



The Necessity of Certain Behaviors (Pitt Drue Heinz Lit Prize)

Shannon Cain

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Winner of the 2011 Drue Heinz Literature Prize

Shannon Cain's stories chart the treacherous territory of the illicit. They expose the absurdity of our rituals, our definitions of sexuality, and above all, our expectations of happiness and self-fulfillment.

Cain's protagonists are destined to suffer—and sometimes enjoy—the consequences of their own restless discontent. In the title story, Lisa, a city dweller, is dissatisfied with her life and relationships. Her attempt at self-rejuvenation takes her on a hiking excursion through a foreign land. Lisa discovers a remote village where the ritualized and generous bisexual love of its inhabitants entrances her. She begins to abandon thoughts of home.

In "Cultivation," Frances, a divorced mother strapped with massive credit card debt, has become an expert at growing pot. When she packs her three children and twelve pounds of homegrown into the minivan and travels cross-country to sell the stash, their journey becomes one of anguish, revelation, and ultimately transformation. "Cultivation," like many of the stories in *The Necessity of Certain Behaviors*, follows a trail of broken relationships and the unfulfilled promises of modern American life.

Told in precise, evocative prose, these memorable stories illuminate the human condition from a compelling, funny, and entirely original perspective.

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