

Chapter Two - 2012 "September Gurls"

Artist: Big Star

Writer: Alex Chilton

*"September girls, I don't know why.
How can I deny what's inside?
Even though I'll keep away
They will love all our days.
December boy's got it bad;
December boy's got it bad."*

Not long before Jennifer and I reconnected in 2012, I had started to dig deeper into the catalogue and history of Big Star, the influential and tragic seventies power pop band from Memphis. This latest musical obsession began to illuminate a lineage and web of jangle rock for me, from The Byrds and The Clique to Big Star to R.E.M. to The Desert Rose Band to The Posies, and so on. Upon her return to my world, Jennifer joined me in my exploration of Big Star's short story and limited catalogue, and would soon become more a student of the band than I.

In August of 2012, Jennifer and I traveled to Memphis for a long weekend which would become a defining moment, at least for me, in our second chapter. It was three days of music: Duran Duran at the Memphis Botanic Garden, a Stevie Wonder cover band at Onix, and hanging with the ghosts of Alex Chilton and Chris Bell at Ardent Studios.

Our visit to Ardent started with a photo op out front and evolved into an impromptu tour of the studios courtesy of Jonathan Pekar, son of Ron Pekar, the artist who created the iconic Big Star neon sculpture featured on the band's first album, *#1 Record*. He filled us in on plenty of studio history, talked about his father and Big Star, and let us sit behind Jody Stephens' drum kit.

The whole weekend in Memphis felt like an accidental pilgrimage to the musical holy land that birthed so much of our story's soundtrack. It was a whirlwind, three-day tribute to the best of what we have with each other. It was random and beautiful, natural and mystical, just like the lyrics to "September Gurls"—lyrics so pristine that Jennifer and I only drop "October" into the chorus in quiet moments and with much reverence.

To hear the entire channifer2017 playlist, visit our blog at channifer2017.com.