



By Margaret Evans, Editor

I'm a morning person. *Early* morning. As in, always up before dawn.

I've been like this all my life – something about my internal clock – but the natural habit became a precious commodity when I began raising a child.

Lots of mothers will know what I mean. Many of you relish the sweetness of those quiet hours before the household begins to stir and the day, to whirl. For 18 years, I not only treasured my early mornings, but guarded them rather greedily. Even now, when our daughter has left home, the sound of my husband rising before his alarm buzzes fills me with angst. My sanctum is about to be invaded.

Fortunately, this rarely happens. My husband is *not* a morning person. Bless his heart.

I spend my early hours reading news and commentary, essays and devotionals, and plenty of other stuff, too. As a columnist and editor, I see this as my professional duty. That it's also my great pleasure is not lost on me, but I only occasionally feel guilty about it. You don't get rich in this journalism biz; I figure the least I can do is enjoy my work.

Most of my morning reading is done online. (I save books for nighttime.) The wonderful,

terrible Internet is a bottomless pit of info and intrigue, and I've long since given up trying to resist it or even plot my path through its multiple mazes. I mostly just wander about, like Alice in Wonderland, going down one rabbit hole after another.

Some are more shallow than others.

This morning I find myself on a website called The Zoe Report – who knows how I got here? – reading an article called “[These '80s & '90s Fashion Trends Were Seriously Underrated — Until Now.](#)” Here I learn that some of the ugliest styles I ever loved are back in a big way. Shoulder pads. Power suits. Pleated “mom jeans.” Giant gold-and-pearl earrings, à la Lady Di. (Before she became Princess Di.) Stirrup pants. (Seriously!) Sailor collars – on grown up women! (Again, think Lady Di.) I lived through these horrors the first time around and do not intend to do it again. A few of the throwbacks actually hold some appeal, though; long column skirts never went out for me, and I adore chunky fisherman's sandals. Apparently, the polo golf shirt is also back – yes, for women – and I chuckle remembering how my poor daughter complained about wearing those dress code mandated “collared shirts” all the way through middle and high school. Pity I just gave a large stack of them to Goodwill . . .

Still in the semi-shallow end of the Internet: I'm a little obsessed with [Keanu Reeves' new girlfriend, artist Alexandra Grant.](#)

She's his

*first*

girlfriend in decades – that we know of – and all of social media is abuzz about the relationship because – in a shocking turn of events – Grant is “age appropriate.” It is, perhaps, a sad commentary on our popular culture that this should be such big news – and also that this “age appropriate” person is still almost a decade younger than Reeves, 46 to his 55. But the lovely Ms. Grant also has silvery hair and a natural-looking face (i.e. no “work”) and you could almost hear the collective cheer go up from women throughout cyberspace when we saw pictures of her on the red carpet holding hands with America's kooky sweetheart. We shall see if this relaxed approach to feminine aging “takes.” I fervently hope so, but most everything else on the Internet screams, “don't count on it!”

Somehow, I pivot from Keanu's girlfriend to the Bible. Somebody says something, somewhere, about being “in the world but not of the world,” and, not for the first time – or even the hundredth – I start pondering that phrase, then reading up on it, and the next thing I know, I'm contemplating similar Biblical challenges. “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's” . . . “Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” . . . You know the ones.

The beefy, paradoxical stuff. And now I'm pillaging the [Bible Gateway online](#), looking for other chewy verses and commentary . . . And so it goes for a while.

Then, in another unlikely segue, I toy with the idea of catching up on the Trump impeachment saga. But which source to read? Which reporter to trust? Through which ideological lens shall I view this epic tale today? Frankly, the thought of going down *that* road is exhausting here in the gentle glow of my early morning. I know I will see and hear about Trump throughout my day – it's inescapable – and certainly tonight, when the news is on at our house, and I just can't muster the right kind of dark energy at the moment.

So I decide to reread an essay from *The Atlantic* that a friend posted to my Facebook page last night, saying it was "tailored" for me. It's a long, profoundly beautiful piece called ["My Friend Mr. Rogers,"](#) by writer Tom Junod, whose relationship with Fred Rogers inspired ("loosely") the upcoming film starring Tom Hanks. There are so many reasons to read this essay – and I hope you do – but my friend knew I'd love it mainly because Junod addresses one of my pet obsessions: social media as a potential road to hell.

He imagines how Mr. Rogers might have handled Twitter, a platform that dishonors everything the man stood for (especially loving your neighbor). "Twitter is a platform consecrated to the eternal pie fight—to the purposes of protest, complaint, and particularly punishment—where nobody is special and nobody is invulnerable," writes Junod. "Who would have been Fred's first troll? Who would have taken it upon themselves to 'school' Fred, to 'call him out,' to 'educate' him? Who would have told him that his faith in us was misplaced, and informed him—and us—that Mister Rogers was wrong?"

The essay leaves me in tears for the second time in twelve hours, so I'm happy when I stumble on "[A Silly But Accurate Guide on How to Recognize Famous Painters By Their Art](#) ." It's full of famous art – by famous painters – with clever captions like, "If Everyone Looks Like Hobos Illuminated Only by a Dim Streetlamp, It's Rembrandt," and "If Everyone – Including The Women – Looks Like Putin, Then It's Van Eyck." Not only is this article delightful, it's educational! I'm actually learning something useful here. And I'm laughing.

Learning and laughing. This seems like a good way to exit the virtual world and face the real one. The sun is up, and soon my husband will be, too. I need more coffee, the laundry needs folding, and the Y is calling my name.

It's been a long day already. Wonder how soon I can grab a nap?