

**Susan Houston
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Dear Friends and Family,

Winter 2025

I need to write my usual fat and wordy Christmas letter, but alas, I am tired. I think we all are. Watching the world around us collide in antagonism and fear is exhausting. But maybe 2026 will be a fresh start with some hopeful and friendly news. We all need a break and a cookie. But not from that Crumbl place, which is Crummy. Overpriced, underbaked, and too fancy. (I like cookies better than almost any dessert, and those things are too elaborate and they taste weird.)

It has been a super-full year for me; a surgery (nothing important), a new home (very important) and other things which, having passed, do not readily come to mind. But I will recall what I can.

My stepfather Tony Morreale passed away this summer. It had been about 14 months since my mom passed away from pancreatic cancer, and like many elders who lose a spouse, he struggled on his own despite excellent care from friends and family. The man seemed to be indestructible; I lost count of how many times he went to the ER or was hospitalized in the last several years. He had not wanted to move into a retirement home or assisted living, and by the time he had resigned himself to doing so, his health had deteriorated to the point that even that wasn't possible. So, depending on how you look at it, he won.

One of the things I helped Tony with over the last two decades was getting his paintings on the web and social media. He loved sharing his work with people, and frequently printed notecards of his best works. I always thought that his best pieces were predominantly white and blue – his skies, clouds and snow were always so visually pleasing to me. Which is why I've made that my Christmas card for 2025. He really enjoyed seeing his work put to use – he did two of the covers of the American Economic Association's Annual Meeting

programs, and sold cards of his paintings at the St. B's Bookstore and the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. One of the things he asked me to do before he died was to have all of his paintings made into a book that we could display at the funeral, and I was fortunate to find a print-to-order company called Lulu that did a great job. I had not realized how many pieces he had done; well over 100, but some had been given away before they were photographed, so it isn't a complete collection. If you are interested, you can order a copy here: <http://bit.ly/4a3ieLF>.

My big news for 2025 is that I have moved again... living in southeast Nashville off of Nolensville Road has proved to be one of my biggest regrets; the traffic was appalling. Even though I wasn't that much further away than I had been in previous residences, I was too far away from the interstates in a very high-traffic area, and the section of Nolensville that I lived by was being widened (and is STILL being worked on) which made it much worse. It had gotten to the point that I didn't ever want to go anywhere because it was such an ordeal. I did about 75-90% of my purchases online, just to avoid going shopping.

So for a couple of years now, I had the plan to eventually move out to Bellevue where my younger sister lives, and which is much less crowded and has much less traffic. If you've ever driven west on I-40 from Nashville, you know how wooded and beautiful the drive is. I finally found a place in a little community of 60 townhomes built in 2019, just off of Hwy. 70S by the 2nd Bellevue exit. It is a DELIGHT to go anywhere now! I'm near a large retail area, yet my complex feels like it is rural since my house backs up to a wooded slope above the Harpeth River (I can see greenery out of my windows!) I moved in mid-October; it's a three bedroom townhome with a GARAGE (luxury!) and although it's more than I wanted to spend, I really feel like THIS is the place I have been working my way up to for the last 15 years. I hope this will be where I am until I can't manage stairs anymore. I had the garage painted periwinkle – a color I enjoy, but am too cowardly to use in a room I actually live in.

I kept my old townhouse in Lenox Village and found a tenant... my hope is to keep it as a rental property, at least for a while to build up more equity so I can pay this house down eventually. If I can afford to keep it long-term, then it will help fund my retirement. So, change my address in your contacts if you keep track of those things – Leveson Way, although a nice little place in a pleasant neighborhood, is no more.

New address: 2717 Gossett Trail, Nashville, TN 37221.

I read books and watched TV this year as usual, but in my usual habit of hyperfixation (Let me enthusiastically tell you about my new hobby at length!) I am still watching Chinese television dramas almost exclusively, and reading translated Chinese web novels. I will not share them with you unless you ask me directly (except for drawing comparisons during conversations)... even I know this is just too weird for everyone. Even though it's killing me that I can't get anyone to watch it with me so I have someone to discuss it with.

I will say this... I am a predictor of entertainment trends from Asia... a micro-niche of clairvoyance so obscure and useless that it embarrasses me. I was collecting Japanese animation and manga a good 10-15 years before it exploded onto the American market. I started watching Bollywood films obsessively several years before everyone started getting interested in them in the US. So with these two predictors as potential indicators... Chinese historical dramas will be appearing everywhere within the next decade. Invest now! 😊

I'm tired of writing now, and so in my usual manner of leaving parties and gatherings with too many people in them, I will do an Irish Goodbye and just disappear...

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'S' at the beginning.