

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 36 2012-09-21

### To E-read? That Is the Question

Disappearing textbooks

### Sneezes & Studies

Healthy school year

### Le Havre

Where angels tread

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



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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indicate if we may publish your letter.



## SO YOU WANT TO BE A BETTER WRITER

Maxie van Roye

## Writer's Expiration



Have you ever sat down in front of a blank page, put your fingers to the keys, and then . . . nothing? Of course you have. Writer's block is so ubiquitous that it's become late-night entertainment show fodder. But all the *SNL* skits in the world aren't going to do you much good when there's a deadline around the corner and your brain won't push past the opening line.

What about when you've got a good thing going already, but get stuck partway through? The 70+ half-finished drafts (gulp) in my blogging folder suggest that this is a bigger problem—at least for me. I'll be cruising along, typing however many words a minute my kinda-sorta-but-not-really ten-finger typing can put on the page. Then there will be a blip in my creativity stream and I'll waste time and altitude trying to sort out which word would be the best choice or how to end that paragraph.

Inevitably I'll become so stuck that I'll either spend twice as long as necessary on the written piece or I'll get up and walk away—but never come back.

The solution to both problems is this: *just write something*. That sounds simple, but of course it's one of those things that are a lot more difficult in practice.

Why? One of our problems is that we often self-edit as we write. Yet this is one thing that most creativity experts will warn us against, since it slows down and even interrupts our thought process. It's impossible to keep a smooth flow of words and ideas if we're constantly reviewing and picking at what we just put down on the page. Sure, it's not perfect—but it's not supposed to be, not yet.

Letting thoughts flow without worrying about perfection is a hard habit to establish, but it's necessary if we want to be productive writers. When I find myself falling into a pattern of editing as I go, I have to force myself to move ahead, even if I can't think of the perfect word. I'll put in a note ("INSERT RANDOM WORD HERE") or finish a sentence with "BLAHBLAHBLAH," highlight the issue, and move on. The highlighting's important so that I don't miss the problem on my second go-around.

Then I work time into my schedule to come back for a second look, and invariably the solution to the problem will jump out at me. If I'd tried to solve it the preceding day, it would have taken me hours.

Prolific writing is not a guarantee of good writing, but steady writing is the only way you'll practice enough to get anywhere near perfect. And making a habit out of a second edit is a good idea even if you didn't experience writer's block, since it gives an additional opportunity to catch errors and polish your work. By writing first and editing later you can stave off writer's block and produce a more polished bit of writing.

Now that's something to write home about!

## HEALTH MATTERS

Katie D'Souza

### Back-to-School Health

As the cooler weather starts creeping around, it's not uncommon to get the sniffles—or a full-on cold or even the flu. And with the kids starting school and daycare, the predisposition toward illness escalates with this whole new onslaught of germs. No wonder many parents experience change-of-season/start-of-school anxiety! Here are some tips to help your family stay well this season.

#### *Bundle Up*

Why does a change in outdoor temperature make us more susceptible to illness? Traditional Chinese medicine offers the answer: our bodies need to maintain a balanced temperature for health. A “cold” is called this because, in Chinese medicine, it's believed to usually result as an exposure to cold. This can refer to cold temperatures in general, but more often is associated with a chill wind blowing, especially around the neck and head.

So as the weather changes, be sure to bundle up! In fact, during the fall it's better for your child to be a little too warm in a sweater than too chilled without one. And if it's windy, make sure that the head is covered with a hat or hood.

#### *Eat Well*

You usually can't expect—or even bribe—your offspring into eating immune-boosting “change of season” soup, a traditional Chinese medicine soup made with broth, vegetables, and immune-boosting roots. However, there are some diet changes you can institute more easily.

The most obvious is to reduce the kids' consumption of refined sugar. Did you know that one teaspoon of sugar (the amount that's in an oatmeal cookie or a single chocolate mint) can lower immunity for up to five hours? If your children are craving sweets in their diet, choose fruits (dried, fresh, or canned) instead.

Secondly, how many fruits and vegetables is your child actually consuming? Studies show that adequate fruit and vegetable intake helps maintain a healthy white blood cell count. Nutritional experts recommend a minimum of five servings daily.

Additionally, be aware of any food allergies or sensitivities your child may have. Now is not the time to consume these foods. Your child's body is already under stress with the change of season, and adding a known allergen/sensitive item into her diet increases this stress. Other times of the year may allow limited “cheating,” depending on the nature of the sensitivity, but not now.





## Take Your Sunshine

Another way to make sure your child's immunity is up to par is to supplement with vitamin D. Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that's essential in maintaining healthy natural killer cells (among other things). Although vitamin D is usually made by our bodies in the summer during full sun exposure, the sun's rays aren't direct enough in the fall to allow for sufficient vitamin D production. This means that during the colder seasons, vitamin D supplementation is necessary. In fact, lack of supplementation is related to the drop in immunity that seems to coincide with the cooler months.

I recommend that children consume 1,000 IU vitamin D per day. Use the D3 form of vitamin D (read the label); this is the form most easily absorbed. If you have a picky eater or a supertaster, there are easy-to-administer products available. One brand even offers 1,000 IU of vitamin D3 in just a single small drop.

## And If You Do . . .

Although the above tips can't, of course, guarantee complete wellness throughout the cooler months, they can definitely help reduce the frequency of illness in your household. However, if your children do fall sick, there are some natural options to help them regain their health more speedily.

Vitamin C helps white blood cell activity, especially when illness occurs. Vitamin C crystals are an easy way to administer liquid vitamin C to children, although watch the crystals' sugar content (it varies by brand). The dose depends on the child's age; up to 500 mg for children ages two through ten is common.

Another virus-busting supplement is dark purple elderberry liquid; there have been many studies showing its efficacy in reducing severity and the duration of colds and the flu.

The fall can mean the onslaught of germ season, but it doesn't need to be. Take care of yourself and your family, stay warm, think positive, take vitamin D, and watch your diet. This fall and winter may be your healthiest yet!

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

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

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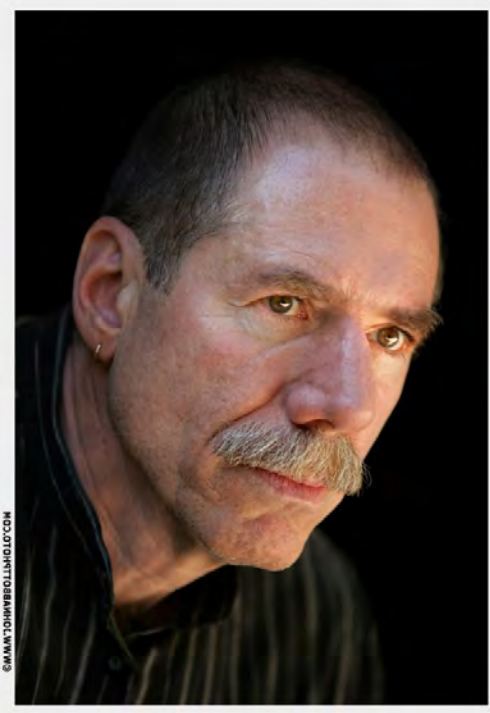
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## IN CONVERSATION

Wanda Waterman



Giacomo Gates. Photo: John Abbott.

## Giacomo Gates, Part II

Giacomo Gates is a baritone chanteur known for his engaging *vocalese*, a form made famous by Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross, among others. *Vocalese* is composed by fitting new lyrics to jazz tunes and even to fast, complex instrumental solos. (Read the Voice [review](#) of his latest album, *The Revolution Will Be Jazz: The Songs of Gil Scott-Heron*.) Recently, Wanda Waterman was able to hear him sing at Blackstone's in Laconia, New Hampshire, as part of the New Hampshire Jazz performances. (See the first part of this article [here](#).)

During the intermission Giacomo whispers, almost apologetically, "I can't do the songs from *The Revolution Will be Jazz* here. They just wouldn't go over well." (A subtle gander around at the trust fund and tax shelter crowd doesn't inspire dissent.) He does, however, offer to do a song from his upcoming album of Miles Davis tunes.

## When the Jazz Man's Testifyin' . . .

Giacomo's voice is as mellifluous as honey on buttered toast, his improvisation subtle but original. We usually assume that this good a voice would have to be the product of years of intense training, but Giacomo seems simply to have been gifted with a natural affinity for jazz.

"I always had an interest in jazz music specifically; it was part of my life, though I never pursued it as a vocation," he says. "I didn't one day 'decide' to become a jazz singer—that's madness. I was connected to the music since I was a kid. I knew the language."

## How it All Started

"One year, while living in Fairbanks, I attended a festival that presented a two-week vocal workshop. Several instructors, among them Grover Sales, encouraged me. Sales said, 'You'll never get heard up here!' 'I'm not tryin' to get heard,' I told him. 'I live here.'"

*"We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."*

*Joseph Campbell*

After almost 20 years of construction work, Giacomo decided to move back to New York to take advantage of the music scene that thrived in the city—and in the surrounding area—and to launch a musical career:

"I tried to make some noise first locally, then regionally. I got my first recording, *Blue Skies*, done by DMP Records, and that helped me to get around more and to get some national work."

## Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

"I got a great education from recordings and I saw and heard (and sat in with) some of the best of the best, including Miles, The Basie Band with Basie, Joe Williams, Sarah Vaughn, Carmen McRae, Jon Hendricks & Company, Dizzy, Dexter Gordon, Frank Foster, Lou Donaldson, Billy Mitchell, Buddy Tate, Steve Allen, Max Roach, Billy Taylor, Mose Allison, Sheila Jordan, Mark Murphy, Walter Bishop Jr., along with performers of other kinds of top-notch music like James Brown, Jimi Hendrix, Al Jarreau, The Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, and many more."

*"A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself."*

*Abraham Maslow*

### "The Language, the Hipsters, the Cats and Chicks"

Giacomo's conversation is inspired by the era in which the notion of "cool" was first distilled, his lingo liberally peppered with words like "dig," "hip," and "baby." This makes his on-stage patter almost as delightful as the songs it frames.

"A very strong influence for me was Grover Sales, who was connected to the music and to people like Lenny Bruce, Lord Buckley, 'Professor' Irwin Corey, and Jonathan Winters," Gates says. "I dug the scene that the music came from—the clubs, the clothes, the era, the language, the hipsters, the cats and chicks!"

"Regarding *The Revolution Will Be Jazz* . . . I was hip to Gil when he landed on the scene, and to The Last Poets. The planet was a different place in the late '60s and early '70's.

"When I was approached to sing Gil's songs, I listened to over 40 tunes that were presented to me and chose the ones that I felt I could sing honestly. Some were funny, some weren't, some were about the music, some were about the messed-up world we live in, and some were about the beautiful world we live in. Gil had a lot to say that was ahead of its time and valid. I grew up in an inner city, on the Northeast corridor, so I could relate. I had fun with the music and the lyrics. The album was number one for six weeks on National Jazz Radio and got lots of good ink."

### What's Next?

"On creativity, there's so much music already written. I have so many books of music and recordings I'll never have the time to listen and look at everything, and one thing leads to another. There's not enough time. What to do next is not an issue."



Giacomo Gates at Dizzy's. Photo: Frank Stewart.



## WHEN MEN GO FEMINIST

Wanda Waterman

## ~WHEN MEN GO FEMINIST~



YOU'RE SAYING NO TO ME BECAUSE THERE'S A PART OF YOU THAT'S JUST NOT LIBERATED. LET ME HELP.



I THINK SHEENA OF THE JUNGLE IS A GREAT ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN AND THAT IF WOMEN ACTED AND DRESSED LIKE HER THEY'D BE A LOT MORE EQUAL. I'M JUST SAYING.



YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK? WHY TIE YOURSELF DOWN? I THOUGHT YOU GIRLS WANTED TO BE FREE!



THE LILITH FAIR IS, LIKE, THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY YEAR. I LOVE SEEING ALL THOSE TOPLESS—UH, ZEALOUS, UNINHIBITED WOMEN WAVING THEIR ARMS AROUND.



I THINK IT'S GREAT SEEING WOMEN GET OUT THERE IN THE BUSINESS WORLD AND GIVE IT THEIR ALL. IT'S LIKE WATCHING THE PARALYMPICS.



A WOMAN WITH SELF-ESTEEM DOESN'T MIND ASKING A MAN FOR HELP WITH ALL THE THINGS SHE CAN'T DO BY HER OWN LITTLE SELF.

~WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY WANDA WATERMAN WITH THE CREATIVE INPUT OF BEN WATERMAN



## Learning by Demand

From the very first day you stepped into kindergarten, you probably noticed that school is all about rules. Rules for behaviour, rules for lessons. Rules about what you have to read. Now, there are even rules about *how* to read, with some universities insisting on e-textbooks over paper. Has the education rule book gone too far?

So far the shift is limited to a handful of universities in the United States. But the incentive behind it is financial and, since money has a way of ruling decisions, it's a safe bet that this trend will spread.

There are several obvious benefits to e-textbooks. Some of those pluses apply to e-books in general, but others are specific to school texts. For starters, there can be bulk cost savings. As this *USA Today* article [notes](#), the e-textbook program at Indiana University lets the school negotiate far lower prices with

publishers. How much lower? Some texts can cost “about half as much as . . . anywhere else.” That can translate to a huge difference in the overall price of a degree.

E-texts also mean that students don't have to lug heavy books around campus—or find places to store them in small dorms or other shared housing. And since e-textbooks can easily be updated to stay current (unlike paper texts), students will be studying the latest information in their field. Knowing that a student is getting the latest and greatest version can ease the pain of paying as much as \$150 for a single textbook.

All those pluses, though, don't really matter if e-textbooks undermine the very reason students go to school in the first place: to learn. So far, research shows that when it comes to understanding and retaining information, e-textbooks just don't make the grade.

It's one thing to read an e-book or magazine for pleasure. We don't need to remember the plot or characters' names once we reach the end. On the Internet, we can look up travel details or shopping sites, but most of that information is in brief, compact form—unlike an engineering or English textbook.

Long-form text that needs to be understood and retained requires a different style of reading altogether, and paper is still the form best suited to that. As fancy as e-book options may get, with interactivity, online links, and the ability to highlight or make notes in the text, none of that will matter if students simply can't absorb the information as well as they can with a paper book.

The difference seems to lie in the physical nature of print books. Not the smell or feel of them, but the geography of them. The way a reader always knows exactly where they are in the landscape of the text;

how close to the beginning or end, and how much room a particular concept or idea takes up within the entire text.

In a *Toronto Star* [article](#), Daniel Wigdor, a computer science professor at U of T, notes that it's the "spatial memory" that paper books provide that sets them apart from using an e-reader. E-texts don't provide the same types of physical cues that let readers orient themselves within the text, and "endlessly scrolling through pages can be overwhelming, distracting and slow." That lack of spatial grounding can be even worse when you're ploughing through a 500-page science textbook.

The same article reports on the findings of a UK study in which researchers found that "participants . . . needed 'repeated exposure and rehearsal' of on-screen material in order to grasp the same information."

It's understandable that universities want to lower costs, especially when it comes to textbooks. But cost-cutting efforts shouldn't come at the expense of one of the most fundamental tools in the learning experience. In some pilot programs, like the one at Indiana University, students don't have a choice. The cost for their e-textbooks comes straight from their bursar accounts.

Since it's not uncommon for students to end up printing large sections of those e-texts themselves, the cost of ink and paper can quickly eat up (or exceed) any cost savings, especially when the price difference between paper and digital texts isn't that large.

There are many, many benefits to e-books. But it's a mistake to assume that they translate to all types of texts in every environment. There may come a day when today's toddlers, raised on e-books and kid-friendly apps, converge on campuses with nary a paper book in sight. Until then, though, students should have a choice in the way they want to learn.



*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!).*

## GREEN LIGHT

It's sad, but true: the natural beauty of waterways is often marred by litter tossed by careless beachgoers. And not only is it unattractive, but it's also dangerous to the wildlife who inhabit the coastal and lakeside areas.

The good news is that it's easy to make a difference. Between September 15 and 23 you can participate in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, a cross-country series of events that allow Canadians to "work together to help clean up a specific area at one of their local waterways." Check the [website](#) to find a cleanup site near you—or coordinate your own. Let's take some responsibility for our natural heritage!



## THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



Image ©Sputnik Oy.

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

Film: Le Havre (Janus Films 2011)

Writer/Director/Producer: Aki Kaurismäki

Cast: André Wilms, Kati Outinen, Jean-Pierre Darroussin, Blondin Miguel

*"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."*

Hebrews 13:2 (NIV)

## God Smiles on Port City Ghetto Saints

Marcel's wife, Arletty, is in the hospital to undergo a series of cancer treatments. On his way home Marcel is stopped by the grocer, who just the day before had read him the riot act for not paying his bill.

Today the grocer, knowing about his wife, tells Marcel he has some

groceries that are going bad. He'd like Marcel to take them off his hands, if he wouldn't mind. He then proceeds to pull items off the nearby shelves and load up a box with canned goods and dried beans.

It's the sort of random act of kindness Marcel has come to expect and is just as ready to dole out. When he accidentally meets Idrissa, a boy refugee from sub-Saharan Africa, it never occurs to him to deny the boy's needs (though his concern for his wife would certainly give him an excuse to look the other way).

Marcel and Arletty have lived for years in a bleak little house on a bleak street in a bleak neighbourhood in the fishermen's quarter of the French port city, Le Havre. The neighbourhood is populated with the kind of dishevelled, good-hearted people who have little but who always find things to share, folk whose religion is humility and compassion. Happy the individuals who fall into such hands in their hour of need.

Marcel himself is a former Paris bohemian who now shines shoes for a living, a singular mission considering the number of rubber boots and running shoes that keep crossing his line of vision. Far from feeling humiliated, he takes pride in how this trade affirms, as he says, the Sermon on the Mount.



Above: Marcel Marx (André Wilms) and Arletty (Kati Outinen). Photographer: Marja-Leena Hukkanen. Image ©Sputnik Oy.



When he dresses up he looks quite handsome and distinguished and easily fools officials into thinking he's of a higher station. In one scene he's trying to get some information about Idrissa's family from an anal-retentive bureaucrat:

*OFFICIAL: His brother? Are you mocking me?*

*MARX: I'm the family albino. And unluckily for you, a journalist and a lawyer. Know what the law says about discrimination based on skin colour?*

*OFFICIAL: I never—*

*MARX: [palm raised] Don't make it worse. [patting coat pocket] I recorded everything.*

Arletty has devoted her life to the kind and gentle Marcel. Though she appears cold, we see her diligently perform many little tasks to make his life easier, even shining his shoes so that he, the shoe shiner, won't have to do it himself. We learn that her first husband was abusive, which may explain the frozen visage, common to those with PTSD, that comprises her strange composure.

Idrissa, the young refugee, is a wonderful character who plays straight man to the crude flamboyance of the Le Havre locals. This is actor Blondin Miguel's movie debut, and it's a phenomenal one; his gentle dignity and thoughtful expression are transcendent. He seems like an angel sent to test these folk, his ultimate blessing dependent on the number and quality of their acts of mercy.

The tenderness with which writer-director Kaurismäki presents these people is a far cry from the racist aspersions we're used to hearing against the French, but it seems that it's the French bourgeoisie and upper classes that are most often found guilty of xenophobia and exclusivity. Kaurismäki has said he can't write for the middle and upper classes—he simply wouldn't know what they'd have to say.

Is he wearing rose-coloured glasses? Maybe; those of us who've grown up among the working poor know there's no dearth of bigotry, violence, and apathy among them, but there's normally much less hypocrisy

here than in the higher castes. And we're all familiar with the statistics that show that the lower the income, the higher the percentage of that income that's given to those even needier.

Kaurismäki loves to include musical performances in his films, and this one features Le Havre rhythm and blues icon Roberto Piazza (also known as Little Bob), playing himself. Other musical references in the film point to the international network of African musical influences that inspire us today. At the refugee centre, an African man in a *dashiki* is plucking a *sintir*. Later we see Idrissa listening, mesmerized, to a Robert Johnson record on



Above: Marcel Marx (André Wilms) and Idrissa (Blondin Miguel). Photographer: Marja-Leena Hukkanen. Image ©Sputnik Oy.

Marcel's battered old phonograph. The still rapture of this victim of political violence, on a quest to find his mother, is heart-rending.

*Le Havre* manifests seven of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda; 3) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 4) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation; 5) it displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering; 6) it renews my enthusiasm for positive social action; and 7) it makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomenon, making living a unique opportunity.

*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.*

## CLICK OF THE WRIST

## FISCAL FUN

**Accountants and other financial types are scrambling; the end of fiscal year 2012 is coming up fast. But thinking about money doesn't need to be stressful or confusing. This week's links bring a bit of levity into the world of bills and coins.**

### Tracking Willy

"'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands," Shakespeare wrote about the contents of his purse. But if you've ever pondered the practical side of the Bard's words, you might have wondered where exactly your money goes. "Where's Willy?" is a website which allows you to track the path of paper currency (using serial numbers); it's a fascinating look at how money passes from one side of the country to the other!

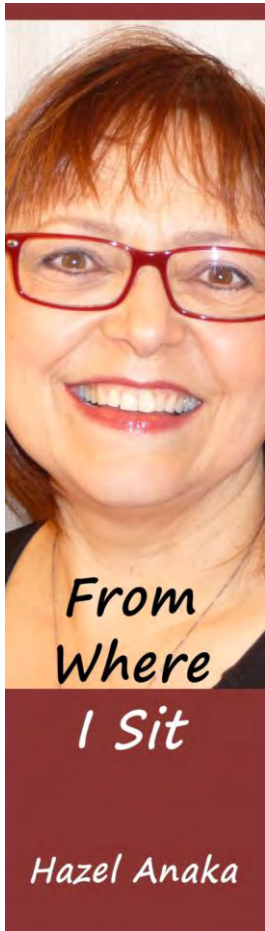
### No Ticket

One man decided to get creative when paying a traffic fine; he spent "six hours making 137 origami pigs" out of dollar bills, he told reporters. Then he brought them in to municipal court, with hilarious results. Watch the video from his hidden pocket camera!

### Money Study

You may already know that numismatics is the study of money and currency. But did you ever want to dig a little further beyond the basics? The Royal Canadian Numismatic Association offers a two-part correspondence course that covers everything from history to minting to grading and collecting to Canadian Tire money (yes, really!).





## Making the Right Choices

Students of human behaviour have long known what motivates us. Most of us will do more to avoid pain than to gain pleasure. We'll quit smoking when we've got lung cancer rather than doing it to have sweeter breath or more lung capacity and money. We'll lose weight as a prerequisite for knee replacement surgery, not so we can dance the night away. We'll endure the hell of divorce rather than go to couple's therapy to save our marriage.

Maybe those are extreme examples. But how about these smaller pleasure-pain choices: Declutter for aesthetics versus spending weeks of our lives looking for keys and unpaid bills. File our taxes early versus paying penalties and interest when we procrastinate. Get free floss and a toothbrush at our annual checkup versus extraction, root canal, and fillings when we stay away for years.

Somehow we are conditioned to take the path of least resistance, to choose the easy over the hard. We believe the laws of the universe don't apply to us. We live in denial of the realities of our financial circumstances and the state of our health. We've forgotten or chosen to ignore the moral of Aesop's fable about the ant and the grasshopper. The grasshopper fritters away his summer having fun while the ant is toiling away storing food for the winter. When the grasshopper faces starvation, he sees the pain of his chosen behaviour.

The deadbeat grasshopper is just like the lazy farm animals in the Little Red Hen folk story. The animals refuse to help the hen plant, thresh, harvest, and bake the bread. Then, of course, they are shut out of sharing the rewards she reaps from her efforts.

Pain, when we finally encounter it, has a way of grabbing our attention. At that point we either learn the implicit lesson or look for someone or something to blame. Of course, doing the latter ensures that the pain will continue to repeat itself until we learn said lesson.

Occasionally some of us turn pain into a mega-hit and earn worldwide acclaim. Here I'm thinking of virtually any song from Adele's *21* album. Or Gotye's "Somebody That I Used to Know." Adele's phenomenal success is borne of a broken heart and betrayal of love. Anyone who's experienced the same heartache can identify with the truth of her lyrics and the powerful emotion behind her masterful delivery. When I asked the girl at HMV when Adele's next album would appear, the quick answer was 10 years. What? *She's in a happy relationship, so she doesn't have any material* was the flip reply.

That got me thinking. We do tend to focus more on our hurts than on our blessings; our pain versus our pleasure. Oh sure, there are songs celebrating precious love, but are they chart-toppers?

The moral of this story is to avoid pain by making the right choice or learn from it if you can't escape it. Or else get really good at songwriting, from where I sit.

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

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



### At Home: Heart Watch

Most long-distance runners appear healthy and fit, with stamina to spare. But for some, heart problems are silent killers: sometimes tragedy will strike and a marathoner will drop dead in the middle of a race. A group of Ontario doctors is trying a new method to research the effect of long-distance running on cardiac activity.

As the CBC reports, several runners “will wear portable heart monitors during a marathon” in southern Ontario later this month. The monitor, called a cardiphone, “combines heart monitoring and cellphone technology” and will transmit data back to a group of doctors at the Windsor Cardiac Centre.

According to cardiologists, extreme athletes “could be doing long-term damage to their hearts”; this is particularly a problem for those in their mid-40s and older. The cardiphone will not only allow doctors to study the effects of marathoning on heart activity, it will also protect the runners themselves. “If there’s any abnormalities we’re able to intervene at the right time,” one doctor told reporters.

### Around the World: Pink Stinks

A pink playhouse sounded like the perfect gift for one Georgia woman’s four-year-old granddaughter. But not everyone agreed, and now the grandmother may be headed for court.

As *Today* reports, the neighbourhood homeowners’ association is suing Becky Rogers-Peck after “complaints by neighbors” spurred it to action.

The HOA insists that it is not the existence of the playhouse itself but the colour which is objectionable. According to the HOA’s rules, backyard structures must be approved by the HOA board—including the color. But Rogers-Park argues that “the playhouse does not fall under the definition of a backyard structure like a shed or a garage that would be subject to the association’s rules,” so the approval process should not have been required.

“I consider this play equipment like a trampoline or a swingset,” Rogers-Peck told reporters, adding that if she had purchased a commercial playhouse there wouldn’t have been a problem. Now her granddaughter, Rogers-Peck told reporters, “is scared they might make us tear it down.”

The playhouse, which was erected in April, “cannot be seen from the street in front of the house.”



## AUSU UPDATE



### AU Students urge candidates to improve university funding

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## THE VOICE

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