

Musical Prozac has infected my world



Kate's Corner

Kate Gilderdale

I am the victim of a cunning, unrelenting stalker.

My tormentor follows me everywhere — to shopping malls, drug stores, restaurants, cafes and bars. Escape is impossible, even at home, where radios lurk in almost every room.

The scariest thing of all is, I'm beginning to get sucked into a terrifying nether world of goey sounds and mushy lyrics. Yesterday, I even found myself humming along to my nemesis.

The source of my pain and paranoia is the aptly named *My Heart Will Go On* (and on and on) by Celine Dion.

Our decorated diva's treacly tune has become the omnipresent soundtrack to my life. I have purchased plants, tried on T-shirts and checked my wrinkles in the wash-room mirror to the accompaniment of this mind-numbing mantra.

I am beginning to suspect that someone may have discovered the most chilling cold war weapon of all time: a musical Prozac for the masses.

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It's a communist plot. Pakistan's answer to India's bomb tests; a new missile in the ghastly arsenal of the NRA.

Like Big Brother, the Nike logo and "Have a nice day," it has wormed its way into the international subconscious, and now that it has been released, it can never be returned to the obscurity of steerage, hit an iceberg and meet a watery grave.

It may not be the worst song of all time, but it is certainly among the most pervasive.

My Heart Will Go On makes me nostalgic for rap, hip-hop and Nine Inch Nails. It is a tune that should carry a medical warning for anyone concerned about high sugar intake.

Okay, so I'm a reactionary old baby boomer, refusing to fade away, preferring instead to impose my pathetically outdated views on my fellow men and women.

Worse, I come from the generation that sent stuff by Dawn, Bobby Vee and Barry Manilow hurtling up the charts. Who am I, you may very well inquire, to think I can set taste standards for the world?

With age comes not only wisdom, but belligerence and the refusal to heed logic that gives scant credence to your own point of view.

I admit that I once, secretly, felt a lump in my throat whenever I heard the opening strains of Bobby Goldsboro's execrable *Honey* and the equally icky *Seasons in the Sun*, the perpetrator of which I

have managed to consign to my large inventory of mercifully unrecovered memories.

Now that I have become more discerning I refuse to listen to them at all, in case I give myself away.

Back when I was growing up, Muzak ruled in elevators and shopping centres. It was pretty dreadful, but you could close your mind to it because nobody could possibly confuse it with a tune.

And if you were a shopping mall magnate with a special affection for, say, *Among My Souvenirs* by Connie Francis, you indulged your strange proclivity in the privacy of your own home, instead of inflict-

ing it on the world at large. One thing I have gleaned from my enforced exposure to Dion's doleful ditty is that, contrary to perceived wisdom, millions of people can be wrong.

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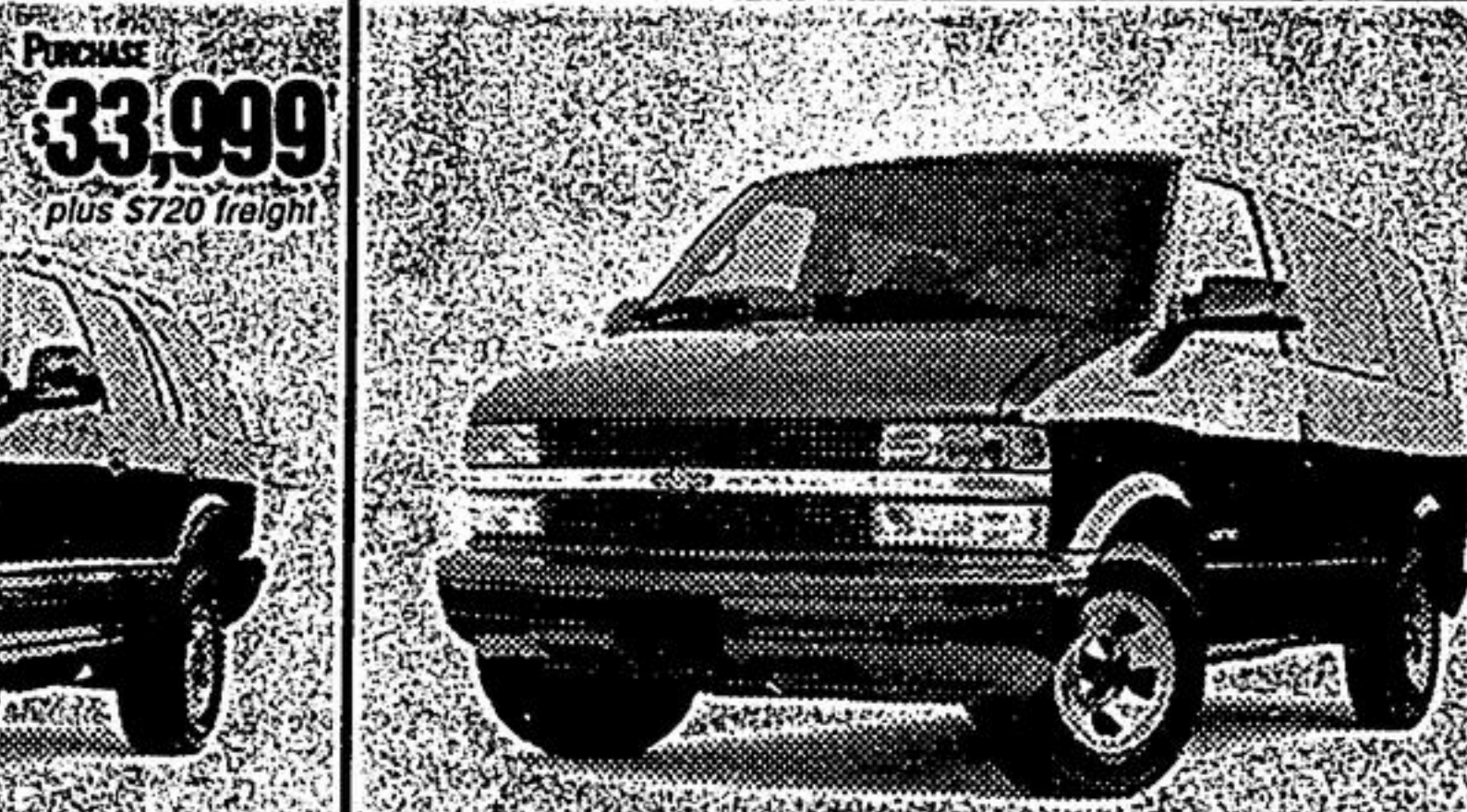
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