

**The
SUN**

Correspondence

DECEMBER 2017

Aaron Carnes's interview with Henry Robinett [["Jailhouse Blues,"](#) October 2017] compelled me to do something I've been contemplating for a year: check out the acoustic guitar we have available at Folsom Women's Facility.

On the women's side, none of us has more than five years remaining on her sentence, and the majority are eager for the chance to re-enter society and make a positive contribution.

*Kali Woods
Folsom, California*

Henry Robinett was right when he said guards resent prison programs and say things like, "Man, I didn't have that when I was growing up. And they get it for *free*?"

Nothing in prison is free. We pay for everything with our suffering, our time, and our effort, just like the guards do for their paychecks.

*Eddie Hubbard
Delano, California*

I found myself weeping at Henry Robinett's acknowledgment of his incarcerated students' humanity and his repetition of the words poet Maya Angelou taught him: "I am human, therefore nothing human can be foreign to me."

As much as I am dismayed by Donald Trump's bombast, I can't find it in myself to hate him. I don't agree with reader Libby Hewes that *The Sun* has become overly critical of this White House [[Correspondence](#), October 2017], but there is a danger of missing the president's humanity as we revile his words and actions.

*Betsy Bell
Seattle, Washington*

I doubt I will ever forget "[Home from the War](#)" by Benjamin Hertwig [October 2017]. I'm glad he connected with Omar Khadr and shared that story with us. Hertwig has motivated me to speak up in the face of fear and hatred and reach across whatever divides us. If we don't find the courage to connect with our so-called enemies, what is left but to continue the cycle of violence and war?

Eric Bowers
Agassiz, British Columbia
Canada

Brenda Miller's essay "The Wayward Daughter" [October 2017] was elegantly and powerfully written.

My mother is ninety-seven years old and holding on to life by the barest of threads. As I helplessly watch her disappear, I understand Miller's assertion that she can never make enough sacrifices for her parents. But I bet the look in their eyes when she visits is an incalculable reward.

Marc Rogers
North Hollywood, California

I was at the gathering for Child Survivors of the Holocaust that Paul Mandelbaum describes in "We Are All Children Here" [October 2017]. He and I seem to have attended some of the same sessions and even danced past one another and sang together. Being there was part of a commitment I have made since my father passed away five years ago: to identify myself more openly as the child of a survivor.

Due to my grandparents' foresight and a measure of luck, my father escaped Nazi Germany as a teenager and lived through the war in London, rather than dying in Auschwitz or Treblinka. I lost dozens of relatives in the Holocaust, especially on my mother's side in Ukraine. What rang true for me in Mandelbaum's essay was the survivors' sense of that time as being not so distant: a mirror of the current stirrings of racism and ethnophobia in the U.S. and Europe.

Robert Oppenheimer
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada

Reading *The Sun*, I have cried, smirked, pouted, and been inspired. But when I read the Readers Write on "Mischief" [October 2017], I did something I rarely do: I laughed out loud and almost choked on my coffee.

Judy Raymond
DeLand, Florida

I respect your ongoing inclusion of inmates' essays, poetry, and contributions to Readers Write. Your October 2017 issue was the most meaningful in months. I plan to use Aaron Carnes's interview with Henry Robinett in my humanities class, accompanied by "The Nesting Ground" by Saint James Harris Wood.

Catherine Kigerl
Washington State

I had already read Brian Doyle's pieces over the years, but as I reread them in your posthumous tribute ["The Salt Seas of the Heart," September 2017] I was touched once more by his depiction of a family life with an astonishing sense of connection ["We Did"]; by his moving descriptions of his older brother's life and death ["To the Beach"]; and by his father's critique of militarism and war ["Memorial Day"]. Maybe what moved me most is the simple fact that Doyle's writing will no longer appear in your magazine.

Kathleen Eagan
San Jose, California

It took longer than I expected for the complaints to appear in your Correspondence; I thought maybe I was the only Independent/Republican subscriber dismayed by the recent political tone of the magazine. I will continue to read *The Sun*, however, because though I might not agree with everything you print, I find its bluntness and candor refreshing. I like that I don't feel I've been lied to when I finish. I could read only things written by people who agree with me, but that would make me closed-minded and less informed.

Corinna Sinclair
Billings, Montana

I let my *Sun* subscription lapse about twelve years ago, when life got in the way: I lost family members and close friends, battled debilitating flare-ups of lupus and a near-fatal West Nile fever, and witnessed a natural disaster change the face of my hometown. To top it all off, I couldn't write.

About two years ago I broke out of my funk. I have a new outlook, and my keyboard and pen are the busiest they've ever been. When I saw *The Sun* on a magazine rack, I paged through it and immediately recalled what makes it so special. We all experience heartache, joy, judgment, excitement, and disappointment. But isn't the point of life to persevere no matter what? *The Sun* reminds readers of that.

I resubscribed that night.

Jill Ocone
Point Pleasant, New Jersey

I need *The Sun* to offset the myths I grew up believing in: the conventional definition of success, the mandate to perfect yourself, the importance of winning, the idea that life is about being better than others.

The writers in your magazine are honest about the suffering many of us are taught to deny. *The Sun* is the antidote to braggadocio and narcissism.

Kelly Aanrud
Amherst Junction, Wisconsin

More than a decade ago a beau said to me, “Your writing reminds me of this awesome magazine,” and he proceeded to buy me a subscription to *The Sun*.

I don’t know why I let the subscription lapse: hand-to-mouth living, single motherhood, chopping wood to heat our tiny home, wondering where the money for the car repair will come from. But in my little corner of the world, this magazine is one of the best things out there. Until I subscribe again, I’ll continue to read it at the library.

When I’m dismayed by the shallowness of U.S. “culture,” your magazine shows me that depth still exists.

*Eleanor Burke
Lopez Island, Washington*

I always turn directly to Correspondence with each new issue. I particularly appreciate readers’ comments about the magazine’s partisan content, as well as its bias against our chief executive.

I want the editors to know that the moment I notice anything in the magazine that offends my precious worldview or challenges my preconceived notions about how the world should be, I will fire off a letter so fast it will make your gosh-darned heads spin.

*Craig J. Corsini
Moraga, California*

THINKING ABOUT WRITING US A LETTER?

Give in to the temptation. We love getting mail. (Of course, we reserve the right to edit.)

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