

# THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 24 2012-06-22

## Kick Some Butt . . . Naturally

Quitting aids

## World's End

Final analysis

## Sister Act

Taking sides

*Plus:  
Write Stuff  
Gregor's Bed  
and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.



## STUDY SPACE

Maxie van Roye

**It's the End of the World as We Know It**

***This article was originally published May 27, 2011, in issue 1920.***

Sure, the end of the world may be six months away (or not), but for many students it feels like it's already happened.

With June often comes the end of the academic journey, the close of a significant segment of one's life. And while this is most obviously true for graduates,

even students just finishing their first semesters can look back on the past year and realize that they've just passed a milestone.

Looking back, looking ahead. Most graduation speeches focus on the future, but at the end of the school year it's equally important to shine some light on the past. Perhaps it's even more important, because how we learn from our past successes and failures can affect our present—and shape our future.

Many self-help gurus recommend a similar exercise at the end of the calendar year: a sort of pre-New Year's review, if you will. But for students, beginnings and endings tend to cluster around the summer, when we wind down the old school year and gear up for the coming semester.

Whether we're finally graduating with that long-sought degree or moving on to the next stepping-stone class in our educational program, June is a good time for reflection on the year—or semester—or 10-year marathon—that's finally come to a close. It's an opportunity for a broad personal review, an attempt to discover *what worked? What didn't?* Keeping in mind the coming semester, year, or phase of life, these are a few points to reflect upon:

What affected my motivation? Was the class delivery method one that didn't appeal to me? Were there too many readings, compared with other classes? Was it too theoretical—or too applied? We can use this new understanding to help schedule future classes for a more satisfying and productive semester.

Or was there a tutor conflict? Or an outside event, illness, or personal circumstance that affected my progress? Because as much as we like to plan, we simply can't control all the factors in our educational experience. However, a good plan takes contingencies into account, and recognizing our triumphs and failures in dealing with any past problems is the key to future success. How will I handle it if I fall ill, or if I'm unhappy personally? How will I cope with a bitter disappointment, a death in the family, a difficult relationship? How will I keep focussed? Most importantly, what will I *not* do?

What about inner conflict? We shouldn't discount the effect that negative self-esteem can have on our productivity. Like that poor grade earned despite all my hard work on that assignment. Did that colour my perception of the semester in general, or cause me to lose interest in the rest of my classes? Did I obsess

over that one letter grade—to the point that I was no longer able to give my best in the rest of my studies (and thus setting myself up for future failure)?

Did I take on too much? Or not enough? While it's easy to see how too many commitments can cause burnout, sometimes insufficient challenges can equally affect motivation. Was the interplay of work, school, family, and community activities in my life imbalanced? Finding the right proportions is important when we're juggling many obligations, and the best way to do so is to evaluate the successes and failures of each year-long "experiment."

A caution: this year-end review is not a time for regrets, for *woulda-coulda-shoulda* self-judgment. Rather, it's a look back with a view to the future. Self-productivity blogger Celestine Chua, who recommends yearly reviews in late December, [says](#) that the practice will "help you to start the next year on a high note." After all, it's only by understanding the lows of the past that we can hope to soar to the heights of the future.

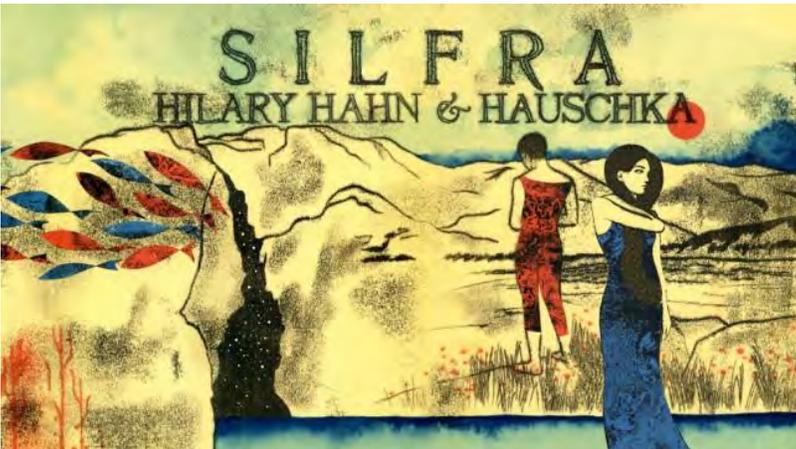
## CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



## GREGOR'S BED

Wanda Waterman



## Recent Discoveries From the Realm of the Experimental and Avant-Garde

**Album:** Hilary Hahn and Hauschka, *Silfra* (2012)

**Instruments:** Violin and prepared piano

*"The soul should always stand ajar. Ready to welcome the ecstatic experience."*

Emily Dickinson

After the Jim Crow laws came into effect in the South, black musicians were not allowed to read sheet music; although many of the players had advanced degrees, white audiences didn't want to think these artists capable of academic learning. These meant that upper-class black musicians were practically compelled to memorize and improvise on standard tunes. This circumstance was one catalyst for the birth of jazz.

Conversely, white classical musicians have long been discouraged from improvising. White audiences like to see those music stands, and frequently they assume that improvisation is just messing around, having fun, throwing all the rules out the window (a criticism voiced most often by poor listeners). Why waste our time listening to *that*?

American violinist Hilary Hahn started her career as a musical prodigy at the age of 12, when she performed with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. A virtuoso with an exceptional ability to interpret Bach, she refused to renew a contract with Sony because in her opinion they'd failed to grant her sufficient artistic license.

The German piano master Volker Bertelmann, better known as Hauschka, is used to a more modern repertoire and uses John Cage's prepared piano technique, fastening small metal objects to the piano strings to create new sounds.

Hauschka was accustomed to experimental work; Hahn had mostly restricted her improvisation to her interpretations of Bach compositions, whose meticulous scoring belies their improvisatory origins. They're an unusual combo and *Silfra* is a unique creation, an adventure in improvisation that makes use of each musician's unique gifts.

The idea for the album came about after Hahn and Hauschka were introduced by folk performer Tom Brosseau, who kept on insisting that the two were somehow musically compatible. Hahn and Hauschka took pains to hide their collaboration, keeping the music business at arm's length until entering the Greenhouse Studios in Reykjavik, Iceland. And they left all their scores at home.

In university I remember the joy of aleatoric evenings with my buddy Lorrie. Amateur musicians, we would sit on the floor of her basement apartment—surrounded by recorders, guitars, glass bottles filled at varying heights with water, and whatever we else we found that might make music—and we would play and sing, entering a creative space wherein we fed off each other’s sounds. I’m still amazed at the beauty of the music we recorded during those sessions as well as the extraordinary focus they demanded. We couldn’t have done it without a profound connection with each other, an arrival at that place where all things had become one, and the humility to channel something that came from both within and beyond us.

*“If new music ushers in the future, then the future this album is ushering in must be a deeply benevolent one.”*

What are Hahn and Hauschka channeling? *Silfra* defies the expectations of both avant-garde and traditional music by being too pleasant and hopeful for the first and too liberated for the second. The tracks themselves are profoundly beautiful, but grounded—there is a rigour in the sweetness, like a parent capable of both tenderness and tough love. At times the music is as poignant as a baby’s hug, yet sometimes it’s eerily romantic and wild with abandon.

Hahn and Hauschka clearly work well together, drawing inspiration from each other’s creativity. Crescendos are slow and seem almost to carry a conflict and resolution format, beginning in dissonance as if stating a problem and then slowly building to a harmonious and uplifting conclusion that’s worshipful and healing at once. The more minor dissonant tracks, like “Adash” and “Bounce Bounce” (the [music video](#) by Hayley Morris is fabulous) are never difficult to listen to, and move toward solace. Even the bleak grey vastness of “North Atlantic” ends up sounding ecstatic.

The exception is “Krakow,” the only track on the album for which Hauschka did not prepare the piano. This one, in a minor key, carries a sense of sadness and loss, the playful toylike chords offset by a violin that expresses a mourning tinged with rage.

Hahn’s background is clear; “Clock Winder” (also a great showcase for Hauschka’s tinkedy rinkedy piano sounds) communicates a Bach-like delight in intellectual puzzles and a kind of aural reassurance, a promise that ultimately all will be well.

It’s all good news. If new music ushers in the future, then the future this album is ushering in must be a deeply benevolent one.

*“The canon which runs from antiquity via Palestrina and Bach and through to Schoenberg via Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven is truly a wonderful tradition full of beautiful music. But who needs it any more? And when did people begin sitting down to listen to music instead of dancing and singing along? Compared to the joys of group improvisation, this great European tradition seems like so much hierarchical social nonsense studded with genius.”*

Rod Paton



## Natural Smoking Cessation

We know that smoking isn't good for our bodies, and that second-hand smoke can harm our children, pets, and anyone else who comes into contact with it. Yet the decision to quit is no easy one, and for most smokers, quitting is a huge undertaking.

Ending an addiction is never easy. But did you know that natural medicine may be able to help you make the quitting journey a little more comfortable?

### **Quit Basics**

Quitting smoking begins in the brain. First, you have to make that firm decision: *I quit*. Making a deliberate decision is important, since it can help fuel you with the motivation you'll need to stay on target. Some have found that it's helpful to establish a "quit date," a firm date on which they'll stop cold turkey. Note that a gradual approach to quitting smoking is not recommended, since studies show that the all-or-nothing approach to smoking cessation is the most successful.

### **Natural Options**

Although quitting smoking starts in the brain, it doesn't stay there; the body experiences a wide variety of symptoms during the initial cessation period. These occur as the body slowly withdraws from its nicotine addiction, essentially detoxifying itself. Withdrawal symptoms include insomnia, cravings, a general feeling of unwellness and low energy, and the sensation of being "on edge." Fortunately, natural medicine offers a unique toolkit for helping you reduce or eliminate these symptoms.

*Acupuncture:* One of the oldest types of medicine, acupuncture stimulates the release of endorphins (natural pain relievers), enabling the body to relax. This helps to relieve that tense, "on edge" feeling. Additionally, because acupuncture treatment increases circulation in the body, it enhances detoxification. This is key to keeping you feeling healthy during smoking cessation. Acupuncture can also help to reduce the cravings that sometimes accompany quitting.

Both traditional and auricular acupuncture are good options for treatment. Traditional acupuncture uses acupuncture needles on various points of the body, while auricular acupuncture uses the same needles (or replacements for the needles, called ear seeds), but only on points located on the ear. In traditional Chinese medicine, the ear holds energy points for all the organs in the body; toning or sedating these can have profound physiological effects on those organs. One important ear point in helping with smoking cessation is the *Shen men* point, the most "grounding" or relaxing point of the ear.

*Diet:* Sugar triggers the addiction centre in the brain, so avoiding and replacing it with whole grains and vegetables will allow you to have a more positive quitting experience. Additionally, regulating your diet can help manage cravings; eating at regular intervals or “grazing” ensures blood sugar stability.

*Herbal Medicine:* Herbal medicine, like acupuncture, is another ancient form of medicine. Plants exert physiological actions on the body; in fact, most pharmaceutical drugs originated as plant medicines. Herbal medicines can help in several areas of the smoking cessation journey: increasing relaxation, reducing stress, and controlling blood sugar and cravings. Plants like *Avena* (oat) reduce the nervous tension associated with quitting smoking. Certain herbs like *Rhodiola* (rhodiola) target cortisol (stress hormone) levels, since this is often high during the adjustment. Blood sugar control can be achieved through the use of plants like *Momordica* (bitter melon), and one teaspoon daily of *Cinnamomum* (cinnamon).

Of particular note: *Lobelia* (lobelia) was traditionally used by First Nations tribes to help wean users off smoking, due to its piperidine alkaloid constituents. These components mimic the effects of smoking on the body, but in a reduced degree (like the modern nicotine patch). Additionally, some studies indicate that it can render the palate distasteful to smoke.

Quitting smoking is no easy decision, but it’s one that will reward you for the rest of your life. With the help of natural medicine, you can ensure that your smoking cessation journey will proceed more smoothly and comfortably toward your goal.

*Katie D'Souza is an AU graduate and a licensed naturopathic doctor. She currently practices in Ontario.*

*Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is for personal interest only; it is not intended for diagnosis or treatment of any condition. Readers are always encouraged to seek the professional advice of a licensed physician or qualified health care practitioner for personal health or medical conditions.*

***Ending the smoking habit is a challenging journey, but natural medicine—including acupuncture and herbal medicine—can help make it go more smoothly.***

## DID YOU KNOW?

## Convocation Online



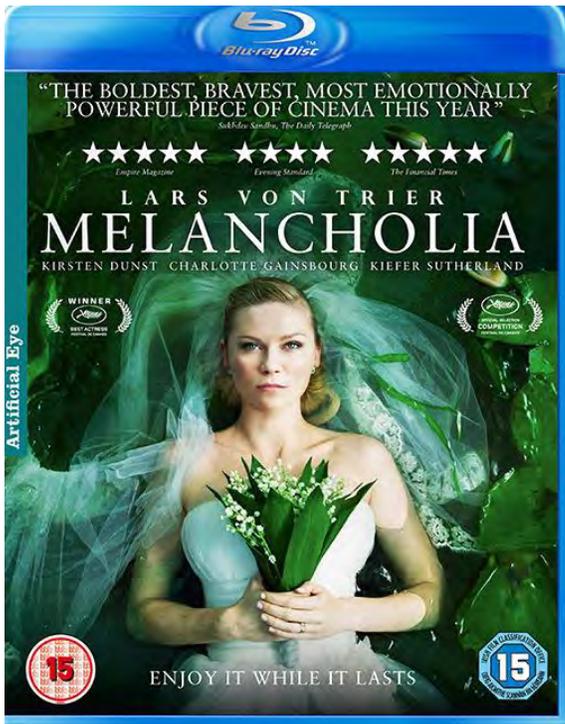
This month, thousands of AU graduates crossed the stage to receive their diplomas during the University’s annual Convocation ceremonies in Athabasca, Alberta.

Yet not all graduates, families, and friends were able to attend the ceremonies. If you or a friend missed the event—or you want a preview of what your own graduation will look like someday—you can still catch all the excitement [here](#), as part of AU’s live webcast of the Convocation ceremonies.

Coverage includes all three days of events: addresses, speeches, presentation of degrees, and more. Videos can be freely accessed via Adobe Flash or Windows Media Player.

## THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



## Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World

## The Bad Sister in Three Recent Films

*"In front of you is an exciting, even dangerous life, but while watching it you feel safe. In this sense the film theatre is a harbour in which to enjoy the turmoil and the storm around you. You are living the storm, but you are in the harbour."*

Francesco Casetti in an [interview](#) with Wanda Waterman

Francesco Casetti claims that film is a means of negotiating reality—of coming to terms with the way things are and in the process making important statements about film per se. In *King Kong*, Casetti's example, the giant ape represents primal, primitive nature raging against the industrial world that wishes to capture it, a theme often repeated in movies because it reveals the film industry's conflicted sense of self.

Since reading Casetti's book *Eye of the Century* I've kept an eye open for clusters of salient motifs in current films in order to gauge the direction of cultural change. I couldn't help noticing that the three films I'd seen in the last week all portrayed a particular sister-sister relationship. What could it mean?

In *Melancholia*, Claire is a wealthy wife and mother who lives with her husband and little boy in an English castle. The tenderly solicitous Claire represents all to which her sister Justine seems to aspire, at least until Justine becomes progressively crippled by depression. The opulence of Claire's world is then nothing to her but dust and ashes, and she repeatedly and maliciously reminds her sister of the pointlessness of her life until Claire herself becomes disillusioned with it.

In *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, Martha, who's just escaped from a truly twisted rural commune (think *The Droogs* meets *The Family*), is so unsure of who she is that she has no problem with others renaming her and dictating her identity. She gains a bit of a sense of self by distinguishing herself from her sister Lucy, who's now trying to rescue her and whom she now accuses of being too interested in money. Lucy, like Claire in *Melancholia*, is wealthy and married to a stable man.

The lead actress in *Certified Copy* (tellingly, we never learn her name) is charming and successful. Her sister doesn't actually appear in the film, but we hear all about her; this sister is in love with life itself and places no conditions on happiness. She insists that costume jewellery is just as lovely as the real thing and that her stammering husband is a romantic hero. In the meantime, the heroine of *Certified Copy* is at her wit's end trying to get this woman to come to her senses.

In all three cases there is a good sister and a bad sister, and the good sister is the elder one. The good sister is also well-to-do, married, hard-working, pragmatic, compassionate, and mentally stable. She manifests all the qualities which society has lead us to believe are worth having and has all the things society teaches us are worth striving for. In fact, she represents all to which our society demands we aspire: beauty, a lovely home and possessions, an ordered life, children or at least the possibility of them, a good husband, and success in business. If you look closely, you see that the elder sister's wealth has come somehow at the expense of the younger sister, or at least of those she represents. Big Sis feels entitled to it all simply because she has it, even though deep down she's aware that her having more means someone else must have less. But she's quite contented until her little sister comes along and spoils it all. Still, she tolerates the slings and arrows because she feels obliged to parent her little sister, to rescue her, to somehow compensate for the lackluster parents who messed the girl up in the first place.

*"The younger sister, knowing that she's flunked out of the game of life, tries to end her cognitive dissonance by condemning the older sister for being repressed, shallow, acquisitive, hypocritical, and enslaved by her wealth, but she's just too broken and confused to mount a convincing reproach."*

The bad sister is very attractive. The good sister's husband is clearly drawn to her (the attraction is pretty obvious in *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, where the husband seeks every opportunity to touch and ogle his sister-in-law while being revolted by her bizarre behaviour. This ambivalence from the male is a static part of the drama, at once an explanation for the problem and a symptom of it.

The bad sister also represents an outside-the-box way of thinking. She's counterculture, a rebel, but she's also shiftless, lazy, confused, helpless, and single. She mocks traditional values while being utterly dependent on those who uphold them.



She is the critical voice that questions the validity of the material goods our society lauds, that sees ambition as avarice, achievement as vain hubris, traditional family life as a prison, and high society as vapid and empty. Her arguments are credible, but it's hard to take her seriously because she's speaking from a world of hedonism, self-destruction, addiction, risk-taking, and amorality, all of which have taken their toll on her ability to stand firm against such a powerful opponent. The younger sister, knowing that she's flunked out of the game of life, tries to end her cognitive dissonance by condemning the older sister for being repressed, shallow, acquisitive, hypocritical, and enslaved by her wealth, but she's just too broken and confused to mount a convincing reproach.

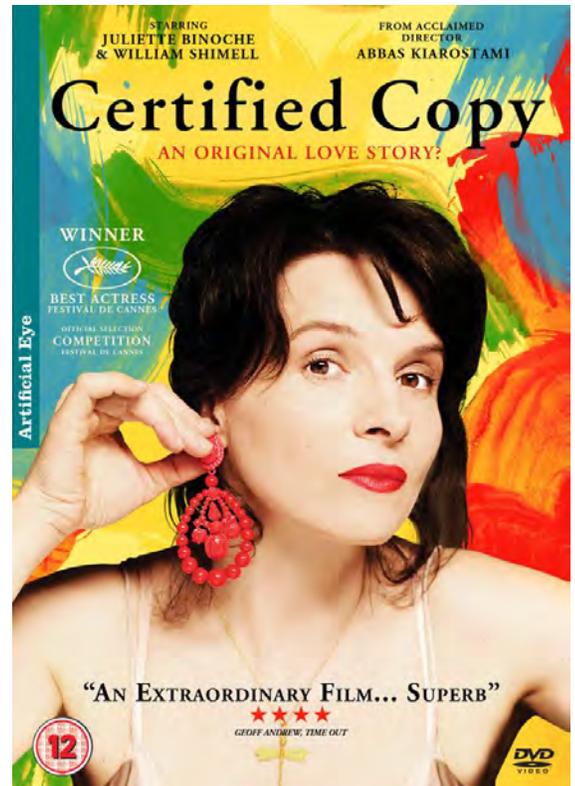
The bad little sister (the one we don't see) in *Certified Copy* is the healthiest of the bunch. She has a husband whose flaws are her delight. Her acceptance of him and the way in which it manifests itself becomes a symbol for the film's theme—that we find our authenticity in abandoning judgment and drawing nearer to what we love.

In *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, the little sister has emerged from a cult that represents the extreme of a counterculture in which all moral standards have been razed. Her story demonstrates that the very legitimate allegations of the anti-establishment youth against those in power are easily delegitimized by moral relativism.

Do we have enough faith in the younger generation to mount an effective campaign against those members of the higher echelons who exploit and abuse us for their own gain? Rumours of drug abuse among the Occupy Wall Street movement would suggest that mainstream society has its doubts. Justified or not, this doubt greatly weakens the effectiveness of this kind of movement.

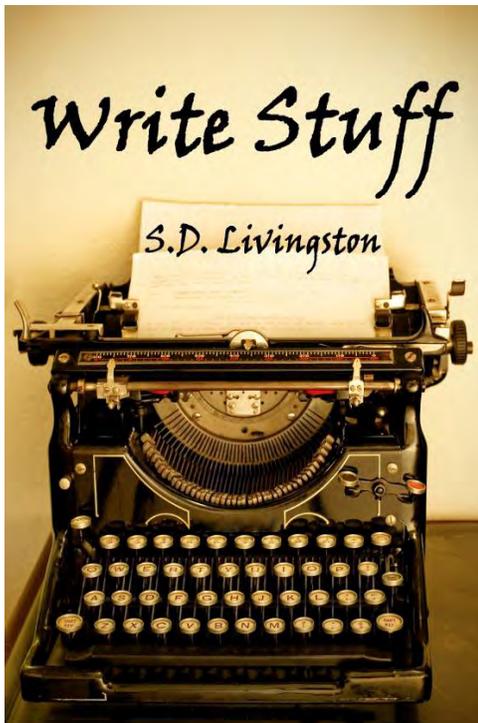
The challenge to overcome in our culture is to avoid taking sides in the debate between the good and bad sisters. Rather, we must become more like the sisters who love and accept each other without needing to fix each other, who refuse both compromise and mutual destruction.

*Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book [They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good](#), a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom*



## CONVOCATION 2012

*The Voice Magazine* would like to extend its congratulations to all 2012 graduates! What has your educational journey meant to you? What are your thoughts as you move on to the next phase of your life? Let us know, and you could be featured in our upcoming Convocation coverage!



## Jemima Who?

Jemima Puddle-Duck is disappearing. So is Heidi, and it looks like Pippi Longstocking could soon follow. Are these classic children's characters the victims of some dastardly plot? No, but they're rapidly vanishing from the literary landscape as fewer children read the classics.

A recent *Guardian* [article](#) highlights the growing trend. The question, of course, is whether we should be concerned about it. Will today's young readers somehow be less curious if they've never enjoyed the escapades of Peter Rabbit? Are they missing valuable life lessons if they never dive into stories about Pollyanna's selflessness? No, and the challenge here is to not confuse literary value with nostalgia.

It's only natural that we put our favourite childhood things on a bit of a pedestal. We look back on cherished books, films, and games through a sort of soft-focus mental lens. True, those things brought us countless hours of pleasure. Earlier generations went on thrilling adventures through the stories in *The Jungle Book*, or with popular characters like Honey Bunch, Roy Rogers, and the Five Little Peppers. Then there were Trixie Belden, the Hardy Boys, and many others.

Yet the popularity of these tales doesn't automatically endow them with moral merit. Though they often reflected more innocent values (the good guys were clearly good and the bad guys clearly bad), it doesn't mean the world was a kinder, gentler place then. It simply means that it wasn't acceptable to discuss tough social topics in children's literature (at least, not unless those topics were heavily cloaked in allegory, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's war experiences reflected in *The Hobbit*, or the Biblical metaphors in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*).

For the most part, though, classic children's literature reflected the moral values of its particular time. It might have stressed the virtues of being "good" within the confines of mainstream Western society, but a children's book that openly challenged the widespread racism and sexism of previous decades would likely never have been published.

As for literary merit, many children's classics are indeed carefully crafted. They're well edited, well illustrated, and contain vocabulary that demands something from young readers. But many of the more modern classics, like the original Hardy Boys books of the 1920s and 1950s, were stilted to the point of being wooden.

In contrast, societal changes in the latter half of the 20th century led to more realistic kids' books being published: titles like *The Outsiders* and *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret*. And *Lisa, Bright and Dark*, which tackled the topic of mental illness.

There are many different yardsticks by which to measure children’s literature, but perhaps the most important one of all has nothing to do with the way adults view it. Instead, when deciding whether to ensure that our kids are exposed to Jemima Puddle-Duck and Heidi, we should ask how well those books speak to the kids themselves.

If your 10-year-old protests the very thought of *Robinson Crusoe* but devours every last book in the *Heroes of Olympus* series, the fact that the Riordan books aren’t classic literature won’t stop them from instilling a love of reading. Indeed, that’s exactly how Jemima herself got started—once an unknown little duck, she grew in popularity among young readers and quickly became the well-loved literary matriarch she is today.

So rather than worrying about yesterday’s classics, let’s pay attention to the quality of children’s literature today. After all, they’re probably the classics of tomorrow.

*S.D. Livingston is the author of several books, including the new suspense novel Kings of Providence. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing (and for more musings on the literary world!).*

## CLICK OF THE WRIST

## Get a Job

**So you’ve graduated—congratulations!—and now comes the fun part. Well, maybe not so much fun. In today’s economy, getting a job or applying for a promotion is a full-time job in itself, and certainly a frustrating and stressful one. Check out these links for inspiration and helpful tips.**

### Social Media

Social Media is the big bad wolf of job seeking—or is it? Not according to this *Harvard Business Review* article, which discusses how to make social media work for you. Used properly, these resources can help you make contacts, spread your portfolio, and land interviews and, eventually, jobs.

### Creativity Pays Off

Don’t be too original, job applicants are warned; most would-be employers frown upon resumes that seem gimmicky or just too clever. And yet these job applicants took the risk, and their creativity and knowledge of the employer resulted in a hiring. Click through for some inspiration!

### Back to Basics

All the creativity in the world won’t get you very far, though, if you approach the job market without a plan. The *Huffington Post* gives some solid advice for organizing your job hunt.





## Choose Your Focus

Is there anything quite so sweet as biting into dark red cherries just out of the fridge? The juice squirts into your mouth and is proof positive that there is a God. Unfortunately, telltale stains on your fingers make it impossible to lie about the treat you've just devoured.

Perhaps your pleasure comes in the form of butter on fresh bread, a juicy steak, or beets and garlic. Good (or bad for you) food can be memory-making, especially when we stop inhaling it and start to savour each bite.

Then there are the lovely smells. Is there anything as heavenly as the scent of garden roses or lilacs as you hurry past them on the way to your Very Important Life? What about the spicy smell of the thyme you accidentally stepped on as you hurried by?

What a joy it is to catch a whiff of your signature perfume when you pull a sweater over your head or wrap a scarf around your neck. Or to smell White Diamonds instead of second-hand smoke when you bend to check a winning card during Bingo night.

Or maybe your favourite scents are gastronomic in origin? Like the aroma of freshly baked cinnamon buns in the mall food court, a smell that grabs you and pulls you in, even though you were on your way to a healthy green salad.

Maybe the smells you remember longest fall into the stench category. Recently I was awakened from a deep sleep by the smell of skunk. I could have sworn the animal was in the room. I pinched my nose and cranked the window shut. I dribbled perfume on my fingers and transferred it into my nose. I rubbed my

nose with hand lotion. Nothing worked, and for days afterward I got whiffs of it as I walked around the yard. Who needs quills or venom to deter enemies when your smell could make them drop?

Let's not forget the feel of fabrics on the skin. It may be the cotton sheets on your bed or the cinching-in power of stretch denim; the soft warmth of a cozy throw on a chilly afternoon or the lacy tease of your best underwear. Better yet is the soft, sweet hand of a grandchild clutching yours as you cross the street.

In this round-up of sensory delights I haven't forgotten the breathtaking power of Adele's voice or the sound of birdsong or the babbling of an infant. Even the words "I love you" or "I'm sorry" are sweet music to the ears.

Finally we stop our rushing around and look, really look. Our gaze falls on the good, the bad, the ugly. Where we choose to remain, to focus, depends upon how mindful we are in the moment. The same is true for all of our senses. We get to choose our focus, from where I sit.

*Hazel Anaka's first novel is Lucky Dog. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.*

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Sedentary Summer

It's summertime. Do you know where your children are?

As *The Globe and Mail* [reports](#), a new report from Active Healthy Kids Canada suggests aren't where they should be: outside, playing.

The annual Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth gives Canadian kids a "failing grade" when it comes to physical activity and active play. According to the report, each day "[at] lunch and after school, kids are getting only 24 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity"—less than half of the minimum recommendation of 60 minutes a day.

Active play and leisure—including traditional childhood games like "[jumping] rope, tag, hide-and-seek and Red Rover"—is at an all-time low, with nearly half of Canadian children "getting three hours or less of active play each week . . . including weekends."

The culprit? Experts point to screen time—the report noted that "kids in Grades 6 to 12 spend seven hours, 48 minutes each day on screens"—and parental worries about safety as some factors contributing to today's sedentary kids.

### Around the World: The Edge of Space

*Space: the final frontier.* Cue sci-fi music: scientists now believe that we're just a step away from reaching the edge of the great beyond.

As the *Huffington Post* [reports](#), the "Voyager 1 space probe has reached the edge of the solar system, extending its record for being the most distant man-made object in space."

Voyager 1 and its sister probe, Voyager 2, have been transmitting data back to Earth since they launched in 1977, but lately Voyager 1's data has "[shown] a sharp increase in charged particles that originate from beyond the solar system." The source of these particles is "stars that have exploded elsewhere in the galaxy."

In an official statement, NASA said it believes that this "rapid rise" shows that "humanity's first emissary to interstellar space is on the edge of our solar system." Scientists are also investigating whether the "magnetic fields around the space craft" have shifted, another indication that the probe might have "entered interstellar space."

The probes' "plutonium power sources . . . are designed to last until 2025"; after that, the probes will continue their journey through space but "will no longer transmit data back to Earth."

## AUSU UPDATE



### AU Students urge candidates to improve university funding

AU students are concerned about the financial health of Athabasca University and the effect of recent news stories on the reputation of the AUSU membership.

A recent CBC report notes that in recent years the university has made a series of reserve draws to cover budget shortfalls, draining the once \$30-million reserve fund.

Tuition and fees at AU, meanwhile, continue to increase despite the concerns of AUSU that education is becoming increasingly unaffordable in Alberta.

“I’m very concerned about AU’s financial situation,” says AUSU President Bethany Tynes. “AU is increasing student fees, observing hiring freezes, denying sabbaticals, delaying projects, and downsizing their offices due to a lack of available funds. We don’t want to see the quality of our education diminish.”

“At the same time,” Tynes continues, “I am confused by AU Board Chair Barry Walker’s comment to the CBC that AU is ‘in a very sound financial position,’ as the concerns we’ve noted do not support the notion that we’re financially sound.”

Chronic underfunding of public post-secondary education is a factor in AU’s financial stress. AU students have lobbied Alberta in recent years to address the shortfall; our members call on the candidates in Alberta’s provincial election to make post-secondary funding a priority in their platforms and to ensure that all Alberta universities are funded equally and sufficiently. Public post-secondary institutions need a reliable, predictable funding model that provides sufficient base operating funds to support a world-class education.

Athabasca University Students' Union is the largest students’ union in Alberta, representing nearly 40,000 undergraduates annually.

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*This column is provided by AUSU to facilitate communication with its members. The Voice does not write or edit this section; all content has been exclusively and directly provided by AUSU, and any questions or comments about the material should be directed to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org).*

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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## THE VOICE

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