

# THE VOICE

Vol 30 Issue 20 2022-05-27

## Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You

## Small Acts of Ableism

You Do it Too.

## Welcome to Canada

The Land of Opportunity

*Plus:*

*Sometimes I Get Hopeful  
When Einstein Wrote to Freud  
and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

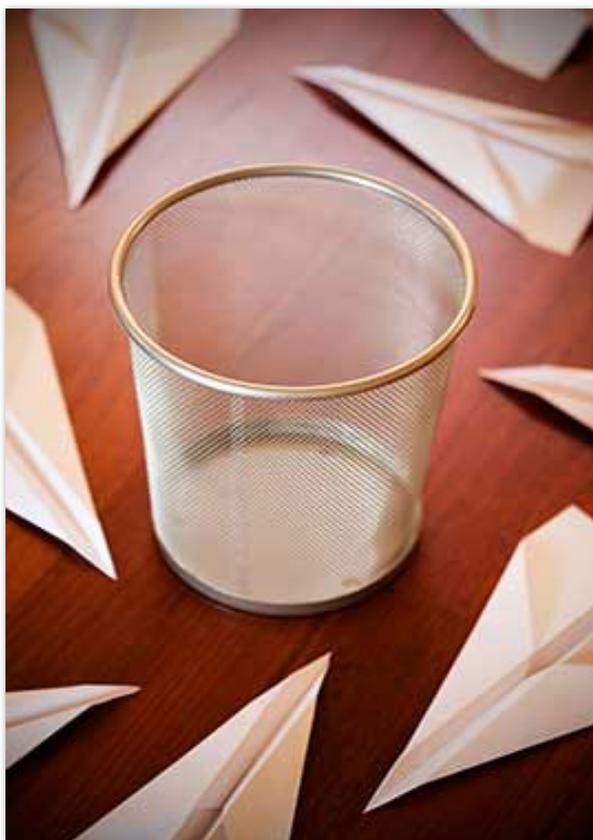
**Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?**

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

## Editorial

### Sometimes I Get Hopeful

Karl Low



And then reality steps in.

You may not yet be aware, but the former chair of the Board of Governors of AU has been summarily removed. Nancy Laird's term was supposed to go until sometime in August. However, for reasons the Alberta provincial government hasn't seen fit to tell anyone, it suddenly was quite urgent that she be removed and a new lackey, one Byron Nelson, a commercial and personal injury lawyer from Calgary who is a two-time failure at attempting to gain a seat in government, first as the PC candidate in Calgary Bow in 2015, then as a contender for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party in 2017. He also enjoys playing rugby and is an active horseman, so obviously is well connected with the concerns of the average AU student?

At any rate, what warrants this sudden change? Well, the Tyee has access to an exclusive letter where apparently Ms. Laird explained in rather direct language to Advanced Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides, that telling AU to start consolidating staff in the remote small town of Athabasca was something that was not within his purview as the minister of

Advanced Education, I expect because it has absolutely nothing to do with advanced education and is completely outside of any of the responsibilities listed on the Ministry of Advanced Education's website. It seems likely that this is part of the reason, though as yet, the Minister has not provided any comment as to why the early termination was required.

Her letter, as reported, lends support to the new AU President, Dr. Peter Scott, who, as I reported on earlier, took the Advanced Education Minister's request to consolidate within Athabasca and gave it the full respect it was due, noting that AU wouldn't be changing its current plans one iota. It has been noted in various reporting about this board change that Minister Nicolaides does not have the power to fire President Scott, that has to be done by the board. In one of the least subtle real-politick moves I've ever seen, Minister Nicolaides has quite clearly decided to send a message.

Meanwhile, AU gets a smaller portion of its funding from the provincial government than most so-called "private" schools, and certainly less than the brick-and-mortar post-secondary institutions in Alberta, yet it seems the current government is bound and determined that a good chunk of that money be spent on boosting the employment rate in a small town that can't be bothered to make itself a more attractive option with its own local governance and taxes.

Perhaps that's because the \$53,000 raised by the town, county, and residents of the Athabasca region to pay lobbyists close to Kenney is a heck of a lot less than it would cost to actually invest in the town enough to make it attractive as a long-term home to most advanced academics. The town website advertises "Bingo and Cards" as one of the town's foremost leisure activities, after all. Yes. I'm annoyed that the town and especially the local residents, which include a number of AU staff and faculty, have seen fit to encourage the government to step into AU's operations

as it's attempting to do. Maybe those staff and faculty didn't see how dangerous a thing that was to do with this government, but if that's the case, I suggest they simply haven't been paying attention.

So why should you, as a student, care about any of this stuff? One reason I can think of off the top of my head is that the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the group that grants AU its accreditation in the US, has specific standards that an institution must meet to maintain accreditation.

One of those standards is "Institutional goals that are realistic, appropriate to higher education, and consistent with mission;" I think AU would be hard pressed to argue that supporting employment in a small town is a goal that is somehow appropriate to higher education.

In addition, an institution needs to have a clearly defined mission and goals that "are developed through appropriate collaborative participation by all who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional development and improvement." Does anybody really think this UCP government would allow any institution to develop a mission or goal "through appropriate collaborative participation"? One of the reasons for the leadership review that saw Kenney promise to hand in his resignation at some unspecified point in the future was that members and MLAs within the UCP were complaining that there was no collaborative process going on, the grass roots were being trampled—and that's within their own party, not something that's an expense like post-secondary education.

More than that though, there's the larger issue of academic freedom. If governments start making wholesale changes to boards because those boards are not making the universities run in the specific operational fashion that they like, what happens when the university has a course that is critical of the government? "No, no, they'd never do that," people might exclaim, but then who ever thought a government would think it gets to tell a post-secondary institution how to do its hiring?

So if you're an AU student, and especially if you're an Albertan, I urge you to either send an email to Advanced Education Minister Nicolaides or perhaps to call him at (780)427-5777, and register your concern with unjustified changes to the board, and with the government's attempts to direct AU's hiring process that extend well beyond any benefit to the university or yourself. We need to let them know we're watching, or they're more likely to think they can get away with this.

In the meantime, this issue is coming out a bit late because I've been having some technical issues, but if you're reading this, they should be all sorted out, which is good, because aside from my rant here, we've got a solid issue. Check out the photographic talent of our latest student interviewee, along with discovering which he prefers, AU or brick-and-mortar schooling. Or maybe get a glimpse of the immigrant experience here in Canada with Alek's passionate defense of immigration in Canada. Jessica Young also gives us a look at ableism with an example story that may have you fuming.

Plus a recipe for Chinese hot-pot, an examination of the correspondence between Freud, Einstein and what it means for you as a student, music and book reviews, advice, events, scholarships and more! Enjoy the read!



# MINDS WE MEET



Who are your fellow students? At times, in an online learning environment, it can feel like you are all alone, but across the nation and around the globe, students just like you are also pursuing their Athabasca University (AU) studies! Each week, *The Voice Magazine* will be bringing you some of these stories. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

*The Voice Magazine* recently had a chance to chat with Justin Davis, currently residing in Edmonton, Alberta who is currently “pursuing a degree in Human Resources/Labour Relations.” He explained, “This degree has opened my eyes up to so many different opportunities after graduation. Currently I am interested in a career Labour Relations; the prospect of working with employers, unions, and workers is appealing spastically in a mediation role.”

On a more personal note, Justin is “a father, husband and student,” who stated, “After years in

the renovation industry my body told me it was time for a change, and, after much searching, Athabasca University was the best fit for me.

When not studying, Justin stated that “[j]uggling my studies, family, and health takes up most of my time. If I do find some spare time, I love photography, mostly landscape and street photography. I find it so exciting when I see something special or interesting, whether it is downtown or on the backroads of Alberta. I also like to go snowboarding with my son, especially while I am still faster than he is.”

Justin became interested in photography during a vacation to Mexico. (Check out some of his photography below!) He explained, “I bought an entry level DSLR that came with two lenses. I took many photos and when I returned home edited them using Lightroom and Photoshop. Some of the photos turned out well, so I watched a bunch of YouTube videos on how to use all the camera modes and various editing techniques. I eventually purchased better quality equipment and now I really enjoy taking photos. It is exciting to go out for a walk, in the city, or on a trip and really pay attention to your surroundings, looking for moments to put in the camera. I recommend getting out even with just your phone out and seeing what you can capture.”



*The log was taken just as you enter Jasper on a cold fall day 2019, the wind was blowing, and the air was damp. The riverbed was mostly dried up except for a few puddles and this big log was left behind freezing in the elements looking out of place, I thought to myself that's what make it special, because it was out of place. That is what makes it worth it. Worth the picture. Worth paying attention to. Kind of like people, it's good to feel out of place from time to time. I think that means that you are being yourself and you are expanding your comfort zone."*

Justin also had some thoughts about the online learning experience. "I love when a course uses the Bookshelf app, having all my textbooks in one easy to use app is awesome. Highlighting, bookmarking, or having it read to me while I fold laundry or prepare supper is fantastic. Most of my courses have been so well organized! It makes the learning experience really pleasant. I hate photocopied PDFs! EW! I went as far as tracking down the [ORGB 300](#) [Organizational Culture] text book at an antique book store, Athabasca U has spoiled me with the Bookshelf app and now I can't go back."

However, like many students, Justin did waver about continuing the educational journey at one point. He explained, "During the lock downs I had a hard time being productive; it seemed like there were bigger issues than my education. Being stuck in my home without the coffee shops or the gym and in isolation was too much. This last academic year I took a few classes at the UofA just to get out of the house and see what it was like to attend a brick-and-mortar University. I discovered two things. One I need to get out more, environment is very important to my success. Two, and to my surprise, Athabasca University manages to deliver a much richer education, classes are laid out nicely support is there when it is needed and no professors that lecture just to hear their own voices."

As for his most memorable AU course? "Project Management was sweet! It is almost like a project manager designed the course. Every element was so well organized, the information had been presented in a very digestible manner, I loved it."



*The old barn photo was taken between the airport (Edmonton international) and Devon. I liked the textures and thought of it like our health. If we do not look after things, they can change fast. It also reminded me of the Wizard of Oz for some reason.*

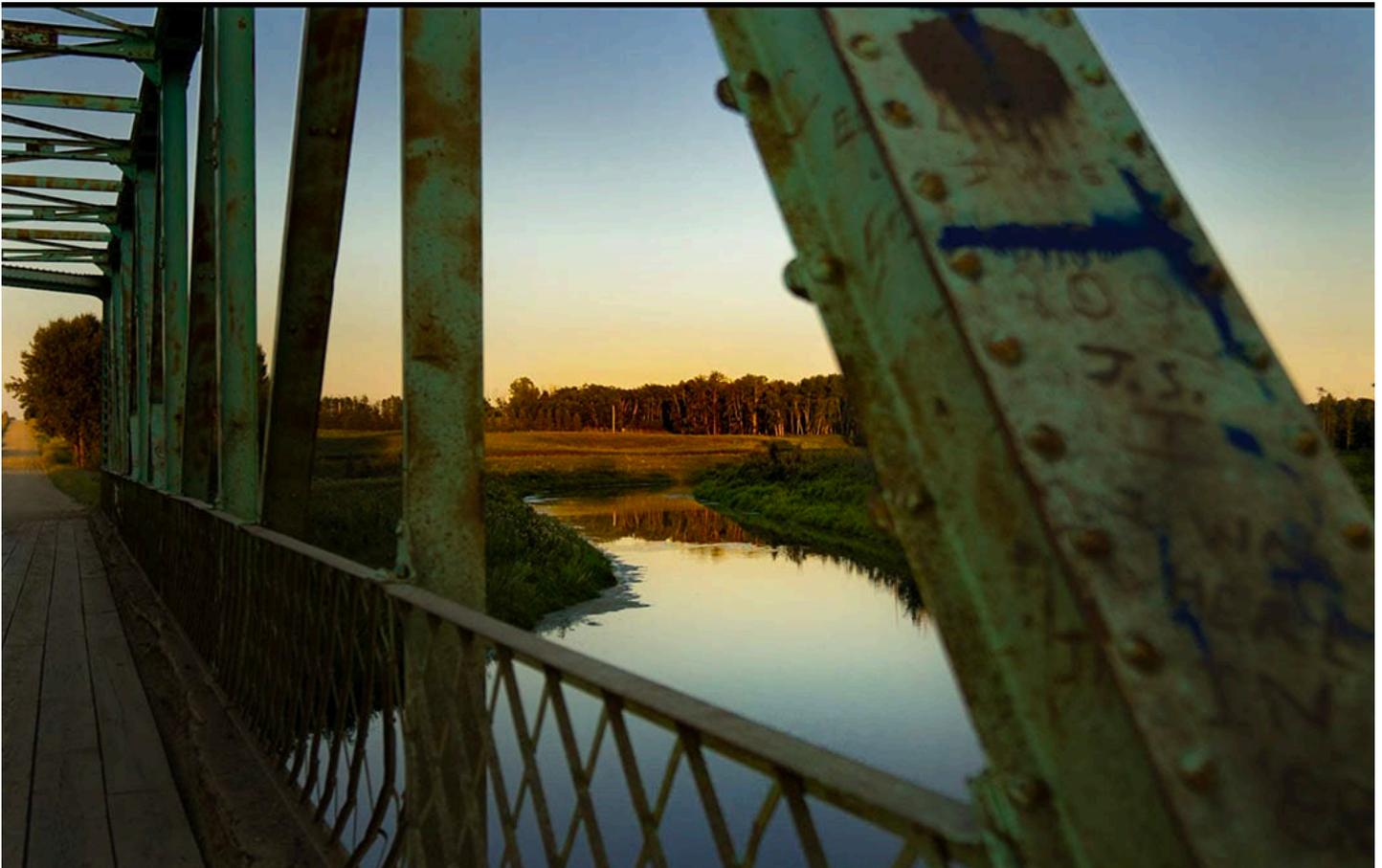


*The flower I took on my birthday June 21. I love the feeling of the warm sun on an early summer morning, that genial glowing feeling is something I look forward to all year long. Nature is the great creator of beauty and with all things beautiful they are so very delicate. I wanted the viewer of this picture to feel warm and soft, well that's how I feel when I see it.*

When asked about communications with tutors, Justin stated, “I have not had to communicate too much with them but when I did they had been so nice, they seemed like people you could go for coffee with. Super friendly and easy going, not to mention helpful and understanding.”

If Justin were the new president of AU, one major project would be to “[c]reate consistency throughout all the courses,” explaining, “Most classes that I took so far have been great, Etextbooks, good commentary and assignments that class material prepared me for. However, there have been some classes I dreaded my way through, bits of reading from all corners of the internet, assignments that did not do a good job reflecting the material.”

As for pet peeves? “For the most part I am an easy going type of guy but when there is a flaw in something or a system that can be easily fix it real gets under my skin. And when spring refuses to come, I need sunshine!” Best of luck Justin!



*The bridge was discovered when I was taking a back road home from Sylvan Lake. It was a silent, hot late summer evening very peaceful.*

*Photos by Justin Tyler Davis*

*Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.*

## Welcome to Canada, The Land of Opportunity The Immigrant Experience

Alek Golijanin



The “land of opportunity” label is commonly associated with USA, but I have used it when describing Canada and my experience as a first-generation Canadian. There have been countless waves of immigrants that can attest to how Canada has given hope to the hopeless, and how it has been the best thing to happen to people. However, I am not writing this article to talk about how great Canada is, and it is, but how little people know about our immigration system and the immigrant experience.

### “We Don’t Want Lazy Immigrants.” – Anti-Immigrant Trope

One of the most famous anti-immigrant tropes is the “*We don’t want lazy immigrants.*” It is an anti-immigrant trope that has been used worldwide. That exact language is no longer being used in 2022. A few of the words have been taken out for sensitivity purposes and the explanation is a little

longer to justify the position. The message you hear today focuses on immigrants that do not want to work and would rather just “freeload”.

This idea is definitely still in play today, as not that long ago we had a situation where the Premier of Ontario made some backhanded remarks about immigration when he resorted to saying that Canada only wanted immigrants that wanted to work and not ‘freeload’.

The full quote was, “You come here like every other new Canadian has come here, you work your tail off. If you think you’re coming to collect the dole and sit around, not gonna happen ... Go somewhere else. You want to work, come here.” To make matters worse, Rupa Subramanya, a columnist for the National Post took the ridiculous position of uplifting Doug Ford shortly after his remarks in her opinion piece. Rupa argued that immigrants were thanking Doug Ford for his position on immigration. Her article labeled his language as colorful, and she later referred to the response it garnered as ‘woke outrage’ in her tweet promoting the article.

While many newcomers do find it difficult to work in their chosen fields in Canada, often because of various red tape and bureaucracy required for them to take on those positions here, it does not change what was said and by who it was said. When individuals in positions of consequence make careless remarks about situations, they have real-life implications. The reaction to Doug Ford’s backhanded remarks had nothing to do with fake activism or woke outrage. Pushing the idea that newcomers coming to Canada are arriving with a freeloading mentality is extremely irresponsible.

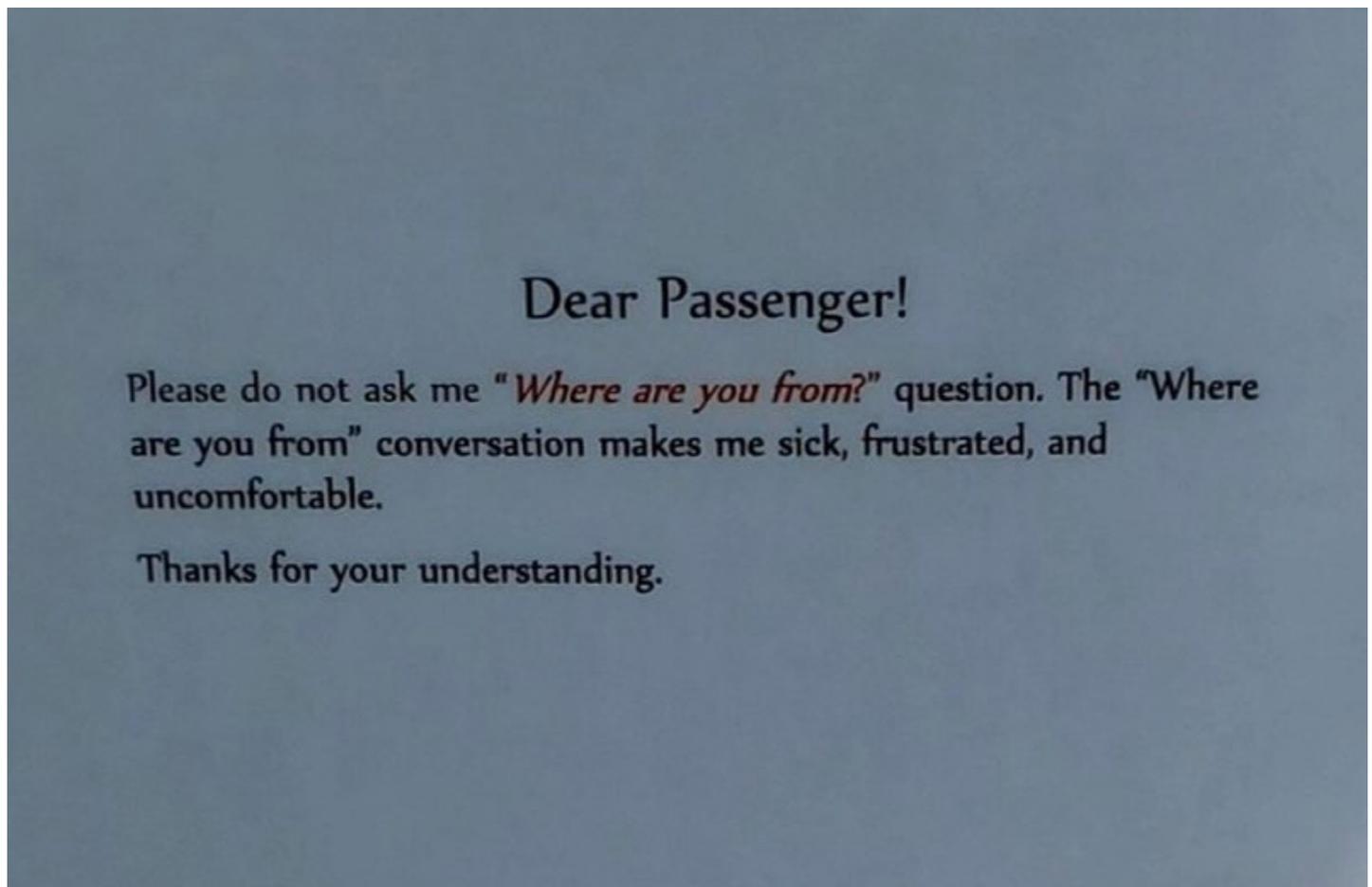
In our digital age, fringe media will take snippets and spin them, spreading misinformation and hate amongst people, or affecting people that might be imbalanced and going through difficult times. Some of them do this purposely. Others are simply more interested in pushing their agendas so don’t take the care needed.

However, people that have gone on to commit hate crimes often cite irresponsible comments that were made by public figures. While intentions matter, so do words, and as mature adults we need to think about our words and their far-reaching impacts.

I refuse to believe that a newcomer would turn down a chance at a higher quality of life by working for the sole reason that they are lazy. In fact, I know that many immigrants often work multiple jobs in order to make ends meet. That is why it is also important to understand that the immigrant experience is not a one size fits all. People are complicated and their can be a multitude of reasons why someone is they way they are.

### **A Sign of the Times?**

This past weekend as I was scrolling through my Twitter timeline, I came across a viral tweet shared by a prominent personality about how they came across a sign in their Uber in the USA. The sign read, *“Dear Passenger, Please do not ask me “Where are you from?” question. The where are you from question makes me sick, frustrated, and uncomfortable. Thanks for your understanding.”*



Although the tweet has since been deleted, I found it very thought provoking. And as someone who has grown up around and heard hundreds of stories of what people have had to go through to escape their countries of origin, I had a hunch that there may have been significant trauma attached to those words. I thought that the responses to that tweet would elaborate on similar ideas like the toxicity of the current political climate, being on the receiving end of racist attacks, the challenges of culture shock, or an immigrant's journey that is filled with triggering PTSD. I was wrong.

The responses beneath both the original tweet and the quoted tweet that showed up on my timeline were positions that I might have taken in my late teen years. Back then I had no sense of what other people were going through and my view of the world was very me-first. But I never imagined I would read one adult's response to the quoted tweet, a verified account, claiming that the sign suggested that the Uber driver was an unhappy person who should not be in a customer-facing job.

The person who made that response tweet was living in America. They were a white multi-generation American whose bio stated that they were a retired attorney. I mention this only to highlight the difference between realities of life for this retired attorney and the Uber Driver who we knew very little about. After this realization, it becomes clear that the retired attorney is projecting their reality onto someone else despite not knowing anything else about that person.

In social psychology we are taught that our assumptions of others can be and often are the part of a naïve realism because there are far more perspectives to how the world works than just how we see it. Perception is a type of construct which is the result of neuro-cognitive process. Your brain's lived experiences shape the lens from which you view the world. In relation to the response made by the retired attorney, they are basing their opinion on their positional knowledge – also a form of bias.

### **Canada's Immigration System**

When it comes to Canada's immigration, there are different classifications for immigrants which include economic immigrant, sponsored immigrant, landed immigrants, and refugee.

The difference between these classifications has to do with the nature of a person's arrival to Canada. Economic immigrants tend to be individuals that have greater financial means compared to other potential immigrants and they likely have skills needed by Canada's labour market. Sponsored immigrants are individuals who arrive to Canada because of a sponsorship program made possible by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident—sometimes referred to as family reunification. Landed immigrants are individuals that have no limitations on the duration of their stay in Canada and can work without restriction. Refugees on the other hand are individuals that who have fled from persecution in their country of origin.

While Canada's immigration system has been referred to as being one of the most fair and secure. Prior to all the technological security improvements, there were loopholes that were being exploited. Back in the 1990s there were two main immigration waves that contributed to confusion of the immigration system and the way it operated, and they were the immigration waves from Former Yugoslavia and Somalia.

Although Canada did have more advanced forms of identification back in the 1990s, much of the world had very basic forms of documents that were easily forgeable, and during the immigration wave from the Former Yugoslavia, it was not uncommon for individuals to buy diplomas from universities or pay doctors for clean health records to meet the criteria for the points-based evaluation that Canada was using to determine who would have their application approved. Additionally, there were several cases where individuals lied about their involvement in the civil wars like participating as an armed fighter or trafficking weapons to various ethnic communities.

The challenges with the immigration wave from Somalia had more to do with the nature of the country and that it was not uncommon for people living in more rural communities to not have identification. The challenge that presented is that it made it difficult for immigration personnel to verify a person's identity beyond their claim of who they were. This challenge complicated

the approval process, and it was not uncommon for people fleeing Somalia to experience long delays before getting approved to come to Canada.

Similar to people fleeing the Former Yugoslavia, there were some individuals that recognized those various loopholes and exploited them to come to Canada, but those people were few and far between.

However, I recall reading headlines in Ottawa where individuals from the Former Yugoslavia were found to have lied about their involvement in the civil wars, and it resulted in their deportation. There were news reports about similar incidents in other provinces, but it is well known among the Albanian-, Bosnian-, Croatian- and Serbian-Canadian ethnic communities that there are individuals who are living in Canada despite having been involved in ethnic cleansing and the killing of innocent civilians, and the trafficking of weapons.

Growing up in Heron Gate, most of my friends were Somalian or from Arabic-speaking countries, and there were some from the Caribbean too. Almost everyone had an immigrant experience that they could share, but most of those stories would be something you could only image in a rated R Hollywood film.

One particular story that my friend shared with me was about his older cousin who was the only person to survive a certain death scenario out of an entire village. He had just entered his teens and on that fateful day he accompanied some male family members to visit friends and family in a neighboring village. What started out as a nice and sunny day quickly turned dark. An armed group of rebels invaded that village on motorcycles, and they rounded up all the males regardless of their age. Although tribal wars were taking place across Somalia, the village was removed from the epicenter of violence, and nobody expected that it would reach them.

All of the men and boys were forced to line up against a wall, and once everyone was against the wall a hail gunfire erupted. People were falling over. Blood was splattering everywhere. It was a miracle that the teen boy had managed to survive by falling over and playing dead. People had fallen on him and he was drenched in blood, none of which was his. The rebels fired randomly into the bodies to make sure that everyone was killed. That teen played dead until night fall. I was

## AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### Virtual Student Lounge

Mon, May 30, 2:00 to 3:00 pm MDT  
Online via Zoom, Hosted by AUSU  
[www.ausu.org/event/virtual-student-lounge-4/](http://www.ausu.org/event/virtual-student-lounge-4/)  
Register through above link

### CHAT with AU Library

Tues, May 31, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT  
Online, Hosted by AU Library  
[library.athabascau.ca/page/ann](http://library.athabascau.ca/page/ann)  
No pre-registration necessary; access through CHAT link on home page

### MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, Jun 1, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT  
Online, Hosted by AU Faculty of Business  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20220601/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20220601/)  
RSVP through above link

### The Library Presents:

#### ERIC database webinar

Wed, Jun 1, 12:00 to 12:30 pm MDT  
Online, Hosted by AU Library  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/the-library-presents-eric-database-webinar/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/the-library-presents-eric-database-webinar/)  
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### CHAT with AU Library

Thur, Jun 2, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MDT  
Online, Hosted by AU Library  
[library.athabascau.ca/page/ann](http://library.athabascau.ca/page/ann)  
No pre-registration necessary; access through CHAT link on home page

### Accessibility Services presents: Learning strategies for online learning

Thur, Jun 2 Thur, Jul 7, 5:30 to 6:30pm, MDT  
Online via Microsoft Teams  
Hosted by AU Accessibility Services  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/accessibility-services-presents-the-learning-strategies-for-online-learning-series/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/accessibility-services-presents-the-learning-strategies-for-online-learning-series/)  
Register through above link

### Looking ahead...

### Convocation 2022

Fri, Jun 14, 8:30 am to 4:45 pm  
Online, Hosted by AU  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/convocation-2022/](http://news.athabascau.ca/events/convocation-2022/)  
Register through above link by May 31

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

told about the terror he felt when he decided to get up in the middle of the night after not hearing any commotion. He ended up making his way back to his home village and told the people what had happened. He was the only survivor. There are many more details to this story, but I feel they are far too unsettling to discuss.

Although that lucky teen managed to survive a certain death scenario and come to Canada, he did not manage to overcome the toxicity of his low-income community. He had his entire future to look forward to but being a war-hardened kid growing up in a low-income neighborhood contributed to a path of crime and gun violence. That is the immigrant experience that most Canadians don't know exists—and there are many more of these types of stories.

### **The Immigrant Experience**

People are complicated but if you do right by people, people will do right by you. The immigrant experience is unique to every immigrant. Immigrants are not, by and large, lazy or freeloaders. What I want people to think of when you hear someone using this type of language is that whoever is saying this is ignorant about immigration. The rabbit holes it leads down are toward lunatic ideas like replacement theory.

What all the world's strongest economies have in common is that they all have some of the largest populations. Canada has a shrinking workforce, and it is more vulnerable in certain sectors than others. There is a significant demand in the skilled trades, and these are careers where earning potentials can exceed \$100K.

Workforce economics is a complicated field, and it is heavily influenced by globalization. Although it is not uncommon to hear people talk about a brain drain in Canada, there are many tech grads that struggle to find work in their field of study because there are limited opportunities. These are complex topics that even experts who go on tv to speak on them are misspeaking about. So to think that someone can sum it up by simply saying immigrants are freeloaders doesn't make sense.

*Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.*

## **Scholarship of the Week**

**Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.**

**Scholarship name:** Villa Charities Undergrad Student Scholarship

**Sponsored by:** Villa Charities

**Deadline:** June 30, 2022

**Potential payout:** \$2500

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be Canadian citizens or have permanent-resident status, be registered full-time in an undergrad program at an accredited university or college and entering the second, third, or fourth year of the program, and have a GPA of at least 3.5.

**What's required:** An online application form, proof of enrollment, academic transcripts, your resume, and a 500-word essay describing how you help enrich lives through experiences and services that honour Italian culture and heritage (applicants need not be of Italian heritage.)

**Tips:** Read the [Terms and Conditions](#) carefully.

**Where to get info:** [www.villacharities.com/foundation/scholarship-programs/](http://www.villacharities.com/foundation/scholarship-programs/)



## Small Acts of Ableism

Jessica Young



Ableism is a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and is often rooted in the assumption that being nondisabled is the default, and people with disabilities are flawed or need to be ‘fixed.’ Now, I firmly believe that most people hold this assumption *implicitly*. This means that they may not know that they are behaving or thinking in an ableist way because ableism is so deeply imbedded in our society.

Even many disabled people themselves have internalized ableism—a study by the American Bar association found that “76 percent of respondents showed an implicit preference for people without disabilities, compared to nine percent for people with disabilities [and] even test takers with disabilities showed a preference for people without disabilities.”

Ableism can take several different forms, including hostile ableism (bullying, abuse, violent behaviour) benevolent ableism (patronizing behaviours) and ambivalent ableism (patronizing behaviour turning abusive if the person with a disability objects to the patronization). As [this Medical News Today article](#) points out, “an important thing to note about ableism is that it affects people differently depending on how others perceive their disability. For example, how people discriminate against those with visible impairments is different from how they treat those with invisible impairments.”

Recently I was standing in line at my city’s courthouse. In front of me was a woman wearing leg braces, seated awkwardly on the floor. When the clerk called the woman forward, she gingerly rose to her feet and limped toward the counter. The woman pulled out a stack of documents from her bag and began discussing her applications with the clerk. We were in the line for family court, so her applications most likely had something to do with child custody, a divorce, or domestic violence.

For those of you who have never had the misfortune of attempting to fill out a court application—they are long, repetitive, and confusing, which is why I wasn’t surprised when the woman asked the court clerk to label a few things on the document. The woman explained that she had a cognitive disability and would have difficulty completing the application without the clerks help.

The clerk looked at the woman disapprovingly and snapped, “I just explained it to you.”

After going back and forth for a few moments, the woman insisting that she would appreciate a little help from the clerk, the clerk finally wrote the labels on the document. This took the clerk less than a minute—much less time than she took to argue with the woman in the first place.

The woman then attempted to slide over a chair from a different counter so she could sit and fill out the application, but the clerk told her that the chair could not be moved.

“She’s wearing leg braces; she needs to sit.” I remarked from my place in the line. Surely, I thought, the clerk simply didn’t see the leg braces from behind the counter.

“The chair can’t be moved.” The clerk repeated and gestured down the long hallway to a few benches. “There’s seating over there.”

I was about to point out the chair was stationed at the counter that was lowered for accessibility purposes and the benches were much too far away for the woman to walk to easily, but the woman turned to me and smiled meekly. “Thank you,” she said. “I’ll just sit on the floor.”

If this is the way that women with disabilities are treated when they go to our justice system for help, it is no wonder that statistics show that these women are less likely to report incidents of abuse, despite being significantly more likely to be victims of violence than nondisabled people. It’s understandable that many people with disabilities might have a distrust of law enforcement or feel trapped by their abuser. We do not seem to be properly training our public servants on how to help the most vulnerable in our society, and this is one of the ways that our culture systemically subjects people with disabilities to acts of violence.

All too often people with disabilities face acts of ableism like this. Some acts may be small and inconspicuous, others large and hard to miss—but all acts of ableism negatively impact people with disabilities and those that love them. As the mom of a son with a disability, witnessing interactions like this breaks my heart. Not only for my son, but for anyone who requires a little extra support to get through the day. We are all human, and we are all deserving of respect, compassion, and kindness, regardless of our abilities.

*Jessica is completing her Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations degree while pursuing her passion for writing and drinking coffee.*

## Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

### Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.

#### **AthaU Facebook Group**

**Examining the exam weight.** A student wonders why some exams are worth so much of the final course mark, and a discussion ensues about why this is often the case, and how it could be otherwise.

#### **Discord**

**Portable learning.** In the #coffee-shop-lounge channel, a student shares a tip for a great Edmonton study location, in a café/bakery with wifi and a patio.

#### **reddit**

**Not necessarily driven to learn.** A non-driver wonders if a healthcard is acceptable ID for a ProctorU exam; responders generally say yes, as long as it's government-issued and has a photo.

#### **Twitter**

**@AthabascaU** tweets: "Reminder! In order to attend Convocation, and have your name announced during the presentation of degrees, you must register by May 31. We can't wait to celebrate your special day with you! <https://athau.ca/3LHc3hq> #AthaU22."



## Hot & Sour Soup Recipe



*My favorite hot and sour soup makes a great appetizer for dinner parties.*

So while, traditionally, hot-and-sour soup uses white pepper and rice wine vinegar, the soup tastes just as delicious with some substitutes.

Preparation time: 25 minutes

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup of mushrooms (½ cm thick slices). My favorite is enoki or shitake mushrooms but you can easily replace them with white or portabella mushrooms as well.
- 1 can of chicken or vegetarian stock
- 3 Large eggs whisked
- ¼ cup Firm tofu (or dried tofu)
- 2 tablespoon green onions
- ½ cup of sliced black fungus (optional)
- ½ carrot sliced with mandolin (optional)
- 1 can of Bamboo shoots (optional)
- ½ cup of pork tenderloin cut into thin strips (optional)
- 1700 mL of water
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- Salt and white pepper/black pepper to taste
- ½ cup rice vinegar (or regular vinegar)
- ½ cup low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp sriracha sauce
- ½ cup cornstarch
- 1 tsp ground ginger or 1 tsp chopped ginger

## Xine Wang

Ever since I was young, one of the most classic soups my parents made growing up was the sweet and sour soup. It's a delicious, simple recipe that is hearty and memorable. The complexity of flavors that seem unusual at first, but it works incredibly. It's easily customizable as well. If you're a vegan, you can replace the egg with tofu. If you're a fan of everything tangy, then some extra rice wine vinegar will help achieve that. Classic hot-and-sour soup originates from northern China. I had a taste of the authentic soup in Xi'an province, and it tastes a bit different from the ones we enjoy frequently at Chinese restaurants.

The ingredients are highly customizable as well. There are options for replacing certain ingredients if you're a vegetarian or if you're too comfortable at home to pick up groceries.

Most of the ingredients can be found in the ethnic aisle of a large supermarket like Walmart or Superstore. The best part of my recipe is that it makes do with what you have at home. For example, if you don't usually carry white pepper at home, black pepper will suffice.



*This is dried black fungus (which sounds absolutely revolting!) but tastes delicious and gives the soup a unique texture.*



*I am using firm, dried tofu that is easy to manipulate and doesn't crumble in the soup.*

**Directions:**

1. Mix  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of stock and cornstarch until powder dissolves
2. Combine stock and water into one large stock pot and bring to a boil
3. Add mushrooms, bamboo shoots (optional), rice wine vinegar or white vinegar), soy sauce, ginger, sriracha sauce to the stock pot and mix evenly
4. Heat broth on medium-high heat until it boils again then add the cornstarch-broth mixture. Stir the soup broth until smooth.
5. Continue to stir the soup clockwise then slowly add pre-whisked eggs.
6. Add tofu and sesame oil.
7. Add pepper, salt to taste. If you prefer spicier soup base, add more sriracha. If you prefer a more tangy soup base, add another spoonful of vinegar.

8. Serve with green onion garnish.



*Cremini mushrooms or any type of mushrooms are a fantastic addition to hot-and-sour soup. It gives the soup a meaty, umami flavor.*

*Xine Wang is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot-breeder and tea-connoisseur.*

## It's Never Too Late to Be What You Might Have Been

Marie Well



“It's never too late to be what you might have been” is a quote from Victorian novelist George Eliot.

Did you ever dream so big that, when the dream got quashed, you were crushed for ages? I know two men who long to retire in style. Both of their dreams got quashed for different reasons: one due to entitlement; the other to misfortune. I longed to gain a PhD but didn't get accepted into the program. Conflict with a supervisor was a critical factor. And when I was younger, I dreamed of becoming a singer and songwriter, but it never materialized. I believed I didn't have the talent.

But all quashed dreams could still become reality: my dreams, their dreams—your dreams!

Here's how:

### **Remind yourself that you have unlimited potential.**

Nothing in this world can truly stop you from attaining an ethical dream. That is, unless you let it defeat you. After all, you have more potential than you've ever imagined. A PhD? You have the potential! A six-figure career? You have the potential! A blissful everlasting

relationship? You have the potential! Anything you can imagine is potentially yours, if not now, perhaps tomorrow.

### **Break your dream into steps, themes, goals, whatever.**

Brainstorm as many words as you can possibly associate with your dream. Then cluster all the best words together into themes. Or take those words and associate them with steps to realizing your dream. This serves as a starting road map.

### **Engage in activities related to your dream.**

If you want to be a PhD in math, start taking math classes, read math books, buy a calculator, watch YouTube math videos, find a math coach—do anything math-related. Even join a chess club. You can't swim an ocean until you've dipped your toe in the pool.

### **Visualize what your dream will look like.**

Envision what success will look like. Imagine the different routes you could take, the various things you'll need to learn, and the obstacles you'll overcome. Sculpt your dream into a masterpiece of the imagination.

### **Research your dream.**

A great way to research a dream is by going on a job search board and searching the career most aligned with your dream. You'll see the educational requirements, the skills needed, and the pay.

### **Prepare for obstacles.**

The job boards you research won't reveal some of the challenges that come with a dream. For instance, a dream career to own an animal shelter may involve emotional drain from seeing animals abandoned. The trick is to remember that everybody's dreams have high points and low

ones. The goal is to manifest as many of the high points as possible by cultivating a positive mindset.

### **Self-talk yourself back into the passion.**

A high school dropout clearly wanted to acquire a degree, and she had all the potential. But she self-talked herself out of pursuing it. She told herself she didn't have the willpower. But she had more potential than many. She just needed to believe in her potential and boost her self-esteem with positive self talk—and action!

### **Let failure spur you on more.**

Don't let failure get you down. Keep throwing stuff at the wall until something sticks. It can take repeated efforts until something starts to rev.

### **Give your dream all you've got.**

Give each task all you've got. Every effort positions you for little wins. And each little win is like a drop of water that culminates into a gorgeous waterfall. It's that consistent effort that leads to success.

### **Ensure your dreams benefit others.**

A person might become a celebrity, but end up living a toxin-filled life, dying early of a drug overdose. Or a person can become a celebrity but give their energy to living a wholesome life, staying true to their faith by helping others. The dream that gives to others is a healthy ideal.

As Eliot said, it's never too late to be what you might have been. Better still, it's never too late to become what you might've been—and then some more.

## **Fly on the Wall**

### **What Einstein Wrote to Freud**

**Jason Sullivan**



### **War And Human Affinity**

Distance education provides academic intimacy between our daily struggles and pleasures and the reality that all of life is a lecture hall from which we may avert our gaze or take note. When the cultural going gets tough, our academic critical thinking skills spring into action. Theorists and tutors alike provide grist for our mental mill. We walk hand in hand with intellectual giants when we scratch beneath the surface of current events and seek to place contexts within a philosophical framework of human nature as a flowing artifice that explains and advocates for life itself as a learning process.

Two great minds of the past century elucidate the process of interacting and

learning from others, in this case literally. Albert Einstein, cultural superstar of physics, once

wrote a letter to Sigmund Freud. Both being of Viennese extraction, they had geography in common and shared that great baseline of wonderful minds: curiosity. The letter addressed one of the most crucial questions of that or any time: how and why does violence and warfare ensue and how can we humans avoid and abolish it?

Einstein asked: "This is the problem: Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war? It is common knowledge that, with the advance of modern science, this issue has come to mean a matter of life and death for Civilization as we know it; nevertheless, for all the zeal displayed, every attempt at its solution has ended in a lamentable breakdown." (in Popova, online)

Sigmund Freud, in reply to Einstein, wrote: "For the transition from crude violence to the reign of law, a certain psychological condition must first obtain. The union of the majority must be stable and enduring. If its sole *raison d'être* be the discomfiture of some overweening individual and, after his downfall, it be dissolved, it leads to nothing. Some other man, trusting to his superior power, will seek to reinstate the rule of violence, and the cycle will repeat itself unendingly. Thus the union of the people must be permanent and well organized; it must enact rules to meet the risk of possible revolts; must set up machinery insuring that its rules — the laws — are observed and that such acts of violence as the laws demand are duly carried out. This recognition of a community of interests engenders among the members of the group a sentiment of unity and fraternal solidarity which constitutes its real strength" (Freud in Popova, online).

Clearly, if affinities arise between people then conflict will be diminished. Yet, in our epoch of shattered unity, where every means of identification seems equal and unique and cynical retorts meet any claim to commonality and universal brotherhood, difference appears to hold sway over common cultural denominators. Think of the term brotherhood, once used to mean all people. It's now considered to be a sexist term?! There's an old spraypainting in Greenwood, BC of the flags of countless nations along with the 60s-era phrase *let's live as a human brotherhood*. Driving past it I've always pondered how the meaning has changed and been lost because, let's face it, the words have become more important than the sentiment. Brotherhoods imply anything but a unified gathering of our species. Instead, brotherhoods bring to mind at best a club of boys and at worst a sexist or racist gathering of ne'er-do-wells. Would *humanhood* be a better term, of just another politically-correct clunker? Maybe just use *sisterhood* and call it a balanced reprisal for historical injustices?

Can the human race find enough common ground that war and difference don't drive us apart before, inevitably, bringing us back together with sickening thuds of violence? The times imply that conflict is here to stay and yet we are, after all, members of the same species with much to gain by working together. The social sciences are based on seeking to understand these core realities of being human and, where people are involved, philosophy, history, psychology, and biology are never far behind. In a sense, all of life is a classroom as the laboratory of humanity unfolds before our very eyes.

### **From Merit to Equality and Back**

Think of a meritocracy, a nice idea when kids are old enough to make grilled cheese sandwiches for the whole family on a Saturday afternoon. What works on the small scale, and dates back to cave-lady days of yore where a simple fireside chat meant just that, does not always add up to success on the societal or global level. Heck, many people can't even handle the aroma of one another's lunches in a break room or their chair-neighbour's perfume in a waiting room! Solidarity gets tricky in a society of faceless strangers who we can imagine in the abstract but not relate to at the personal level. And that's in situations when basics like language are shared.

The very fables that guide our core beliefs, and recall that challenging our basic conceptions of reality and how it ought to function is fraught with the perilous fact that any good ideology has not only answers for every question but a naturalized method of providing, with algorithmic precision, responses to even the most earnest of critiques, may be what holds us back from societal improvements. Maybe we have to surrender our critical thinking skills as we've learned to apply them and open up to ways and means of thinking that we'd hitherto chucked out or not even noticed. Freud seemed to be saying to Einstein that, like us all, people have to begin with their commonalities and end with their individuality. And this, after all, is ironically a personal choice. Maybe that's why individualized study at AU is so rewarding. As a classroom of usually only ourselves we learn as much about our private realms as we do about the world around us. And isn't that what learning how to learn and grow is all about?

#### Reference

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*Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.*

## Beyond Literary Landscapes Indigenous and Métis Literature

**Natalia Iwanek**



From my early beginnings as a young introvert, the public library has always been a bit of a refuge. Years later, not much has changed, albeit with an additional affinity for endless hours spent scouring second-hand bookstores to add to my ever-growing “to-read” pile.

From one bookworm to another, this column will be underscoring and outlining various literary genres, authors, and recent reads and can serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with these works, as a refresher for long-time aficionados, and maybe as an inspiration for readers to share their own suggested topics. Do you have a topic that you would like covered in this column? Feel free to [contact me](#) for an interview and a feature in an upcoming column.

#### Who

This column serves as an introduction to the works of Indigenous and Métis authors, a reminder of some of the authors' classics, and as an inspiration for further reading.

Some examples of well-known authors include [Eden Robinson](#), a “Haisla and Heiltsuk novelist and short story writer,” [Waubgeshig Rice](#), an Anishinaabe author and journalist from Wasauksing First Nation, and [Lee Maracle](#), a “writer and academic of the Sto:lo [N]ation.” Other popular

authors include Joshua Whitehead, 2020-21 AU Writer-in-Residence, author, scholar, and “Ojibwe member of Peguis First Nation,” Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, a “Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer and artist,” and Richard Wagamese, an Ojibwe “author and journalist from the Wabaseemoong Independent Nations.”

Other well-known authors and playwrights to consider are Tomson Highway, a Cree playwright, author, and musician of the Barren Lands First Nation, Katherena Vermette, a “Red River Métis (Michif) writer,” Thomas King, a Cherokee and Greek “novelist, short-story writer, essayist, screenwriter, [and] photographer, and Jeannette Armstrong, a Syilx Okanagan author, educator, and artist.

Students interested in poetry may consider the works of Cree/Métis poet and scholar Marilyn Dumont, Mohawk poet and artist E. Pauline Johnson, and “Mohawk writer, essayist, and poet of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte First Nation,” Beth Brant.

### **What**

Some well-known works include Robinson’s *Monkey Beach* and *Son of a Trickster*, Rice’s *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Maracle’s *Celia’s Song*, Whitehead’s *Joshua Appleseed*, Simpson’s *Islands of Decolonial Love: Stories & Songs*, and Wagamese’s *Medicine Walk*.

### **Where**

Many of these works are set throughout Indigenous territories, in what is now called Canada.

### **When**

These works often take place during the late 20th-century.

### **Why**

Readers who would like to learn more about Indigenous and Métis history, culture, and worldviews, as well as historical and contemporary issues, may consider the works of these authors.

### **How**

AU’s wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to Indigenous and Métis Literature are available in a variety of disciplines, including one’s that may fit into your Degree Works. (Always check with an AU counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in ENGL 308: Indigenous Literature in Canada, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “begins with the origins of Indigenous literature in the oral tradition and leads to contemporary Indigenous writing in English. The course also examines related areas such as findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).” The current revision includes works by Robinson, Highway, and Vermette.

In addition, students may also consider INST 420: Indigenous Resistance, a senior-level, three-credit course, which “give[s] students a broad survey of the diverse forms of Indigenous resistance to colonialism by highlighting the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples themselves.” Happy reading!

*Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.*

## Music Review

### You Liked This (Okay Computer!)

Jessica Young



**Artist:** Will Wood (featuring Bev Standing)

**Song:** You Liked This (Okay Computer!)

Multimedia artist, Will Wood, will be releasing a new sound project on June 6<sup>th</sup>. The sound project comes with an animated video and looks like it will be released on [YouTube](#) and perhaps Wood's [patreon](#), although finding information about Wood and his projects is difficult—it seems that he has a minimal online footprint despite being a multimedia artist. His online anonymity makes sense, however, considering that this project was “fueled by his disdain for social media and his belief that its negative effect on our mental health is due to a concerted effort by the platforms to destabilize and manipulate users.”

Wood explains,

“It’s an absolute tragedy that people have been so thoroughly duped by the idea that social media is “the democratization of media” as opposed to a corporate-owned series of media platforms programmed by hordes of the finest scientific minds on earth with the express purpose of collecting information on you and using it in tandem with highly advanced A.I. systems to feed you a personalized, custom-tailored string of lies curated for the sole purpose of re-wiring your neurochemistry. Even the youth counterculture, the group that should be the most critical of corporate influence on culture, refuses to acknowledge that the ideas they find in their echo chambers were picked out for them by the machines, as were the echo chambers themselves, and that no, you cannot ‘educate yourself’ by blindly following what you see on a social media platform.”

The sound project consists of Wood’s signature piano as a backdrop to soundscapes, samples, and the universally known dings and whistles signaling a notification on our phone. The lyrics are spoken by Canadian voice actress Bev Standing, imitating the “predatory” headlines and suggestions given to us by A.I.’s. If you don’t know, Bev Standing is the iconic robotic voice behind the TikTok text-to-speech feature. Standing [sued the platform in 2021](#) for using her voice without her consent, and TikTok has since changed the voice used for the text-to-speech feature, although Standing’s voice can still be heard in previously made videos.

So, while I wouldn’t necessarily call this sound project “music,” it’s certainly interesting. Wood’s piano is beautiful yet foreboding, like something out of a Tim Burton movie. The lyrics include cryptic messages such as, “three warning signs you might be right about everything your worst instincts tell you,” “your friends are all here, in easily digestible parts—funny, how you all have so much in common,” and “the revolution begins here, with our free service.” All of this is occurring over an animation of electronic sheep being modified on a manufacturing line controlled by robots.

Overall, “You Liked This (Okay Computer!) is pretty cool. As someone who isn’t on social media at all and tries to practice digital minimalism as much as possible, I connect with many of Wood’s sentiments. Even if you don’t necessarily agree with his opinions, I think his project is worth the watch, and hopefully generates some important discussions.

*Jessica is completing her Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations degree while pursuing her passion for writing and drinking coffee.*

## How to Become a Superhero



**Marie Well**

Why do motivational clips almost always feature athletes? The discipline and effort required for top athletic performance is inspiring. All superheroes are commonly athletic. But other, lesser-known activities can require the traits of a superhuman also! What traits are those? Well, there's a few that I can think of:

**Go to bed and wake up at the same hours each day.** Doing so sets you up for a routine, and routines are the cornerstone of mastery and accomplishment. But don't just select a mundane routine. Instead, make a detailed, extensive, and comprehensive list of activities you need to do to excel. Challenge yourself with an intense, regimented routine.

**Improve yourself every day.** Do not allow a day to go by where you didn't become smarter, stronger, kinder, wiser, or a little more terrific in some way. Make sure you stretch yourself daily by exercising, reading, learning, or accomplishing. And the more

you push yourself to stretch, then the more disciplined and more exciting you become.

**Work out for super motivation.** Work your way up to exercising for at least an hour a day five or six days a week. That is the minimum for a superhero. But if you can't muster that duration at first, then try simply walking a half hour back and forth across your hallway while watching a video clip on YouTube. You can work up to running the hallway and then add weights and then buy a full-blown gym membership and go hard core.

**Eat super foods.** Cut out all added sugars in foods. That means avoid all sweets. Remove all processed foods from your diet as well. Remove all salty or oily treats as well, such as potato chips. Instead, try to eat mostly raw fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, fatty fish, and organic whole grains or sweet potatoes. Go a bit further and cut out all caffeine. Eating 100% clean foods is easier than committing 99%.

**Stay happy.** Discipline your mind to stay happy and always carry a smile on your face. Keep your thoughts positive by refusing to see faults in others, by being empathic, and by seeking to unconditionally love the world. After all, Mother Teresa was a superhero, in my mind.

**Clean like a marine in boot camp.** In the marines, the toilet seat has to be so clean that you can eat a meal from it. Schedule cleaning tasks four times a day every day. In the morning, make the beds. Spend half your lunchtime cleaning. Clean immediately after work, and clean before bed. Also, invest in a shoe rack, coat rack, book shelves, storage boxes, and other organizational tools. They immediately brighten up the home.

**Brush and floss daily.** Schedule in your calendar times for brushing and flossing. Consider purchasing an electric toothbrush, as well. I received a complimentary electric toothbrush from my new dentist, and I love it so much, I brush up to three times a day. And floss twice a day, if you can. My landlady at 80-some years of age had almost all of her original teeth due to flossing twice daily

**Emphasize learning.** Getting a certificate, diploma, degree, or graduate degree is a superpower, isn't it? An education not only makes you a better human being but also gives you greater resources for making other people's lives a little easier.

**Avoid all toxins.** Toxins are the vices of villains. But you want to leave this world as a superhero, right? Toxins can reduce your chance of success at school, work, and in your relationships. The best way to get sober and clean is to change the toxic addictions to healthy ones, like extreme fitness. Also, stay away from toxic environments like bars, pubs, and dance clubs. Instead, consider hanging out at churches, bookstores and libraries, or colleges and universities.

**Develop wisdom and spirituality.** Spirituality or adherence to a religion is a superpower. It can infuse you with wisdom and help you make healthy life choices. In other words, religions and spirituality can help you know what constitutes a moral action and what leads to bad outcomes.

**Set high goals.** Superheroes push themselves to achieve great things, most commonly for the benefit of others. Great things like fame and wealth can be either constructive or destructive, however. And sometimes more modest goals, like working at Tim Horton's, can result in better outcomes. The trick is to seek a healthy and moral outcome in whatever heights you climb by cultivating your best self.

**Dress for success.** You don't need to dress like a fashion icon to be successful. Basic hygiene and basic care for one's appearance can go a long way. But if you want to go all-out, consider buying a wardrobe exclusively of three colors, such as red, beige, and black—or blue, white, and gray. You'll find it less expensive and easier to mix and match. At least, that's what a stylist advised me to do when I was in graduate school.

**Learn self-defense.** Superhuman often have combative skills. Consider taking up a martial art, boxing, wrestling, or basic self-defense class. But try not to compete professionally if brain health is your priority.

**Love unconditionally.** Superheroes would selflessly sacrifice their lives for the well-being of others. That is a form of unconditional love. Loving all others, no matter their flaws, even if only from afar, is a superpower.

In my mind, if you did even just one of these things, you're a superhero!



## Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of The Voice Magazine

Hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents lost power—in some cases for day—when a (new word alert!) derecho storm system swept across the southern half of that province May 21. Our writers past have had the lights go out on them, too.

**Who pulled the switch?** Shannon Maguire describes the cause and effects of the (then) largest blackout in North American history, in August 2003. "The actual cause of the blackout was traced back to three failed transmission lines in northern Ohio, but experts still do not know how the situation escalated beyond those three lines." [Lights Go Out in Ontario and North-Eastern United States, August 20, 2003.](#)

**Meanwhile, in Edmonton.** Debbie Jabbour relates a recent storm-related power outage, and points out that individual preparedness only goes so far. "It's fairly easy to cope on a small scale – bring out the candles, cook supper on the barbeque, etc.; but it's quite another matter when companies that supply us with the 'necessities' of life lose their power too." [From My Perspective – And then the lights went out!](#), August 20, 2003.



Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Doing it All

*Dear Barb:*

*Hi, I am a mother of three children. My husband and I work full time and have very demanding jobs and my kids are involved in a lot of sports and other activities. We are both so tired all the time, we just want to relax on the weekends, but our kids want us to do stuff with them. We end up feeling like we are bad parents. It just seems like we can't find the right balance between home and work life. I have other friends in the same situation, and they seem to be able to manage it all. What are the secrets to balancing work and family life, do you have any advice for us?*

*Thanks, Tina.*

Hi Tina:

Finding the proper balance between work and family life is challenging, but it can be done. Everyone is anxious to do it all and only become overly stressed in their pursuit. When people become over stressed their productivity level drops and they accomplish even less. Here are some tips for managing stress levels at work and at home.

While at work set realistic goals for yourself and prioritize your tasks. If you find you can't do it all, speak to your boss, he/she may be able to get you an assistant, or give some duties to coworkers. Do not be afraid to speak up. Also do not hesitate to offer new ways of accomplishing tasks. Sometimes we get stuck in old ways when an innovative approach could be exactly what is needed. Organize your

workload by priorities and complete one task before moving on to the next. Don't work through your breaks. Those few minutes to destress can make a tremendous difference to your productivity level and ability to deal with stressful situations.

Many of these same practices can be applied to responsibilities and chores at home. Learning to say "no" is especially important, and something that most people find exceedingly difficult to achieve. You cannot do it all. Set your priorities and strive to achieve them. Also spread out the responsibilities among family members. Encourage your children to do some of the chores, with the promise that once everything is done, they will be able to do fun activities as a family. As I said above do not be afraid to say no! You are not a superhero! Most importantly take care of yourself by eating right and exercising regularly. At times you may practice all of the above and still feel stressed, don't be afraid to speak to a mental health professional. They will be able to point out additional ways to help with the home/work balance. Thank you, Tina, and best of luck!

*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.*



Poet Maeve  
Post Post-Modern Love

Wanda Waterman





### Virtual Food Assistance Program Doubling Support in June

AUSU will be doubling the number of \$100 gift cards awarded through the [Virtual Food Assistance Program](#) in June from 5 to 10.

Food insecurity is a problem faced by many post-secondary students for reasons such as rising tuition costs, living expenses, and insufficient financial aid systems. Students often endure hardship while furthering themselves personally, academically, and professionally. This is especially true around the holidays.

The gift cards will be for a major grocery chain in Canada convenient to those selected through the draw. In the case of rural or international students who do not have access to one of the major Canadian grocery chains available, AUSU will offer alternate options.

### A Hobby-Filled Learner Pathway!

Check out [this custom Learner Pathway](#) curated by AUSU where you can browse a variety of the more creative (and unique) skills showcased on LinkedIn Learning. Need a break from studying? Take your mind off things with a fun, new hobby!



**Annual General Meeting** MAY 26



**5 PM MT on Zoom  
Students Welcome**

### AUSU will host a formal Annual General Meeting on May 26, 2022.

AUSU executives and staff will meet over Zoom at 5 pm MST to present the [2022 Annual Report](#), which includes the AUSU audited financial statements and highlights from the 2021 fiscal year.

Students are welcome! If you have any questions about the event, please contact Governance and Advocacy Coordinator Duncan Wojtaszek at [governance@ausu.org](mailto:governance@ausu.org).

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Classifieds are free for AU students!  
Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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## THE VOICE

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