_\_ the \_\_\_. It's *easily* my favorite Beatles song, and it's not even by the Beatles!

I blame this video for a lot of my love of collage. I've been making collages of various types since I was a kid, and have been drawn to them for ages. Even more than the Gilliam segments, it was music video that made me a fan of experimental film, and particularly the kind where images are mashed together. Bruce Conner, who I had the absolute pleasure of knowing at the end of his life, would do similar things, and the brilliant Larry Jordan created works that used many of the same techniques. The different, though, is the absolute brightness, the saturation of the world we encounter in *Sowing the Seeds of Love*. It's a remarkable thing to experience.



### *The Question of Head Over Heels ~or~ What of the Cover?*

*Mad World* is a fairly straight-forward synthpop song. It's really well constructed, with a synth swell that just pulls and pulls. It was my second favorite song on *The Hurting*, but it's also one that hammers the most out-of-nowhere. I love the way that it's insistent, not driving, not pulling, but it insists that you come inside, and if you're resisting, you ain't gonna succeed.

The song was a significant hit, though over-shadowed by *Shout* and *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* as the years wore on, but it was always there. It wasn't until the film *Donnie Darko* that it got a re-examination, a cover, and a serious run for its money.

The early Tears for Fears sound is synth-heavy with drum accent. In other words, it's perfect for me. The original takes some time to get to the place you expect it to go, and when we get a fairly simple, fairly perfect solo section, it really starts to land.

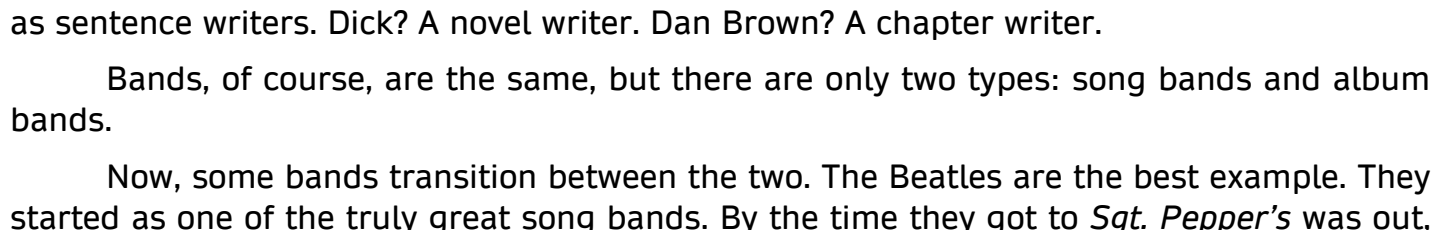
In *Donnie Darko*, we're presented with the classic *Head Over Heels* at an early moment of the film for a beautiful montage of Donnie's school. That's not the one that people remember, though. It's a slow, haunting, damaging version of *Mad World*.

Gary Jules' version pre-dated the film, and his strange, kinda reedy, voice interprets the lyrics as beautifully as you could imagine. It's a thorough re-imagining of the song, and the backing piano and cello is muted to allow the voice to stand out. That choice, more than anything, always the perfection of the lyrics to come through.

It also turns the song into something much more personal than the original.

The original feels more like an external examination than one that is going through one's own head. It's as if it's a re-counting told to someone else. Jules' turns it into something brutally lonely, desperate. That makes it so much more devastating, and why I go back to it so often.

The music video for the Jules' version, directed by Michel Gondry, is also incredible. It's one of those single-shot short videos that I love.



### *Tears for Fears ~or~ The Singles Band*

Kristy Baxter and I often refer to authors as being of a certain type—a sentence writer, a paragraph writer, a chapter writer, or a novel writer. Someone like Vonnegut is one of the truly great paragraph writers, while your Mieville's and Valentes are more aptly described as sentence writers. Dick? A novel writer. Dan Brown? A chapter writer.

Bands, of course, are the same, but there are only two types: song bands and album bands.

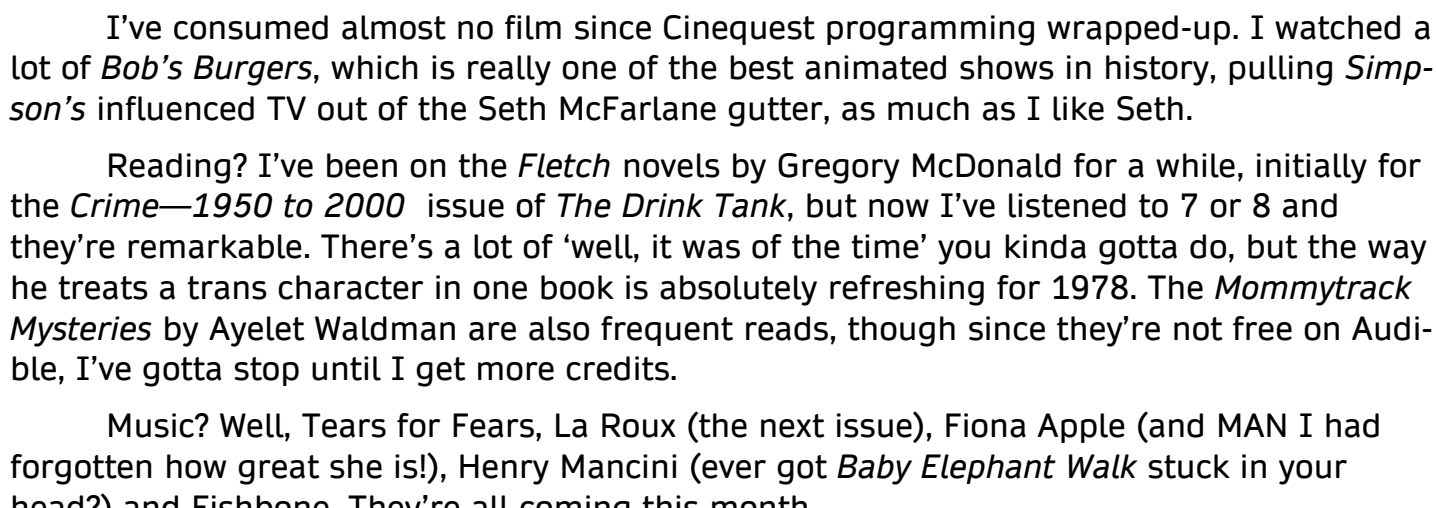
Now, some bands transition between the two. The Beatles are the best example. They started as one of the truly great song bands. By the time they got to *Sgt. Pepper's* was out, they had changed into being an album band. Bands of the 1970s tended to be album bands, save for the punks, but even 1980s bands would find themselves in the album mode, notably Talking Heads and Madonna, where each album tended to give itself a form that inhabited each and every song. It's not merely 'this is their sound' but this is their sound on this record.

Tears for Fears is a song band, but it's not quite the same.

When you hear a song like *Mad World* you can sense where it comes in their songography, but then you listen to the rest of *The Hurting* and you get see that each one is an exploration of a different area of their overall sound. This shows even more starkly in *Songs from the Big Chair*. There's no unifying tone for the album, though there are recurring themes (like psychoanalysis) but there's a separation. *Head Over Heels* and *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* are not only different songs, but different genres. *Shout* is clearly a synth-hard rock song. It's more Midnight Oil than U2, but *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* is clearly a Beach Boys' song, for lack of a better word. The two don't feel like their connected. In fact, *Head Over Heels* feels far more attached to *Mad World* while *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* and *Sowing the Seeds of Love* are cousins.

I think it shows something that makes a lot of sense - Tears for Fears wanted to understand the edges of their sound as much as the center of it. I'd say *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* exists at the heart of their sound, but you only get one or two of them in an album, while you have songs like *I Believe* and *Shout*, which are so different as to feel like two different bands, co-existing on the same album.

In one sense, that makes them the perfect Spotify band, easy to add to playlists and simply take a few songs you like without further investment, as well as a great Greatest Hits band.



Those are my thoughts on the important aspects of Tears for Fears, the songs. That's why I closed for that piece. I'll have a lot more to say about their songwriting when I cover Weezer and Lorde, but those are much later in the year!

I've consumed almost no film since Cinequest programming wrapped-up. I watched a lot of *Bob's Burgers*, which is really one of the best animated shows in history, pulling *Simpson's* influenced TV out of the Seth McFarlane gutter, as much as I like Seth.

Reading? I've been on the *Fletch* novels by Gregory McDonald for a while, initially for the *Crime—1950 to 2000* issue of *The Drink Tank*, but now I've listened to 7 or 8 and they're remarkable. There's a lot of 'well, it was of the time' you kinda gotta do, but the way he treats a trans character in one book is absolutely refreshing for 1978. *The Mommytrack Mysteries* by Ayelet Waldman are also frequent reads, though since they're not free on Audible, I've gotta stop until I get more credits.

Music? Well, Tears for Fears, La Roux (the next issue), Fiona Apple (and MAN I had forgotten how great she is!), Henry Mancini (ever got *Baby Elephant Walk* stuck in your head?) and Fishbone. They're all coming this month.

My trips to San Francisco for the WILLIAM SAROYAN exhibit have been frequent, but worth it. Lots of listening (music, and presently the History of Ancient Egypt course from *The Great Courses* which is informing the next issue of *The Drink Tank*) and I get to see stuff I rarely see since I'm seldom out that way. I've seen Buffano statues (if you need to know who he is, go read the Public Art issue!) and a ton of very cool graffiti.

For Vanessa's birthday, we went to SFMoMA and then across the street for dinner at Fogo de Chao. It as the first time I'd been there since my blood pressure/diabetes scare, and though I probably still over- indulged, I at least significantly pulled back.

Anyhoo—johnnyeponymous@gmail.com