

# Thanksgiving



**T**he little kids will tell you about maize and pilgrims. High schoolers will rejoice about the four-day weekend, and many college students will craft any number of excuses to not be able to make it home. But amid all the hand turkey art, cranberry sauce, homemade stuffing and naps in front of the football game, we wanted to remind you that the spirit of this autumnal season remains simple gratitude.

So I've mined the memory banks for a special column, one that speaks my gratefulness of such a wonderfully rich (figuratively, obviously) life. My family, of course — lovely wife Jennifer, and mischievous sons Miles and Quinn — is at the top of the list. The others follow, in no particular order:

Paul Newman in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." The flavor-infused heaven of Chicken in a Biskit. Snowmen with scarves, hats and carrot noses. "Schoolhouse Rock." The uproarious Flashman novels of George MacDonald Fraser. The raspy voice, striking lyrics and general weirdness of Tom Waits. The slight arc of a double to the gap from your own bat. Maker's Mark, rocks, splash of water.

Slapstick comedy. That I've seen Tiger Woods swing ... in person.

## CAN YOU LIST ALL THE LITTLE

## THINGS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OUR GOOD FORTUNE? BY MARK LUCE

That I've seen Roger Federer swing, even though not in person. The austerity of the Midwest landscape in novels by Willa Cather. The intensity of Glenn Gould's piano playing on Bach's Goldberg Variations, and the sheer beauty of Rostropovich's recording of Bach's Cello Suites. Plain white T-shirts, khaki shorts, Converse All-Stars and a baseball hat from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City.

The short stories of Alice Munro, Raymond Carver and Denis Johnson. The extraordinary use of light by the painter Caravaggio. The extraordinary use of funk by James Brown. The searing vision of Frank Miller's Sin City series of graphic novels. LEGOs. Netflix. Catfish. Tom Brady.

Popeye, Bugs Bunny and Woody Woodpecker. That I got to become friends with William S. Burroughs. The beat-up, old vinyl recording of Louis Armstrong and his Hot Sevens that sits in my record bin. The Constitution. That I used to get to eat my grandmother's chicken fried steak and my grandfather's chili. Cozy Inn

hamburgers and Scheme Pizza in Salina, Kan. Nintendo Wii tennis.

EnerGel Deluxe RTX black pens. The angels of Giotto. Ella Fitzgerald singing "Paper Moon," Willie Nelson singing "Stardust," The Clash singing "Hateful." Milan Kundera's "The Unbearable Lightness of Being." The Tour de France. A 50-inch plasma TV in my living room. Buster Keaton, SpongeBob SquarePants and the Three Stooges. Kansas City barbecue (Gate's or Bryant's) and University of Kansas basketball.

All the teachers I have ever had, many of whom I will never forget. Spending my time teaching others about literature, writing and art history. My colleagues, too numerous to mention. My friends, too numerous to mention. My extended family and all their quirks. My parents. And, of course, writing this column for the last 10 years.

Enjoy your Thanksgiving. I will.

*Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, Mo., where he loves really dry stuffing. He can be reached at [msluce@everestkc.net](mailto:msluce@everestkc.net).*

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