

Cynthia F. Davidson

Author & Mystic



Cynthia and her father Andy in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
From new edition of the memoir including images.

[Click here to view *The Importance of Paris* on Amazon.](#)

Surrender

Letting go...how long does it take? Surrender can mean giving up or it can mean giving over. How do we surrender to what is greater than our small ego pains and needs? In this issue I'm sharing a long story about surrendering. It concerns the evolution of my relationship with my father, on another anniversary, of his passing.

Thinking of my dad Andy Fetterolf on the anniversary of his passing in 2004. As his firstborn, the one who made him a father, I knew him in ways no one else did. He learned on me, literally. And I on him.

Legacies are odd treasures. They can take their toll or they can take us up. Over time they shimmer and glint if you keep questioning. They live on, hinting at deeper enrichment awaiting, though the body's long gone. My father used to say, "Yours is not to reason why, yours is but to do or die." He certainly did "do" and "die." Yet I'm still here to "reason why."

For the last week of his life, I was there, at his invitation. Watching him take his last breath was his final gift to me. It took away any remaining fears I harbored about my own passing. Or anyone else's. It also removed other fears, about being criticized, for speaking my lived truth. We'll all be dead sooner than we realize. So speak up now, or remain forever unheard in "the valley of Death," as the poem cautions.

The first time my young ears heard him utter those lines, "Yours is not to reason why, yours is but to do or die," they sent me on alert, suspicious. The couplet sounded received, a planted rhyme, not the truth of his original thinking.

Maybe that's why those words stuck in my craw. Had he heard them during his Navy years, or from his dad, who was another veteran of the military? This hand-me-down legacy needed to be unpacked and deeply re-examined, at some future time.

When is it time to "reason why"?

He recited that rhyme often and believed it, literally. He did not advise me to question, or find another way, yet those words served to galvanize me. Over time they came to represent the gulf of grief that took its toll, on him and many others, literally.

Years later, when raising a family of my own, I challenged many aspects of his legacy. Angrily I quoted him those lines, "Dad, that's the dumbest thing to tell a kid!" He was surprised, even a bit hurt, to discover I had not swallowed the lines like he

had. Did this mean I wasn't in solidarity with him, and my fellow sufferers, shackled in doomed obedience to "go down with the ship?" Had he failed in his job as a parent? Or failed to see how he had succeeded ?

His acquiescence to that rhyme gave him the psychic space to survive, to go down to the bar and get drunk with the other men wounded by the world. Together they could commiserate, reinforcing their shared disdain for the "brown-nosers" and "candy-asses," the ones who did the bidding of out-of-touch officers or corporate bosses, who weren't one of us...

But the seed he planted pushed me to grow and get educated enough to question our legacy. Researching the origins of that "patriotic" poem, I discovered it was written 100 years before I was born, and was meant as a covert warning.

In 1854 the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom, Alfred Lord Tennyson penned it, upon learning of the tragic loss of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War. Six hundred men on horseback, sabers drawn, were ordered to charge and they rode to their deaths in a frontal assault against entrenched Russian artillery guns. Senselessly mowed down in minutes, for no gain, not a single British officer was reprimanded for having given such heinous orders.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

'[...] into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blundered.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.[...]

How many millions have perished with no poems to commemorate them, or their mothers, sisters, wives and children? When shall we come to our senses and stop the slaughtering? Since Tennyson wrote those words men have murdered their fellows in Two horrific World Wars, the Holocaust and dropped atomic bombs upon each other, further mechanizing all this killing. When will we reason with our Legacy? What we call "civilization" lacks all human decency and morality.

Dad mocked me for my ability to "rationalize everything" as if that was wrong...yet I persist. His experience did not save us from the scarring war in Lebanon, in Beirut. To find my way, and reason all that out, I finally published a **memoir** about our complicated Legacy. Thanks dad for the torturous but undeniable inspiration.

Ours is to reason why.
Ours is to do more than die.

Wisdom Wheel

Happy Birthday to all the Pisces people celebrating out there, whose Birth Law is Surrender on the Wisdom Wheel. This Law is balanced by the Journey.

Publishing News

Despite uploading our audio to Amazon AIX/Audible over three weeks ago, they have not finished doing whatever they do! Perhaps other projects are ahead of ours in the queue. So, I've had to Surrender to the powers that be, and their long, slow process! Surely hope to have a link to share for the audio version of the book in next

issue.

Events

When my hibernation ends in the spring, the season will begin with a bang. On **April 1** we'll have our first Memoir Writing Workshop of 2020. Please note that is on a Wednesday. In response to your requests, we are now offering weekday workshop dates, as well as weekends.

Reserve your seat soon. Our one day overview workshops run 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. They fill up fast! We only take six people at a time. **Please see complete 2020 schedule here.** We have made these more affordable, \$79. This includes all instruction, materials, light lunch, unlimited coffee/tea and a signed copy of my first memoir, *The Importance of Paris*.

Don't forget - those who post reviews on Goodreads or Amazon, or pictures of themselves holding copies of the book, earn a seat at our raclette parties, to be resumed in the spring! Stay tuned.

Upcoming Events

Publicity will kick off on **March 26th** with an evening event at the Ink Fish Bookstore in Warren, RI. More details in next newsletter.

And watch for the spring release date of the *Measuring Distances* cross-cultural poetry collection, featuring artwork and photography by graphic designer/editor extraordinaire Gigie Hall.



Ceremonies

Our next Purification Lodge ceremony will be on Sunday, March 22, 2020, at 10 a.m. in honor of the Spring Equinox. We will also be celebrating the return of the fasters, who will be finishing their four day Bear Fast. It begins on the evening of March 18th.

In this special Lodge, the fasters will share the teachings/dreams they received, while living outdoors without any modern conveniences. Taking a respite from the crazy making news of the manmade world, the fasters reconnect with Nature, and rest deeply, sleeping soundly in the woods, when not tending the Sacred Fire they keep lit the entire four days.

All ceremonies at HOPE HOUSE in Hope Valley, Rhode Island are held free of charge although donations are gratefully accepted. For 20 years we have held these ceremonies. Many are repeat Bear fasters.

Contact me for more details and **click here for the full 2020 schedule.**

[Hope House FB Page](#)

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