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Dear Friends,

WHOLE NEW MONTH!
WHOLE NEW YEAR!
WHOLE NEW DECADE!

A lawn with fresh snow that no footprints have yet disturbed. A new composition book, each page pristine. A blue sky devoid of clouds.

This is how a New Year always feels to me (and because of all my years in school, September feels the same). Blank slate. Ready for that first mark, those first commitments, the first word.

But sometimes this blankness is paralyzing; we believe we have to fill the space ourselves using words or images born straight from our brains and egos. And so the page stays blank. But what if we believe (a leap of faith, not intellect) that just below the surface of the blankness there lay all we need, waiting.

Enjoy this blank slate. Expect wondrous things to spring up from it. Sit with it a while. And then leap with your heart, not your head.

You might like these links as you start 2020:

1. "Middle age is when you can throw your back out watching Netflix. The middle-aged person is being consumed by life and knows it. Feed the flame—that's the invitation. Go up brightly." From [An Ode to Middle Age](#).
2. You're going to want to listen to [this cover of "Stand By Me"](#) by Tracy Chapman. Start your day with it.
3. Five years after it was first published, "[The Case for Reparations](#)" by Ta-Nehisi Coates remains relevant. Take another look. We've got a lot of work to do.
4. "Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go." -Jamie Anderson
5. [We're living through a golden age of nature writing](#). Eight more books to add to your reading list.

In the New Year:

First 37 - It's not too late to register for "First 37," which started on January 1st and will run for the first 37 days of 2020. How can you set yourself up for success in the new decade? We will discover, write, see, and create together for the first 37 days of 2020. [Go here for info](#).

Hard Conversations: Intro to Racism - educate yourself on systemic racism, white privilege and white fragility, the myth of colorblindness, and how to be an effective ally. The 17th cohort of this online class begins January 7th. For details, [go here](#).

Life is a Verb Camp - Only 45 tickets remain. October 29 - November 1, 2020, near Asheville NC. [Go here](#) to get information and to register. Email support@pattidigh.com to get information on payment plans.

In appreciation for your work in the world,

Patti

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