

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 21 Issue 33 2013-09-06

### Time Stand Still

Life, death, future

### Put It Down

Scary numbers

### To Jajouka

Billy Martin speaks

*Plus:  
From Where I Sit  
Gregor's Bed  
and much more!*



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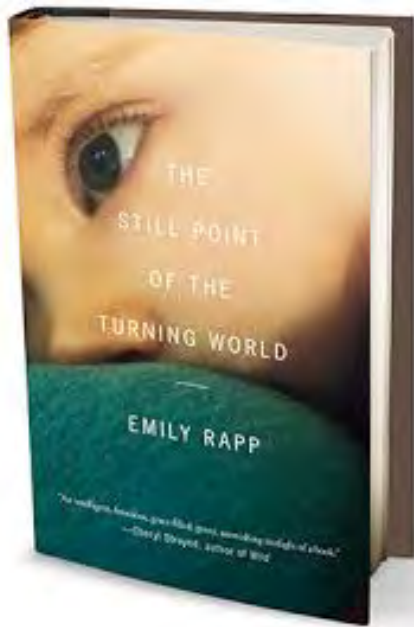
# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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indicate if we may publish your letter.



## IN REVIEW

Christina M. Frey



## The Future of Life and Death

Everyone's searching for something, even if we don't know it yet. Does it take a tragedy to guide us to an answer? Or is the answer in the process of searching itself?

Emily Rapp's *The Still Point of the Turning World* came highly recommended, yet it sat in my to-be-read pile for weeks. The problem was the little I knew about the plot. How could a book about a baby with a terminal genetic disease be anything other than heartbreaking? How could such a subject be handled without turning into a depressing tale or a inspiring but schmaltzy live-for-the-present manifesto?

What a mistake. Because while Rapp's story is heartbreaking to be sure, the book is not so much about her child's illness or even her efforts to come to terms with the diagnosis. *The Still Point of the*

*Turning World* is the story of a woman's journey to understand meaning in life, death, grief, and the future. It's a quest for the spiritual, a quest to make the unknowable accessible, to plumb the mysteries of the human condition.

Rapp is a professor but her prose is eminently readable. She draws on myth, poetry, literature, and history as she struggles to change her vision of reality—and her personable style challenges the reader to think in whole new dimensions.

From the very moment of our birth—and before—we are shaped by a world geared toward the future. Everything we do, whether as infants batting at a toy or graduates entering the workforce, is preparatory to the next step, or the next two or three steps, awaiting us in the future. How has society come to live so far ahead of itself? What is this doing to us as human beings?

While most of us won't be able to identify with the topical struggle in the book, the internal struggle to make sense of life and death is something that humanity has contended with since the dawn of time. I found myself pausing every few pages to think, really think; to go off on a tangent of *what ifs* and *whys*; to ponder why I did or said this or that thing today.

Did it change my life? Am I going to start living in the moment, every moment? I don't know. We can't change on a dime, nor should we; in fact, it will take me a good while to work through and even begin to understand the internal thoughts and ideas raised by a reading of this book.

But that's a good thing. *Still Point* made me think, and it's going to keep me thinking for a very long time. And as long as we can still think about our world and our actions, we're on our way to becoming more engaged, more present, and more alive.

## IN CONVERSATION

Wanda Waterman


**Billy Martin, Part I: A Singular Devotion to Liberated Means of Expression**

***Billy Martin** is a percussionist, filmmaker, music producer, composer, sculptor, and carpenter and is part of the groundbreaking jazz trio Martin, Medeski & Wood. His latest musical production (due out in September) is *The Road to Jajouka*, a remix tribute to Morocco's Master Musicians of Jajouka (see the Voice review [here](#)).*

**Jajouka Road**

*The Road to Jajouka* is a benefit album intended to preserve Jajouka music by granting essential needs to the Jajouka community, a poor village that's now shrinking as the young forego the musical traditions of their ancestors to seek better livelihoods elsewhere.

"They're in kind of a remote region," says Martin. "It's a rural village tucked away in the Atlas Mountains. It's close to Tangier, but not that close. The music is unique but at the same time it intersects with so many other things in the region. The music is all connected in some way."

Billy produced the album, which features recorded tracks by the Master Musicians of Jajouka working with Western musicians (including Ornette Coleman, Flea, and the London Philharmonic), and he also contributed a number of percussion tracks to it.

He was handed the project because of his expertise with remix albums and his musical prowess; he didn't start out with any kind of scholarly background in Jajouka music. "I'm just like an infant when it comes to the Jajouka world," Martin admits. "But I've learned a lot just by listening and reading. I've been interested in the Master Musicians of Jajouka all of my life because of their association with Ornette Coleman, and I keep coming across the group in a lot of world music studies I've done on my own. But I wasn't really aware of what they were about until the last few years, when I started getting deeper into their music."

**What Is It About Jajouka Music?**

"This music is part of a healing ritual," says Billy. "It's a music whose purpose is to cure and transcend. In a sense all music can help you transcend, but this music has a little more spiritual significance without being

***"Whether it's music or films or my drawings, I take the same approach: I improvise. I do have conceptual ideas I try to realize, but I think the best stuff comes out of improvisation. It comes from the same place, the same creative part of myself in the moment."***

**Billy Martin**



religious. What also makes it unique is its instrumentation, tonalities, rhythms, and melodies, which make it very different even from other Moroccan musical genres.”

### Getting Involved

“They wanted a remix album and I had experience with taking tracks from other sources, editing, adding parts, breaking them down. I did that with this album and then had guest musicians play along with it.

“I’ve studied a lot of African music and Brazilian music, so I wanted to combine the essential elements of who we are and who they are and make it work, but not homogenize it—rather to bring it to a higher level.

“I’m proud of it,” he says. “Everybody did a great job and nobody hesitated to give his or her time and effort to it. Everybody that I talked to wanted to be involved. A lot of them were very familiar with Jajouka already, so they were honoured to be included.”

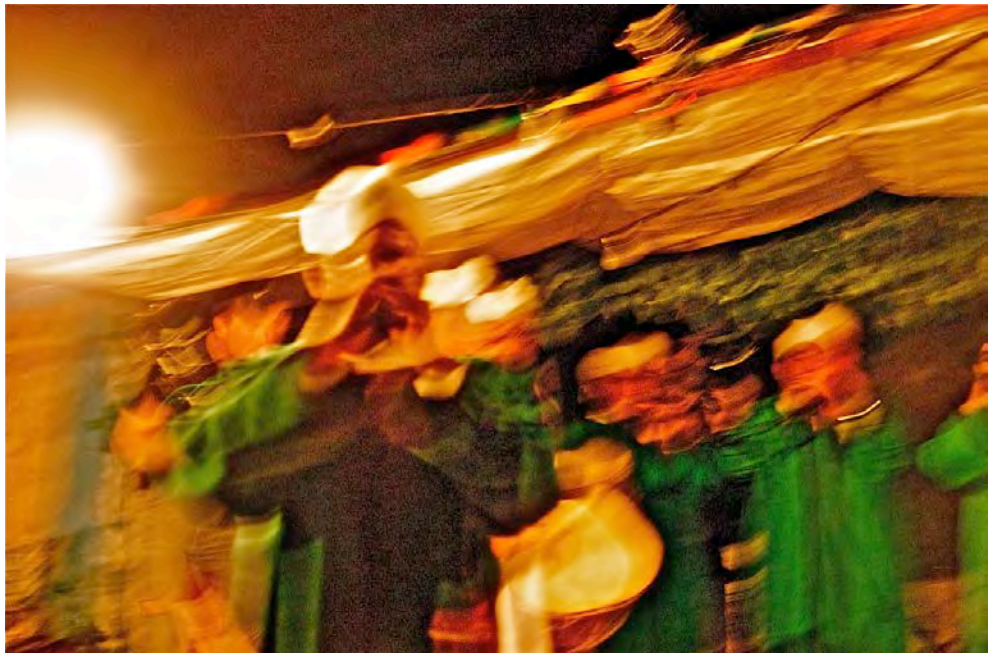
### The Power of Unguarded Expression

Billy applies the same principle to all his endeavours—removing obstacles to creativity by lessening control and courting chance while striving for authentic expression.

“‘Less guarded’ means I’m not conceptually planning out the result of something. It’s improvising. I’ve come to the realization that this is the most powerful form of expression for me. I go about it in this way for most of my work, whether it be music, visual art, etc., with no idea of the outcome.”

*To be concluded next week.*

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.





## Recent Discoveries from the Realm of the Experimental and the Avant Garde

### Three “Hero Journey” Indie Shorts

**Feast of the Foolish** (USA)

**The Runner** (Germany)

**Fisher** (USA)

If, as Francesco Casetti so eloquently states, film is a way of negotiating reality, then you’d think independent film shorts would represent a series of asides, the whispers and mumblings of courtroom

visitors. Such is not always the case, however. In fact, we find many of the best shorts getting very quickly to the point and nailing the truth while circumventing the time and expense of a feature film.

The goal of these three shorts seems to be not so much to make an intellectual argument as to allow the viewer to experience an intense situation vicariously so that the emotions experienced can inform the intellect and promote a moral stance based on a view of reality that the film has rendered more clear and immediate.

In the first two shorts, the protagonists are left to deal with realities that push the thresholds of human psychic endurance; at the same time they present analogies of the universal human experience once the ego defense is broken down, the sense that we’re abandoned and defenseless within a heartless universe.

*Feast of the Foolish* is a jarring ride through the experience of being rejected by a malignant narcissist. The cowboy, Oliver, stumbles, lost, confused, and bleeding, through a surreal spaghetti Western landscape peopled by simple peasants who undergo a brief, bizarre incarnation: they somehow turn into a bohemian acting troop that warns him of danger while underlining the absurdity of his plight and guiding him through it.

Among the significant images in the tale—including tarot cards, guns, and crones—is one of those houses made of coloured bottles lodged in concrete walls. Looking like a little jewel box in the night, it reminds us of the gingerbread house in Hansel and Gretel; the habitation of a witch who tempts and feeds in order to capture and fatten her victims and devour them.

The title of this film suggests a key piece in the emotional jigsaw—the feeling that Oliver knew what he was getting into and pursued the relationship anyway. Why? Because of the realization of one of the worst of human fears, the dread that perhaps we’ve put all our faith in a love that never existed.

In *The Runner*, a poor boy in Cape Town believes he must somehow find the money to pay for a surgery to save his mother's life. He's willing to do anything. When her life is saved by the surgeons, he realizes the enormity of what he's done; his heroic act of love and sacrifice is now seen to have been a monstrous and pointless error. The terrible fear and shame he must now face eclipses the joy, relief, and gratitude he should be experiencing on hearing of his mother's survival. This terrible conflict is clearly registered on the face of this excellent child actor (Cwangco Mayekiso) when the doctor tells him that all is well.

*" . . . many of the best shorts [get] very quickly to the point and [nail] the truth while circumventing the time and expense of a feature film."*

All three of these shorts portray harsh predicaments, but the third, *Fisher*, shows us the rainbow after the existential deluge. It's a moving animated piece featuring an adorably homely little creature in a yellow nor'wester and fisherman's rain hat. He lives alone in a little shanty in a fishing village beside a grey sea and cherishes a photo of someone whom he has lost and still loves. A series of accidents blow him out to sea, and all that he fears comes true. But in the end he experiences that state to which the spirit aspires: the final realization that all is one and that he, for one, is one with all.

## DID YOU KNOW?

## Student ID Cards



Studying by distance? You can still get student discounts at the movies, bookstore, or train station! According to the [AU Student Calendar](#), every "active Athabasca University student" is eligible to request a photo student identification card.

To apply, you need to complete the required [form](#) and submit a photo. Acceptable photos are "taken by an Athabasca University staff member whenever possible." However, if circumstances require it the Registrar's Office will accept a digital photo together with a copy of your driver's license, or a passport photo. If not taken by AU staff, photos must be signed by a guarantor, someone "who can attest to your identity." Further instructions can be found [here](#).

Still have last year's ID card? Don't throw it away, as AU students are only eligible for one card during the course of their studies. To keep the card current from year to year, active students may "request a date sticker from the Office of the Registrar, AU Edmonton, or AU Calgary."



## PRIMAL NUMBERS

S.D. Livingston



## It Can Wait

Shiny buttons. We love them, don't we? On our mobile screens, on the animated mall directory, at the movie kiosk. Everywhere we look, those sliding, swiping screens make life easier and more fun. But they're also killing us. Not in slow ways, but in sudden, violent, tragic ways. Cellphones now kill more drivers than drunk driving does—yet we just can't seem to stop texting and driving.

The alarming news came just ahead of the Labour Day weekend. The *Globe and Mail* reported the numbers: in Ontario, road deaths caused by distracted driving were at 19 per cent in 2010. In 2013, that shot up to 26 per cent, and the year isn't over yet. If you're texting behind the wheel, you're "23 times more likely to be involved in a crash." Prefer to talk while you're driving? You're still about four times more likely to smash into something or someone.

Perhaps the most frightening thing is that the mayhem isn't caused because we don't know better; those numbers reflect an upswing in deaths *after* the use of handheld mobiles was banned by the province in 2009. Several other provinces and countries have similar bans. And still the death rate keeps climbing.

It's easy to blame it on irresponsible teens getting behind the wheel with their smart phones. But middle-aged parents, business execs, seniors—they're all doing it too. Even on the job.

Like the air-ambulance pilot in Missouri who spent his day sending a steady stream of text messages, even "while the helicopter was in flight and during a phone call about whether to undertake the mission." The helicopter crashed, killing the pilot, a flight nurse, a flight paramedic, and the patient they were transporting.

Then there was the California commuter train crash in September 2008. The 46-year-old train driver sent and received several text messages in the moments before the crash. He sent his last message just 22 seconds before the train skipped a red light and hurtled into a freight locomotive. The crash killed 25 people and injured another 135. Reuters reported that after the accident, "California authorities temporarily banned railroad workers from using cellphones on duty."

So what should we do? Ban the technology altogether? Of course not. It's useful, convenient, and even saves lives when used intelligently—like the Mobiles in Malawi program, which uses SMS to link people in remote areas to nearby medical aid.

The problem with the carnage on our roads isn't the tool, but the way we're using it. In an effort to raise awareness, the [It Can Wait](#) campaign challenges people to pledge that they won't text and drive. The site offers plenty of stats, an app, and even lets you test your skills on a Texting and Driving Simulator.

But if that's not enough to hit home for you—or if you still think you can get away with it—you should watch this [video](#) by famed director Werner Herzog. It's called *From One Second to the Next*, and it will take 34 minutes of your life. Not a very long time when you consider it might just be long enough to save it.

*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

## Trying the New

**September's here, and for schoolkids and university students it's all about the new: new classes, new books, new school supplies, and maybe a few new outfits thrown in. It's also a great time for all of us, students or not, to try a few new experiences before the fall schedule gets too busy. Check out these links for ideas!**

### Go Veg

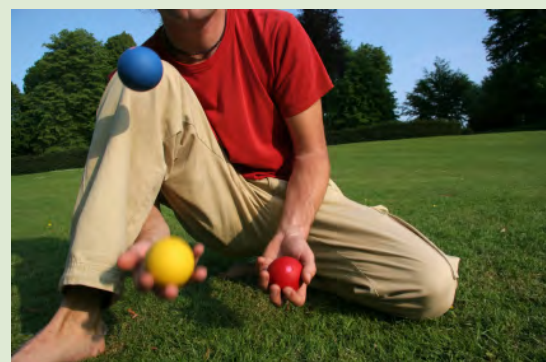
Want to ditch those bad summer eating habits? The fall is the perfect time to explore healthier and more environmentally conscious diet plans. September is the food blogging world's Vegan Month of Food—known as Vegan MoFo—and it's a wellspring of vegan recipes, product reviews, and musings on all things vegan.

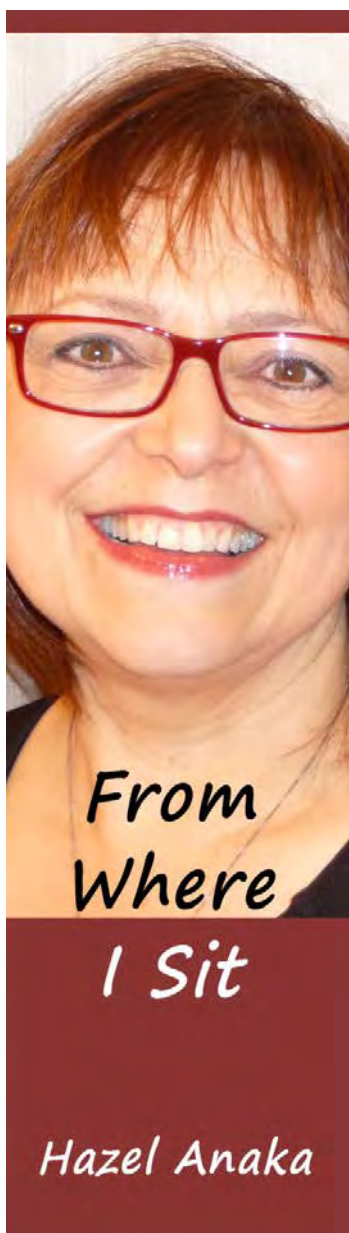
### Juggling It All

Whether you planned to join the circus as a kid or just want to learn a cool trick to impress your friends now, learning to juggle is a fun and simple pastime—if you start out with the basics, that is. The above video guides you through basic juggling for three balls; for more tricks, both beginner and advanced, check out these [videos](#).

### Change It

Most of us drive cars, but only a very small percentage of us know how to take care of them. Edmunds.com offers a series of free how-to videos on the basics of car maintenance, including changing oil, changing tires, and more. For a more hands-on experience, check your local community for classes offered by community centres and garages.





## Just What I Needed

In the days since the big event I was coordinating ended—the Babas and Borshch Ukrainian Festival—I’ve attempted many things.

I tried to get some feeling, other than pain, back into my body. A chiro treatment and hour-long massage have helped. I attempted a nap Monday afternoon, slept for an hour, and bugged up my night.

And speaking of sleep, I’m baffled. In the months leading up to the event, several nights were broken up by middle of the night staring-at-the-ceiling sessions lasting hours. I dreamed the caterer was a no-show and we had no food for the big-deal dinner. In my mind I wrote speeches, dictated emails and letters, planned pitches. Some nights, when the craziness went on too long I got out of bed, crossed the hall to my office, and worked. I sent midnight emails, updated to-do lists, and jotted down snippets of stuff in an often-futile attempt to empty my mind.

So why in God’s name am I still dreaming about Babas and Borshch? I’ve cleansed my amethyst and faithfully place it beneath my pillow each night. I fall into bed exhausted. And while it’s true that there remains much post-event work to do, the toughest part is over. Yet one night I dreamed it hadn’t happened yet.

Slowly I’ve begun re-entry into my life. Tackling a sink full of dishes, washing load after load of laundry, and trying to turn the house back from a warehouse into a home filled many hours. I even watered my patio pots in an attempt to revive the plants that had succumbed to the neglect.

But maybe the best thing I could have done was inviting Grady over for a sleepover. We picked him up Thursday after dental appointments and I returned him Saturday before the first of two weddings I was performing that day. At age four he plays more independently, but still loves company. His insistence on my presence kept me from disappearing into my work.

We watched *How to Train Your Dragon* and *Up*. At the gravel pit he climbed like a monkey to the top of a 15-foot pile. We had a few tense moments (and a talking-to) when he locked me out of the pickup when I stopped to close the gate to that farm.

The best part was getting caught up in his giggles as he drove the riding mower. I worked the gas pedal; he drove. No power steering here, yet he was able to control the machine. I encouraged him to burn some doughnuts. We spun around and around until I was dizzy. We laughed like kids, and for a while I forgot the world of work and responsibility. Just what I needed, from where I sit.

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



COMIC: CHAZZ BRAVADO

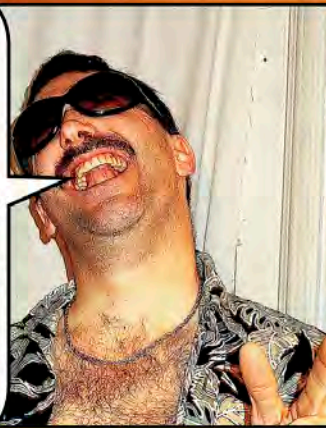
Wanda Waterman

## CHAZZ BRAVADO: Asking Betty Friedan for Her Daughter's Hand

BETTY, I'VE BEEN CARRYING YOUR BOOK AROUND WITH ME FOR YEARS. I READ IT IN OUTDOOR CAFÉS WHILE SIPPING ESPRESSO. I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES IT'S HELPED ME GET LUCKY!



BUT YOUR DAUGHTER IS MY DREAM GIRL! WELL, NOT REALLY—MY DREAM GIRL HAS TOO MANY STAPLES, HWAH HA HA!



SERIOUSLY THOUGH, I'D MAKE A GREAT HUSBAND. YOUR DAUGHTER WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORK, THINK, OR ACHIEVE ANYTHING EXCEPT FOR KEEPING HUBBY HAPPY IN EVERY WAY.



WHAT?! LOOK, BETTY, IF YOU WANT TO STAY ON THE GOOD SIDE OF ME YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PUT DOWN THE FRYING PAN. ALTHOUGH I DO ADMIT IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT'S EVER LOOKED GOOD ON YOU—UNGGGGGGG...

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN  
WITH INPUT FROM BEN AND  
STEPHANIE WATERMAN

**CLANG!!!**



## 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](mailto:ausu@ausu.org).

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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## THE VOICE

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