

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 14 2013-04-19

Doing Nothing

Of Burke and Boston

Music & Lyrics

A chat with Jay Nash

Camera

View from the *Terraces*

Plus:

*From Where I Sit
Click of the Wrist
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



EDITORIAL

Christina M. Frey



Sadness. Anger. Disbelief. That's what I've seen proliferating across my social media feeds this week as we all try to process yet another tragedy.

The bombs at the Boston marathon followed too closely on the heels of the death of Rehtaeh Parsons, the Halifax teen who committed suicide after being allegedly gang-raped. It's as though society's careening into a crater we're digging ourselves; the violence, the anger, the hatred, the screaming. It's overwhelming. It's sickening. It's discouraging.

Edmund Burke wrote, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." It's easy to mouth sayings, but how are we supposed to do something? Or what, specifically, can we do against all this violence, all this cruelty?

The answer may be simpler than you think.

Increased safety measures, awareness campaigns, and petitions to change laws and policies: All of these are good things, sure. Grassroots anything is a good thing. But the problem with grassroots is that you need to make sure you really are at the root. And while talking about bullying and guns and terrorism is good and helpful, it's never going to be complete enough, because it doesn't go quite all the way.

The problem is that in all our solutions, the thrust is in the wrong direction. We're trying to change the world. But we can't even hope for a fraction of success if we don't first work at changing ourselves.

Edmund Burke might have meant that standing by and watching evil being done is as good as giving the evildoers a helping hand. But maybe he meant something bigger. Maybe he meant that in the end, it comes down to choices. That each of us, every day, every hour, every minute, even, is faced with a choice: how will we spend this time? What will we do? How will we react? How will we look at someone, think about someone, speak to someone?

Selfishness, pride, greed, anger, resentment—all are players in the "bigger" bad decisions we see in the news. But they're also present in our own poor decisions, and that's a scary thought. Maybe our choices will never go anywhere near as far as mass killings or shootouts or even bullying a kid with glasses. But it doesn't mean that bit by bit, cumulatively, our small little choices throughout the day won't make a difference for good or for evil.

So today, take some time to remember all the victims of violence and cruelty. Then take a look inside, and never stop looking; because when we don't bother to control ourselves, then we are, like Burke said, just standing around doing nothing.

And that's the quickest way to let evil win.

IN CONVERSATION

Wanda Waterman

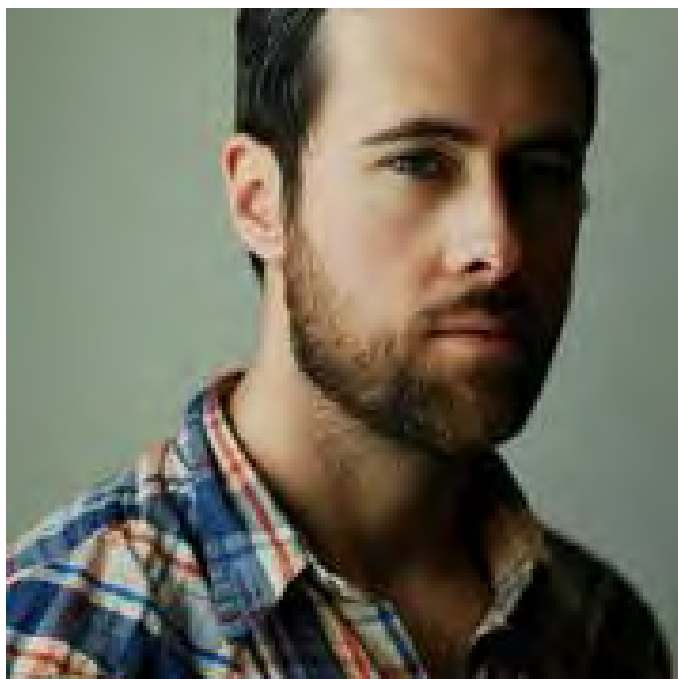


Photo: Debra Lopez

Jay Nash, Part I

*Jay Nash is a Vermont-based singer-songwriter whose latest album, **Letters from the Lost**, will be released May 14. He recently took the time to answer some of Wanda Waterman's questions about his life and musical experiences, and why he writes about both isolation and human connection.*

On the surface there was nothing particularly striking about Jay Nash's upbringing. He grew up in a rural town outside Syracuse, New York, in a typical middle-class American family. Because they lived in the country, Jay was often free to explore his surroundings on his own.

The only child of an engineer and a piano teacher, both music lovers, he was exposed to a lot of different sounds: "My parents could be best described as 'post-

bohemian,'" he explains. "My mom went to Woodstock on the back of a motorcycle. And my dad used to tell me stories about ripping around northern New York in a Dodge Charger and going to rock concerts."

Significant Connection

But what's unusual about Jay's life is how and why he first responded to music in a meaningful way. Around the age of eleven he had an epiphany in which he suddenly grasped the infinite quality of space and the eternal quality of time. The experience triggered an existential crisis for him, and he quickly seized on music—listening to it, writing it, and playing it—as a means of buffering the terrifying sense of solitude and smallness he felt in the midst of a frighteningly vast reality.

Music gave Jay a sense of connection to something beautiful, and sharing it with others turned out to be just as gratifying as consuming it himself.

"The first time I really played in public was in a high school talent show in front of about 1,500 people. I played a Cat Stevens song—'Father and Son'—and when I got to the second half of the song, the audience started clapping along on the backbeat. It sent a chill up my spine to see all these people connected by this beautiful invisible thread. There's really no other word to describe it but magical. Science can't explain it."

*"It is good to be solitary,
for solitude is difficult;
that something is difficult
must be a reason the
more for us to do it."*

Rainer Maria Rilke

A Dichotomy of Human Experience

Jay still seeks that level of connectivity, even after some years into his professional musical career. His latest album, *Letters from the Lost*—beautifully produced entirely in his home studio—shows his lyrical pendulum swinging back and forth from this sense of aloneness to the difficulties inevitably experienced in relationships with others.

The isolation theme shows up on “Wander,” with its snow, wind, and cold metaphors. The pain of relationship comes out in “The Art Thief,” which speaks of loss of connection in a relationship in which the artist nonetheless remains true to his sense of self.

“I have to be careful because I’m preoccupied with those concepts. They tend to be the most poetic—the joy and the pain of relationships and the dichotomy between connectivity and isolation and how experiencing both can exist so close to each other, at times almost simultaneously.

“From a human perspective I’m probably a little bit more comfortable with it than my songs would let on, but these are two truly interesting concepts to grapple with. I’m surrounded by people who are coping with those things, with varying degrees of success.”

Putting It All Together

“On this particular record it happened almost subconsciously. When I wrote the songs I wasn’t filtering myself or censoring myself; I didn’t set out with ‘Here are the stories I want to tell.’ I would record every day and I wouldn’t look back at the end of the day.

“In the course of a day I would put a song together, in a lot of cases recording as I went. Sometimes I would start with a drumbeat, sometimes a bass line or a guitar riff or melody. But I never started with a story or concept. As the structure of the song came together the vocal melody would reveal itself. The last thing to reveal itself would be the story that the melody was trying to tell.

“Like I say, I didn’t go back at the end of the day and say which was a good song or a bad song. I would just start over with a new song the next day. I did this day in and day out for a couple of months and ended up with a batch of songs. Then at the end of the process I curated that batch of 25 or 30 songs to create a cohesive collection that tackles those two key concepts.”



Photo: Debra Lopez

Just What Is It about Music?

What is it about music that allows it to so effectively express isolation and the pain of human interactions?

“It’s a strange thing,” says Jay. “When you use words alone, they have one meaning. But if you set a sentence to a particular melody, whether the melody on its own sounds sad or happy or hopeful, the combination of the melody and the lyric articulates things in a much more powerful way. That’s what drew me to music in the first place.”

(To be continued.)

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.

“When . . . you set a sentence to a particular melody, whether the melody on its own sounds sad or happy or hopeful, the combination of the melody and the lyric articulates things in a much more powerful way. That’s what drew me to music in the first place.”

Jay Nash

DID YOU KNOW?

Student of Fortune



Have a question you need answered? Confused about that mathematical concept and need some one-on-one help? Lost, stuck, or unable to wait for formal help via your course tutor?

Student of Fortune may have your answers—literally.

The online service pairs up students and would-be tutors without a formalized arrangement like many tutoring organizations require. The site itself is free to use and browse, though tutors are paid for their tutorial work.

Start out by submitting a question, and tutors will respond by creating and offering personalized tutorials to help meet your needs. The website will allow you to preview the tutorials, view tutor ratings, and more; you can then choose to purchase a tutorial through the website (the money goes to the tutors).

Anyone can join as a student or a tutor. If you’ve got an area that’s been confusing you, or you’re a subject matter expert and want to earn a few bucks helping other students, check out Student of Fortune to get the learning journey started.



Férid Boughedir: Propheying the Arab Spring, Part II

"I see two stars darting across the sky. Between them darts a shining star. It is coming towards us. It shines over all the planet. Djandjo, the sky is changing colour. It is getting darker. This means that our knowledge escapes us. The divine forces have deserted us. Now act by your strength and by what you know. Make offerings and go. From now on act according to your knowledge."

from *Finye (The Wind)*, a 1982 film by Souleymane Cisse

Read Part I of this article [here](#).

A Glancing Light

In *Child of the Terraces*, young Noura (the apt moniker means "light" in Arabic) sneaks through alleyways, clambers up and down stairs, scales walls, and leaps across rooftops. On the way, he peeks into every window, every door he finds ajar, and down into every street and courtyard, his insatiable curiosity compelling his eyes to devour every inch of the splendour of Tunisian life.

Later he reflects, turning the sights, sounds, and strange new sensations over in his mind, and reaches personal conclusions clearly at odds with the prejudices of the motley collection of Chaucerian characters around him. These ribald, repressed, vulgar, prudish, sensual, and tight-arsed Tunisians continually hedge him in, their company comprising both a prison and a muddy road to freedom.

To Thine Own Self Be True

Noura is a human movie camera, bringing us his pictorial fodder and inviting us to interpret it. We're asked to look at this raw material honestly; Noura is also the quintessential modern artist, requiring that experience be understood only in light of one's most heartfelt convictions.

This is not an easy task and many an artist falls short, unable to develop a strong conscience and thus simply being, like Stevenson's cow, "blown by all the winds that pass and wet with all the showers." And to be fair, it's not easy to remain entirely true to one's own conscience or to trust one's own mind as the standard by which to judge experience and the values and beliefs of one's society. For one thing, many human beings have a quite natural desire to be *told* what to do and think, and some are ready to rise to the occasion of dictating our "shoulds" to us.

"As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being."

Carl Jung

Tug of War

This tug of war between self and the other is clearly played out in Boughedir's work, which portrays small-scale power struggles within families and communities as well as the large-scale conflicts of the global stage. For example, *Un été à La Goulette* depicts the effect of the Palestine conflict on daily life in Tunisia; while in *Villa Jasmin* the conflicts between socialist reformers and colonial governments are manifested. There's also the dichotomy between religious traditions and the craving for pleasure, and between political repression and the desire to speak freely.

It's no wonder that caged birds are a frequently recurring metaphor in Boughedir's films.

Incubating Radicalism

In *Child of the Terraces*, Noura's voyeurism delivers a spectrum of experience in pre-Bourguiba Tunisia. It also expresses the boy's sadness at a society that symbolically castrates and shames him, both physically and intellectually.

Though this is the fleeting pain of a young boy unable as yet to cope with his budding sexuality (it's clear that Noura is on his way to becoming an unusually gifted young man), they're indications of the malaise that afflicts the young in many Arab countries, where unemployment, sexual frustration, political and religious repression, and foreign interference breed hopelessness. These in turn create Petrie dishes for incubating subversive elements whose determination to take power usurps any desire to work for the good of their nations.

"[W]hat emerges from Boughedir's films is the absolute necessity of a pure love, that bright jewel you find after courageously burrowing deep into the muck of human experience, that priceless treasure hidden in the common, the mundane, the everyday."

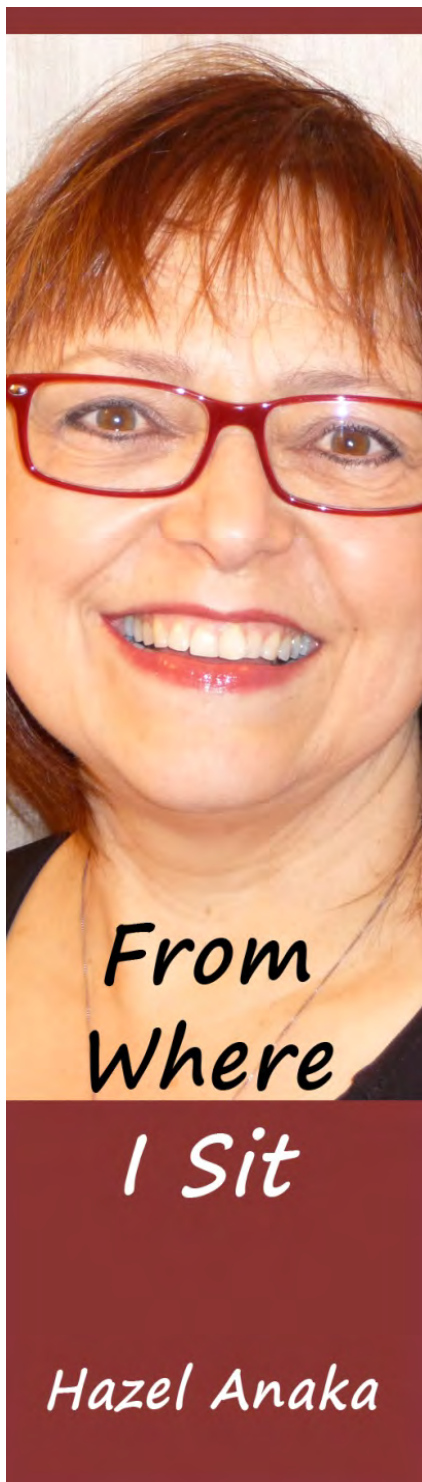
Silencing Dissent

In *Child of the Terraces*, the local shoemaker, drunk, is stumbling down the street when he sees this dictum scrawled on a wall: "One mind for all—the president's." He immediately strikes this out and writes beneath it: "Our mind— not the president's." Someone sees him doing it, and the next day he's carted off to jail, calling, in comic triumph, to the woman he loves, "Wait for me!"

Listening to the Seers

In retrospect, the conditions that led to the Jasmine Revolution and the domino effect it created were clearly revealed in the films of Boughedir. But what do these films have to tell us about the aftermath of revolution and what is needed to make it succeed?

The answer might seem simple-minded, but what emerges from Boughedir's films is the absolute necessity of a pure love, that bright jewel you find after courageously burrowing deep into the muck of human experience, that priceless treasure hidden in the common, the mundane, the everyday. Why is it to be found here? Because this is where God is, plain and simple.



Getting Better

In the continuing saga of my surgery, I'm pleased to report that the patient survived the procedure. I was in a positive frame of mind going in and thought it a good omen that the OR nurse was someone I knew. I was armed with the prayers and good wishes of many. When the surgeon came around to talk, I asked him if he had had a good night and was feeling strong and steady. The smart ass said he'd been out late drinking the night before, but not to worry.

I usually come through anesthetic well, and this time was no exception. Morphine and Tylenol 3s kept the pain at bay for the most part. The staff at the Grey Nuns Hospital was kind and competent. My loved ones visited often, and I was discharged two days later with four prescriptions to fill.

The scariest one was something called Metoclopramide HCL, which helps the stomach remember to empty. A possible side effect includes a muscle problem called tardive dyskinesia; that would result in unusual muscle movements that the patient would be unable to stop or control, and it might not go away after stopping the medication. The prospect of involuntary lip smacking, mouth puckering, chewing, frowning, sticking out my tongue, blinking, and more had me cutting back the dose from three per day to two and then stopping altogether very soon. I only stuck my tongue out once at the doctor when I saw him eight days later.

But thank God someone invented pain meds. Pain management is one of the cornerstones of the healing process. With shoulder surgery I learned I couldn't let the pain get ahead of me, because playing catch-up is virtually impossible. At their best, the meds facilitate restorative sleep and allow for ease of movement. The bad news is that they also cause constipation; not a matter to ignore. I felt my healing journey turned a corner when that problem was resolved.

The liquid, then soft, diet has been challenging. We eat for reasons other than hunger and to stay alive: We crave the textural variety of food, and there is satisfaction in the act of chewing. As one who can't resist pushing some envelopes, sometimes I discovered that the diet is not merely a suggestion.

When I forgot to eat teeny-tiny bites of the right food very slowly, I ended up with the painful, scary realization that the food was stuck midway down my esophagus. What, pray tell, do you do then? Luckily it eased down and the feeling passed. It was a blunt reminder that in fundoplication surgery the top part

of the stomach is wrapped around the bottom part of the esophagus to help prevent it from moving above the diaphragm again—and that needs time to heal.

Let's hope the eight weeks of restricted mindful eating results in some weight loss, though there are definitely easier ways to drop a few pounds. For now I'm back and getting better each day, from where I sit.

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

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Recycle!

Recycling is easy—for the basics, like glass, paper, and aluminum. But what about items that are harder to classify (“weird” plastics, electronics, ink and toner cartridges, and more)? Click these links to learn how to recycle some of your other household junk.

Ink and Toner

While there are options for refilling your ink cartridges and some toner cartridges, there is an easy way to recycle these items, too: simply drop them off at any Staples Canada location. The office supply chain's Recycle for Education program channels the revenue from the recycled materials into local schools. It's a win-win for the earth's future!

Old Electronics

Relatively speaking, electronics have a pretty short lifespan. But they don't need to end up in the landfill—there are many organizations that will recycle your unwanted electronics for you. Recycle Your Electronics is an Ontario-based program that provides drop-off boxes in communities around the province. Live in a province outside Ontario? Check [here](#) or [here](#) for options near you.

Plastic Problems

Confused by the numbers on various types of plastics? This guide, from The Daily Green, classifies plastics and explains how recyclable they are and what they can be turned into.

Phones and Batteries

You're finally eligible for a new smart phone—but don't toss the old model in the trash. The Call2Recycle program facilitates the recycling of phones and rechargeable batteries. Check the site for a drop-off location in your community.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Order in the Court, Part I

Want to tweet the latest trial news straight from the source? Your time may be running out. While Canadian law is largely patchwork on the presence of technology and social media in the courtroom, the province of Quebec has spoken out: no more courtroom Tweets.

As *The Toronto Star* [reports](#), “Quebec judges have decided to put an end to the practice” of allowing “tweets and texts from the confines of a courtroom.”

The guidelines, which “came after months of discussions” among members of the Quebec Court, Superior Court, and Court of Appeal, note that “[it] is prohibited to broadcast or communicate text messages, observations, information, notes, photographs, audio or video recordings from inside the courtroom to the outside.”

This would appear to also prohibit relaying breaking news and photos via email, Facebook, or other sharing media. The use of electronic media for note taking, however, is acceptable, and journalists and lawyers can keep their electronic devices on vibrate or silent.

Brian Myles, president of the Quebec Federation of Journalists, expressed concern that the judges had acted without thinking of the implications. He told reporters that “Twitter is a tool of the 21st century and it allows journalists to bring the citizen into the courtroom.”

Around the World: Order in the Court, Part II

While judges in Quebec were busy debating whether to limit electronic devices in the courtroom, one US judge was wrestling with a unique technology blooper: what happens when a judge’s smart phone goes off in the middle of court?

As the *Herald Sun* [reports](#), Michigan District Court Judge Raymond Voet takes a hard line on cellphone use in the courtroom—including, apparently, his own.

During a jury trial, Judge Voet’s “new smartphone began to emit sounds requesting phone voice commands.” While the judge, embarrassed, realized he must have inadvertently “bumped” the phone, he told reporters, he decided that he wasn’t above the law.

His courtroom’s policy requires that “electronic devices causing a disturbance during court sessions will result in the owner being cited with contempt.” The judge told reporters that even if the phone’s noises were unintentional, he didn’t “take those excuses from anyone else.” The judge “held himself in contempt, fined himself and paid the fine.”

AUSU UPDATE



Dear Members,

You may have recently seen information on the internet speculating about the future of Athabasca University. These reports suggest that the Alberta government may broker a merger between AU and University of Alberta, and that this may result in drastic changes to the services and programs offered to students AU students.

We want you to know that AUSU is aware of these rumours and is actively investigating the source – we will keep you informed as we know more.

We can tell you that AU is governed via a bicameral structure with two main governing bodies: the General Faculties Council (formerly Academic Council) and the Board of Governors (formerly Governing Council). AUSU has representatives on both of these governing bodies and we can confirm that there has been no formal discussion of a university merger among these groups. The AU president, Frits Pannekoek, has also assured the press that there is no truth to the rumour. On behalf of our members, we are seeking more information from the Board of Governors, the minister, and AU executives.

At this time we simply have no evidence that a merger is being seriously considered by AU, the U of A, or the Alberta government, and we note that among the many committees and working groups of AU, planning and development for the future continues as usual.

We know that our members are worried and want more information. We will update you as soon as we know more. At this time we do not feel there is any reason for students to worry or make changes to their study plans.

Do not hesitate to contact our office if you wish to talk about this or any other issue affecting AU students.

AUSU.

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.

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Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

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