

***My Life and Hard Times, or  
Down and Out in Athens, Ohio***

**David Bruce**



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**Cover Boy:**

**~~Brad Pitt~~**

**David Bruce**

**This is a collection of previously published material to  
form an autobiography of sorts.**

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## Chapter 1: My Life and Hard Times

I have been single all my life so far, and I expect to be single for the rest of my life. I like being alone. I know men who go hunting not because they like to hunt, but because it is the only time all year they can be alone for more than a few minutes. I am the type of person who likes to be alone for most of each day. I can visit family on vacation and be around people for most of a few days, but then I need to get back home so I can be alone.

Quite simply, I am the type of man who finds the life led by Jack Nicholson's character in *As Good as It Gets* to be quite attractive, except for the misogyny, and the racism, and the cowardice, and the obsessive-compulsive disorder, and probably a few other things. Still, he makes a good living by writing novels and he spends much of each day alone. Then he had to go and ruin it all by falling in love. (It's hard to believe that I have a sister — Brenda Kennedy — who writes romance books.)

To any women who write complaining posts on Reddit's Forever Alone thread, I apologize. I also give you permission to say that you and I used to be engaged to be married, but we called off the wedding due to a matter of life and death — we would have killed each other. You might be able to use this story to answer prying questions about why you haven't married or remarried yet. Add all the gruesome details you want. Be sure to blame me.

But I do have children, just not biological children. As a teacher at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, which is commonly confused with Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, I taught 60 or more adult children — usually from age 18 to 22 (Yay! No poopy diapers!) — each quarter, back when Ohio University was on the quarter system.

Most of my students were angels, but some were not. Unfortunately, I found plagiarism in student papers and in some cases I sent the student to University Judiciaries, where the most common punishment dealt to guilty students was being put on Academic Probation. Even more unfortunately, I am positive that I did not discover all the plagiarism that occurred. Most students, of course, worked hard and did not plagiarize.

Here's an example of academic dishonesty that was not committed by one of my students, but that one of my students told me about. My student and her acquaintance were taking a class in computer programming, but both were having a hard time learning the subject. When the final computer-programming project was due, neither had been able to complete it, but another student gave copies of his work to everyone who wanted it. My student was honest and did not pass off work as her own that she had not done. Her acquaintance, however, accepted a copy of the other student's work and handed it in as her own work. Result: My student failed with an F, and her acquaintance passed with an A. My student retook the class, learned how to program, put the class on her resume, and got a job as a computer programmer. Her acquaintance did not retake the class, did not learn how to program, put the class on her resume, and got a job as a computer programmer. My student was a good programmer and kept her job, while her acquaintance was not a good programmer and got fired. My student then made a Xerox copy of her paycheck and mailed it to her acquaintance with this note: "Ha! Ha!"

Among any group of people, of course, most members of the group will be angels and a few will be devils. Usually, one student will be high-maintenance and ask for special privileges such as handing in papers late without penalty or missing many classes without penalty. Let's face it, not everyone is competent. Some people can't work well on their

own, or with others, and their supervisors sometimes feel such people can't walk unless the supervisor tells them which foot to use to take the first step.

Here's an example of one of the students who failed one of my classes. The student missed my class one day, and so he sent me an email giving an explanation of why he missed my class: His alarm clock didn't go off. Hmm, the class met at noon!

Of course, sometimes students have better excuses for missing class. One student met with me before class started and asked to be excused because she fell nauseous after another class during which her professor had dissected a human leg. I excused her, but I also said that in a future year the leg being dissected might be mine because I have donated my body to the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine.

One student wrote this memorable evaluation at the end of one quarter: "If I ever have just one hour left to live, I hope that I spend it in David Bruce's class." Of course, I felt pretty good reading this, but then I read the next sentence: "One hour in David Bruce's class lasts forever."

Some of my students had email addresses other than their email address at Ohio University. Once in a while, a student would have as their email address drunkguy111@hotmail.com or partygirl111@gmail.com. Let's hope that they don't use these email addresses on their resumes.

Of course, any student can make mistakes. A student once sent me an email that began, "Hell, Bruce." No, he wasn't angry at me; he simply didn't proofread. He had meant to write, "Hello, Bruce."

Also, of course, you don't have to be a student to make a mistake. Channel 4 (Columbus, Ohio) News once gave a

quiz to help determine if you are a hypochondriac. After giving the quiz, the news co-anchor, Colleen Marshall, said, “If you think you are a hypochondriac, you should see a doctor.”

By the way, Columbus, Ohio, radio deejay Bob Simpson once asked listeners for silly pet names. One caller had a friend who had named his cat “Stir Fry.” Why? “It’s a threat.”

Back when I was a student at Ohio University, my roommate and his best friend wanted to go on Spring Break in Florida, but they had hardly any money, and certainly not enough money for food. They ended up stealing apples and brownies from the cafeteria. (Students were not allowed to take cafeteria food back to the dorms.) Of course, the brownies grew hard and stale, and they grew tired of eating apples, so they stole food from stores. They would go in a store, unwrap an ice cream sandwich, shove half of it in their mouth when no one was looking and then shove the other half in their mouth when no one was looking. God, of course, was looking, and God punished them with incredibly painful brain-freeze.

By the way, one of the students in my dorm had no morning classes, and so he slept late. However, his student meal card included breakfast, and so he would set his alarm, go to the cafeteria in his pajamas, bathrobe, and slippers, eat breakfast, and then go back to his room and sleep.

Also by the way, Ohio University frequently hosts such special occasions as Moms Weekend, during which students’ mothers come to visit them. I once got a big laugh at the beginning of a class by saying after one Moms Weekend, “I must be getting old. Some of these OU moms look hot!”

The angels among my students made me marvel at their work. I frequently taught freshman and junior composition and technical writing, and I attempted to make the writing my students did useful. I would assign the writing of a 10- to 20-page manual in many classes, but I would allow students to write more pages and many students responded with 60-page manuals. Why? They got into the project and knew that it would help them. They were writing for themselves, not just for a grade, which is the way it should be.

Two of my students who had studied in France as part of the Ohio University Study Abroad Program worked together on a manual for students who would be in that program. Jobs in France opened up that were associated with the Study Abroad Program, and both students applied for those jobs and both submitted copies of the manual they had co-written. One student was given a job immediately. The other student was officially a little too young, but she got the job after a slight delay. Why did she get the job? She got it because of the manual she had co-written for my class. In fact, the person who hired her was flipping through the manual and looking at and reading it as he talked to my student on the phone to tell her she had the job. These two students got paid to live in France. Nice!

Another student wrote a 60-page employee manual for the job he did working for the Ohio University football team. He was responsible for such tasks as getting things ready for game day. He was in Sports Sciences, and he ended up getting a very competitive job internship because he sent the sports organization a copy of the manual he wrote for my class.

Michelle Griesmer wrote a huge manual about how to be a lighting director. She worked professionally one summer on a TV program and was excited to get a copy of the program.



Of course, she looked for her name in the credits; unfortunately, she was listed as *Michael* Griesmer.

Another student did a long problem-solving manual for the company she worked for. She identified problems at the company and made recommendations about how to solve those problems. She was given a \$1,000 bonus for writing the problem-solving manual.

In my composition classes, I always had the assignment of writing a problem-solving letter in which students identify one or more problems and make recommendations about how to solve it or them. I have had students actually mail the letters, which was optional in my class. At least one student received the offer of a promotion and a raise to come back after graduation and work at that company. (She turned the company down because she had a better offer.)

One of my favorite assignments in some of my composition classes was the autobiographical essay, which focused mainly on funny incidents in my students' lives. I well remember many of those essays. For example, Maggie Wendell wrote about the first day of her first class as a freshman at Ohio University. It was a public-speaking class, and she was shocked when she learned that the professor was going to have the students speak for five minutes without preparation on a topic that the professor would tell them. Maggie is a student who likes to be super-prepared for every test and every assignment, so impromptu speaking is not at all her thing. When it was her turn and she got her topic, she immediately began staring at the back wall and spewing whatever verbal diarrhea came into her mind. She even invented an Asian-American friend as she talked about the *youth in Asia*. When her five minutes was up, she stopped talking and saw that the other students were looking at her and trying to stifle laughter. What was wrong? Were her pants unzipped? Her professor said, "Thank you, Ms.

Wendell, for your enlightening talk on the *youth in Asia*, but your topic was *euthanasia*. You may know it better as mercy killing.” She said weakly, “I know what euthanasia is,” sat down, and after the class was over, immediately dropped it and took another class. Fortunately, embarrassment plus time equals comedy, and by the time Maggie was a senior, she thought that what had happened was funny.

Of course, freshman students don’t want other, older students to know that they are new to campus. One of my students carried a campus map in her backpack for her first few days at Ohio University. Whenever she got lost, she would find a building, go into the women’s restroom, go into a stall and shut the door, and then look at the map and find out where she was. If any one had seen her consult the map, that person would know that she was a freshman.

Speaking of freshmen, one of my students was from out of state and did not know even a single person in Ohio. She spoke to her sister about being worried that she wouldn’t make any friends at Ohio University. Her sister told her, “Don’t worry! You’ll be fine! Just don’t talk to strangers!”

Each summer, lots of incoming students go through freshman orientation at Ohio University. They stay in dorms, go on tours of the campus, and visit the library, among many other things. After the library tour, students get free Freezy-Pops, but librarians tell them that a student first has to ask a question before the members of the tour group get Freezy-Pops. Of course, this encourages students to ask questions about the library; however, once an incoming student, a young woman of wit and intelligence, asked, “Can I have a Freezy-Pop?”

Other students, and their families, are people of wit and intelligence.

When my student Molly Gedeon was still a fetus, her parents had discussions about what to name her, but each parent thought that they had picked a different name. One parent thought she would be named Monica, and the other parent thought she would be named Molly. The name Monica appeared on her birth certificate, but her father insisted on calling her Molly. This created some confusion with friends and teachers because her mother called her Monica and her father called her Molly. On her eighteenth birthday, Monica had her name legally changed to Molly. Her father now calls her Monica.

One of my students was a United States Marine, where he had to take a wilderness survival course that taught him such things as bugs are a very good source of protein if you are trapped without food behind enemy lines. As part of the course, my student and some other soldiers parachuted into the wilderness, where they made good use of their problem-solving skills. As they parachuted into the wilderness, they looked around and noticed a road in the distance. Once they dropped to the earth, they used their compasses to find the road, then they walked into a town and ate pizza.

By the way, when David Bruce, one of the co-authors of this book, was in Navy boot camp, he and the other recruits were sometimes given the order to “Groucho March”! When that happened, he and the other recruits would bend forward, put their hands behind their backs, and in unison do an imitation of comedian Groucho Marx’ famous stooped-over walk.

When one of my female students was very young, she had a sister who would sometimes become very naughty and very angry. Once, she was naughty at the dinner table and was sent to bed early while the family continued to eat. My future student heard disturbing noises, thought about a recent nature lesson she had learned at school, and said to her parents, “Mom, Dad, a wolf is in the house.” They laughed,

and her mother told her, “No, dear, that’s just your sister howling with rage.”

One of my students was named Rachel. While very young, she attended a day care center that was run by a couple of Jewish women who would say a short Jewish prayer at lunchtime. Rachel learned the prayer, and then she asked her parents at home if she could say a prayer at suppertime. She then recited the Jewish prayer. Her parents were astonished at hearing her speak Hebrew, and she told them, “I figured out our secret. Rachel is a nice Jewish name, and we’re Jewish!” (Actually, they were Catholic.)

When they were children, Barbara G. and her sister used to create plays and perform them in front of their parents, who of course were wildly enthusiastic. Unfortunately, after Barbara and her sister grew up, their parents told them how much they dreaded watching those plays.

During a discussion at Ohio University about cheating, OU student Adam C. told a story about a high school student he had known in Indiana. The student had been an exchange student in Japan and knew Japanese well. Adam C. noticed that she had Japanese written on one of her wrists and when he asked her about it, she rolled up her sleeve and showed him that she had Japanese written up to her elbow. Adam C. asked her if she was getting ready to cheat on a test in Japanese, and she replied, “No — biology.”

Ohio University student Kimberlee Eichhorn’s mother knows sign language. She was once asked to sign the Miranda rights (“You have the right to remain silent ...”) at the police station to a person who was deaf and mute. By the way, at a store, Kimberlee once was standing in line behind a little boy and a little girl who plopped 20 pennies and a bunch of candy on the counter. The clerk said, “That’ll be \$1.20.” The little boy looked at the little girl and said, “I

don't think we have enough.” (Kimberlee gave them the dollar.)

One of my philosophy students saw a slaughtered cow when she was a young child, and as a result she stopped eating meat. Her parents wanted their young daughter to eat animal protein for her health, so they had to convince her to eat meat again. They finally figured out how to do that: they told her that meat grows on trees. (As a young, no-longer-so-naive adult, she became a vegetarian.)

The father of my student Emily Kresiak made a mistake when he proposed to her mother — no, Emily wasn't born yet. He proposed on April Fool's Day. He didn't know it was April Fool's Day, and he was surprised when she laughed at his proposal. Eventually, he learned that it was April Fool's Day, and she learned that he was serious, and Emily is very glad that she said yes.

Nathaniel S. grew up in a household in which the alarm clock was turned up very loud and was set to a radio station. One day, the station was playing a drama show about a fire, and when the alarm went off, the house was filled with the shouts of firemen and the sound of crackling flames. His mother ran screaming through the house, grabbing her children and making sure that they got outside to safety. Only after everyone was outside did they discover what had happened.

Lindsey DeStefano and her sister had separate bedrooms when they were growing up, but they always ended up sleeping in just one of the bedrooms. They used to do such things as scare each other. One sister would go out in the hallway while the other would hide. The sister in the hallway would then enter the room and walk around looking for the other sister, who would jump out from her hiding spot and scare her. They went to bed at an early hour, and part of their bedtime ritual was their father reading them a bedtime story and their mother telling them something each day that they

had learned or that they could be proud of. They were scared of monsters, but their father invented “monster spray,” which was ordinary water in a spray bottle. He would spray the room and sure enough, no monsters! Once, Lindsey called him back into the room to spray some more because she thought that he had missed a spot.

Rachel Harrison grew up with loving, but mischievous siblings. Her sister was beautiful and popular (so is Rachel), and boys often called her at home. This was before cell phones, and she and the boy would talk on a landline phone that was connected to another phone in the house. Their brother took the other phone, put it on mute, and then went into the bathroom. He then took the phone off mute and flushed the toilet. The boy talking to Rachel’s sister asked, “WHERE ARE YOU?”

I would sometimes teach students how to identify sexist and racist and discriminatory language and how to avoid writing it. One of my sample sentences was this: “Irish men are drunks.” Of course, I expected a student to identify this as a stereotype, but one of my students struck a blow for feminism by pointing out, “Irish women can be drunks, too.”

While in high school, my student Kate K. took a German class. Of course, students would use the word “*herr*” to refer to an adult man, with one exception: Their teacher made them call him “Mister.” Why? He did not want them to call him “Herr Ball.”

In a class on avoiding clichés and writing vividly, my students would take a cliché and give it a twist to make it a vivid expression. An example I gave my students was Tallulah Bankhead’s “I am as pure as the driven slush,” which is a variation on “I am as pure as the driven snow.” One of my students changed “Better late than never” to “Better late than later.”

By the way, I tend to wear what I want. Once I find a comfortable shirt, I will buy several of them and not worry about wearing different styles. However, I used to constantly wear solid-color shirts, but when I found out that my students were making bets on what color of shirt I would wear I did buy a few shirts with stripes of different colors.

One of the goals I had for each of the students in each of my classes was for them to lead lives of wit and intelligence. Many of my students achieved that goal. Of course, Ohio University professors and staff are also witty and intelligent, as seen by the following stories.

When English professor Calvin Thayer talked about Falstaff, the fat rogue living on his wits in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays, he would recite a long list of Falstaff's traits: Falstaff is an alcoholic, very fat, a spendthrift, white-bearded, etc. From when I attended Ohio University graduate school, I remember that when Dr. Thayer, who had a white beard, mentioned Falstaff's white beard, he looked shocked, glanced up at his students, and protested, "There's nothing wrong with *that*, of course."

When Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* first came out, Shakespeare scholar Samuel Crowl saw it at his local cineplex, where the number of teenyboppers who had come to see Leonardo DiCaprio play Romeo surprised him. When Mr. DiCaprio's Romeo and Claire Danes' Juliet first met, a young DiCaprio fan sitting behind Professor Crowl whispered, "Don't touch him, you bitch."

English professor Frank Fieler knew and loved books. Frequently he would make wise acquisitions for OU's Alden Library. Once, in England, he had almost succeeded in acquiring some important first editions at an auction when a bidder for another university — that was rich because of Texas oil money — spoke up and gave a bid that was twice as large as Dr. Fieler's. The bidder was showing off his

university's wealth by waiting until the bidding was almost over, then jumping in with a big bid. Dr. Fieler was so angry that he bid the first editions up until the other fellow's bid was way over the books' true value, then Dr. Fieler stalked out — to the applause of the other people in the auction house.

In the free-wheeling days of the 1960s, Edgar Whan and other English professors used to throw Frisbees in Ellis Hall.

Some students and professors show the haters that they are wrong. Robert DeMott and Dave Smith became friends in the early 1970s. They had a number of things in common that facilitated their friendship: They were or would become editors, scholars, teachers, and writers, plus both had been told as undergraduates by professors that they were “not smart enough or able enough to amount to much in the ‘real’ world” — predictions that they ignored. Mr. DeMott (actually, Dr. DeMott) became a noted John Steinbeck scholar at Ohio University, and Mr. Smith became a noted poet. By the way, at times, learning excites students. During Spring Quarter of 1970, Dr. DeMott offered a course titled “Writers of the Beat Movement.” The course drew so many students that there was standing room only, with many students spilling out of the classroom and into the hallway. Later in 1970, he taught an Honors course on beat poet Gary Snyder — the class met in a teepee on property owned by an OU art professor.

Robert Roe served in the tank corps in Africa during World War II. One day, while driving a tank he ran out of gas in the desert; an Arab saw him and tried to speak to him, but neither spoke the other's language. The Arab shrugged, went to a nearby clump of trees where he had a cache of gasoline, then filled Mr. Roe's tank with gas. Mr. Roe not only reads Old English, but he also reads Marcel Proust in French. As an undergraduate at a time when professors were more



autocratic than they are today, he took a French class but had a hard time in it. He needed the professor's permission to drop the class, but when he asked the professor for permission, the professor glowered at him. This so unnerved Mr. Roe that he left the professor's office and learned French.

John Jones specialized in Milton and Swift as an English professor. One day, a freshman student came to Professor Jones' office and asked him why he should take his course. Professor Jones pointed to one bookshelf, then another. "Milton! Swift! What more do you want?"

When English professor Barry Roth first came to OU, he was asked to teach a course on mysteries. But instead of teaching mysteries by such people as Agatha Christie and Rex Stout, he taught such "mysteries" as William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*.

Classics professor Steve Hays says that he doesn't want his students to graduate only to write poetry to themselves in coffeehouses; humanity can be well served by engineers, journalists, nurses, physicians, dentists, and lawyers. Dr. Hays points out that building a better fuel injector is a wonderful way to serve humanity. When he was taking university classes, he would go through the Student Catalogue and circle the names of professors who had graduated from such schools as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton and then try to take classes from those professors.

OU physiologist Fredrick Hagerman, who worked at NASA, vouches for the authenticity of this anecdote about the first man to walk on the moon: Ohio-born astronaut Neil Armstrong. The first words he spoke on the moon are famous — "One small step for man; one giant leap for mankind" — but he said other things on the moon, including, "Good luck, Mr. Gorsky." At first, people assumed that Mr. Gorsky must be a Russian cosmonaut, but no Russian

cosmonaut had that name. For a long time, Mr. Armstrong declined to reveal who Mr. Gorsky was, but after years had passed, he said that the Gorskys had died and so it was OK to reveal the story. It turned out that the Gorskys were next-door neighbors to the Armstrongs when Neil was growing up. One day, during a game, a ball was hit into the Gorskys' yard, and young Neil went to get it. The ball had landed near an open window, and Neil heard the Gorskys arguing. In particular, he heard Mrs. Gorsky yelling, "Sex? You want sex? I'll tell you when you'll get sex! You'll get sex when the kid next door walks on the moon!"

In the 1970s, OU President Claude Sowle decided to hold public meetings at which college deans would argue for money for their departments. Of course, these were spectacular events at which college deans wore caps and gowns and argued passionately for money. At one such public meeting, Dr. Henry Lin, Dean of Fine Arts, began his remarks by saying, "*Ni hao*, Dr. Sowle." Of course, he was speaking flawless Mandarin Chinese, and he continued to speak flawless Mandarin Chinese — which Dr. Sowle did NOT understand — for the rest of his remarks, occasionally using a Chinese abacus to emphasize a financial point. At the end of Dr. Lin's remarks, President Sowle told him, "Henry, you know I don't understand Chinese, but I've never understood you more clearly than right now — you need big bucks!" (By the way, Dr. Lin is the father of Maya Lin, the genius who designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.)

Artists frequently work with nude models. OU art professor John "Jack" Baldwin and his wife, Bunny, once took a vacation in Mexico, where they went to a clothing-optional beach. Bunny pointed out a particularly beautiful naked woman to Jack, who told her, "Bunny, I am here on vacation. I am not here to work."

An OU art professor once wrote a letter in which she used as many words beginning with the letter F as possible. She called it her F-word letter.

Margaret “Peg” Cohn, Dean Emerita of the Ohio University Honors College, remembers carpooling with other mothers. On one occasion, she had a carload of children when they came across an intersection in which someone had written in large letters a four-letter word beginning with “F” and ending with “K.” Ms. Cohn’s seven-year-old carefully said each letter aloud, then asked, “Mom?” Ms. Cohn braced herself, afraid that she would have to give a sex education lesson to a carload of children, but fortunately her seven-year-old asked merely, “How did they do that without getting run over?” Ms. Cohn answered that question, happy that she had remembered “a cardinal rule for parents: Be sure what the question is before you give the answer.”

Women’s sports and women athletes have not always been respected. For example, in the 1960s (well before Title 9), Catherine L. Brown used to teach field hockey at OU on a field that was also used by ROTC cadets. Sometimes, the ROTC cadets would act as if the women athletes were invisible and march onto the field — even during games. On one occasion when this happened, the ROTC cadets were standing at attention — meaning that they could not move — so Ms. Brown ordered the game to continue, and she rewarded each woman athlete who managed to hit the legs of an ROTC cadet with the ball.

Philosophy professor Warren Ruchti studied under the famous philosopher Nelson Goodman, author of *Ways of Worldmaking* and other important books, at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Goodman’s intelligence was awesome, and Dr. Ruchti tells several anecdotes about him. A visiting lecturer once was busily writing numerous premises for his arguments on the chalkboard before his lecture when Nelson

Goodman walked in. Dr. Goodman glanced at the columns of premises, and then told the visiting lecturer, “You have contradictory premises — look here and here.” The lecturer said, “Oh my gosh, you’re right!” Another time a visiting lecturer gave a long, involved talk at a colloquium. At the end of the talk, Nelson Goodman looked at Warren Ruchti and said, “He hasn’t got the answer,” and then walked out of the room. Nelson Goodman moved on to Harvard, from which he retired, but he has not been forgotten. The Ruchtis’ family pet was named in honor of the eminent philosopher: Nelson Gooddog.

Many people don’t regard reading, writing, and learning as working. Philosophy professor Robert Wieman decided to clean his office one day, so he got sweaty moving furniture around and throwing away heaps of old, outdated files. A maintenance worker passed by and said, “You’re the first person I’ve seen working around here.” By the way, Dr. Wieman once told his students, “I have more children than I have fingers, and all but one of them totalled a car by their eighteenth birthday.” Also by the way, Dr. Wieman was my main advisor when I was working on my Master’s thesis in philosophy. At a volleyball game between philosophy professors and philosophy students, I managed to score a point against him. I noticed that he didn’t look too happy about it, so as soon as I could, I let him score a point against me. I could have blocked the ball, but Mama Bruce didn’t raise her little boy Davy up to be no fool.

A student once wanted to interview Ohio University zoologist Scott Moody for a term paper on herpes simplex after learning that Dr. Moody taught herpetology. However, herpetologists study amphibians and reptiles, while virologists study viruses such as herpes. Still, the student’s mistake was not as bad as it may sound. Interestingly, “herpetology” and “herpes” share a common root word, “herpo,” which means crawling. As Dr. Moody explains it,

“‘Herpeton’ means creeping, crawling creature. The earlier naturalists used this term for the slow sprawling terrestrial vertebrates (lizards, snakes, turtles, salamanders) in contrast with the more active terrestrial vertebrates (mammals and birds). The first herpes described scientifically was ‘herpes zoster’ or shingles. The way a shingles infection manifests itself is as an outbreak of skin rash and blisters that then spread in a linear fashion, hence crawl in one direction. The Greek word ‘herpes’ was chosen as the genus name for this group of viruses.”

Here is a story that Scott Moody tells his friends: “When I was a graduate student living in Germany collecting data for my doctoral dissertation, I often used the public bathroom at the Berlin Train Station. One of the ‘sanitary engineers’ who happened to be an older woman got her jollies by waiting until there was a long line of men urinating in the contiguous urinal stand, then she would flush real hard, spraying water everywhere, causing men to jump backwards while urinating on the floor or on themselves, displaying their shagadelic [fans of the Austin Powers movies will recognize the reference] tools, and so forth. I witnessed this several times, and it was always the same ‘putzfrau.’”

Ohio University sports publicist Frank Morgan occasionally talked at elementary schools about sports. Once he explained that baseballs are made of horsehide, and a horrified little girl exclaimed, “You mean they kill horsies to make baseballs!”

I used to write for *The Athens News* in Athens, Ohio, partly to make extra money and partly to show my composition students that I am a competent writer. I once wrote a preview story for an Ohio University School of Dance performance. The only place for interviews during a rehearsal was in a closet, so Ohio University dance teacher Michele Geller told the dance students, “This is David Bruce. He is going to

interview you for a story he is writing for *The Athens News*, so don't be shocked if he asks you to go into a closet with him."

I remember the first article that I wrote for *The Athens News*. It was about the OU women's basketball team and appeared just after Thanksgiving in 1983. I was standing in line at a bank just behind a man who was reading a copy of *The Athens News*. He came to my article, read the headline, and then started to turn the page. I tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Sir, I wrote that article. Please read it."

A janitor at Ohio University is a good problem-solver. OU students aren't supposed to drink soda, coffee, or other liquids in classrooms, but several do anyway — and they leave behind their cans and bottles, creating a huge mess for janitors. One janitor made a statement by collecting all the cans and bottles in each classroom and stacking them up on the professor's desk in the classroom. The next morning the professors reminded their students not to bring liquids to class.

Ohio University engages in problem-solving occasionally. For example, students often create their own paths on a green instead of walking on the concrete sidewalks or brick pathways. Of course, this means that the grass is killed where the students frequently walk. To keep students from creating their own paths, OU groundskeepers sometimes put a load of stinky manure right where the students like to walk.

I mostly enjoyed my years at Ohio University except for the devil students and that time Parking Services booted my car. (What! You couldn't just give me a ticket! OU fundraisers, take note: Don't even think about asking me for money! I gave! This happened years ago, and I still get angry when I think about it.)

The booting of my car happened just after Halloween. Athens, Ohio is reputed to be one of the most haunted places in the world, and when I was a student at Ohio University, some friends and I heard that if you went to a certain place at midnight on Halloween, you would see your future. We followed the directions carefully and arrived at the location exactly at midnight. It was a cemetery.

Now I am retired. The students I wrote about have graduated, and the professors I wrote about have mostly retired or died. I have been spending my retirement happily writing such books as *Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose*, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose*.

## **Chapter 2: Down and Out in Athens, Ohio**

### **My Mother**

Poverty is not a good thing to experience, but poverty exists and we ought to know about it.

The word “poor” has two meanings: 1) lacking money (impoverished), and 2) lacking quality. I will be writing about poor people, by which I mean people who lack money. I think we all know that some high-quality people don’t have a lot of money.

My mother grew up poor in Georgia. She and her brothers and sisters ate a lot of lard sandwiches. A lard sandwich is a slice of bread, spread with lard, and sprinkled with a little sugar, if your family could afford sugar. Often, my mother’s parents couldn’t afford sugar, and their lard sandwiches were sprinkled with salt.

We would not call this nutritious food, but fat fills the belly, and lard is 100 percent fat — and it was cheap.

Sometimes, my mother and her siblings would steal vegetables from the next-door neighbor’s garden. He knew they were stealing vegetables, but he never said anything about it.

For a time, my mother had one dress and one pair of underwear. Once a week, she would stand behind the door, as she called it, take off her dress and underwear and wait until her mother hand-washed them and then let the sun dry them on a clothesline.

Georgia is hot, and in the days before air conditioning — and my mother’s family could not have afforded air conditioning even if it had been invented back then — every door and every window was open.



One day when my mother was standing behind the door, her boyfriend came to visit. How old was my mother? Old enough to be embarrassed.

As an adult, one of my mother's first jobs was working in a store that sold clothes, including baby clothes. One day, a woman walked in with a baby. The woman was not well dressed, and the baby was wearing rags. The woman set the baby down on a table displaying baby clothes, stripped the baby, and started putting new clothes on the baby. My mother looked at the woman and knew that she would not be able to pay for the clothing. But my mother helped her dress the baby and then watched as the woman carried the baby out of the store without paying for the new clothing.

One way out of poverty is to marry someone with a job, and my mother got out of poverty by marrying my father.

### **My Uncle**

My mother's brother wanted to escape from poverty, so he tried to run away from it. He stole a car so he could drive up north where he hoped to find opportunity, but he got caught and ended up on a Georgia chain gang for several months. In a chain gang, prisoners are shackled every few feet by the ankles to a long length of chain to keep them from escaping. They work in the hot sun while shackled to the chain, and when they sleep, they are shackled to the bed. No freedom, hard work, hot sun, no pay, bad food, and some mean guards.

When my uncle got released from the chain gang, he hitchhiked up north. He did what a lot of people trying to escape from poverty do: He drifted. He drifted from town to town, seeking opportunity and not finding it. He worked when he could, but the jobs were temporary and low pay. My uncle slept rough often, and he was hungry often. Once, when he was completely broke and completely hungry, he saw a restaurant with a buffet and went inside and asked to

He said, “I am very hungry, I don’t have any money, and I would appreciate it very much if you would give me any food that the restaurant is going to throw away. I will be happy to wait by the rear entrance until you are ready to throw away food.”

The manager told him to sit down at a table, and then the manager went to the buffet, loaded a big plate high with food, and gave it to him free of charge.

One way out of poverty is to get a good job, and my uncle got out of poverty by getting a job working with sheet metal.

My uncle’s work ethic helped him. His employer sent him to California to do some special sheet-metal work, and the people in California wanted to keep him there. They explained that their California employees liked to come to work late, leave early, and take many days off. It was difficult to get someone who would show up and do the work they were supposed to do and were paid to do.

My uncle was also good with money. He got married, bought a house, and raised six children. Each time he made a mortgage payment, he paid extra money so he could pay off the mortgage faster.

If there was a sale on food, he bought lots of it. He had a large pantry, and if there was a sale on peanut butter, two jars for the price of one, he would buy twelve jars and sometimes go back the next day and buy six more jars.

If you went in his pantry — a closet set aside to store food — you saw that it was packed with food. If you went in his kitchen, you saw that he had taken off the doors of the high cabinets in which he stored food so that he could see the food. If you went in his bedroom, you saw that he had all the regular bedroom furniture, but he also had lots of shelves he had installed. The shelves were loaded with things that he had bought on sale that he knew his family could use: food

(of course), light bulbs, toothpaste, toilet paper, etc. His bedroom looked like a warehouse.

Once he made a bad purchase: he bought a case of baked beans. Beans are beans, but the sauce they came in can taste good or bad, and the sauce these beans came in tasted bad. His kids told him, “Dad, throw those beans away! They’re awful!”

But when you grow up poor, you don’t throw beans away. For a long time, whenever my uncle and his family ate baked beans, they ate a mixture of one can of good baked beans and one can of bad baked beans.

My uncle’s kids never had to eat lard sandwiches, and neither did I.

### **My Students and I**

I was never the kind of poor that my mother and uncle were, but I did have times when I worked low-wage jobs and could have eaten better. That happens to a lot of people, including college students and people pursuing creative careers. Sometimes, people want be independent and not ask Mom and Dad for help. This can make it hard to both eat good food AND pay the rent.

For a while it seems like I lived on peanut butter-and-jelly cracker sandwiches except that I couldn’t afford jelly. I was like my uncle and stocked up on peanut and crackers when they were on sale. I also got bags of apples and bags of carrots occasionally.

Don’t think I was hungry. For a while, I worked at a place where I could eat all the doughnuts I wanted, so I weighed 40 pounds more than I do now and resembled the Pillsbury Doughboy.

Once, I was looking forward to getting my paycheck. I like doughnuts and peanut butter and crackers, but eating them every day gets old. I was looking forward to getting my paycheck and eating something good.

I was going to get a sub, and not just any sub — I was going to get a 12-inch sub.

I even wrote a song — songwriters, take note. It goes like this: “I’m going to eat tonight! I’m going to eat tonight!” Repeat 10 or 11 times.

I got my paycheck and it was exactly two cents more than my rent, which was due. So I went to my landlord and signed my paycheck over to him and got two cents back.

My landlord was a nice guy and offered to wait a few more days for the rent, but I turned him down. I didn’t have any more money coming in and if I spent my paycheck on food, I wouldn’t be able to pay my rent. I did not want to sleep rough.

After paying my rent, I went to my one-room apartment with bath and ate peanut butter and crackers.

Two weeks later, I got another paycheck and ate a 12-inch sub.

I got out of that kind of poverty — which a lot of people go through — by earning my degrees and getting a good job in the OU English Department teaching composition.

Many of my assignments were practical writing because I wanted my students to get jobs when they graduated. My assignments gave students things to talk about at job interviews and papers to add to their writing portfolio.

For example, I assigned a problem-solving letter in which students would write someone and make a recommendation about solving a problem. No one was allowed to write their

roommate and recommend that he or she take more showers, but they could write a former manager about ways of increasing profits, raising employee morale, and improving customer satisfaction.

I learned some things from students by reading their assignments, some of which were autobiographical essays. Sometimes I could read between the lines and realize some things that the student may not have realized.

Some of my students wrote about special nights when everyone would eat pancakes for supper. Kids like pancakes with syrup or sprinkled with sugar or spread with peanut butter, so these were really special nights.

If this happens once, then Mom and Dad are probably tired and don't feel like cooking, but sometimes they happened a few nights in a row.

When and where I was growing up, it wasn't unusual for a mother to send a kid over to borrow a cup of flour or a cup of sugar or a couple of eggs. The family was having a special-pancake supper because it was the end of the month and money and food were running low.

Parents really do take special care of their kids. Jerry Clower, a country comedian, remembers that when he was young whenever his mother made chicken, she would tell her kids, "Save the back for me! That's my favorite part!"

Of course, a chicken back is not good eating, and when he got older, he realized that his mother loved her kids and wanted them to eat the best parts of the chicken.

Kids often realize later in life what their parents did for them when the kids were growing up. Sometimes a single mother would sit her kids down at the dinner table, feed them, and not eat. Later, the kids would see her eating peanut butter and crackers. When they got older, they would realize that

there wasn't enough good food to go around, so the mother would feed the kids first, eat what they left behind, and then fill up on peanut butter and crackers.

One of my students wrote about one of the best weeks in her life. She was in elementary school, and one day she got off the school bus and went inside her home. The electric lights were off, and her mother and father were wearing jackets inside the house.

Her parents told her that they had a special treat for her: They were going to go camping — in the living room.

They used candles because you don't have electric lights when you go camping, her parents made a tent out of a rope and blankets, and her mother cooked on a tiny portable camp stove that was normally used by backpackers. The "campfire" was twelve tealights (small candles) on plates in the middle of the living room; they cooked marshmallows over those tealights. Her parents sang camp songs and told scary camp stories, and they told family stories about how Mommy and Daddy met and what their little girl was like as a baby. My student had a really fun time camping out in the living room because her parents made it a fun time: She had lots of quantity time and quality time with her parents.

Then one day she came home from school, walked inside her home, and the electric lights were on and the house was warm.

My father made good money as a power lineman, but before he went to lineman school, his job was turning off people's electricity if they couldn't pay their bill. Sometimes, he would knock on the door of a run-down trailer, and a poorly dressed pregnant woman, or a poorly dressed woman holding a baby, or a poorly dressed woman with a couple of toddlers standing behind her would answer the door. Often, the poorly dressed woman wouldn't have the money to pay

the electric bill, so my father would tell her that she needed to pay it quickly or her electricity would be cut off. He would then mark on a form that no one was home at the trailer because if no one was home he wasn't allowed to cut off the electricity. He always had to give them a chance to pay their overdue bill, and if they weren't home, they didn't have that chance.

Make no mistake. It's good not to experience poverty, but I think it's good to know what poverty is as long as poverty exists.

### **Chapter 3: David Bruce's Open-Mic Nights**

**I do spoken word. See following pages for some examples.**



## **Fred Flintstone Supports Drag Queens**

**Take a look at what Fred Flintstone wears. Obviously, he thinks it is OK for a man to wear a dress.**

**I have known a few men who have worn dresses or skirts in public. They weren't all gay.**

**One guy wore a dress as an experiment to see whether it is true that USAmerica is the land of the free and the home of the brave.**

**He figured, "I'll be brave and wear a dress, and I'll see whether I am free to wear a dress."**

**He thought that he might be beaten up — or cat-called.**

**But this is Athens, Ohio, and all that happened was that some women gave him tips on how to get a good fit.**

**After a few days or a week, he stopped wearing dresses.**

**He wasn't gay.**

**Another guy I know loved fashion.**

**He used to watch the Oscars, the Tonys, the Grammys, and the Emmys awards shows and criticize the men for all wearing the same thing: black tuxedos.**

**The women, on the other hand, wore fabulous dresses, with many colors, many designs, and many designers.**

**He thought, *Why should the women have all the fun?***

**And he began to wear women's clothing — quite well, in fact.**

**He wasn't gay.**

**A police officer got married.**

**On their wedding night, the wife went into the bathroom and came out wearing a lovely nightgown.**

**Then the police officer went into the bathroom and came out wearing a lovelier nightgown than his wife was wearing.**

**He said, “I can’t help this.”**

**His wife said, “I love you, and I accept this. You don’t need to worry about it. It’s not a problem.”**

**It is common for a wife to buy a mastectomy bra and for the salespeople to be kind, solicitous, polite, and all-around great people.**

**It is also common for a wife to be tempted to say, “I don’t want to mislead you. I don’t have breast cancer. I haven’t had my breasts removed. My husband just likes to wear a bra.”**

**There are other reasons to wear a dress or a skirt, or something like a skirt.**

**I have recently seen a guy wearing a Scottish kilt, perhaps as a way to show pride in his Scottish heritage.**

**My name is David Bruce, and there was a King David Bruce of Scotland, and so I suppose could wear a kilt if I wanted to.**

**I think more men may be wearing skirts and dresses in the future because of global warming.**

**It’s simply true that skirts and dresses are cooler than pants.**

**I tell you what. If next summer is hotter than this summer, if you see me on Court Street, I will be wearing shorts.**

**I don't want to wear a dress, but I don't care if other guys want to.**

**“Fiddler Jones” by Edgar Lee Masters**

**“Fiddler Jones” is a poem that was written by Edgar Lee Masters and published in his 1915 book SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY. This book of poetry is public domain and can be downloaded free from many websites**

**Pretend that you are in a cemetery and that the ghost in each grave talks to you and tells you about his or her life in free verse (which does not have a rhyme scheme or a regular meter). The poets here tonight may want to try to a poem in the style of Edgar Lee Masters.**

**This ghost is named FIDDLER JONES, and you can by his name what he did in life. He created musical art.**

**Fiddler Jones will mention a man named Cooney Potter who was materialistic rather than artistic.**

**FIDDLER JONES SAYS TO YOU:**

*The earth keeps some vibration going*

*There in your heart, and that is you.*

**COMMENT:**

**The word VIBRATION is interesting because music vibrates. The vibration of fiddle strings creates music. The vibration of vocal cords creates speech and sound.**

**FIDDLER JONES SAYS TO YOU:**

*And if the people find you can fiddle,*

*Why, fiddle you must, for all your life.*

**COMMENT:**

**When people know that you make music, people want to hear music. In 1915, most music was live, although Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877.**

**FIDDLER JONES SAYS TO YOU:**

*What do you see, a harvest of clover?*

*Or a meadow to walk through to the river?*

**COMMENT:**

Two different people can see the same thing: a field of clover. But they can have very different thoughts about that field of clover. A person such as Cooney Potter sees something that he can use. He can bale the field of clover and feed his herding animals in the winter or sell the bales. Fiddler Jones sees a meadow to walk through to the river.

**FIDDLER JONES SAYS TO YOU:**

*The wind's in the corn; you rub your hands*

*For beeves hereafter ready for market;*

*Or else you hear the rustle of skirts*

*Like the girls when dancing at Little Grove.*

**COMMENT:**

Two different people can hear the same thing: the wind blowing in the corn. But they can have very different thoughts about that rustling sound the corn makes. Cooney Potter thinks that it is time to sell his cattle (so he won't have to feed them in the winter and sell the hay bales), but Fiddler Jones thinks about the skirts of young women rustling as they dance.

**FIDDLER JONES SAYS TO YOU:**

*To Cooney Potter a pillar of dust*

*Or whirling leaves meant ruinous drouth;*

*They looked to me like Red-Head Sammy*

*Stepping it off, to "Toor-a-Loor."*

**COMMENT:**

I think that a pillar of dust is dust swirling around in a circle like a miniature tornado. Dry leaves can also swirl around in a circle. To Cooney Potter these sights mean drought and a bad harvest, To Fiddler Jones, it looks like Red-Head Sammy dancing.

**FIDDLER JONES SAYS TO YOU:**

*"How could I till my forty acres*

*Not to speak of getting more,*

*With a medley of horns, bassoons and piccolos*

*Stirred in my brain by crows and robins*

*And the creak of a wind-mill — only these?*

*And I never started to plow in my life*

*That some one did not stop in the road*

*And take me away to a dance or picnic."*

**COMMENT:**

Fiddler Jones did not make a lot of money in his life. The time he spent fiddling was time that he did not work on his farm.

**FIDDLER JONES SAYS TO YOU:**

*I ended up with forty acres;*

*I ended up with a broken fiddle —*

*And a broken laugh, and a thousand memories,*

*And not a single regret.*

**COMMENT:**

Chances are, Fiddler Jones started up forty acres: the number he ended with. The fiddle may have been broken through much use. The broken laugh may be from old age. The last line is important: He had not a single regret.

Edgar Lee Masters also wrote a short free verse poem about Cooney Potter. He started with forty acres, and he increased it to a thousand acres by his own hard work and self-denial and by the hard work of his wife and two daughters. He also died before he was sixty years old. He says that he died from

*Eating hot pie and gulping coffee*

*During the scorching hours of harvest time*

Sometimes people want all music to be free (and there is lots of free music), but I think that all music should be free when all food, clothing, and shelter are free.

In the meantime, I don't mind paying for music on Amazon or Bandcamp.

I want to conclude first by saying that there needs to a balance in life. We need to make a living, and we need an art to enjoy or practice. We need to 1) make a living, and 2) make the living worthwhile.

I also want to conclude by saying THANK YOU to all the performers tonight and all the other nights. I have heard Bruce Dalzell perform more than any other performer, and I always enjoy his music.

**“The Man He Killed” by Thomas Hardy**

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

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

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

**“He thought he’d ’list, perhaps,  
Off-hand like — just as I —  
Was out of work — had sold his traps —  
No other reason why.**

**“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."**

**Notes:**

**A nipperkin is a small cup of an alcoholic drink such as beer.**

**Traps are personal belongings.**

**Half-a-crown is British money.**

**COMMENTS:**

**I support Ukraine in the war resulting from the Russian invasion of a sovereign country, but every time I celebrate a Ukrainian victory, I am also celebrating the deaths of many young Russian soldiers.**

**I support punishing Hamas, but I know that many innocent Palestinians with no connection to Hamas will almost certainly be killed in the coming weeks.**

**I don't have any answers, except this: Maybe God should out "Thou shalt not kill" in a holy book.**

**Oh, wait. God already did that.**

**I guess that only the dead have seen the end of war.**

## **Peace On Earth. Good Will Toward Men [Humankind].**

**Unfortunately, there's a lot of war going on now.**

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**“And When the D\*mned Russians Come ...”**

During World War I, the Russians were advancing against East Prussia, and an East Prussian named Mr. Siebert thought it would be a while before they arrived. Therefore, he stayed longer in his house with his ill wife and his two children, Lena and Gustav, than he should have. The children were doing their homework. Lena was attempting unsuccessfully to solve a difficult math problem, and Gustav was writing an essay in German. Actually, the title of the essay was a quotation from Horace in Latin: *Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori*. Gustav began his essay by translating the Latin and then writing about the Russians: “Yes, it is sweet and glorious to die for one’s country. And when the d\*mned Russians come ....” Just then, word arrived that the Russians were very near and that the family should leave immediately. They did, and they left most of their possessions and all of the children’s homework behind. Time passed, and eventually it was time to return and see if anything was left of their house and possessions. Mr. Siebert was prepared to see that their house had been destroyed, and he was happy to see that it was still standing. In fact, it was in remarkably good shape, although the windows had been broken, the doors had been taken off their hinges, and lots of dirt had been tracked into the house. Mr. Siebert even found his children’s homework! A Russian soldier had solved the math problem for his daughter, and had finished the German composition for his son. The son had started the essay with “And when the d\*mned Russians come ....” and the Russian soldier had continued the essay with “... they come only

because their Emperor wishes and it is their duty, and for some, my dear German boy, it is very hard.” The Russian soldier then wrote about his own home and his own son and daughter. He wrote that his daughter wished to study in Germany, where the Russian soldier and his wife had once lived happily for many years, then he wrote, “That is impossible now, but let us hope, not forever. For these times, which are cruel enough to teach even children to swear, will pass. When you are grown up, people will, I hope, have remembered again that they are human beings and what a good thing that is.” As for the quotation from Horace, the Russian soldier felt that it was “right enough,” but “it is still more sweet and glorious to live for your country and to work for its peace, no matter whether it is your German fatherland or that of us ‘d\*mned Russians.’” The composition was signed, “Your enemy friend, Dr. Paul Fedor Heidenkamp, Lieut.”

The above is my retelling. Below is the original source: Bernhard Diebold, collector and editor, *The Book of Good Deeds: 1914-1918*, pp. 15-18.

### **GERMAN COMPOSITION**

THE landlord Siebert from Skaisgirren fortified himself with a good draught of toddy and began his story: “Yes, you are quite right, the Russians acted like barbarians in East Prussia, I am the last to dispute that ... But one must be just ... I might tell you a little story that speaks very differently. And it is true, because it happened to myself, or rather to my boy Gustav. By the way I can even prove it; I have the corpus delicti in my pocket ... Well, it was August, 1914, and what that meant in East Prussia we all know. Nothing more can be said about it except, God spare us a repetition to all eternity! Amen! Prost! Well, one day we were sitting in our little house,—my good father built it and it lies at a little distance from the village towards the woods—and we were

wondering whether next morning we should be off to Königsberg. Most of our neighbors were off already, but I had a sick wife and two children, Lena and Gustav, and so it was hard for us. For, besides the house and a little land, we had not much left except a small sum put aside for a rainy day. We had already packed, as much as we could get on one cart, and now we were waiting. The shepherd from the estate had said that the Russians were still a long way off. And we had confidence in him, as he was an ex-service man.

I was smoking my pipe, my wife was knitting and the children were doing their vacation homework. Lena was doing a frightful sum which she could not work out at all, and Gustav, the boy, was writing away at his German composition. You can see for yourselves, here is the exercise book, but please don't look at more than the first page. You'll soon see why."

He took a blue exercise book from his breast pocket, rather dog-eared and dirty, smoothed it out with his hand and laid it before us. On the cover was written:

German Composition Book

Gustav Siebert. Upper III.

and on the first page the title was written: "Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori" (Hor. Od. Ill, 2, 13). Then came the first sentences: "Yes, it is sweet and glorious to die for one's country. And when the damned Russians come ..."

Yes ... when the damned Russians come—so far the little rascal had written, and then they came. The shepherd came rushing out of the forest like a madman and shouted: "Mr. Siebert, they are at the castle, for God's sake hurry!" And he was off again while we without even stopping to think, rushed out into the courtyard, my old lady and the children were packed in and hey presto! off we went as fast as we could into the gathering darkness. Everything was left on the

table as it was, the knitting, the slate with the sum, a plate of bread and butter and the composition book. As we turned the corner, I saw the door still standing open, and I thought “Good lord, you should have taken the gun along,” and my wife cried “the chickens!”—but there was nothing to be done about it. It was really terrible at first, meeting other people also in flight, and during those two days we saw more tears than bread. But all that has been much better described than I can do it. Maybe you can’t describe it so well if you actually were in it.

Well, we got safely to Königsberg, where I had relatives, and we were certainly better off than many others, for we remained together. Meanwhile time passed—and then came Hindenburg—[Prost! Yes I’ll drink to that and gladly]—and we refugees began to think about getting back. Gentlemen, but my heart was heavy as news of the devastations came from all around. What was I to do if my poor little place were burned down? With trembling and in trepidation I drove home, alone for the first time. I thought, “I’ll have to break it gently to the wife.” And then came the first miracle.

Everything all around was in ruins and burned down, and a trench ran right through the churchyard. But my house (I mentioned before that it was a little distance off) stood there quite intact; at least from the outside. The windows were smashed, the doors off their hinges; but the house stood, I couldn’t think why. On tiptoe I crept in: I tell you I was still thinking the cholera must have been there, or that something lurked inside—but no, it was empty and the rooms, except for an ample deal of war dirt, in good order. There were heaps of straw where the men had slept, a knout lay in a corner and a rag with brown spots on it which may have been blood, but nothing had been taken from the cupboard! And the table stood at the window, exactly as it had stood six weeks ago when we fled, only of course dirtier and the bread and butter gone. The knitting had been thrown on the floor,

but amid rags, straw and cigarette packets, lay the slate and the exercise book side by side. And then came the second miracle: the sum had been worked out, and the composition had been written to the end.... There now, you don't believe me. But seeing is believing, now you can turn the page."

This we did and we read, in neat handwriting, and in good German, how the opening sentence went on—"When the damned Russians come" Gustav Siebert of the Upper third, had begun, and someone else had continued:

"... they come only because their Emperor wishes it and because it is their duty, and for some, my dear German boy, it is very hard. For I, who am writing this, have also a little home like this, and it also stands among trees, and there are two children in it, a boy and a girl. The boy's name is Fedor and he has a little horse on which he wanted to ride out to war, but he was too young. And the girl's name is Nina and she wanted to study in Germany where her father and mother were for many long years and were very happy. That is impossible now, but let us hope, not forever. For these times, which are cruel enough to teach even children to swear, will pass. When you are grown up, people will, I hope, have remembered again that they are human beings and what a good thing that is.

Remember me to your parents, and tell them that I have saved their little house as much as possible. And remember me to your teacher, as a colleague of his in Kurland, and ask him to explain to you that the poet Horace is right enough when he says that it is sweet and glorious to die for your country; but that it is still more sweet and glorious to live for your country and to work for its peace, no matter whether it is your German fatherland or that of us 'damned Russians.'

Your enemy friend,

Dr. Paul Fedor Heidenkamp, Lieut."

— Paul Block, *Paris*.

You can download for free the book this came from here:

<https://freeditorial.com/en/books/bernhard-diebold-s-the-book-of-good-deeds-1914-1918>

## CONCLUSION

I have no real answer to war. In my opinion, some wars have a right side and a wrong side. We need to fight justified wars, such as when another country invades our country without good reason, but we need to avoid starting unjustified wars, such as invading another country without good reason.

The only thing I can suggest is to vote carefully. Soldiers don't start wars; leaders do. Vote for someone who will fight a war when necessary, but who will not start an unjustified war.

## **The Seven Deadly Sins**

1) Pride — A sinner who is guilty of Pride thinks, “I am the center of the universe, and I am better than other people. Quite simply, I am more important than other people.”

2) Envy — A sinner who is guilty of Envy thinks, “I am the center of the universe, and if you have something I want, I envy you.”

3) Wrath — A sinner who is guilty of Wrath thinks, “Because I am the center of the universe, everything ought to go my way, and when it does not, I get angry.”

4) Sloth — A sinner who is guilty of Sloth thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so I don’t have to work at something. Either other people can do my work for me, or they can give me credit for work I have not done because if I had done the work, I would have done it excellently.”

5) Avariciousness and Prodigality — A sinner who is guilty of Avariciousness or Prodigality thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so I deserve to have what I want. If I want money, I get money and never spend it, or if I want the things that money can buy, then I spend every penny I can make or borrow to get what I want. Either way, I deserve to have what I want.”

6) Gluttony — A sinner who is guilty of Glutton thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so I deserve these three extra pieces of pie every night. This is my reward for myself for being so fabulous.”

7) Lust — A sinner who is guilty of lust thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so my needs take precedence over the needs of everyone else. If I want to get laid, it’s OK if I lie to get someone in the sack and never call that person afterward. My sexual pleasure is more important than the hurt of someone who realizes that he or she has been used.”



Many of the sinners in the Inferno believe themselves to be the center of the universe. According to Dante's cosmology, the Earth is the center of the universe. Circle #9 of the Inferno is at the center of the Earth. Lucifer is at the center of the Circle 9.

What is at the exact center of the universe? I know. It is inside Lucifer. The exact center of the universe is that place where food is not food anymore.

### School Legend: A Short Story

“What are you doing?”

“I think it’s pretty clear what I’m doing,” my Aunt Clara replied.

She was right.

Clearly, she was using lipstick to color the end of a tampon red.

Aunt Clara said, “Coraline, I think you want to ask *why* I am doing this.”

She was right.

I asked, “Why are you using lipstick to color the end of a tampon red?”

“Watch the end of the show tonight, and you’ll see why,” Aunt Clara answered.

She then taped the red-tipped tampon on her thigh under her skirt.

Aunt Clara is a punk rocker, and she was preparing for a show.

Her all-woman band is called The Blazing Molotovs, and they are locally and regionally known and have no ambition to become nationally and internationally known.

Aunt Clara, aka Clara Molotov, and her bandmates Mara Molotov, Patty Molotov, and Puella Molotov have lives to lead outside music, and as long as they can play most weekends at bars in and around Athens, Ohio, such as the Union, the site of tonight’s show, they have no desire to become rich and famous and lead rock star lives.

Aunt Clara once explained, “The dumbest thing I’ve ever heard is ‘Live fast, die young.’ I’ve got stuff to do and a long lifetime is not long enough to do it, much less a short lifetime.”

The Blazing Molotovs, as a group, also reject any kind of lifestyle that would slow down their creativity.

“Too many stars — and especially superstars — put out an album every two or three years,” Aunt Clara explained to me once. “Not that the Blazing Molotovs ever could be superstars or even stars, but if we were, I hope that we would continue to put out as much music as we want and as we can. I can’t imagine writing just one good song every two or three or four months. And I hope that we would never sign a contract that told us what and how much music we could release.”

The Blazing Molotovs are very much a Do It Yourself punk band.

They knew each other from Athens High School and like punk fans everywhere, they heard the Ramones, learned to play three chords, and started a band.

Aunt Clara once told me, “The first time we practiced, we wrote a song. We were so excited that we wanted to perform it immediately, so we went to the Union, and the band playing that night let us use their instruments. Halfway through the song, we realized that we had forgotten to write the end of the song, and so the end was a train wreck, but we still got applause from the audience — lots of creative people were in that audience.”

In my opinion, although I wasn’t there, the Blazing Molotovs performed well that night — just being on stage for the first time is a triumph. Later this night, I got to see the purpose of the red-tipped tampon at the end of a good performance.

The Amazing Molotov Cockgirls finished with an angry song about the patriarchy, toxic masculinity, and misogyny, and then Aunt Clara reached under her skirt, grabbed the red-tipped tampon, held it out so the audience could see it, and yelled, “ARE YOU AFRAID OF WOMEN? YOU SHOULD BE!”

Then she threw the red-tipped tampon into the middle of a group of men.

Fun ensued.

That was Saturday night.

Monday was school at Athens High School, and during lunchtime some of us girls met in one of the girls’ bathrooms and discussed a major controversy.

“Did you hear about Susan and Mr. Amorphus?” Beverly asked.

Beverly is someone I would want to be in my band if — when — I start a band.

“No,” I said. “What happened?”

“Susan’s period started in Mr. Amorphus’ English class, and she asked to go to the bathroom. He said no, and she told him that her period had started, and he still wouldn’t let her go. He even told her to hold it in and go after class was over. Can you believe it?”

“Hold it in!” I said. “He’s an adult. Doesn’t he know that periods don’t work that way?”

“He’s an adult, yes,” Beverly said. “But he’s a guy, and some guys don’t know much about periods — or about women.”

“What happened?”

“Susan bled through her pants — just a little and she cleaned it up quickly — and she had to go to the school nurse, who called her mom. Can you imagine the embarrassment?”

Actually, I could. When I was fourteen, I bled through my pants. Fortunately, a kind woman pulled me aside and quietly said to me, “Pardon me, but you have a stain on your pants. Do you need a pad or tampon?”

I already had what I needed, thanks to my mom’s insistence on my keeping emergency supplies in my purse *and* in my school backpack. And fortunately, I was wearing a hoodie that I could tie around my waist.

The consensus in the girls’ restroom was this: Somebody ought to do something.

I agreed. I was NOT on my period right then, but I wanted to be able to go to the bathroom if I ever had an emergency period situation, just as any girl would.

I also formed a consensus of one: I was the person who ought to do something. Mr. Amorphus was my English teacher, and I had a class with him coming up.

I then affixed some strips of tape to my thigh under my skirt.

The other girls watched me, and they wondered what I was going to do.

I told them, “If you’re in English class with me, you’ll see. If you aren’t in English class with me, you’ll hear about it.”

In the middle of English class, I raised my hand and asked, “Mr. Amorphus, may I go to the bathroom, please?”

“No, you may not,” he said. “Stay here and learn something. Your education is important.”

“I agree that my education is important, but my period has started, and I need to go to the bathroom.”

“Stay here until the end of class,” Mr. Amorphus said. “Just hold it in.”

“Periods don’t work that way, Mr. Amorphus,” I said. “If I stay here, I will bleed through my skirt and onto my seat.”

“No, you may NOT go to the bathroom,” Mr. Amorphus said.

“OK, Mr. Amorphus,” I said.

I took a tampon and a wet wipe out of my purse, and I went to the wastepaper basket in a corner of the classroom.

With Mr. Amorphus and the students, including boys, watching me, I unwrapped the tampon, threw away the wrapper, and spread my legs.

I reached under my skirt and used the strips of tape to securely affix the tampon to my thigh under my skirt.

I threw away the tampon applicator, used the wet wipe to clean my hands, and threw away the used wet wipe.

Then I went to my school desk and sat down.

Mr. Amorphus and some of the boys in class were very red in the face.

Another girl in class raised her hand and asked, “Mr. Amorphus, may I go to the bathroom, please?”

“Of course,” Mr. Amorphus said.

Some girls abused the privilege for a while, and then they settled down and behaved correctly.

In that year’s school yearbook, I was named “School Legend.”

## YouTube Video Ideas

These Public Domain ideas are by David Bruce.

1) A young woman in college was going through a Goth / Punk phase, and she wore heavy, scary makeup most of the time. Sometimes, she didn't take off the makeup even when she was going out for a run in the park. One day, she was running in the park while wearing the heavy, scary makeup, and a masked man jumped out from behind a bush, grabbed her arm, and said, "I'VE GOT YOU NOW!" The scary Goth woman said, "THE POLICE ARE AFTER ME!" Scary masked man ran away in one direction, and scary Goth woman ran away in the opposite direction.

Alternatively, the young woman can be clean-cut and when she says, "THE POLICE ARE AFTER ME!" the masked man can laugh at her. So she says, "I'M A SHOPLIFTER!" Lots of clean-cut young women are shoplifters, so the masked man runs away.

2) A man was trying to pick up a woman, and he was persistent even after she made it clear that she was not interested in him. Finally, she asked, "May I borrow your phone?" He handed her his phone, and she looked through the contacts and saw a contact labelled "Mom." She called that number, and when his mom answered, she said, "Your son is trying to pick me up, and I have told him over and over that I am not interested, and he is persistent even after I have made it clear that I am not interested." They talked for a minute or so, with the woman giving the man's mother a few details, and then she handed the phone back to the man and said, "Your mother wants to talk to you."

3) A man was walking one way on the sidewalk, and a woman was walking toward him on the sidewalk. When they got close, the man said, "You're a bit too thin for me." The

woman replied, “You’re a bit too thick for me.” They kept on walking past each other.

4) Two women were riding their bikes in the neighborhood when a man working on his roof began to catcall them. The two women got off their bikes, walked over to his house, knocked the man’s ladder over, and then they got on their bikes and rode away.

5) Some men are scary, obviously, but other men are not scary. A man was arguing with a woman on a bus. The man was standing up, and the woman was seated. Eventually, the man got so angry that he kicked the seat the woman was sitting on. This is, of course, an act of violence. A quick-thinking man ran up behind the angry man and grabbed the top of his sweatpants and pulled them down to his ankles. The quick-thinking man then stood between the woman and the angry man, and he stared at the angry man. The angry man pulled his pants up and walked back to his own seat. The woman thanked the quick-thinking man, who said, “You’re welcome,” and he went back to his seat and sat down. The angry man got off the bus at the next stop.

6) This story is just about a man who simply did the right thing. A woman ordered a pizza and thought she had time to take a quick shower before it was delivered, but she heard the doorbell ring as she was wrapping a towel around herself after the shower. She went to the door and let in the pizza-delivery man. She handed him her credit card, and he handed her the pizza, and — oh! my goodness! — her towel accidentally fell to the floor. Pizza-delivery man immediately turned around so he couldn’t see her, and she picked up the towel and held it in front of her. Pizza-delivery man finished the credit-card transaction and handed the woman her credit card and the receipt by holding it over his shoulder and behind his back, and he left.



7) A woman went into a coffee shop and a man there tried to pick her up. She did not want to be picked up, but the man was persistent. The woman bought two hotdogs and two Cokes. She went to a table and put down one hotdog and one Coke on each side of the table. She sat down. The man sat down opposite her. She pushed her hotdog and her Coke toward him, and then she got up and left. The man had a decision to make: Does he get up and follow the woman, or does he stay and eat? The man stayed and ate.

8) A husband and wife are passionately kissing in their bedroom.

Suddenly, someone says, “Cut! That was terrible! Go find some bushes and practice!”

The somebody is one of their daughters, who has been filming them.

The wife says, “But we’re married!”

The husband says, “And we have kids!”

The wife says, “And you’re one of them!”

The husband says, “And who said you could film us!”

Another daughter walks into the bedroom and says, “I don’t have anything to wear. Can I wear something of yours, Mom?”

She opens the closet door and looks through the clothes and says:

“Mom, I didn’t know you were a cheerleader.

“Mom, I didn’t know you were a nurse.

“Mom, I didn’t know you were a Japanese schoolgirl—

“Oh.”

A third daughter, who is very young, walks into the bedroom, and goes into the closet and takes out of a drawer or a box a pair of pink furry handcuffs. She holds them high and says, “Mom, can I take these to school for Show and Tell?”

The wife takes away the handcuffs and says, “You better take a stuffed animal, honey.”

The girl next door walks into the bedroom and sees the pink, furry handcuffs and says:

“Hey.

“Wow.

“Neat.

“Can I borrow those?”

The husband and wife shoo out the girls, and the husband says, “Honey, are you willing to be Helen of Troy tonight?”

She says, “Sure, if you’re willing to be Conan the Barbarian.”

\*\*\*

Please, someone take these stories and make videos to put up on YouTube, Vimeo, or wherever. In the case of the pizza delivery, the woman can be wearing a two-piece swimsuit so you don’t get censored.

## Free Advice

- **Rise above.**

Theater director Tyrone Guthrie advised his actors and crew to do this. The advice means to rise above whatever forces are working against you. All of us have personal problems. No one's life is perfect. Sometimes, life seems to conspire against us. Rise above all that, and produce the best work you can.

- **Astonish me.**

Dance impresario Sergei Diaghilev advised his choreographers to do this. The advice means what it says. Do such good work that the person who commissioned the work — and of course the audience — is astonished. (Tyrone Guthrie also used this phrase.)

- **Do it now.**

As a young man, choreographer George Balanchine nearly died and so he believed in living his life day by day and not holding anything back. He would tell his dancers, “Why are you stingy with yourselves? Why are you holding back? What are you saving for — for another time? There are no other times. There is only now. Right now.” Throughout his career, including before he became world renowned, he worked with what he had, not complaining about wanting a bigger budget or better dancers. One of the pieces of advice Mr. Balanchine gave over and over was this: “Do it now.”

- **Go out and get one.**

Ruth St. Denis once taught Martha Graham an important lesson when Ms. Graham was just starting to dance. Ms. St. Denis told Ms. Graham, “Show me your dance.” Ms. Graham replied, “I don't have one,” and Ms. St. Denis advised, “Well, dear, go out and *get* one.” (Everyone needs

an art to practice. Your art need not be dance. Perhaps your art can be writing autobiographical essays. Of course, you may practice more than one art.)

- **Ignore bad critics.**

If the Moldy Peaches (the main members were Adam Green and Kimya Dawson) had asked me for career advice, I would have told both of them to keep their day jobs because neither of them can sing. Of course, they would have ignored me and gone on to record “Anyone Else But You,” which appears on the soundtrack of the movie *Juno* and which I think is a very good song (but I still don’t think that either of the Moldy Peaches can sing).

- **Work a little harder.**

“I think high self-esteem is overrated. A little low self-esteem is actually quite good — maybe you’re not the best, so you should work a little harder.” — Jay Leno.

- **The only way to do it is to do it.**

Asked “What’s the best advice anyone ever gave you?” choreographer Merce Cunningham replied, “‘The only way to do it is to do it.’ It’s advice I gave myself as a young man, and I continue to give to students now.”

## **Appendix A: David Bruce's Kindle Desktop Publishing Account Termination**

### **AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING**

THIS IS AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING'S EMAIL TO ME (I read it 2-8-2022):

Hello,

We are terminating your account effective immediately because we found that you have published titles with misleading content that have the potential to mislead or defraud our customers.

You can see the violations reflected in the following title(s):

B08LNLCLBN/William Shakespeare's "King Lear"; A Retelling in Prose

As part of the termination process:

- We will close your account
- You're no longer eligible to receive any outstanding royalties
- You'll no longer have access to your accounts. This includes, editing your titles, viewing your reports and accessing any other information within your account
- All of your published titles will be removed from sale on Amazon

Additionally, as per our Terms and Conditions, you aren't allowed to open any new KDP accounts.

You can find our Terms and Conditions, here: [REMOVED HERE BUT PUBLICLY AVAILABLE]

**DAVID BRUCE**

THIS WAS MY REPLY:

The two books in question are

*William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*

and

*The History of King Leir: A Retelling*

They are two separate books. *The History of King Leir* is a source for Shakespeare's famous tragedy: *King Lear*.

How about we remove from sale *The History of King Leir*? That way, readers will not be confused.

While we are at it, I have two other books — not flagged by you — with similar titles:

*The Taming of a Shrew: A Retelling*

and

*William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose*

*The Taming of a Shrew* is a source for Shakespeare's famous tragedy [Oops! Should be comedy]: *The Taming of the Shrew*.

How about we remove from sale *The Taming of a Shrew*? That way, readers will not be confused.

To avoid confusion and to provide a better value to readers I can combine plays.

The two Lear/Leir books will become one book.

The two Shrew books (a Shrew/the Shrew) books will become one book.

No misrepresentation [Oops! Should be misrepresentation] is/was intended by me.

David Bruce

**AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING**

AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING GOT  
BACK TO ME QUICKLY

Hello,

Thank you for the email concerning the status of your account.

After reviewing your response, we have reevaluated the Content Guideline violations relating to the titles in your account.

We found that you have published titles with misleading content.

As a result, we are upholding our previous decision to terminate your KDP account and remove all your titles from Amazon.

If you have questions or believe you've received this email in error, reply to this message.

If you would like to review our Content Guidelines, please visit:

<https://kdp.amazon.com/self-publishing/help?topicId=A2TOZW0SV7IR1U>

Kathryn  
Amazon Content Review Team

AND:

Hello,

We've reviewed the information you provided and we are upholding our previous decision to terminate your account and remove all your titles from sale on Amazon.

As a result, we will not be reinstating your account.

Please note that, per our Terms and Conditions, you are not permitted to open new accounts and will not receive future royalty payments from additional accounts created.

Logan  
Amazon Content Review Team

**DAVID BRUCE**

I contacted KDP again on 2-14-2022:

Please check your emails to me.

The email before the account termination stated that KDP would NOT publish my book

*WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S KING LEAR: A RETELLING IN PROSE.*

Since KDP stated that it would NOT publish the book, I assumed that I had plenty of time to finish other projects before looking at this book and perhaps deciding not to publish it.

One other thing to keep in mind is that the book is a retelling of a play. Shakespeare titled his play *KING LEAR* and I cannot change his title.

And Anonymous titled his play *THE HISTORY OF KING LEIR* and I cannot change that title.

Thank you.

David Bruce

**AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING**

AGAIN, AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING GOT BACK TO ME QUICKLY (2-15-2022):



Hello,

We've reviewed the information you provided and we are upholding our previous decision to terminate your account and remove all your titles from sale on Amazon.

As a result, we will not be reinstating your account.

Please note that, per our Terms and Conditions, you are not permitted to open new accounts and will not receive future royalty payments from additional accounts created.

Logan

Amazon Content Review Team

**DAVID BRUCE**

I did not send this to AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING, but let's look at the two titles:

*William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*

and

*The History of King Leir: A Retelling.*

\*\*\*

*William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*

Why did I write *William Shakespeare's*?

Because William Shakespeare's wrote the play I was retelling.

Why did I write *King Lear*?

Because *King Lear* is the title of the play I was retelling.

Why did I write *A Retelling in Prose*?

Because I was retelling the play in prose.

Why did I spell *LEAR* as *LEAR*?

Because that is how Shakespeare, the author of *King Lear*, spelled it.

*The History of King Leir: A Retelling*

Why did I write *The History of King Leir*?

Because *The History of King Leir* is the title of the play I was retelling.

Why did I write *A Retelling*?

Because I was retelling the play.

Why did I spell *LEIR* as *LEIR*?

Because that is how the anonymous author of the play spelled it.

If someone buys a copy of my book *William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*, what will they get?

They will get my retelling in prose of *King Lear* by William Shakespeare.

If someone buys a copy of my book *The History of King Leir: A Retelling*, what will they get?

They will get my retelling of *The History of King Leir* by Anonymous.

## CONCLUSION

I don't see how the two titles are misleading.

Also, the two different BOOK DESCRIPTIONS gave additional details about the two books.

AMAZON KINDLE DESKTOP PUBLISHING kept my royalties.

Does anyone know who gets that money?

My outstanding royalties were a few hundred dollars.

I'm guessing that Logan gets a year's-end bonus.

Since then, I have drastically reduced the price of my books in an attempt to create a lasting legacy.

A look at APPENDIX E: SOME BOOKS BY DAVID BRUCE ought to show that I want to create a lasting legacy.

We always hope that an adult is in the room, but my experience with Logan, Kathryn, and Amazon shows that that is not always the case.

## Appendix B: About the Author

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine’s brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka “The Joker,” decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn’t been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don’t often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for “sounds like” and “two words,” then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn’t let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor’s degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*,

*Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose, and William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose.*

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

**Appendix C: Some Books by Brenda Kennedy (My Sister)**

**Look for these books on online booksellers everywhere.**

**The Forgotten Trilogy**

Book One: *Forgetting the Past*

Book Two: *Living for Today*

Book Three: *Seeking the Future*

**The Learning to Live Trilogy**

Book One: *Learning to Live*

Book Two: *Learning to Trust*

Book Three: *Learning to Love*

**The Starting Over Trilogy**

Book One: *A New Beginning*

Book Two: *Saving Angel*

Book Three: *Destined to Love*

**The Freedom Trilogy**

Book One: *Shattered Dreams*

Book Two: *Broken Lives*

Book Three: *Mending Hearts*

**The Fighting to Survive Trilogy**

Round One: *A Life Worth Fighting*

Round Two: *Against the Odds*

Round Three: *One Last Fight*

### **The Rose Farm Trilogy**

Book One: *Forever Country*

Book Two: *Country Life*

Book Three: *Country Love*

### **Books in the Seashell Island Stand-alone Series**

Book One: *Home on Seashell Island* (Free)

Book Two: *Christmas on Seashell Island*

Book Three: *Living on Seashell Island*

Book Four: *Moving to Seashell Island*

Book Five: *Returning to Seashell Island*

### **Books in the Pineapple Grove Cozy Murder Mystery Stand-alone Series**

Book One: *Murder Behind the Coffeehouse*

### **Books in the Montgomery Wine Stand-alone Series**

Book One: *A Place to Call Home*

Book Two: *In Search of Happiness...* coming soon

**Stand-alone books in the “Another Round of Laughter Series” written by Brenda and some of her siblings: Carla Evans, Martha Farmer, Rosa Jones, and David Bruce.**

*Cupcakes Are Not a Diet Food* (Free)

*Kids Are Not Always Angels*

*Aging Is Not for Sissies*

## Appendix D: Some Books By David Bruce

**“The problem in our country isn’t with books being banned, but with people no longer reading. You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.” — Ray Bradbury**

**My FREE eBooks can be downloaded here in various formats, including PDF and ePub:**

**<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/bruceb>**

**Smashwords recently made it mandatory to open an account to read or download free eBooks. The reason is this: “The change was [...] made to prevent scraping of free books by bots for machine learning training data or similar. It was not a change made lightly — both authors and readers enjoyed the ability to download free books without an account.”**

**No account is needed to download my FREE eBooks at Freeditorial.**

**<https://freeditorial.com/en/books/filter-author/david-bruce>**

**You can also search FREEDITORIAL for my name and the title of the specific book you want.**

**My EXPENSIVE books (paperbacks and hardcovers, all of which are FREE eBooks at Smashwords) can be purchased here:**

**<https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/brucebATohioDOTedu>**

**RETELLINGS OF A CLASSIC WORK OF LITERATURE**

**Arden of Faversham: *A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson’s The Alchemist: A Retelling***



***Ben Jonson's The Arraignment, or Poetaster: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's The Case is Altered: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's Epicene: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humor: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's The Fountain of Self-Love, or Cynthia's Revels: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's The Magnetic Lady, or Humors Reconciled: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's The New Inn, or The Light Heart: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's Sejanus' Fall: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's A Tale of a Tub: A Retelling***

***Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling***

***Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings***

***Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling***

***Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text***

***Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling***

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