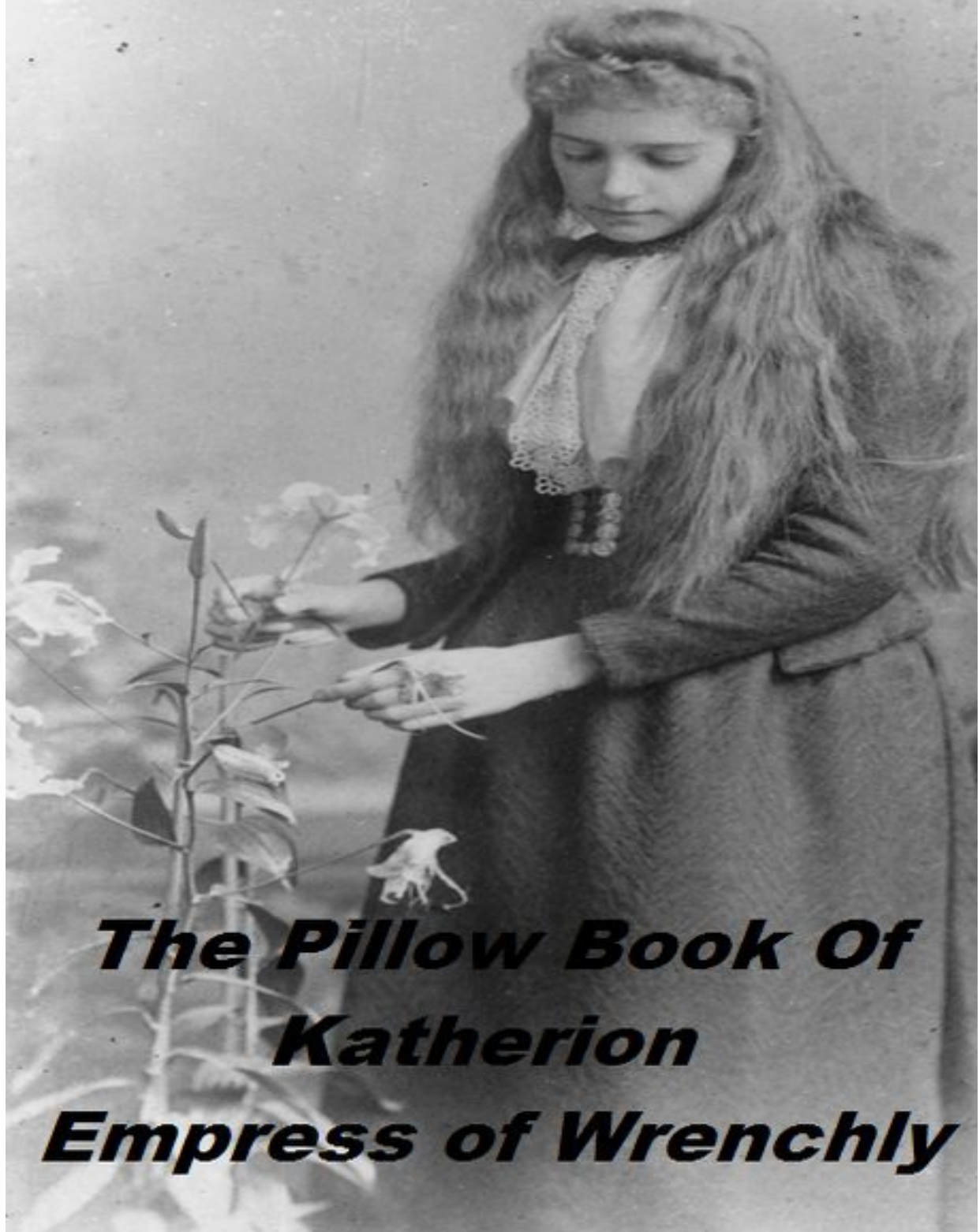


***Day Lilies***



***The Pillow Book Of  
Katherion  
Empress of Wrenchly***

Day Lilies

The Pillow Book of  
Katherion Empress of Wrenchly



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## News Article

**A** today spoke of "irrational reasons" That is of course absurd, an oxymoron, except in the context of a madman's mind. What if it has nothing to do with religion. Cult leaders. They are mad, sociopaths or psychopaths and we do not understand how they find followers. But they do. They use the words of "religion". Say, you have a madman, who is charismatic, a person who can use passionate words, and he discovers that he can find followers who are feeling lost and powerless, they feel they have nothing, and nothing to lose. He discovers that he can control them, inspire them, or not. He may not even have been a madman until he discovered this, but power can make one mad. He promises the world and eternity and they become addicted to his words, his praise, and his scorn. They feel a part of something, unified, and feel strong. The power feels good to him, and he pushes the limits of what he can ask them to do. His words mesmerize. He goes further, and asks them to do more. It is addictive to him, this power. Some, like Jim Jones, may end up destroying himself and his followers, perhaps because he could go no further in Jonestown, the "world" he had created for his control, and the end of that control was imminent, and he could not live without it, so he exerted his final act of control. But what if this madman, instead of creating an enclave of the world to control, gets so caught up in this greed for power, and it is an addiction, that he tries playing the world, like some computer game, advancing to a new level. He gets his rush from the manipulation, from watching the result and would be only further delighted by a response. They are like the person at a video game, only they are not manipulating a joystick, they are manipulating people, and they are getting the same rush of the win, the kill. I do not think this madman cares what the response of the United States is, because I do not think it is a chess game. Chess is a perfect battle with attacks, responses, and strategic retreats. It is all there in front of you on the board. Logical. There is no reason for the heinous, horrible action, because it is the action of a madman.

## **M**My Stapler

I was looking at my stapler. For 25 years at least, I have had this stapler. It's a Jet 170, whatever that means. It is serviceable and staplers and staples have not changed in the last decades, so I keep using it. It stapled my Grade School and Highschool essays typed on my old typewriter. It staples bills, letters, and cheques (I know they always say please don't staple but I do it anyway), it has stapled all this stuff that goes from me to them. Me to them, stapled, tidy, organized. The act of stapling is quite final. I have put some information together that I am sending from me to them. Of course there is always the act of sealing the envelope and licking the stamp, and going to the mail box and putting it in. But for me it is the stapling that is the final act. Because at that point I am saying "here, I have something important for you."

## **S**haria Law

Marriage and separation are contracts, even when they are not written down. The problem with a contract arbitrated by an Imam, using Sharia principles, is that there would be an equality of bargaining power between the couple. As I understand it, inequality between the man and the woman seems to be at the essence of Sharia law. Therefore, under Canadian law, the contract could be overturned. In Ontario, The Family Law Reform Act, 1978, and the now Family Law Act, 1986, addressed and protected against this very issue. Ontarians can contract out of their rights under the Family Law Act, but only if it is a valid contract. There may also be a presumption of undue influence; the husband, with Sharia and the not impartial arbitrator, may raise social and cultural "consequences" if a woman refuses to agree. Again, the contract may be invalid. So, Ms. Boyd's recommendation is essentially setting up a system which may create contracts unenforceable in Canadian courts, but which, under the same principles and pressure under which they were created, in addition to the expense of going to Court, are unlikely to be litigated. So, if her recommendations are put into practice, we will have to wait for a test case some years down the road, at which point the law would probably be changed, but it cannot compensate for any intervening years of suffering.

## **D**rop The Bomb

The Canadian parallel investigation of the pilot who dropped the bomb on the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in Afghanistan. From the Globe: The grandmother, Joyce Clooney of one of the man killed, Pte Smith of Tatagamouche N.S. said "Nothing is going to bring Ricky home....I don't see that punishing the pilot will do any good, except I wouldn't want him flying again" " His father, Lloyd Smith, whose son Nathan died in the tragedy, said the pilot will regret his mistake forever" "We can't bring him back", Mr. Smith said. "The fact is that we don't harbour any resentment towards Major Schmidt. He'll have this with him for the rest of his life. It's traumatic for us. It's traumatic for him"

No, it isn't for him. Unless you count the trauma of the investigation. He's a soldier. He is trained to kill. Modern warfare allowed the pilot to go in to war relatively risk free. He did not have to consider the consequences and risk of his own death, so there was no need to give thought to the death of others. It was remote control killing, not having to look those he killed in the eye, or to see the death. His training allowed him to switch off the morality, just as a sociopath does (there was an interview on CBC radio about criminals who are able to kill, and a switch was the analogy) I am reminded of the Star Trek NG episode with Angosia, and Roga Danaar, who was one of the soldiers genetically, and psychologically programmed to kill. When the war ended, they didn't "fit in" with society and were exiled to Luna Five an "orbiting gulag". His heightened skills allowed him to kill 80 times and his improved memory allowed him to remember each of the 80 faces. Pte. Smith's relatives, in N.S. where they know their neighbours, and are living at a community level, does not understand that Schmidt can turn of his sense of another person. I doubt he feels anything. Whose fault is that. But their training not only increases this ability, it makes it okay.



## **A** bortion

In Calgary, a Roman Catholic priest, refused to marry a woman who worked for an organization that offered abortion (and other) counselling. - sounds like they weren't pushing an abortion agenda, just giving it as an option. The Bishop of Calgary supports the decision. Says people like that, "doctors who perform abortions or a mobster who abuses his family and sells illegal drugs" " would likely be excommunicated". Goofs. The R.C. think that there's them and everyone else is a heathen. They (like the Jewish people) seem to think that they are not part of the human community. Perhaps the R.C.s are attempting to make a "tribe" where, as I was saying to a friend yesterday, we do not have "tribes" in the Western world; only countries. This was the root of the problem in Africa, where Europe broke the continent into countries (creating their style of "tribe") and cutting through the "Boundaries of the existing African tribes."

## **H**ere Is a Part of the Way I See It:

The planet we call Earth will prevail. It has its own "life cycle", no matter what we do. Regulating pollution may have no effect upon the planet. However it may have an effect upon our living environment, and hence the survival of our species. Within "environment" I include air, water, etc. and all other species, and the rainforest, the polar caps, and the depth of the oceans which we will never see or know.

We are a species that has evolved as being well adapted to the present particular combination of air, water, and the general environment, and we fit in with the ecology of the other species. We found a niche. Basic Darwinism: Compare. Insects reproduce in abundance, and within any generation there is likely to be a couple of them with a greater propensity for survival in the particular environment in which they find themselves. Human beings reproduce and mature slowly; our young must be nurtured for many years. We are physically a weak species, but we are intelligent and innovative. We adapt by behaviour and by manipulating our local environment (eg. we build houses and dams) and we cultivate crops and herd other animals for our food and we are inventive and make tools like hammers and backhoes. (Guns are also a tool, but now are mostly for use against our own species, and that is a different and extended topic)

Our survival is dependent upon our numbers. Therefore our survival is dependent upon our looking after each other. So those "silly elitist fools", the ecologists, are simply doing what comes naturally. It's called self preservation. I was reminded of this when the Premier of the Province of Ontario approved the development of some very environmentally sensitive land. Our lawmakers seem to think that if they have lots of money that their family will be protected and safe in the future. They are acting in their own manner of self preservation, however misdirected that may be.

I compare environmental action to sweeping out the kitchen. It used to be that you could just sweep it out the back door and it would go away/decompose and you wouldn't be bothered by it anymore because the Earth would absorb it. The problem is we do not have a back door anymore. There is nowhere to put it. (except for Yucca Mountain where they are putting the nuclear waste and hoping it will stay there). What is needed is humility and respect. The humility of humankind to understand that we need each other, and that we need the other species on the planet in order to survive, because they are all a part of the ecology of the life that exists upon the planet. Respect should be of each other, and all life and of the planet we call Earth. So, the penguins on the move are probably like the toads who are dying and mutating; an indicator of change. Hopefully they are not the canaries in the mine (our "mine", the Earth).

NOTE: on the "Political Compass" test I scored more libertarian and more left of Ghandi, and I'm Canadian so I have to apologize for everything. I do not apologize for this opinion

## **F**lasher

I mourn it really, as a passing art. The element of surprise is fading away, moving far too fast. We've seen it all before, thrown it away as disgust. Increasingly the flasher will apologize, touch his forehead, tip his hat, say I'm sorry and apologize. This is all very old and you will forgive me for being so unoriginal but, all the time . . .forgive me, he says. Let me show you this. (It's his triumph). There's now nothing left to hide. It's the flasher's dilemma. However suddenly he jumps, however deft his movements, however dark his expression, however innocent and lovely is his victim, the likelihood is that she has seen it before. There's nothing left but the embrace, and his fantasy to be touched.

## **W**hen I Was 17

When I was 17 and in University in the sciences, there was a fellow whom I had met briefly at the University Community College outside Room 260. He came running up to me on the street in front of the library and asked for my last name. Reader, please understand that I was 17 in 1974 and I had absolutely no idea why he was asking for it. I was confused and I told him my name. My relationship with him lasted for a year and a half. I thank him for introducing me to picnics with wine and bread and cheese at Reservoir Hill, and to love. Early in my relationship with him, one day we were going skiing up north in his green Datsun. We got a bit lost and ended up in Elmira and they were closing the roads because of the snow storm becoming a major blizzard. We kept going and I'm not sure whether it was that my internal safety monitor instilled by my parents didn't connect the dots, or whether I was snow blinded by love and perhaps feeling that I had no say. We slid off the road and the car overturned. We were okay. I was hanging by my seatbelt after having been showered by skis and apple cores. He unhooked me and we looked at the upside down Datsun. Then, down the road came a fellow on a bicycle. I'm not kidding. He was probably in his sixties, maybe seventies and he said, "can I help you, son?" He said, "maybe you can help us overturn the car?" And he did. The fellow rode off and we tried to start the car to no avail. So we went to the nearest farmhouse, knocked and asked for help. The fellow said "I don't know, I'll have to ask the boss" and shut the door. I was pretty cold by now and confused. I was in a sort of "take what happens" mode. The fellow came back after a while and said "The boss said we can't help, we have to go to church." He'll grow up to be a nice Christian boy.

## **B**ank Mergers

Of course banks want to merge. Whenever a merger is proposed, it is because it would be cost effective, and increase profit. Profit, of course always has to be at the expense of someone. With computerization and the Internet, their capacity to do business has outstripped the need for many of their employees. Why? because their business has changed. Their business is no longer customer service. It is the money market, and investing. Billions of "dollars" of virtual money fly around the world, and none of it changes hands. Their business does not require homeowner mortgages, and personal loans. These are in fact a nuisance to the big banks. The bank did not want to lend me a piddley 42,000 for my mortgage; it's more trouble than it's worth. Solution? Let them merge. Keep Canada's currency as an international currency. It will be the virtual money. Start a new currency, a currency of the people, between the people of Canada, something that is already done in the barter system, so it would in a way be "codifying" the barter system. Start a new bank. With people, with paper changing hands.

## **Special Meeting August 9th, 2001**

### **City of London Public Art and Monuments Policy**

**S**Public Art and Monuments Policy. Feel free to come up with any new ideas, or a new approach. The policy must state the overall purpose/benefit it serves, the intent, (goals of the policy, what it is trying to do) and describe a process which has a likelihood of achieving the benefit in a way which is acceptable by the community. I look at it this way: If a piece of art or a monument showed up on my doorstep, and egads I didn't like it, before I thought about complaining, I'd at least want to know it was part of a plan for the good of the city and had passed through a few knowledgeable and responsible minds.

The following are some "givens" within which we can work:

1) We can start with the premise that public art, and monuments, benefit the community of London, and should be encouraged.

2) Past experience has been that the policy issues, and the need for a process have arisen when:

a) An individual, interest group, patron, or corporation may offer to donate funds or a piece to commemorate an event, or recognize a person;

b) An artist may propose to create a work, often site specific (they may just ask for cost of materials);

c) the City may commission a work or hold a juried competition

d) a space "needs something"

e) any combination of the above

(that is not to say these are the only ways it can, will, or should arise)

3) What's there now. I found it an interesting and useful exercise to try and think of what public art and monuments I could remember seeing in the City. It may guide your thoughts to ask what it is you like or don't like about them. (Chances are a number of them are private.) A partial list will be made available at the meeting. Stephen Joy produced a booklet on Public Art in London in 1997 while on the newly formed London Arts Council.

4) A Practicality: Sometimes a decision has had to be made fairly quickly. The process has to be streamlined so that a decision firmly based on purpose and intent, and with thoughtful input from "appropriate" people, can be made fairly, and expeditiously, but without being rash, or importantly seen as having been rash. Here are suggestions of issues to think about; consider relevance and priority; please add your own.

### **Intent/Goals**

-In what specific ways do Public Art, and/or Monuments benefit the community

- public art versus art accessible to the public which is privately owned / on private property
- what about community art on city streets and bridges, art in parks and city buildings, art on private property, only art that is outside?
- what can and should the policy cover, or try to cover, and how (rules and guidelines versus encouragement)
- are issues around public art different from those of monuments, and should the two be dealt with differently
- do we need to (or can we) categorize "kinds" of art; if so what would be useful categories
- temporary displays
- priority given to work of London artists - how to define
- issues of location - what are they
- different "types" of art related to different location themes e.g, historical versus contemporary (you may recall the controversy over the Women's Memorial in Victoria Park)
- dealing with proposals by "interest groups"
- integration with arts policy and the ACA Terms of Reference

## **Process**

- whom should be involved, when, and with what specific roles (see under "Roles and Responsibilities" and under "Areas of Action" in the current policy for some ideas)
- receiving applications
- approving or refusing applications based on specific criteria and practical considerations
- acquisition and selection (and giving tax receipts)
- installation
- management and maintenance
- deaccessioning

## **F**ungible Things

We are all fungible. The word fungible had not entered my life until 1980 when I was at law school and my colleague Sher Singh, who has remained a true and good friend, were teammates in the first year tradition. The game was an appeal of a case. The case was about airlines. In the course of the presentation, of which Sher did most of the work, Sher uttered the marvelous words “Money is a fungible thing”. Money is absolutely fungible. People are fungible in a qualified way. We are citizens. Every life matters. We must look after others. Safety in numbers. We need each other in order to survive, we need leaders and followers. Religion creates followers. Problem is that the leaders of today are not those who can assist our survival, they are powerful for making money, which requires neither strength nor intellect. It requires only illusion. This is the work of someone who is absolutely horrible at history and geography. I have an excuse. I learned about Raddison and Grosseliers and the couriers de bois in elementary school. I also learned about Texas, the Fountain of Youth in Florida, and the coming of statehood in Louisiana. In Grade 9 in London Ontario, my history teacher was really boring and not only that, we were supposed to get up to the year 1900 but we got mired back in the Druids and the ancient Celts. In Grade 10 history my teacher asked whether we wanted to learn about 1900 forward or about the Aboriginal Indians. Show of hands with loud vocal interest for the latter. For thirty years since then I have had trouble reading about events and fitting them within any historical context. I did not have a framework of thought about the history of our human world. I cannot remember history in order to not repeat the mistakes of the past. But in Grade 10, my teacher gave me something else, which only 5 other students were given. I was asked to be a participant in a project at the Cross Cultural Learner Center, very new in London at the time. It was a series of role playing exercises over the course of some weeks in which we were either third world people or those of powerful capitalist countries; in sessions we negotiated and sought answers together, with differing interests. Both that gift and the dearth of historical education have shaped my philosophy. Since that time, I have learned when the Second World War started and have started to piece things together. But, because I did not have the factual knowledge of events, I have not been subject to political creation or purging of historical events, I had to fit my understanding of current events into a framework of knowledge I had been taught. That framework is the tribal. I did not take history or geography after those first two years.



## **A** afraid of Words

How has it come to be that we are afraid of words? That we feel we must protect our children from hearing or reading particular words. Words mean nothing unless they are acted upon. Unless we and our children speak and hear the words, we cannot as a society, discuss the actions and behaviors which might follow from these words, decide as a society whether or not they are appropriate, and teach our children accordingly. Censorship does us all a disservice. What is a “bad word”? Say it in front of your children, explain what it means, explain how it may hurt if used improperly. They will decide. We now write now of computerized censorship, which bears no relation to the context in which the word is spoken or written. I decry “filters”, but more than that I condemn the producers of what I consider verbal garbage . . . but one man’s garbage is another man’s treasure, and I can respect that freedom of expression but, but . . . I do not accept that a computer (Alexa?) should dictate to me what I should or should not be exposed to, because my parents taught me well. The responsibility should be upon the individual, both parents and children, to decide what ideas they wish to follow. If censorship is allowed, then those ideas which are promulgated may be one-sided (propaganda) without the benefit of full discussion.

## Little Girl

**L**I went to the variety store at about ten minutes to eleven this evening and just as I was getting out of my car, a little girl, maybe five, wearing a red cotton night dress came running across the street. She was in bare feet and the first thing she said to me was “I forgot my shoes”. She said she had to get something for her Dad. I asked her where she lived and she motioned towards the house kitty corner to the shop. I asked her if she wouldn’t mind if I made sure she got home okay after she had bought what she came for. I don’t think she quite understood. We both went in and the fellow behind the counter was, as he always was, on the phone, in Vietnamese, I think. He managed to keep talking while I completed my purchase. I thought it a little odd that he wanted to deal with me first, even though I motioned to the little girl, who already had her coins on the counter. But it was kind of hard to discuss it with him as he kept talking. So I waited, thinking he would attend to the little girl next. He didn’t. I started to wonder if he knew what she was there for, then I thought, horrors, that the Dad often sent her for cigarettes, that the shopkeeper would sell them to her unless I had been there. But she had just enough for gum, less than a dollar. She looked at me and said she had lost some. I asked her her name, Mary, she said. I told her that was my middle name. As she walked out, I asked her name only because I was concerned. I walked her to her house. She didn’t go right in but rather stood on the walkway, ripping open the gum and throwing the wrapping paper on the ground without a thought. This told me a lot about her parents. Odd about that, when we were coming out of the shop, a truck, a white one, a pickup, pulled up to the stop sign and she said, “that’s my Mom”, then she said “no it’s not”. Then “I have to go home.” The child was troubled and I wondered what I walked her home to? Finally, I asked if she would go inside for me, while I was there, so I would know that she was safe. That was the point. I didn’t know if she would be.

## **B**utterfly Effect

She was thinking about how every person she met affected the course of her life in some way. Maybe unnoticeably at the time; maybe she didn't even remember meeting them, but that exact moment of meeting in that exact place set forth an energy like the ripples from a pebble thrown in the water. She would be oblivious to the ripples, having long since left her at their epicenter to go wherever and whenever such ripples go. But then the ripples would invariably hit something that would send a ripple back to her. These would be no ordinary ripples, she observed; they disobeyed the laws of physics and instead of diminishing on their journey back to her, gained momentum and collided and joined forces with other ripples from other meetings in some other time and place. They would cause at some time and some place, an event, or a word from someone, or some great complication. If she remembered the meeting, she would marvel at the complexity and tidiness of the world; if she did not, she would find the world utterly confusing.

## **D**isco Era

Do you know what it's like to have grown up in the disco era? It was so short that nobody could get nostalgic about it. Like reminiscing about a sneeze. The wave from the past . . . gesundheit! In 1978 I was a waitress at the West End, you know, the Holiday Inn downtown. It was the hottest disco in London. That was before Mingles opened up. I made good money. Joe from New York used to come in and hand the bartender a hundred dollar bill and say "Buy the kids a drink after work". He'd give the waitresses a hundred dollars for a kiss. I never did but he'd give me 20 or 50 anyway. And Tracy Horton used to come in, you know, Tim Horton's donuts, that was her Dad, she always sat in my section. She liked Zombies, the drink not the dead things. She'd have 5 or 6 friends with her and she'd pay for them all with a gold American Express card. God the music was loud but . . . trying to hear what people were ordering, you had to read lips, but it went right through you. It made me feel like I wasn't really working. Like I was at a big party with lots of money and dancing. You know, when I hear Thelma Houston, Donna Summer, Boz Scaggs now . . . I want to dance! That was the music I was dancing to. When I was falling in love (again). I remember one guy, in Toronto, I said I didn't know how to dance disco, I didn't know him, but he could lead! I mean I danced fantastically. I danced. We danced. In the lights, so wonderful, so perfect, so a part of my growing up. And when we play disco now, people say "what's that shit!"

## **I**f George Bush Were a Trekkie

If only George Bush were a trekkie. Then he might have an understanding of the importance of the Prime Directive - non interference with other worlds, other civilizations. I was watching a bit of the episode with the Rutians and the Insada. The Insada try to blow up the Enterprise, Geordi manages to remove the device, but they capture Picard. They use a "dimensional jump" method of travel, which is killing them. (suicide bombers come to mind) Picard says that the Federation will respond, he says it as a warning, but Finn says on the contrary, I'm counting on it. Picard says another seat at the table. Finn says you brought the chair, I'm simply forcing you to sit in it. The Federation has/will have a trade agreement with the Rutians, who are suppressing the Insada. Finn says the Federation is very involved. By taking on the Federation as an adversary, it will force the Federation to mediate between the Rutians and the Insada, because the Federation "will tire of our little war" Isn't that what Bin Laden did? Force the U.S. to sit down, to not just be "involved" at a safe distance, benefitting. The U.S. So yesterday there was an earth quake in Afghanistan, and poof, instant aid. What about all the other countries with which the U.S. is "involved" but at a safe distance. They may say, hey it worked in Afghanistan. What's to lose. Okay, a few citizens.

## **W**hat The Maple Seed Wants

What the Maple seed wants but to populate the world with its own kind. The Key being which came first, the tree or the seed? All seventy-eight species of Aceraceae having two things in common; a V shaped branch crotch and wings to ride the wind and implant its DNA coded seed into the womb of Mother Earth. Conversely, does the seed produce a tree in order to nurture itself above ground to produce another seed, thus populating the world with its kind? Beside some northern lake; Silver Maple; Manitoba Maple; at the edge of the pagoda, Japanese Maple in a European Boreal forest, Striped Maple, Norway Maple, and the Amur Maple. The world has already been populated but seeds don't have the brains to know better, just genes.

## **T**he Tribal System.

The problem is that we are not able to work on the tribal system any more. My siblings have children, and they are believing in the tribal system. Children. I didn't want children. I think I understand why now. The interconnectedness of all things. The human species is coming to an end, or at least a change. You see we cannot continue as we are. Because we need a new system of governing ourselves. What is happening is that human beings are no longer behaving in the interest of the species. The US Constitution is not in the interest of the species. It focuses on the individual. We live because of our numbers and now we are dying because of the power structure we have created. Everyone wants to be the Alpha Male/Female. This can't be. Our political leaders are not generous. They are behaving as individuals not as monarchs (unlike Trump). I think that is what is missing, the monarch. Monarchs had a sense of responsibility. The US has no sense of responsibility. Trudeau has a sense of responsibility, Cretien had no sense of responsibility but then he lost it. He was fighting for his family not the Canadian family. What we need is a United Nations in order to save the person. How can I effect change. I do not know.

## **G**ood Help

It's hard to find good help these days. But what is worse, it's difficult to get a supply of good help. If there is some truth to the plots of old movies, there was a time when the hired help helped themselves to the cutlery. They were equally sacked, no legal hearings, no running to human rights tribunals. This is not to say that there were not false accusations and unjust firings, but the questions of it what had made the system work. They could always get another job and references were seldom double checked. Now, either way, however just or unjust the firing, the ex-employee has a choice of gambling upon being either a pariah, who can't get another job, or a righteously indignant hero, who won't get another job so the employer is put in a position of paying an ex-employee to not do the job or to take the risk of a judgement making them pay the ex-employee enough so they don't have to ever get another job (Welfare/ODSP). Well, at least we won't need to hire anyone to polish the silverware anymore.



## **L**amb Chops

Today I was going to marinate lamb chops. I couldn't find the Tarragon and so decided to organize my spice boxes. The herbs and spices are in little ziplock bags. Some of the bags were broken or torn. I decided to put all the spices in the bottom of the boxes from the broken bags, into the marinade. I didn't exactly know what was in it or the proportions, but my spice boxes contain only spices that I like and use in the kitchen. I was about to venture upon an unknown combination of my spices. One of the things about the process of theater is to do things without being afraid of how they'll turn out. Trust your spices? I may never be able to repeat my lamb chops, or my performance. I may not want to. I wish I could, but I created something. With experience and training you may be able to keep enough of yourself aside to remember how you felt, what you did, just as I can try and approximate that particular blend of spices, and recreate it. But that particular moment will never happen again. I am fascinated by condiments. At fast food places there's this table/hutch and you can pick up a plastic fork and napkins, and then there are the condiments: mustard, relish, vinegar, hot sauce, sugar, salt and pepper. Spices. I always take a few of each. You might never know when you might need them. Trust your spices.

**G**od

Is there a God. I do not know. If there is a greater power who is "looking after" his/her children, would he/she(as human being we have to think of thins/beings in genders) allow this to happen . Yes. I think that h/she would allow this to happen. So where does that leave us. Belief in a god that will do the right thing, but unfortunately the right thing does not necessarily include the continuation of the human species. Join the tour.

## **D**eodorant

I don't like the word deodorant. I don't like the concept. I love your scent, please don't deodorize it. I nestled into your bed today and smelled you and it gave me peace, Deodorize. Are we as a species so offended by our own smell that we must deodorize. And yet we are animals. The oldest part of our brain, is the Limbic System, it reacts to smells. So are we saying, we are not animals? The other day you farted. You felt you had to apologize. Well not really, but you thought you should say so. Millions of cows and sheep and kangaroos fart every day. In fact the news media said that this was a big factor in the depleting Ozone and the cows didn't even apologize.

## **Y**our Brain

Dear Brian. Would you please take a look for my tent? While searching for my tent I came across some items which are yours. You know the tent is very special to me and quite irreplaceable. I have no interest at all in retaining your property, again, would you please look for my tent? It was in the trunk of my car. I did not drive my car. You did this frequently and nobody else had access to it. I am wondering if it had ended up in a garage somewhere, maybe your parents or some random parking lot. My friend J. mentioned that you wanted the grill. Sorry it didn't occur to me that you wanted it back. I'll return it to you when you return the tent. I also took a few minutes to gather together the oven mitt, the plastic scraper, the instructional video, and the recipe pamphlet from the different places where you had put them, of course, not in one place or their original place. You see, Brian, when I put something somewhere, I do know where it is. The problem is when other people move them around, like my tent. Is there anything else that you are missing, maybe your brain? I have since learned that when someone needs something, and I have it, be it possessions or money or advice, I give it. The difficulty is in distinguishing what is needed or merely wanted. I have decided to leave it up to the asker. If they ask for it, then must need it.

## **U**nknown Soldiers

They found a WWI grave with unknown soldiers, arms linked together . . . and while digging out the last soldier, they found his arm was connected to a similar mass grave site from WWII and was linked to the new layer of soldiers. Go figure? On the new Canadian \$10 bill our beloved Sir John A. Has been replaced with a collage of army images . . . the images were of the fourteen native soldiers who weren't allowed to own land after they returned from the war to end all wars. In the lower left hand corner of the new \$10 bill is a piece of grass from Pierre Trudeau's house. Two more soldiers appeared on top of the soil in my front garden. They dig themselves out at night. There are now six, standing (except for the one who lost a leg) in various weapons-at-ready positions. The troops have cleverly chosen to amass in my kitchen here at Wrenchly, which already contains a formidable arsenal of plastic . . . their leader has died and hidden a large sum of money in a foreign country and placed a note under his wife's pillow telling her to search the WWWeb for someone to obtain it for her. The other soldiers come out at night and run around the house but can't seem to get up the stairs which is being guarded by two large pussy cats.

Coincidence? I don't think so.

## **T**wo Events, a Dictionary and a Thought.

The first event. I was driving home to London today from Guelph, taking the back roads, in no hurry, taking my time, and there was a hitchhiker outside Plattsville, a small town which seems to have named after someone named Platt; street names are people's first names, probably relations of Platt. There was a hitchhiker, a young man, probably named Platt. My first reaction was to stop and pick him up, talk with him, learn his story, but I didn't because I was a woman alone in a car and this voice inside my brain said "don't be stupid, you could end up raped or murdered and everyone would say it was your own damn fault for being stupid and picking up a stranger and getting raped or murdered". My family would have to deal with this. I drove on, and in my rear view mirror I saw his thumb fall, not despondently, not accusingly, just matter-of-factly. The second event. A short article from the Globe and Mail, Saturday October 26, 1996, p. A14, read as follows: "A Cincinnati grandmother who tried to help a stranger by feeding a parking meter instead wound up in jail. A police officer who saw Sylvia Spayton, 62, put coins in an expired meter, charged her with obstructing official business and disorderly conduct. She was in jail for three hours before family members bailed her out."

The Oxford Dictionary "Altruism (-roo-) n. Regard for others as a principle of action."

In the first event, I did not perform an altruistic act because of two fears; one of being raped or murdered, the other of being thought responsible for my own fate, which responsibility would fall to my family. I balanced the risk against the benefit of speaking with someone probably named Platt and decided to take the safe course and drive on. In the second event, Sylvia Spayton put a coin in a parking meter; I doubt that in her mind she saw any risk, any danger.

Our laws, religious and legislative, are ostensibly made to govern human tendencies towards violence, towards power. But Sylvia Spayton put a coin in a parking meter, a completely altruistic act, she had nothing to gain by doing so. What if human beings are innately altruistic? What if altruism is a trait that has enabled species to advance? What if the laws that we have created are discouraging altruism, and pushing us (I did not say "guiding" on purpose) towards an, every-person for her/his-self chaos, instead of ordering and advancing us? I don't think that altruism is uniquely human. My adopted feline senses when I am ill or depressed and she lies beside me and touches my face with her paw. I suppose I could interpret that behaviour as her simply wanting attention but I think that would be very pompous and superior of me. I suppose some would say that my interpretation of her behaviour as altruistic is anthropomorphism, but I don't think so. We have all read news stories about cats and dogs waking their caregivers when fire strikes a home. I believe that these animals are committing acts of simple care, because that is their nature. I believe that it is our nature. Competitiveness and being adversarial are, I think a good force, in weeding out the weak, in increasing the power of the community as a whole, continuing thing. But what is this thing called the community.

The Oxford Dictionary "Suspicion (-shon) n. Suspecting; feeling or state of mind of one who suspects; being suspected; slight belief or idea, faint notion or inkling; slight trace, very small amount of.

The Oxford Dictionary "Mistrust" v.t. Not trust; have uneasy doubts or suspicions about.

The neighbourhood. I have neighbours, and I trust them absolutely. They know me and there is an accountability. Many journal articles have decried the loss of this accountability, the loss of neighbourhood, the loss of trust. In our legal studies concerning tort law, one principle was the liability for actions performed that a person was deemed in law to know that would affect someone, their neighbour, their neighbour in the eyes of the law, their neighbour in law, no legal marriage required, not even proximity. So we suspect, we mistrust. Not necessarily because what we have observed or experienced in others, "I did that because they did that. They did that because of their hatred, because of their hatred and mistrust, so I did that because they are jerks, therefore, they would do that, I know they did that, because of their hatred for me and for what I did but I know I was right."

So whom do we trust? We are discouraged from performing an altruistic act because of our laws. If I were to attempt to save a person who was drowning and I failed, I could be sued under our laws; if I did nothing I could not be sued, but I would have a moral cost, the guilt that I did nothing. As a lawyer, I know this, but I also know that if faced with the situation to save someone I would try, without thinking, without weighing the costs, without weighing the risks, without hesitation, because it is our nature. I am amazed at the news stories of people who do attempt, and succeed or fail at saving others. One story that has stuck with me is that of a parachuting instructor, who saw that his student's parachute did not open, and he dove after him, caught up with him, and opened his parachute at some 500 feet above ground. Another story about a man who jumped into the frozen Thames River to try and save two boys who had fallen in. He saved one.

It is a principle of professional theatre that actors trust each other. The common goal is to tell the story, together. Live theatre in rehearsal is unpredictable. An actor gives something to another actor and trusts them to take it and find a way of telling the story. If something goes wrong in performance, we work together to continue the story, we adapt. In my theatre workshops there are a number of "trust" exercises. One exercise is that an actor jumps off an elevated place into the arms of two parallel rows of other actors. In this exercise, the jumping actor learns that it is absolutely impossible for the people into whose arms she or he is jumping to let them fall. It is impossible. They will catch you. We learn trust, and we learn a basic nature of beings. That nature is altruism.

So back to Sylvia at the parking meter, and me on the highway. If altruism is an instinctive thing, present in human beings and animals, then I maybe can start to understand the larger issues in the world. We are governed by our elected politicians; we are led by people who have a charisma, offering something about which most of us have no information, their agenda. Have we abandoned our altruism, abandoned our basic nature; giving way to a weakness - abandoning our forgotten nature to the demigod, a phantom, of power. I refuse to be mistrustful and I want my nature to continue to trust. We talked about the man who invented the V2 rockets and the guiding system for the atomic bomb. But our laws tell people that they cannot trust, and that it has to be written down how to not trust, and we have to write down the situations in which they cannot trust, to protect themselves from the people and situations that they cannot trust.

But Sylvia put a coin in a parking meter.

## **E**vil People

"U.S. Vulnerable to attack from Canada, report warns" Yeah, and it's just as vulnerable to an attack from a nut bar in Montana, or al-Quaeda operatives who have immigrated and been living and working in Florida. This is deflection, to bolster the U.S. ego, that they, THEY keep a tight rein on their citizens, and that they, THEY are better at spotting evil people.



## **K**ato

Have you ever found yourself say on the corner of Colborne and York Streets and you're listening to the CBC and Peter Zoski is talking to somebody in Vancouver and you think you are insignificant? Then you go home to the corner of George and John Streets and your cat, mine is named Kato, jumps up in your lap and you think to yourself, why is this animal of another species, so trusting of me? And then you suddenly feel like a valid person because you have someone or something who likes you, even though she is small and furry and very clean.

## **M**inimart

It had been a very long, hot day full of sticky air and sticky people with their own sticky problems and I was in no mood for this delay to me day. I was clutching in my hand my sole means of regaining my sanity - a can of Heinz spaghetti - which I was going to eat watching the news and only wearing a very old t-shirt. But here I was at the END of a very long line of people standing at the Minimart, with their own particular brand of comfort food. It crossed my mind that usually the end of the line is the worst place to be. This holds even more true if you are in a hurry of course, but also if like me and most people, you are a morbid gawker. I always slow down to look at the bodies when there's been a car accident. If you are at the end of a line of cars, they've usually cleaned up the mess before you get there and all you see is the burned and destroyed vehicle as it is being towed away. Hardly satisfying, Today at the Minimart, however, I was able to watch the whole thing.

## **M**isquotes I Found

My how time funs when you are not having flies.

Time wounds all heals.

Having here, wish you were a good time.

This will probably be read when I am dead. That's okay, read it when you have the time.

Life can sometimes be very complicated, and sometimes very simple; the trick is to know which it's being

.

The Director who type casts allows the scope of the play to stretch only as far as his own imagination, imposing upon the play rather than gaining from its own momentum.

## Mamas & The Papas

After my divorce, I stopped listening to music. The music that you put on the record player or the tape deck or the MP3. It wasn't that I stopped liking music. I enjoyed it when it came on the radio in the car or in my house. I just stopped putting it on for enjoyment. I sold my piano, not having space for it in my living room. But I have to ask now, when I just put on Eine Kleine Nacht Music and then the Mamas and the Papas records, why it makes me cry. Music, I think for me, was about love, and the dream of love, and the communication of love. Mozart, with the love of my father. The Mamas and the Papas for the hope of love. Funny, that group was before my generation. Or maybe I was on the cusp of generations. My generation was disco and I loved dancing. Have I lost the dream of love? Perhaps love can only come when you are young and stupid. Of course, later on, sometimes your gut feeling was right and that person was right for you, but that giddy-in-love, put-your-brain-on-the-plate kind of love, I don't think I will ever find it. I think love now is a decision of economics and whether I could stand to share my space with this person. I have managed to live so far unscathed, largely because my parents not just saying "don't do that" but telling me why.

I was thinking about the fellow who left me a heartfelt note when I was working at a bar in Toronto. It was really sweet. More than just asking me to call him, and I probably still have it. I never called him. I should have and I apologize to him that I didn't. He was probably a sweet guy. I wonder what happened to him? And Will Assad, cutest brother of the cutest guy I remember at University. I went out with Will a couple of times and when I invited him to my law school graduation, he commented that I had gained weight! That hurt me at the time but now I see that it was immaturity. Well, Will, at 5'4" and 120 Lbs I'm probably more fit and trim than your wife is now. There, I feel much better. (Sorry, I got immature for a moment there.)

## Defence Giant Lands Census Contract Oct 10/03

### Privacy and Accountability

Computers are networked. Is the U.S company going to delete information from their computers, all of them, when they accept the cheque? Canada has so far been better protective of it, but in the U.S. all rights seem to have been taken for homeland security. What if the U.S. Government decides that it would be useful to have such information in the interest of their Homeland Security? It sem to trump all else with their own citizens. Perhaps that is why Lockheed was able to make such a low bid? Are they being subsidized? Corporations have no accountability except to their shareholders, and even that is easily circumvented, as we have seen with the Enron and Worldcom scandals. They certainly have no accountability to me. If my information is made available, or "lost" and I receive, at the least harmful, solicitations from corporations who have purchased my personal information where do I complain? At the U.S. border? Where do I complain? And once the information is gone, it is gone. I have an obligation to provide information to Stats Can. I do not have an obligation to provide information to a U.S. Company. And I won't, without clear contractual obligation on the part of that company to provide info to the Canadian government, and only the Canadian Government.

## **P**rotest

Politicians who haven't a clue should go to any national newspaper website and do a search for the word "protest". Bing (o).

## **W**ayward Seed

With head upraised and eyes squinting in the searing sun, he searched for a cloud. There was no breeze, but the dust of his cracked field made its way into his nostrils, choking his breathing. He stooped to touch the land, a tear watering a wayward seed. He crumbled, apologizing to the seed for giving false hope of life, of growth. In desperation, he pounded the land with his fist, commanding it to serve. Looking up again, he saw a hawk, and he knew that it had seen his movement, and nothing else.

## **S**elf-centered

If I can be self-centered for a moment, I think that working as a lawyer may give me a chance to make a difference. I have worked for a long time toward understanding as much of this world as I can, and I think I have a responsibility to share it. Unfortunately, the political route is not for me; I couldn't afford it, detest the game, and I believe my skills are being rather wasted. My leadership skills were formed in theater production and direction. If you know the nature of artists, you will not think this odd, but understand that this is no easy task, and I would challenge any corporate CEO to do it. One weakness is history, and there is a story to that, which you may find interesting; I wrote it as a theatrical monologue. My legal practice is quite different than most. I spend time with clients. Strong belief in the interconnectedness of all things. I have often been told I belong in government. I write a lot about events in the news that are brought to my attention. On thinking about it, I have much experience with different cultures. I taught math and English to adults on Walpole Island. It wasn't a tough gig at all, because my being Caucasian was dealt with in way that simply focused on the goal of learning, the students about math and English, and myself about how they learn, and wrapped up in that was who they are and how they had learned. Simple. Why would I want to move from Ontario? Yes, life is good here. I divorced after a 4 year disappointing marriage, and have no children, and I would like to do something important. I would like to be Prime Minister of Canada, but frankly I would never want to go through the process of cozying up to a political party and working my way up through petty ranks by spouting political jargon. I am a federalist I suppose, although I do not espouse the views of any political party. I am someone who is fair, logical, interested and curious in just about everything, informed about many things, knows when she is not informed, and admits it.



## **T**he Shell

A woman walks along the beach and looks at the moving water. She sees a shell which belonged to a bivalve, empty. She picks it up and looks inside where the body of the small creature was. She does not pull it open to break it up, feeling that it was this creature's home, its house. Then she stops and corrected herself, no, it was not its house, it was a part of the creature itself. She wondered what it would be like if we all carried our house along with us, wherever we went.

## **O**ctober 19, 2002 " Cretien's Hezbollah Blunder Draws Fire"

Blunder? I write not for or against Mr. Cretien's office, but to express a concern that the Globe and Mail has printed a catchy headline which seems to belie the reporting of the event. Or does the Editor believe that Mr. Cretien blundered? The text of the article describes how our Prime Minister conducted himself, and it does not seem that there was any blunder at all. How can speaking to an audience, the members of which one did not invite, be a blunder? How can not being aware of a guest list (unless it's your wedding) be a blunder? What was he supposed to do, refuse to speak? Quit the summit?. As an aside, I enjoyed Mr. Day's comment that "'it is astonishing' that Mr. Cretien would not have known about Hezbollah's participation in the meeting". I have sometimes thought it would be refreshing to be frequently astonished. How can "brushing off a tirade of anti-Israeli comments" be a blunder at a summit to discuss Francophone matters; it would seem to be appropriate to ignore any off-topic comments. It might well have been very ill-advised to respond. And what's wrong with inviting a Hezbollah leader? I'm sure many of us have felt a little bit ticked by not being invited to a party, be it widely advertised or very, very secret; if Sheik Nasrallah is a terrorist, do we want a terrorist more ticked than he is? The article says that "Mr. Cretien's presence in the same room, albeit unwittingly, highlights some of the complications and ambiguities of the war on terror..." It is my understanding that the summit was not about the "war on terror", nor was it about Israeli and Palestinian matters. If the writer of the article wishes to segue into those issues, fine, but to say that someone blundered by being unwitting about something that is irrelevant is absurd. It appears that our Prime Minister wisely focussed on the purpose of the summit and avoided taking sides on subjects irrelevant to it.

## **M**ethadone

Drug store junkie? Worse. Reformed. Yes Virginia, there is a line behind you at the check-out. I stand in the line, smiling, knowingly as you pull out your I-never-drink-on my credit card to pay for your dreams of soft wrinkle free skin, color-coded cover-girl body parts, and a lack of foresight in the boudoir drawer space. I smugly roll my eyes, pausing in a brief prayer for you, as I hold daintily twixt my thumb and index finger, a package of antihistamine pills. This is London after all, ragweed capitol. You know my purchase is justifiable. But that doesn't mean the old urges don't wash over me as I longingly watch each item pass over the scanner with a joyful beep, and be placed in a white, oh so white, plastic bag which you will open at home like a Christmas stocking. Wistfully, I will never know again that absolute delight of discovery; with recovery from addiction comes the curse of remembering what I bought because I needed it not wanted it. If you catch my glance it will mean nothing to you. You can't see my pain. You can't know that when you whisked through the store, merrily gathering your treasures, I had already been there for an hour. Armed with the ruse of comparing unit prices and reading lists of ingredients, the ones available on every product we buy, I walked down every aisle, breathing in the differing aromas emanating from each one, touching new products and bargains with shivering excitement. Methadone, no thanks. I don't need a bag, I'll just put it in my purse. It's just not the same.

## **W**e Need Each Other

In order to survive, we need leaders and followers. Religion creates followers. Problem is that the leaders of today are not those who can assist our survival, they are powerful for making money, which requires neither strength nor intellect. It requires only illusion.

## **I**ndividuals Do Not Matter

The point is that individuals do not matter. None of us, individually, do. The power mongers are filled with a sense of self importance, that if it were not frightening, it would be funny. The "leaders" of the human population are acting in their own interest (what they short sightedly think is their own interest). Why do they not see. They are making decisions which will give their family more money. Money means nothing to the human race. Why the heck don't they see that. I am dismayed. The individualism which has taken over, is destroying the species; we exist because of our numbers. And we are dying because of our numbers. The tribes are not clear any more, they are not defined. It was simpler in the year I was born. Simpler because the tribes were able to distinguish themselves geographically. Geography. That is what we think we are fighting about. The native Indians, aboriginals of Canada are bringing their case on the issue of geography. But it's not about that. The aboriginals' fight for land is interesting, because, as I understand from my role-playing at the Cross Cultural Learner Centre in 1977 or was it 5 or 6, it doesn't matter, aboriginals had a very appropriate sense of the world we live in, no sense of property. The Israelis and the Palestinians. They are fighting to live. To be. The thing is that individually we do not matter. The suicide bombers of Palestine are acting out of genetically coded behaviour,; they think it is anger, the United States thinks it is madness, but it is absolutely correct for the human species.

## **C**onfessions

In law school at the University of Western Ontario, I wrote a research paper on videotaped confessions for Dr. Neil Vidmar's course "Psychology and the law". I researched the body of case law on confessions, including the scant (at that time) jurisprudence on videotaped evidence, and applied my experience as a trained actor, and my first degree in psychology. The camera is not a benign observer. One only needs to think of the effect on people's behavior when they know there is a camera on to realize this. But more importantly, the information the camera records is limited.

## **T**he Charity Minefield

The charity minefield (LFP editorial Apr. 3) A registered charity's tax exempt status, and ability to issue tax receipts for donations amounts to a recognition that their work benefits all of us. In order to qualify as a charity, its objects or purposes must be exclusively and wholly charitable, and must promote a public benefit of a nature recognized by the courts as a public benefit. We trust the Public Trustee to have made sure that a charity was in fact a charity before permitting its registration, and we all pay indirectly for the work of all registered charities with our tax dollars. We then can give additional support to charities of our choice, by direct donation of dollars or by volunteering our time and services.

Charities are already engaging in competition for this additional support, tugging at heartstrings with telephone calls and letters, and with charity lotteries tapping into gambling dollars. Many of us give what we can, but advertising and promotion will not change this amount; it may only affect to which charity it is directed. If I choose to give a donation to a charity, I am essentially voting for that charity's work, and with a tax receipt for my directed dollars, meaning that I do not give that amount to the government for spending of its wise choosing, I am making a decision on behalf of all taxpayers. Once the threshold of public benefit is passed, the opinion of the government must be that all charities are equal. After that it is individuals who decide which charities are worthy of more support; the amount of taxpayer dollars which go to it indirectly as a result of its tax exempt status and the giving of tax receipts are related to its performance and public appeal, whether narrow or widespread.

If charities are to be permitted to lobby government in a game of "our charity is better than the others", and with tax exempt status and charitable receipts, spend our taxpayer dollars to play this game, this is a waste of money. The mark of a good charity is how little it spends on administration, so that more of our public tax dollars go toward the public benefit. If our government were to change the laws, and permit charities to "spend" our tax dollars in lobbying and advertising, the beneficiaries will be the consultants and advertising promoters, not the public. If the government listens to the consultants and advertising promoters, and acts, it could then be putting itself in a position where it would be deciding on our behalf which charities are "better" than others, and which work is more valuable to the public, and. If the government does this then it is essentially licensing some charities as government agencies. I would no longer be able to "vote" for a charity with my directed dollars, but would be forced to accept the decision of government to support the charities who spend the most.

## **P**uppetry of the [P]

This was my draft response, (because I write for fun) to Mr. Herman Goodden's article. I have known Herman quite a long time, since the mid 80's. He became "religious" a few years ago, (I would say "unfortunately" but I am not one to judge, and if it makes him happy, so be it) and as you probably know, it is very close to impossible to "discuss" matters with someone who is "religious". I did not write this as a letter to the editor and do not want it published, because I do not want to hurt him, and I ask that you understand that. If you do not have, or cannot get, a copy of his article I can fax it to you. It was quite awful. I haven't seen the Puppetry of the...the...I can't even bring myself to write it... either, but I can state categorically that Mr. Goodden is absolutely correct; "that" sort of show does not belong on the stage of the Grand Theatre. What would people think of our citizenry! We have worked too hard for too long to maintain our reputation...of ...of ...what is our reputation? Of course the big question for those people who feel so duty bound to support the theatre that they would make a sacrifice and sit through what will obviously, from the name alone, be filthy smut, will be what to wear to accessorize the paper bag over their head. The tourist to London (and we expect that there will be one this year) should be advised to go straight to StoryBook Gardens. The Grand Theatre indeed has fallen and this time they have gone too far. Accepting thousands of dollars in rental makes them complicit and equal perpetrators of this crime; they are prostituting the theatre! It is prostitution, nothing less than prostitution. They should stick to doing Shakespear's plays; at least the sex and violence in those are cloaked with an aura of dignity. I mean, Shakespear named it "Macbeth" not "Screw it to the Sticking Place". Please, this is London. It is no place for innovative, creative entertainment that has little likelihood of being comfortably bland and appropriately boring. The good reviews from all those other cities is all we should need to tell us that this show does not belong in London, much less at our beloved Grand Theatre. We should urge City Council to pass an emergency measures bylaw, blocking off Richmond Street between Dundas and Queens so nobody has to read the marquee with those vile words.

Yours truly,

A citizen



## **F**ood

I remember when my parents decided that we should try tacos. It was the thing then. It was after TV Tables and Swanson Dinners. We had eaten the Swanson Dinners on the TV Tables. I remember doing it, almost religiously, we did it. It was kind of a disaster. My Mom, bless her heart, bought the shells, cooked the meat. They decided that tacos were not our kind of food. They were unwieldy or something. What did I know, I was a kid. I just know that we didn't have tacos anymore after that. I don't know, it was my parents trying to join the tour or something. Like the Kiwi, it was so weird. My parents bought a Kiwi. Like it was a BIG Thing. I don't know if they kept it for a while or whether they bought it that way, but it was bad. It smelled bad and I don't think they've bought a Kiwi since. So eating is important. I like to eat with A.

*Maybe we should cook a roast tonight.*

*You know, some mashed potatoes.*

*And boiled carrots.*

*White food. That's what you eat isn't it?*

*I laughed. You are goading me again.*

*But you don't like that foreign stuff.*

*Yeah right. Your mother's a wonderful cook.*

*White Bread. Bred in the bone.*

## Happiness

With my husband, I didn't get to be happy. Life was something you somehow got through. I remember when he announced that after all, we were middle-aged. I was 36 and he was 41. I was shocked and I knew then that I could not stay with this man, that he would drag me down into his world, even though as he said to himself, and me, that he was buoying me up. He settled into, or perhaps had never emerged from this passivity about life that had taken him into narrower and narrower places. Like an endless highway. Now cut into a horror movie scene with the long hallway, slightly out of focus, skewed, shifting, screeching arrhythmical music. I saw a doorhandle and I grabbed it and it opened and I shut it behind me where I found a world which allowed me to be happy. But I kept having flashbacks to that hallway of no happiness. Had I painted and decorated it?

I think I could become an evil person, she said. Why? He asked. Because I think I understand the crossing, one of only many, I'm sure. The one I understand is where a good person has been good for so long to so many and also giving so much and he or she has not received anything back. Not that the giving was conditional upon that you understand, but that there is always this silent expectation, this little kid that trusts that if you make good, good will come back and when it doesn't, or when one realizes that it is never going to, in my case, 35 years, there is a sense of why bother. There is a sense that other people are evil, that they put themselves first, and that you've been a patsy all these years. That they've been at a trough and coming back asking for something and you didn't notice the slop stain on their shirts. So I feel that outrage, whether or not it's justified, and I cannot do anything with it. I keep it inside. If I were to strike out, be angry, I would feel diminished.

I watched him eat. The mastication. The self-righteous mastication. I love to watch him eat. With his hands. An exploration of the sensation of eating. So what's up today. The cat was speaking in her infinite vocabulary about things that are very important to cats. We stopped to play with her. Three worlds playing together, each with their own set of play rules and set of words. I was also thinking about people's faces. His face in particular. How it had changed. This was not the slow change of aging. I thought that if I kept the bathroom clean, then everything would be okay. The bathroom. He has to go there after eating and other things. And of course he would notice that it was clean. Or would he? He travels so much and is used to the pristine hotel thing. I remember when he told the marriage counselor that I had put a note in his dental floss container. I did. At the breakfast table I turned my head and looked into his eyes, well not really, they were closed but I know what they look like. Eyes of the most beautiful man I have ever known. In the beginning it was so simple. I had chosen my path in life. Or rather it had been chosen for me. I lived a life in appreciation of what had been given, of opportunity generously presented but not yet grasped, of my ability to forget the bad things. Forgetting was something I felt I must do. He looked at me and he said "talk to me." I was in the laundry café and he came over and sat beside me and he had the most beautiful eyes I had ever seen.

How do you say "I'm leaving you in Gaelic"? Okay, so I am a fool.

I spoke with a lover. Well he's not my lover anymore now that I am married, but he was for about 8 years. We were talking about his couch. The one in his office. He said it had papers and books all over it and I asked if he had ever swooshed them off and he said he didn't know what I was talking about. For the next three minutes he said he didn't know what I was talking about. Then he finally said, sex. I asked him about his wife. He tells me that his wife left him and he wants her back, so I gave him a big hug and that's all I can give him. What do you say to yourself when you leave; I want to leave him but I don't want him back. And it dawned on me

that so many, maybe all of these men that I had know thought they were old and it's I being in denial or am I just being crazy, or am I just an, am I?

After my husband left. After the mastication and the bathroom and the cat, I realized it was a nice day. I spoke with a woman I thought was my friend and she was chilly, polite but friendly. So, I said okay, this is not a nice day. I reflected; did I do anything to cause this? Did I do or say anything that was not true to my heart? No. So maybe she was having a bad day. Funny how something like that can ruin your whole day. I was thinking about how every person I met affected the course of my life in some way. Maybe unnoticeably at the time; maybe I didn't even remember meeting them, but that exact moment of meeting in that exact place set forth an energy like the ripples from a pebble thrown in the water. We are oblivious to the ripples, having long since left the epicenter to go wherever and whenever such ripples go. But then the ripples would invariably hit something that would send a ripple back. These would be no ordinary ripples, I observe; they disobeyed the laws of physics and instead of diminishing on their journey back, gain momentum and collided and join forces with other ripples from other meetings in some other time and place. They would cause at some time and some place, an event, or a word from someone, or some great complication. If one remembers the meeting, one would marvel at the complexity and tidiness of the world; if not, we would find the world utterly confusing. I am confused. How do you say "I'm leaving you"? Okay, so I am a fool.

## **R**elationships

A good relationship is one that you feel brings out the best in you. You like who you are with them. Unfortunately, they can usually bring out the worst in you too, because passion is like that, extreme in nature.

**2**<sup>002</sup>

RE: The importance of being earnest and doing nothing. Unfortunately, I agree with Mr. Thorsell that turning a blind eye to infractions of the law, as written, seems to be the best way for us to carry on. I say "unfortunately" because it speaks of a larger problem, not in our justice system, but in our legislative system. Much has been said about our justice system recently; there have been complaints that our judges are "making law" in their interpretation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There has been outrage that Mr. Sharpe was acquitted of charges of possessing child pornography.

## **L**earning From Mistakes

It is said that one of our biggest problems is that we do not learn from our mistakes. This is not entirely correct. The problem is learning the right lessons from our mistakes and identifying what was the actual mistake that we made. This came to me this morning when I was awakened at 5:00 am by the smoke alarm. I naturally arose quickly to a state of alertness, and often depend on this. I ran downstairs to the kitchen where the smoke alarm was and turned it off. There was no visible smoke. The coffee pot on the stove had boiled dry. I had put it on to perk at about 3:00 am, before I went upstairs to watch a Star Trek video in bed before sleeping. I often put on the coffee and go and work upstairs, the smell of the coffee always drifts up at just the right time, when it has perked. When I got into bed, I made a mental note that I must not fall asleep while watching the video, as sometimes happens. This works for me, and I didn't; when I started feeling drowsy, I turned off the video, and the light and went to sleep.

What was my lesson then? To not put on the coffee before going to bed? This would be many people's conclusion. But no, this was not the problem. The lesson was that I cannot smell the coffee perking from the bedroom, therefore my mental note had been incomplete; it should have been to turn off the coffee before I fell asleep. This is what I learned.

Compare this to a second lesson learned following the incident. I was cleaning the coffee pot. In scrubbing it, coffee splattered onto my white nightgown. I decided that such splattering is quite inevitable, as was the scrubbing I was doing as carefully as I could. This then became the assumption on which I based my next lesson. Do not scrub coffee pots or pots in general in white or light colored clothing. I can make the assumption because scrubbing is an essential activity, and the risk of being wrong is simply that I may have to wash whatever I am wearing. So the mistake that is often made is to change or avoid the larger classification of behavior, solving the problem with a sledgehammer. This has implications in the drafting and passing of laws to affect human behavior. If drafted broadly, to make illegal or wrong too many behaviors, including some that do not necessarily lead to the undesired result and which may in some cases lead to a desired or beneficial result, this can be unfair and even counter-productive.

The particular behavior which is wrong must be identified, and we must not attempt to prevent the result on the basis of an incorrect assumption about its cause. Some results have a simple cause, with a simple rule to prevent them. Some results are so dire that we don't want to have missed a particular cause, and so we must have a blanket rule against the result, no matter what the cause. If however, the downside risk is low, then we can afford to legislate or make a rule against one particular behavior and depend upon refining the rule later if it becomes evident that there is another behavior or error we missed which may lead to the undesired result.

Flowing from this should be mentioned a girlfriend's story of her Grandmother who always cut off the legs of the Christmas turkey before roasting it. The original "reason" for this rule had been because her Great-Grandmother's roasting pan had been too small. However, the rule of behavior continued long after the cause was irrelevant. She later turned the turkey upside down because the lid had more room than the pot bottom. Therefore, the rule should have been to cut the turkey into smaller pieces if it doesn't fit in the pan, relating the rule to its cause, just as I should have related my self-imposed rule, to not fall asleep watching the video (the broader behavior) to turning off the coffee pot before I fell asleep (the specific behavior). Therefore, in each case, a risk and benefit decision must be made as to how strictly defined the curtailed behavior must be, given the likelihood of missing a variable, with the risk weighed against the benefit. I had better go and check visually to see if the coffee is perked as I can't rely on my sense of smell in the coffee-smell filled house. I am ready to go back to bed, but I won't go back to the bedroom until it's done and ready for when I wake again or we humans invent the Star Trek "Replicator".

## Differences

The difference between being stupid and just not getting it is subtle. It can only be a temporary excuse to protect one's ego. Being stupid is the general inability to comprehend. Not getting it has to do with your experience and education. If you are not stupid, you will be able to perceive when presented with an alternative that further understanding should be sought, and work toward getting it. If the person is stupid, they will not enquire further when presented with an opinion or fact that does not jive with their understanding because: they can't see that it is different; and they're not prepared to accept the possibility that they are not right or completely right. This is a stage is a subcategory of the one we are in; yes it would go on forever, like mirrors of mirrors. There is also what we could call a mid-ground, which is that they don't get it, and don't care. This is the absence of curiosity, and I would put it squarely in the stupid category. And then we have politics. Politicians often say things that are just wrong, and which would imply that they are either 1. Stupid or 2. they don't get it. The essence of politics is relying on other people being stupid (or not getting it and not caring).

## **D**iscrimination

What are they blind?? Well, yes, I guess they were. I have just been discriminated against on the basis of age. My age on paper. An interview was not an option for this particular application. Perhaps they wanted to remain objective? A laudable goal in some circumstances, but not this time. This is a first for me, being rejected on the basis of age, the first since I was underage. At least that what I think it was, or perhaps what I have to think it was. If I for a moment think it was anything else, I would be quite confused. Not dejected though, because if it was anything else, I would simply think they were stupid. If they rejected me on the basis of age, I can at least feel sorry for them for sticking to some stupid rule of thumb.



## **H**iroshima

Regarding errors of judgement and blame. People kill each other everyday, sometimes on purpose, sometimes by accident, sometimes because of what is called mental illness. In each case we feel a need to assign blame. We have to blame something or someone. We have a need to understand the why. The religious folk have an easy solution; it was God's Will. The men who crashed the planes into the Trade Towers, an advertent act, even put that down to God's Will. The pilots who dropped the bomb made an error in judgement; they as are we all, fallible human beings. It is how that information is processed by our brains that we do not understand, and probably never will. I would even suggest that there is a danger in trying, because along the way of our "research" we, again because of our nature, our need to understand why, we will draw conclusions which will be necessarily wrong. Even in writing these thoughts I am guilty of the same in a way, although my conclusion is what we cannot understand. With regard to the pilots, the problem is the possible sanction that could be applied if they were found guilty, 64 years later. That is too much for an error of judgement, whatever its cause. So they seek to blame all sorts of factors: the night vision goggles, the amphetamines they were taking, the two-week new computer software, the failure of the information system at the time. They were "doing their job". They "perceived a danger" and acted "within the rules." Rules made by fallible human beings.

**Dear Madam**

**D**Thank you for your surprising letter, and for wishing me luck in the future. I appreciate the sentiment but it was unnecessary; I do not require luck. Please return to me or make available to be picked up the notarized copy of my Law School Admission Test (LSAT) score which shows that I am in the top three percent of Canada and the United States. I shall treasure my rejection letter, in appreciation of absurd humour, and would probably refer to it in my published writings. If you would reconsider, I might have the humility to accept. If you do not have the humility to reconsider, then it is unlucky that the University will not be able to add the production of my writings to its credits. I am a smart woman and I have a lot to say about world events; not only that I write grammatically perfectly.

Yours very truly,  
Katherion, Empress of Wrenchly

## **T**o Give a Human Face

Why is it that we need to see the face of our attackers, our killers. Why is it that the executioner was not seen. Is it a need for understanding, to know that it was a rational act. In the Crying Game, Geordie, played by Forest Whitaker, wanted the hood taken off, saying that it was hot. But was it more than that. A need to see the face of "Fergus". I think it may be a need in human beings to make sense of the world, of the human world/existence anyway. "I need to see your face". In a criminal trial of an accused murdered, the jury needs to see the accused. In that trial, if the accused does not look at the jury, they will take that as a sign of guilt. The child in school who does not look at the teacher when the class is asked who took the eraser, or who threw the spit ball, is the one who will be presumed guilty. There are cultural differences here, and I am having trouble accounting for that.

There has to be a tribal basis for the need to see the attacker. Is it to see if they are one of the tribe? But we have adapted to living with members of other tribes. Or have we. Is not a black man more likely to be convicted. And maybe it is not just on the evidence; maybe it is because he is, to a jury that is mostly white, not of the tribe. So why do we need to see a human face. The media presented this article about the hometown of the F16 fighter. He's a person, with neighbours and family too. Does that make what he did any less heinous. No. But "seeing his face" may allow the family of the victims to deal better with the tragedy. Why. So that they can forgive perhaps, but I think it goes deeper than that.

There has to be a moment of communication at the time we see our attacker's face. What that moment means I do not know. Perhaps, as I said, it is to know that it is a rational act, not one of happenstance. To know that our death "means something" is to have a sense that our life meant something. The dead squirrel on the road; It may have been killed by someone who didn't pay attention, and didn't notice that it was extinguishing a life, it may have been killed by someone who noticed but could not swerve in time to avoid killing it (within this group there are two subsets: those who didn't care, thinking or not even bothering to think that the squirrel's life was irrelevant, and those who, for a moment anyway, felt the death, and felt regret that they had caused it) , those who truly noticed and felt genuine loss at having destroyed a life, and what would be hopefully a very small percentage who felt good about killing it, and may even have swerved to hit it. I am reminded of when I was in Australia and we were on a truck with a farmer fellow, and he swerved to hit and kill a fox. The children were aghast, as was I, but the farmer explained, and shrugged it away very simply that foxes were a threat to his livestock. I could understand on an intellectual and economic level, but I could not fathom the willful taking of a life, what switch had been turned off in this man's mind that would allow him to do this. Or maybe it was a switch that had never been turned on.

The taking of another life. That is what soldiers are trained to do. They should be trained not to take another life. The Star Trek episode Roga Danaar is a soldier that had been trained and genetically and chemically altered to be the perfect soldier. He had killed 83 people and had the perfect memory to remember all 83 faces. The faces of those he had killed. See the faces. Why do we have to see the faces. There has to be some communication, but what?

## **P**ower Monger

How does the behaviour we are seeing politically, at the federal level, the patronage, at the municipal level with Malpass - in short, the power mongering - fit into the evolutionary theory. I have often stated that one of the most interesting revelations for me, was when read the theory that because human beings reproduce so slowly, thereby making physical genetic mutation/adaptation a slow process which cannot necessarily keep up with environmental changes, or the changes in other species which can harm us, we adapt behaviorally.

Human beings need leaders. I think that much is clear. Most people are by nature followers; we have to be, because it is our sheer numbers that give us an advantage, over other tribes, and over the environmental dangers. Quite frankly, we can afford to lose quite a few people, and we have to lose quite a few people, otherwise there would be too many of us. Quite the dichotomy - we have an ingrained behaviour to protect each other, to protect our numbers, just so we have some to lose in war and pestilence. But as for the leadership thing. What makes a leader. One who is strong, and smart, and has the ability, and the will to lead, to rally people to follow. I have said before, that the political and social structure today does not necessarily require either strength or brains. One can become a leader, solely on the basis of the last quality. But, once there, without the first two, they get desperate, because they don't know what to do? We see this behaviour in all societies, from the African, to the aboriginal, to the Europeans, and Asians, and of course Americans. So they surround themselves with a cadre of people who can help them lead. This is all very well and fine, could be a good thing, maybe some of them have brains.

But "survival skills" today have become twisted. The qualities that will allow a person to survive, in order to continue their particular lineage, which is an innate drive, have always included getting food and shelter for one's family. But, enter "money". Enter "property" that bears no relation to anything physical, but which has value in money. And money made from intangible property can be equally used to buy property that is tangible. So if people are able to make money easily, without having to work, to produce, and still purchase food and shelter, they will. Ergo, the deviousness. Add to that the "everyone else is doing it" factor, which essentially creates and self perpetuates itself. The Church is the interesting example. Here we have an institution, ostensibly set up to control and counter human behaviour which would not perpetuate the species, and it finds itself in the same game. I guess those "men of God" are just men, and they cannot escape their biological drive to perpetuate, therefore to gain power and money by whatever means in the particular situation.

## Same Sex Marriage

So. Some of our eminent politicians on the Commons Justice Committee believe that a union between people of the same sex is "fundamentally wrong", and contrary to principles and foundations of our society. Perhaps a union that does not by itself produce children cannot possibly be marriage, and therefore is of little use to productive society? And to legalize same sex marriage would encourage behaviour behind closed doors of which "we" do not approve, even if "we" begrudgingly accept it? Ms. Wayne thinks "they" should just shut up about it, advocating denial of free speech. And, Mr O'Brien thinks it might lead to all sorts of heinous unions, including, heaven forbid, polygamy. Democracy is stated to be fundamental to our society. Civil marriage is a legal partnership, which as evidenced by federal divorce legislation provincial family laws is not necessarily democratic in its practice, but which is encouraged by the state. Civil marriage is a contract. Religious marriage is another matter, and neither democratic, nor contractual; separation of church and state is a another fundamental principle of our society. Some politicians are confusing the two.

The preamble to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes that "Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law". Under the Charter, elected representatives like all citizens, may hold and freely practice their religion. But that right, upon which they rely as citizens, does not extend to their position as elected representatives to give them the right to put forward their personal moral beliefs, their God, in supporting or opposing rule of law. Their beliefs are irrelevant to rule of law, except in their right to hold them.

It has been suggested that the "notwithstanding" clause in section 33 could be invoked. A declaration under this section ceases to have effect after five years, unless the legislation is re-enacted, with another declaration. This would conveniently put the matter past the next election. It has been suggested that the matter should go to the Supreme Court of Canada. Not only would this also take a conveniently lengthy period of time, the decision of the highest court would not prevent the invocation of the notwithstanding clause by pouting legislators. Perhaps our morally torn elected representatives need to realize the difference between religious morality (supremacy of God) and societal morality (rule of law), One can be moral according to the dictates of one's religion, and at the same time immoral according to societal rights and freedoms of others. It is hypocrisy for a citizen to rely upon a societal right to practice religion to support the denial of others' societal rights. It is inexcusable for an elected representative to do so. It is likely that some of those eminent all-seeing politicians are, have been, or may become directors of business corporations, or partners in a business partnership. Hmm. A for profit business corporation is a legal union between persons who may be of the same sex, and often more than two persons.

Polygamy? Sexual intercourse is not a requirement of civil marriage. While we don't know what goes on in the boardrooms of the nation, through its bylaws, and shareholder agreement, a corporation purports to be a democracy. It is formed for the purpose of profit, just as marriage often betters the partners' positions; democracy and capitalism are a respectively a stated principle and practised foundation of our society. A corporation does not produce children, unless you count subsidiaries. Children are expensive anyway, cutting into partnership profit which would otherwise be infused back into the economy, and otherwise costing the state in care and education. Our eminent legislators would seem to believe that businesses are of use to us, considering favourable tax treatment alone. Along with the limited liability of a corporation, it may be said that, while not blatantly "encouraging" certain behaviours, the formation of a corporation certainly makes possible the "ordering of its affairs", behind closed doors, in such a way that some CEO's can become very rich at the expense of the shareholders and the rest of us, a behaviour which few of us, except for the rich, would support as "moral".

Therefore, at least some many of our eminent politicians are already comfortably ensconced in the equivalent of a same-sex, polygamous for-profit marriage. Perhaps they should either come down off their hypocritical high horse, or perhaps simply act in their self interest and support legalization of same-sex marriages, lest the Supreme Court take a page from their religious book and deem business corporations immoral in our society.

## Slut Talk

I was brought up in an upper middle-class home. I had everything I needed and more and the white picket fence was in the back yard. How do you tell these things to your father: my husband doesn't make love to me. He thought sex was just for courting.

### I Thought Sex Was Just for Courting

Really, I thought sex was just for courting,  
for poking the pud after a good meal when  
the flowers you gave her were in her eyes,  
and your mind just wasn't on the wedding  
but wedged in the dark moist of her thighs.

Really, I thought sex was just for courting,  
it's been so long I wondered why she wept,  
and how she wanted to keep it up all night  
when I could have slept and the making  
of marriage would do things up all right.

She's replaced me with the spices of the East  
and oiled her body to be a culinary delight.  
Her cucumber legs and creamy yogurt thighs  
on a pita bread bum can be quite a feast  
but I prefer to work like all the macho guys.

I tried to show her who the boss should be,  
that she should show more respect for me,  
but she fell on my fist and now I'm sulking  
because I thought sex was just for courting.

Poem by a friend.

## **C**harter Of Rights

There is a popular notion that judges are "making law" when they make a ruling that legislation is unconstitutional. This is not so. Judges do not then change the legislation; they say "go back and fix it so it goes not infringe the rights of Canadians. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is not just a set of rules. It is not legislation, the bailiwick of legislatures and Parliament, at all. It is a philosophy, and a very correct one. It says that "everyone" is entitled to certain rights and freedoms.

The Rights under the Charter are not just there to be "considered" along with "other legislation". The rights under the Charter are not open for debate by Parliamentarians or the electorate should there be a referendum. Amendment of the Charter can only be made by the method set out in the Charter. When a judge says that a piece of legislation, or part of it is unconstitutional, she or he is saying that as written, or as acted upon, that legislation does or can infringe our rights as entrenched in the Charter. "Entrenched" is a very important word.

As an aside, in criminal matters, people will sometimes say that an accused "got off" on his or her Charter Rights. It is important to understand that what sometimes happened is that the process, under the legislation called the Criminal Code, to which an accused was subjected, infringed that person's rights, but it is the process that a judge asks to be fixed, and if that process is permitted by legislation or rules, then that legislation or rules must be changed. What many do not realize is that if one person could be wrongly accused, or dealt with unfairly by a system or legislation or regulation which permits such, that it could happen to any of us. It is not just "bad" people who get accused. And our laws cannot permit someone to be convicted even if they are "bad" if it cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that they did the act of which they were accused.

Mr. Bloomfield seems to think that because Parliament "spoke " on the matter of same sex unions, that this should be the final word, Members of Parliament being elected, and therefore, theoretically speaking the will of the people (and of course questions of whether or not this is so would require a treatise upon the electoral process, and voter turnout). Well, no. The Charter is the will of the people, and its words are final. Parliament could vote to preserve the "traditional definition of marriage" daily, and it would not change the Charter. Mr. Bloomfield advises that he was a member of Parliament when the Charter was written. Perhaps he should have paid closer attention; not that what would seem to be his views, that homosexuals should not be included in Canadian's concept of "everyone" , would have prevailed. Yes, Mr. Bloomfield, even in 1982, gays and lesbians were people too.



## **S**ome Thoughts

Did anyone consider that whomever was behind this may be addicted to control. Say, they are charismatic and have discovered that they can lead; there are many examples, look at any cult leader. They are mad, sociopaths or psychopaths and we do not understand how they find followers. But they do. Their followers are people of the character of cultists. We know that there are many such people, those followers of cults. They may be people who are lost and if somebody, anybody, shows them anything to follow, they will. Say, this leader has gotten his rush from the manipulation, from watching the result and would be only further delighted by a response. They are like the person at a video game, only they are not manipulating a joystick, they are manipulating people, and they are getting the same rush of the win, the kill. Star Trek. An episode of Next Generation centered around a power called "Ne-gee-la" (that is a phonetic spelling.) It threatened to carry out "experiments" upon the crew of the Enterprise to explore ways of dying, estimating that only a certain percentage would lose their lives. The Enterprise "won" by engaging the self destruct order, 20 minutes to the end, their end.

## **Funding the arts: market forces**

It is a rule of good business that money should be invested in the production of what sells. What sells? Useful things, like appliances, socks, and blankets will always have a steady market. There is competition among producers with price, quality, effectiveness, and marketing to varying degrees of relative importance, depending upon the consumer. The sale of luxury items and knick-knacks is more complex; income, effective advertising, and impulse buying are only a few factors. Someone who drives a cool expensive car, may be renting and they may be old money, nouveau rich or wannabes, all of whom have their statistical and individual buying habits. What's an ad agency to do? Glossy photograph, witty advertisement, full-page ad or clever enticing placement, in which publication should it appear?; it's an amalgam of psychology, and this essay will not attempt to explain, but it is written with all of this in mind. The writer asks that you, the reader, consider only your own buying habits; what do you buy, how long do you take to make a decision, do you purchase over the internet, why do you "go shopping" -- because you need something or because you enjoy shopping, do you read Consumer Reports or ask friends first, do you, do you....this is not a test; there is no wrong answer, just think about it). Pet Rocks. Anyone who was alive in the '70s probably remembers them, and there have been many variations on the theme since then. They were marketed well, sold well and they were absolutely useless. Or were they...

## COMMUNITY

We are as a species "programmed" to form a community. The reason is simple; a community was and is the reason for our survival.

Human beings, individually are quite pathetic predators; no match at all for a lion or a bear. We succeeded in surviving as a species (Note: not as individuals) against those predators because of:

1. our numbers,

2. our propensity to look after our own (this propensity was formed by knowledge that was passed down and reinforced by learning from war and the hunt that numbers count) It took a number of riders to corral the buffalo to Buffalo Jump Off. I think that's part of the name, it seems to me the name goes on about the buffalo being dead at the end of it (Buffalo Jump Off Head Bashed In? ( yes, it's somewhere in the west). I'll get to # 3 in a minute; just a note about our strength in numbers. Human beings have a long gestation period, 9 months, and we do not produce a lot of offspring per mating pair. We do not have a large capacity for genetic mutation to adapt to environmental, viral, bacterial, or predatory threats. (Compare this to insects which reproduce frequently and in great number, thereby increasing the chance that one -- and it only takes one -- would have a better ability to survive)Therefore our adaptation is behavioral. Part of that behavioral adaptation is the caring for our young, for many years, and our community. So what does this have to do with the arts? She's all over the map! She's talking business one minute, then she's talking populations biology. Is she nuts or what?

## **C**reating A Bigot

"Mr. Stein" as he calls himself, a tenant's dad called this morning and he was on about the shower doors. "they can't take a shower" as if it was the end of the world, as if I cared. He called back later, after what my contractor Jim, had recommended, that a shower curtain would be better instead. He seemed miffed, probably thought I was being cheap. I explained that I had to go and look at it, but that I understood that the walls weren't quite straight (it's an old house) and so it could be that no shower doors would fit properly. He suggested putty. Anyway the thing that got me was when he said will you do that for me. I resisted saying no, I won't do it for you. It's my responsibility. Instead I said, while I appreciate your calls, I look after my tenants, I look after the place. It's the only one I have. Things get done. It has occurred to me that Jewish people, and indeed minorities (or people who think they are minorities) subconsciously invite other people to display prejudice. It is almost as if they want justification for feeling as though they are repressed. Unfortunately, Mr. Stein, it won't work with me. I cannot be baited. You see, I do not just behave in a non prejudicial manner because it is politically correct. I actually am that way. Funny, his behavior toward me could not have been better designed to create a bigot.

## **The End**

What is happening is that human beings are no longer behaving in the interest of the species. The United States constitution is not in the interest of the species. It focuses on the individual. But our species is not about the individual. We live because of our numbers. And now we are dying. Because of the power structure that we have created. Everyone wants to be the alpha male. They can't be. Get a life. Our political leaders are not generous. They are behaving as individuals, not as monarchs. I think that is what is missing, the monarch. Monarchs had a sense of responsibility. The U.S. has no sense of responsibility. Jean Cretien had a sense of responsibility, but he lost it. He is fighting for his family. There is a sense that his family will die, but still he is struggling. What we need is a United Nations, in order to save this species.

## **K**at's Exkataganza

Kathryn was on the move. After three months at the food mart, she decided it was time to start a business of her own; "Kat's Exkataganza" was born. She was going to have an eclectic shop, as a purveyor of excellent shoes, bowling balls, bingo dabbers and the exquisite fashion designs of her friend, Donovan. She sat down to figure out how much money she had to invest. She had worked 480 hours at the grocery store at \$12.25 an hour, plus 39 hours of overtime at 1.35% per hour. She had paid her property taxes on a little cottage she owned in Grand Bend. The mill rate was 82, and she had bought the property for \$43,900, in 65/35 partnership with Curtis. She had hesitated before buying it, but Curtis had said that "it sounded good to him" and she had to admit, when she was lying on the beach, that it had been a good buy. The property had been assessed by the town at 80% of its value.

She opened her shop, in partnership with Nevada, who had excellent taste in jackets and ties (although she had never seen him wear them). Jan regularly bought bowling balls; the price was \$48 for a ball, but Kathryn gave him a 20% discount on the first 50 he bought, and a 30% discount for any over that number. Jan bought 57.

Cheryl and Angela dropped in to buy shoes; they had a letter from Imelda Marcos with an order for 50 pairs of \$89 snake skin cfm pumps in every colour of the rainbow, and a certified cheque to pay for them. Kathryn supplied Imelda with 50 fake snake sneakers (real snake is so declassé and politically incorrect) which retailed at \$56 each and she wrote Imelda a cheque for the difference.

Angela had knitted some socks -- thirty nine pair - and Kathryn agreed to retail them for \$8.50 per pair, subject to a 40% commission. A cough and a sneeze startled the three women, and who should arrive but Revenue Canada.

## Roller Coasters

Jennifer did not like roller coasters. It wasn't that she was afraid of them. It's just that every time she went through the gate, it seemed as though she were passing a point of no return. She would fully prepare herself for the moment when the car would not turn at the bottom of the hill, but rather would go flying off the track. When that happened, she figured she would prefer to enjoy the flight than to panic and think of all the things she imagined she would think about, things she hadn't done yet, the faces of her parents, her life flashing before her eyes like she had read it was supposed to. Mind you, she wondered how anybody who had lived to tell about their life flashing before their eyes could really say for certain that was what happened just before you died. They could only say that it happened when you *thought* you were going to die.

So it was that on this particular day, she mounted the roller coaster with resignation along with a sense of responsibility for her little brother and sister, whom she shepherded into the car, excitement in their eyes as the man lowered the safety bar. Oh well, they hadn't lived as long as she had; maybe a flash would be enough time to cover their lives.

I didn't hate my brother and sister. It's just that I didn't want to go on a roller coaster and I didn't like to be told to go on a roller coaster to look after my brother and sister. So it started and I closed my eyes, feeling the thing pull us up, and waiting for that terrifying moment when we would hurtle down. My eyes were shut, and it started. Then down. I tried to think about things other than us going flying of the track when it turned, but it didn't turn, it just kept going down and down and down and I'm thinking turn, turn, please turn, even though I knew if it turned it would go up again to turn and go down again, but it kept going down. And then it started to slow down, slower, and slower and slower, and then there was a little bump and it stopped. And thought great, short ride! There had been a lot of people a lot of people lined up at the gate so maybe they made it a short ride.

I opened my eyes .... and couldn't see anything. It was totally dark. I shut and opened them again, then again. Just dark. And quiet. I couldn't hear the midway. I couldn't hear anything. started feeling a bit scared. But I couldn't see anything. I mean it was dark. Totally dark. I could feel Ben and Emma squished on either side me, but they weren't moving. Ben? A whisper, Yeah. Emma? Yeah. I felt and put my hands on each of them. We were safe. But it was so quiet. The ride people will come in a minute, I said, something must have gone funny with it. The man will come to take off the lap-lock thing. I thought the dark was like the horror house ride but with no creepy face appearing. It was just dark. And quiet. We still had our hands on each other; we were safe. But I, as the eldest, charged with keeping my younger brother and sister safe had to do something, but no options presented themselves. We seemed safe now, but nothing was happening, and i couldn't see or hear anything.

Just sitting here -- was that irresponsible? If I were lost in a store my parents told me I should stay where I was so they could find me. But I was lost and I was responsible for my brother and sister; should I stay where I was? I just didn't know. I was scared. We sat for quite a long time like that, our hands on each other so we knew we were all there, when I heard something, sort of a chirp, like a cricket. Or maybe a bunch of squeaks, like the screen door.... No more like clicks, musical clicks, and we gripped each other a little harder. "Hello" I said, and there was a flurry of squeaks and clicks and s and then I heard, loud and clear, "hello". "Hello" I said with huge relief. Maybe the ride men had found us. Nothing . "Hello" I said. There were more squeaks. "Are you okay?" the voice said. "Yes" I said we're okay, but we can't see anything. Can you help us out of here, put the light on what happened.

**O** kay, So I'm a Fool.  
(*And a first time fiction writer*)

who bo denay piyar gorachu  
what?

who bo denay piyar gorachu. I Love you very much

I turned my head and looked into the eyes -- well not really, they were closed, but I know what they look like -- of the most incredibly beautiful man I have ever known.

How do you say "I'm leaving you"?

Okay, so I'm a fool.

1974 She looked out the window of the airplane. Not that she could see anything. It was the pitch black that is only possible to see through an airplane window, high above any city lights, on the other side of the world from the sun. Well I guess I am seeing something she thought. Something on the other side of the world from the sun. Her son stirred in his seat beside her. He was sleeping. Twelve years old. And he would have to become a man very soon, very quickly. Jeldi, Jeldi. Hurry, hurry. No my son. I will protect you. She looked over at her husband, also sleeping. No not sleeping. Not dreaming. He was in a place that was neither here not there, not sleeping or waking, an eternal dusk of finishing a day, a life, leaving a place and he would never arrive at another.

She closed her eyes and thought of her country.

---

What do you want for breakfast?

I don't know. Eggs?

Whatever you want sweetheart.

You have to make them.

Okay.

He went back to sleep. I read the paper.

---

It was dead cold. Snow is an evil thing. Pyarali stopped to bang his frozen hands together, then picked up the shovel again. Shovels are for dirt, for working land to make things grow. Not for moving evil white snow off sidewalks so people can go shopping.

It was a job to do, this moving of evil snow. His boss paid him money to do it. A man whose wife walked in new high heeled boots along shovelled sidewalks to go shopping in stores that were an acre wide. He wanted to buy a new pair of high heeled boots for his wife, so she could go shopping in this city of new boots. Sidewalks and sidewalks and shopping aisles of new boots. In this new white city.

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The airplane was landing. The pain caused her to put her hands on her son's ears to block out the pressure and the noise. He looked at her questioning her fear, and put up his hands over her ears.

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1975 The MiniMart. That's a very Canadian name.

All right. The children will go to school.

Yes. But we'll need them to work after.

I was very lucky. I never had to work. But also my dad said I wasn't allowed to have a job, that my job was going to school. You worked all the time. You had to.

Yes.

---

1952 Uganda He stroked her beautiful hair and smelled the warmth of her sweet body, his hand swept over the swell of her belly where his daughter was growing. Who bo dene pyar gorachu. She turned to him and smiled. The sun was shining in the window. Morning. Sweet sweet morning.

What shall we name her?

---

No it wasn't like that at all.

What do you mean.

It wasn't like that.

But it's such a good story.

No it isn't.

I want to tell it.

Tell your own story.

I was trying to.

Tell our story instead.

No yours too.

Okay.

---

1950 Uganda

My wedding day. I bathed and dressed. I looked in the mirror. My mother said "you are beautiful." I thought of R. I wanted to marry him. But he was not the man to which I was to be joined today.

Too late. I will be too late. H cursed at his automobile which refused to start.

That man is no good. I must stop this. I have heard of him and he is no good. Why.

The motor coughed to a start and he drove with a vengeance toward Mubende. I must stop this. A letter had come, that his sister was to marry P. He threw it down and without a word to his business partner he had walked to his automobile, no, walked is not the right word, he had been impelled, without thinking, without remembering the act, to go to his parent's house to stop this thing. He drove all night, with no thought except one; I must stop this. Then this. This mechanical device that is supposed to serve, has become an impediment.

He is not an ugly man, this man that my parents have chosen to bond me with. But I think of R. I do not remember the ceremony. I looked at my mother, my father, their friends, our community. All had this expression of satisfaction. This was right. This was a good thing. This was as it should be.

This was wrong.

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Do you want tea?

Mmm.

This arranged marriage thing, I asked. I mean, most of the time it works out as well as a chosen marriage. Those statistics are scary. The point is, you work out your differences, and if you have the support of both families, or the pressure of both families, you do. Maybe without the choice, you stay and work it out.

Yeah right, like your marriage worked out.

Yeah you're right, but my husband beat me up.

---

tea?

My promised husband and his parents came to the house of my parents to seal the contract. I was so excited. I think now about the word contract. I didn't notice it at the time.

Do you think, I asked myself, that we will travel to faraway places? He will sweep me into his arms every morning and we will dream of places and we will make love. She giggled very quietly. I know it's wonderful but what is it like. The books I have read, they don't tell me anything. She thought of R. She thought of his face, she thought of his shoulders, but most of all she didn't think; her sense of him was beyond thinking, it was a moment that kept flashing through her, and every moment gave her a warmth that invaded her whole body.

We will have children.

She was in the kitchen reading a book, a very romantic book. That is what my life will be like. I was so excited. I heard our guests come in, and I prepared the tea. I peeked around the corner of the door opening, to see what he looked like. My heart was flying. I am to be married!

She spread her arms as wide as she could, and wiggled her fingers to see if she could spread any wider and then she started to turn slowly, slowly, then faster and faster and she was making herself dizzy and she brought her arms in to embrace, what, she didn't know, she just wanted to embrace, maybe the man in the book, maybe R., maybe her husband, no definitely R. She spun and she spun and she fell down laughing, she was so happy.

They sat and talked. I served tea, but I could not even raise my face to look in the eyes of the man who was to be my husband. I was so shy!

---

After the ceremony, my husband was congratulated. I travelled to the house of my husband's family where I was to live. The house of my family, for now I had a new family, a new life, not of my choosing. When I arrived, there were a number of people there. My husband's family, and friends they had invited to share the joy of his good fortune. His good fortune in acquiring a beautiful wife. I was 19 years of age. When I was 19, I was in university, dissecting rats, probing the human mind and studying great literature. I was a young woman with the world at my feet.

Feet

---

My husband greeted me cordially. His family did not speak with me. He pointed to the great number of shoes that had been left inside the door and told me to clean them, that it was expected. I did.

You're kidding.

No.

19

Yes

Her wedding day

Yes

Her family?

They had arranged the marriage because my father's mother, my grandmother, wanted her daughter to marry the man whom my mother loved. He was quite rich.

There was money involved.

Of course.

---

The motor coughed again and then stopped. No amount of cursing or praying would start it again. His watch showed 12:00. Too late.

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She had cleaned all of the shoes, and the guests had left. She had spoken only briefly with a few of them. Her attempts at conversation with members of his family had been futile. She was in a room, beautifully appointed. The room to which she had been assigned, a room in her husband's house. Her husband's family house. She dressed in her nightclothes and stood for an hour, maybe two. She stood dreading a bed. He came to the room, his room, and found his wife standing by the wall. Come, he said. I remember the first time I made love. It was wonderful. He was my first real boyfriend and we had been going out for, oh I don't know eight months. He must have loved me, he waited that long.

---

Uganda 1957

Pyarli felt the heat of his hand. It hurt a bit, but he wouldn't notice it until later.

He looked at his wife who would not cry. Damn it why wouldn't she cry.

He worked hard to support her and her children.

Why wouldn't she cry.

He hit her?

Yes.

You?

Yes.

Tell me.

I remember my mother sitting with the four of us kids around her me, my brother, and sisters, and he was there right in front of us, and she said, wait, just wait until these children are grown.

---

Pyali waited for the bus. He stomped his feet in his boots. Canada to him was boots and snow. Cars went by with their wheels splashing the brown mush on the roads. Cars and trucks with

their windows closing in their warm along streets that were wet and cold. He was cold. And he waited for the bus.  
Good morning.

S. was waiting for him outside the mini mart. He unlocked the door for his employee.  
A nice young man, full of energy.



**Household Staff at Wrenchly**



**Katherion - Empress of Wrenchly**