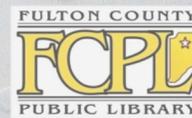


Ath·e·nae·um

VOLUME I ISSUE 5



FEBRUARY 2017

They were renewed by love.
The heart of each held infinite
sources of life for the heart of
the other.

-Fyodor Dostoevsky



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Heart: An Apocalypse



Along with Valentine's Day, February marks American Heart Month, a great time to commit to a healthy lifestyle and make small changes that can lead to a lifetime of heart health. The heart is rather enigmatic though. If you put the puzzle pieces together, all ten thousand of them, you may be surprised with what you see. Almost universally the heart symbolizes love. Love, what a violently misunderstood word. Red, what a terribly geometricized color.

Your heart is the gospel, literally four gospels, alchemizing your blood. These said gospels, the scientists call chambers: upper left and right atria, and lower left and right ventricles. The blood selflessly exchanges oxygen and nutrients for nitrogenous waste. Blue and shivering it returns home to warm itself until it once again burns crimson red. Your heart pumps blood in a predestined rhythm. This rhythm is apocalyptic.

By definition, gospel, or εὐαγγέλιον, ου, τὸ in Greek translates loosely in English to mean "good news." To write one must have an understanding of the gospel. I believe most of us have heart dis-ease, our anger and our longing both locked tightly away in Pandora's box, unsafely guarded by fear. Occasionally we open the box and gaze into the abyss, but fear's shadow makes our bodies tremble and we close the box as quickly as we opened it. It is easier to buy a lock and throw the key into the ocean, than prostrate before the vulnerability required to gaze into the abyss.

In a healthy heart, blood flows one way to heart valves, which prevent backflow. A heart valve opens or closes incumbent on a differential force from both sides of the heart, the two sides of our heart, the left and right, intimately in relationship. The scientist's call this tension blood pressure, the prophets call it love. Either way, this tension must remain for a heart to remain healthy. There is a mystery in this tension, a theurgic darkness.

As I was studying the heart, I remembered something I once read by Dionysius the Aeropagite, St. Paul's first disciple. Dionysius said in paraphrase, "Love is not the opposite of anything. Love has no antonym." It confused my mind, because the mind is used to context. If love has no antonym, then how can we understand it? Maybe we are not intended to understand it. Maybe if we understood it, we would lose hope. This paradox devoured me. I sang, with the Russian author of Crime and Punishment, Fyodor Dostoevsky, "the praises of my devourer."

“Patron” is a column in *Athenaeum* that focuses on someone connected to FCPL. This month I interviewed Kristyn Childers. She works in our Youth Services Department, crafts blackout poems, and recently self-published.

You work at the library. Do you intend on making a career working for libraries?

Yeah, probably. I am working at my own pace towards a degree in library science. Libraries feel like home to me in a certain sense.

What were you like as a kid?

I was a loner. I'd play with others, but as I grew older I preferred to read and write. I enjoyed being alone so I could think.

What do you wish others knew about you?

That I'm more than a girl who happens to love *The Little Mermaid*. I love many other things of interest like serial killers, poetry, and video games. I'm deeper than Disney.

Do you have a favorite book, or genre of writing, that has influenced you?

Too many! But there are a few that have impacted my life. *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, *Doomed Queen Anne* by Carolyn Meyer, *Night* by Elie Wiesel, and *Speak* by Laurie Anderson. I enjoy reading historical fiction.

Films of influence on your understanding?

My favorite film growing up was *The Little Mermaid* and it has always been “a feel-good classic” for me. Disney films are comforting in their simplicity. In an almost opposite sense I do like historical films like *Valkyrie*, *Apocalypto*, and *The Patriot*. I enjoy some comedy, but not all comedies.

Is there an obstacle you overcame in life that has impacted you meaningfully?

Depression. I've overdosed twice, but I feel it was a harsh, but necessary, lesson. Life is the longest thing you'll ever have to do and the key is to live the most of your days, not just see how long you can survive.

If you could answer any question?

Do we have souls and is there a place they go, or do they just wander. I have always wondered about the afterlife.

Does mythology play a role in your life?

I would say yes, a large part. I have studied Greek mythology mostly, but after Disney released *Moana*, I dug into Oceanian/Polynesian mythologies. The movie focuses on the demi-god Maui and how he pulled islands from the sea with his fishhook. Mythological explanations of nature are inspiring and answer some questions.

You recently self-published?

I published a book of poetry called *un/conscious*. It is sectioned into two parts. One part is my own thoughts and the second is inspired by Dadaism, an anti-art revolution. I expound more in the book to give people a chance to see my thoughts and feelings, to see me in a different light.

Who, or what, inspires you?

People do, sometimes. There are some people I adore, some that I really dislike, and others that I love to hate. I love my Grammie the most. Chloeann Choate has always been my role model, intelligent and caring. Amy Roe is a person that I aspire to be like too, motivated and humble. Certain events and emotions have impacted me enough to write, usually to express or vent.

Do you have any superpowers?

I don't think so. If I could ask whoever gives them for two, I would choose telekinesis and teleportation. Telekinesis would be great to clean a house and teleportation would be awesome because I could get anywhere instantly and be on time.

Do you believe in the concept of fate?

Life seems to be what you make of it— you decide. I do believe there is the luck of chance, like if I wasn't in a certain area at a certain time, I wouldn't have my friends.

If money was no object, what would you do with your time?

I would probably become a hermit. Try to find my favorite spot to live and stay there. I feel like an incarnation of Emily Dickinson at times.



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