

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 09 2012-03-02

### **Dead Funny**

Humour and the Third Reich

### **History of Violence**

Crime and repentance

### **Soup's On!**

Foods that warm

*Plus:  
In Conversation With  
From Where I Sit  
and much more!*



# CONTENTS

*The Voice's* interactive Table of Contents allows you to click a story title to jump to an article. Clicking the bottom right corner of any page returns you here. Some ads and graphics are also links.

## Features

In Review: <i>Dead Funny</i> .....	3
Health Matters: Warm Up! .....	5
In Conversation with . . . Gescha, Part II .....	7

## Columns

Chronicles of Cruiscin Lan .....	6
From Where I Sit: Something Borrowed, Something Awesome.....	9
The Mindful Bard: <i>A Somewhat Gentle Man</i> .....	10
Write Stuff: Online Afterlife .....	12
AUSU Update: February 2012 .....	15

## News and Events

Did You Know? .....	8
Click of the Wrist.....	13
International News Desk .....	14

## From Our Readers

Letters to the Editor .....	2
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***The Voice  
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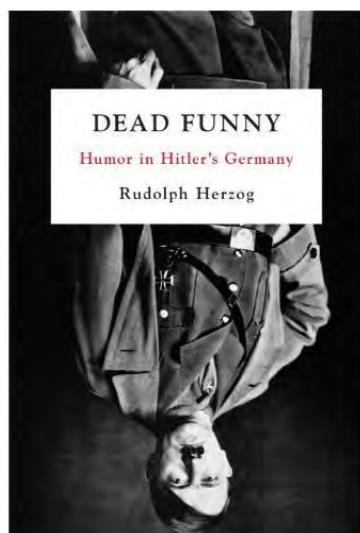
# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.



IN REVIEW: *DEAD FUNNY*

John Buhler



**Book:** Rudolf Herzog, *Dead Funny: Humor in Hitler's Germany* (tr. Jefferson Chase) (2011)

Though the Nazi regime brought about human misery and death on a massive scale, it is surprising to learn that humour still existed and indeed flourished during this dark era. In *Dead Funny: Humor in Hitler's Germany*, German director Rudolf Herzog (son of filmmaker Werner Herzog) examines the very broad issue of comedy and the Third Reich.

Despite the possible penalties, artists and civilians alike used humour to understand and even mock the political situation. *Dead Funny* describes Nazi efforts to silence its critics and profiles several actors, cabaret artists, and ordinary Germans who were subjected to interrogations, imprisonment, and even death for making jokes about the Nazi government. For example, Berlin cabaret performer Werner Finck had made a career of ridiculing Hitler and the Nazis. He was often under surveillance as he performed and would joke about not being allowed to talk, even offering to speak his lines more slowly so that Gestapo agents in the audience could more easily record his words. Finck only escaped the clutches of Propaganda Minister Goebbels by joining the military, thereby surviving the war.

Other satirists and comedians were persecuted because they were Jewish, supported left-leaning politics, or were in some manner at odds with Nazi values. Among them were screen actors who suddenly found that they were no longer offered film contracts and cabaret entertainers left with no venue in which they were allowed to perform. Many of these were arrested and sent to concentration camps or forced into exile. One case is particularly tragic: that of Jewish comedian, actor, and director Kurt Gerron. Gerron had fled to Holland in order to avoid persecution by the Nazis. But when the Germans invaded the country, Gerron was sent to Theresienstadt concentration camp—and forced to perform in comedies and direct a Nazi documentary about the camp. Eventually he was sent to Auschwitz, and like many other talented German performers of his generation, perished there.

There are also cases in which ordinary Germans were punished by the Nazi state for making political jokes. Although an individual's repeated failure to adhere to Nazi values and increased radicalization as the tide of war turned against Germany made execution a more likely punishment, Herzog emphasizes that death sentences were restricted to "exceptional" cases. This point, however, gets lost among the many deaths that Herzog documents, and the title *Dead Funny* only helps to further this misconception.

In one instance Marianne Elise K., a technical draftsperson in a Berlin armaments factory, was denounced for sharing a wisecrack with her colleagues:

*"Hitler and Göring are standing atop the Berlin radio tower.*

*Hitler says he wants to do something to put a smile on Berliners' faces.*

*So Göring says: 'Why don't you jump?'"*

The fact that Marianne K.'s husband had been killed in the war failed to help her case. The People's Court handed down a death sentence.

Overall, *Dead Funny* is both interesting and thought-provoking. It is very broad in its scope; in addition to describing anti-Nazi humour originating in Germany itself, it also discusses Allied efforts to ridicule Hitler, BBC broadcasts in German, and the Nazis' own brand of humour. The author also devotes a chapter to the dark humour shared among Jewish people even as they were facing persecution and annihilation.

One of the most thought-provoking questions Herzog raises is whether it is acceptable to laugh at Hitler and his regime. While this may seem like a rather surprising question for North Americans, who may be familiar with the 1960s sitcom *Hogan's Heroes* or countless comedy skits featuring stereotypical Nazi interrogators, the situation is different in Germany itself. According to Herzog Germans, burdened by their past, do not want to be accused of trivializing horrific events. Furthermore, unlike here, where anyone can purchase Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Germany has strict laws about accessing and displaying items associated with the Nazi regime. Given this backdrop, German cartoonist Walter Moers' 1998 spoof of the Nazis in his *Adolf, the Nazi Sow* was indeed groundbreaking, an event seen by Herzog as a sign of increasing freedom within Germany to ridicule rather than simply demonize Adolf Hitler.

*"One of the most thought-provoking questions . . . is whether it is acceptable to laugh at Hitler and his regime. While this may seem like a rather surprising question for North Americans . . . Germans, burdened by their past, do not want to be accused of trivializing horrific events."*

Internationally, filmmakers are no longer completely constrained by earlier conventions in which the Holocaust could only be portrayed with faithful accuracy. Most strikingly, in Roberto Benigni's 1997 film *La Vita e Bella (Life is Beautiful)* a Nazi concentration camp—resembling Auschwitz, as Herzog points out—becomes the setting for a comedy.

*Dead Funny* forced me to consider the manner in which the Holocaust has been presented in film and other media, and what sort of treatment it may receive in the future. With the passage of time and with fewer perpetrators and victims still living, will new artistic representations of the Holocaust continue to develop, including the use of comedy? Or will Benigni's film remain the only internationally successful film that uses humour in the portrayal of Hitler's Final Solution?

Although it is a translation, *Dead Funny* flows quite well. However, it could have used more careful editing of its content. Perhaps the book's most jarring error is in reporting that Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1944. It is surprising that an error concerning an event which is so closely linked to the final few days of the war and occurred in 1945 was not detected prior to the book's publication.

These oversights, however, should not distract readers from an otherwise well-researched and well-presented analysis on a subject that's rarely discussed.



## HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

**Warm Up!**

During the winter, we'll usually reach for a bowl of soup instead of a big dinner salad, or an oven-baked meal rather than something grilled. Why is that?

**Chinese Medicine**

Chinese medicine has the answer. In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), winter is considered to be a “yin” time: a period of rest, reflection, and chilly temperatures. To counteract the cold, our bodies instinctively crave warming foods, which not only use less energy to digest, but also can also recharge certain body organs specific to the winter season.

In fact, according to TCM, each organ in the body is paired with a specific season or time of year. The “winter” organs are the kidneys, urinary bladder, and adrenals; during this time, it is their chance to replenish and rejuvenate. The more warming foods we eat during the winter, the more easily these organs can achieve this renewal. Additionally, warming foods help sustain the body's energy, or *qi*, since winter is a season for replenishing the *qi* as well.

**Warming Foods**

“Warming” in TCM does not necessarily mean food that has been heated. There is a specific set of foods known to have warming properties, and meals made from these foods during the winter can help replenish our “winter” organs and leave us feeling warm inside.

Foods that fit this category include soups and stews; root vegetables; beans, legumes, and pulses; miso and seaweeds; naturally oily foods like fish and nuts; and flavour enhancers like garlic and onion. Herbs and spices like ginger, clove, fennel, aniseed, black pepper, cayenne, and cinnamon are also revered in Chinese medicine for their warming effects.

This doesn't mean that non-warming foods are off limits during the winter months, however. You can easily change a non-warming meal into one that is. For instance, raw fruit has nutritional benefits, but Chinese medicine discourages us from consuming too much raw food in the winter. Stewing apples or pears with a pinch of cinnamon or cloves converts the dish into a winter-appropriate one.

**Menu Suggestions**

Designing a menu can be challenging enough. Add winter food restrictions, and it could get really complicated. To ease the menu pressure, I've included some basic warming meal suggestions.

*Making a meal a warming one can be as simple as adding the right spices. Ginger, clove, fennel, aniseed, black pepper, cayenne, and cinnamon are all noted for their warming effects.*

What's for breakfast? Try gruel made from slow-cooked porridge and topped with roasted nuts, or a tasty mush of lentils, ginger, onion, and garlic. Pair these with a side of stewed fruit (apples, pears, and plums) to which a dash of cinnamon, cloves, and vanilla essence has been added, and you'll have a warming breakfast that's both appealing and beneficial.

For lunch, the lentil stew described above is still a good option. Other warming lunch suggestions include miso soup with a side of carrots sautéed with orange and ginger, or, if you're not vegetarian, marrow broth simmered with root vegetables.

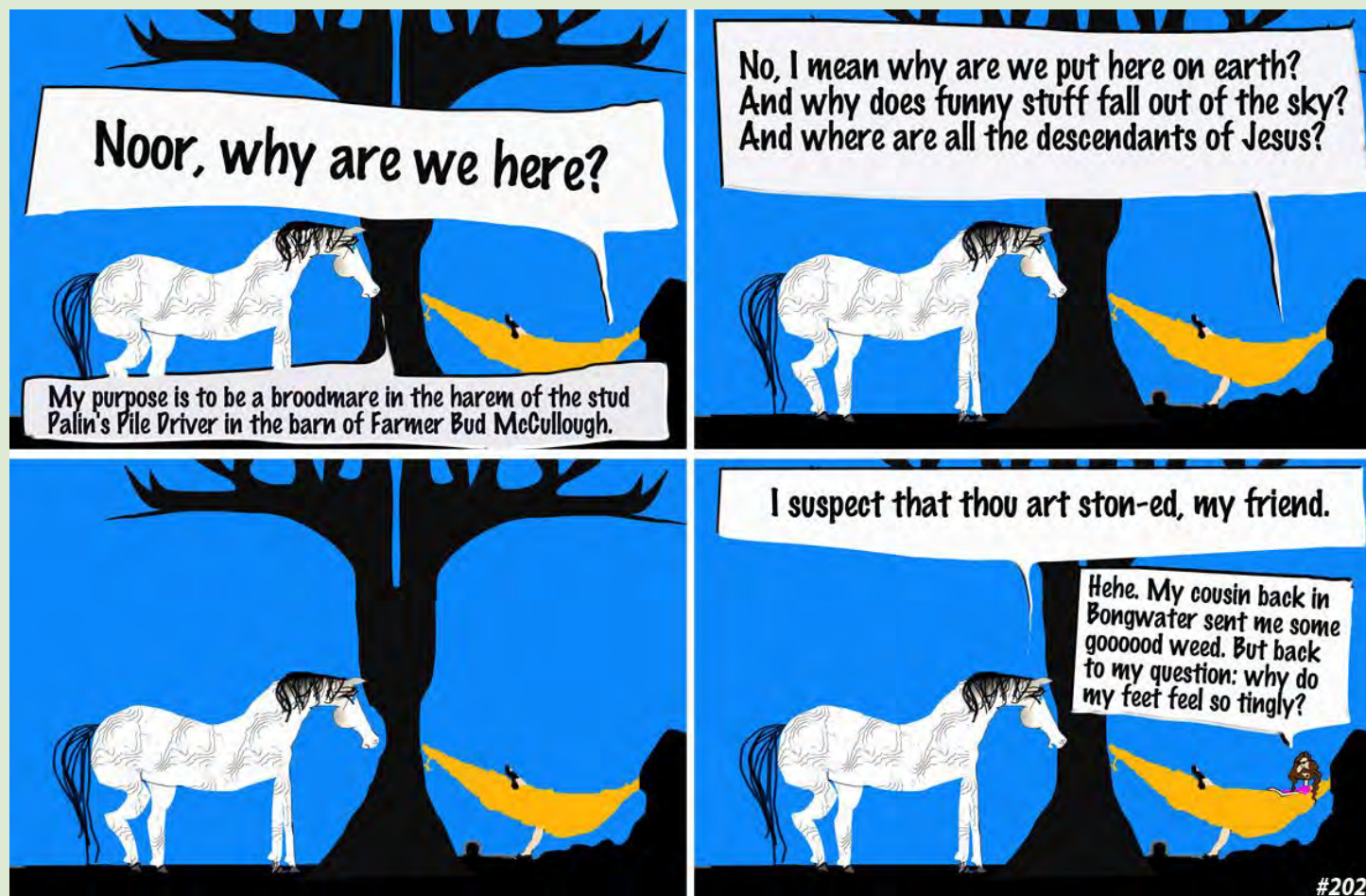
Supper options are diverse. Consider wild fish marinated in cayenne, ginger, and black pepper and baked; bean stew made of beans, barley, and lentils and flavoured with lemon and black pepper; or soups like sweet potato soup, garnished with cilantro or nuts.

And, of course, don't forget dessert: try fruit crisp (fruits, raisins, and vanilla essence slowly oven-baked with a characteristic "crisp" topping of oatmeal, butter, and a pinch of raw sugar).

To stay warm during the last few weeks of winter, respect your body's "yin" time and nourish the wintertime organs. Eat warming foods and you may just find you'll lose some of the winter blahs.

## CHRONICLES OF CRUISCIN LAN

Wanda Waterman



## IN CONVERSATION WITH . . .

Wanda Waterman



Photo by Souldatta.  
Used with permission.

## Gescha, Part II

***Gescha** is a young Canadian hip hop artist who has shared the stage with Tech9, Classified, and Sweatshop Union, among others. His single “Love Pirates” made #8 on the Canadian singles sales charts the week it debuted. After years of struggling with a self-destructive lifestyle, Gescha now mentors youth in an attempt to prevent others from repeating his mistakes. His new album, Crayon Politics, arose out of his desire to channel his personal pain in a positive way through creative expression.*

*Read Part I of his interview [here](#).*

## Teach Your Children Well

The mentoring experience really came along at a time where I had cleaned up my life and was looking for some form of redemption for the wrongs I’d committed. I was sick of poisoning the community and it was the first place where I knew how to give back. So I started working with kids who were beginning to walk the same path I had. I viewed myself as a leader and

believed many of the youth that I was working with could also become leaders in the community if they felt empowered to do so. This is really what motivated my work at the time. It just so happens that I was very passionate about what I was doing, and now building community and working on social justice issues through media is a big part of what I do.

## Balancing Music and Politics

My social conscience plays a large role in the music I create, although it’s not a driving force. I make music about life and throughout that process I weave in political and social justice issues. I feel as though music must speak to the heart first and relate to people on a personal level, and once that’s been accomplished you can spark the fires of passion on world and community issues. That’s why I believe it’s important that an album be balanced between these two things. If you only make political music you just preach to the choir; you need to connect with people first and then use that connection to get important issues across and raise awareness.

## What I Need

If being creative is important to me and my life I will create the scenario and [circumstances] . . . which I need to achieve this goal. So for me solitude [and] time to myself [are] important. It’s in this context that I’m able to create and be free with my thoughts and expressions. Time without solitude is where my mind is attaining information, processing and storing that information, and then reprocessing the collection of



new information and how it relates to old information. My creations are a mere exhale of that insanity, and that's why I need my art to function.

### **Pistols in the Air**

Strangest story I have was while I was on tour with Redcloud. I was offstage watching Redcloud do his freestyle routine where he asks people in the crowd to pull items out of their pockets and hold them in the air. He then incorporates whatever he sees into the freestyle. Suddenly this dude pulls a nine-millimetre pistol out and throws it in the air while he's wearing a bulletproof vest as if this is no big deal—just a normal day at the office—and then Redcloud drops this line: “Yo, this native cat in the crowd, he's trying to murder me, so I grab his gun and I'mma give it to security” and simultaneously snatches the gun out of this dude's hand and hands it to the bouncer at the club. This was followed by some crazy commotion and the dude trying to say his loaded gun was fake. Classic case of using the brain.

### **Horizon Line**

2012 is going to be a busy year. I have a new record that should be dropping at the end of the year and will be launching a new group called “Lost Kings.” We'll have an EP ready and released for the summer as well as some new music videos.

I'm also currently filming a documentary on race relations in Saskatchewan, which should be released summer of 2013.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

### **DegreeWorks**



It takes a lot of planning to map out an academic career. But when you're working with information in several different media, the process can be time-consuming and frustrating. However, the future is promising: AU will soon be launching DegreeWorks, “a comprehensive academic advising and degree audit solution” that will communicate directly with AU's internal student information system and streamline program planning.

DegreeWorks helps students plan their educational futures by “automatically [retrieving] a student's academic record . . . and [organizing] it into an educational plan on the web, identifying program requirements, courses completed and courses still needed to complete a degree.”

Students will also be able to “explore ‘What if’ scenarios to measure the effects of changing programs or adding majors or minors” and check GPAs based on projected future course grades.

It will be user friendly, and AU plans to make advisors available for students who need help navigating the system. DegreeWorks will be launched later this year.

For more information on the DegreeWorks project, visit the [information site](#).



*From  
Where  
I Sit*

*Hazel Anaka*

## Something Borrowed, Something Awesome

Despite some wretched memories of Ikea furniture assembly projects of the past, I found myself entering the gaping maw of the huge blue and yellow building. I remember the pain in my right palm caused by the back end of a stubby screwdriver—hours of screwing in hundreds of cam lock bolts and other screws will do that. I remember the back-breaking weight of the flat packs. Helping a young daughter furnish her first couple (or was it six?) places meant that Ikea was part of our lives for several years.

The Swedish innovator's modern design is legendary. It is space-saving, clever, and clean-lined. TV designers working with a budget use Ikea products in their designs all the time. To most of us they are readily identifiable: accessories like vases, art prints, lamps, frames, and organizational tools tend to be well-priced. These are items that are replaced often, as tastes and trends change.

It's when you look at the furniture that quality drops and frustration mounts. We all know that affordable means compromise. We give up real wood construction for particle board or MDF. We give up longevity for being on-trend. These are not heirloom pieces; they are until-we-can-do-better items. At Goodwill I've found awesome old dressers that are 50 years old. Not gonna happen with one from Ikea.

But today my mission was clear: Pick up a catalogue and buy a metal Helmer drawer unit. I've got a grey one under my desk, holding small office supplies. I wanted another one for the closet, to hold my costume jewellery. I borrowed the idea from a segment on *The Nate Berkus Show*. A fashion stylist showed off her custom closet design and how she stored all her baubles in drawers. What an incredible way to see and select just the right necklace or bracelet! Naturally, I had to modify (and downsize) the idea.

While there, I strolled through the room displays, because they recharge my imagination and creativity if I'm receptive enough to seeing. Eventually Alex, a bigger and more expensive drawer set than I'd originally planned to buy, came home with me after a strapping young man hoisted it into my car. I also bought two Komplement hangers to hold my growing scarf collection. By looping the scarves through the 28 rings you can see all of them at once in not much more space than a hanger takes.

I spent a few hours assembling Alex, and it wasn't so bad. Maybe it's the assembler's state of mind or degree of motivation. In the time I would have spent convincing Roy to do it, I had it done. Next I added drawer liners from the dollar store.

The best part was transferring my jewellery from zip-lock bags into the six drawers. For several years I've had my necklaces sorted by colour families. That idea, too, was borrowed.

Learning from others is good. In fact something borrowed can turn out to be something awesome, from where I sit.

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

## THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



Stellan Skarsgård in *A Somewhat Gentle Man*.

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

**Film:** *A Somewhat Gentle Man* (2010)

**Director:** Hans Petter Moland

**Cast:** Stellan Skarsgård, Bjørn Floberg, Gard B. Eidsvold, Jorunn Kjellsby, Jannike Kruse, Aksel Hennie

**Genre:** Art House/International/Comedy

**Honour Among Thieves (in a Manner of Speaking)**

*"Slowly and with suffering, I have reconquered through slavery my feeling of the dignity of being human, a feeling that this time did not reside in anything external, and was always accompanied by the consciousness that I had no right to anything, that each instant free from suffering and humiliations was to be received as a grace, as the simple result of favorable luck."*

Simone Weil

Ulrik leaves a 12-year prison stint with a few uplifting words from the warden and a look of resolve. He walks into the arms of his former crime boss and a long-anticipated assignment to wipe out the rat who got him arrested. He owes this to his boss because the man has been—allegedly—supporting his wife and son for him while he's been in jail and because the boss demands vengeance on the man who put away his best henchman.

Like most felons, Ulrik and his partners in crime have a rigid moral code: might makes right, informants and wife beaters deserve to die, and you broke it, you bought it.

When you start watching it you wonder why this film is billed as a comedy. The comedic segments are not clearly marked off as such with the kinds of cues we've come to expect of American films, a lack which somehow renders the humour even more sardonic. For example, over and again we find the aging Ulrik in the throes of a loveless and quite bestial carnal act with some needy but emotionally closed women, one of whom brays like a she-ass in heat. There's no lead-in, no anticipatory tenor sax—it just happens.

To some extent Ulrik is a kind of avatar of divine justice, which in the film world means the things the viewer—pacifist or no—would like to see happen to the wicked. But this is one of the purposes of film—to allow us to witness scenes of brutality we openly condemn but secretly long for.

There is, for example, a hilarious scene in which the receptionist at the garage where Ulrik works receives a visit from her abusive ex-husband. Ulrik drags him outside, gently informs him that a man must never hit a child or a woman, and proceeds to pound the snot out of him.

He then quietly instructs the wife beater to hail himself a cab and head for the hospital, where he will report that he fell down the stairs. The man stumbles submissively out to the road—bleeding, swinging a broken arm—and bleats, “Taxi!” repeatedly as cabs speed past him, refusing to slow down for such a sorry spectacle.

Is it really so wrong to laugh helplessly at scenes like this?

A couple of things have softened and humanized Ulrik on his hero’s journey: a kindly Sven has decided to hire him as a mechanic, enabling him to make an honest living and to practice being responsible, and his son’s girlfriend is pregnant.

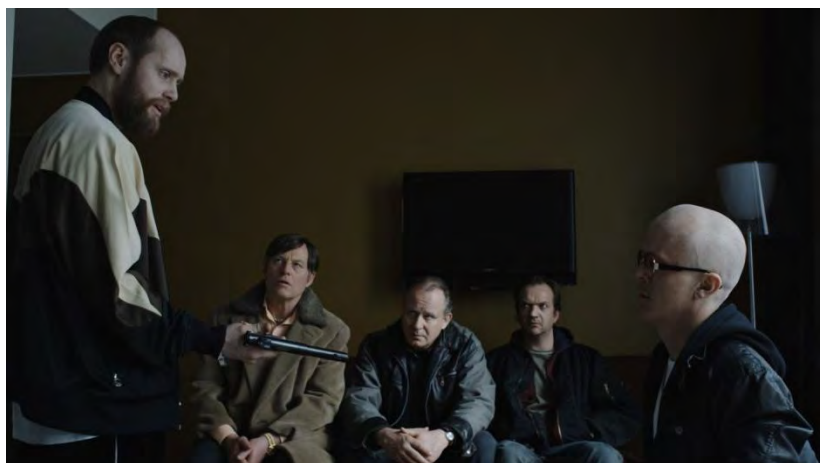
Ulrik is clearly making an effort to consciously open himself to grace, which comes flooding in on him just as M. Scott Peck said it would. The women in his life start becoming warmer and more loving and romantic, and Ulrik himself starts feeling good about life, smiling more, dressing better, being sweet to people, and seeking opportunities to do good.

But repentance doesn’t always hasten forgiveness, and when forgiveness doesn’t come one sometimes feels sorely compelled to seek consolation in the very sins of which one has repented.

In typical ex-con stories the former inmate makes an effort, gets a couple of second chances, and eventually gets shot down and ends up back in the clink. This one has the same up and down quality but there’s a surprisingly atypical ending that makes it worthy of the comedy category, in the classical as well as the humorous sense.

This is truly a film of calibre, with a muted-tone-sparse-dialogue aesthetic that puts it up there with some of the Coen Brothers’ dark comedies. With all the Patsy Kline on the radio, ugly industrial architecture, and meat and potatoes, it will even remind North Americans of home.

*A Somewhat Gentle Man* fulfills six of the Mindful Bard’s criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it is about attainment of the true self; 3) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 4) it gives me tools of compassion, enabling me to respond with compassion and efficacy to the suffering around me; 5) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; and 6) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.



**Aksel Hennie, Bjørn Floberg, Stellan Skarsgård, Gard B. Eidsvold, Knut Jørgen Skaro in *A Somewhat Gentle Man*.**

*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.*





## Online Afterlife

Quick, what do William Shakespeare and Jane Austen have in common? Besides remaining wildly popular, both authors died well over a century ago—and that means their works are now in the public domain. Most writers leave clear instructions for their literary legacy, but what will become of yours? Who will control the musings in your online profiles when you one day join William and Jane in the afterlife?

From the serious to the silly, your blogs and status updates can form a surprisingly large written record. Most of us haven't given any thought to what will happen to that record when we die. Will one family member memorialize our Facebook profile, while another wants to delete it? And what do various policies say about other people's profiles that mention you?

Even if you haven't thought about those questions, plenty of others have. In fact, the importance of these new digital dilemmas has given rise to the creation of Digital Death Day, held each May since 2010. The Digital Death Day [site](#) and conferences discuss, and try to find answers to, this main issue: Where does your data go when you die?

Among the questions the organizers ask are these: How can I inform my online friends of my death and share with them my final messages? How can I be sure that big companies (like Google, Facebook, Yahoo, and Microsoft) will respect my wishes? What are the policies for email accounts and social websites when you die?

One of the people talking about those questions is Adele McAlear, a consultant based in Montreal. She runs a site called [Death and Digital Legacy](#), and her expertise has been featured in print and online media around the world, from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Kulturaustausch*, a "respected German-language journal for international cultural perspectives."

A quick look at her blog posts shows just how global these concerns have become. In Nebraska, lawmakers have proposed legislation "to allow next of kin to control digital accounts after a user has passed away." (Several other states, including Idaho and Connecticut, already have similar legislation.) And in Vancouver, long-time blogger (among many talents) Derek K. Miller prepared a final post for his Penmachine blog—one that was posted only after his death in 2011.

Some solutions can already be found on social media sites themselves. Google has a fairly straightforward [policy](#) titled "Accessing a deceased person's mail" (you've got to give them credit for making that easily searchable). Facebook has a form that lets people report a deceased person's profile, and Twitter's Help Center now has a policy to deactivate a deceased user's account. Still, the legal questions surrounding who has the authority to do so can remain frustratingly murky.

Don't want to bother reading all that fine print? It won't solve the problem of who owns your posts, but a Facebook app called If I Die allows you to create your final status update, then choose three trusted friends who will notify Facebook upon your death—and arrange for your final update to be posted.

Still other folks are showing us that the question of written records is only the tip of the digital legacy iceberg. A TED Talk by Adam Ostrow, ["After Your Final Status Update,"](#) not only asks the above questions but takes things even further. As Ostrow points out, it may soon become possible "for our digital personas to continue to interact in the real world long after we're gone."

In his TED clip, he poses that very real possibility: MIT's media lab is working on robots that, more and more, can interact like humans. "But what if," he asks, "those robots were able to interact based on the unique characteristics of a specific person, based on the hundreds of thousands of pieces of content that that person produces in our lifetime?" When such robots become as common as, say, smart phones are today, will the friend or relative who owns your digital legacy be able to feed that data into a digital you?

One experiment in this vein is a Twitter app called [That Can Be My Next Tweet!](#) The app analyzes a person's entire history of Tweets, then creates new Tweets based on their combined stream. You can try it on the site by typing in your Twitter name; the results range from the comical to the surprisingly coherent.

Though these are purely 21<sup>st</sup>-century questions, I can't help wondering what the Bard would think of his words being randomly mashed together in a posthumous Twitter stream. To be, or not to be, indeed.

*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

## March Winds

**In order to get to those beautiful May flowers, we need to suffer through April showers—and March winds. This week's links introduce the basics of the world of winds and winds of the world.**

### Patterns

We know that wind patterns form around the globe, and satellite photos of the earth show us that these patterns take the form of complicated swirls. In this video clip, a professor performs an experiment to visually demonstrate how the heat differences between the poles and the equator combine with the earth's spin to create the wind patterns that affect us every day.

### High Speed

Weather reports usually give forecasted wind speed in kilometres per hour. But what exactly does that number mean for your weekend plans? The Beaufort Scale uses numbers to estimate wind speed "just by looking about," as this excellent comic strip explains. Click the link a graphic representation of each Beaufort level.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Where There's Smoke

Last year, forest fires devastated land, buildings, and even towns. Now scientists fear that climate change means the fire situation will worsen in the future.

As *The Globe and Mail* reports, experts believe that wildfires will soon “double in number.” And it isn’t limited to drier climates; “the northwest could be hit the hardest, with some projections saying British Columbia and Alaska will have five or six times as many fires.”

Scientists blame the trend on global warming. “A warmer world’s going to see more fires,” Dr. Mike Flannigan, a professor of renewable resources at the University Alberta, told reporters.

Experts are also concerned that the increase in number of wildfires will be accompanied by an increase in the intensity of the blazes, “with many [fires] being too big and too hot to stop using traditional fire fighting methods.”

This will make fire management more challenging even for modern agencies, who will be unable to fight fires head on or by using aerial suppression. It’s particularly of concern in other countries, where fire fighting methods may be less developed. “The risk to life and infrastructure is only going to increase under climate change,” Dr. Flannigan told reporters.

### Around the World: Stay Frosty

Move over, futuristic labs: the ancient world had cryogenics all figured out. So say scientists after finding 30,000-year-old seeds and fruit perfectly preserved in ice.

As *The Globe and Mail* reports, scientists have been able to successfully regenerate a plant from “fruit tissues” found in a “burrow . . . that had been stuck in the Siberian permafrost for over 30,000 years.”

The regenerated plant is “fertile, producing white flowers and viable seeds.”

Burrows like the one where the tissues were found are “often totally filled with ice, making any water infiltration impossible—creating a natural freezing chamber fully isolated from the surface.”

Scientists hope to resurrect, other ancient plant species buried in the permafrost, which one researcher told reporters makes “a natural cryobank.” In the future they hope to discovered well-preserved animal tissue as well.

**AUSU UPDATE: FEBRUARY 2012****Bethany Tynes, President****ELECTIONS ARE HERE!**

Want to get involved with your fellow AU students? Gain valuable experience while still serving others? Then AUSU Council might be the place for you! AUSU holds elections every two years to fill nine positions on Council. These nine councillors later select from among themselves an executive group of three (President, VP External, and VP Finance), and this executive is elected annually. This year, nominations will be accepted February 6th-20th, followed by which campaigning will occur February 21st-March 2nd, and voting March 3rd-6th. Elections (including campaigning and voting) take place entirely online, so you can participate from virtually anywhere in the world.

**What is Council and what's required?**

AUSU exists to serve the undergraduate students of Athabasca University. Some services are directly tangible to students (such as our handbook/planners, mailed free to students on request), while others are important, but more behind-the-scenes (such as meeting with the University to voice student concerns). Council is the body which directs and oversees these efforts, often by creating policies which are then carried out by the executive group and staff. Councillors help generate ideas and policies, and shouldn't be confused with counsellors—councillors do not provide counselling.

Councillors work by phone and email, and need to be able to devote about 2-5 hours per week to Council work. Council meetings occur by teleconference about once a month, and these meetings are scheduled at the best possible time for the majority of the group. So while all councillors have input into our meeting times, they must also be able to be flexible in the event that not everyone's wishes can be accommodated. Similarly, we welcome councillors from all over the world (we've recently had councillors in the Netherlands and Korea, as well as across Canada, participate!) but all councillors should be aware of time zone differences, and how this could affect meeting times in their location.

Councillors need access to reliable Internet and phone connections. We encourage councillors to use land lines while on teleconference, as this can help reduce background noise, but cell phones may be used if the sound quality is very clear. If you try to use a cell phone and we can't hear you, though, you'll need to make other arrangements. We also urge councillors not to drive during meetings, and to be at their computer if possible so that they can easily refer to meeting documents.

Councillors should also have a secure, reliable computer, and be willing to install some necessary software, including genuine Microsoft Office and Excel (if you don't have these, we can help you get them, but Open Office alternatives do not provide adequate functionality for Council work). Councillors must also maintain the confidentiality of their computer and files, so if the computer is shared, councillors should be prepared to create their own password-protected account.



### What do current Councillors have to say?

"I truly enjoyed the sense of community on AUSU. I feel as though I was part of something bigger from interacting with other students, and other members of the AU community. I always got the sense that the work I was doing with AUSU was positively contributing to other students' experiences within the University. While students might not always be able to see the results immediately, AUSU is involved in many of the positive changes at AU. Sometimes it is something as simple as suggesting changes to the wording of service standards on the AU . . . website, while other times it can be something more complex, such as opposing the raising of tuition."

"It is a lot of work; it is challenging to work with different personalities and cultures through mostly email (and never face to face). It is also fun and a really great experience."

"I'd like to emphasize the importance of having passion behind what you do. Passion and determination to dream and accomplish what you set out for yourselves to achieve . . . Being on council is not nearly as easy as it may seem. It's tremendously important to have enough time in your schedule to devote to what is required of you. So before you put your name forward make sure that you take a good look [at] what's going on in your life, as two years is a big commitment. "

"I hope that the next Council will continue to foster positive relationships with AU, as well as continue to improve the services it offers to its student members. Taking the next step in a major website overhaul, as well as continuing to mail regular newsletters, and the newly implemented e-newsletter would all be services that would add benefit to AUSU members."

"I have enjoyed meeting the other councillors, getting to know them, and developing relationships with them all. I also . . . love the democratic process we use for working with the other councillors through a problem or issue. While the conversations we have are varied and sometimes involve disagreement, I enjoy the mix of opinions and viewpoints. I especially look forward to the occasional comment or suggestion made by a councillor that brings up a side of an issue that I hadn't considered, opening up my eyes and broadening my experience overall."

"Being on council is a great experience. Not only is it fun and interesting, it offers a personal experience, an opportunity to communicate with fellow students . . . For those who make it onto the next Council, remember to be patient and avoid feeling overwhelmed. While there is a learning curve, it doesn't take too long to feel welcome and a part of an interesting and important process."

### Want to know more?

For all the latest information on elections, and how you can self-nominate for our elections, visit our [website](#)!

*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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## THE VOICE

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