

VOLUME 23

SPRING 2023

# ENGLISH

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# BREAK

*INCLUDING;*

**POEMS  
SHORT STORIES  
ARTICLES**

**"WAR IN THOMAS  
HARDY'S POETRY  
LAND;  
THE MAN HE KILLED"**

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO "ATOMIC HABITS"**

*YOU WILL READ;*

**"ABJECTION  
IN  
ARONOFSKY'S  
THE WHALE"**

**"WAITING  
ROOM AT THE  
EDGE OF  
ETERNITY"**

**Concessionaire**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abjection in Aronofsky's The Whale</b>	04
<hr/> <p>By Zahra Jazayeri, article.</p>	
<b>War in Thomas Hardy's Poetry Land; The Man He Killed</b>	07
<hr/> <p>By Atousa Mirzapour, article.</p>	
<b>The Jury of Minnie Foster's Peers</b>	09
<hr/> <p>By Neda Bahmani, article.</p>	
<b>My City</b>	10
<hr/> <p>By Saba Khatibi, poem.</p>	
<b>An Introduction to "A Christmas Carol"</b>	11
<hr/> <p>By Mohaddesse Veysi, article.</p>	
<b>Seeing Through Closed Eyes</b>	12
<hr/> <p>By Negar Sohani, short story.</p>	
<b>Waiting Room at the Edge of Eternity</b>	14
<hr/> <p>By Negar Gelyerdi, short story.</p>	
<b>Growing Up</b>	17
<hr/> <p>By Zeinab Moradzade, impression.</p>	
<b>Happy Little Butterfly</b>	19
<hr/> <p>By Sara Momeni, poem.</p>	
<b>Here Comes the Ruin</b>	20
<hr/> <p>By Sama Ashoori, short story.</p>	
<b>How Tiny Habit Changes Help Us Enjoy a Rebirth</b>	23
<hr/> <p>By Arefe Amini, article.</p>	

SPRING 2023

# ENGLISH BREAK

Die Namen der Früh-Prediger. 367

Esse behaltet, und keine Candidaten zur Subalternation zu der Zeit so wenig in der Stadt als auf dem Lande vorhanden waren; so beschloß E. Hochw. Rath der Rektoren Scholze ordinieren zu lassen, damit er im Falle der Noth, und wenn es ohne Versammlung der Schulen geschehen könnte, dem Wundere abschließen, und auch die Früh-Predigten halten könnte. Es wurde ihm auch über seine Rektorsats-Hebungen, ein gewisses Salair als Prætor aus der Kirchen, dem Hospital, und von dem Persinischen Hofe and anderer Hebungen ausgemacht. Und so wurde von neuem als der erste Früh-Prediger wieder berufen.

1740. den 7. Jul. Georg Friedrich Heiserfieg, Bildhauer, Meißner. Ihm wurden auch zugleich die 5 Compagnien hiesiger Quamtion weislich denen die dazu gehören, zu seiner Prediger-Ergalsalt übergeben. Es sind auch diese Verordnungen mit den andern Verordnungen eines hiesigen Früh-Predigers wol kompatibel, weil die mehesten Amteverrichtungen bei der Quamtion in solche Stunden fallen, welche er von der Schule frei hat. Dieser neue Früh-Prediger wurde 1744 von dem Grafen in Sorau von hier ab, zum Postorator nach Gross-Wiechendorf nahe bei Ederau abgerufen, und verwoilet man mehr solches Amt in Rietenburg an der Quisse in der Nieder-Lausitz. Ihm folgte in dem Rektorat und Früh-Prediger Amte

1744. Johann Abraham Mallitt, gebürtig aus der an dem Sächsischen angrenzenden Stadt Zefetow in der Mittel-Mark. Die Vocation erzielte er in der Woche zwischen Cantate und Rogate, konnte aber seinem Amte hieselbst wenig Wochen versehen, weil er von einem vomitu erkrankt wurde, welches ehemals auf der Universitäts in Halle gehabt, dessen er auch den 2. Nov. desselben Jahres die Schwindstuch nach sich zog, woran er starb. Nach ihm wurde berufen

1745. Gottfried Leppin, gebohren in Wustferhausen an der Dosse in der Prignitz. Da er hier seinem Amte 12 Jahr in aller Treue vorgestanden, so wurde er von Sr. Hochfürstl. Durchl. von Mecklenburg nach Ratsecht anzuverlegenden Wapfen-Hausen berufen. Seine Stelle behaltete nachher

1746. Peter Heinrich Franke, welcher in dem kurz vorher gedachten Dorfe Lindenberg das Lebens Licht erblicket. Er gieng um Johannis 1760

صاحب امتیاز: انجمن علمی-دانشجویی زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی دانشگاه الزہرا (س)

مدیر مسئول: نگارین ہوشمندنیا

سر دبیر: رہا فضل اللہ

ہیات تحریریہ: سما عشوری، عارفہ امینے، ندا بھمنے، زہرا جزایری، نگار سوهانے، صبا خطیبے، نگار گلیردی، زینب مرادزادہ، سارا مومنے، آتوسا میرزاپور، محدثہ ویسے .

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ناشر: دانشگاه الزہرا (س)

نشانی: تهران، میدان ونک، خیابان دہ ونک، دانشگاه الزہرا (س)، واحد نشریات.



# ABJECTION IN ARONOFSKY'S THE WHALE

## BY ZAHRA JAZAYERI

The Whale, directed by Darren Aronofsky and adapted for screen from the play of the same name by Samuel D. Hunter, has astonished both critics and audiences. The movie was nominated for quite a few awards across categories in 2023 and won some of them including the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role (Brendan Fraser as Charlie).

The Whale tells the emotional story of a cast-off English teacher, Charlie, who in his dying days attempts to reconnect with his estranged teenage daughter. The story is a very sincere portrayal of a dying man's efforts to redeem himself in the eyes of his daughter and "do something right with his life for once", as Charlie himself puts it.

The Whale is a powerful and emotional story of grief, regret, anger, and love which brings the audience to tears through the strong and impressive performance of its cast. However, I argue that at the very heart of this heartfelt story lies something very dark if we watch the movie through the lens of Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection. Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, which she first explained in her "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection", puts forward the idea that there are certain things or experiences the society deems "unclean" or "impure". These things or experiences are often related to functions of the body (that people consider disgusting) such as defecation, vomit, and blood, as well as death and decay. For example, the sight of a decaying body or a gashing wound is considered abject because they induce a sense of horror and disgust in the viewer.

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Kristeva goes on to explain that what is considered abject, puts in jeopardy our sense of identity and order. Therefore, we attempt to detach ourselves from “abject” things and avoid them in order to maintain a sense of cleanliness and purity and prevent an identity crisis. However, Kristeva claims that this process of avoiding the abject is never quite done, because the abject always lingers about as part of us and our identity, no matter how hard we try to reject or repress it. Kristeva's theory of abjection has influenced many disciplines in humanities such as literary criticism, cultural studies, and psychoanalysis because it offers a way to understand how individuals and societies form their identities and boundaries.



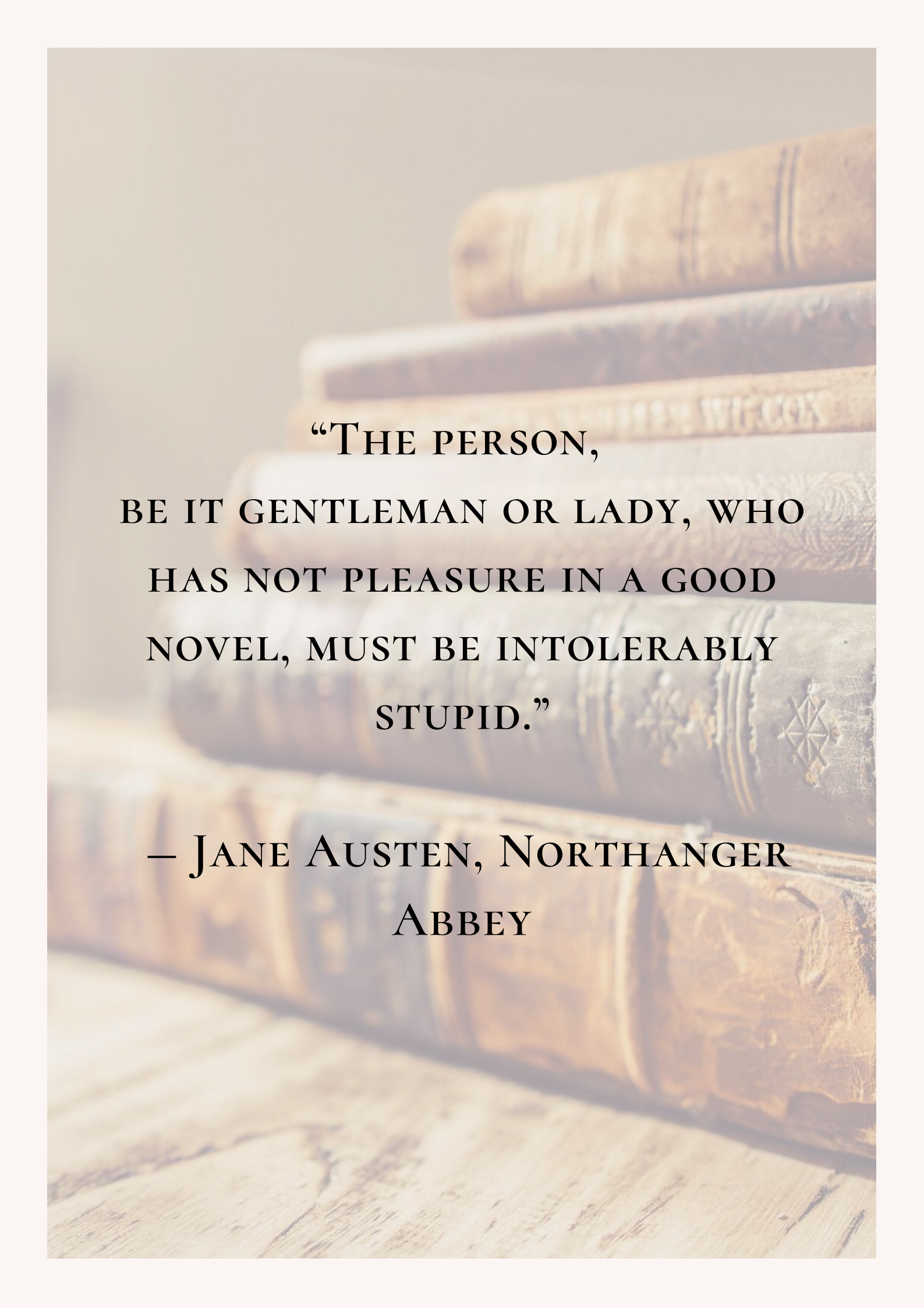
*The Whale* directed by Darren Aronofsky, 2022

People and societies define themselves as opposed to the “other” and they consider this “other” to be abject. Therefore, Julia Kristeva’s theory of abject (or abjection) is not only a concept related to the body and its functions but it is related to society also. Marginalized groups and communities (people of certain genders, racial ethnicities, and religious faiths, for example) can be the “other” and therefore considered abject. In *The Whale*, Charlie is extremely obese and secluded from society. He spends all his time confined to his own apartment and rarely socializes with anyone. His body and his lifestyle are considered abject by society because his physical form does not conform to society’s norms and neither does his lifestyle. He is often treated with disgust and is rejected, even by his own daughter. Another way in which Charlie can be understood to be abject is due to his disease. Charlie inhabits a deformed and dying body. His illness is slowly killing him and his decaying body is a constant reminder of death to those around him as well as to the audience.

Charlie’s struggle to redeem himself from his past mistakes and reconnect with his estranged daughter is in its heart a struggle to be accepted despite his abjectness. So, Charlie is not only physically abject because of unhealthy eating habits, his lack of hygiene, and his diseased body; he is also psychologically and emotionally abject as a man who has been rejected by his family and lives in isolation.

Because of how *The Whale* encourages its audience to identify and sympathize with Charlie, the movie can be understood as a critique of how society acts towards those, whom it considers to be “the other” and thus, abject. This movie illustrates how our aversion and repulsiveness to the abject can result in marginalization and prejudice, which has severe impacts on the mental and emotional well-being of those who are impacted by it. Despite the morbid nature of the last scene, *The Whale* ends on a hopeful note: if we can find it in ourselves to set aside the fear of the abject through acceptance and understanding of “the other”, we might overcome our isolation and find redemption at last.



A stack of several old, leather-bound books is shown, resting on a wooden surface. The books are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner, with the spines facing the viewer. The leather is aged and shows some wear. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color. The text is overlaid on the books in a black, serif font.

“THE PERSON,  
BE IT GENTLEMAN OR LADY, WHO  
HAS NOT PLEASURE IN A GOOD  
NOVEL, MUST BE INTOLERABLY  
STUPID.”

— JANE AUSTEN, *NORTHANGER  
ABBNEY*

# WAR IN THOMAS HARDY'S POETRY LAND; THE MAN HE KILLED

BY ATOUSA MIRZAPOUR

The man he killed is a poem by Thomas Hardy with the rhyme scheme of AB AB. This poem is expressly dramatic. If you ask what the central purpose of the poem is: you will come to the irrational nature of war. One can find various detail in the poem to prove the fact that the poet wants to indicate how illogical war can be when two people face each other on the battlefield not knowing one another. Only their uniform is a sign of whether they can be friends or enemies. These two soldiers, as the poet says, could have been friends if they had met in an ancient inn. They might have even found so many things in common or they could have bought one another a drink. But now they are in a dramatic moment when they meet each other with guns in their hands. The speaker feels challenged when he finds himself in a situation where he should make an odd decision whether he wants to survive himself or wants to prioritize someone else's life who is innocent just like him. The puzzlement of the speaker becomes ours.

"Had he and I but met  
By some old ancient inn,  
We should have sat us down to wet  
Right many a nipperkin!

The first stanza of the poem is the imaginary world of the speaker where nothing has happened yet. He tries to show us how their world could have been without war when they might have met somewhere else like an *old ancient inn*. Even the phrase "*old ancient inn*" is designed to show how impossible it seems for him to imagine that there may be another way to meet each other.



Honor guards firing salute at the burial  
of Brigadier General William Mitchell.  
Feb. 23, 1936.



The word “But” in the first line of the second stanza takes us to the real world where the soldiers ought to make the most difficult decision.

"But ranged as infantry,  
And staring face to face,  
I shot at him as he at me,  
And killed him in his place.

The second stanza states an experience close to death when the speaker says “staring face to face”. But the truth is that both are dead now, even the ones who survived because there is no victory in war. The speaker says “And killed him in his place”, which means he was killed immediately because it is the nature of war. If you hesitate you will be dead, and life is your only property there. Therefore, you are ready to sacrifice any moral value for that.

"I shot him dead because —  
Because he was my foe,  
Just so: my foe of course he was;  
That's clear enough; although"

The third stanza is a sign of hesitation when the speaker uses “—” to show he is trying to find an excuse for what he has done. However, he is uncomfortable telling his reason. He says he had to because the other soldier was supposed to be his enemy. The pangs of consciousness can be seen when he says “That’s clear enough; although”. The repetition of the phrase “he was my foe” is eye-catching because the speaker is confused and yet trying to justify it.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!  
You shoot a fellow down  
You'd treat if met where any bar is,  
Or help to half-a-crown."

In the end, the speaker says that war is quaint. War can make you do what you would have never known you were able to do. You will kill a stranger to survive; you may know that it is morally wrong in an ordinary situation. There is literally no excuse for what he has done in war; that’s what makes war quite irrational.

# THE JURY OF MINNIE FOSTER'S PEERS

BY NEDA BAHMANI

“The Jury of Her Peers” and the play “Trifles” both follow the same story though they are written in two different genres. Both of these works follow the same plot. Although the stories are the same, “Trifles” is more effective in terms of describing and presenting labor and social parts at the beginning of the 19th century. This play appeared in 1916 and “The Jury of Her Peers”, a detective short story, was published in 1917. This story is Glaspell’s best-known story mostly because of its original plot and feminist theme. The story begins with the arrest of Minnie Foster and taking her to jail because of the probable murder of her husband. As we go through the story, we face several major and minor characters. We have Lewis Hale, a middle-aged local farmer, who went to the Wright’s house to see what is going on; Minnie Foster who is a housewife feeling mad and lonely after thirty years of her marriage; and on the other hand, we have Martha Hale, friend to Minnie since childhood, who is described as a big and strong woman. She is perspective, compassionate, and intelligent in a sense. Martha has a kinship with her close neighbor, Mrs. Wright. She also puts the pieces together to find out what really happened inside Wright’s house.

George Henderson is another male character, who tries to say that women are just housewives and they cannot do anything more than that. Even though his social status is higher than others, this character also makes sexist comments during the story.

It is Mrs. Wright who is subjugated by her cruel husband. The protagonists of the story are Martha Hale and Mrs. Peters, who are somehow sympathizing with Minnie; because they are also affected by this patriarchal society and their cruel husbands.

Throughout different historical periods of time, the impression of women by men and also the patriarchal attitudes in societies have always been the most important arguments of many literary works in the world. Also according to ecofeminism, when we see Minnie Foster, who was lively and vigorous as a young girl, now after thirty years of marriage, she is simply a lonely housewife and when she’s in jail, thinking about her apron and the canning jars of fruit, we can refer to Sandilands when she says, “women’s concerns about the environment derive from their experiences of particular problems experienced in private.”

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# MY CITY

By Saba Khatibi

I came back to my city  
Yet my city wasn't mine any longer  
And it's been a long time as I lost her  
The walls had lost interest in conversing with me  
The streets were turning their face away with a grimace of disgust  
And I could no longer force my soul to adjust  
My memories were buried in a place where I was unwanted  
For people to whom my heart belonged, I was redundant  
This city witnessed all the brokenness and scratches in my heart  
and soul  
This city saw me stumble, rise and glow  
I came back to my city  
Yet my city wasn't mine any longer  
And it's been a long time as I lost her

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO “A CHRISTMAS CAROL”

BY MOHADDESSE VEYSI

A Christmas Carol is a novella written by Charles Dickens in 1843. Regarding the taste of people in that era, Dickens came up with the idea that the stories about ghosts and Christmas, of course with happy endings, possess a great deal of popularity.

In this way, he decided to narrate a story that outlines the corruption of a stone-hearted guy, Ebenezer Scrooge, who hates Christmas and has given up on happiness in the world (Shmoop). Besides, is unbearably ill-mannered with everyone to the extent that all the people in the town are disgusted by his look of him and whenever he is spotted in the alleys they would rather change their path and take the opposite direction; “Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, ‘My dear Scrooge, how are you?’ No beggar implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o’clock, no men or women ever once in all his life enquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge.”(Stave 1)

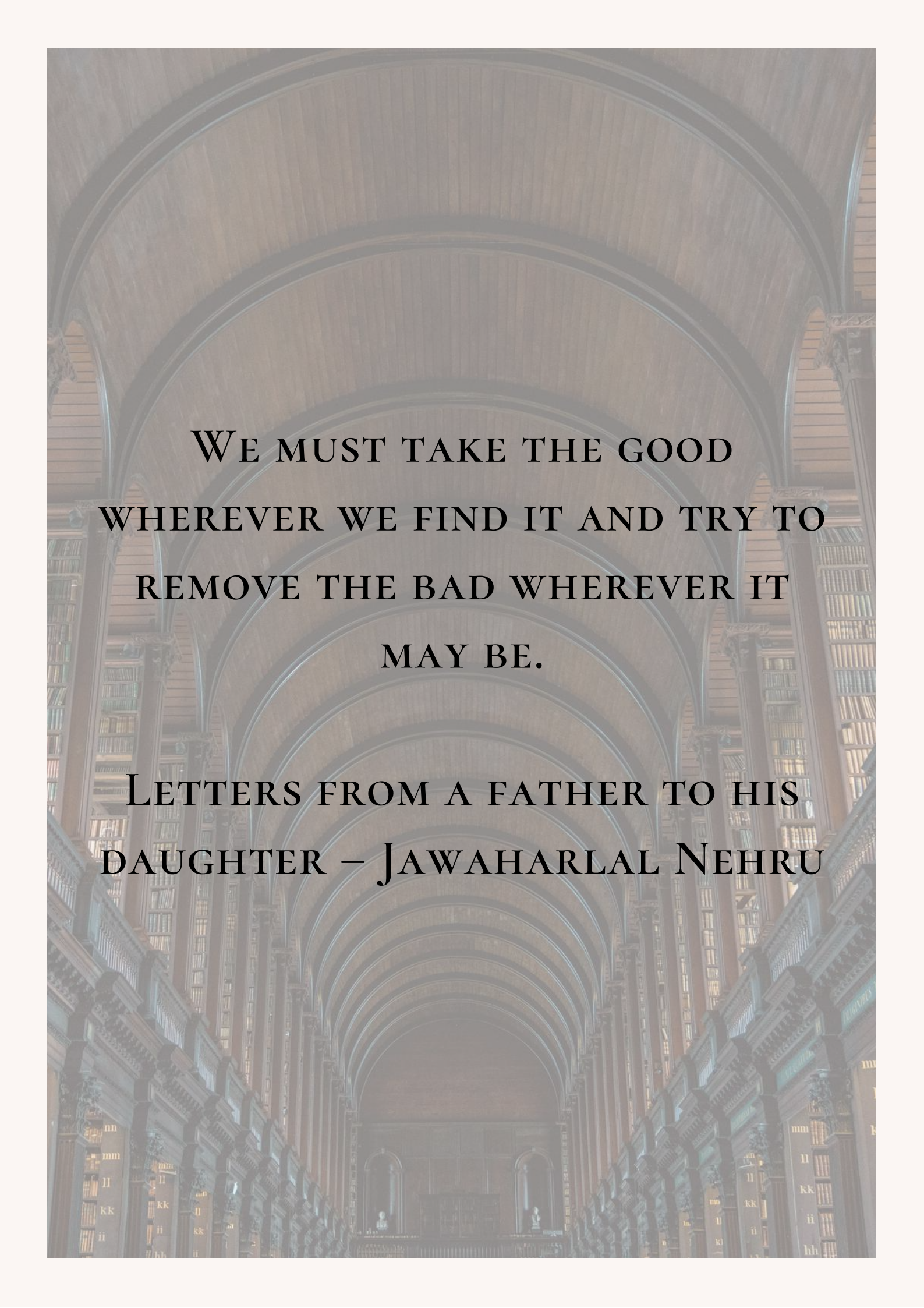
But Scrooge didn’t give a hoot about how they would behave toward him; besides, it was not such a depressing thing for him given the fact that he was willing to keep his distance from all humans.

At the beginning of the story, Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his former business partner, Jacob Marley, on Christmas Eve informing Scrooge about the fact that: “It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. And witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness.” (Stave 1)

That is, ghosts of terrible people must endlessly work to make the world a better place. To put it in other words, even when they are dead, their ghosts are still chained to this world, not having the capability to go further to the world of eternity.

Marley also states that he is one of those ghosts who is in a severe suffocation being a wanderer. Moreover, while Scrooge is frightened to death, Marly goes like this: “I am here tonight to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate.” (Stave 1)

There is this opportunity for him to be soon met by the spirits of Christmas past, Christmas present, and Christmas yet to come and each of them will be a great deal in Scrooge's biggest rebirth. The ghosts help him realize that he needs to change his mindset about Christmas and more importantly about life, and save him from his upcoming and devastating fate in three different periods of Scrooge's life. (Shmoop)



WE MUST TAKE THE GOOD  
WHEREVER WE FIND IT AND TRY TO  
REMOVE THE BAD WHEREVER IT  
MAY BE.

LETTERS FROM A FATHER TO HIS  
DAUGHTER – JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

# SEEING THROUGH CLOSED EYES

BY NEGAR SOHANI

“It is still like the past times, a piece of heaven!” I thought and walked through the tall greenish bushes of grasses. Here I was again; in this magical garden where memories flew around like wandering ghosts, Where spring times would bring glory and gracefulness, and winter times would abandon its soul.

I looked up at the old wooden chair that sat in the shadow of our lovely juniper tree. Its skin was tired and swollen from rush rains and thunder, and spots of resins could be seen everywhere on its surface. The despair chair, if it could talk, would have begged for shelter. I walked toward it and sat on it. My red dress will absorb the dust, resins, and all the heavy rough memories that the old chair bore. I did not mind it at all. The wind blew and traveled through the sage green hair of the old juniper. The sound it made reminded me of a child blowing into a harmonica. I sat there for a while and stared at the pool in front of me. I could hear the mesmerizing sound of the water flowing which was directed by a handmade pipe into the pool. Grandpa made all of these so that we, the grandchildren, would join him on spring

holidays. Hesitantly, I stood and with heavy steps, walked to the pool. The mighty walnut tree was still there sheltering the pool. But then, my eyes were fixed on the surface of the water. Some oval-shaped leaves of a walnut tree were spread on it and tiny insects created little rings of water each time they flew away. A thick layer of algae coated the body of the pool causing an unpleasant smell, but tiny frogs, enjoying this, sang a bass song to it.

I laid there on the cold dirty ground next to the pool, letting my hand drown in it. “If you had done this years ago, the golden fish would have gently left hasty kisses on your fingers, asking for food,” I murmured to myself as a very vague smile walked on my face. I closed my eyes but still shiny rays of sunlight made their way through my closed eyelids and gave me a pink-red vision instead of the usual black. I heard the birds chattering, the frogs croaking, the wind blowing and most enjoyably the water flowing. I breathed in as deeply as I could, and let my lungs be filled with fresh air. Then I was seeing through closed eyes a garden hosting a family. It was there; floriferous and young,





filled with a mesmerizing scent of fresh grasses and illuminated by summer rays. An old slim man in a very neat gray coat sat on a fresh-brown wooden chair under a juniper tree, holding his stick with both of his hands in front of him and resting his wrinkled chin on the handle. With shining brown eyes and the warmest of smiles, he stared at children swimming in the pool. A 6-year-old boy in his boxers climbed the walnut tree and reached the furthest branch. "Make way! I'm about to dive. Don't you nag if you get hurt; I warned you already." He shouted and jumped, making the girls and boys shout with excitement as the water splashed around him widely. The old man laughed out loud, and so did the kids. The boy breathlessly climbed out of the pool. "Look here! I caught a frog. A very fat and big one! Hey, sis look! I finally got one!" he shouted with excitement heading to a little girl sitting in his red dress on a hard stone. She pulled away as he drew the frog near her face. "Pull him away! I disgust its clammy skin." the little girl begged. "Don't be fussy! It's got nothing to do with you. Isn't he the cutest pet we always wished to have?" the boy patted the confused frog, gently. "No way! He'll be your ugly pet but I..." she looked at the old man with passionate eyes "I wanna have a kitty. Grandpa told me he will get me one.

He promised." "Come here you kitty." The old man called. The little girl ran to him while the wind danced in her red dress. She threw herself in the old man's embrace like a wet cat wishing for shelter in the rain. "You my little kitty! I will get you a kitty if you behave well toward your brother," the old man laughed. "I will if he does." The little girl said. The old man kissed her forehead. "My kitty, I love you forevermore. And I promised to get you a kitty no matter what."

I opened my tearful eyes and looked around. The stillness of the silence was much harsher than I could ever remember. There was me and the old chair, despair and lonely, with no company around. I dried my hand with my dress, stood up, and walked to leave. Before entering the tall bushes I turned and took the last glance. The chair, the juniper tree, the walnut tree, and the pool stood there again, but they were as unreal as a misty dream. After all, things are not still like the past times.

# WAITING ROOM AT THE EDGE OF ETERNITY

BY NEGAR GELYERDI

You'd think the waiting rooms of eternal paradise would be just as splendid as the rest of it. With its fluffy white clouds, gates of gold, and buildings of silver. The good place, the one everyone hopes to see.

Looking at the large room, lined with uncomfortable plastic chairs, graying carpet, drywall tinged yellow, and a potted plant in the corner almost close to its second death was concerning, to say the least. He wondered if the golden gates and the food and drinks simply put a dent in the big man upstairs' budget.

Then again, as a nonbeliever, what could he complain about the stylistic choices of this room?

So he bid his time and simply spent his time staring at the neon sign "Have a happy next life!". He wondered if this is what souls were told the first time, before being sent to their mortal coils.

If so, did he simply forget to heed the advice in his own life?

It was a useless thing to think about, and he prided himself on avoiding useless actions. He really couldn't help it though. He'd always been an over-thinker. He didn't know whether he hated this quality about himself or not. It made sure that he never made foolish mistakes that one regretted for a lifetime. It also, he was ashamed to admit, led to a lot of procrastination. "Next!" a voice cried.

He entered through the lone red door. The first thing that he noticed was a young man sitting behind a desk. It hurt to look at him for more than a few seconds as he seemed to flicker like a broken flashlight with every blink, so instead he turned his attention to the lone bed in the room, hooked to an IV machine like a surgery room. He took a few steps closer and his eyes landed on the golden nameplate on the desk.

"Your name is Larry?" He said before he could stop himself.

Dead silence. Emphasis on dead.

To Larry's credit, he didn't seem that shocked with such directness, or maybe he had been asked this question enough times to decide not to dignify it with a response. Instead, he only gave a smile so bright it was practically blinding. "Yes, dear sir! That's my name, don't wear it out!"

Larry then pointed to the bed. He nodded in return and lay down. After that, Larry started the standard questioning procedure he'd already been familiar with after filling out the official rebirth forms; your full name, date of birth and death, the reason for death, the place where you were born, and most of your life was spent in. It was strange in a way, facing Larry's own, unflappable enthusiasm over every question with his own lackluster apathy.

“And now the last question dear sir and you can be on your way. What's your most significant memory on earth?”

“Pardon?”

“Your most significant memory on earth dear sir!” His smile became even more painful to look at. “It's a really important question for the algorithm, sir.”

“Algorithm?”

“For deciding your best future destination and as an anchor to your past soul,” Larry explained.

“I thought the rebirthing process erases all your past memories.” Wasn't that the whole point of it?

“Well dear sir, there needs to be some connection to your past life left. Where do you think *déjà vu* comes from?”

He nodded impassively. It wasn't as if he had enough expertise about the process to protest. “Well, there is none.”

Now it was Larry's turn to sound surprised. “Pardon, dear sir? That's impossible!”

“Well, there's none. Nothing significant whatsoever.”

Larry shook his head with the look of someone who was definitely not being paid enough for his Job. “But dear sir, you wouldn't be here if you weren't approved for heaven first.

Surely there must have been something significant about your life there!”

He let out a bitter laugh. “Hate to disappoint you, but not everyone ends up in heaven for being an amazing person. Some of us just lacked the drive to do anything evil.”

Or do anything significant.

“You mustn't sell that short sir. The world would have been a much better place if some people lacked the drive to do evil...”

“Should I take this as a compliment?”

“You may.” He paused for a moment. “If I may ask, why choose a different life if there was nothing worthwhile in the past one?”

He blinked, not expecting such a personal question. “I suppose... I felt like I spent most of my life waiting for something that never happened. I was hoping that—”

“The afterlife would be different?”

“Yes.”

“Why would you expect it to be any different?”

“I don't know.”

“Perhaps you didn't understand what was really happening?”

“What do you mean?”

"Nothing simply happens dear sir. One has to make things happen. And you, you were blessed with the time to think about what you wanted to do."

"So what is all this then?"

"Another opportunity." Larry smiled while getting up and attaching the IV needle into his arm "You humans never fail to surprise me. Some of you want to give more good to the world. Some aren't quite as altruistic and simply want a second chance. If there is anything you have in common is that nothing is ever enough. "

"... I did go to the beach once." He said feelings slightly groggy.

Larry smiled. "Then I want you to imagine that. I hope that this is what death will be like for you. Like going to the beach. Enjoying the sun and the sand and splashing around in the water with your loved ones. I hope when you dive underwater, you can still hear the laughter from the other side."

"... Can I ask you a personal question?"

Larry nodded. "How many times did you choose rebirth?"

And the world went dark just before he could hear the answer.

# GROWING

# UP



BY ZEINAB MORADZADE

Ladies and gentlemen, the title is not about age. I repeat the title is not about age. Honestly, the title is about the very first day that you woke up from sleep, and guess what?

It was snowing out there!

But you didn't care. Actually, you got upset because you wondered how you were supposed to go to work with that slippery ground. Basically, these words are about the lack of passion in your life. About the first time you stopped enjoying the flavor of your ice cream. The first time you skipped reading your favorite book because you had to study the subject you hated. The first time you started overthinking and measuring all the possibilities in life and sadly you never stopped. And it's also about the last ones. About the last time you couldn't sleep at night because you were too excited to start tomorrow. The last time you felt like you knew how to live, the last time you took a deep breath without any heaviness or any chance to burst into tears. And the last time you daydreamed and someone yelled at you, "JUST GROW UP!" And you did.

I'm not trying to tell you growing up is a nightmare. I'm just trying to say it has nothing to do with those fairytale stories. Because a sad ending exists. And it's not that easy to figure out who the hero is and who the villain is, because simply no one has any certain role in this special show and it makes life more difficult than we planned. You think you are the hero and you might be, but only in your own story. In others' stories, you might be the cruel one, the aggressive one, the rude one, the bad one. Even though you have never wanted to be like that. And it's fine, but no one warned us about this, Did they? I don't think so. They never said at school that we can be wrong and we can't be everybody's favorite. They never said we are not the main characters in all the stories.

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They never mentioned we can try and try and try and in the end still not make it, or how the people we thought we knew the best could turn into strangers. And I have this scary feeling that no one said a word about it because they didn't know, either. We all were waiting for some grand adventure but instead, we spend most of our lives waiting for a bus to a destination we are not even sure we want to go to. We tolerate the greatest pains, waiting patiently for those little moments of joy that remind us why life is worth living. Those peaceful moments, those perfect moments, those moments that make you feel like God has been writing them specifically for you with every detail in mind.

And the latest level of growth is to know all the pain and loss and still choose to fight. Every day, fighting like a soldier. We fight when we're tired and alone and wounded and the glory might be a smile on some strangers' faces and we will take it because we're soldiers and this is a war of life. A holy war.

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# HAPPY LITTLE BUTTERFLY

BY SARA MOMENI

Happy little butterfly, I beg of you, come outside. Let me see those ocean eyes or your pretty, wide smile. And those crystal wings you got, they shine every time you fly. They flutter in the sky, making you glow so darningly bright.

Happy little butterfly, oh prithe, tell me, why? Why did you just start to hide? Or those starry eyes of yours, when did they begin to cry? Why would you keep in disguise when you know I can't survive if you don't show me your light?

Happy little butterfly, why did you suddenly fall? You had so much grace in you, how is all of it now gone?

Happy little butterfly, sometimes it gets all too much, piercing pain stings a lot, so does the sorrow inside, for it wraps around your heart, drenches it of all its blood, makes you feel like you will die like it's a maze and you're lost.

Happy little butterfly, being enough is so hard. I know that you always try, and you break every time, each time you just fall apart, so you cry and you hide.

Happy little butterfly, it's okay not to feel fine. It's okay not to feel right, it's okay not to feel loved. I shall tell you, stardust, there's still so much to live, so much you don't yet know of, so much that you'll have to find.

Happy little butterfly, I know that you'll always fight. I know that you'll always thrive, I know that you'll move forward.

Throughout all these rainy nights, I'll always stay by your side. I'll make sure to be your guide, and help you pass all your rough times. And if you're scared of the dark, I'll sing you a lullaby, and hold your hand really tight, even if you don't hold mine; I'll still love you, after all, for as long as I'm alive.

Happy little butterfly, happiness looks good on you. Sometimes you just feel down though, I hope you know that's alright.

# HERE COMES THE RUIN

BY SAMA ASHOORI

Let me tell you a story about when Mon Marter Hill was covered with purple Jasmines. At a time when people were in love, the rain fell for the lovers to kiss. Everything was beautiful and warm; joy rushed through the town's veins. Emotions were respected and feelings mattered. But that was only temporary until it came. The beast, the monster that tore families apart, separated the lover from the beloved and spread cruelty everywhere. They called it war!

Men were sent to the front lines to protect their country, families, and loved ones. However, their sense of patriotism wasn't enough. They needed to be trained to kill and set aside their emotions while on duty. They had to learn the law: "Kill or get killed!"

Now the rain falls, not for the lovers to kiss, but for the blood to be washed away from the ground.



World War I. American gun crew from the 23rd Infantry, firing a French 37mm cannon in World War I action in Belleau Wood. June 3, 1918.



“Punch him in the face, boy! Hit him, or you’ll never become the man your country needs you to be!” Said the commander to one of his training soldiers. He was supposed to wrestle with his comrade as a training.

“I...I can’t, sir.” said the soldier.

“You can’t?! You sign up for the military, and now you’re telling me you can’t even handle a simple fistfight? Well, Boo Hoo! If you don’t wanna fight, you’re welcome to have your country spoiled and see your family killed by our vicious enemies.”

“But, isn’t it the same way they think about us? Vicious...?”

The young soldier still kept resisting and wouldn’t let go. He couldn’t get it, could he? Too naive for this ruthless world. A pure heart that was about to be broken more than once, a mind that was about to be crushed under the pressure of the battlefield. How old is he anyways? Twenty...Twenty-five? He has his whole life ahead of him. He should be out with his fellas, drinking, making love, and having the time of his life, but what is he doing instead? Fighting for his country... protecting the glory of this nation. Oh, please! Cut the crap! There isn’t any glory. There isn’t any honor in war! It is a filthy, disgusting political conflict between two drama queens, one of whom won’t give back the other one’s baby doll, and causes a fight. What makes it a disaster is the fact that we call them our “Governors.” They start and announce a war, and we are the ones who need to carry its weight on our shoulders.

We are the ones who need to tolerate the pain and the loss—the loss of our friends, our comrades, and our family members. We suffer while the countries’ higher-ups enjoy their time in their so-called negotiation sessions, clinking their glasses and drinking their whiskies in peace. Yes, son. I, too, wish there was another way for this war to be fought, but there is none. We must struggle in the battle because that’s the order they have given us. We must kill because we are not powerful enough to order the kill. “I can’t. Please, sir! There has to be another way for this war to end. It can’t go on like this. This is not fair!” said the soldier with a shivering voice and terror in his eyes. Is this it? Is this how humanity is supposed to be? All fighting, shooting, and blood dripping down the soldiers’ chests? No! he couldn’t accept that; he couldn’t let go of his conscience just to make it easy for himself to murder someone. As long as humanity exists, there is hope for salvation.

The soldier was drowned in his thoughts, too lost in his inner moral struggles to hear the commander until he felt a stinging pain in his jaw and tasted blood in his mouth. He heard a sound; it was of himself hitting the ground. He had fallen. The commander had punched him in the face, pulling out his knife to attack him. He wasn’t going to hurt him...not really. It was just supposed to bring out the boy’s defensive reflection. He didn’t like it any more than the soldier, but that was the only way he could make him understand: “Kill or be killed!”

# HOW TINY HABIT CHANGES HELP US ENJOY A REBIRTH;

An Introduction to "Atomic Habits; An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones."

**BY AREFE AMINI**



Knowing that under no circumstances is someone doomed to fail, we all know that in our lives, a significant amount of failures are rooted in some habits. While we are bombarded by millions of motivational quotes, notes, and clips about success these days, each revealing one aspect of prosperous individuals, our hectic lifestyle accounts for selective reading. James Clear's book, *Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones*, the #1 New York Times bestseller, is unique because not only does it draw on academic background, but it also attempts to "find the ideas that matter most and connect them in a way that is highly actionable" (p. 15). The book, written in simple language, aims to help us improve our daily lives and approach our goals through insignificant habit changes.

Having narrated a story of his life in the introduction section, in which building small good habits made him a rare miracle across the country, i.e. the top male athlete at his university, clearly elaborates upon a series of events since 2012 causing him to embark on this book, over ten million copies of which have sold so far, as well as the potential readers benefiting from the book. It is worth mentioning that having been partly established based on Skinner's (1938) operant conditioning as "stimulus, response, reward", popularized by Duhigg in 2014 as "cue, routine, reward", and cognitive psychology, the book evolves from Clear's model encompassing four stages of habits-cure, craving, response, and reward respectively and the laws of behavior change deriving from such steps.

The rest of the book is divided into six chapters, including three to four units. Chapter 1, titled "Fundamentals", drawing an analogy between the way money is discussed through compound interest and the way the influence of our habits is augmented as a result of being repeated, tries to illustrate the significance of knowing more about our habits as double-edged swords which in turn paves the way for us to become the best version of ourselves.

While discussing the four golden laws for starting new habits, recognizing and fixing the bad ones, making good habits irresistible and the bad habits ludicrous, and sticking to desirable habits, the remainder of the book is devoted to the influential role factors such as environment, family members, friends, accountability partners, and genes, as a variable providing "a powerful advantage in favorable circumstances and a serious disadvantage in unfavorable circumstances" (p. 237), play in habit formation and change. The book ends with introducing perseverance in making improvements as a secret to acquiring lasting results.

The book is different from many other books of its kind in that it shares many hands-on experiences on the efficacy of the laws and principles presented in the book, making it more reader-friendly. The plenty of valuable links to the bonus chapters in the appendices make the work a must-read resource for those interested in psychology, particularly habit changes. Reading this book can have positive lifelong effects, provided that the principles are efficiently applied in our daily lives (Lambert, 2021).

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VOLUME 23

SPRING 2023



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