

# 1918, 1944, 1991, and now

*by Ann Bogle*

I put in a request to connect with Alan Hurwitz on LinkedIn. He may have mentioned to me when he retired within a year of diagnosing (d'x'g) me with bipolar 1 atypical in 1991—he healthy at the age of 44, my age 29, the average age of conception, yet not married or chosen in pregnancy to deliver at 22—23, 29 also the average age of d'x, distributed equally, half women, half men—that he was retiring early from psychiatry to be a fine arts painter. Atypical, I learned six years later from a lesbian therapist who believed men were all dangerous to me, a queerly false estimate of men and a naive social assessment of women, meant “rejection sensitivity.” My first thought when she asked me to view the criterion: the way light hits my retina. I do not know what other people who are not doctors who had access to the diagnostic and statistical manual (DSM) may have thought atypical meant. My first hypomanic episode was d'x'd last year. Criteria were for outpatient: I could call, set the appointment, keep the appointment, drive well, give an oral account of the episode and symptoms, and pass cognitive tests in the office in interpreting writing and other complex deeds of the mind. That episode was the most manic in my experience, so the first d'x and treatment (t'x) of bipolar 1 had been preemptive, on a course set to be over-determined.

The Catholic therapist those first four years pretended to Buddhism and d'x'd a series of illnesses that in my Protestant traditions, including U.C.C., are not illnesses: love, sex, moderate social drinking, relationships, friendship, and above all, talent. My knowing someone who had been in a required class at a nearby treatment and meeting center and who used drugs was her idea of disease and not my idea of people's right to associate freely. My feeling happy that “I met someone” was another illness she

prescribed to me. She prescribed illnesses—prescribe is the right word. Each required lifelong commitments to poorly understood religious niches without clergy. That therapist was 5'2" and she had a boyfriend who was 6'2". She looked "gay" in her facial features and hairstyle and "sexy" in her small bendable body that she arranged in impossible postures in her chair in her office. She forbade creative writing and permitted writing for therapy only, but since I had trained already in novel, I refrained from therapy writing. She wrote therapy notes perhaps about me. I had no thought toward suicide because I had meaningful work and friends, yet one day she penned a contract whereby I agreed that I would not injure myself ("or others" was not let open to suggestion) before calling her first. It was so unlikely that I would injure myself or call her since she screamed if I did anything she didn't like, such as the single time I called her at home to set an appointment. She was not polite and firm—she screamed as first resort. One can do our world a disservice and diagnose her with 29 illnesses and false illnesses or take her simple religious failings into account. She serves as a two-year trained Jungian guru today.

Then the word woman was less controversial. The word prostitute is in use in comment streams in *The Economist* following one of their cover stories. The word woman and its difficult-to-spell and pronounce plural, women, are rarely in use. It is as if prostitute is a type of human with female physical characteristics whose essential credential is being alive. She is an active or acting object. I turn to grammar often to sort these genders. An active object is not a case in languages I know. They pay her. She is a prostitute rather than a woman. She is a sex worker rather than a woman. In mental studies after Y2K, people—the'y!—confuse unfree mentals (f.) with outlaw-do-ers. No one is a woman. Sisters are co-pay nuns; sisters are not whites. An early-love sister is cast in fantasy circles as the little one's heinous dog sitter. There are ladies, girls, gals, wives, chicks, girlfriends, females [sic], and another handful of words of misogyny to describe her angrily, her or ex-her or her type plural, plus a few forgotten words, such as dames. Increasingly, there are prostitutes.

Many active lively debates occur surrounding practices that are illegal. That is one of those active discussions. These are my comments in one stream:

I cannot tell if this a male party or not, the comments, since few sign their names. There is something missing in our economy, and it is meaningful work and sustainable incomes that are secure. Formal trainings are not respected financially but the athletics of love without its continuities are, even in advance of larger assent. (11 recommend)

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My comment yesterday was lost, mechanically. I wrote that it is difficult to know whether this is a male party, since few sign their names. It seems in the U.S. the idea of legalization titillates the economy more than legalization might do. The missing, homeless, jailed, once-jailed, and dead will not be taken into account in letting in sudden respectability; the difference between Americans and Europeans in service cost may not alleviate American women's poverty; in some places, I've read, dating has been investigated and in therapy settings discouraged (to prevent violence) in what may seem like a commercial leveraging of a popular new trade; will growing girls aspire to train in occupations and higher professions; will all attractive or well-dressed women be regarded as being in or belonging to the skin trade and will women's opportunities in their true fields diminish; will people stop giving freely in relationship if a fee-based standard for sex is established; in a social environment that more easily accepts women accompanied by men, that resembles chaperonage, is it women who should pay a liberty or protection fee to men? (201 recommend)

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My name is Ann Bogle. I sign Ann Bogle when I publish short stories, poetry, and essays in journals online and in print. On Facebook and Twitter, I am Ann Margaret Bogle. I have deposited two comments in this comment stream. My machine-assigned designation is guest-ssnojoo.

I was born in 1962 and received a Presbyterian baptism. The pastor, Robert K. Hudnut, is a respected author who participated in the Civil Rights Movement in Selma, Alabama. I grew up and presently live in Minneapolis' western suburbs. My ethnic heritage is Swedish, English, and Scottish. My DNA test reports that my ethnicities are 99.9% European with a known concentration in Northern Europe, Great Britain, and Scandinavia. (A reading of < three-fifths of 1% Eastern European fell off my ethnic chart's scales, from conservative to speculative. Eastern European heritage had appeared on the sixth and twelfth autosomes, where deafness also falls, before my Eastern Europe measurement disappeared.) My g.p.a. over the course of sixteen graded years after sixth grade as a diploma- and completed-degree student and graduate student is 3.8 on a 4.0 scale.

Mary Magdalene is regarded by certain, established present-day theological historians as a Church founder. As children on the playground, we heard that Magdalene in the Bible was a prostitute. Much later in life I read that the Pope in the 1960s had stated publicly that Magdalene in the Bible was not a prostitute. It is possible that Catholics and others as well preferred to think that she was a prostitute and their preference, perhaps mostly in America, created a rift in belief.

The most excellent poetry in which Magdalene figures that I have read was written by the poet Hilda Doolittle, who signed her work H.D. H.D. was from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and was raised as a Moravian Christian. She lived her adult life in Europe during and after the Wars. She was for a time the analysand of Sigmund Freud, who did not regard her as a case study. She wrote and published a tribute to her doctor called *Tribute to Freud*.

I am friends with an American author, a man partly of French descent, his other heritages European—what Americans refer to as “white”—who grew up poor in Oakland, California, and who told me that his following in France is larger than his following in the U.S. It will sound hyperbolic to repeat what he said here, and he spoke it rather than writing it to me: All paid work is prostitution, as he put

it. I disagree, and in fact, it bothers my sense of ethics to consider it as an idea. Nevertheless, that he spoke it may indicate that others may view profession that way as well. I refer to that friend as a male chauvinist. He may be my only male-chauvinist friend. I have read about half his books. I would even recommend his first book, a novel, and have recommended it to others. It is a coming of age story set in Oakland that reminded me of Richard Wright's novel, *Black Boy*. Several of my friend the author's other books and writings concern literary criticism.

I felt alarmed when I learned that my long-time intended—fiancé/mate/would-be-husband/partner (who later changed the name of our relationship to “friendship”—was indulging regularly in arranging for female companionship by hiring foreign-born women represented by escort agencies. Adrenalin coursed through my body for days while he narrated over the telephone details about his life that until then I had not known or guessed. When I learned, doing a little reasonable detective work in his apartment (he kept his checkbook registers in the same plastic bag as household cash that he told me to use in buying food, taxi fare, and other incidentals, and that I declined as of that time to spend or count—hundreds of dollars in small denominations) how much he paid for escorts' company, that he had told me included at least some type or types of sex and other things, such as her hours spent asleep without disturbance and alone, errands, household assistance, cooking, dining at home, watching the news, talking, guidance, her threatening behavior, etc., \$5,000 for her 6- or 8-hour shift—I became obsessed, unreasonably and for a long time. After researching escorting online, inasmuch as that was possible given rather scanty credible news reporting, and the additional resources of blogs and escort web sites, I lost my real, inner self for two years. (I screamed while editing this passage in realizing that the statement, “I lost my real, inner self for two years” might conjure a subject other than a two-year loss of my good self. To wit, I became driven internally by an overpowering demand to be remembered for constancy in “full-time married caregiving” that connected my heart

strings to his, a clear relationship that disappeared in three months as women visited him for checks. I could not divorce, since I was not married. I had no legal rights in our relationship, referred to by alternative-family practice lawyers as "friendship." "I lost my real, inner self for two years" is not a *euphemism*.) I had already been expected by more than one therapist to live as a celibate, and while I did not always follow their advice, and they are not doctors, I know their form of control. I have this year succumbed to a sense of defeat worse than any I had experienced in "depression." I have passed the line and verbally renounced the value of my life. There are factors other than those listed here that contribute to my impatience for dying. I do not suffer physical conditions that might hasten it. I say "thank goodness" because I prefer not to have an illness that may aggravate living with physical demands. I would not relish to live in physical pain. At 52, I would continue to seek appropriate paid work, yet the quest ahead seems hedged.

Ladies, as escorts prefer to be called, not born or raised in the U.S., expect respectable day jobs within their publicly-financed university trainings achieved in their homelands; while I, because I was born in the U.S., try to carry on without husband, livelihood, or nearby friends. (7 recommend)

Instead of separation of church and state, there is an affirmative-action separation of disabilities along the collar-bone line (excepting eyes, ears, and bones).

Diagnosing patients, finding them, rounding each one up, singly, separating each from family units, alienating each within family units, segregating them in non-familial groups, and interning them in welfare housing are all legal activities. School of Education-trained therapists urge or require WWII vets' offspring to live in poverty in government-subsidized housing not allowed to hold assets or more than one small pet, as punishment for the service of their fathers in WWII. I figured it that way based on my resistance to dependent housing and my ongoing resistance to being a not-for-profit individual as determined by civilian disability status. My father was a reservist at nineteen, eager to serve, whose corrected

vision and partial hearing loss in one ear kept him stationed in the U.S. rather than overseas; his cousin was a flyer shot down over France; both were only-children. In my family, my sister and I drive Japanese cars.

Yuck, yuck, meaning huck, huck, not meaning icky, a girl's lawsuit—yucky, a very serious lawsuit meaning Hick, farm Europeans. We are the childless offspring and grand-offspring of Mainline Liberal Christian Protestant farm holders of profession who selected for love neighbors of a few European nationalities as well as their native Swedes in marriage. Love beyond the family may have seemed commonplace but is not yet.

I never met someone actually manic. I met d'x'd, treated responsible people in remission from depression who had undergone a frazzled sense of overwork—who were branded and whose children lost regard for them as they grew, who could not feel very proud that way, and who gathered weakness in their social defense mechanisms. Sudden happiness is called euthymic in diagnostic terms. The loss of the wish to be happy in order to be and to seem compliant is the worst, the loss to life (not meaning of the body), the drop in quality of life, the enforcement of it by unqualified tent watchers, the feeling of war in tents that others across town know little of—und'x'd people who pursue happiness as Americans and own a house and parcel of land.

I discovered my subject in mental disability and fiction-writing recently in revisiting a short story I had kept in mind since it appeared in 1987. In almost any way of describing the story or remembering it, “mental disability” would not occur to any kind or close reader or be assigned to stick. Any author might rather avoid letting “mentally disabled” be applied to her or his or their social friends’ work or actual lives. A writer may risk identification as crazy related to his or her prose style or to registering his or her political distress in brief form and content, short stories of any length long rejected as a form by print publishers as unsuitable for their audiences. The longer the printed word, the safer the writer is to be around socially. It is a later risk of association when a created

character displays an altered state of mind caused by stress, for example, Moses Herzog's through his creator Saul Bellow's genius in employing point of view in the unfolding of divorce in *Herzog*, described frequently and unwisely in the typing of passersby as his one person's madness.

Had I taught, paid per course or salaried, the 2,000 to 4,000 further students I would have welcomed to my classes after I graduated in 1994, students who had been born regardless, but who went to other teachers, I would ask a writing teacher in the hallway today, "Who is better, Kate Zambreno or Saul Bellow?" That reminds me of the old one, "Jim or Mary?" and "Ted or Alice?" about pens who had met and married. "Bill or Hillary?" let's ask about presidents who met and married.

Psychotropic medications taken daily as intended and instructed, along with an accompanying belief in their hoped-for effect—to mask mood cycles taking place or presently calm in the body—produce steadiness and a normalcy of feeling that psychosis and intoxication would not. As I have noted in my writing elsewhere, there are those who seek steadiness and those who seek altered states such as euphoria. Mental illness is a condition in which unwanted thoughts or moods intrude on normalcy without having an outside cause. It is perhaps a stress response that leads to the initial lifelong diagnosis. Diagnosis of a serious mental illness clinically and legally means that the person will be regarded as having a mental illness even in the absence of symptoms—a respite due to successful treatment or to the cyclic nature of it, as defined by the patient's or another observer's narrative report rather than by any laboratory test exposed to the patient.

The purpose of hyperexercise is to release endorphins. I learned the long and hard way, by consuming about twelve ounces more in beer on election night in 2002 than allowed by law—expressed as level of alcohol in the blood, a reading only police can test—that alcohol releases endorphins in the body. It can feel like passive hyperexercise at times. I learned that endorphins and alcohol go together in a required class at a nearby treatment and meeting

center that I walked to along a pleasant route four times. I asked the man giving the psychopharmacology lecture whether people who were athletes in high school, not drafted to play collegiate sports, could, without noticing, turn to heavy situational drinking in seeking their usual endorphin levels. No answer. I asked out of concern for people's bodies and not to paint a vista of men such as Gatsby knew, especially Daisy's Tom Buchanan. In high school, there was a required drug class as part of physical education. Most of what I learned in the high school class I had retained as information that might apply today, even though the class might no longer be taught or required as ours was in the late 1970s. Except about alcohol, the most common hazard in our grades, we had been told too little in class, only that "drunkenness kills brain cells." Elsewhere, we had heard Albert Einstein's estimate that most people use only five per cent of their brain's capacity. A public service commercial on television showed a frying pan with eggs simmering in it, "This is your brain on drugs," and another promised, "The mind is a terrible thing to waste." As a stay-at-home in this century, frozen inside by a collective decision to go along infirm-action lines, I say in all irony to myself, "The mind is a terrible thing to waste ... unless it presents well and is educated."

This is not offered as fiction nor as much related to fiction. Fiction is an art form based in the liberated imagination and trained near the hand. Fiction is not interchangeable with lies as is sometimes passively said. Fiction is a gift to humanity. To write fiction, something I realized recently and not at the time of my last graduation, a writer must like people well enough to want to delight them.

Physical disability is last in line for affirmative action. It is not a later addition but was most ignored. Disability will be Affirmative Action's last word. From disability alone among identified minorities arose the question of individual difference. Disability is indivisibility—all of us could be its members—unlike its affirmative action forebears who remain underrepresented, even as the groups' selected contestants prepare to retire early, a distributed group

whose specialty is American anthropology. Americans are not regarded as having art. Americans prefer soft science, homogeny, dollar work, and wealth insurance.

I would like to acknowledge the staff of *Minnetonka Review* and its editor Troy Ehlers, who let me withdraw a cultural essay that I tried to write as a first-person personal essay in 2006 or 2007. The essay I discarded concerned Protestantism, blocked memory of childhood sexual abuse, and World War II-era veterans and their kids. I do not believe in blocked memory of child sexual abuse unless it is accompanied by head injury. Reportedly, psychiatry as a branch of medicine had recognized psychological memory blockage unrelated to head injury in two per cent of people. Later, "blocked memory" became a popular theory to account for people's decisions in life. I know that head injury may result in a memory skip of the head injury itself. *Minnetonka Review* let me withdraw my first pass at an essay and offered to publish three unrelated very short stories in its stead. I feel thankful to the journal for letting me experiment in essay and to withdraw it when I felt unsure. I felt afraid to suggest such a wide topic—Protestantism, blocked memory of child sexual abuse, and World War II-era veterans and their kids—that no one else seemed to have written about publicly or suggested in conversation with me. I had believed until 2000 or so in another theory called "own truth" about a lie. That is not a generosity I offer today. Today I believe that a thing has happened along certain lines that can be recalled by one or more participants or that nothing like it occurred. I believe that "blocked memory theory" attracted some whose childhoods had contained relatable traumas that adults in their lives had not known about or not responded to as traumas. One friend could remember in detail that her parochial high school coach had beat her feet. Her father was the lawyer in her small farm community, a village in southeastern Wisconsin. The mistreatment she experienced at school likely caused her not to continue in sports. Later, she earned the Psy.D., the most difficult-to-attain degree in psychology. One of her grandmothers was Jewish, as she proudly reported whenever speaking of her family line. Another

friend whose grandmother was Jewish, as she, too, was unafraid to report, and whose father was also an attorney, a big city criminal defense attorney, had been sent to Europe when she was nine after her parents had received threats of her abduction. If her time in Europe was not specifically traumatic, then separation from her parents placed under threat might have been. Her therapist during college, John Bradshaw, induced LSD-related memories of sexual abuse at the hands of her sister and future brother-in-law that led to her cooperative sister's diagnosis with bipolar later. Her sister is the only daughter, the middle of three in a family without sons, to have had children, a son and daughter born before her diagnosis with bipolar. Until 2000 and after 1980, when I knew the friends best, I would not have tried to interfere in anyone's interpretation of his or her own past. I have since realized that "blocked memory" very often related to teenage LSD experiences and contained no validity as ugly memories of times that contained blanks—nothing in particular—in the past. I also realized but might have more quickly believed that in the American North, lesbians sometimes favored "blocked memory" as a belated explanation for their orientations or clerical roles in life. In the American South, lesbians offered no abuse explanation for their orientations and stated they had always "felt drawn to girls" in relationship, since their earliest memories. There is indeed abuse that occurs in childhood. In my experience, negative events are wickedly stubborn in memory instead of lost. Abuse of my body before sexual love had taken place was at the hands of certain boys with first and last names whom I knew of my age. It did not involve the worst imaginable forms of it, and for that I remain glad, no matter what others might have wished for me as part of my past. I have friends who experienced sexual abuse in childhood, not blocked as mine was not, whose abuse was especially serious, and who became diagnosed after thirty-five with mental illnesses. Two of those friends are men who had been abused as young boys by adult men not priests, one by a father and one by a father's friend. By the age of twenty-five or thirty, my friends had become strong men. There was a studied strength in their humanity

that became disbelieved and chased around in them by members of society, including town police, to crush their testimonies as survivors. It is understandable to me that agreeing to be gay after initiations such as theirs would not truly be agreed. Certain others, women exposed to sexual abuse in childhood, chose to be gay. Gay when I went to college in Madison was not a word to apply to women, though in the South it was. The idea that sexuality as part of one's identity can be interpreted by oneself, enacted together, and understood by others—as I see it—is still very, very far away. People are rote in their thinking and expressions. There is a social force against long life, against our being together, you and me.

