



Diamonds in the Rough
A Literary Magazine

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Editor: Dr. Melissa Knox-Raab

This issue of *Diamonds in the Rough* is concerned with social justice and the urgent need to speak one's mind. Essays cover important political issues like abortion and women's rights, gay rights, free speech and free thought when democracies are increasingly at risk. We also have some light-hearted writing—an essay on not being a duck—and a critique of a TV series, *One Tree Hill*. I'm happy to say we have some wonderful art work as well—a series on beer bottles with commentary: "Beer Stories," and four paintings. As a last word, I'm reprinting a favorite "Coming Down with Covid" chicken soup; you don't have to endure Covid to like it. Enjoy!

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Essays

Don't Say The G-Word

By Corinna Schroll

Based on the latest developments, it seems the Republican Party is on a crusade to erase civil rights for minorities in the US once again. The Supreme Court has voted to overturn abortion rights, and other politicians intend to make same-sex marriage illegal as well as the act of gay sex itself. But these developments are nothing new, and earlier this year Floridan governor Ron DeSantis signed the so-called Parental Rights Education bill by Republican authors, which prohibits teachers to instruct students from kindergarten through third grade on sexual orientation and gender identity. The vague language of the bill has raised concerns that it will be used to suppress even the acknowledgment of the LGBT+ community in schools. Additionally, the bill also allows parents to sue for damages if a school district does not take their complaint about a child's education and essentially forbids discussion of LGBT+ issues and identities. To quote Jaclyn Diaz in her article *Florida's governor signs controversial law opponents dubbed 'Don't Say Gay'* from March 28th, 2022:

DeSantis said teaching kindergarten-aged kids that "they can be whatever they want to be" was "inappropriate" for children.

This arguably unconstitutional bill, also dubbed the "Don't Say Gay" bill, takes effect on July 1, but various LGBT+ organizations have already filed a lawsuit to challenge it. It would make some sense if any sexual education was deemed inappropriate for children until a certain age to protect their innocence – yet it seems to only be inappropriate if the sexual orientation is anything other than heterosexual. This bill is nothing but censorship and suppression, and it will be harmful to LGBT+ individuals such as teachers, parents, or children. It destroys an environment of acceptance and instead teaches children that not everyone is allowed to live their life with respect.

Even Disney has weighed in as one of the major employers in Florida with Disneyland, and the company has criticized the bill as well as vowed to donate to LGBT+ organizations to help. But DeSantis is not backing down.

Another Right-wing figure with ties to white Christian nationalists, Christopher Rufo, has only added fuel to the fire through purposefully misleading statements, such as stating sexual education programs for children taught lessons "*on 'sex liberation,' 'gender exploration,' 'BDSM,' 'being a sex worker,' 'self-managed abortions,' and 'sexual activity while using licit and illicit drugs.'*"

His claims are false and dangerous; children aren't taught queer theory in school, which investigates ways in which gender identity and sexual orientations other than heterosexuality have appeared throughout history and in our daily lives. Instead, children are offered more age-appropriate approaches to the concept. Primary schools for instance provide relationships education during which children learn about LGBT+ issues, other types of diversity, or that

families come in all shapes and sizes. It seems Rufo's inflammatory comments only serve the end goal of purging free and critical thinking from schools.

You can force people to stop saying gay, but that won't stop anyone from being "gay". Suppressing people of a different sexual orientation throughout history may have silenced and erased them and their identities, but it has never stopped them from existing. While a little boy in Florida may not be taught about different sexual orientations or gender identities, it won't stop him from liking another little boy in his class. This bill may be meant to protect children, but arguably it will harm them more than it might protect them. LGBT+ children without support from their family or peers show a dangerous trend toward developing depression, and social support is one of the main aspects of suicide prevention. Many trans children for instance show a staggering suicide rate when they are not met with support during their teenage years. Being gay or trans is not a choice but taking one's own life is one that even children can make; current statistics suggest that childhood suicide is on the rise. Leaving this earth is not a thought any child should have when their lives have not even truly begun. But if queer children grow up without the love and support they need from family and their environment, they will undoubtedly suffer and might lose interest in continuing their life as it is.

This law destroys supportive environments teachers are building for their students, and while it suppresses any LGBT+ students, it also teaches children to reject those who are different and don't fit the "norm" and the hateful environment this creates puts LGBT+ youth at risk for bullying, violence, self-harm, and suicide.

It is not the evil homosexuals corrupting and harming the children, but the bills of right-wing politicians who are hurting them and in the worst-case driving them to end their own lives. Teaching children about different kinds of love and gender identity also teaches them to not only accept others but themselves for who they are. A kindergarten-aged child understands who they are, and they will also understand when they are different and not accepted. Children should not grow up scared to express themselves, hiding who they are and living in fear of being outed against their will. The Parental Rights Education bill is a step backward for Florida and if it is not opposed, will harm many of the children it is allegedly meant to protect.

Why I am Not a Duck

By Ann-Katrin van Loosen

I would love to be a duck, but I guess God hates me.

Firstly, my form does not fit. I do not have feathers, so I would freeze in winter. I am too big to be considered a duck, with the typical mallard being a maximal 65cm. However, my current size of 160cm would make me the most colossal duck on earth. Additionally, ducks do not have fingers, and I do not have webbed feet. And my mouth consists of fleshy lips and teeth; no beak in sight. My arms and legs are too long for a duck. But with long legs, I could at least be categorized as a crane. But then I would have to eat frogs which would break my heart.

My diet also does not fit as seeds and algae cannot fill my stomach of human size. It would also not be a nutritious diet for an omnivorous human. And it would require a lot of willpower for me to eat insects. I would also only be able to drink water which I do not like. I prefer sweet beverages. Besides, I could never abstain from chocolate. A duck, I imagine, does not think about its meal's taste.

Sadly, I cannot choose the form in which I am born. And my parents had to be humans of all things. How unfair is that? But the saddest is that I am not able to fly. I have to abide the cold winter and cannot fly south, but I can at least endure the winter in my warm flat. In any case, I can swim and float when I hold up my legs; I also like to dive. So that are 2 things I have in common with a duck. And foxes are too small to be my predators.

The most obvious difference would be that I do not lay eggs, and I do not plan to. Even if I were able to, I would not put my offspring in a nest on the hard ground, where I do not like to sleep, even more so in the open, like a park. I prefer a cozy bed with lots of blankets and pillows. My brain is also not made to sleep with one eye open. Additionally, I would rather have my surroundings be dark and quiet, lest I cannot sleep.

Nevertheless, I would love to be an annoyance, chasing after park visitors and biting them. I can be as loud as a duck, but sadly I am bound to social courtesy. Compared to that, a duck can live without the consequences of being a human living in a society with rules.

Why I Write

By Ronja Iding

There are three things in life I can't live without: people, movies, and writing. Apart from food and water it is these three things that are essential to living a fulfilling life. Establishing human relationships and talking to people are important to me for two reasons: I hate feeling lonely, and people inspire me. Movies inspire me as well. They introduce me to amazing characters and stories, and they show me where I want to go in life. They teach me how to figure out who I want to be as a writer.

For me, life is all about inspiration. I watch movies and I read books. I listen to music, and I create stories in my mind. In a way, I need people and movies to be capable of pursuing my passion: WRITING.

Writing fulfills me. It's my personal therapy. Through writing I can process my emotions. I am myself on paper, and I understand myself better through writing. Sometimes it is easier to write than to speak. It feels right to share feelings and thoughts on a piece of paper. It feels honest to use paper for writing, keeping it old-school. I often use a typewriter for the same reason. And I need to let out my thoughts, otherwise my head would explode.

I write because I couldn't live with myself if I didn't write. I write because I have to. I believe that every human being was brought to this world to do something specific, and I always felt like this was my way in life. The adrenaline I feel pumping through my veins when I write, more adrenaline than I ever felt on a rollercoaster, is what keeps me alive. I am addicted to the way writing makes me feel.

Ever since I started school, I always knew that I would be a writer. I distinctively remember writing my first ever essay in first grade and immediately falling in love with the way building sentences activated my imagination. My grandma wanted to be a writer and so did my mom. So, I think God thought it was time that someone in my family took their shot. I believe in fate. And it is my fate to write.

I spent an insane amount of my childhood sitting in our small bathroom without windows. The lights were off, the door was locked, I put on music, and I made sure all the drains were closed. Once I did all that I just sat on the floor and listened to my thoughts. I imagined different worlds and new stories. Whether I was entering a magical fantasy story or creating characters that would later come to life in more realistic settings, I just enjoyed creating stories. It worked because I couldn't see or get distracted by anything. I remember when I used to do that it felt like I was entering a world of my own.

I was always interested in figuring things out. Like I watched TV shows and stopped to write everything down to figure out how an episode would end. Continuing only once I was sure that I was right. And I often was. The times I wasn't, I still thought my ending would have been better. Whenever I read or watched a story I liked, I made it my own. I never did anything without thinking about how I could use it in a story later.

There are certain kinds of stories I love and movies I watch. I look for stories that include sports, strong friendships, a team, sibling relationships, a common goal, and strong characters. I also explore stories that lie outside of that definition but normally they don't end up on my list of movies I can watch every day for the rest of my life. One day, I will write stories that apply to my definition of a perfect one.

There are a few movies I have probably seen over 100 times; There's *The Mighty Ducks'* series, the *Step Up* series, the *Harry Potter* series, *The Outsiders*, *Die wilden Kerle*, the *Narnia* series, *Grown Ups*, *IT*, *Stand By Me*, *Miracle*. I know all of them by heart, I can say the lines along with the actors and I still never get sick of them. I watch one of these movies each day. They always make me feel like the world is okay.

When I started writing this essay there was one specific quote that popped into my mind. It's from the *Step Up* series. My favorite character *Moose* says it. And I thought of it because it somehow explains why I write, at least partly: *I dance because dance can change things. One move can set a whole generation free. One move can make you believe like you're something more.*

It's the same with words and books. Words can change things; they are extremely powerful. And the stories presented in books can change people's lives. Stories in books and movies ARE my life. And I wouldn't change that for the world. I love that my life consists of stories. I love exploring stories and I love creating stories. And if there is one thing I know, it is that I will do this for the rest of my life. What's the point of living if you don't get to write?

It is crazy to think that I will become a writer at some point in time. It seems surreal. And I don't expect to make a lot of money from writing. But I know I will be happy as long as I get to write. If there is one thing I know, it's this.

Why I Write

By Katja Budich

Living in a democracy like Germany has given us the impression that expressing our opinions is something easy and casual, something that everyone does frequently and a lot of people do excessively. The ways in which we can express our opinion today are diverse. Whether you write professionally for a newspaper or online news site, whether you're socially or politically active or just like to express what you believe on social media – you have the possibility to do as you like.

And while it sometimes feels like some people should really rather not have the right to an opinion, the fact remains that free speech and thought is one of the greatest values of democracy, and one we must protect at all costs. So, why do I write? The answer is pretty simple: because I can.

When I was 14, I read George Orwell's "1984" for the first time. My dad had given me his copy, a special edition published in 1984 when he was eighteen. It was worn and battered, read many times, a favourite of my father's, who used to read to me and my younger sister, take us to museums and memorials and never thought us too young or too inexperienced to deal with difficult historical and social topics. I read the book with interest, but back then, I didn't really know what to make of it. The book was strange, intimidating and scary and didn't seem to quite fit into the world I was living in. We were on holiday in France, Paris to be exact, and the world was sunny and bright and full of free people with free thoughts and opinions. The book was an escapade, but one that didn't have anything to do with me.

Today, however, I have my own copy of "1984" and know better. Because while the world depicted in the book is still a dystopia, many things Orwell imagined aren't far off from situations occurring today – and that is scarier than any dystopian book could ever be.

We can see similarities and trends developing in certain directions like depicted in the book in many situations today. Take Putin's war on the Ukraine, for example. The Russian leader and his staff have managed to spread so much propaganda and fake information that a lot of people, especially young, impressionable users of platforms like Tik Tok, have trouble making out who is actually fighting whom and why. Who is the aggressor, who is in the right? A very similar thing happens in "1984", where no one actually knows which other nation they are fighting at the moment and just hate whoever the government tells them to hate. The same goes for those who the "1984" government labels as traitors – without question, the people accept that and start hating. This is dangerously close to what some leaders today do. Putin does it, Trump does it, raising his republicans into an army willing to believe whatever he tells them to believe – his "Truth Social" is a concept that might as well stem from Orwell's "1984".

"Free speech" and, most importantly, "free thought", is a concept that doesn't fit into a dictator's world view. That is why the government from "1984" established the thought police – a concept that scares me to death. The many ways in which "Thinkpol", the people searching for citizens who seem like they might commit a "Thoughtcrime", meaning a

thought or idea unapproved by the Party, are able to spy on the people of Oceania always scared me, because so many seem familiar. Microphones in the walls and telescreens that supervise you at any given time or place? That is basically just Siri, Alexa, Amazon Echo and our very own phones, mine currently lying right next to me and watching me write this. People pretending to be on your side to spy on you and report to the thought police? That's what China made their point system for, where the more obedient and silent you are and the more neighbours you betray, the more points and amenities you get.

Dictators all over the world are slowly but surely turning their own states into Orwellesque places full of surveillance, oppression and thought control. And even in democracies like our own country, free speech is harassed increasingly. Germany recently fell to place 16 in the global ranking of press freedom. And while we are still one of the best countries for journalism, like many other countries in Europe, attacks on journalists and reporters have increased significantly. People that are claiming no one can say their opinion out loud anymore are the ones attacking people that are responsible for saying opinions out loud. And why? Because they have a different opinion. That, to me, is called Fascism.

And here we have the problem with free speech – everyone has to get it, whether we agree with their opinion or not. And still – if we want to keep our world from becoming even more like Orwell prophesized, we have to protect free speech at all costs, and we have to protect everyone's free speech, as ridiculous and useless it sometimes seems. As Voltaire ingeniously put it: "I may not agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

And that, finally, is why I write. Why everyone who is able to should write, should express their opinion on any topic they like – because we can. So many people cannot freely express their opinion without fear for their lives. So, because we can, we have to. And maybe, someday, slowly, things will change again, and more people will be able to write. And maybe, it will be because we did write. Because we could.

Why I Write

By Beyza Yildiz

In school, my friends and I used to write each other letters where we talked about our daily lives and the things that annoyed us about teachers and other students. We would write the letters with our best pens, draw little flowers and hearts in the corners and put cute stickers on the envelopes before we sneaked the letters into each other's bags. I cannot remember how this secret started, but I am glad it did because in those letters we could write about things that we would be too shy to say to each other in a face-to-face conversation. I recall talking about my issues at home and how I was so scared of the final Abitur exams. Talking about my parent's disputes and how they affect me seems weird to talk about in a school break, doesn't it? Well, in letters it doesn't because my friend can just read it in private and my concern is still there – it is timeless.

On the Internet I once read about someone who advised reading when you feel underwhelmed or bored, and writing when you feel overwhelmed. The idea of writing whenever I felt very caught up in my own thoughts was very helpful at that time and became a habit since then. Taking advantage of one's blurred thoughts makes a lot of sense because it helps in identifying one's feelings and describing them in a way that depicts one's mood. Journaling or keeping a diary is one of the ways many people cope with stress and impulses of the outside world, but to me writing is usually the most helpful when I feel really sad and bottle up all the feelings inside of me. Then, writing is my only escape and I use it to express my thoughts, feelings, ideas, worries and concerns.

In my first years of school I used to hate tests that graded our writing skills because I could not organize my thoughts and put sentences on the paper that said what I meant. This especially had to do with my bilingual upbringing because I could think of the correct Turkish word for something, but not the German one. In characterizations for example, I had trouble finding the German word for scarf, even though I knew it in Turkish. This is still a problem that haunts me to this day, and English and a little bit of Spanish added to this. There is for example a Turkish word "keyif" which roughly translates to "enjoyment" in English, however, the connotations of this word are not the same. Problems like this drive me to be a better writer because I want people to understand the feelings and nostalgia the word "keyif" conveys. A one-word translation may not transfer the feelings this word carries, but when someone pours him-/herself a cup of black tea after a long day of work and drinks the tea with a nice piece of cake on the balcony, then "keyif" has a much better illustration than the mere translation "enjoyment".

In high school I had much more fun in writing because teachers allowed us to include our own opinions e.g., our evaluation of a historical event and its reception today. This encouraged my confidence in writing and later became one of my strengths compared to the sciences or maths. The task that I was most anxious about was getting easier with each writing task and I learned to overcome my insecurity concerning the language barrier caused by vocab-
confusion.

Today I write because it is one of the most important skills that a Bachelor of Arts diploma requires, but I also write because it helps clear my mind and strengthen my confidence in observation skills. It is important to write so everyone can be included in sharing the beauties of written pieces, no matter the language. While translation may be a barrier between the understanding of a word, writings can convey the same meaning by illustrating the adequate picture of the word. Additionally, writing creates a piece that is timeless and can be passed down to other generations, so that today's concerns, wishes and excitements can be understood by others in the future.

The Vicious Circle in Women's Football

By Christina Brauer

Roughly 100 years after football had been invented, women were finally, in 1970, allowed to play football as well. Before, football teams all over the world were legally **forbidden** to found female teams and let women use their football pitches. The official excuse was that football would harm the female body, soul and grace because of how masculine the sport is. But in reality this ban of women's football was just another misogynist move.

Three years after the ban had been annulled, my mom was born and all she wanted to do when she was younger was play football in the streets with the boys of the neighbourhood. But just because legally female athletes could join football teams and leagues didn't mean social approval allowed girls to play. Since football was considered a masculine sport where women could get dirty or fall and scrape their knees, her mom would always forbid her to join the boys outside. Since then, our society has luckily moved into the right direction. Nowadays there are plenty of female football teams, enjoying their freedom to do what they love. But the catch is, no one seems to care about them. Hence, it's understandably hard for women to establish themselves in the world of football.

It's a vicious circle. Just like many other sports, football is there to entertain an audience. But if the audience isn't interested, there's no point in making the sport in question public or supporting it so it can get better. That's the problem with women's football. The male version is much more appreciated by the audience so *men* get all the attention, brand deals and sponsorships. *Men* are promoted and shown on TV.

On the flipside, it's rare to catch a women's game on TV for this exact reason. People don't seem to be interested. But the reason they're not interested is the lack of knowledge about the female teams. Of course it's more fun to cheer for a team whose players you know by heart and maybe even look up to. A survey from 2021 backs my theory up. It shows that 40% of the 16.000 people that were consulted world-wide blame the lack of media coverage for their lack of interest. This goes to show how immensely the popularity of a sport depends on promotion. Another 41% state they would watch women's games if they were on TV. It's undeniable – the interest in women's football theoretically exists. Now it's the media's turn to set it free.

Statistics further show that the size of the audience in a football game severely differs depending on the gender of the players. On average, up to 500.000 people or more come to see the men's Bundesliga games in person whereas women's Bundesliga games are only visited by 5.000-15.000 people. A major reason why football fans prefer watching men's games is the "lower quality" of women's games. However, female football teams have a hard time improving without any recognition, sponsorships and the money that comes with it. While male players can make a living playing football and even a fortune if they're really good, women need to work another job part-time, sometimes even full-time to pay for all the essentials in life. These obstacles limit their training time. To give you some numbers, only about 50 female kickers in the world make more than 300.000 Euros a year by playing

football (– in comparison, men in the national team make several millions). No wonder men’s football is considered to be “better” than women’s football.

But there’s not just a pay gap between men and women. Especially teams in lower leagues lack essential resources. In the past, my mom’s team has gotten extremely lucky with sponsorships that funded their jerseys and additional clothing like sweatpants, windcheaters and thick winter coats. But this isn’t self-evident. My mom told me about a time when they had to wear the men’s old, worn-out jerseys and trunks that were way too big. A friend of hers who plays football as well summed it up perfectly: “All we really want is a decent football field and enough space for our fans to sit that *are coming!*” In the end, they want nothing more than to play good and fair football and have fun. But it’s not right to think that it’s “just women’s football” so it won’t matter where they play because nobody is going to care anyway.

Since football is so reliant on public interest it’s not enough to simply be good at it. The key nowadays is marketing. The only female football player that comes to my mind by name is Megan Rapinoe from the national team of the United States. When it comes to male players I could name Manuel Neuer, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Robert Lewandowski, Neymar...I could go on and on and I’m not even a huge football fan. But why is it so hard for female players to market themselves? After all, women in other sports, like the tennis star Angelique Kerber, have managed to do so. One could argue that women’s tennis has gotten increasingly popular over the last few years. Or maybe it’s hard to market a whole team as it is the case with football. But what about the countless famous men in football? Why is it impossible to market at least some of the female football players? Aren’t women interesting enough to stand for themselves? Whatever it is, marketing is the key to more recognition which is extremely necessary for women’s football.

Something that is the opposite of helpful when it comes to the public portrayal of women’s football in society is its negative connotation. The term “women’s football” is often used as an insult and totally devalues women’s performance on the field. This insult suggests that these women are subordinate to their male equals. Because of utterances like “They play like women” or “That’s women’s football” when men play bad football, it’s implied that playing this sport as a woman is something to be ashamed of.

It’s the overall attitude towards women’s football that needs to change. But it’s crucial to keep in mind that male teams are about a century ahead of female teams. Humans are creatures of habit. They’d rather stick to the old than to be open for something new. With the pay gap between men and women in any working environment getting more attention these days, it’s easy to simply argue that women should get paid the same as men. But it’s not that simple in sports because teams are heavily reliant on public interest as it is the condition for sponsorships and brand deals. Nothing comes from nothing. It’s hard but true. If teams don’t evoke as much interest, they won’t get paid as much.

That being said, that doesn’t mean it’s fair that men in this industry are much more privileged. They get to relax on their throne and watch women struggle in football from above. Men have already established themselves in football and all they needed to do was to be the first to officially play it. Now that women are doing the same, they have to work their butts off to escape the vicious circle and get even close to where men are today. But what’s new, am I right?

Why Watch *One Tree Hill*?

By Katja Kramer

I have started, finished, hated and loved *many* TV shows, but there is not a single one that could ever compete with my all-time favorite: *One Tree Hill*. Knowing how underrated and overlooked it is genuinely upsets me as it is a show truly everybody should watch. That is not only to be entertained, which is why most people watch TV shows in the first place. Certainly, *One Tree Hill* is one of those that are extremely enjoyable in that matter; although to this very show, there is much more than just its entertainment value.

With the plot starting in their high school days, the show follows the lives of a group of teenagers along with a multitude of other characters as they face various struggles, overcome them and finally turn into adults worth looking up to. Now, this might sound like any other teen drama and superficially speaking, I am not going to argue. This particular coming-of-age drama, however — with its variety of captivating storylines, its outstanding characters and its crucial life lessons — is like no other.

Undoubtedly, *One Tree Hill* has storylines some might deem overused — love triangles, teenage parenthood, creepy stalkers faking their identities — but other than that, through nine seasons, an extraordinarily broad range of topics and plots is explored. In high school, we witness the characters discover and express their talents, struggle in Math class, deal with immense pressure from the outside world, grieve a fellow student's suicide, try to find where they belong and much more. In adulthood, they are exposed to a variety of other challenges and realities of life: from a couple facing severe marital problems to another character suffering from infertility. Basically, *One Tree Hill* offers everything to keep its audience hooked — while also, to some extent, having it relate to specific situations and identify with the characters — and more: unexpected friendships that give us hilarious moments; teen marriage; kidnappings; cold-blooded murder; the excruciating depiction of losing a loved one. What really makes these storylines, though, is the people that are inherent to them; without these remarkable characters the plot would not work nearly as well.

This directly brings me my second argument to watch *One Tree Hill*: the characters. To know them is to love them or in some cases, you love to hate them. Major or minor, doesn't matter — every character is an essential part of the story; every single one is complex and every single one we enjoy watching unfold. It is undeniable that *One Tree Hill* has given us some of the most memorable fictional characters of all time. To name a few minor characters, we have reoccurring musician Chris Keller whom we on the one hand are annoyed by, but who on the other hand, is incredibly amusing; we have Coach Whitey Durham whose wisdom never fails to give us goosebumps; we have Quentin Fields whose name alone brings tears to my eyes. For some of the most exceptional character developments, we have Brooke Davis and Nathan Scott. We also have Dan Scott who, to me, is perhaps the greatest villain ever created for despite being a downright awful person, he still manages to make me feel for him at times. Every character is unique, special and almost every one is lovable; whenever I realize I haven't rewatched *One Tree Hill* in a while, I start seriously *missing* them. And as once a character on the show said, “if you miss [someone], that means you're lucky” — that means they are “worth missing.”

Speaking of quotes, a third reason why everybody needs to watch this show: all the life lessons. No work of fiction taught me as much as *One Tree Hill*. There is probably not one episode which does not contain at least one quote to relate to or live by and that is true until the very end. It would not only be impossible to list them all, but pointless too — one needs and deserves to have the *full* breathtaking experience of hearing them delivered by the characters and in the exact contexts they occur. I am convinced that everything I learned from this show and its characters shaped an overwhelming part of who I am today; for this, I remain forever grateful.

A little bonus argument to watch the show: the music. Along with basketball, music is a major theme in *One Tree Hill*; in fact, every episode except the pilot is named after a song and even its title was given to it by U2's "One Tree Hill." The soundtrack is amazing and makes an essential component of the show.

I could swoon over *One Tree Hill* indefinitely, but truth be told, I know my words will not do any justice to it in the long run; it's just one of those things one needs to see and experience for oneself and I really hope everyone will. No other show portrays love, friendship, loss and growing up in a comparable manner. No other show teaches you as much about some of the most important things in life: to never let others define your worth; to always be yourself and stand up for that person; to never stop believing in love, friendship and dreams; to face your fears and not be afraid to make mistakes; to never give up and at all times know that no matter how hopeless a situation might seem, there is always a brighter tomorrow. While I could easily name plenty of remarkable TV shows off the top of my head, no other show is *as* worth watching as the timeless masterpiece that is *One Tree Hill*.

Abortion in Danger

By Laurine Viel

Donna is from Georgia. She was eight years old when her stepfather started to abuse her. After another abuse by her stepfather, Donna became pregnant. She was fifteen years old when this tragic event occurred. She was scared to tell her mother that it was her stepfather's and lied, saying it was her boyfriend's. Donna could not fathom giving birth to a child, not only conceived by abuse but also by her mother's husband : Donna's stepfather. She therefore decided to abort. What else could she have done? What should she tell her child later? "My stepfather is both your grandfather and your biological father. Yes, and he sexually abused me from the age of eight to seventeen, when I was still a little girl." All the questions that came to her mind, but also the answers, seemed baffling, each one more than the other. It is inconceivable for a young girl and a mother-to-be to imagine having to explain this situation to her child. A mother wants the best for her child. That is, to allow her child to grow by protecting him or her as much as possible from what could hurt and distress him or her, which is in Donna's case impossible. Indeed, even before the child could be born, the conception that Donna experienced was a shattering and traumatic event for her. All the more so, since after the abortion Donna's stepfather did not stop abusing her. In fact, he continued until she was seventeen years old. Donna's story echoed in me when a month ago, the media outlet *Politico* published a document revealing that the Supreme Court had drafted a decision that would overturn the famous *Roe v. Wade* decision. This Supreme Court decision gave women safe and legal access to abortion and made abortion a constitutional right in 1973. Almost 50 years after *Roe v. Wade*; it is now time to stop restricting and challenging women's rights.

In theory, equal rights for men and women are simple. As the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". From this point on, there should be no doubts or questioning of these rights. However, from a physiological point of view, only women can get pregnant and therefore have an abortion. The foetus exists inside a woman's body, not a man's. Because men do not get pregnant and to restore equality, it is thus the woman's decision whether or not to have an abortion. If abortion rights are denied, then the woman's freedom is restricted. We cannot let the Supreme Court justices, made up of a majority of men, decide for us – women. It is not one politician or government official's decision. They act as if we, women, are heartless, irresponsible and incapable of making our own medical decisions. Our bodies will go through pregnancy and abortion as well; our voice must have more weight. Our body, our choices.

As a young woman of 20 years old, born in France, I have always known the possibility of having an abortion in complete safety. I never imagined that this fundamental right would possibly be taken away from me. Being privileged by my situation, by the country in which I grew up, I thought this right was inviolable. Innocently, it seemed impossible to me until then that countries allowing abortion could reverse their decision. I only thought possible that this right would be extended to many other countries, but not the other way around. What is even more striking and alarming is to think that it is the world's leading power that will possibly reverse its decision and take a step backwards. A country that in the eyes of the rest of the world is a country of progress, a country that thinks big, a country of success, a country that makes people dream, a country of freedom. It is therefore very frightening because being the first world power, the USA are considered as a role model and the risk, if they decide to modify the right to abortion, is that other countries will follow example as they have always

done. Only this time it will not have the same impact. This is not about the establishment of American shops or fast food chains in Europe or in any countries in the world. No, this is about a fundamental right that Simone Veil in France, in 1975, fought for too. In other countries, many women have also fought so that future generations will have more freedom. We, in 2022, do not want to go down that road again. Many women have already suffered too much and for them, we must preserve this legacy. Abortion must remain a right and as modern women, in 2022, we will fight and do everything we can to keep our abortion rights and have our voices heard.

For many women around the world, abortion saved their lives at a time when pregnancy was not a viable option for them or their prospective child. As a woman, I hope to never have to undergo an abortion. However, if for whatever reasons I want to terminate the pregnancy, I hope that like Donna, I will be able to decide on my own what I want to do with my body because no one else should make that decision, but me. In this case, I am hoping that I will be allowed to make use of the fundamental right to an abortion.

Caledonia Dreaming¹ – Why Scottish Independence is Inevitable

By Martina Wolf

I firmly believe Scottish independence is inevitable. It is merely a question of “when”, not “if”. The 2014 referendum results were extremely close, with those wanting to stay in the union winning by a slim majority (55.3% compared with 44.7% in favour of independence). These figures illustrate the complicated social and political relationship Scotland has with the United Kingdom. According to the National Records of Scotland 2011 census, 62% of the population identify themselves as Scottish, with only 8% identifying as British only and 18% see themselves as both British and Scottish². The feeling that Scotland is a somewhat “junior partner” in a union dominated by England, a feeling that has been growing at least since the failed referendum on devolution in 1979, was reinforced by the actions of the Westminster Parliament and other politicians both during the referendum campaign and in the years that followed. Despite Scotland getting its own parliament for the first time in 200 years in 1999, a large proportion of the population expressed their concerns that they were not properly represented and that their needs and worries were not acknowledged by Westminster.

As I write these lines, Britain is preparing for the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth (whether you want to call her the First or the second depends on which side of the Scottish-English border you live. I would call her the First, knowing that quite a few people will probably be outraged by this. But that is a hill I am willing to die on.) Britain’s longest-reigning monarch has been on the throne for 70 years and has had to weather her fair share of turbulent times, crisis, and upheaval. Interest in the monarchy varies considerably and at some point, its continuing existence was put in doubt, in Scotland more than in England. The majority of Scots in favour of independence would also prefer a republic to having a king or queen as head of state. This can be seen in the enthusiasm or lack thereof with which people across the nation are preparing for the Jubilee and their thoughts on the matter. According to a poll from “British Future”, only 48% of Scots are interested in the Jubilee and only 37% feel that it can help unite people.³ One thing is certain: there will be a lot less flag-waving and fewer street parties north of the border than there are in England. This has nothing to do with ill will, more with a genuine lack of interest in the monarchy. There are, quite simply, more pressing matters at hand, such as the war in Ukraine, the ongoing corona pandemic, and the sharp increase in the cost of living.

Since that fateful day of the first referendum in September 2014, a lot of things have changed. The Scottish National Party (SNP) managed to get a majority of seats in the Scottish Parliament, making them the strongest party by far and enabling them to push Scottish issues in Westminster and further the case for a second independence referendum. At the beginning of June 2022, the Scottish government set aside £20 million to pay for the next referendum; not a lot, considering the vastly higher costs of the Jubilee alone, which will cost the British government 650 times as much. But it’s certainly better than nothing and it shows that a second referendum is becoming a reality.

Brexit was another catalyst for change. In the months leading up to the 2014 referendum, pro-Union campaigners told Scottish voters that only as part of the UK would Scotland be able to stay in the European Union; Scotland, they claimed, would have to begin the long and complicated process of reapplying to the EU as an independent, small country. This claim of course backfired spectacularly when the UK voted in favour of leaving the EU in 2016 and

forcing Scotland – whose population overwhelmingly voted against Brexit – to leave alongside the pro-Brexit faction. In football, this would be termed a classic “own goal”, which helped the independence movement a lot. The question is, at what cost? A moment of “I told you so” compared to being dragged, reluctantly, kicking and screaming, out of the European Union and all the negative effects this has on the political and economic future of the nation is not really a price worth paying. Already, the UK is feeling the repercussions of Brexit; what happens in the long run remains to be seen.

Brexit and a strong SNP are two factors in the work towards independence. Other contributing factors include the current Conservative government’s continuing dismantling of the welfare state, its lack of interest in the less well-off, the mismanagement of the corona crisis and Boris Johnson’s ineptitude to fulfil his role as Prime Minister. As the well-known Scottish blogger *The Wee Ginger Dug* has stated in a February 2022 blog post:

“With the British Government proving that the institutions of the Westminster Parliament are incapable of holding to account a known liar like Boris Johnson, a man whose alleged law breaking is currently subject to a police investigation, the democratic argument for Scottish independence is now unanswerable. Independence is no longer required just so that the people of Scotland can be assured that Scotland will always get governments that the people of Scotland vote for and in order to be certain that policies like Brexit, which has never enjoyed the support of a majority in Scotland, will no longer be forced upon Scotland against its will.”⁴

The recently published findings of the Gray investigation have proven this point yet again: Boris Johnson is a serial liar who seems to think the laws don’t apply to him, only to others.⁵ It is precisely the fact that despite all of his shortcomings, blunders and mishandling of office, the Conservative party is still supporting him that proves to me that Scottish independence is inevitable. In a recent confidence vote, Johnson received the support of 211 Conservative MPs, 148 voted against him, meaning Johnson has the support of 59% of his MPs. The last eight years have proven again and again, that the so-called “family of nations” is breaking up: not only Scotland is dissatisfied with Westminster policies; voices pushing for independence in Wales are getting stronger as well. Brexit has also ignited tensions in Northern Ireland as well, since the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland now make up a hard border between the EU and a non-EU member state. The Union is creaking under the strain and quite a few people are taking a long, hard look at the political construct that has survived for so long. The feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction in the north of England, in Wales and Scotland, which started with Thatcher and deepened with each successive Tory government is finding another outlet in the various independence movements all over Britain.

Personally, I hope for another independence referendum, the sooner the better. It is my sincerely held belief that Scotland would be better off as an independent nation and EU member state. It is not an impossible dream; other small nations have proven to be very successful. As a former EU member, Scotland already fulfils the necessary criteria for membership and some of the current member states have signalled that they would approve of Scotland’s re-entry. The future of Scotland lies firmly outside of the UK, as a fully recognised, independent EU member.

1. A play of the same name, written by David Greig and directed by Iain Reekie for 7:84 Scotland, was performed at the 1999 Edinburgh Festival

2. Figures quoted from Homberg-Schramm, Jessica. *Colonised by Wankers Postcolonialism and Contemporary Scottish Fiction*, Modern Academic Publishing. 2018
3. “A quiet lie down in a dark room with industrial quantities of elephant tranquillisers”. *The Wee Ginger Dug*. <https://weeingerdug.wordpress.com/2022/06/02/a-quiet-lie-down-in-a-dark-room-with-industrial-quantities-of-elephant-tranquillisers/>. Accessed 02 June 2022
4. “The unanswerable case for independence.” *The Wee Ginger Dug*. <https://weeingerdug.wordpress.com/2022/02/02/the-unanswerable-case-for-independence/>. Accessed 21 April 2022.
5. “What is the Sue Gray Investigation.” *Institute for Government*. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/sue-gray-investigation>. Accessed 02 June 2022.

LAST WORD: Coming-Down-With-Covid-Chicken Soup

By Melissa Knox-Raab

I am reprinting a favorite recipe of mine here: Coming-Down-With-Covid-Chicken Soup

It's probably just a cold—tested negative. But this soup is delicious, inexpensive to make (about eleven euros for at least ten servings) and filled with flavor.

I took one important hint from Martha Stewart: start by putting the chicken in cold water. I didn't take her other piece of advice, which is to add a tablespoon of salt. Forget that. Start very simply: a large Dutch oven—I used my trusty *Le Creuset*. You will need:

- One pack of chicken wings or drumsticks—or if you want to get fancy, what Germans call a “soup hen.”
- One pack of “Suppengrün” (800 grams) which typically comes with a big hunk of celery root, three or four carrots, a leek or two, and fresh parsley.
- Garlic, fresh, lots
- Ginger – to taste, fresh
- A red onion or two
- Turmeric – fresh or powdered
- A strip (about eight inches) of Kelp (available in most stores selling Asian food products)
- Olive oil
- Dry vegetable broth

The recipe:

Remove the chicken wings from package and place them in the Dutch oven. Fill almost to top with water, cover, and set on stove to boil.

Slice the red onions, the garlic, the leeks and the ginger and sauté them in olive oil. Set aside. Rinse the celery root, carrots, parsley. Slice but do not yet add.

Check the chicken broth. After 20-30 minutes, scum will appear—take a small sieve, skim it off. Rinse the sieve and skim again. Cover chicken and let simmer around fifteen minutes more. Skim again.

Add turmeric, leeks, ginger, red onions, garlic. Stir. Let simmer around fifteen minutes.

Add all *except the parsley*. Allow to simmer till the carrots are soft. Stir. Taste. Add vegetable broth—to taste. I used two tablespoons full.

Add parsley. Stir. Consume! The chicken will be falling off the bones. You will feel much better.