

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Excerpt from *Two Years Before the Mast*

by Richard Henry Dana

- 1 The first day we passed at sea was Sunday. As we were just from port, and there was a great deal to be done on board, we were kept at work all day, and at night the watches were set, and everything was put into sea order. When we were called aft¹ to be divided into watches, I had a good specimen of the manner of a sea-captain. After the division had been made, he gave a short characteristic speech.
- 2 “Now, my men, we have begun a long voyage. If we get along well together, we shall have a comfortable time. All you have got to do is to obey your orders, and do your duty like men, — then you will fare well enough; if you don’t, you will fare hard enough, — I can tell you. If we pull together, you will find me a clever fellow; if we don’t, you will find me a rescal.² That’s all I’ve got to say. Go below, the larboard³ watch!”
- 3 I, being in the starboard⁴ or second mate’s watch, had the opportunity of keeping the first watch at sea. Stimson, a young man making, like myself, his first voyage, was in the same watch, and as he was the son of a professional man, and had been in a merchants counting-room in Boston, we found that we had some acquaintances and topics in common. We talked these matters over — Boston, what our friends were probably doing, our voyage, etc. — until he went to take his turn at the lookout, and left me to myself. I had now a good opportunity for reflection. I felt for the first time the perfect silence of the sea. The officer was walking the quarter-deck, where I had no right to go, one or two men were talking on the forecastle,⁵ whom I had little inclination to join, so that I was left open to the full impression of everything about me. However much I was affected by the beauty of the sea, the bright stars, and the clouds driven swiftly over them, I could not but remember that I was separating myself from all the social and intellectual enjoyments of life. Yet, strange as it may seem, I did then and afterwards take pleasure in these reflections, hoping by them to prevent my becoming insensible to the value of what I was losing.

¹**aft:** at, close to, or toward the stern or tail

²**rescal:** rascal

³**larboard:** the left side of the ship when facing forward

⁴**starboard:** the right side of the ship when facing forward

⁵**forecastle:** any sailors’ quarters located in the forward part of a vessel, as a deckhouse

4 But all my dreams were soon put to flight by an order from the officer to trim the yards,⁶ as the wind was getting ahead; and I could plainly see by the looks the sailors occasionally cast to windward, and by the dark clouds that were fast coming up, that we had bad weather to prepare for, and I had heard the captain say that he expected to be in the Gulf Stream by twelve o'clock. In a few minutes eight bells were struck, the watch called, and we went below. I now began to feel the first discomforts of a sailor's life. The steerage, in which I lived, was filled with coils of rigging, spare sails, old junk, and ship stores, which had not been stowed away. Moreover, there had been no berths put up for us to sleep in, and we were not allowed to drive nails to hang our clothes upon. The sea, too, had risen, the vessel was rolling heavily, and everything was pitched about in grand confusion. There was a complete "hurrah's nest," as the sailors say, "everything on top and nothing at hand." A large hawser⁷ had been coiled away on my chest; my hats, boots, mattress, and blankets had all fetched away and gone over to leeward, and were jammed and broken under the boxes and coils of rigging. To crown all, we were allowed no light to find anything with, and I was just beginning to feel strong symptoms of seasickness, and that listlessness and inactivity which accompany it. Giving up all attempts to collect my things together, I lay down on the sails, expecting every moment to hear the cry, "All hands ahoy!" which the approaching storm would make necessary. I shortly heard the raindrops falling on deck thick and fast, and the watch evidently had their hands full of work, for I could hear the loud and repeated orders of the mate, trampling of feet, creaking of the blocks, and all the accompaniments of a coming storm. In a few minutes the slide of the hatch was thrown back, which let down the noise and tumult of the deck still louder, the cry of "All hands ahoy! tumble up here and take in sail," saluted our ears, and the hatch was quickly shut again. When I got upon deck, a new scene and a new experience was before me.

5 The little brig was close-hauled upon the wind, and lying over, as it then seemed to me, nearly upon her beam ends. The heavy head sea was beating against her bows with the noise and force almost of a sledgehammer, and flying over the deck, drenching us completely through. The topsail halyards⁸ had been let go, and the great sails were filling out and backing against the masts with a noise like thunder; the wind was whistling through the rigging; loose ropes were flying about; loud and, to me, unintelligible orders constantly given, and rapidly executed; and the sailors "singing out" at the ropes in their hoarse and peculiar strains.

6 In addition to all this, I had not got my "sea legs on," was dreadfully seasick, with hardly strength enough to hold on to anything, and it was "pitch dark." This was my condition when I was ordered aloft, for the first time, to reef topsails.⁹

⁶**trim the yards:** to make sails ready for sailing

⁷**hawser:** a heavy rope for mooring or towing

⁸**halyards:** lines or tackle used to hoist a spar, sail, or flag

⁹**reef topsails:** to draw in part of the sail to reduce the area exposed to the wind

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Excerpt from *Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit*

by Barry Estabrook

On the Tomato Trail

- 1 My obituary's headline would have read "Food Writer Killed by Flying Tomato."
- 2 On a visit to my parents' condominium in Naples, Florida, I was mindlessly driving along the flat, straight pavement of I-75, when I came up behind one of those gravel trucks that seem to be everywhere in southwest Florida's rush to convert pine woods and cypress stands into gated communities and shopping malls. But as I drew closer, I saw that the tractor trailer was top heavy with what seemed to be green Granny Smith apples. When I pulled out to pass, three of them sailed off the truck, narrowly missing my windshield. Chastened, I eased back into my lane and let the truck get several car lengths ahead. Every time it hit the slightest bump, more of those orbs would tumble off. At the first stoplight, I got a closer look. The shoulder of the road was littered with green tomatoes so plasticine and so identical they could have been stamped out by a machine. Most looked smooth and unblemished. A few had cracks in their skins. Not one was smashed. A ten-foot drop followed by a sixty-mile-per-hour impact with pavement is no big deal to a modern, agribusiness tomato.
- 3 If you have ever eaten a fresh tomato from a grocery store or restaurant, chances are good that you have eaten a tomato much like the ones aboard that truck. Although tomatoes are farmed commercially in about twenty states, Florida alone accounts for one-third of the fresh tomatoes raised in the United States, and from October to June, virtually all the fresh-market, field-grown tomatoes in the country come from the Sunshine State, which ships more than one billion pounds to the United States, Canada, and other countries every year. It takes a tough tomato to stand up to the indignity of such industrial-scale farming, so most Florida tomatoes are bred for hardness, picked when still firm and green (the merest trace of pink is taboo), and artificially gassed with ethylene in warehouses until they acquire the rosy-red skin tones of a ripe tomato.
- 4 Beauty, in this case, is only skin deep. According to figures compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Americans bought \$5 billion worth of perfectly round, perfectly red, and, in the opinion of many consumers, perfectly tasteless commercially grown fresh tomatoes in 2009 — our second most popular vegetable behind lettuce. We buy winter tomatoes, but that doesn't mean we like them. In survey after survey, fresh tomatoes fall at or near the bottom in rankings of consumer satisfaction. No one will ever be able to duplicate the flavor of garden-grown fruits and vegetables at the supermarket (or even the farmers' market), but there's a reason you don't hear consumers bemoaning the taste of supermarket cabbages, onions, or potatoes. Of all the fruits and vegetables we eat, none suffers at the hands of factory farming more than a tomato grown in the wintertime fields of Florida.

- 5 Perhaps our taste buds are trying to send us a message. Today's industrial tomatoes are as bereft of nutrition as they are of flavor. According to analyses conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 100 grams of fresh tomato today has 30 percent less vitamin C, 30 percent less thiamin, 19 percent less niacin, and 62 percent less calcium than it did in the 1960s. But the modern tomato does shame its 1960s counterpart in one area: It contains fourteen times as much sodium.
- 6 A couple of winters ago, I bought an assortment of supermarket tomatoes and brought them home for a tasting. I put four on the counter and reached for a cutting board, accidentally nudging one. I was too slow to stop it and watched as it rolled off the counter and fell on our newly refinished pine floor. It hit and traveled for a few feet but incurred no damage. As I retrieved it, my partner came into the kitchen, and I tossed the tomato at her playfully. She shrieked and dodged, and my hardy store-bought tomato struck the floor with the solid thud of a baking potato. I bowled the fruit through the kitchen door, across the dining room, over a wooden threshold, onto the tile floor of the sunroom, where *The Tomato That Would Not Die* crashed against the door. No damage done.
- 7 The best way to experience true tomato taste is to grow your own. Little wonder that tomatoes are by far the most popular vegetable for home gardeners, found in nearly nine out of ten backyard plots. Both *The Tomato That Would Not Die* and the heirloom Brandywines in my Vermont garden are of the species *Solanum lycopersicum*, and both are red. But the similarity ends there. My Brandywines are downright homely — lumpy, deeply creased, and scarred, they look like badly sunburned Rubens derrieres. Nor are they made for travel. More often than not, one will spontaneously split during the twenty-five-yard stroll from garden to kitchen. If not eaten within a day or so after being picked, they develop brownish bruises and begin leaking a watery orange liquid. But that rarely happens. Around our place, Brandywines go fast. They may be ugly. And fragile. Yet there is no better-tasting tomato than a garden-ripe Brandywine. With sweetness and tartness playing off each other perfectly, and juices that burst into your mouth in a surge that forces you to abandon all pretext of good table manners and to slurp, a real tomato's taste is the distilled essence of sun, warm soil, and fine summer days.

Excerpt from *Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit* by Barry Estabrook. Copyright © 2011, Andrews McMeel Universal. Used by permission of the publisher via Copyright Clearance Center.

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Some people celebrate the lunar new year, but do you know what that is? It might be helpful to first consider the Western calendar which is also called the Gregorian calendar. It is used all over the world, accept in countries that follow religious calendars. The Gregorian calendar is a solar calendar. The dates on the solar calendar are based on the Earth's position in relation to the Sun. So the Earth was in the same position relative to the Sun on the same day every year.

In contrast, the lunar calendar bases its months on the lunar cycle — the time from one full moon to the next. The length of lunar months varies from 29 to 30 days, but twelve lunar cycles add up to 354 days instead of 365. This is why the lunar new year, or Chinese New Year, is on a different date each year.

Although the lunar new year has been honored in Asia for centuries, in recent years other countries have observed it as well. One reason for this new interest; globalization. As people move around the globe, they get shown around other cultures and share in their celebrations. Whatever the reason, every new year is a cause for celebration.

Read the passages and answer the questions that follow.

The following passages are about Prometheus, a character from Greek mythology.

Passage 1

Prometheus

by Michael Karas & Charilaos Megas

- 1 Prometheus was one of the Titans, son of Iapetus (also a Titan) and Clymene, an Oceanid. His brothers were Epimetheus, Atlas, and Menoetius. The name derives from the Greek word meaning “forethought.”
- 2 During the Titanomachy, the war between the Titans and the Olympian gods, Prometheus sided with Zeus, helping to overthrow the old gods. Siding with the winning side, Prometheus avoided being punished with the rest of the Titans and was therefore not sent to Tartarus, the Underworld.
- 3 In all accounts, Prometheus was presented to be the protector and benefactor of mankind. In an event called Trick at Mecone, he tricked Zeus by asking him to choose between two offerings: beef hidden inside an ox’s stomach (something pleasing hidden inside a repelling exterior) or bones wrapped in glistening fat (something inedible hidden inside a pleasing exterior). Zeus chose the latter and hence, a precedent was created in what humans could sacrifice from that moment; so, they kept the meat for themselves and sacrificed bones to the gods.
- 4 As a result of the trick at Mecone, Zeus was infuriated and decided to hide fire from mortals as punishment. Prometheus, in an effort to help humanity again, managed to steal fire back and give it to humans. More enraged, the father of gods asked Hephaestus to create Pandora, the first woman, who according to Hesiod, would bring troubles to mankind. He also punished Prometheus by having him chained to a rock, where an eagle ate his liver during the day, and the liver was regenerated during the night due to Prometheus’ immortality. He was later saved by the demigod Hercules.

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Passage 2

The Story of Prometheus

by James Baldwin

5 Prometheus did not care to live amid the clouds on the mountain top. He was too busy for that. While the Mighty Folk were spending their time in idleness, drinking nectar and eating ambrosia, he was intent upon plans for making the world wiser and better than it had ever been before.

6 He went out amongst men to live with them and help them; for his heart was filled with sadness when he found that they were no longer happy as they had been during the golden days when Saturn was king. Ah, how very poor and wretched they were! He found them living in caves and in holes of the earth, shivering with the cold because there was no fire, dying of starvation, hunted by wild beasts and by one another — the most miserable of all living creatures.

7 “If they only had fire,” said Prometheus to himself, “they could at least warm themselves and cook their food; and after a while they could learn to make tools and build themselves houses. Without fire, they are worse off than the beasts.”

8 Then he went boldly to Jupiter and begged him to give fire to men, that they might have a little comfort through the long, dreary months of winter.

9 “Not a spark will I give,” said Jupiter. “No, indeed! Why, if men had fire they might become strong and wise like ourselves, and after a while they would drive us out of our kingdom. Let them shiver with cold, and let them live like the beasts. It is best for them to be poor and ignorant, that so we Mighty Ones may thrive and be happy.”

10 Prometheus made no answer; but he had set his heart on helping mankind, and he did not give up. He turned away, and left Jupiter and his mighty company forever.

11 As he was walking by the shore of the sea he found a reed, or, as some say, a tall stalk of fennel, growing; and when he had broken it off he saw that its hollow center was filled with a dry, soft pith which would burn slowly and keep on fire a long time. He took the long stalk in his hands, and started with it towards the

dwelling of the sun in the far east.

12 "Mankind shall have fire in spite of the tyrant who sits on the mountain top," he said.

13 He reached the place of the sun in the early morning just as the glowing, golden orb was rising from the earth and beginning his daily journey through the sky. He touched the end of the long reed to the flames, and the dry pith caught on fire and burned slowly. Then he turned and hastened back to his own land, carrying with him the precious spark hidden in the hollow center of the plant.

14 He called some of the shivering men from their caves and built a fire for them, and showed them how to warm themselves by it and how to build other fires from the coals. Soon there was a cheerful blaze in every rude home in the land, and men and women gathered round it and were warm and happy, and thankful to Prometheus for the wonderful gift which he had brought to them from the sun.

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Nikki Giovanni is an award-winning writer and activist who was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1943. As a child, her family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. There, she grew up listening to her grandmother's rich stories and reading her mother's novels.

Giovanni attended Fisk University, where being the editor of the literary magazine and earned a degree in history. After college, she went to graduate school, became actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement, and began writing poems. Her first book of poetry titled Black Feeling, Black Talk was published in 1968, shortly after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The book sold more than 10,000 copies in one year. Her poetry reflects issues that are important to her, such as family and ethnic pride. She has published more than a dozen poetry collections and numerous children's books.

Giovanni's academic career has spanned decades. I believe she has taught creative writing and black studies at numerous universities. She has also earned the title of University Distinguished Professor. There is no higher academic honors at the university level. Today, she continues to write, lecture, and read her poems.