

# A Collection of Texts for Socratic Seminar



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## Of Anger

by Francis Bacon

Anger cannot be completely stamped out, but it can be controlled and calmed. We will speak first about how the tendency or habit to be angry can be changed or softened; secondly, about how to prevent anger from causing further harm.

For the first, there is no other way but to think deeply about how much being angry disturbs, troubles, and throws your life into turmoil. The best time to do this is when the fit of anger is thoroughly over. The Bible urges us to try to be more patient. When people lose their patience, they lose possession of their souls.

For the second point, there are three main causes and motives of anger. The first is being hurt too easily: for no one is angry unless he or she feels hurt. Therefore, weak, soft and delicate persons often become angry. They have so many things to trouble them, of which stronger people are not even aware. The second main cause is if, in addition to feeling a hurt, the hurt is combined with hatred. For hatred can cause anger as much or more than the hurt itself. Lastly, anger become much sharper if a person's reputation is touched or even spoken about. The best cure for this is to have a tougher hide. But the best way to prevent getting angry is to gain time. Make yourself believe that now is not the best time to get even, but later will be better. In the meantime, you can calm down.

There are two things you should be very careful about if you lost your temper. The first is not to say anything you will regret, such as bitter and spiteful words, especially if they are true. Also never reveal a secret. The other is that you should not end any matter in anger. Never take any action which cannot ever be changed back again into how it was before.

## from The Republic

by Plato

### The Allegory of the Cave

A student asked Socrates if there were a way to understand how humans learn what is true and what is not. Socrates replied with this story:

*Picture a cave. It is enshrouded in darkness, with just one beam of light at its only entrance. Way back in the deepest reaches of this cave live a small knot of men who have been there for as long as they remember. The men are situated in such a way that all they can make out with their eyes is the wall that lies in front of them. Forevermore, they can see nothing but the shadows that fall upon this wall. Never do they—or can they, for they are chained to their places—see what is behind them, casting the shadows. So if there is a fire casting the shadows, these men mistake the shadows for the fire. They believe what they see.*

The student declares that these men are strange, and that the story itself is hard to believe. Socrates explains:

*Ah, but these men are men like us. They are prisoners, yes, but they are unaware of their captivity. Knowing nothing else but what they see, they can talk about nothing else. Learning nothing else but what they talk about, they can learn nothing else.*

The student slowly nods, as understanding seeps into his brain. When Socrates perceives that the student understands, he continues:

*But suppose one of the prisoners manages to escape. He turns around, facing, for the first time, the fire. Having never seen or heard of it before, he does not recognize it, does not know what to call it, or how to describe it, or whether it is even real. He sees a resemblance to the shadows, but he fails to connect the fire to the shadows for a long time of thought that leads to confusion. His confusion is disturbing and unresolvable, so he seeks to return to his chains, yearning for the comfort of the familiar shadows and the men who speak of them.*

*But he cannot return. He is compelled toward the mouth of the cave, toward its single light. He finds himself out in the sun, pained by its naked light that sears his eyes. His eyelids offer scant protection as he squeezes them shut. Ever so gradually, he is able to make out objects surrounding him: trees, animals, streams, clouds. These objects cast shadows, and the man begins to understand the meaning of the shadows, relative to the objects that cast them.*

*This man sees things as they really are. He distinguishes one real object from another, as well as the difference between the object itself and the nothingness of its*

*shadow. He comes to understand the difference between the ground and the air, the air around him and the sky above. But these understandings are not without hard work and pain. And these understandings make the man know that he is alone.*

The student asks whether the man would desire to return to the cave to tell others of his understanding. "Were it I," he asserts in a voice brimming with adventure, " I would wish to inform the other men that the shadows are not the fire, that a real fire burns bright within their vision, if they would just turn around. I would show them how to escape from their chains. I would offer to lead them into sunlight, to a world too wondrous for words."

Socrates asked: *And do you think they would thank you for that visit?*

*The Iliad, Book VI, by Homer*

After the war between the Greeks and the Trojans had been spilling blood on both sides for ten years, Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks, made a fatal mistake: He insulted his finest warrior, Achilles, by refusing to relinquish Briseis, the Queen of Asia Minor, to him as a war prize. Agamemnon insisted upon keeping her as his own after the defeat of her family. In reprisal, the mighty Achilles laid down his arms and refused to fight. Hector, leader of the Trojans, was thus emboldened, and, for the first time in ten years, he and his army attacked the Trojans in front of their own gates. The Trojans won some small victories there, out in the open, against the Greeks, but they feared it was only a matter of time before the fierce Achilles would rise up in battle, wielding his fearsome sword against them yet again.

But even a warrior cannot abide to leave his wife and infant son for too long. Hector left the cold battlefield to warm himself in the arms of his beloved wife Andromache. He found her, as expected, awaiting him inside the gates of Troy, their child at her bosom. As they stood together as a loving family, Andromache spoke: "Dear Husband, you are a warrior of great courage. But it is your courage in war that will kill you, I fear." She gazed down at their baby son. "It is your courage that will leave us bereft. With your death in battle, I die too, for I could not live with the thought that you were gone. Your death will leave our child orphaned of both father and mother." Her eyes overflowed fearful tears that dripped upon the child's head. She recalled how Achilles had slaughtered her father and seven brothers. How he had captured and enslaved her mother, who soon died of grief under his cruel abuse. "I plead with you, my Husband, do not continue in this death-soaked enterprise out beyond the safety of our own gates. Gather your men. Lead them inside. Let them be safe within our gates, as well as you."

Hector did not give her argument. But his pride and commitment to his men were too great. He would give no sign of retreat. He would not be known as the once-valiant Trojan who traded his name as such for the love of a woman and their child. Yet, Hector knew in his heart that the day would come when Achilles would claim Andromache just as he had taken her family. He knew that the best he could do was to put off that dreaded day for as long as he could. He hoped that his own death would come before that day.

Without a word, Hector tenderly took his son from his mother's arms to embrace him and surround him with fatherly love. But the child was frightened and clung to his mother. Perhaps the sight of his father's bronze helmet, with its showy horse-hair plume, was fearsome in its strangeness. Perhaps he could sense the import of his mother's words, as his little face was wet with her falling tears. But when Hector removed his helmet, the child was mollified and accepted his father's outstretched arms. Hector and Andromache smiled, touched by the change in their son, comforted by his sudden willingness to lie in the protection of his father's arms. Holding him, Hector lifted his eyes to Olympus and prayed that Astyanax, for that was the child's name, would grow to be, like his father, a warrior.

## Language: Change in Values and Attitudes

National Speech Week, 1917:

In 1917, the National Council of Teachers of English prepared the following pledge for school students to recite in observance of National Speech Week:

*I love the United States of America. I love my country's flag. I love my country's language. I promise:*

- 1. That I will not dishonor my country's speech by leaving off the last syllable of words.*
- 2. That I will say a good American "yes" and "no" in place of an Indian grunt "un-hum" and "nup-um" or a foreign "ya" or "yeh" or "nope."*
- 3. That I will do my best to improve American speech by avoiding loud rough tones, by enunciating distinctly, and by speaking pleasantly, clearly, and sincerely.*
- 4. That I will learn to articulate correctly as many words as possible during the year.*

NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) Resolution, 1974  
(reaffirmed, 2003)

### Students' Right to Their Own Language

We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.

## Why Miller Now?

(1) In Ancient Greece, theatre was used to hold a mirror up to society—to provoke and debate, to ask important questions of where society was headed, but not necessarily to have answers. Author Miller's work was heavily influenced by Greek theatre, and his need to call into question the very fabric of society is a recurring theme through all of Miller's plays.

(2) What sets Miller apart from his contemporaries and has cemented him among America's great playwrights is his ability to tackle these grand philosophical or ideological questions within the context of a family drama. The social conscience found in his work was forged by his experience of the Great Depression, which for Miller was the most impactful event on American society since the Civil War.

(3) Writing plays, for Miller, genuinely had the potential to alter the course of the world. He believed that a playwright's responsibility equaled, if not exceeded, that of a doctor. A doctor, after all, can save lives. But a playwright can change lives.

(4) Miller recognized how necessary drama was to help a society reflect on its own actions. *The Crucible* (1953) famously uses the Salem Witch Trials as a stand-in for McCarthyism and the deeds of the House Un-American Activities Committee. But Miller found that the allegory of the play reached far beyond the witch-hunt of his own time that he was trying to evoke. He said, "I can almost tell what the political situation in a country is when the play is suddenly a hit there—it is either a warning of tyranny on the way or a reminder of tyranny just past."

(5) Miller's work, whether cloaked in allegory or in a seemingly traditional family drama, always has something deeper lurking beneath the surface. When society is facing a moment of change or trauma, we can continue to look to this great dramatist of morality for insight into the road ahead.

Roundabout Theatre, 2017

The World is a Beautiful Place  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti, 1955

(1) The world is a beautiful place  
to be born into  
if you don't mind happiness  
not always being  
(5) so very much fun  
if you don't mind a touch of hell now and then  
just when everything is fine  
because even in heaven  
they don't sing  
(10) all the time

The world is a beautiful place  
to be born into  
if you don't mind some people dying  
all the time or maybe only starving  
(15) some of the time  
which isn't half bad  
if it isn't you

Oh the world is a beautiful place  
to be born into  
(20) if you don't much mind  
a few dead minds  
in the higher places  
or a bomb or two  
now and then  
(25) in your upturned faces  
or such other improprieties  
as our Name Brand society  
is prey to with its men of distinction  
and its men of extinction  
(30) and its priests  
and other patrolmen

and its various segregations  
and congressional investigations



and other constipations  
(35) that our fool flesh  
is heir to

Yes the world is the best place of all  
for a lot of such things as  
making the fun scene  
(40) and making the love scene  
and making the sad scene  
and singing low songs  
and having inspirations  
and walking around  
(45) looking at everything  
and smelling flowers  
and goosing statues  
and even thinking  
and kissing people  
(50) and making babies and wearing pants  
and waving hats and  
dancing  
and going swimming in rivers  
on picnics  
(55) in the middle of the summer  
and just generally living it up  
Yes  
but then right in the middle of it  
comes the smiling  
(60) mortician

## II

from "Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell

### I

A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outline and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'. All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia.

### II

But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.

## III

...I am going to translate a passage of good English into modern English of the worst sort. Here is a well-known verse from Ecclesiastes:

*I returned and saw under the sun, the the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet great to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.*

Here it is in modern English:

*Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.*

## IV

The word *democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice*, have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like *democracy*, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic, we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim the it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way.

## Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

### ***Chapter I***

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in.  
I am lost... I am hopeless.  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

### ***Chapter II***

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I **pretend** I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in this same place.  
But it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

### ***Chapter III***

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I **see** it there.  
I still fall in...it's a habit...but,  
my eyes are open.  
I know where I am.  
It is my fault.  
I get out immediately.

### ***Chapter IV***

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

### ***Chapter V***

I walk down another street.

—Portia Nelson

## Quotations Pertaining to the First Amendment

### I

“Congress Shall Make No Law Respecting an Establishment of Religion, or Prohibiting the Free Exercise Thereof; or Abridging the Freedom of Speech, or of the Press; or the Right of the People to Peaceably Assemble, and To Petition the Government for a Redress of Grievances.”

First Amendment

### II

“First Amendment freedoms are most in danger when the government seeks to control thought or to justify its laws for that impermissible end. The right to think is the beginning of freedom, and speech must be protected from the government because speech is the beginning of thought.”

Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy,  
Ashcroft V. Free Speech Coalition

### III

“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.”

President Harry S. Truman

### IV

“Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the Government’s purposes are beneficent. Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding.”

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis  
Olmstead V. U.S

“Outside, even through the shut window pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no color in anything except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-mustached face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston’s own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a blue-bottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the Police Patrol, snooping into people’s windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.”

George Orwell, 1984

“Of course the people don’t want war. But after all, it’s the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it’s always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it’s a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and for exposing the country to greater danger.”

Herman Goering at the Nuremberg trials

“What happened was the gradual habituation of the people, little by little, to be governed by surprise, to receiving decisions deliberated in secret; to believe that the situation was so complicated that the government had to act on information which the people could not understand, or so dangerous that, even if people could understand it, it could not be released because of national security. ~ The crises and reforms (real reforms too) so occupied the people that they did not see the slow motion underneath, of the whole process of government growing remoter and remoter. ~ To live in the process is absolutely not to notice it — please try to believe me — unless one has a much greater degree of political awareness, acuity, than most of us ever had occasion to develop. Each step was so small, so inconsequential, so well explained or, on occasion, ‘regretted.’ ~ Believe me this is true. Each act, each occasion is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock comes, will join you in resisting somehow. ~ Suddenly it all comes down, all at once. You see what you are, what you have done, or, more accurately, what you haven’t done (for that was all that

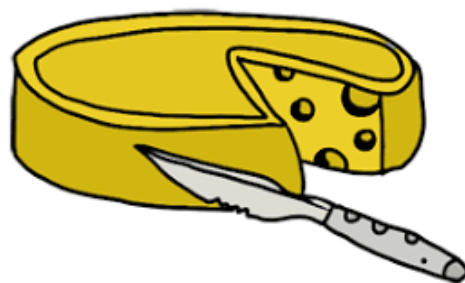
was required of most of us: that we did nothing) . . . You remember everything now, and your heart breaks. Too late. You are compromised beyond repair.”

—A German professor describing the coming of fascism in *They Thought They Were Free* by Milton Mayer

### A Tale of Two Mice

Two mice stole a large chunk of cheese. Both wanted to have what they thought was their fair share. But neither of them trusted the other to divide the cheese fairly. So they went to the Lion, the king of all the animals. “King, we want to divide this cheese but we can’t do it fairly. We can’t agree on what is fair. Please help us.” The Lion frowned at the mice because he was very busy but felt it was his obligation to help. “I’ll send you to the monkey. He’s the judge and will help you, but it would be better if you could do it yourselves. Once you bring in a judge, many new problems might come up.” But the mice wanted the monkey, and so the king sent them to his law court.

The monkey was seated in a big chair behind a large table. The mice asked for help in dividing the cheese. The monkey said, “Of course I’ll be the judge if you want me to.” He sent his helper for a scale and a knife. With the knife, he divided the cheese so that one piece was much bigger than the other. Then he ate some of the bigger piece. The mice asked him what he was doing. “I’m eating from this piece so that it will be equal to the smaller piece,” he said. He ate so much that when he put both pieces on the scale again, the one that used to be smaller was now bigger. So he began to eat from *that* piece. The mice now realized that the monkey planned to eat all the cheese. They pleaded, “Give us what’s left, O Judge, and we will divide it fairly.” But the monkey said, “No. You will fight with each other and then King Lion will be angry with me.” So the monkey went on eating until all the cheese was gone. Then one mouse turned to the other and said, “Why didn’t we trust each other and divide the cheese ourselves?”



## Downeaster Alexa

Billy Joel

Well I'm on the Downeaster Alexa  
And I'm cruising through Block Island Sound  
I have charted a course to the vineyard  
But tonight I am Nantucket bound

We took on diesel back in Montauk yesterday  
Left this morning from the bell in Gardiner's Bay  
Like all the locals here I've had to sell my home  
Too proud to leave I worked my fingers to the bone

So I could own my Downeaster Alexa  
And I go where the ocean is deep  
There are giants out there in the canyons  
And a good captain can't fall asleep

I got bills to pay and children who need clothes  
I know there's fish out there but where God only knows  
They say these waters aren't what they used to be  
But I got people back on land who count on me

So if you see my Downeaster Alexa  
And if you work with the rod and the reel  
Tell my wife I am trolling Atlantis  
And I still have my hands on the wheel

Now I drive my Downeaster Alexa  
More and more miles from shore every year  
Since they tell me I can't sell no stripers  
And there's no luck in sword fishing here

I was a bay man like my father was before  
Can't make a living as a bay man anymore  
There ain't much future for a man who works the sea  
But there ain't no island left for islanders like me

## Allentown

Billy Joel

Well we're living here in Allentown  
And they're closing all the factories down  
Out in Bethlehem they're killing time  
Filling out forms  
Standing in line

Well our fathers fought the Second World War  
Spent their weekends on the Jersey Shore  
Met our mothers in the USO  
Asked them to dance  
Danced with them slow  
And we're living here in Allentown

But the restlessness was handed down  
And it's getting very hard to stay

Well we're waiting here in Allentown  
For the Pennsylvania we never found  
For the promises our teachers gave  
If we worked hard  
If we behaved

So the graduations hang on the wall  
But they never really helped us at all  
No they never taught us what was real  
Iron and coal  
And chromium steel  
And we're waiting here in Allentown

But they've taken all the coal from the ground  
And the union people crawled away

Every child had a pretty good shot  
To get at least as far as their old man got  
But something happened on the way to that place  
They threw an American flag in our face

Well I'm living here in Allentown  
And it's hard to keep a good man down  
But I won't be getting up today

And it's getting very hard to stay  
And we're living here in Allentown



## Two Poems about Immigration

### The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant Greek fame,  
with conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, tempest-toss’d, to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

Emma Lazarus, 1883

## The Unguarded Gates

Wide open and unguarded stand our gates,  
And through them presses a wild motley throng—  
Men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes,  
Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho,  
Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt, and Slav,  
Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn;  
These bringing with them unknown gods and rites—

Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.  
In street and alley what strange tongues are loud,  
Accents of menace alien to our air,  
Voices that once the Tower of Babel knew!

O Liberty, white Goddess! is it well  
To leave the gates unguarded? On thy breast  
Fold Sorrow's children, soothe the hurts of fate,  
Lift the down-trodden, but with hand of steel  
Stay those who thy sacred portals come  
To waste the gifts of freedom. Have a care  
Lest from thy brow the clustered stars be torn  
and trampled in the dust. For so of old  
The thronging Goth and Vandal trampled Rome,  
And where the temples of the Caesars stood  
The lean wolf unmolested made her lair.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich, 1892

## "Aria: A Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood"

Richard Rodriguez

(1) ...Memory teaches me what I know of these matters. The boy reminds the adult. I was a bilingual child, but of a certain kind: "socially disadvantaged," the son of working-class parents, both Mexican immigrants...

(2) In public, my father and mother spoke a hesitant, accented, and not always grammatical English. And then they would have to strain, their bodies tense, to catch the sense of what was rapidly said by *los gringos*. At home, they returned to Spanish. The language of their Mexican past sounded in counterpoint to the English spoken in public. The words would come quickly, with ease. Conveyed through those sounds was the pleasing, soothing, consoling reminder that one was at home.

(3) During those years when I was first learning to speak, my mother and father addressed me only in Spanish; in Spanish I learned to reply. By contrast, English (*inglés*) was the language I came to associate with gringos, rarely heard in the house. I learned my first words of English overhearing my parents speaking to strangers. At six years of age, I knew just enough words for my mother to trust me on errands to stores one block away—but no more.

(4) I was then a listening child, careful to hear the very different sounds of Spanish and English. Wide-eyed with hearing, I'd listen to sounds more than to words. First, there were English (*gringo*) sounds. So many words were still unknown to me that when the butcher or the lady at the drugstore said something, exotic, polysyllabic sounds would bloom in the midst of their sentences. Often the speech of people in public seemed to me very loud, booming with confidence. The man behind the counter would literally ask, "What can I do for you?" But by being so firm and clear, the sound of his voice said that he was a gringo; American speech—which I rarely am conscious of hearing today because I hear them so often, but could not stop hearing when I was a boy: Crowds at Safeway or at bus stops were noisy with the birdlike sounds of *los gringos*. I'd move away from them all—all the chirping chatter above me.

(5) My own sounds I was unable to hear, but I knew that I spoke English poorly. My words could not extend to form complete thoughts. And the word I did speak I didn't know well enough to make distinct sounds. (Listeners would usually lower their heads to hear better what I was trying to say. But it was one thing for *me* to speak English with difficulty; it was more troubling to hear my parents speaking in public: their high-whining vowels and guttural consonants; their sentences that got stuck with "eh" and "ah" sounds; the confused syntax; the hesitant rhythm of sounds so different from the way gringos spoke. I'd notice, moreover, that my parents' voices were softer than those of gringos we would meet.

(6) I am tempted to say now that none of this mattered. (In adulthood I am embarrassed by childhood fears.) And, in a way, it didn't matter very much that my parents

could not speak English with ease. Their linguistic difficulties had no serious consequences. My mother and father made themselves understood at the county hospital clinic and at government offices. And yet, in another way, it mattered very much. It was unsettling to hear my parents struggle with English. Hearing them, I'd grow nervous, and my clutching trust in their protection and power would be weakened...

(7) But then there was Spanish: *español*, the language rarely heard away from the house; *español*, the language which seemed to me therefore a private language, my family's language. To hear its sounds was to feel myself specially recognized as one of the family, apart from *los otros*. A simple remark, an inconsequential comment could convey that assurance. My parents would say something to me and I would feel embraced by the sounds of their words. Those sounds said: *I am speaking with ease in Spanish. I am addressing you in words I never use with los gringos. I recognize you as someone special, close, like no one outside. You belong with us. In the family. Ricardo.*

(8) At the age of six, well past the time when most middle-class children no longer notice the difference between sounds uttered at home and words spoken in public, I had a different experience. I lived in a world compounded of sounds. I was a child longer than most. I lived in a magical world, surrounded by sounds both pleasing and fearful. I shared with my family a language enchantingly private—different from that used in the city around us...

(9) If I rehearse here the changes in my private life after my Americanization, it is finally to emphasize a public gain. The loss implies the gain. The house I returned to each afternoon was quiet. Intimate sounds no longer greeted me at the door. Inside there were other noises. The telephone rang. Neighborhood kids ran past the door of the bedroom where I was reading my schoolbooks—covered with brown shopping-bag paper. Once I learned the public language, it would never again be easy for me to hear intimate family voices. More and more of my day was spent hearing words, not sounds. But that may only be a way of saying that on the day I raised my hand in class and spoke loudly to an entire roomful of faces, my childhood started to end...

## The Eagle

1. High up in the sky, the lone eagle grips an edge of the rocky cliff with his claws. The bright sun shines down from a clear blue sky. The eagle gazes down below, which is lightly ruffled by the wind. Suddenly, he swoops down.
2. The eagle stands by itself on the top of the cliff high up in the sky. The sun shines in the blue sky. He looks at the sea waves below and flies down.

3.

## The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

## Fish Cheeks

Amy Tan

I fell in love with a minister's son the winter I turned fourteen. He was not Chinese, but as white as Mary in the manger. For Christmas I prayed for this blond-haired boy, Robert, and a slim new American nose.

When I found out that my parents had invited the minister's family over for Christmas Eve dinner, I cried. What would Robert think of our shabby Chinese Christmas? What would he think of our noisy Chinese relatives who lacked proper American manners? What terrible disappointment would he feel upon seeing not a roasted turkey and sweet potatoes but Chinese food?

On Christmas Eve I saw that my mother had outdone herself in creating a strange menu. She was pulling black veins out of the backs of fleshy prawns. The kitchen was littered with appalling mounds of raw food: A slimy rock cod with bulging eyes that pleaded not to be thrown into a pan of hot oil. Tofu, which looked like stacked wedges of rubbery white sponges. A bowl soaking dried fungus back to life. A plate of squid, their backs crisscrossed with knife markings so they resembled bicycle tires.

And then they arrived—the minister's family and all my relatives in a clamor of doorbells and rumpled Christmas packages. Robert grunted hello, and I pretended he was not worthy of existence.

Dinner threw me deeper into despair. My relatives licked the ends of their chopsticks and reached across the table, dipping them into the dozen or so plates of foods. Robert and his family waited patiently for platters to be passed to them. My relatives murmured with pleasure when my mother brought out the whole steamed fish. Robert grimaced. Then my father poked his chopsticks just below the fish eye and plucked out then soft meat. "Amy, your favorite," he said, offering me the tender fish check. I wanted to disappear.

At the end of the meal my father leaned back and belched loudly, thanking my mother for her fine cooking. "It's a polite Chinese custom to show you are satisfied," explained my father to our astonished guests. Robert was looking down at his plate with a reddened face. The minister managed to muster up a quiet burp. I was stunned into silence for the rest of the night.

After everyone had gone, my mother said to me, "You want to be the same as American girls on the outside." She handed me an early gift. It was a miniskirt in beige tweed. "But inside you must always be Chinese. You must be proud you are different. Your only shame is to have shame."

And even though I didn't agree with her then, I knew that she understood how much I had suffered during the evening's dinner. It wasn't until many years later—long after I had gotten over my crush on Robert—that I was able to fully appreciate her lesson and the true purpose behind our particular menu. For Christmas Eve that year, she had chosen all my favorite foods.

## Roly-Poly Bug

### *Non Servium*<sup>1</sup>

Because I can't ever appear  
as I would like to appear,  
I once tried to make it so you couldn't see me at all.

I named myself after a pill  
but it didn't help. I liked  
the feeling of feeling small,

as long as it let me feel mobile; I wanted to roll  
up and down and around the tiny hall

of a groove in discarded cardboard. I used to appeal  
my peers with risky behavior. I might fall

to my death in a half-inch ditch  
full of oil or lawnmower grease. I stall

at the brush of a fingertip. I'm so afraid  
of a grand faux pas that I answer the most banal<sup>2</sup>  
questions by quoting the questioner, so as to let  
his words shield mine. I cover my anger  
imperfectly, so I can breathe

with my tea between my ten legs; I am my own  
backyard slat fence, my own slate garden wall.

I am chitlin<sup>3</sup> and ichor<sup>4</sup> inside, but I'll never let on  
how I look underneath. I could always make something  
else of myself. I could be having a ball.

by Stephanie Burt

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<sup>1</sup> Non Servium: Latin for "I will not serve."

<sup>2</sup> Banal: rhymes with "canal"

<sup>3</sup> Chitlins: small intestines of hogs, prepared as food

<sup>4</sup> Ichor: the fluid said to flow in the veins of the gods, in Greek mythology



*Commentary:* This poem displays a clever folding and folding. Alliterative “LL” sounds braid each stanza with a mix of lull and lullaby. “I could always make something else of myself,” it declares, bouncing between introversion and confession. Sly engineering makes the poem something more than a child’s riddle. Even the almost overlooked epigraph—*non serviam*, Latin for “I will not serve”—makes it something more than playful.

Terrence Hayes

from "A Raisin in the Sun"  
Act III, Sc. 1

Lorraine Hansbury

Context: *This is a conversation between Beneatha Younger, who is an African American college student and her suitor Asagai, a fellow student from Nigeria. At this point in the play, Beneatha's family has been struggling in their quest to purchase a home in a white neighborhood, where they are told that they are not welcome, and with financial losses that have dimmed their hopes to better their positions in life. The story is set in Chicago's South Side in the 1950s.*

ASAGAI: End? Who even spoke of an end? To life? To living?

BENEATHA: An end to misery! To stupidity! Don't you see there isn't any real progress. Asagai, there is only one large circle that we march in, around and around, each of us with our own little picture in front of us, our own little mirage that we think is our future.

ASAGAI: What you just said about the circle. It isn't a circle, it is simple a long line as in geometry, you know, one that reaches into infinity. And because we cannot see the end we also cannot see how it changes. And it is very odd because those who see the changes who dream, who will not give up are called idealists...and those who see only the circle we call them the "realists." !

(*shouting over Beneatha*) I LIVE THE ANSWER! (*Pause*) In my village at home it is the exceptional man who can even read a newspaper...or who ever sees a book at all. I will go home and much of what I will have to say will seem strange to the people of my village. But I will teach and work and things will happen, slowly and swiftly. At times it will seem that nothing changes at all...and then again the sudden dramatic events which make history leap into the future. And then quiet again. Retrogression even. Guns, murder, revolution. And I even will have moments when I wonder if the quiet was not better than all that death and hatred. But I will look about my village at the illiteracy and disease and ignorance and I will not wonder long. And perhaps...perhaps I will be a great man...I mean perhaps I will hold on to the substance of truth and find my way always with the right course...and perhaps for it I will be butchered in my bed some night by the servants of empire...

BENEATHA: The martyr!

ASAGAI (*He smiles*)...or perhaps I shall live to be a very old man, respected and esteemed in my new nation...And perhaps I shall hold office and this is what I'm

trying to tell you, Alaiyo: Perhaps the things I believe now for my country will be wrong and outmoded, and I will not understand and do terrible things to have things my way or merely to keep my power. Don't you see that there will be young men and women not British soldiers then but my own black countrymen to step out of the shadows some evening and slit my useless throat? Don't you see they have always been there...that they always will be. And that such a thing as my own death will be an advance? They who might kill me even...actually replenish all that I was.

## The Country Mouse and the City Mouse

Once a little mouse who lived in the country invited a little Mouse from the city to visit him. When the City Mouse sat down to dinner he was surprised to find that the Country Mouse had nothing to eat except barley and grain.

“Really,” he said, “you do not live well at all; you should see how I live! I have all sorts of fine things to eat every day. You must come to visit me and see how nice it is to live in the city.”

The little Country Mouse was glad to do this, and after a while he went to the city to visit his friend.

The very first place that the City Mouse took the Country Mouse to see was the kitchen cupboard of the house where he lived. There, on the lowest shelf, behind some stone jars, stood a big paper bag of brown sugar. The little City Mouse gnawed a hole in the bag and invited his friend to nibble for himself.

The two little mice nibbled and nibbled, and the Country Mouse thought he had never tasted anything so delicious in his life. He was just thinking how lucky the City Mouse was, when suddenly the door opened with a bang, and in walked the cook to get some flour.

“Run!” hissed the City Mouse. And they ran as fast as they could to the little hole where they had come in. The little Country Mouse was shaking all over when they got safely away, but the little City Mouse said, “That’s nothing; she will soon go away and then we can go back.”

After the cook had gone away and shut the door, they stole softly back, and this time the City Mouse had something new to show: he took the little Country Mouse into a corner on the top shelf, where a big jar of raisins stood open. After much tugging and pulling, they got a large raisin out of the jar on to the shelf and began to nibble at it. This was even better than the brown sugar. The little Country Mouse liked the taste so much that he could hardly nibble fast enough. But all at once, in the midst of their feasting, there came a scratching at the door and a sharp, loud, MEE-OW!

“What is that?” said the Country Mouse. The City Mouse just whispered, “Sh!” and ran as fast as he could to the hole. The Country Mouse ran after him, as fast as he could. As soon as they were out of danger, the City Mouse said, “That was the old Cat; she is the best mouser in town,— if she gets you, you are lost.”

“This is very terrible,” said the little Country Mouse; “let us not go back to the cupboard again.”

“No,” said the City Mouse, “I will take you to the cellar; there is something special there.”

So the City Mouse took his little friend down the cellar stairs and into a big cupboard where there were many shelves. On the shelves were jars of butter, and cheeses in bags and out of bags. Overhead hung bunches of sausages, and there were spicy apples in barrels standing about. It smelled so good that it went to the little Country Mouse’s head. He ran along the shelf and nibbled at a cheese here, and a bit of butter there, until he saw an especially rich, very delicious-smelling piece of cheese on an odd little stand in a corner. He was just on the point of putting his teeth into the cheese when the City Mouse saw him and gasped.

“Stop! Stop!” cried the City Mouse. “That is a trap!”

The little Country Mouse stopped and said, “What is a trap?”

“That thing is a trap,” said the little City Mouse. “The minute your touch the cheese with your teeth, something snaps down on your head, and you’re dead.”

The little Country Mouse looked at the trap, and he looked at the cheese, and he looked at the little City Mouse. “If you’ll excuse me,” he said, “I think I will go home. I’d rather have barley and grain to eat and eat it in peace and comfort, than have brown sugar and raisins and cheese,— and be frightened to death all the time!”

So the little Country Mouse went back to his home, and there he stayed all the rest of his life.

from *Fascism: A Warning* by Madeleine Albright (2018)

Within each of us, there is an inexhaustible yearning for liberty, or so we would like to believe in democratic society. However, that desire often seems in competition with the longing to be told what to do. We are of two minds. In classrooms, we reach constantly for the right balance (5) between instilling discipline in our students and allowing their curiosity and creativity to run free. In religious circles, rote memorization is the means of learning favored by some, but for others the search for wisdom, though beginning with scripture, opens itself to the full range of human experience and imaginings. When rabbis are accused of answering every (10) question with a question, they typically reply: “And why do you think that is?” In the Gospels, Jesus asks forty questions for every declarative statement he makes. In business, too, and in the armed forces, there are commandments that must be obeyed, mixed with exhortations to reject the state conventions of dogma in search of fresh insights.

(15) We all value the right to push against boundaries and go boldly where none has preceded us; however, that is not all we value. Especially when we are afraid, angry or confused, we may be tempted to give away bits of our freedom—or, less painfully, somebody else’s freedom—in the quest for direction and order. Bill Clinton observed that when people are (20) uncertain, they’d rather have leaders who are strong and wrong than right and weak. Throughout history, demagogues have often outperformed democrats in generating popular fervor, and it is almost always because they are perceived to be more decisive and sure in their judgments.

(25) In times of relative tranquility, we feel we can afford to be patient. We understand that policy questions are complicated and merit careful thought. We want our leaders to consult experts, gather as much information as possible, test assumptions, and give us a chance to voice our opinions on the available options. We see long-term planning as (30) necessary and deliberation as a virtue, but when we decide that action is urgently needed, our tolerance for delay disappears.

In those moments, many of us no longer want to be asked, “What do you think?” We want to be told where to march. That is when Fascism gets its start: other options don’t seem enough. There is a reason that vigilante movies are popular. We all know the scenarios: a law-abiding (35) citizen is hurt—a loved one slain, a daughter kidnapped, a rape un-

prosecuted —and the police have no answer. Suddenly we feel ourselves identifying with an agent of vengeance such as those portrayed on-screen by Liam Neeson, Bruce Lee, Jodie Foster, or Batman, and all that pent-up fury goes in search of its target, due process be damned. (40)When the villains are annihilated, we cheer. It is our nature—or at least part of it.

In the lives of nations, the origins of anger do not have to be deeply personal to awaken the desire for instant solutions. Mussolini and Hitler drew on the anguish of their citizens following the carnage of World War I. (45)Kim Il-sung played guardian and guide in a country scarred by four decades of strife. Milosevic and Putin tapped into deep wells of nationalist outrage in the aftermath of the Cold War. Chávez and Erdogan rose to power amid political and economic crises that were knocking members of the middle class off their financial ladders and into poverty. (50)Orbán and his fellow travelers on the European right promise to shield voters from the psychological demands that stem from religious, cultural, and racial diversity. Going much further back, the ancient Israelites—surrounded by enemies—pleaded with Samuel to give them a king, so that “we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out (55)before us and to fight our battles.” The prophet cautions the Israelites to think twice, warning that the monarch they are demanding will certainly take their sons to be warriors, their daughters to be cooks, and their vineyards, fields, cattle, sheep, and servants to satisfy his own needs. Still the people persist, and their prayer is answered. A century later, their kingdom is split and careens toward destruction.

Students Learn From People They Love  
David Brooks, NYT  
January 17, 2019

A few years ago, when I was teaching at Yale, I made an announcement to my class. I said that I was going to have to cancel office hours that day because I was dealing with some personal issues and a friend was coming up to help me sort through them.

(5) I was no more specific than that, but that evening 10 or 15 students e-mailed me to say they were thinking of me or praying for me. For the rest of the term the tenor of that seminar was different. We were closer. That one tiny whiff of vulnerability meant that I wasn't aloof Professor Brooks, I was just another schmo trying to get through life.

(10) That unplanned moment illustrated for me the connection between emotional relationships and learning. We used to have this top-down notion that reason was on a teeter-totter with emotion. If you wanted to be rational and think well, you had to suppress those primitive grem-lins, the emotions. Teaching consisted of dispassionately downloading (15) knowledge into students' brains.

Then work by cognitive scientists like Antonio Damasio showed us that emotion is not the opposite of reason; it's essential to reason. Emotions assign value to things. If you don't know what you want, you can't make good decisions.

(20) Furthermore, emotions tell you what to pay attention to, care about, and remember. It's hard to work through difficulty if your emotions aren't engaged. Information is plentiful, but motivation is scarce.

That early neuroscience breakthrough reminded us that a key job of (26) a school is to give students new things to love—an exciting field of study, new friends. It reminded us that what teachers really teach is themselves—their contagious passion for their subjects and students. It reminded us that children learn from people they love, and that love in this (30) context means willing the good of another, and offering active care for the whole person.



Over the last several years our understanding of the relationship between emotion and learning has taken off. My impression is that neuroscientists today spend less time trying to locate exactly where in the brain (35) things happen and more time trying to understand the different neural networks and what activates them.

Everything is integrated. Mary Helen Immordino-Yang of the University of Southern California shows that even “sophisticated” emotions like moral admiration are experienced partly by the same “primitive” parts of (40) the brain that monitor internal organs and the viscera. Our emotions literally affect us in the gut.

Patricia Kuhl of the University of Washington has shown that the social brain pervades every learning process. She gave infants Chinese lessons. Some infants took face-to-face lessons with a tutor. Their social (45) brain was activated though direct eye contact and such, and they learned Chinese sounds at an amazing clip. Others watched the same lessons through a video screen. They paid rapt attention, but learned nothing.

Extreme negative emotions, like fear, can have a devastating effect (50) on a student’s ability to learn. Fear amps up threat perception and aggression. It can also subsequently make it hard for children to understand causal relationships, or to change their mind as context changes.

Even when conditions are ideal, think of all the emotions that are involved in mastering a hard subject like algebra: curiosity, excitement, (55) frustration, confusion, dread, delight, worry, and, hopefully, perseverance and joy. You’ve got to have an educated emotional vocabulary to maneuver through all those stages.

And students have got to have a good relationship with teachers. Suzanne Dikker of New York University has shown that when classes are (60) going well, the student brain activity synchronizes with the teacher’s brain activity. In good times and bad, good teachers and good students co-regulate each other.

The bottom line is this, a defining question for any school or company is: What is the quality of the emotional relationships here?

(65) And yet think about your own school or organization. Do you have a metric for measuring relationship quality? Do you have teams reviewing relationship quality? Do you know where relationships are good and where they are bad? How many recent ed reform trends have been about relationship-building?

(70) We focus on all the wrong things because we have an outmoded conception of how thinking really works.

The good news is the social and emotional learning movement has been steadily gaining strength. This week the Aspen Institute (where I lead a program) published a national commission report called “From a Nation (75) at Risk to a Nation at Hope.” Social and emotional learning is not an add-on curriculum; one educator said at the report’s launch, “It’s the way we do school.” Some schools, for example, do no academic instruction the first week. To start, everybody just gets to know one another. Other schools replaced the cops at the door with security officers who could (80) also serve as student coaches.

When you start thinking this way, it opens up the wide possibilities for change. How would you design a school if you wanted to put relationship quality at the core? Come to think of it, how would you design a Congress?

## WHATIF

Last night, while I lay thinking here,  
Some Whatifs crawled inside my ear  
And pranced and partied all night long  
And sang their same old Whatif song:  
Whatif I'm dumb in school?  
Whatif they've closed the swimming pool?  
Whatif I get beat up?  
Whatif there's poison in my cup?  
Whatif I start to cry?  
Whatif I get sick and die?  
Whatif I flunk that test?  
Whatif green hair grows on my chest?  
Whatif nobody likes me?  
Whatif a bolt to lightning strikes me?  
Whatif I don't grow taller?  
Whatif my head starts getting smaller?  
Whatif the fish won't bite?  
Whatif the wind tears up my kite?  
Whatif they start a war?  
Whatif my parents get divorced?  
Whatif the bus is late?  
Whatif my teeth don't grow in straight?  
Whatif I tear my pants?  
Whatif I never learn to dance?  
Everything seems swell, and then,  
The nighttime Whatifs strike again!

Shel Silverstein

## Phenomenal Woman

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.  
I'm not cute or build to suit a fashion model's size  
But when I start to tell then,  
They think I'm telling lies.  
I say,  
It's in the reach of my arms,  
The span of my hips,  
The stride of my step,  
The curl or my lips.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

I walk into a room  
Just as cool as you please,  
And to a man  
The fellows stand or  
Fall down on their knees.  
Then they swap around me,  
A hive of honey bees.  
I say,  
It's the fire in my eyes  
And the flash of my teeth,  
The swing in my waist,  
And the joy in my feet.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered  
What they see in me.  
They try so much  
But they can't touch  
My inner mystery.  
When I try to show them,

They say they still can't see.  
I say,  
It's in the arch of y back,  
The sun of my smile,  
The ride of my breasts,  
The grace in my style.  
I'm a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Now you understand  
Just why my head's not bowed.  
I don't shout or jump about  
Or have to talk real loud.  
When you see me passing  
It ought to make you proud.  
I say  
It's in the clic of my heels,  
The bend of my hair,  
the palm of my hand,  
The need for my care.  
'Cause I'm a woman  
Phenomenal woman,  
That's me.

Maya Angelou

After Twenty Years  
by O. Henry

The policeman on the beat moved up the venue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely 10 o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depeopled the streets.

(5) Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye down the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch (10) counter; but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

When about midway of a certain block, the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke (15) up quickly.

"It's all right, officer," he said reassuringly, "I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands— 'Big Joe' Brady's (20) restaurant."

"Until five years ago," said the policeman. "It was torn down then."

The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with a white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarf pin was a large diamond, oddly set.

(25) "Twenty years ago tonight," said the man. "I dined here at 'Big Joe Brady's with Jimmy Wells, my best friend in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just like two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn't have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place (30) on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years

each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be.”

(35) “It sounds pretty interesting,” said the policeman. “Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven’t you heard from your friend since you left?”

“Well, yes, for a time we corresponded,” said the other. “But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, (40) and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he’s alive, for he always was the truest, stanchest old chap in the world. He’ll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door tonight, and it’s worth it if my old partner turns up.”

The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with (45) small diamonds.

“Three minutes to ten,” he announced. “It was exactly ten o’clock when we parted here at the restaurant door.”

“Did pretty well out West, didn’t you?” asked the policeman.

“You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of plodder, (50) though, good fellow as he was. I’ve had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor-edge on him.”

The policeman twirled his club and took a step or two.

“I’ll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call (55) time on him sharp?”

“I should say not!” said the other. “I’ll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth he’ll be here by that time. So long, officer.”

“Good-night, sir,” said the policeman, passing on along his beat, trying doors as he went.

(60) There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the

(65) friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

“Is that you, Bob?” he asked, doubtfully

(70) “Is that you, Jimmy Wells”? cried the man in the door.

“Bless my heart!” exclaimed the new arrival, grasping both the other’s hands with his own. “It’s Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I’d find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well! —twenty years is a long time. The old place is gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner (75) there. How has the West treated you, old man?”

“Fine; it has given me everything I asked if for. You’ve changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches.”

“Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty.”

“Doing well in New York, Jimmy?”

(80) “Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we’ll go around to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times.”

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by his success, was beginning to outline the history of his (85) career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

At the corner stood a drug store, brilliant will electric lights. When they came into this glare each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other’s face.

The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

(90) “You’re not Jimmy Wells,” he snapped. “Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man’s nose from a Roman to a pug.”

“It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one,” said the tall man. “You’ve been under arrest for ten minutes, ‘Silky’ Bob. Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you.



(95) Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go on to the station here's a note I was asked to hand you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells."

The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he (100) had finished. The note was rather short.

"Bob: I was at the appointed place on time. When you stuck the match to light your cigar I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plain clothes man to do the job."

JIMMY

from 1984:

“It’s a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn’t only the synonyms; there are also antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other words? A word contains its opposite in itself. Take ‘good’ for instance. If you have a word like ‘good’ what need is there for a word like ‘bad’? ‘Ungood’ will do just as well— better, because it’s an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of ‘good,’ what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like ‘excellent’ and ‘splendid’ and all the rest of them? ‘Plusgood’ covers the meaning or ‘doubleplusgood’ if you want something stronger still...In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words—in reality, only one word. Don’t you see the beauty of that, Winston?”