

# Wild Flower

GROW INSPIRED

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## Letters and Postcards

“Seeing her lovely handwriting on the outside of an envelope brings a host of warm memories.”

If you’ve been reading *Wild Flower* for any length of time, then it will come as no surprise to you that I’m a saver. A keeper. Of pretty much everything. Especially cards and letters I’ve received over the years. There must be a name for people like me—and not “hoarder” (although sometimes I force myself to watch that “Hoarders” show as a scare tactic). I’m just very sentimental about correspondence because it’s such a beautiful expression of the writer’s location—chronologically and emotionally. As such, I make no apologies for my correspondence-archiving tendencies.

I’ve had a pen pal for more than 25 years. Her name is Erika, and she has served as a creative mentor for me. I can’t even remember who introduced us. Through many apartment moves in my early adulthood and then after my family settled into a house, Erika and I kept the US Postal Service busy handling all our back-and-forth writing. It was comforting to me that she was always at the same address, a mere 10 miles away from where I lived. Though we have met in person on a few occasions (mostly in the early 2000s), we’ve stayed in touch all this time—by mail only. We never shared phone numbers or online connections. This was probably intentional, at least it was for me. It required me to hand write a note occasionally. All those years, Erika sent me clippings, quotes, photos, and written encouragement. Sometimes she mailed thick, heavy envelopes full of written pages, and a few times she even sent me a recommended book. We also traded Christmas cards and photos of our families. I’ve saved all her letters and postcards in a big binder that’s stored in our attic. Looking through it again and seeing her lovely handwriting on the outside of an envelope brings a host of warm memories.


These days, we both have teenagers, and she also has two adult children. We’re busy, and it’s easy for our pen pal relationship to settle at the bottom of a to-do list. But I’ll always treasure the fact that she encouraged me when I was single, hosted me and my soon-to-be husband for one of our first dates at a concert in the park,



and sent a sweet gift each time I had a baby.  
And though our letters are less frequent  
now, I know she's still there, and I'm still  
here. Erika, if you're reading this, I'm  
sending love and gratitude your way!

Know what else I tend to keep? Friends  
I randomly make in Trader Joe's! Years ago,  
I was strolling through my local Trader Joe's, pushing my  
toddler son in the shopping cart. Walking toward me—also  
pushing a cart containing her toddler son—was a woman  
who gave me a friendly smile. We chatted and noted how  
close in age our sons were. I took a chance and exchanged  
numbers with her, promising to set up a playdate. And



we kept our promise! We had a swim  
playdate at her house. Turns out, my  
Trader Joe's friend is **Jamie Shew**, and  
she's an amazingly talented jazz vocalist!  
We've stayed in touch throughout the  
years, and later I went with friends to see  
her perform at Steamers in Fullerton.  
Recently, I reached out to her again, and it was  
perfect timing—she just released her third  
studio album! She's incredible, and I can't wait  
for you to get to know her and to experience  
her music—you'll have to go see her live  
sometime! 



## Inspiration: Poetry

### City Trees

Edna St. Vincent Millay

The trees along this city street,  
Save for the traffic and the trains,  
Would make a sound as thin and sweet  
As trees in country lanes.

And people standing in their shade  
Out of a shower, undoubtedly  
Would hear such music as is made  
Upon a country tree.

Oh, little leaves that are so dumb  
Against the shrieking city air,  
I watch you when the wind has come,—  
I know what sound is there.

*On city streets: an anthology of poetry, 1968*

*WildFlower is a monthly publication  
featuring writing, interviews, stories,  
designs, observations, recommendations,  
encouragement and reflections on faith  
and creativity.*

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otherwise credited.

### Like Dogs at a Concert

Stan James

Sometimes we're at our lives  
The same way dogs are at a concert—  
We hear all of the sounds  
And none of the music.

Which is not to say all dogs  
are at their lives  
the way they're at a concert.  
Though, these days even  
some dogs are that.

*Dog music: poetry about dogs, 1996*

### Cherry Bomb

Joan Jett, Kim Fowley of the Runaways

Can't stay at home, can't stay in school  
Old folks say, "You poor little fool"  
Down the street, I'm the girl next door  
I'm the fox you've been waiting for

Hello, Daddy, hello, Mom  
I'm your ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch  
cherry bomb  
Hello, world, I'm your wild girl  
I'm your ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch  
cherry bomb  
Stone Age love and strange sounds too

Come on, baby, let me get to you  
Bad nights causin' teenage blues  
Get down, ladies, you got nothin' to lose

Hello, Daddy, hello, Mom  
I'm your ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch  
cherry bomb  
Hello, world, I'm your wild girl  
I'm your ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch  
cherry bomb

Hey, street boy, want some style?  
Your dead-end dreams don't make you  
smile  
I'll give you somethin' to live for  
Have you and grab you 'til you're sore

Hello, Daddy, hello, Mom  
I'm your ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch  
cherry bomb  
Hello, world, I'm your wild girl  
I'm your ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch  
cherry bomb

Cherry bomb  
Cherry bomb  
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Cherry bomb  
Cherry bomb  
*genius.com*



# Spotlight on Jazz Musician Jamie Shew

*Please tell us a little about yourself.*

My name is Jamie Shew, and I'm a **jazz singer**, songwriter, arranger, and educator. I've been teaching at Fullerton College for the past 22 years. I have three albums—and "Spicy, Classy, and a Little Sassy," which launched on



May 9, will be my third release. I'm originally from Washington State. My family is all up there. I have an undergraduate degree from WSU and went to Western Michigan

University for grad school. Later, I taught at Virginia Tech. I have one son who's 17. I was married for 17 years, but lost my husband to cancer in 2016.

*Where did you find inspiration for creativity when you were younger, and where do you find it now?*

Music has always been a part of my life. I don't know if it was the only creative source for me. Every once in a while it became more of a hobby. But practicing piano was always such a function. It was not my favorite thing when I was a young kid. I was into Top 40 music; I played volleyball, basketball, softball, and tennis. I was ASB president

of my middle and high schools, and I played piano, accompanying all the choirs. So much of it was inspiring, and all the experiences were motivating. I was actually going to quit piano when I got into high school—I had been in lessons and competitions for years, but it wasn't what I enjoyed. There was so much pressure. But then my mom discovered that the pianist who played for the jazz choir was looking for a replacement, so I decided to give that a try for a year and switch piano teachers. That experience, along with seeing inspirational people through ASB and sports—there were so many motivating people who were making a difference—shaped who I am today. Musicians, like athletes, need to condition their body and be trained over time. My mom could see something for me and encouraged me to hang in there.

*What sorts of things inspire you in the everyday?*

I'm all over the place. When I run and walk, when I go to a museum, when I go to the beach, visit a garden or a park, listen to music and podcasts, comedians—all that provides humongous inspiration. Inspiration is just plain necessity—I get excited when I see there's a need for something that leads me to create. Also, order. Having order in one's life is a necessity for me. My students and my



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## Jamie Recommends: Chicken Shawarma ala NYTimes

2 lemons, whole (juiced)	2 teaspoons paprika
1/2 cup olive oil (plus)	1/2 teaspoon turmeric
1 tablespoon olive oil	Ground cinnamon, pinch
6 cloves garlic, minced	Red pepper flakes, to taste
1 teaspoon kosher salt	2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken thighs
2 teaspoons ground black pepper	1 large red onion, quartered,
2 teaspoons ground cumin	2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Prepare the marinade for the chicken by whisking ingredients in a large bowl. Add chicken and toss well. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. To cook, heat oven to 425F degrees. Grease a sheet pan with olive oil. Add onion, toss to combine. Remove chicken and onion from the marinade, place on pan, spreading evenly. Roast chicken until browned, crisp at the edges and cooked through, about 30-40 minutes. Remove and allow to rest two minutes, then slice into strips. Scatter parsley over the top and serve with tomatoes, cucumbers, pita, white sauce, hot sauce, olives, fried eggplant, feta, and/or rice.

artist friends inspire me. I have close friends who are great jazz singers. Women artists inspire me—I have friends who are instrumental musicians, sound engineers, life coaches, teachers, Grammy winners, and even one who is a podcast host.

**Please tell us about your current album release project!**

Yes, my new album, “Spicy, Classy, and a Little Sassy,” was just released on May 9! The process of creating the album



Jazz vocalist Jamie Shew. Photo by Robert Cerini.

and launching it hasn't been easy as an independent artist. I don't consider myself a new-to-the-space person, but so much of it now is about how wide my exposure is. In

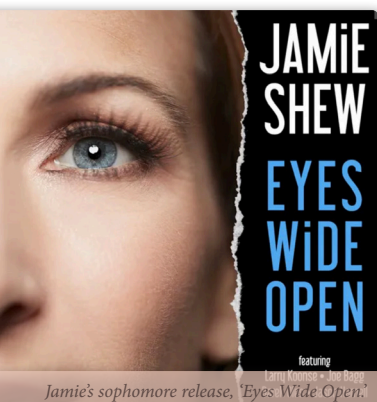
order to be considered for gigs, most clubs want to know my social media stats, so I have been concentrating on growing my online presence. May 9 was launch day, and I filled a bunch of pre-orders to help fund the remaining pieces of the release. On May 8, we celebrated the album's midnight release (9 pm PST) at Roost 374, a local speakeasy. We have a larger release concert planned for May 22 with the full band and special guests at Campus JAX. [Tickets here!](#)

**Please describe some of your hobbies.**

Well, when I'm not acting in horror films...

**What?!**

It's true. I had never done any acting before. I perform—but acting and musical performance are obviously very different



expressions. My photographer's husband is an actor/producer, and he asked me, during my album photoshoot, if I'd ever done any acting. It's funny because sometimes people from out of state assume I'm deep into Hollywood. When they've asked me if I'm an actress, I respond, “No, I'm just dramatic!” Anyway, he explained that he was producing an indie horror

film and felt I would be perfect for the lead role. He said I had the look and character he wanted. I happened to be on

a year-long sabbatical from teaching, and it was my year of ‘saying yes,’ so I accepted the role—with only five days to prepare. We filmed in Bodfish, California. It's up north near Lake Isabella, four hours away. He sent me the script, and I had no idea how to rehearse. I didn't have time to sit and read a script. So I figured, I'll have AI read it to me while I listen and do my daily tasks. And it was a great experience. Turns out that in the movie, I am the horror. We shot from 10 am to 1 am the first day, and the next day from 11 to 3 pm. Then I was done. It pushed me along creative paths I never knew I had. My other hobbies include cooking and gardening. I mow my own lawn!



Jamie performing live.

**Seriously? That's amazing!**

Really, I do! My dad owned a landscaping business, so caring for a yard is not foreign to me. Mowing the lawn is one of those tasks that makes life look immediately better, and it is immediately finished. A little effort has a large effect. I use a gas mower, but I drive an electric car. I love paddle boarding when I get a chance, and if I can get out early to the Newport Back Bay. It's so beautiful, but it gets windy, so you have to time it right. I love finding interesting restaurants. I did go surfing a few weeks ago with another jazz musician friend. It just about killed my arms and neck.

**How do you make space for inspiration in your life?**

Walking and running are my times to recharge. I like finding quiet. I have beautiful musical noise around me all the time, but sometimes my ears need a sonic rest. Just quiet. Nothingness is great for me.

**What are you reading/listening to/cooking/growing these days?**

I'm reading *The Artist's Way*, as you recommended. I love writing to get my thoughts out—Julia Cameron gives me permission to write in a journal and not care what I write. Writing has such a permanence to it that often I'm fearful of it. I used to journal when I was a kid about really insignificant things. But I liked Julia's idea of writing about your monster. And I'm learning what it means to take myself out on a creativity date. ✨

**Keep scrolling to read Jamie's music and shopping recommendations!**

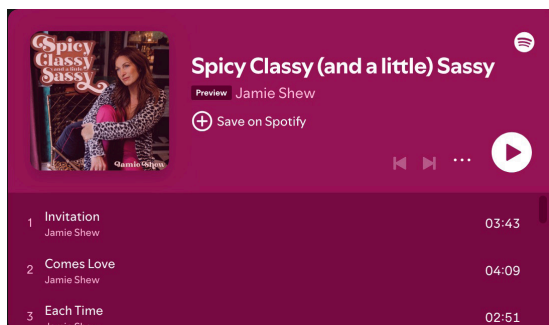


## Recommended Listen: Jamie Shew's "Spicy, Classy and a Little Sassy"

As a longtime musician, Jamie enjoys a broad collection of artists and genres. "I've been in a nostalgic moment lately," she says. "Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, George Michael—that music is pretty incredible. Also Chaka Khan and Prince. Equally nostalgic for me are jazz albums that I started with—Nancy Wilson with the Cannonball Adderley Quintet—she is the most beautiful song stylist ever. Later I found Carmen McRae, Sarah Vaughan, and Chet Baker." Jamie says lately what gets her going is Lake Street Dive and Lawrence. She *loves* those two bands.

Jamie's home is equipped with a Denon turntable and ELAC speakers that she uses to enjoy her music. "I just upgraded our home sound system last year to marry hi-fi and wifi with the Sonos amp." Some of the instruments in Jamie's house include: a baby grand piano, microphones, a Roland keyboard, her late husband's upright bass, a Cajon drum, a guitar, a ukulele, a melodica, a Boss Loop Station, and some stringed instruments from when her husband went to Nepal.

Here is Jamie and her latest release! 🌿



## Shopping: Anthropologie

Jamie says she used to love in-person shopping, but now doesn't go unless she absolutely needs something immediately. She loves to shop at Nordstrom, Nordstrom Rack, Anthropologie, and TJ Maxx when she has the time. 🌿

## Furniture: West Elm

Jamie's a huge fan of mid-century-modern furniture—in fact, she just acquired an amazing wall unit from a neighbor. It has papers and everything! Along with musical instruments, her home contains some Eames chairs (replications), a Noguchi-style table, an Alexander Girard sun canvas found at the Rose Bowl Flea Market, hand-me-down MCM vintage dressers, an MCM vintage teak dining table, exposed wood furniture with natural, clean lines, and molded plastic Eames type chairs. "Comfort, aesthetic, and functionality are the MCM draws for me," she explains.

I also love MCM and have two amazing pieces in my family room. But let's be serious. It takes time to outfit an entire house with authentic vintage MCM. That's where West Elm comes in. It's all MCM-type furniture that provides welcome inspiration as you walk through the store or browse online. Check it out! 🌿



"Street Furniture" by Andrew Bennett from Bristol, UK - SCC BY 2.0



"Tree Swallows" by Rhododendrites - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

## The End: Until Next Time



I hope you've enjoyed this issue of *WildFlower*. I'll be back next month to share an interview with another amazing artist, as well as some original essays, writings, and inspiration. If you'd like to submit content or ideas, please reach out to [editor@wildflowerjournal.com](mailto:editor@wildflowerjournal.com). 🌿