

## ● The Good Daughter ●

*Caroline Hwang*

Having earned a BA in English from the University of Pennsylvania and an MFA from New York University, Caroline Hwang (b. 1969) has worked as an editor at *American Health*, *Mademoiselle*, *Glamour*, and *Redbook*. Hwang's novel *In Full Bloom* was published in 2003. Constantly juggling her varied projects as both a writer and an editor, Hwang observes, "I've often heard it said that the difference between being an editor and writer is that the editor has power and the writer gets the glory. I don't know that the difference is so clear-cut, but I can say that being on both sides has helped my writing and editing." The following essay was first published in *Newsweek* in 1998.

- 1     The moment I walked into the dry-cleaning store, I knew the woman behind the counter was from Korea, like my parents. To show her that we shared a heritage, and possibly get a fellow countryman's discount, I tilted my head forward, in shy imitation of a traditional bow.
- 2     "Name?" she asked, not noticing my attempted obeisance.
- 3     "Hwang," I answered.
- 4     "Hwang? Are you Chinese?"
- 5     Her question caught me off-guard. I was used to hearing such queries from non-Asians who think Asians all look alike, but never from one of my own people. Of course, the only Koreans I knew were my parents and their friends, people who've never asked me where I came from, since they knew better than I.
- 6     I ransacked my mind for the Korean words that would tell her who I was. It's always struck me as funny (in a mirthless sort of way) that I can more readily say "I am Korean" in Spanish, German and even Latin than I can in the language of my ancestry. In the end, I told her in English.
- 7     The dry-cleaning woman squinted as though trying to see past the glare of my strangeness, repeating my surname under her breath. "Oh, *Fxuang*," she said, doubling over with laughter. "You don't know how to speak your name."
- 8     I flinched. Perhaps I was particularly sensitive at the time, having just dropped out of graduate school. I had torn up my map for the future, the one that said not only where I was going but who I was. My sense of identity was already disintegrating.
- 9     When I got home, I called my parents to ask why they had never bothered to correct me. "Big deal," my mother said, sounding more flippant than I knew she intended. (Like many people who learn English in a classroom, she uses idioms that don't always fit the occasion.) "So what if you can't pronounce your name? You are American," she said.



Though I didn't challenge her explanation, it left me unsatisfied. The fact is, my cultural identity is hardly that clear-cut.

My parents immigrated to this country 30 years ago, two years before I was born. They told me often, while I was growing up, that, if I wanted to, I could be president someday, that here my grasp would be as long as my reach.

To ensure that I reaped all the advantages of this country, my parents saw to it that I became fully assimilated. So, like any American of my generation, I whiled away my youth strolling malls and talking on the phone, rhapsodizing over Andrew McCarthy's blue eyes or analyzing the meaning of a certain upperclassman's offer of a ride to the Homecoming football game.

To my parents, I am all American, and the sacrifices they made in leaving Korea—including my mispronounced name—pale in comparison to the opportunities those sacrifices gave me. They do not see that I straddle two cultures, nor that I feel displaced in the only country I know. I identify with Americans, but Americans do not identify with me. I've never known what it's like to belong to a community—neither one at large, nor of an extended family. I know more about Europe than the continent my ancestors unmistakably come from. I sometimes wonder, as I did that day in the dry cleaner's, if I would be a happier person had my parents stayed in Korea.

I first began to consider this thought around the time I decided to go to graduate school. It has been a compromise: my parents wanted me to go to law school; I wanted to skip the starched-collar track and be a writer—the hungrier the better. But after 20-some years of following their wishes and meeting all of their expectations, I couldn't bring myself to disobey or disappoint. A writing career is riskier than law, I remember thinking. If I'm a failure and my life is a washout, then what does that make my parents' lives?

I know that many of my friends had to choose between pleasing their parents and being true to themselves. But for the children of immigrants, the choice seems more complicated, a happy outcome impossible. By making the biggest move of their lives for me, my parents indentured me to the largest debt imaginable—I owe them the fulfillment of their hopes for me.

It tore me up inside to suppress my dream, but I went to school for a PhD in English literature, thinking I had found the perfect compromise. I would be able to write at least about books while pursuing a graduate degree. Predictably, it didn't work out. How could I labor for five years in a program I had no passion for? When I finally left school, my parents were disappointed, but since it wasn't what they wanted me to do, they weren't devastated. I, on the other hand, felt I was staring at the bottom of the abyss. I had seen the flaw in my life of halfwayness, in my planned life of compromises.



17 I hadn't thought about my love life, but I had a vague plan to make concessions there, too. Though they raised me as an American, my parents expect me to marry someone Korean and give them grandchildren who look like them. This didn't seem like such a huge request when I was 14, but now I don't know what I'm going to do. I've never been in love with someone I dated, or dated someone I loved. (Since I can't bring myself even to entertain the thought of marrying the non-Korean men I'm attracted to, I've been dating only those I know I can stay clearheaded about.) And as I near that age when the question of marriage stalks every relationship, I can't help but wonder if my parents' expectations are responsible for the lack of passion in my life.

18 My parents didn't want their daughter to be Korean, but they don't want her fully American, either. Children of immigrants are living paradoxes. We are the first generation and the last. We are in this country for its opportunities, yet filial duty binds us. When my parents boarded the plane, they knew they were embarking on a rough trip. I don't think they imagined the rocks in the path of their daughter who can't even pronounce her own name.

### THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. What might be Hwang's strategy for opening her essay with a brief narration of her encounter with the Korean dry-cleaning woman? What multiple issues does she introduce with this personal anecdote?
2. Explain how the dry cleaner's comment "You don't know how to speak your name" functions not simply as an observation but as a symbol throughout the essay.
3. What details does Hwang use to support the claim that "I straddle two cultures" and "I feel displaced in the only country I know"? (9).
4. Using your own words along with phrases from the essay, identify Hwang's *aim* or purpose in this essay as well as her key *claim* or thesis.

### WRITING FROM THE TEXT

1. Including details from this essay and your own experiences and observations, write an evaluative response essay agreeing or disagreeing with Hwang's claim that "children of immigrants are living paradoxes" (10). Use examples from the essay to define "living paradoxes" and to support your key claim.
2. Incorporate specific details from Hwang's essay to write an analysis of the causes and effects of her parents' expectations.



## CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXTS

1. Focusing on "The Good Daughter" and "Breaking Tradition" (p. 20), write an essay analyzing the pressures and demands on children of immigrants.
2. Create a thesis about effective or ineffective parenting and write an essay incorporating support from any three of the following: "The Good Daughter," "Breaking Tradition" (p. 20), "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" (p. 70), "Living in Two Worlds" (p. 99), and "Peaches" (p. 49). Include direct quotations and analyze them fully.

## A Cabdriver's Daughter

### Waheeda Samady

Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1981, Waheeda Samady and her family escaped the country during the Afghan-Soviet war. They lived in a refugee community in Islamabad, Pakistan, for several years before coming to San Diego, California, where Samady has continued to live. In 2003, Samady completed her undergraduate degrees in molecular and cell biology and in international studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She obtained her MD from the University of California, San Diego in 2010. Currently the chief resident in pediatrics at UCSD's Rady Children's Hospital, Samady enjoys teaching medical students and residents as well as conducting research in preparation for her academic fellowship in hospital medicine. She is an active executive committee member for the San Diego branch of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). A version of the essay below appeared in the anthology *Snapshots: This Afghan American Life*. The essay reprinted here appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on October 3, 2010.

- 1 In the morning, before my father and I go our separate ways to work, we chat amiably. "Good luck on your day." "Hope business is good." And our one response to everything: "Inshallah." God willing.
- 2 I get into my mini-SUV and head off to the hospital, groaning about the lack of sleep, the lack of time, but also knowing that I am driving off to what has always been my dream.
- 3 My father gets into his blue taxi, picks up his radio and tells the dispatcher he's ready. Then he waits. He waits for someone wanting to go somewhere. He waits to go home to my mother, the woman he calls "the boss." Maybe today will be a good day. He will call her up and tell her he is taking her out tonight. He can do that now that we're all grown up; now that he doesn't have to save every dime for the "what-ifs" and the "just-in-cases."
- 4 There is very little complaining in his car. His day starts off with a silent prayer, then a pledge: *Hudaya ba omaide hudit*. God, as you wish. Then he



hums or sings. Some songs are about love and some about loss. They are all about life. He sings. He smiles the whole time.

5 My father is the type of person who is content to listen, but I love it when he speaks. There is wisdom there, although he does not intend there to be.

6 "What's new?" he'll ask over a Saturday morning breakfast.

7 "Not much," I reply. "My life revolves around these books, Dad; there is little to say unless you want to hear about the urinary tract."

8 "You know when Gandhi's minister of foreign affairs died, his only true possessions were books. It is the sign of a life worth living," he replies and begins to butter his toast.

9 Sometimes, the years of education and learning shine through the injuries and lost dreams. I get a glimpse of the man who once existed, and the one who never will. Who would he have been, I wonder, if the bombs hadn't come down in 1978? What if I could take away the time he spent in a coma, the years of treatment and surgery, the broken bones and disabilities. What if there were no refugee ghettos, no poverty, no fear, no depression written in his life history? Who could he have been? The thought saddens me, but intrigues me as well. Is it possible that he is who he is because the life he has lived has been filled with such tragedy? Perhaps these stories were the making of my hero.

10 Sometimes he'll tell me about his college days, about an Afghanistan I have never known and very few people would believe ever existed.

11 "In the College of Engineering, there was this lecture hall, with seats for 1,000 students," he says as eyes begin to get bigger. "At the end of the lecture, the seats would move. The whole auditorium would shift as you spun along the diameter. The engineering of the building itself was very interesting." He continues to describe the construction details, then sighs. "I wonder if it's still around?"

12 There is a pause. For 25 years I have tried to fill that silence, but I have never quite figured out what to say. I guess silence goes best there. He is the next one to speak. "You see, even your old-age father was once part of something important."

13 When he says things like that, I want to scream. I don't want to believe that the years can beat away at you like that. I don't want to know that if enough time passes, you begin to question what was real or who you are. I am unconcerned with what the world thinks of him, but it is devastating to know that he at times thinks less of himself.

14 We are the same, but we are separated. People don't see him in me. I wish they would. I walk in with a doctor's white coat or a suit or my Berkeley sweatshirt and jeans. High heels or sneakers, it doesn't matter, people always seem impressed with me. "Pediatrician, eh?" they say. "Well, good for you."



- 15 I wonder what people see when they look at him. They don't see what I see in his smile. Perhaps they see a brown man with a thick accent; perhaps they think, another immigrant cabdriver. Or perhaps it is much worse: Maybe he is a profile-matched terrorist, aligned with some axis of evil.
- 16 Sometimes the worst things are not what people say to your face or what they say at all; it is the things that are assumed. I am in line at the grocery store, studying at a cafe, on a plane flying somewhere.
- 17 "Her English is excellent; she must have grown up here," I hear a lady whisper. "But why on earth does she wear that thing on her head?"
- 18 "Oh, that's not her fault," someone replies. "Her father probably forces her to wear that."
- 19 I am still searching for a quick, biting response to comments like that. The trouble is that things I'd like to say aren't quick. So I say nothing. I want to take their hands and pull them home with me. Come, meet my father. Don't look at the wrinkles; don't look at the scars; don't mind the hearing aid, or the thick accent. Don't look at the world's effect on him; look at his effect on the world. Come into my childhood and hear the lullabies, the warm hand on your shoulder on the worst of days, the silly jokes on mundane afternoons. Come meet the woman he has loved and respected his whole life; witness the confidence he has nurtured in his three daughters. Stay the night; hear his footsteps come in at midnight after a long day's work. That sound in the middle of the night is his head bowing in prayer although he is exhausted. Granted, the wealth is gone and the legacy unknown, but look at what the bombs did not destroy. Now tell me, am I really oppressed? The question makes me want to laugh. Now tell me, is he really the oppressor? The question makes me want to cry.
- 20 At times, I want to throw it all away: the education, the opportunities, the potential. I want to slip into the passenger seat of his cab and say: This is who I am. If he is going to be labeled, then give me those labels, too. If you are going to look down on him, then you might as well peer down on me as well. Close this gap. Erase this line. There is no differentiation here. Of all the things I am, of all the things I could ever be, I will never be prouder than to say that I am of him.
- 21 I am this cabdriver's daughter.

### THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. What is the author's intention of starting her essay with the scene of her and her father's morning brief conversation followed by their separate departures by car? What is created for the reader in Samady's description of the scene?



2. When the author acknowledges that her life of studying does not give her much opportunity for interesting stories to relate to her father, how does he convert her admission into an affirming reply?
3. What does the author reveal of her father's background? What part of his history saddens her? How might his life have been positively shaped by the tragedies of his past?
4. The author reveals that she does not care how the world regards her father, but she is distressed when she perceives that at times he "thinks less of himself." What feelings does Samady reveal? When she acknowledges that "we are the same, but we are separated" (12), what does she mean?
5. How does the ethnicity of the author and her father contribute to the author's sorrow in realizing how they are perceived? What is the "gap" between them that others see but which the author wants to close? List the many ways the author must live "between worlds."
6. Although the author has many academic and professional triumphs in her life, of what is she most proud?

### WRITING FROM THE TEXT

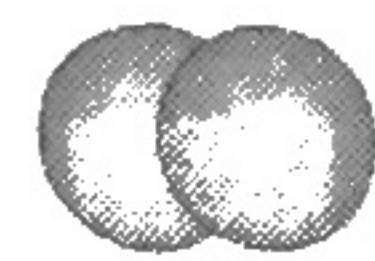
1. Write an analysis of the author's father that supports a thesis based on character inference and includes details from the essay. Your discussion of the supporting details will reflect both your understanding of the character and your judgment of him. (See Character Analysis, pp. 445–468.)
2. Write an essay that shows your perception of what makes a good family. Reflect on the relationship you see between Waheeda Samady and her father as you consider points to include in your analysis. Your thesis will be supported with details from the essay and inferences you can make based on what the author provides in her work.
3. Write a comparison-contrast essay to show how the author's life reflects joy, pride, and sorrows that conflict with her contentment. Your thesis should reflect your position on these conflicting emotions as you illustrate with material from the essay.

### CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXTS

1. Read "An Identity Reduced to a Burka" (p. 113) to learn how the points made by Semeen Issa and Laila Al-Marayati are also reflected in Samady's essay. Write an analysis examining what these authors believe Muslim women most value, and support your thesis with examples from both texts.
2. Read "Terra Firma—A Journey from Migrant Farm Labor to Neurosurgery" (p. 102) and write an essay showing how Alfred Quinones-Hinojosa



and Waheeda Samady exemplify the values and high achievements of many immigrants and children of immigrants in the United States. Use the examples of people you personally know, in addition to the experiences of these authors, to develop your essay.



## The Color of Love



*Danzy Senna*

The daughter of an African Mexican father, author Carl Senna, and Irish American writer Fanny Howe, Danzy Senna (b. 1970) earned a BA from Stanford University and an MFA from the University of California, Irvine. She won several awards for her best-selling novel *Caucasia* (1988), and in 2002 was honored with the Whiting Award, presented each year to ten outstanding writers who demonstrate ability and promise. She published the psychological thriller *Symptomatic* (2004) and a memoir *Where Did You Sleep Last Night?: A Personal History* (2009). The following essay originally appeared in *O: The Oprah Magazine* in 2000.

1 We had this much in common: We were both women, and we were both writers. But we were as different as two people can be and still exist in the same family. She was ancient—as white and dusty as chalk—and spent her days seated in a velvet armchair, passing judgments on the world below. She still believed in noble bloodlines; my blood had been mixed at conception. I believed there was no such thing as nobility or class or lineage, only to keep some people up in the big house and others out but from that country's Prote she was



of my ancestors, the pale and dead men who had conquered Africa and built Boston long before my time. When I visited, their eyes followed me from room to room with what I imagined to be an expression of scorn. Among the portraits sat my grandmother, a bird who had flown in to remind us all that there had indeed been a time when lineage and caste meant something. To me, young and dark and full of energy, she was the missing link between the living and the dead.

4 But her blood flowed through me, whether I liked it or not. I grew up to be a writer, just like her. And as I struggled to tell my own stories—about race and class and post-civil rights America—I wondered who my grandmother had been before, in Dublin, when she was friend and confidante to literary giants such as William Butler Yeats and Samuel Beckett. Once, while snooping in her bedroom, I discovered her novels, the ones that had been published in Ireland when she was my age. I stared at her photograph on the jacket and wondered about the young woman who wore a mischievous smile. Had she ever worried about becoming so powerful that no man would want her? Did she now feel that she had sacrificed her career and wild Irishwoman dreams to become a wife and mother and proper Bostonian?

5 I longed to know her—to love her. But the differences between us were real and alive, and they threatened to squelch our fragile connection. She was an alcoholic. In the evening, after a few glasses of gin, she could turn vicious. Though she held antiquated racist views, my grandmother would still have preferred to see my mother married and was saddened when my parents split in the seventies. She believed that a woman without a man was pitiable. The first question she always asked me when she saw me: “Do you have a man?” The second question: “What is he?” That was her way of finding out his race and background. She looked visibly pleased if he was a Wasp, neutral if he was Jewish, and disappointed if he was black.

6 My mother ignored her hurtful comments but felt them just the same. She spent her visits to my grandmother’s house slamming dishes in the kitchen, hissing her anger just out of hearing range, then raving, on the drive home, about what awful thing her mother had said this time. Like my mother, I knew the rule: I was not to disrespect elders. She was old and gray and would soon be gone. But I had inherited my grandmother’s short temper. When I got angry, even as a child, I felt as if blood were rushing around in my head, red waves battering the shore. Words spilled from my mouth—cutting, vicious words that I regretted.

7 One autumn day in Cambridge, at my grandmother’s place, I lost my temper. I was home from college for the holidays, staying in her guest room. I woke from a nap to the sound of her enraged voice shouting at what I could only imagine was the television.



8 "Idiot! You damn fool!" she bellowed. "You stupid, stupid woman!" It has  
to be *Jeopardy!*, I thought. She must be yelling at those tiny contestants on  
the screen. She knows the answers to those questions better than they do. But  
when the shouting went on for a beat too long, I went to the top of the stairs  
and looked down into the living room. She was speaking to a real person:  
her cleaning lady, a Greek woman named Mary, who was on her hands and  
knees, nervously gathering the shards of a broken vase. My grandmother  
stood over her, hands on hips, cursing.

9 "You fool," my grandmother repeated. "How in bloody hell could you  
have done something so stupid?"

10 "Grandma." I didn't shout her name but said it loudly enough that she,  
though hard of hearing, glanced up.

11 "Oh, darling!" she piped, suddenly cheerful. "Would you like a cup of  
tea? You must be dreadfully tired."

12 Mary was on her feet again. She smiled nervously at me, then rushed  
into the kitchen with the pieces of the broken vase.

13 I told myself to be a good girl, to be polite. But something snapped. I  
marched down the stairs, and even she noticed something on my face that  
made her sit in her velvet chair.

14 "Don't you ever talk to her that way," I shouted. "Where do you think  
you are? Slavery was abolished long ago."

15 I stood over her, tall and long-limbed, daring her to speak. My grand-  
mother shook her head. "It's about race, isn't it?"

16 "Race?" I said, baffled. "Mary's white. This is about respect—treating  
other human beings with respect."

17 She wasn't hearing me. All she saw was color. "The tragedy about you,"  
she said soberly, "is that you are mixed." I felt those waves in my head: "Your  
tragedy is that you're old and ignorant," I spat. "You don't know the first  
thing about me."

18 She cried into her hands. She seemed diminished, a little old woman. She  
looked up only to say, "You are a cruel girl."

19 I left her apartment trembling yet feeling exhilarated by what I had  
done. But my elation soon turned to shame. I had taken on an old lady. And  
for what? Her intolerance was, at her age, deeply entrenched. My rebuttals  
couldn't change her.

20 Yet that fight marked the beginning of our relationship. I've since decided  
that when you cease to express anger toward those who have hurt you, you  
are essentially giving up on them. They are dead to you. But when you ex-  
press anger, it is a sign that they still matter, that they are worth the fight.

21 After that argument, my grandmother and I began a conversation. She  
seemed to see me clearly for the first time, or perhaps she, a "cruel girl"



herself, had simply met her match. And I no longer felt she was a relic. She was a living, breathing human being who deserved to be spoken to as an equal.

22 I began visiting her more. I would drive to Cambridge and sit with her eating mixed nuts and sipping ginger ale, regaling her with tales of my latest love drama or writing project. In her presence, I was proudly black and young and political, and she was who she was: subtly racist, terribly elitist, and awfully funny. She still said things that angered me: She bemoaned my mother's marriage to my father, she said that I should marry not for love but for money, and she told me that I needn't identify myself as black, since I didn't look it. I snapped back at her. But she, with senility creeping in, didn't seem to hear me; each time I came, she said the same things.

23 Last summer I went into hiding to work on my second novel at a writer's retreat in New Hampshire. The place was a kind of paradise for creative souls, a hideaway where every writer had his or her own cabin in the woods with no phone or television—no distractions to speak of. But I was miserable. I could not write. Even the flies outside my window seemed to whisper, "Go out and play. Forget the novel. Leave it till tomorrow."

24 I woke one morning at four, the light outside my window still blue. I felt panic and sadness, though I didn't know why. I got up, dressed, and went outside for a walk through the forest. But the panic persisted, and I began to cry. I assumed that my writer's block had seized me suddenly.

25 That night I ate dinner in the main house and received a call on the pay phone from my mother. She told me my grandmother had fallen and broken her leg. But that wasn't all; she had subsequently suffered a heart attack. Her other organs were failing. I had to hurry if I wanted to say good-bye.

26 I drove to Boston that night, not believing that we could be losing her. She would make it. I was certain. Sure, she was ninety-two, frail, unable to walk steadily. But she was lucid, and her tongue was as sharp as ever. Somehow I had imagined her as indestructible, made immortal by power and cruelty and wit.

27 The woman I found in the hospital bed was barely recognizable. My grandmother had always been fussy about her appearance. She never showed her face without makeup. Even in the day, when it was just she and the cleaning lady, she dressed as if she were ready for a cocktail party. At night she usually had cocktail parties; doddering old men hovered around her, sipping Scotch and bantering about theater and politics.

28 My grandmother's face had swollen to twice its normal size, and tubes came out of her nose. She had struggled so hard to pull them out that the nurses had tied her wrists to the bed rails. Her hair was gray and thin. Her body was withered and bruised, barely covered by the green hospital gown.



29 Her hazel eyes were all that was still recognizable, but the expression in them was different from any I had ever seen on her—terror. She was terrified to die. She tried to rise when she saw me, and her eyes pleaded with me to help her, to save her, to get her out of this mess. I stood over her, and I felt only one thing: overwhelming love. Not a trace of anger. That dark gray rage I'd felt toward her was gone as I stroked her forehead and told her she would be okay, even knowing she would not.

30 For two days, my mother, her sisters, and I stood beside my grandmother, singing Irish ballads and reading passages to her from the works of her favorite novelist, James Joyce. For the first time, she could not talk. At one point, she gestured wildly for pen and paper. I brought her the pen and the paper and held them up for her, but she was too weak for even that. What came out was only a faint, incomprehensible line.

31 In death we are each reduced to our essence: the spirit we are when we are born. The trappings we hold on to our whole lives—our race, our money, our sex, our age, our politics—become irrelevant. My grandmother became a child in that hospital bed, a spirit about to embark on an unknown journey, terrified and alone, no matter how many of us were crowded around her. In the final hours, even her skin seemed to lose its wrinkles and take on a waxy glow. Then, finally, the machines around us went silent as she left us behind to squabble in the purgatory of the flesh.

### THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. Compare and contrast Senna and her grandmother. Which differences most threaten their “fragile connection”?
2. Describe what provokes “the fight” between Senna and her grandmother and how both verbally attack each other.
3. Why is it important to Senna to “express anger”? In what ways does their fight ironically help their relationship?
4. How do both Senna’s writer’s block and her grandmother’s deathbed scene bring a sense of resolution to this essay? What ultimately matters most to Senna and what are the “trappings” that seem irrelevant?

### WRITING FROM THE TEXT

1. Focusing on your view of Senna’s relationship with her grandmother, write an essay comparing and contrasting these two female writers. Include specific details to support your analysis and assessment of them. (See Comparison-Contrast, pp. 407–413.)



2. Based on details from this essay, write a character analysis of Senna's grandmother, and include specific characteristics and illustrations for support.
3. Write an essay about a conflict you have had with a relative or with someone who discriminated against you. Dramatize what led up to the conflict, how both of you interacted, and how the tension was resolved or intensified.
4. Considering Senna's realistic details of her grandmother dying, write an essay describing your own encounter with someone who was ill or dying. Focus on those details that support your thesis about how that person changed or how your view of him or her was altered by this experience.

### CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXTS

1. After reading "Race Is A Four-Letter Word" by Teja Arboleda (p. 108), write an essay showing how Senna's experience with her grandmother illustrates Arboleda's sense of the "barriers, pedestals, doors, and traps that form the boundaries that confine human beings to dominant and minority groups" (111). Include details from both essays to support your thesis.
2. In "Living in Two Worlds" (p. 99), Marcus Mabry discusses the guilt, helplessness, and embarrassment he often feels at leaving his family behind. Write an essay comparing and contrasting Senna's and Mabry's attitudes and experiences as they move between their new environments and the worlds of their families.
3. Read Heilbroner's "Don't Let Stereotypes Warp Your Judgments" (p. 424). Then write an essay showing specific examples of what Senna's grandmother could learn from Heilbroner's essay and how her judgment has been "warped" by stereotypes and prejudgments.

## **Breaking Tradition**

### *Janice Mirikitani*

A third-generation Japanese American, Janice Mirikitani (b. 1942) was interned at a relocation camp during World War II. Since then, she has emerged as both poet and proponent for social change. Serving as president of the Glide Foundation, she directs thirty-five programs that assist the homeless and poor in San Francisco. Mirikitani is also a founding member of Third World Communications, editing the works of other Japanese American writers. Her collections of poetry include *Awake in the River* (1978), *We the*



*Dangerous* (1995), and *Love Works* (2003). Her poems typically illustrate her opposition to oppression and her support for those seeking their own American identity rather than following traditional customs, as in this poem from *Shedding Silence* (1987).

For my daughter

My daughter denies she is like me,  
Her secretive eyes avoid mine.  
She reveals the hatreds of womanhood  
already veiled behind music and smoke and telephones.

I want to tell her about the empty room of myself.

This room we lock ourselves in  
where whispers live like fungus,  
giggles about small breasts and cellulite,  
where we confine ourselves to jealousies,  
bedridden by menstruation.

This waiting room where we feel our hands  
are useless, dead speechless clamps  
that need hospitals and forceps and kitchens  
and plugs and ironing boards to make them useful.

I deny I am like my mother. I remember why:

She kept her room neat with silence,  
defiance smothered in requirements to be *otonashii*,  
passion and loudness wrapped in an *obi*,  
her steps confined to ceremony,  
the weight of her sacrifice she carried like  
a foetus. Guilt passed on in our bones.

I want to break tradition—unlock this room  
where women dress in the dark.

Discover the lies my mother told me.  
The lies that we are small and powerless,  
that our possibilities must be compressed  
to the size of pearls, displayed only as  
passive chokers, charms around our neck.

Break Tradition.

I want to tell my daughter of this room of myself  
filled with tears of violins,  
the light in my hands,  
poems about madness,  
the music of yellow guitars—  
sounds shaken from barbed wire and



goodbyes and miracles of survival.  
 This room of open window where daring ones escape.  
 40 My daughter denies she is like me  
 her secretive eyes are walls of smoke  
 and music and telephones,  
 her pouting ruby lips, her skirts  
 swaying to salsa, teena marie and the stones,  
 45 her thighs displayed in carnivals of color.  
 I do not know the contents of her room.  
 She mirrors my aging.  
 She is breaking tradition.

### THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. The narrator repeats “room” numerous times throughout this poem in relation to herself, her mother, and her daughter. What are some reasons that she uses “room” and what might this word symbolize?
2. Early in the poem, how does the narrator describe “the empty room of myself”?
3. Analyze the images that the narrator uses to describe her mother’s “room.” What is the impact of these details on the narrator?
4. Later, after the narrator recognizes her own attempts to break tradition and to deny she is like her mother, she describes the room that she would now like to reveal to her daughter. Analyze specific images from this “room of myself.” How does this new “room of myself” contrast with that earlier “empty room of myself”?
5. How does the narrator characterize her daughter? Examine specific images.
6. How do the last two lines of the poem signal a shift in the narrator’s tone from the opening two lines? What might account for this change in attitude?
7. Analyze the author’s extensive use of repetition, not only of “room” but also of the title and of both daughters’ denial that they are like their mothers. Are these repetitions purposeful and effective? Support your views with details from the poem.
8. Speculate why the narrator includes the dedication “for my daughter” at the beginning of the poem? Did that phrase affect your reading of this work?

### WRITING FROM THE TEXT

1. Considering your responses to exercises 1 and 7 above, analyze Mirikitani’s use of repetition throughout the poem. Write an essay showing how



- the repetition of certain key words and phrases not only helps unify the poem but also develops the poem's themes.
2. In an analytic essay, evaluate whether the issues addressed in this poem are ones of universal concern or if any seem more limited to one particular generation, gender, or culture. Use specific quotations to support your views.
  3. Write an essay comparing and contrasting your own "room"—especially your views and values—with the "room" that best characterizes your mother or father. Describe the details in both "rooms" and explain any attempts made to "break tradition."

### CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXTS

1. Focusing on the narrator's mother in "Breaking Tradition" as well as the parents in "The Good Daughter" (p. 8), write an essay analyzing the parents' strategies, efforts, and results as they attempt to pass on certain traditions and expectations to their children.
2. Unlike the narrator's mother in "Breaking Tradition," some parents and grandparents may or may not understand the need for children to rein "Breaking Tradition" as well as the parents in "The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination" (p. 154) or the grandmother in "The Color of Love" (p. 15), discuss why these individuals seem able to support and understand the need for change.

## Who Shot Johnny?

*Debra J. Dickerson*

After serving for twelve years as an intelligence officer in the United States Air Force, Debra J. Dickerson (b. 1959) earned a BA in politics and government, an MA in international relations, and a JD from Harvard Law School. While at Harvard, she began writing a column for the Harvard Law Record and decided to pursue a full-time writing career instead of practicing law. Dickerson's work has appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping*, *VIBE*, *Mother Jones*, *Slate*, the *Village Voice*, *Salon*, and many other publications. Dickerson has also published two books, *An American Story*, a memoir (2001) and *The End of Blackness: Returning the Souls of Black Folk to Their Rightful Owners* (2004). Dickerson edited *The Best African American Essays: 2009*. Initially published in the *New Republic* in 1996, the following essay was selected by Ian Frazier for *The Best American Essays 1997* and is credited by Dickerson for "jump-starting" her writing career.

1 Given my level of political awareness, it was inevitable that I would come to view the everyday events of my life through the prism of politics



2. Focusing on Johnny and including details from Dickerson's narration, write an essay about the emotional and physical difficulties—for both victim and family members—of surviving a crime.
3. Write an evaluative response of Dickerson's essay as you take a stance on her thesis, tone, and main points. (See Evaluative Response, pp. 391–397.)

## CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXTS

1. After reading Brent Staples's essay "Black Men and Public Space" (p. 164), write an essay comparing and contrasting his thesis, focus, and style with Dickerson's. Although Staples's and Dickerson's personas and attitudes may seem quite different, be careful to show how their concerns, fears, and choices overlap, too.
2. Referring to Dickerson's essay and to works by Staples (p. 164) and Thayer (p. 169), write an argument convincing readers who may be tempted to use aggression or rage that their impulsive behavior could have deadly consequences for themselves and others. Include details from all three essays to illustrate your points.
3. Using details from Dickerson's essay and from the film *Crash*, write an analysis of the causes and the consequences (for both perpetrator and victim) of street crimes and attacks.

## ●● On Teenagers and Tattoos ●●

*Andres Martin*

Professor of child psychiatry, psychiatry director of medical studies at the Yale Child Study Center, and medical director of children's psychiatric inpatient service at the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, Andres Martin (b. 1966) is also editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. He is widely published in professional journals of pediatric and adolescent psychology. The essay below was published in the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* (1997) and reprinted in *Reclaiming Children and Youth* (2000). You will notice that the in-text citations, in paragraphs 2 and 12, and the end "References" follow APA documentation form.

The skeleton dimensions I shall now proceed to set down are copied verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed: as in my wild wanderings at that period, there was no other secure way of preserving such valuable statistics.

—MELVILLE, *Moby Dick*



1 Tattoos and piercing have become a part of our everyday landscape. They are ubiquitous, having entered the circles of glamour and the mainstream of fashion, and they have even become an increasingly common feature of our urban youth. Legislation in most states restricts professional tattooing to adults older than 18 years of age, so "high end" tattooing is rare in children and adolescents, but such tattoos are occasionally seen in older teenagers. Piercings, by comparison, as well as self-made or "jailhouse" type tattoos, are not at all rare among adolescents or even among school-age children. Like hairdo, makeup, or baggy jeans, tattoos and piercings can be subject to fad influence or peer pressure in an effort toward group affiliation. As with any other fashion statement, they can be construed as bodily aids in the inner struggle toward identity consolidation, serving as adjuncts to the defining and sculpting of the self by means of external manipulations. But unlike most other body decorations, tattoos and piercings are set apart by their irreversible and permanent nature, a quality at the core of their magnetic appeal to adolescents.

2 Adolescents and their parents are often at odds over the acquisition of bodily decorations. For the adolescent, piercing or tattoos may be seen as personal and beautifying statements, while parents may construe them as oppositional and enraging affronts to their authority. Distinguishing bodily adornment from self-mutilation may indeed prove challenging, particularly when a family is in disagreement over a teenager's motivations and a clinician is summoned as the final arbiter. At such times it may be most important to realize jointly that the skin can all too readily become but another battleground for the tensions of the age, arguments having less to do with tattoos and piercings than with core issues such as separation from the family matrix. Exploring the motivations and significance [underlying] tattoos (Grumet, 1983) and piercings can go a long way toward resolving such differences and can become a novel and additional way of getting to know teenagers. An interested and nonjudgmental appreciation of teenagers's surface presentations may become a way of making contact not only in their terms but on their turfs: quite literally on the territory of their skins.

3 The following three sections exemplify some of the complex psychological underpinnings of youth tattooing.

4 Tattoos and piercing can offer a concrete and readily available solution for many of the identity crises and conflicts normative to adolescent development. In using such decorations, and by marking out their bodily territories, adolescents can support their efforts at autonomy, privacy, and insulation. Seeking individuation, tattooed adolescents can become unambiguously demarcated from others and singled out as unique. The intense and often disturbing reactions that are mobilized in viewers can



help to effectively keep them at bay, becoming tantamount to the proverbial "Keep Out" sign hanging from a teenager's door.

5 Alternatively, feeling prey to a rapidly evolving body over which they have no say, self-made and openly visible decorations may restore adolescents' sense of normalcy and control, a way of turning a passive experience into an active identity. By indelibly marking their bodies, adolescents can strive to reclaim their bearings within an environment experienced as alien, estranged, or suffocating or to lay claim over their evolving and increasingly unrecognizable bodies. In either case, the net outcome can be a resolution to unwelcome impositions: external, familial, or societal in one case; internal and hormonal in the other. In the words of a 16-year-old girl with several facial piercings, and who could have been referring to her body just as well as to the position within her family: "If I don't fit in, it is because I say so."

6 Imagery of a religious, deathly, or skeletal nature, the likenesses of fierce animals or imagined creatures, and the simple inscription of names are some of the time-tested favorite contents for tattoos. In all instances, marks become not only memorials or recipients for dearly held persons or concepts: they strive for incorporation, with images and abstract symbols gaining substance on becoming a permanent part of the individual's skin. Thickly embedded in personally meaningful representations and object relations, tattoos can become not only the ongoing memento of a relationship, but at times even the only evidence that there ever was such a bond. They can quite literally become the relationship itself. The turbulence and impulsivity of early attachments and infatuations may become grounded, effectively bridging oblivion through the visible reality to tattoos.

7 Case Vignette: "A," a 13-year-old boy, proudly showed me his tattooed deltoid. The coarsely depicted roll of the dice marked the day and month of his birth. Rather disappointed, he then uncovered an immaculate back, going on to draw for me the great "piece" he envisioned for it. A menacing figure held a hand of cards: two aces, two eights, and a card with two sets of dates. "A's" father had belonged to Dead Man's Hand, a motorcycle gang named after the set of cards (aces and eights) that the legendary Wild Bill Hickock had held in the 1890s when shot dead over a poker table in Deadwood, South Dakota. "A" had only the vaguest memory of and sketchiest information about his father, but he knew he had died in a motorcycle accident: The fifth card marked the dates of his birth and death.

8 The case vignette also serves to illustrate how tattoos are often the culmination of a long process of imagination, fantasy, and planning that can start at an early age. Limited markings, or relatively reversible ones such as piercings, can at a later time scaffold toward the more radical commitment of a permanent tattoo.



9 The popularity of the anchor as a tattoo motif may historically have had to do less with guild identification among sailors than with an intense longing for rootedness and stability. In a similar vein, the recent increase in the popularity and acceptance of tattoos may be understood as an antidote or counterpoint to our urban and nomadic lifestyles. Within an increasingly mobile society, in which relationships are so often transient—as attested by the frequencies of divorce, abandonment, foster placement, and repeated moves, for example—tattoos can be a readily available source of grounding. Tattoos, unlike many relationships, can promise permanence and stability. A sense of constancy can be derived from unchanging marks that can be carried along no matter what the physical, temporal, or geographical vicissitudes at hand. Tattoos stay, while all else may change.

10 Case Vignette: A proud father at 17, "B" had had the smiling face of his 4-month-old baby girl tattooed on his chest. As we talked at a tattoo convention, he proudly introduced her to me, explaining how he would "always know how beautiful she is today" when years from then he saw her semblance etched on himself.

11 The quest for permanence may at other times prove misleading and offer premature closure to unresolved conflicts. At a time of normative uncertainties, adolescents may maladaptively and all too readily commit to a tattoo and its indefinite presence. A wish to hold on to a current certainty may lead the adolescent to lay down in ink what is valued and cherished one day but may not necessarily be in the future. The frequency of selfmade tattoos among hospitalized, incarcerated, or gang-affiliated youths suggests such motivations: A sense of stability may be a particularly dire need under temporary, turbulent, or volatile conditions. In addition, through their designs teenagers may assert a sense of bonding and allegiance to a group larger than themselves. Tattoos may attest to powerful experiences, such as adolescence itself, lived and even survived together. As with Moby Dick's protagonist, Ishmael, they may bear witness to the "valuable statistics" of one's "wild wandering(s)": those of adolescent exhilaration and excitement on the one hand; of growing pains, shared misfortune, or even incarceration on the other.

12 Adolescents' bodily decorations, at times radical and dramatic in their presentation, can be seen in terms of figuration rather than disfigurement, of the natural body being through them transformed into a personalized body (Brain, 1979). They can often be understood as self-constructive and adorning efforts, rather than prematurely subsumed as mutilatory and destructive acts. If we bear all of this in mind, we may not only arrive at a position to pass more reasoned clinical judgment, but become sensitized through our patients' skins to another level of their internal reality.



### References

- Brain, R. (1979). *The decorated body*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Grumet, G. W. (1983). Psychodynamic implications of tattoos. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 53, 482–92.

### THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. After acknowledging the prevalence and relative permanence of tattoos, Martin may surprise his readers with his argument for adults to accept teenagers' "bodily adornment." How does the wording of his thesis reflect his position? How does Martin's professional background possibly contribute to his position being accepted by his readers?
2. What three specific areas does Martin analyze to support his understanding and acceptance of tattoos? What appears to be the focus or assertion for each of Martin's three points?
3. How does Martin explain the symbols of the playing cards, anchor, and face tattooed on the subjects in his essay? What motif have you seen in tattoos that might also support Martin's analyses?
4. Martin discusses both the role of "limited markings, or relatively reversible ones" (30) as well as the tattoos that "promise permanence and stability" (31). How do you interpret these apparently contrasting types of tattoos?
5. Martin's original audience is readers of the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. What does the author want his fellow psychiatrists to keep in mind as they work with patients who bear tattoos and body piercings?
6. How does the quotation from Melville's *Moby Dick* at the start of Martin's essay foreshadow the content of the essay? What is Martin's rhetorical strategy in returning to Melville's words at the end of his essay?

### WRITING FROM THE TEXT

1. Using specific details from Martin's essay for support, write an essay that explains your decision to pierce or tattoo your body.
2. In light of Martin's analysis that tattoos "are often the culmination of a long process of imagination, fantasy, and planning" (30), write an essay analyzing one of your tattoos, or a tattoo you might design for yourself, or the specific tattoo of a friend. The case story of "A" might serve as inspiration for your essay.
3. If you regret a tattoo that you have, write an analysis of that tattoo that illustrates how your thinking about it has changed. Use explanations and analysis from Martin's essay to present your evolution in understanding of your tattoo.



## CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXTS

1. After reading "Breaking Tradition" (p. 20), write an essay using details from this poem and from Martin's essay to explain how young adults often feel compelled to depart from family traditions to assert their own individuality.
2. Read David Pogue's "Twitter? It's What You Make of It" (p. 235) and write an analytic essay that shows the possibilities of self-expression through abbreviated images (tattoos) or language (Tweets).

## ● The Only Child ●

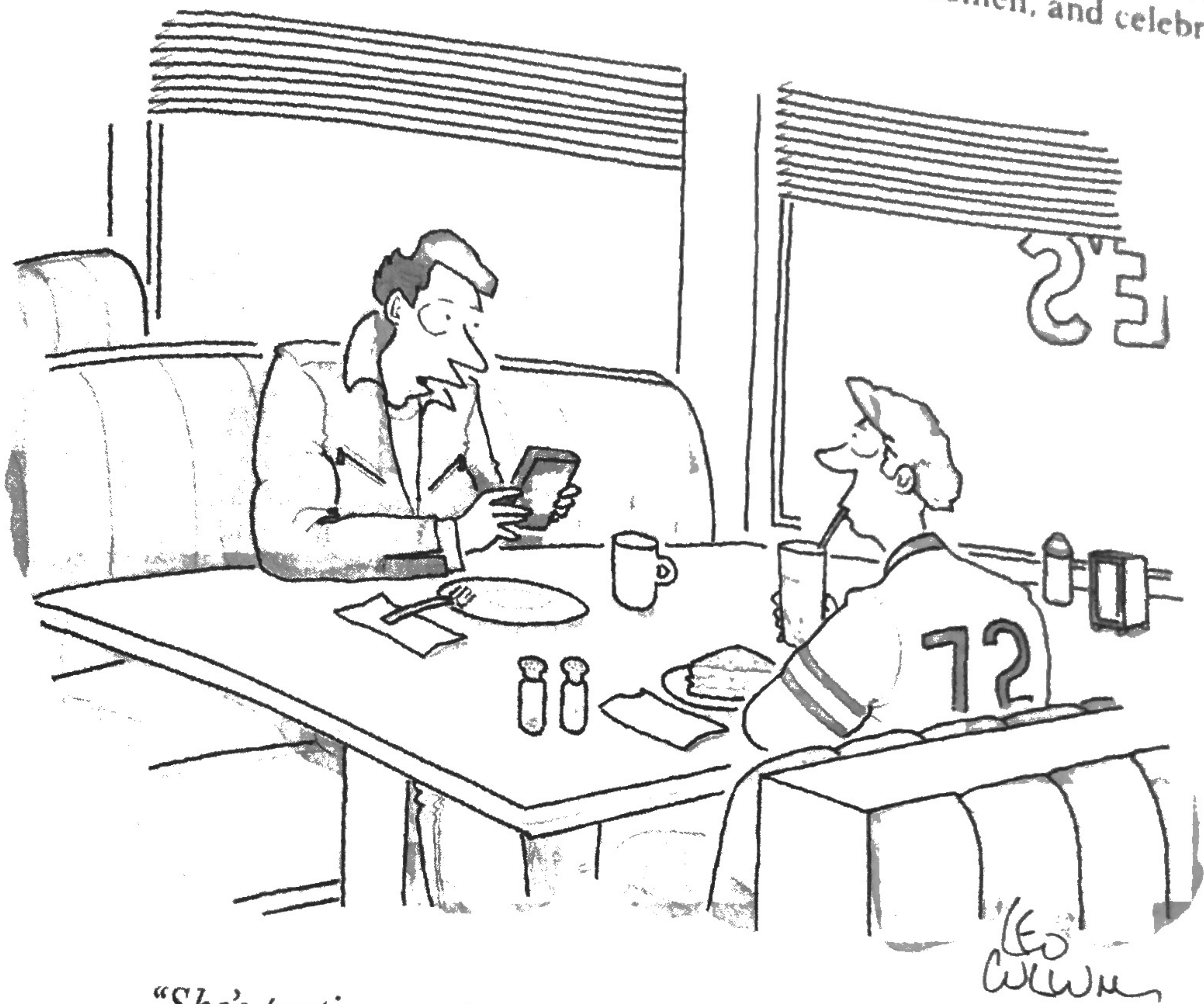
### John Leonard

After studying at Harvard and Berkeley, where he received his BA in 1962, John Leonard (1939–2008) worked as a book reviewer, a producer of dramas and literature programs, a publicity writer, a staff writer for the *New York Times*, and a cultural critic for *Variety*, the *Nation*, and *CBS This Morning*. He is the author of *Smoke and Mirrors: Violence, Television, and Other American Cultures* (1997), *When the Kissing Had to Stop* (1999), a collection of previously published pieces, and *Lonesome Rangers: Homeless Minds, Promised Lands, Fugitive Cultures* (2002). Leonard intends his writing to ask moral questions: How do you want your children to grow up? What do you think is decent and fair? Who are your friends, and why? The work included here, from *Private Lives in the Imperial City* (1976), probes family tensions and concerns.

- 1 He is big. He always has been, over six feet, with that slump of the shoulders and tuck in the neck big men in the country often affect, as if to apologize for being above the democratic norm in size. (In high school and at college he played varsity basketball. In high school he was senior class president.) And he looks healthy enough, blue-eyed behind his beard, like a trapper or a mountain man, acquainted with silences. He also grins a lot.
- 2 Odd, then, to have noticed earlier—at the house, when he took off his shabby coat to play Ping-Pong—that the white arms were unmuscled. The coat may have been a comment. This, after all, is southern California, where every man is an artist, an advertiser of himself; where every surface is painted and every object potted; where even the statues seem to wear socks. The entire population ambles, in polyesters, toward a Taco Bell. To wear a brown shabby cloth coat in southern California is to admit something.
- 3 So he hasn't been getting much exercise. Nor would the children have elected him president of any class. At the house they avoided him. Or, since he was too big to be avoided entirely, they treated his presence as a kind of



You most likely have found that gender issues are everywhere, showing up in such diverse places as pop music lyrics, films, magazine articles, and the Internet. In this chapter our writers question stereotypes, explore alternatives, deplore injustice and violence against both men and women, and celebrate improved alliances between the genders.



*"She's texting me, but I think she's also subtexting me."*

## ● Who's Cheap? ●

Adair Lara

Former columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Adair Lara (b. 1952) is also a teacher of writing and the author of *Welcome to Earth, Mom: Tales of a Single Mother* (1992), *Slowing Down in a Speeded-Up World* (1994), *The Best of Adair Lara* (1999), and *Hold Me Close, Let Me Go: A Mother, A Daughter, an Adolescence Survived* (2001), and *The Granny Diaries* (2008). Lara's work has appeared in *Cosmopolitan*, *Reader's Digest*, *Parenting*, *Glamour*, *Redbook*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *American Woman*, *Departures*, *Westways*, *American Way*, *Via*, *Fitness*, *Good Housekeeping*, and many other magazines and newspapers. The essay included here originally appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.



1 It was our second date, and we had driven one hundred miles up the coast in my car to go abalone-diving. When I stopped to fill the tank at the only gas station in sight, Craig scowled and said, "You shouldn't get gas here. It's a rip-off."

2 But he didn't offer to help pay. And that night, after dinner in a restaurant, he leaned over and whispered intimately, "You get the next one." Though he was sensitive and smart, and looked unnervingly good, Craig was as cheap as a two-dollar watch.

3 This is not an ethical dilemma, you're all shouting. *Lose the guy*, and fast. Lose the guy? Is this fair? My friend Jill is always heading for the john when the check comes, but I don't hear anybody telling me to lose her. And she's far from the only cheap woman I know. A lot of us make decent money these days, yet I haven't seen women knocking over tables in fights for the lunch tab. In fact, many women with 20/20 vision seem to have trouble distinguishing the check from the salt, pepper and other tabletop items. But if a guy forgets to chip in for gas or gloats too long over the deal he got on his Nikes, he's had it.

5 Why is this double standard so enduring? One reason is that, while neither sex has a monopoly on imperfection, there *are* such things as flaws that are much more distasteful in one sex than in the other. Women seem especially unpleasant when they get drunk, swear or even insist on pursuing an argument they'll never win. And men seem beneath contempt when they're cheap.

6 These judgments are a holdover from the days when women stayed home and men earned the money. Though that old order has passed, we still associate men with paying for things. And besides, there's just something appealing about generosity. Buying something for someone is, in a sense, taking care of her. The gesture says, "I like you, I want to give you something." If it comes from a man to whom we are about to entrust our hearts, this is a comforting message. We miss it when it's not forthcoming.

7 Then why *not* dump on cheap men?

8 Some men are just skinflints and that's it. My friend Skye broke up with her boyfriend because when they went to the movies he doled out M&Ms to her one at a time. Craig, my date back at the gas station, liked to talk about how he'd bought his car—which in California, where I live, is like buying shoes—as a special present to himself.

9 This kind of cheapness is ingrained; you'll never change it. That guy who parks two miles away to avoid the parking lot fee was once a little boy who saved his birthday money without being told to. Now he's a man who studies the menu and sputters, "Ten dollars for *pasta*?" His stinginess will always



grate on you, since he is likely to dole out his feelings as parsimoniously as his dollars.

10 On the other hand, I know a wonderful man, crippled with debts from a former marriage, who had to break up with a woman because she never paid her share, and he was simply running out of money. Though she earned a lot more than he did, she couldn't expand her definition of masculinity to include "sometimes needs to go Dutch treat."

11 To men, such women seem grasping. One friend of mine, who spends a lot of money on concerts and theater and sailing but not on restaurants he considers overpriced, has evolved a strategy for women who are annoyed at the bohemian places he favors. If his date complains, he offers to donate to the charity of her choice the cost of an evening at her favorite spot. "Some women have bad values," he says, "And if the idea of spending money on a good cause, but not on her, makes her livid, I know she's one of them."

12 I had a bracing encounter with my own values when I told my friend Danny the humorous (I thought) story of a recent date who asked if I wanted a drink after a concert, then led me to the nearest water fountain.

13 Danny gave one of his wry looks. "Let's get this straight," he said, laughing. "As a woman, you are so genetically precious that you deserve attention just because you grace the planet. So, of course, he should buy you drinks. He should also drive the car, open the door, ask you to dance, coax you to bed. And then when you feel properly pampered, you can let out that little whine about how he doesn't treat you as an equal."

14 On second thought, I guess I'd rather buy my own drink.

15 So here's the deal. Before dumping a guy for ordering the sundowner dinner or the house white, better first make sure that you aren't burdening the relationship with outdated ideas of how the sexes should behave. Speaking for myself, I know that if a man looks up from the check and says, "Your share is eleven dollars," part of me remembers that, according to my mother, my share was to look charming in my flowered blouse.

16 Wanting the man to pay dies hard. What many of us do now is offer to split the check, then let our purses continue to dangle from the chair as we give him time to realize that the only proper response is to whip out his own wallet.

17 Is this a game worth playing? It's up to you, but consider that offering to help pay implies that the check is his responsibility. And this attitude can work both ways. My sister gets angry when her husband offers to help clean the house. "Like it's *my* house!" she snorts.

18 Like it's *his* check.



## THINKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. Authors may use humor to engage an audience—even when their intention is to argue a serious point. Is Lara's main purpose in this essay mostly to entertain or to persuade her audience?
2. Does Lara have a claim? If so, what is it? Does she have support?
3. What does Lara mean when she writes that some flaws seem "much more distasteful in one sex than in the other" (46)? Are women more unpleasant than men when they "get drunk, swear or even insist on pursuing an argument they'll never win" (46) or are these the author's sexist generalizations? (If they are generalizations, what is her goal in using them?)
4. In what way is the point of Lara's essay embedded in Danny's response to Lara's anecdote about the after-concert drink? Why does Lara manipulate her essay so that its central wisdom appears in Danny's words? What is the author's strategy?
5. What conventional and sexist ideas are challenged in this essay?

## WRITING FROM THE TEXT

1. Lara cites a number of specific ways that people save money—avoiding commercial parking lots, eating the "sundowner" or "early bird" dinner, and drinking the house wine. Make a list of all of the ways that you save money. How many of your habits would be regarded by a date or friends as "cheap"? Develop your list into supporting examples for a thesis of your own.
2. Describe the habits of your dates and friends when it comes to ignoring a bill or saving money. The focus of your essay can be to laud or deplore your friends' habits.
3. Using Lara's essay for support, write an essay arguing that the double standard Lara describes hurts both men and women.

## CONNECTING WITH OTHER TEXTS

1. After reading "In Groups We Shrink" (p. 151), write an essay analyzing how pressure from others and within social groups can condition our behavior on a date. Incorporate the ideas of both Tavis and Lara as you focus on group conventions and individual expectations.
2. Using Lara's essay and Jeff Z. Klein's "Watching My Back" (p. 57), write an essay that illustrates how couples might redefine romantic relationships free from stereotypical role playing.