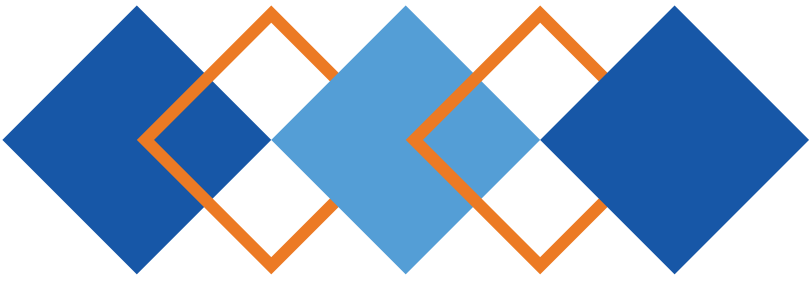
A.P. LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION

"... I only wrote of what interested me genuinely, what I felt most strongly at the moment, and I found this fervor, this enthusiasm produced a vividness which often withered in the formal work. Improvisation, free association, obedience to mood, impulse, brought forth countless images, portraits, descriptions, impressionistic sketches, symphonic experiments, from which I could dip at any time for material."

~Anaïs Nin from 1946 lecture at Dartmouth



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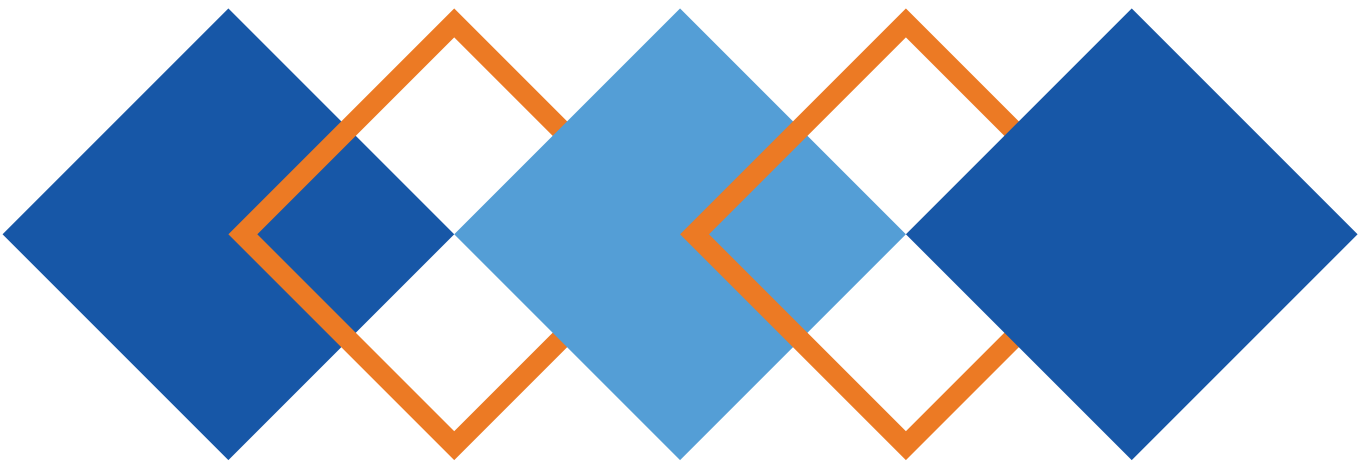

As a caretaker of my curious nature, I collect knowledge.

Six-year-old Mrs. Augustine attempted to answer the big questions – usually about the nature of reality. I recall smashing the soft buttons on my Sega Genesis controller, making Sonic the Hedgehog jump and run. I wondered, is some being in a distant universe also controlling MY every move? And then, there was that time I casually asked my mom from the backseat, "If we all came from God, where did God come from?"

You know, normal stuff.

Curious means "eager to know or learn something" and "strange". I have an innately curious temperament in the former sense, which tends to result in others perceiving me as that other kind of curious. In school, I found it hard to relate to other kids. They played kickball while I read encyclopedias. They created cliques, titled with acronyms of their names, while I stared into the hole in the brick wall of the school, wondering if it was actually a portal to a different dimension.

As I got older, my desire for connection led me to channel my curiosity into how to be liked. I believed the bullies who called me weird and resolved myself to fit in. Using my curiosity to get a social stamp of approval drained me.

Yet, I didn't consciously understand what had happened. It took nearly two decades for me to finally get curious enough about myself to unpack how I traded my authenticity for acceptance. This unraveling began with a simple question: what would I do for fun if no one else were around? The answer: delight in my curiosity, voraciously eating up all the knowledge I can stomach.

Now, I indulge my curious nature daily. Whether it's collecting fascinating tidbits from Reddit to save to my Second Brain database in Notion, exploring the depths of Kindle Unlimited for fascinating books, or engaging my husband in a debate on the merits of TikTok, I will forever curate my curious nature. **~Mrs. Augustine**

In preparing for this introduction, I discovered that I collect in phases. And abundance.

When I was a girl (and embarrassingly well into my teenage years), I collected penguins. Why penguins? Superficially, it's because they're adorable. (Who doesn't smile when they watch a penguin waddle?) Emotionally, I'm drawn to the way they commune–as a colony, not a cult. Like Bubba's affinity for shrimp, I can babble endlessly about penguin mementos: sweatshirts my Mim appliqued with penguins, poster penguins, crochet penguins, a penguin whittled by my great-grandfather, ceramic penguins, plushy penguins, slipper penguins, a Swarovski crystal penguin purchased with my allowance during my first trip to Germany. Though fashion trends of the 90s are making a [tragic] comeback, my obsession with penguins remains in the past (aside from a few treasured baubles, of course).

As a middle schooler, my son discovered theatre. (Obviously, theatre already existed, but *his* world was absent of personal appreciation until that time.) So, I started collecting musical playbills. A show a year blossomed to two; senior year of high school mother-son season tickets to The Fabulous Fox burgeoned to sophomore year of college season tickets to The Grady Gammage Memorial Auditorium, ASU's Fox-equivalent. We salute the standards–*Hamilton*, *Wicked*, *Dear Evan Hansen*–but laud the obscure–*Something Rotten* and *Waitress* and *The Band's Visit*–over the mainstream. When too many days pass between face-to-face visits with him, I turn to my Spotify Broadway playlist to lessen the void created by the 1450 miles of interstate that separate us.

Spurred by a desire to expand the diversity of voices in the sophomore English curriculum, I began collecting graphic novels in 2018. Comprised primarily of memoirs, my collection rests on the bookcase above my desk in 3D. From the sepia watercolor illustrations of *The Best We Could Do*, the aggressive, dark lines of *Stitches*, and the multi-media layered photographs of *Good Talk* to the traditional panels in *Vietnamerica*, the absence of panel frames in *Poppies of Iraq*, and the motif of circle panels in *Flying Couch*, graphic novels stretch the way I perceive stories. In another life, I'll possess the bravery and the talent to share my story as a graphic novel; until such time, I'll collect the stories of others.

Who knows what I will collect this summer. But I'm certain it will happen in abundance. **~Ms. Cearley**

Hello. I'm Mrs. Hamilton and I collect dogs. Currently, I have three: Odin, the brindle Boxer who is not magical or intelligent but who *is* loyal and cuddly; Lemmy, the brindle Frenchie, who most recently lost fifteen teeth and now smiles like a vampire - he is my favorite; and Augustus Eugene, the cream colored Frenchman lovingly called "The Terrorist" for the habitual behaviors of biting his brindle brothers, killing computers, and refusing to become potty-trained. In the "Rainbow Bridge" branch of the family, there is Keys the best-boy-in-the-whole-wide- world-who-ever-was; he rests on a shelf in the kitchen. Conan, the menacing giant of a mama's boy who was born afraid of everything, huddling close by on the bedroom bureau. And finally, Cleitus the touch dog who saved my life by saving my soul and who still keeps watch over me from the bookshelf. Collecting dogs has led to some of my other most prized collections: dog-breath kisses, teeny-tiny scars on my fingers, and being able to love big in small situations. I've considered writing a book about these boys for a long time, but I have never mustered the courage. Perhaps this summer I will collect their stories, but they are insisting I want to collect sticks. **~Mrs. H.**

Writing Assignment

This summer, you must **COLLECT ONE** something about which to write. You can collect anything.

You can collect tangible things: sticks, rocks, butterflies, graphic novels, strings, stuffed animals, signed baseballs, stickers, buttons, ticket stubs, bottle caps, or game pieces--hopefully from someone else's games. You can keep your collection in a shoebox or a ziploc or a shelf by your bed.

Or maybe you want to collect less tangible objects: a list of beautiful prose, a collection of stories about your dogs, all the interesting questions ticker-taping through your mind, smiles, hugs, smells, observations of your favorite tree, shadows, or bruises. These collections depend even more deeply on your ability to translate them into the pages of your journal or your creativity in documenting their existence.

Another way to approach this is to dive deeply into someone else's collection. For example, at the St. Louis Art Museum you can examine collections of art and artifacts, at the Missouri History Museum you can investigate the "Soccer City" or the 1904 World's Fair collections, and at Laumeier Sculpture Garden you can wander and wonder at built art's place in nature. Of course, we are asking you to collect over the course of the summer, and these particular collections require time and multiple visits.

And, keep a **WRITING JOURNAL** in the blank pages nestled in the middle of this booklet. A writing journal, as Nin notes, can be composed of many styles of writing - improvisation, free association, descriptions, symphonic experiments and so much more. Use the journal space to list, to draw, to compose prose & poetry, to draw description with your words, to paint if you must and to destroy the edges as you will. You can write about the thing you collect, the process of collecting, and the collector themself. By the end of the summer, you will have created a writing pool "from which [you] can dip at any time for material."

Due date: Bring your completed journal on the first day of class. You will be assessed on your ability to **fill** the journal and your journal's ability to **show your mind at work**.

Need inspiration? Check out these essays about collections. (Check them out even if you don't need inspiration.)

A day in the life of an oak tree, from mistle thrush in the morning to mice at midnight
John Lewis-Stempel March 10, 2023 Country Life

1 Our friends the trees have an unremarkable life, or so it seems to us. They come into leaf, their fruit drops, or is gorged on by birds and the winds of autumn strip them of their dressing to leave them as the cold, bare sentinels of winter.

However, if we were to stand, tree-like ourselves, in a British copse and watch a single oak tree for an entire 24 hours — say when spring hatches out of winter — what would we see?

6.17am First light. The male mistle thrush flies to the top of the oak dome and sings: Pavarotti in feathers, the valley his auditorium. On a branch just below, the thrush is joined by the great tit, who similarly likes a high post to 'ring his bell'. The mistle thrush breeds early and, halfway down the 60ft tree, snug in a dim fork, is its bowl-nest with four speckled blue eggs.

7.01am The slanting rays of morning sun first catch the 1,000 leaf buds in the canopy, then the high untidy drey of the grey squirrel, before illuminating the ground beneath our 300-year-old oak. There, as Robert Bridges versed it: 'Thick on the woodland floor Gay company shall be,/Primrose and Hyacinth And frail Anemone.' Hyacinth here is the bluebell, lying in a mauve pool.

5 The leaves of autumn, brought down by the screaming Halloween wind, still lie around the tree in a thick sodden copper mat; the mould is soft on the pads of the returning vixen as she slinks down into her den among the tree's roots, a rabbit clamped in her jaws from her night prowl. A present for her cubs.

In the brightening of the day, the birds and animals that have roosted in the tree emerge from their lairs; the pipistrelle bats from a hollow branch, the wren from under the ivy crawling up the immense trunk. Early morning is the great feeding time of diurnal birds and to the oak fly a great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and a treecreeper. The latter climbs our venerable Quercus robur in a spiral, inspecting the multitudinous cracks in the bark of trunk and limbs for insects; she is immediately lucky and a Clubiona brevipes spider, which has overwintered under the tree's rough, hard skin, falls victim to her tweezer-precise bill. The fissures of the oak are, quite literally, crawling with creepy-crawlies; in total, 1,178 invertebrate species use it and 257 of them rely solely on this tree.

10.39am A waft of warm, light, spring wind brings the first of the summer migrants, the chiffchaff, who returns to his familiar bough, to sing his song of only two tones: chiff; then chaff. As did the pied flycatcher, together with the redstart that is hot on her tail, the chiffchaff has timed his arrival to meet warm days and insect hatching. From a twig in front of the chiffchaff hangs a wooden bauble, as if left over from some primitive Christmas display: an 'oak-apple gall' is the most conspicuous result of an insect attack on the oak, caused by tiny wasps (Biorhiza pallida, Andricus quercuscorticis, Andricus kollari) chemically provoking the tree's twigs to form a protective structure — the marble-like gall — around their eggs. Throughout the morning, a green woodpecker chisels a nest hole in a decay-ing sky-striving branch of our common oak, as a nuthatch, a bird almost as colourful as a kingfisher, plasters up a hole in the noble trunk with mud to make the correct-sized entrance. If we step back from the tree, even if it is still only in leaf-bud, it glows green in the sunshine.

12.18pm It starts raining; on the lee side of the tree, a fallow-deer buck takes shelter, his back to the rain-blackened trunk. On the perennially wet west side, enough mossy, verdant vegetable matter has collected in the bark's fissures for a polypody fern to grow as readily as in soil. The oak is parasite paradise, opportunist opening; lichens, liver- wort, moss, algae and fungi all have their hold on the tree. A whip of wind brings down a rotten bough, soon to be the abode of the oak click beetle.

Into the open socket wound on the tree, a floating spore of the bracket fungus Laetiporus sulphureus ('chicken of the woods') gains purchase. An oak supports 108 different types of fungi, above and below ground; the root system of the tree needs a network of mycorrhizal fungi to gather nutrients. The fruiting bodies of these mycorrhizae, among them oak orange bolete and oakbug milkcap, may poke up through the dense leaf carpet during summer and autumn.

2.22pm The rain stops and the buck ambles off to munch on the reachable leaf-buds of a nearby oak sapling. In the ensuing sunshine, the oval leaf-buds of our oak unfurl, to the joy of numerous species of hungry grub and caterpillar; no fewer than 100 different moth types have been recorded as feasting on oak leaves, perhaps the commonest being the green oak tortrix. The fresh leaf growth of spring also attracts aphids, which then produce their sugary secretion, 'honeydew'; a black line of wood ants is ascending to the very top of the tree in search of this nectar. As the ants climb up, a grey squirrel is heading slowly down a 45° limb, alert and tense; it can hear the tiny cheeping of chicks in the hole-nest of the marsh tit, which despite its name favours trees for its home.

4.44pm In the circle of ground beneath the spreading oak tree, a jay is gulping down the last acorns from its winter larder, a crude hole in the earth at the base of the trunk; jays are particularly partial to acorns, hence the second part of the birds' scientific name, glandarius, meaning exactly that, 'eating acorns'. Inside some of the acorns is a protein bonus, the larva of the acorn weevil, an improbable long-nosed character more suited to a Disney cartoon than tooth-and-claw real Nature.

Oaks are 'monoecious', having both male and female flowers on the same tree; these 'catkins' are catnip to a visiting female bullfinch and to the emerged caterpillars of the purple hairstreak butterfly (an oak specialist, thus Favonius quercus, the adult of which floats about the canopy in summer). The pollen of the catkins is sweet on the proboscis of the oak-mining bee, too.

5.16pm The ecology of the oak tree is a game of consequences: the newly emerged leaves of the oak are eaten by the pale-green caterpillar of the wintermoth, which, in turn, feeds the blue tit, whose brood has just hatched in yet another of the tree's cavities; the sparrowhawk, terror of the copse, flashes between the tangled branches, to catch and feed on the blue tit.

7.59pm In the white sunset, the mosses and lichens that clothe the bark of the trunk gain a subtle beauty; more than 700 different lichens inhabit the oak's rough tessellated bark; the most conspicuous of these strange symbiotic beings, part fungus, part alga, is Ramalina farinacea, which resembles the antlers of the fallow buck who used the tree as shelter earlier in the day.

8.16pm Under the darkening silhouette of the tree, a woodcock comes patrolling through the shadows, probing with its long bill down through the copper top of the leaf litter into the black mulch below; a stag beetle burrowing through the rotting leaves is luckless and gulped down. A flat-backed millipede suffers the same fate.

10.30pm Around the cupola of the moonlit tree, pipistrelle bats swirl in pursuit of moths. At the base of the tree, in the mouth of the fox den, two cubs play roly-poly.

Midnight A shambling badger, almost invisible in the willow pattern of dark and light, stumbles on the last of the jay's acorn trove; Brock's clumsy, bear-like pawing dislodges an oak bracket fungus at the base of the tree. Meanwhile, on a low crooked branch, a tawny owl sits as still as a stump. She is listening to the pitterings and patterings of the small mammals, the shrews and the mice, as they scour the floor beneath the oak for invertebrates and the acorns that the jays, the squirrels, the badgers and the wood pigeons have overlooked. A wood mouse holds up an acorn as a prize, then feels the talons of the owl on its neck. The wood mouse's death shriek is an old sound under the oak in the copse.

"Maybe Broccoli Doesn't Like You Either" (Lot 151) On the Allure of Joan Didion's Objects: Mary Kate Frank Wonders at the Power We Give to Things
Mary Kate Frank November 15, 2022 *Literary Hub*

1 Joan Didion's seashells are for sale and I am stuck behind a Greyhound bus on I-87 North. The bus, I am convinced, is loaded with people who want the shells. I don't know whether I want the shells, but I would like to put one to my ear and imagine hearing the Pacific.

I pass the bus.

It is October 31, the first day that *An American Icon: Property from the Collection of Joan Didion* is open to the public at Stair Galleries in Hudson, New York. It is Halloween, and I am the ghoul who wants to listen to the shells *(Lot 50)*, look through the magnifying glass *(Lot 78)* and sit on the slipcovered sofa *(Lot 22)*. Never again will it all be together. On November 16, Lots 1-224 will be auctioned, a little less than a year after Didion died at 87 of complications from Parkinson's disease. Proceeds from the sale will go towards Parkinson's research and patient care at Columbia University, as well as the historical society in Didion's hometown of Sacramento.

The auction includes valuable artwork. I admire the Cy Twombly lithograph *(Lot 95)* that Didion and her late husband, the writer John Gregory Dunne, bought one day when they were meant to be shopping for a winter coat. (It happens.) But how my heart thumps over the dictionary *(Lot 77)* left open in Dunne's office, not to mention the group of Didion's prescription eyeglasses *(Lot 189).*

5 Why would I choose the eyeglasses over a first edition of *The White Album?* What makes me covet the everyday object? I believe there is power in the things our favorite writers keep close, the objects they run their fingers over: loose buttons in a box *(Lot 169)*, seashells on a mantle. Evidently, I am not alone. As I write this, bidding on the shells has reached $1,000.

"We tell ourselves stories in order to live," Didion wrote.

The first story I tell myself, in front of her Cartier desk clock *(Lot 68)*, is that I can afford to look. The second: If I put this clock on my desk, my work will be blessed. Blessed by Joan Didion? By Cartier? Just blessed. As long as I leave the clock stopped at 10 minutes to three.

I need to know that the clock was found stopped precisely on that time. (It was.) Did Didion alphabetize her books? I hear another potential bidder inquire. (No.) Tracy Daugherty, author of the Didion biography *The Last Love Song,* recalls that someone once asked him whether she used wooden or stainless-steel spoons for cooking. (The answer is unclear, but I can confirm there are no wooden spoons up for auction.)

Questions like these, Daugherty observes, are usually about something else altogether.
"I think what we all want to know about a writer or an artist is: *How did they do it?*" he tells me by email. We, the readers, avoid dwelling on talent and focus instead on method. *Do you use a pen or a pencil?* we ask our favorite writers. We hope that knowing the answer will help our own efforts.

10 Yes, I think, remembering myself poring over Jill Krementz's photos of writers at their desks. *How do you do it? If I arrange my desk like this, can I do it too?*

I have come close to trouble, imbuing objects with magic.

For several hours in July 2021, I was the high bidder on Sylvia Plath's rolling pin (Lot 45) at an auction at Sotheby's London.

Let me explain.

I've read Plath's poetry since I was a teenager, copying "Mad Girl's Love Song" into my journal in runny black ink near the lyrics to Hole's "Doll Parts." *(Was anyone ever so young?)* The summer of the auction, I had just finished *Red Comet,* Heather Clark's brilliant new biography of Plath. My head was full of her. I felt in fresh awe of her genius.

15 *Okay*, you say. *But why the rolling pin?*

I found the chipped wood beautiful. I knew it was an object that had brought Plath joy. I believed it would bring me joy. It would live on my desk. Stuck on a sentence, I'd turn it over in my hands. The words would come. I'd roll out pages like pastry dough.

One night, I raised my digital paddle at Sothebys.com and clicked until I reached 5,500 British pounds. Until a green message flashed: "The current bid is with you."

I went to sleep pleased, not grasping that I seriously might, you know, win. I woke up to reality in the form of an email from Sotheby's. The auction house needed me to submit a copy of my passport or driver's license to confirm both my identity and my billing address.

"Should you be successful in this auction we will be unable to release the property to you until ID has been added to your account," the email read.

20 *Should you be successful.* The terror of those words.

Numbers began to churn. The exchange rate put my bid at roughly $7,500. Plus the buyer's premium. Overhead premium. Value-added tax. Shipping. I considered the possibility of owning a $10,000 rolling pin.

Should I be successful, I would pay for Lot 45 somehow. But I could in no way afford it.
I took a walk. *Please get me out of this,* I begged Plath and Ted Hughes and Horus, an Egyptian god in the form of a falcon, a statue of which Hughes had bought Plath. (Horus was now Lot 3.) I appealed to my father, eight years gone. His response, I heard clearly: "Jesus Christ."

By the end of the walk, I had been outbid. The rolling pin, together with 33 of Plath's typed recipe cards, sold days later for $27,794.

I recently asked Heather Clark whether the price had surprised her. "Plath enjoyed cooking and baking very much, so I expected the rolling pin to sell for a few thousand dollars," she told me by email. Of the final number, she wrote: "I don't understand it myself, except that some people have money to burn."

25 "Is there a market for dead writers' rolling pins?" I ask an antiques dealer in Hudson.

"There's a market for everything," he says.

Didion used a marble rolling pin and an apron that reads: "Maybe Broccoli Doesn't Like You Either". In my mind, those words are a jab at George H.W. Bush who, while president in 1990, declared, "I do not like broccoli." Didion covered his election. I realize that I am imposing my narrative on an apron.

Auctions are driven by narratives. The title of the Didion sale, "An American Icon," manages to evoke both monuments and Coca-Cola. Inside Stair Galleries, the walls conjure California skies. They've been painted a Benjamin Moore color called Blue Jean (customized to become darker, which seems right). Lisa Thomas, director of the auction house's fine arts department, tells me she chose the shade to set off Didion's Richard Diebenkorn lithograph and yellow slipper chairs.

30 The curation tells a story. "We wanted some personal items that nobody would have seen unless they visited her at her apartment," Thomas says. "And then we wanted some of the iconic things, like the rattan chair that everybody's seen because she was photographed in it so many times."

Didion scholars may someday look at the catalog as a supplement to *The Year of Magical Thinking,* her memoir of losing Dunne, and *Blue Nights,* her reflections after losing their daughter, Quintana Roo. Consider the devastating detail of Lot 47 ("This quilt hung over the bed in Quintana Roo's room in her parents' NYC apartment") or Lot 26 ("It was at this table that John Dunne suffered the fatal heart attack that took his life").

Even the condition reports read as poems about mortality. I tear up over the barware in Lot 164: "The decanter with rim chips. The funnel with bruises and oxidation. The wood corkscrews with nicks and losses."

The absence of certain items, the white space in the text, may bring you relief. You will not find, for example, a Western Union cable to an editor signed, "REGARDS, DIDION." Any items related to her career will live on in a joint Didion Dunne archive. The home of the archive will be announced in the coming months.

The books on offer don't contain Didion's marginalia. They contain a bookplate put there by the auction house. You cannot buy notebooks full of Didion's scribblings. You can buy her empty ones. They have been bundled into groups and split across three lots.

35 "What is anyone supposed to do with 13 blank notebooks?" a caller asks on the day I visit. It strikes me as a line Didion might have recorded in her notebook. I think of what she once wrote: "Your notebook will never help me, nor mine you."

People have different reasons for wanting what they want. A fine books dealer may buy Didion's blank notebooks and sell them off one by one. I suppose there is money to be made that way.

Other people, having been moved by a writer, seek objects as a means of connection. I watch news footage of a 2015 estate tag sale at the former home of Maya Angelou in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Some of the late poet's belongings were sold to benefit the Dr. Maya Angelou Foundation.

Javon Bell was one of the people waiting in line to buy something. He admires Angelou's writing and her civil rights activism. They lived in the same community. He wishes he could have met her.

Among the items he purchased are a silver coin bank with carousel horses on it and children's books about Angelou from her own library. He gave the books to his daughter. He hopes to pass them on to his grandchildren.

40 "They can go back and study her work and say, 'I have something of hers that she actually *owned*,'" he says. "It's a part of history that you have hands on."

I love knowing that someone cherishes Angelou's coin bank. Someone, or several people, wear Gabriel García Márquez's ink-stained tweed jackets, which were sold for charity in Mexico in 2021. Someone—I hope!—has Truman Capote's papier-mâché parrot on their bar cart. The parrot sold at Julien's Auctions for $3,200 in 2016.

Someone owns Plath's cane fishing rod *(Lot.* Peter K. Steinberg, an archivist, won it at Bonhams for $714 in 2018. He has spent years reading and studying Plath. He co-edited two volumes of her letters. When he saw the fishing rod in the auction catalog, it struck him as being "almost the weirdest possible thing in there," he says. "And I became enamored of it from that moment."

The rod sits in his office, still in its bag. He has never used it. He rarely touches it. But he could. He could pick it up and make a motion like he was casting a line out into the water. "Who knows? I might even place my hands in the same way Plath did," he says. "That's kind of cool. But maybe not to everybody."

If I put on Didion's eyeglasses, could I see as she did? No. I could try every pair, but I wouldn't see anything; not myself at 28 listening to her read in Central Park or the words now in front of my face. There is no shortcut to the work, not even in Ray Bradbury's favorite magic trick, though it went up for sale years ago.

Wings Of Desire: Why Is An Obsessive British Collector Risking Jail To Kill Rare Butterflies?
Tim Lewis FEB 14, 2018 Esquire

'You couldn't make it up'

1 At 1pm on Thursday, 18 June 2015, two men climbed over a padlocked gate just behind The Daneway Inn. The pub stands in the Cotswolds, an insufferably quaint range of rolling hills and postcard villages in central England. It is three, connected, white-washed cottages built in the late 18th century for workers building the canal that runs through its garden. Beyond that is a steep grassland meadow that now operates as a nature reserve called Daneway Banks. Theirs was a curious way to gain admission to the enclosure, mainly because there was an open entrance less than 100m up the hill. They were clocked immediately by a butterfly enthusiast, Neil Hulme, who works for the British charity Butterfly Conservation but who was visiting the site on holiday.
The more active of the pair, Phillip Cullen, was short and stocky. He walked stiffly, like he'd left the coat hanger in his clothes. He wore a checked shirt and a blue cap with a Nike swoosh; in one hand was a white plastic bag and in the other was a green net with short green pole. For the next four hours, Hulme followed the men around the site, taking notes and surreptitiously photographing their actions.

"I've got absolutely nothing against Cullen as a human being," Hulme says, "but I object strongly to what he was doing. And on that basis I was prepared to ruin my holiday and spend the day rolling around like a commando collecting evidence to make sure we could bring a case that would stick."

While his accomplice disappeared under the shade of a beech tree, Cullen began to take swipes — seemingly unsuccessful — with his net. At this time, Hulme called the police, but mobile reception is erratic in this part of the country and the call couldn't be placed. Occasionally, Cullen would pass something to his companion, whom Hulme believed was acting as "a lookout". After a couple of hours of skulking round remote corners of the reserve, Cullen ditched the net and reappeared holding a small video recorder. He now engaged in what Hulme "perceived to be the exaggerated use" of the camera and began animated discussion with other visitors to the site in an effort, perhaps, to come across as a legitimate hobbyist. When another member of Butterfly Conservation asked Cullen whether he was using a net, he denied owning one.

5 The reason everyone was on Daneway Banks that afternoon was the "large blue", *Maculinea arion*, one of Britain's rarest and most coveted butterflies. The species is globally endangered and it was actually declared extinct in the country in 1979, but a dedicated and unprecedented conservation effort has seen it reintroduced to 33 sites. The locations of many of these populations are closely guarded secrets, but Daneway Banks, which supports the second largest number of large blues in England (and therefore effectively the world), is well-known among lepidopterists. When the site was officially opened in 2016, the Prince of Wales did the honours.

The following day, 57-year-old Cullen and his accomplice appeared, helpfully wearing the same clothes, on another nature reserve dedicated to the large blue. Here, at Collard Hill in Somerset, a volunteer warden — pre-warned by a report from Hulme, circulated overnight — was waiting for them. When she questioned Cullen, he claimed he was only interested in parasitic wasps. These sightings provided strong circumstantial evidence, but Cullen was ultimately brought down by his eBay records. These listings, which showed illegal specimens bought and sold, some from as far afield as Java in Indonesia, were sufficient for magistrates to issue a warrant to search his home.

At 9am, on 13 February 2016, police arrived at Cullen's address, on the outskirts of Bristol, with two butterfly experts from the Natural History Museum. Cullen, who is unemployed, lives in social housing with his wife and a grown-up son. The search of the two-bedroom house did not take long. There was a pile of rocks in the living room, which were part of another collection, and then – bingo. There in a cabinet was drawer after drawer of rare butterflies, arranged and pinned under glass, including more than 20 examples of large blues. The most recent of these were captioned "DB18" and "CH18". Cullen insisted that the labels referred to "Dark Blue" and "Cobalt Hue". In court, the prosecutors speculated that they were references to Daneway Banks and Collard Hill, and that 18 tallied with 18 June, the day he was seen in the Cotswolds.

The magistrates agreed and, in March 2017, Cullen was convicted for capturing, killing and possessing large blue butterflies. It was the first time an individual had been prosecuted in Britain for harming an insect, and a prison sentence was considered. In the event, Cullen was spared jail time, but he had to pay a £380 fine and perform 250 hours of community service.

Perhaps it was a slow news day or maybe it was respite from the relentless cycle of terrorism and political squabbles, but something about the Cullen trial caught the imagination. Most of the British newspapers covered the story, but so too did *The New York Times*, *The Times of India* and *Arab News*, a daily newspaper in Saudi Arabia. For most of these foreign outlets, it was clearly a tale of British eccentricity. Invariably, too, the reports mentioned in either the headline or the opening sentence that Cullen used to be a bodybuilder. The image of a muscle-bound hulk chasing a frail butterfly around with a child's shrimping net was certainly a gift.

10 But, around the margins, among serious lepidopterists, another discussion was taking place. Butterfly collecting was widely thought to be a relic of a less civilised time: a hobby made obsolete in the Sixties by the rise of the conservation movement and improvements in cameras. These people began to ask: was Cullen a lone weirdo? Or was he part of a renegade underground movement that took butterflies either for their own personal hauls or to sell online for around £400 a specimen?

Some of the answers could be found not long after on specialist insect-collecting forums, a place for like-minded individuals to discuss their finds and gossip about the going rate for prize specimens: there were almost audible gasps recently when a female *Morpho cypris chrysonicus*, a brilliant blue and white butterfly from South America, went for over £1,250, plus shipping. Here the prevailing opinion was that Cullen was an idiot, but less for targeting the large blue than for managing to get caught doing it. On these chatrooms, under the anonymity of usernames, modern collectors describe feeling just as hunted now as the dainty prey that they still stalk.
"The man was stupid yes, but he caught two butterflies, yes two," wrote dp1965 on The Insect Collectors' Forum. "And in the grand scheme of things, with all that's going on in the world right now, it hardly makes him Herr Hitler. But the loony treehuggers want him crucified. Not only that, they also want you and I crucified, too. And I have tasted their bitter venom and been made to feel like a serial killer, for this, the most gentle hobby on planet earth with some of the most gentle people I have ever met. You couldn't make it up."

'Everyone's frightened of sharks, everyone loves butterflies'

There is considerable skill in mounting and displaying a butterfly. It takes many attempts before you have anything even semi-presentable. First, and most important, you need to kill the specimen without harming its delicate wings. Vladimir Nabokov, the novelist and one-time official curator of lepidoptera at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, favoured squeezing the creature's thorax to explode its heart. But this method needs considerable dexterity, an unflinching constitution and long, sharp nails, so a chemical alternative is often sought. In the early days, this might mean ether or cyanide, although cotton balls soaked in ethyl acetate, which is less noxious and smells not-unpleasantly of boiled sweets, is preferred now. Death takes place in what's called a killing jar.

Some essential kit is required. You need entomologist's forceps — sharp-pointed tweezers, really — to unfurl the wings without ripping them. Then insect pins and a spreading board on which to dry out the butterfly. After a few weeks it will be brittle and ready to display in a cork-lined wooden box, ideally made from mahogany. Historically, these would have been fumigated with naphthalene, the main ingredient of mothballs, another dangerous carcinogen, but now freezing the specimens for three days is the preferred method to repel the notorious *anthrenus museorum*, or museum beetle. You will also attach a label in neat cursive detailing where and when you found the butterfly. Then they are meticulously filed away. No serious collector would display a case on the wall, as the specimens would mottle and deteriorate very quickly. They need to be kept in darkness, and taken out only occasionally to be admired.

15 What inspires a human being to kill a butterfly? For non-collectors, it might be hard to fathom, but the impulse must be similar to the one that exists behind most hobbies. It is a pursuit to swallow up spare hours and it allows you to spend satisfying sums on specialist equipment. Collecting gets you out of the house, often to bucolic spots, and you are left with an exotic keepsake to remind you of summer as the nights draw in.

Still, butterfly collecting does seem a strange way to spend your days; an activity so arcane it wouldn't totally surprise you if it was reclaimed by hipsters in Hackney. The golden age of lepidoptery — as the scientific study of butterflies and moths is known — was around the turn of the last century in Britain. Rich men (and it was almost exclusively a male pastime) would travel around the UK and the empire hunting for trophies. Their attire, typically, was tweed suits; one accessory *du jour* was a top hat lined with cork, so that the insects could be pinned immediately. These chaps would leap around fields swiping at the air with a fine-meshed net or they would engage local children to do the work for them for a modest fee.

Over the past 300 years, huge numbers of the great and the good have been collectors. While bombs fell during WWII, Winston Churchill planned a sumptuous butterfly garden at Chartwell, his country house in Kent. Britain's wartime leader started at the age of six, and his drawers were filled with exotic specimens picked up on military campaigns in Sudan, Pakistan and South Africa. His dream enclosure was to feature fountains of water and honey, and he even wanted to reintroduce a large butterfly called the Black-veined White, *Aporia crataegi*, which had become extinct in Britain in 1925. It was never realised in his lifetime, but today 20-odd varieties of native butterflies can be found in Chartwell's gardens.

Nabokov is the great chronicler of butterflies: both directly in poems and autobiography, and more obliquely in his fiction, including *Lolita*. He actually discovered some new species and named one Nabokov's Blue, although it was latterly demoted to a subspecies. More recently, butterflies have been a leitmotif of the British artist Damien Hirst's work. When asked in 1997 why they recurred so often in his art, he explained: "You have to find universal triggers: everyone's frightened of glass, everyone's frightened of sharks, everyone loves butterflies."

Where there are butterflies, death is never far away. Hirst's work "In and Out of Love" (1991) was an installation in which tropical butterflies erupted out of chrysalises, pinned to boards, leaving behind a pink and gold fluid that some thought to be butterfly "blood". In a 2012 retrospective, the work took over two rooms of the Tate Modern. Animal-rights campaigners were furious when it was revealed that more than 9,000 Heliconius and Owl butterflies, which usually have a lifespan of nine months in the wild, died during the 23 weeks that the exhibition was open. Another Hirst piece, "I am Become Death, Shatterer of Worlds" (2006) — a riff on the *Bhagavad Gita* scripture quote made famous by J Robert Oppenheimer, father of the atomic bomb — was made entirely from a kaleidoscopic arrangement of thousands of butterfly wings, covering more than five metres across and two metres high. It sold at Christie's London auction house for £2.1m in 2010.

20 Butterfly collecting, as nature writer Patrick Barkham once noted, is invariably "a male, if not especially masculine, preserve". In the early days, Aurelian (literally "the golden one") societies were only open to men, much like gentlemen's clubs; killing anything back then was deemed unladylike.

As the subject became a formal science this, too, tended to exclude women, who were less likely to receive a university education. One suspects that it is not a coincidence that the virtual death of butterfly collecting in recent times has overlapped neatly with the increasing involvement of women in lepidoptery.

Of course, the rarest and most exotic butterflies have long aroused the most deranged passions. The large blue, which cannot be bred in captivity, was always a special trophy. In 1896, a new colony was discovered in Cornwall. Within weeks, collectors descended in hordes and swiped an estimated 2,660 large blues. An aristocrat called John Augustus Bouck, a baron of the Russian Empire, was especially enamoured with the species: when his butterfly collection was auctioned in 1939, it featured more than 900 large blues, the most extensive "series" ever assembled.

But there's something misleading about these tales of excess. Poaching is almost never the reason that a butterfly species becomes extinct. Invariably it's destruction of habitat that finishes them off. One of the starkest examples of this is the Xerces Blue, Glaucopsyche xerces, North America's large blue, which exists now only as three trays of pinned specimens in the California Academy of Sciences at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. It, too, was known for its beauty; Nabokov called it "celestially innocent". It thrived on the coastal sand dunes of the Sunset District until urban development cleared the natural dunes and the silver lupines that its caterpillars required. The Xerces Blue was last seen alive in 1943.

It was a similar story with the large blue in Britain. Ultimately what decided its fate was not the zeal of Victorian gentlemen, but the fact that the thin-soiled grasslands where they lived were abandoned by farmers because they were agriculturally unproductive. In this context, the idea that a man could be sent to prison for taking two, admittedly endangered, butterflies seems something of an extreme punishment.

Britain's giant panda

The large blue, contrary to reasonable assumption, is actually quite a small butterfly. Each wing is no bigger than a postage stamp. It is definitely blue though, splendidly so. At its finest, it is the inky indigo of Japanese selvedge denim, which dissolves into a black border and is then framed by a stark outer edge of white. Even in the pulchritudinous world of butterfly chasing – which must be like judging a beauty pageant in Sweden – it is regarded as something of a looker. And it's the biggest of the diminutive Blue family, hence the name.

25 On an Arcadian summer's day back in June, under skies the same colour as its wings, I went in search of the large blue on Green Down in Somerset. Finding one is, in no sense, a walk in the park. It is often called the most neurotic of butterflies: its life cycle is macabre and frankly a bit kinky. As an adult, it appears "on the wing", in entomologist-speak, in very specific places, at very particular times and only in perfect conditions for very brief periods. The large blue doesn't like it too hot or too cold, and if there's a gust of wind, forget about it.

The large blue favours south-facing sites covered in wild thyme and the best chance to see it is to catch it sunbathing. Green Down is a nature reserve in the middle of nowhere – the closest town of note is Glastonbury, and it so happens that the large blue often appears at the same time as the famous music festival – but that hasn't deterred a few dozen butterfly obsessives from combing this remote meadow in the hope of a sighting. Accompanying me are Jeremy Thomas, Professor of Ecology at Oxford University, and David Simcox, his right-hand man. These are the two men responsible for reintroducing the large blue to Britain and no one in the world knows more about these fragile creatures. You might imagine that the study of butterflies would attract colourful oddballs, but this pair are clearly very sensible, almost disappointingly so. Thomas is dogged and deeply rational, Simcox more emotional, and these qualities have proved exactly what was required to bring the large blue effectively back from the dead.

“The large blue has been elevated, in the insect world, to the equivalent of giant pandas,” explains Thomas, a spry septuagenarian, as we puff up a steep hill beside a railway track that carries trains between London and Taunton. Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, Ringlets and Thomas’s first Gatekeeper of the season all flit and wobble by, but he scarcely turns his head. The large blue is known for its lazy, faltering flight; some say it looks drunk.

“It always had this charisma originally among the old butterfly collectors,” Thomas continues. “It was one of *the* great prizes, because it was very, very rare and most people think it’s very beautiful. I don’t like the word ‘iconic’ but it’s used a lot. Before cars existed, people made their way to site by horse and trap and they’d camp on site for three weeks. And they would spend every day of their holidays trying to collect large blues. Lots of people did, not just one or two.”

It is not illegal to collect and kill butterflies in the UK. But there are rules that need to be followed. There is a list of species that receive full legal protection and there are places (such as nature reserves and national parks) where you would require a permit. Britain is home to 59 species of butterflies, six are absolutely off-limits under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, and the most high-profile of these is the large blue.

30 While the Phillip Cullen case was a first in the UK, there have been previous convictions in the US. Most prominent was the 1993 indictment of Richard Skalski, Thomas Kral and Marc Grinnell for poaching and trafficking in butterflies protected by the Endangered Species Act. Between them, the men possessed 11 of the 16 restricted North American butterflies, and Skalski and Kral, especially, were operating at near-Victorian prolificacy. Kral, who was just 31 at the time of the trial in 1995, had one species, now known as the St Francis Satyr, so rare that it was not even known to exist; he’d collected 50 of them. The 1,637 illegal butterflies seized from Kral’s home in Tucson, Arizona, were actually only two per cent of his total collection. The three men also avoided jail, but like Cullen had to pay fines and do community service.

Cullen was small-time compared to Skalski, Kral and Grinnell’s sophisticated ring, and it became clear very quickly that the British authorities were not dealing with a master criminal. Simcox, the large blue project officer, tells me, almost sympathetically, “He [Cullen] was not an educated man, which consistently made it difficult for him, really.” Ian Guildford, an investigative support officer for the National Wildlife Crime Unit, who was involved in Cullen’s arrest, is even more damning: “Our friend, he’s not the brightest button in the box, that’s for sure.”

Echoing comments made on insect-collecting forums, Neil Hulme, the man who spotted Cullen and tracked him on Daneway Banks, was especially incredulous of his decision to carry out his activities on one of the most popular sites for large blue at a peak time of day for visitors. Either he was very confident that he would not be challenged, or he’s a first-order numbskull. “It seems crazy to me to carry a net, because if you were what I’d call a clever collector, you would take butterflies when they were at roost in a discreet manner without the need for a net,” says Hulme. “I know that if I wanted to, I could take some small pots in my pocket out in the evening when most people had gone home and find large blues asleep and surreptitiously just pot them.”

Perhaps it was the bodybuilder tag, but Cullen could certainly come across as intimidating. When the police arrived at his house with a search warrant, he was aggressive and unhelpful, and there was a discussion over whether he should be arrested for perverting the course of justice. He has a long police record including theft, actual bodily harm, possession of drugs and criminal damage. These are mostly historical, dating from his teens and twenties, but he had some public order offences — essentially arguments with neighbours — from the past decade. There was an odd moment in court when Cullen’s accomplice, called as a witness for the defence, denied being his “friend”. They had known each other for 20 years, the man clarified to the magistrates, but that was because their wives both came from Thailand. He joined Cullen on the excursions because he was interested in the architecture of railway bridges.

After he was found guilty, Cullen went up to the witnesses who had testified against him and said, “See you on the sites this year.” This comment was enough to earn him a criminal behaviour order banning him for five years from the three main large blue reserves.

35 “We come across two types of people,” says Guildford. “My impression of Cullen is that he was just an obsessive collector. They’re not in it for the money, it’s just the obsession of collecting the rarest thing you can find. Or building your collection. And then you’ve got the real criminals who are in it for the financial gain.”

Guildford catches himself, “I say ‘real criminals’; he’s a criminal, too.”

Sod’s law

On Green Down, the June sun continues to beat down and our search for a large blue remains unresolved. This gives Jeremy Thomas the opportunity to trace his own relationship with the butterfly, which now goes back five decades. In 1972, he was a PhD student in his mid-twenties not long out of Cambridge University. The large blue was on the precipice of extinction in the UK and Thomas was tasked with finding out why. For the next six summers, with pretty much only cricket commentary from Test Match Special on the radio for company, he lived with the last remaining colony in a remote spot on the edge of Dartmoor National Park.

“It did mess up your social life a bit,” he concedes, “but because it was a lovely part of the world, quite a number of my friends would come and take holidays. So we’d stay up drinking, putting the world to rights, and they’d lie in bed until 10 or 11 in the morning after that, and I’d be up at seven and on the site.”

What Thomas realised — belatedly it turned out — was that the large blue has some very specific requirements in order to breed. It is a predator, the only one in Britain (the rest feed on plants). Its prey is one species of red ant called *Myrmica sabuleti*, which, as a tiny caterpillar, it tricks into thinking that it is their queen by singing softly to it and emulating its smell. The ants then dutifully carry it back to their brood chamber, where it spends 10 months resting on a silk pad and bingeing on ant grubs until it is ready to pupate. The whole life cycle is sometimes compared to the movie *Alien*.

40 Sadly, by the time Thomas had joined all the dots, the last colony of large blues in Britain was no more. To reintroduce the species, he and Simcox had to take eggs from a very similar butterfly in Sweden. Just as he is explaining this, Thomas spots a flash of blue and races off in pursuit. It’s not. It is. It’s a large blue! “Oh, it’s a really, really tatty one,” he harrumphs. “It’s a male, probably 10 days old. Argh, that really is sod’s law.”

A butterfly’s wings, their colours and patterns, are made up of tiny, overlapping scales. These are at their brightest for the first day or two, but over time, the scales fall out or rub off. No discerning collector would be interested in a faded specimen like this one, but there is still something pulse-quickening about seeing it. The large blue might be pernickety and ornery, but that is what has given this tiny insect its power over humans for centuries. As David Simcox says that day to a middle-aged couple who had driven more than 150 miles on a futile search for a large blue: “If it was easy, it wouldn’t be any fun at all.”

This sighting also makes some sense as to why some people were so angry about Phillip Cullen. For the trial, Thomas was asked to present a statement on the impact that butterfly collectors could have on the large blue population. His conclusion was that, on the two sites where Cullen was spotted with his net, the effect would be meaningless. “I don’t trumpet this very loudly,” he says, “but to Daneway or Collard, the numbers that someone can actually physically collect are trivial.”

More important for Thomas was the psychological toll that the poaching had and the message it sends out. The large blue now flies in Britain in greater numbers than at any time since the Thirties. It is a heart-warming conservation story in an age that desperately needs one. "So there has been

great satisfaction at the success of the project and a universal feeling of dismay when there is evidence someone is collecting and killing these hard-won butterflies," says Thomas, after our large blue has flown skittishly away. "It's almost akin in certain people to the sense of violation sometimes felt by house owners after a robbery."

Hangar 51

A month earlier, in May 2017, I had met Ian Guildford at the Natural History Museum. He was in London to escort the two cases of butterflies seized at Phillip Cullen's house to add to the museum's collection. It is already, by some margin, the most extensive library in the world: at last count there are 8,712,000 dead butterflies and moths sitting in 80,000 glass-fronted drawers in high, polished mahogany cabinets. If they were laid out rather than stacked, they would cover around 30 football pitches. The collection can be viewed by application only, for security reasons.

45 Cullen's is a tiny addition to the collection: Walter and Charles Rothschild, two English bankers and amateur entomologists who lived at the turn of the 20th century, contributed a quarter of it — more than 2,000,000 butterflies and moths — when they died. Walter used to boast that there wasn't a single duplicate in his entire collection. Guildford drove Cullen's two boxes into a rear entry to the museum and they were promptly put in a freezer for 72 hours to kill any bugs that could infest them or attack the museum's collection.

Is there a long-term plan for them? "I'll have to ask the curator," he replies. "He might make an exhibition of seized goods. There's massive vaults, millions of butterflies. They get a lot of collections surrendered: 'Grandad's just died, I don't want them…' But this one, I don't know."

In just one generation, butterfly collecting has gone from being an acceptable pastime for prime ministers to being viewed with deep suspicion. *Esquire* approached Cullen for this article and he had no interest in discussing the case; neither did a handful of other collectors contacted through forums or even commercial dealers of butterflies. The activity has become a faint embarrassment: the boxes of butterflies are now, in the words of Professor Beth Tobin from the University of Georgia, "suspended somewhere between memorabilia and rubbish".

In 1963, John Fowles published his first novel, *The Collector*. He wrote more famous works — notably *The Magus* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* — but his debut was especially personal. It told the story of a sadistic butterfly obsessive called Frederick Clegg who kidnaps an art student, Miranda Grey, sedating her with chloroform. For Fowles, a repentant collector himself, there was a clear metaphor: the unforgiveable compulsion of some individuals to take a thing of beauty, deprive it of freedom and finally kill it. *The Collector* would subsequently prove popular with serial killers: Leonard Lake, who along with Charles Chi-Tat Ng, is believed to have killed 25 people in California in the Eighties, loved the novel; Christopher Wilder, aka The Beauty Queen Killer, was found with a copy of the book when he was gunned down by police in New Hampshire in 1984 at the end of his six-week, cross-country killing spree.

The link between collecting and psychopathy is well trodden both in fiction and reality. In The Silence of the Lambs, serial killer Buffalo Bill stuffs moths into his victims' throats as a calling card. Again, the insects are a metaphor for dispatching living things silently, dispassionately. The film poster featured a death's-head hawkmoth, which has a distinctive white skull on its back. Among 400 pieces of correspondence confiscated in the 1995 case of the three Americans found guilty of flouting the Endangered Species Act, there were repeated references to their status as outsiders. Kral, a man responsible for the death of around 80,000 butterflies, signed off one letter to Skalski, "Yours in mass murder, Tom."

50 It's worth reminding ourselves – lest we become carried away by stories of genuine monsters – that we are not necessarily talking about an illegal activity. Back on the collectors' forums, there is the strong feeling, discussing the Cullen case, of a stitch-up. Anyone, they huff, can happily slaughter spiders, wasps, even moths, but touch a butterfly and you become an outcast. In this reading, writes dp1965 on The Insect Collectors' Forum again, the reintroduction of the large blue was "an ego trip for a handful of self-righteous, self-styled, self-proclaimed conservation gurus". He goes on to claim that charitable groups such as Butterfly Conservation "post lies galore in order to further their cause which is to put a stop to this 'barbaric and Victorian pastime' that we call a hobby and brainwash their followers like lobotomised sheep who don't have one original thought of their own."

The peculiar thing is that almost all of the entomologists and butterfly fanciers that I did meet started out as collectors. One said that when he first became interested, far back in the early Sixties, it was impossible to imagine how anyone could study butterflies and moths and not also pin and preserve them. Sir David Attenborough, an official national treasure and the world's most beloved naturalist, once said his most profound embarrassment was that he used to be a collector. He had huge numbers of South American blue morphos and Queen Alexandra's birdwings, the largest butterfly in the world, that he captured in Papua New Guinea.

On Green Down, everyone seems content to track the large blues with their cameras these days, but it's a similar story. "When I was a kid, I collected butterflies," says David Simcox, who is in his sixties. "Everyone did. I can remember in 1980 being at a big international symposium with Jeremy called the 'Biology of Butterflies' at the Natural History Museum. There was a lot of talk then about the impact of collecting and right at the end of this quite fierce debate, somebody stood up and said, 'Could everyone who started their interest in butterflies as collectors, as children, stand up?' And about 95 per cent of the audience stood up.

"But that was then," he continues. "And times have moved on. There's no excuse to do it now. Whatsoever."

54 In the closing scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the Ark of the Covenant, so painstakingly earned, is packed in a crate and deposited in the bowels of Hangar 51, a storage facility for the US military. The city of boxes is a clear nod both to Area 51 in Nevada and Hangar 18 in Ohio, where conspiracy theorists believe that UFO remains and US military secrets are hidden away from view. Leaving the Natural History Museum, after Guildford had dropped off the Cullen specimens, it's hard not to think of the collection, now swollen to 8,712,100 slightly shameful, slowly disintegrating bodies lined up in their mahogany trays, stacked up in cabinets, waiting for the moment they will see daylight again, which may never come.

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Reading Assignment

Read **ONE** non-fiction title from the Summer Reading List. (You will find the list of titles on the next two pages.)

Reading focus: Style and Argument

Dear author, I like your style!

- beautiful passages
- figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification, imagery, etc)
- diction (especially those verbs)
- syntax (the way an author chooses to join words into phrases, clauses, sentences; order, length, interesting grammar)
- repetition, balance, order, omission
- The funnies: wit, satire, sarcasm

Mapping the argument

- Identify the main claim. What is the author's point about the topic or relationship between topics?
- As you read, mark the main sub-claims (minor points).

As you read, use 15-20 post-it notes to denote **rich** passages for both focuses. Meaning, you will have 30-40 post-its total. Use one color of post-it for style and another for argument.

Due date: Bring your book** marked with post-its to class on the first day of class.

If you use a book from a library rather than purchasing your own copy, you will also need to keep pictures of pages and post-its so that you have them when we need them throughout first quarter.

Summer Reading List

You can choose your nonfiction novel by topic or by teacher. If you choose by teacher, it doesn't have to be the teacher on your current class schedule for Fall.

Non-Fiction	Hamilton	Cearley	Augustine
Activism		Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life ✍ Alice Wong	
Art	1000 Years of Joys & Sorrows: A Memoir ✏ Ai Weiwei	Monsters: A Fan's Dilemma ✍ Claire Dederer	
Biography	Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President ✏ Andice Millard	Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden ✍ Camille Dungy	Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II ✏ Erin Bennett
Criticism		On Form, Feeling, and Nonfiction ✍ Brian Dillon	
Culture	The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan ✏ Jenny Nordberg	Bunk: The Rise of Hoaxes, Humbug, Plagiarists, Phonies, Post-Facts, And Fake News ✍ Kevin Young	The Anxious Generation ✏ Jonathan Haidt
Essay Collection	The Moth Presents: A Point of Beauty: True Stories of Holding On and Letting Go	Women and Other Monsters: Building a New Mythology ✍ Jess Zimmerman	The Anthropocene Reviewed ✏ John Green
Film & TV	Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business ✏ Neil Postman		
Food	Crying in H Mart: A Memoir ✏ Michelle Zauner	Raw Dog: The Naked Truth about Hot Dogs ✍ Jamie Loftus	
Graphic Novel		The Three Escapes of Hannah Arendt: A Tyranny of Truth ✍ Ken Krimstein	
History	The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl ✏ Timothy Egan	All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, A Black Family Keepsake ✍ Tiya Miles	The Radium Girls: The Dark History of America's Shining Women ✏ Kate Moore
Investigative Journalism	Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital ✏ Sheri Fink	Columbine ✍ David Cullen	
Language	Index, A History of the: A Bookish Adventure from Medieval Manuscripts to the Digital Age ✏ Dennis Duncan	The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary ✍ Simon Winchester	
Memoir	The Liar's Club: A Memoir ✏ Mary Karr	Apple: Skin to the Core ✍ Eric Gansworth	The Other Wes Moore ✏ Wes Moore

Summer Reading List (continued)

Music	Do Remember! The Golden Era of NYC Hip-Hop Mixtapes. ✏️ Evan Auerback & Daniel Isenberg	Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music ✍️ Alex Ross	
Nature	Silent Spring ✏️ Rachel Carson	Landmarks ✍️ Robert Macfarlane	A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail 🔪 Bill Bryson
Politics	A Fever in the Heartland:The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them ✏️ Timothy Egan	The View from Flyover Country: Dispatches from the Forgotten America ✍️ Sarah Kendzior	Some People Need Killing 🔪 Patricia Evangelista
Religion	Man's Search for Meaning ✏️ Viktor Frankl		Under the Banner of Heaven 🔪 Jon Krakauer
Science	The Butchering Art: Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine ✏️ Lindsey Fitzharris	Uncommon Measure: A Journey Through Music, Performance, and the Science of Time ✍️ Natalie Hodges	The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks 🔪 Rebecca Skloot
Social Science	Legacy: A Black Physician Reckons with Racism in Medicine ✏️ Uché Blackstock, MD	The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America ✍️ Richard Rothstein	On Our Best Behavior: The seven Deadly Sins and the Price Women Pay to Be Good 🔪 Elise Loehnen
Sports	Trash Talk: The Only Book About Trashing Your Rivals That Isn't Total Garbage ✏️ Rafi Kohan		The Year's Best Sports Writing 2023 🔪 ed. Richard Deitsch
Technology	AI Needs You: How We Can Change AI's Future and Save Our Own ✏️ Verity Harding	Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology ✍️ Neil Postman	
Travel	Into the Wild ✏️ Jon Krakauer		
True Crime	Charlatan: America's Most Dangerous Huckster, the Man Who Pursued Him, and the Age of Flimflam ✏️ Pope Brock	The Fact of a Body ✍️ Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich	I'll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer 🔪 Michelle McNamara

To recap:

- Join the AP Lang Summer Reading Classroom.
  - Use code: **brp5y6y**
- Collect one thing.
- Journal about your collection.
  - Fill the provided journal pages.
  - Show your mind at work.
- Read one book from the Summer Reading List.
  - Mark book with 15-20 notes on style and 15-20 notes on argument.
    - Use two different colors of post-it notes
  - If you use a book from a library rather than your own copy, you will also need to keep pictures of pages and post-its so that you have them when we need them throughout first quarter.