

# THE VOICE

## MAGAZINE

Vol 22 Issue 11 2014-03-14

### Reading Upside Down

Reading at a Glance

### People Power

The Body Electric

### Ode to March

Spring Shift

*Plus:*

*In Conversation*

*The Writer's Toolbox*

*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](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org), and please indicate if we may publish your letter.**

## EDITORIAL

Karl Low

**Absurdly Excited**

I'm a bit excited today. Not because of anything you're going to see in this issue, although with S.D Livingston's article on human generators, Hazel Anaka's celebration of March, and Barbara Lehtiniemi's exploration of something called PhotoReading, I suppose I should be. After all, where else would you find a look at how we soon might be powering our own electronic devices, but not need to because we only need to glance at the pages briefly to understand and remember what it's about.

No, I'm excited because of things going on behind the scenes that you, dear reader, can't see.

Yet.

One of these things is that the call to AU tutors and academics for interviews has gone out, and the response has been well beyond anything I expected. Between scheduling and interviews, most of the week got eaten up quite quickly, so forgive me if you don't find a Click of the Wrist this week. I simply didn't have the time to be randomly searching the web. (But hey, if you're reading this, maybe you do? *The Voice Magazine* will pay \$20 for Click of the Wrists – a collection of three or four interesting links that all go together under a theme with a short description of each. And since you're wasting the time already, why not get paid for it and help other people waste time too?)

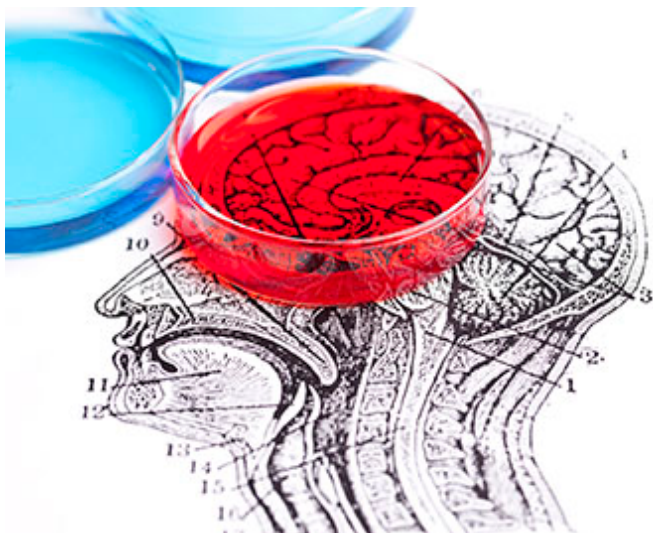
I'm also excited because our Webmaster (who happens to be AUSU's executive director) has finally gotten some time since the AUSU election to be able to perform some needed work on *The Voice Magazine* website. The changes so far have been all on the back end, but they've helped to make the issue a bit easier to get online, and more to serve as a base for a very improved *The Voice Magazine* website to come in the future.

I'm also a bit excited because of the nearness of St. Patrick's Day. I'm not Irish. I don't know anybody who's Irish, and if I'm being perfectly honest, I'm not exactly a Christian either. So you might wonder why I'm excited about a holiday that is supposedly about celebrating the arrival of Christianity in Ireland or the heritage of the Irish people? I'm excited because most I know are exactly like me in these respects, yet we all still use St. Patrick's day as an excuse to get together with friends, have a fun time, and who cares if it doesn't make any sense to do so. So for me, St. Patrick's Day is almost a celebration of the absurd. What else could it be when we're celebrating a man who supposedly drove snakes out of Ireland when all evidence suggests there were never any snakes in Ireland to begin with?

We're funny creatures, we humans. And days like St. Patrick's Day that point it out and celebrate it make me glad to be among us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', with a stylized, flowing script.

## Primal Numbers



electricity is nothing new. Every kid that's pedalled one of those stationary bikes at the Science Centre can tell you that. The human body is a marvellous, self-contained electrical power plant. Every muscle, from your eyelids to your toes, relies on electrical impulses to contract. As this *Live Science* [article](#) explains, the driving force behind that intricate circuitry is the sinoatrial node in your heart.

It's true that the output of one of those millions of impulses is small: only about 10 to 100 millivolts. But the sum, in this case, is definitely greater than the parts. As this piece in the *Business Insider* [explains](#), the energy we generate "in the form of the body's heat, movement, metabolism, and vibrations" has the potential to power our smart phones, TV remotes, and more.

Practical examples should be popping up in stores within the next couple of years, like this small [disc](#) generator invented by researchers at Georgia Tech. It can be worn pretty much anywhere on the body and generates enough energy to charge an iPhone.

This is the kind of research that's worth getting fired up about. Not just for the cool factor, but for its enormous potential as an alternative energy source. For instance, though it might seem like every single person on the planet already owns a smart phone, the [numbers](#) from *Business Insider* reveal that only 22 per cent of the world's population currently have one, while only 6 per cent own a tablet. That means millions more devices still to come, and added pressure on the planet's resources not only to manufacture them but to keep all those screens lit up.

Using an existing energy source—people power, quite literally—is a truly practical solution. Especially since, though the market saturation of cell phones and tablets might increase, the energy source to power them (the consumer) is already in place. And the spinoff benefits could be great. Just imagine how much closer we'd all get to recommended daily activity levels if every action fuelled our touch-screens that little bit longer.

Just remember that there are potential pitfalls to all that distracted walking—and try not to drop your phone in the [fountain](#).

*S.D. Livingston is the author and creator of the Madeline M. Mystery Series for kids, as well as several books for older readers. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing.*

**S.D. Livingston**

## People Power

Talk to someone concerned about the rise of computers and the digital age, and one thing you're likely to hear is that we rely too much on machines. Yet one of the surprising consequences of our gadget-filled days could be just the opposite: all those iPads and Android phones might come to rely more on us. For power, that is, as science finds new and inventive ways to harness biological energy to charge our devices.

The idea of using human energy to create



## INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK

### At Home and Abroad



#### At Home: Canada Centralizes ESL Training

The Canadian federal government is attempting to centralize the management of services for new immigrants, with Citizenship and Immigration Canada in the process of negotiating with some post-secondary institutions and not-for-profit agencies in BC to deliver English as a Second Language training. Part of these negotiations include funding of 10.5 million being delivered to these institutions to shore up programs which the province announced it would no longer be funding.

The cuts made to the programs by the BC government amounted to 17 million dollars, and paid for more than 9,000 ESL students to learn English tuition-free last year. Currently, the federal government has not entertained any ideas to assist all Canadian citizens in attending any post-secondary institution tuition-free.

#### Around the Globe: International School Market lead by the Middle-East

Most people would assume that the bulk of international students flock to the United States, or maybe to China. However, figures released by the International Schools Consultancy Group, and reported by PIE News, show that the Middle East, with almost a third of the world's international school students, is in the lead. Within the Middle East, Dubai is the leading city for international schools with student enrolment increasing by 40% since 2009 to 191,000 students out of the million international students that attend a school in the Middle East.

#### DID YOU KNOW?



#### Employment Standards Review

The Alberta employment standards department (Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour) now being lead by Minister Thomas Lukaszuk, who was responsible for championing massive cuts to the post-secondary institution system that, two years later, have not been fully returned to the institutions even during a time of supposed surplus in Alberta, is now working on an update to the legislation regarding the standards. One of the things they are at least paying lip service to is the changing demographic of working people in Alberta. The government is offering a survey to obtain public input into the changes.

Many of the questions in this survey are directly relevant to AUSU students; many of AU's new grads are "non-traditional" students for one reason or another: often because they are graduating at an older age or have been out of the workforce. The survey also addresses internship practices. With universities being increasingly urged to match training with industry requirements, the results of this survey could be very relevant to future university studies. The survey will be available [here](#) until April 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Reading Upside Down

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Is it possible to read a book in five minutes? Can you read a book backwards? Upside-down? What if everything you knew about reading turned out to be only a small part of the picture? What if you could read faster and with greater comprehension?

These questions and more rattled around in my mind when I attended a three-day workshop on the concept of PhotoReading®. The workshop taught the PhotoReading® Whole Mind System, developed by Paul R. Scheele of Learning Strategies Corporation. This unique reading technique is described in Scheele's book *PhotoReading* (2007.)

I had written a history exam the previous week, the results of which can only be described as dismal. Although everything on the exam was covered in the course, my aging brain had difficulty retaining the information. Every detail I read in the textbook seemed to enter my brain through my eyes then leak out some hidden drain in the back of my head, never to be recalled. If there was a way to make the information stick, I wanted to know.

The skill, I learned, is a multi-step process, and at its core is the photo part. Just by exposing the text to the eyes, the information on the page is absorbed by the subconscious mind. Sounds hocus-pocus-y and perhaps a bit too good to be true. But is it? In his book *PhotoReading*, Scheele claims the conscious mind has a bandwidth of 40 bits per second, while the unconscious mind can process 10,000,000 bits per second. With the PhotoReading® system, the information on the page bypasses the conscious mind with its limited capacity and is delivered directly to the unconscious mind. Books can even be read backwards or upside-down. The mind can still comprehend it.

Traditional reading is a left-brain activity. At a rate of around 200 words per minute, we use the logical left brain, consciously following the sequence of the words and analyzing details. PhotoReading® uses the creative right brain. Taking in around 25,000 words per minute, this activity looks at the whole picture rather than focusing on details. During the workshop, I and the other attendees learned to relax our eyes, flip the pages of a book at a steady pace, and keep our conscious minds from interfering. At the rate of 1 to 2 seconds per page, our unconscious minds "read" a 300-page book in approximately 5 minutes.

Is it really that easy? Yes. And no. I found the skill itself easy to acquire. But that's just one step of a 5-step process. There are two preliminary steps, "prepare" and "preview," that are necessary to get into the right frame of mind and to the right state of relaxation. After PhotoReading®, there are two additional activities, "postview" and "activate," that help make the information available to the conscious mind. The last of these activities involves reviewing the material in several different ways. This "activation" step, which does include some conscious reading, may take an hour or more.

But does it really work? My initial assessment is that, whether my subconscious mind can take in a page of text at a glance or not, there is real value in the pre- and post-reading activities. I already notice that I can

focus better when I'm reading. I now PhotoRead each book, using the whole 5-step process, then read again in the conventional way. I notice an increase in my ability to retain information, which could simply be due to covering the material several times. I plan to stick with it for a few months to see how useful I find it. Maybe I'll be able to PhotoRead my way to learning a new language or improving my chess game. Or, just maybe, my next exam won't be such a trial.

*PhotoReading* by Paul R. Scheele is available in bookstores, libraries, and through <http://www.learningstrategies.com>. PhotoReading® workshops are held worldwide by certified trainers; DVD seminars are also available on the Learning Strategies website.

*Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario*



## In Conversation With Jacob Schier, Part II

**Wanda Waterman**



"Ah, when to the heart of man  
Was it ever less than a treason  
To go with the drift of things,  
To yield with a grace to reason,  
And bow and accept the end  
Of a love or a season?"  
- Robert Frost, "Reluctance" (19-24)

*Jacob Scheier is a writer of essays, poems, and journalism. His first book of poems, *More to Keep Us Warm*, won the 2008 Governor General's Award for poetry. He's Canadian by birth, but only because when his mother was pregnant his American parents, on returning from an activist mission in Palestine, were not allowed to re-enter the United States.*

*His poetic landscape is made up of memories of New York, Jewish culture and history, his family's radical communism, and the tragedy of his mother's early death in 2000. (His most recent book, *Letter From Brooklyn*, was just recommended here in "The Mindful Bard".)*

*Recently Jacob took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about poetry schools, his writing workshops, and the journey of grief.*

### **I Don't Care to Belong to Any Poetry School That Will Have Me as a Member**

When asked if he feels as if he belongs to any particular school of poetry, Scheier admits that though his writing is influenced by some schools, notably the New York School and the Confessional Poets, he's not at ease with the idea of belonging to one.



"I am not sure I would want to be part of a school that would have me as a member," he says, paraphrasing Groucho Marx. "I am kind of serious about that. Schools of art have a protectionist, exclusionary quality that doesn't sit comfortably with how I see the role of the artist."

"I feel much more comfortable borrowing from other poetics than defining myself within a particular poetic (which is then understood in opposition to some other poetic or school of poetics)."

### **Writing Through Loss**

The early loss of his mother compelled Jacob to seek creative ways of dealing with shattering experiences. His own journey prepared him to guide others through loss; in addition to allowing the grieving process to inform his poetry, Jacob taught a course called "Writing Creatively About Grief" through Ryerson University's Continuing Education and trained to become a volunteer peer facilitator of support groups for bereaved young adults.

"Certainly my workshops on writing creatively about grief are very much intertwined with my own creative work," he observes. "My first collection, *More to Keep us Warm*, was very engaged with the loss of my mother, who died when I was twenty."

"This was and remains a life-defining experience for me, and two of the ways I processed it were through writing and through, firstly, joining a support group and then, later, becoming a volunteer peer-facilitator of support groups for bereaved young adults. So, the grief writing workshops were a kind of natural extension of my writing practice, teaching, and group facilitation experience."

### **The Rich Experience of Grief**

When asked if he believes that healing from grief is possible, Jacob replies, "I don't feel professionally qualified to answer that question in the general sense. I will say in my own case—speaking of my own experience of loss—that I don't expect to experience what I think of as healing."

"If by 'healing' we are talking about a kind of closure, of having finally 'dealt' with the experience, then definitely not. My relationship with my mother, the loss, and my own grief has certainly changed a lot over the last fourteen years. I don't think grief has an ending, and in a way that makes it a very rich experience."

### **On the Horizon**

"Right now I am mostly working on creative nonfiction. More specifically, I am working on a collection of personal essays, which in some shape or form engage my secular Jewish identity and my radical upbringing."

"In spring 2015 I will be a resident at The Pierre Berton House in Dawson City, Yukon, where I will be working on what I conceptualize as a fairly lengthy hybrid work of journalism and memoir about being a Jewish person in places with virtually no Jewish population."

*(To learn more about Jacob Scheier's workshops on writing creatively about grief, visit [jacobscheier.org](http://jacobscheier.org).)*

## Ode to March



Despite the bad rap that March often gets I have a certain fondness for this month. No other month has *two* lovely creatures associated with it: lion and lamb. Oh, sure, February has a weather-forecasting rodent with an unpronounceable name but that hardly compares.

March holds the promise, often sadly overstated, that spring is indeed somewhere, somewhere in the not-too-distant future. As I write this we've finally hit a positive single digit temperature somewhere above "Oh my God, it's cold". There's snow melting and sloppy roads and gravelly puddles of muddy water. The detritus of a long brutal winter is slowly being exposed and it ain't pretty.

The sudden melt can also be quite dangerous. About ten years ago I fell in a parking lot, got soaked in the puddle hiding the ice below, and set in motion the need for my eventual shoulder surgery.

But in our little hearts we note that, barring a major calamity of some kind, we can take credit for having survived another winter. We're proud, dammit. And resilient. For the last five months we've tried to keep our moaning in check. Occasionally we say stupid things like 'at least it's a dry cold.' I've been around long enough to know that March will wallop us at least one more time before it's over.

Speaking of being around, March is also my birth month, making me a Pisces. This year was one of those benchmark birthdays and I declined when the kids offered to make a party. Instead, our immediate family had a nice meal in an expensive restaurant a week before the big day. On the sixth, we went to my sister's for supper. Without our knowledge, she invited a handful of friends to help celebrate this passage. It was a fun evening that included great food and some gifts and a recitation of everyone's ailments and upcoming doctor appointments. One friend

just lost his mother two days earlier so we're reminded that every day above ground is a good one despite our complaints and worries and the date on our driver's license.

March is also famous for International Women's Day and World Day of Prayer. On March 8<sup>th</sup> the business supply store in town, Staples, surprised the first 50 female customers with a red rose and packet of Post-its. Everyone got ten percent off everything in the store. Because we were shopping for a new wireless router and printer this was good news. I love stationary so a colourful cube of sticky notes warms my heart. Popping the rose into a bud vase brings a splash of colour and a hint of spring within reach on my desk.

But March is also crazy busy. It's spring convention month and AGMs for various non-profits are sprouting like weeds. It's also grant-writing season and I have three more to finish. Appointments with doctors, bankers, and lawyers also loom. No one can accuse March of being dull, from where I sit.

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

## Writer's Toolbox

Christina M. Frey



### Getting Possessive, Part II

In last week's Toolbox, we began tackling the possessive form of nouns. We covered two basic rules for singular common nouns:

- 1) A singular common noun that does not end in -s forms the possessive by adding an apostrophe + s.
- 2) A singular common that does end in -s also forms the possessive with an apostrophe + s, unless the word that follows it starts with an s or sh sound **and** you're following AP or Canadian style.

If you need a refresher, skim the first part of this series [here](#). Otherwise, we'll move on to plural common nouns and look at a few writing pitfalls that may arise when you're trying to choose between singular and plural forms.

### General rule for plural common nouns

For most plural nouns, the possessive is formed by **adding an apostrophe to the plural form**.

*Example A: The students' research turned up interesting data.*

There's no extra s added, which is logical when you try to voice the word aloud. A good way to remember this is to think of Gollum from the Lord of the Rings movies. Since you wouldn't normally add an -es syllable to a plural word ("students-es"?), you don't form the plural possessive by adding an s with the apostrophe.

Don't forget, though, that the apostrophe is required! In informal communication this punctuation mark is often dropped, but without it you do not have the possessive form:

*Example B (incorrect): The witnesses testimony was persuasive.* This is the plural form, not the plural possessive form.

*Example C (incorrect): The witnesse's testimony was persuasive.* This is incorrect plural possessive form.

*Example D (correct): The witnesses' testimony was persuasive.*

### Irregular plurals

Irregular plural nouns are nouns that don't form the plural by simply adding an -s or -es to the noun. Some examples are *children*, *mice*, *loaves*, *phenomena*, *appendices*, and *teeth*. Of these, irregular plurals that end in an -s (*loaves*, *appendices*) still follow the general rule for making plural nouns possessive: add an apostrophe.

*Example E: The loaves' crumbly texture sent me back to the drawing board.*

However, irregular plural nouns that **don't end in -s are an exception to the general rule for plurals. They add an apostrophe + s.**

*Example F: The children's noise gave me a headache.*

Sometimes this gives unusual results.

*Example G: The mice's loud squeaks alerted me that something was wrong.* Does that look strange? Grammatically it's correct, but if a possessive form looks that awkward, restructure the sentence to avoid using it at all.

*Example H (avoids the plural possessive entirely): I knew something was wrong when I heard the loud squeaks coming from the mice.*

### Singular versus plural

A caution: because the two forms are similar, many writers (and businesses!) use the singular possessive when the plural possessive makes sense. Before deciding which rule to apply, ask yourself who's doing the possessing or to whom the possessed item or quality belongs. If it's just one person, place, or thing, use the singular form (apostrophe + s); but if it's more than one, follow the general rule for plural (apostrophe only).

*Example I (incorrect): The student's union is holding elections.* This is incorrect, because the union belongs to multiple students, not just one student.

*Example J (correct): The students' union is holding elections.*

In some circumstances, either form is arguable, but the choice may alter the meaning. For example, this column is called "The Writer's Toolbox" because it's intended as a toolbox for the writer in general. Calling it "The Writers' Toolbox" could create ambiguity (is it for a specific group of writers or just "the writers," whomever they are? Or is it a toolbox created by "the writers"?). When in doubt, try substituting a different word and see whether singular or plural makes more sense.

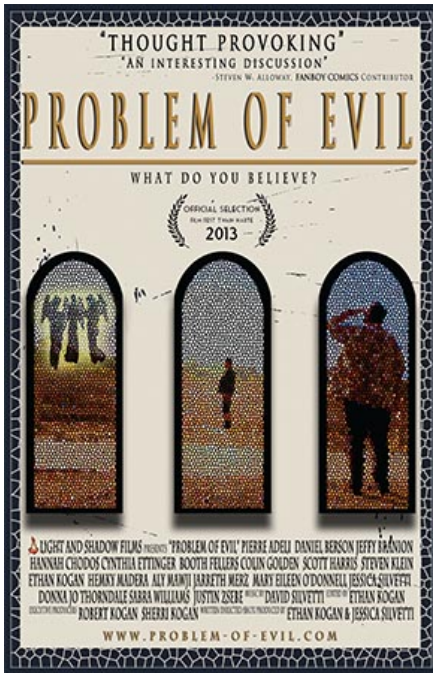
In next week's Toolbox we'll get a little deeper into the possessive case and tackle proper nouns. For now, add the basics on plural possessive to the cheat sheet you started last week. Once again, the general rule for plural common nouns is to add an apostrophe for all regular plural forms (ending in -s or -es). For those irregular plurals not ending in -s or -es, add apostrophe + s. And when it's all too awkward, even in correct form, consider reworking the sentence to avoid the problem entirely.

*Christina M. Frey is a book editor and a lover of great writing. Chat with her on Twitter about all things literary @turntopage2.*

## Mindful Bard

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

Wanda Waterman



**Film:** *Problem of Evil*

**Directors:** Ethan Kogan and Jessica Silvette

**Written By:** Ethan Kogan and Jessica Silvette

**Only Drowning Men Could See Him**

“And when he knew for certain  
Only drowning men could see him,  
He said, ‘All men shall be sailors then, until the sea shall free them.’  
But he himself was broken long before the sky would open,  
Forsaken, almost human, he sank beneath your wisdom like a stone.”  
- Leonard Cohen, from “Suzanne”

The film’s title makes you think you’re in for another installment of a philosophical inquiry—briefly, the question of whether there can be a just God for an evil world. It’s a question as old as the hills but that really picked up steam when the Nazi holocaust photos started emerging. It gets revived every time we’re jolted out of our yeah-but-that-was-in-the-past complacency (e.g. after the photos from Syria started emerging). Generally, the conclusion to this inquiry is that an evil humanity cannot be presided over by a just God.

In my opinion this is more of an emotional reaction than a logical conclusion (it’s like saying bad children can’t have good parents), but then I’m no philosopher. What I love about this film is the way it communicates the rage, grief, helplessness, loneliness, and, at times, pure idiocy that lie behind that emotional reaction.

In the film, Jacob is a Jewish agnostic and refuses to seek false comfort in religious pseudo-solutions. However, he’s also one hurting dude who is desperate to keep from drowning in his own grief.

When asked to interview a woman who manages a community garden, Jacob becomes unnerved when she tells him things about himself that she has no way of knowing. She claims that her “leader” had told her all about Jacob and had even alerted her that Jacob would be coming to visit her soon.

Normally skeptical, Jacob knows that it’s a common trick of cultists, psychics, and fortune-tellers to pronounce facts about a person’s life that are so general as to apply to anyone, however, unhinged by the recent loss of his beloved wife Rebecca, Jacob falls for the garden lady’s speech even as he vehemently resists it. He becomes obsessed with finding the cult’s leader in spite of himself, defending his quest with the claim of wishing to expose him as a hoax. When the garden lady won’t tell him how to find the leader, he steals her address book and starts phoning everyone in it. (Wouldn’t you?)

This film is in a documentary format and so “interviews” follow, and some of the interview subjects are pretty darn interesting, enlightening even, providing a précis of the spectrum of human responses to profound loss. Some actually inspire us with their sincerity and wisdom. Others, not so much.



We meet a slightly paranoid comic book artist who's named himself after Xolotl—the twin brother of Mesoamerican deity Quetzalcoatl. He's looking forward to an impending apocalypse in which all will not be destroyed but rather put right, which mostly means (surprise!) sexual freedom.

It's a real stab in the gut to watch those who believe they've encountered the divine and then lost it, such as the mentally ill Eli. Eli lives in a room with nothing but liquor bottles, a Bible, and a pile of blankets, raging in agony because he believes that the angel he loved—and who he thought loved him—has abandoned him.

When Jacob finally wins an audience with the leader of the garden lady's cult, a man the cult members insist is actually an angel (or at least a Nephilim or descendent of angels), it's to meet a guy who acts just like the Jesus portrayed in films—too tranquil, wise, poised, attentive, and full of himself to be of any earthly good. Still, Jacob can't help but be swayed. He's a smart guy, but his need is simply too great to allow him to completely dismiss this call to transcendence.

Jacob's desperate grasping after meaning does not spin the plot out of control only because of the grounding presence of his sage cameraman, whose gentle spiritual wisdom is the ballast in Jacob's tempest.

The visual symbolism in the film is awe-inspiring, a rare treat in a world where commercial filmmakers insist they don't have time to insert messages most people just won't get. We often see, for example, a close-up of Jacob's wife's wedding ring leaning against Jacob's ring, and Jacob toying with them with his thick fingers, trying to come to terms with the demise of a union that felt like it should have been eternal.

There's another cinematographic metaphor worth noting, and that's the large mirror that Jacob, in his hunt for Mr. Saintly-Face, has covered with maps and stickies, all scribbled over with arrows and notes *à la* John Nash. Clearly Jacob is busying his mind and body in order to avoid facing his true self. Of course in the end all that paper has to come down so that, like it or not, he can stare himself in the face.

This film was open-source funded through [Kickstarter](#). A heart-felt thanks to everyone who supported it; if I'd known about it I would have supported it, too. It's a significant and highly engaging commentary on human existence, delivered amazingly well on a very limited budget. And I really hope the actors get paid, because boy do they deserve it.

*Problem of Evil* manifests seven of the Mindful Bard's [criteria](#) for films well worth seeing.

It's authentic, original, and delightful.

It poses and admirably responds to questions that have a direct bearing on my view of existence.

It stimulates my mind.

It's about attainment of the true self.

It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.

It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.

It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, 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.*



Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Dear Barb:

**Dear Barb:**

*Tina and I have been best friends for fifteen years. We get along really well for the most part. Tina's boyfriend and I were friends on facebook, therefore I was taken back when, one day out of the blue, Tina told me that her boyfriend was getting tired of seeing posts from me and was going to unfriend me. I was so upset by her comment, that I told Tina it was okay and that I would unfriend him so he didn't have to. She never said anything, so I went ahead and unfriended him. Since then Tina's boyfriend has not communicated with me. I sent him messages on facebook and he just ignores me. As well, numerous times I have suggested to Tina that we get together with our boyfriends and she always makes excuses as to why that is not possible. Recently I mentioned to Tina that I hoped her boyfriend was not upset that I unfriended him on facebook. I reminded her that she told me he was going to unfriend me and that's why I did it. Tina said "oh Jay would have never unfriended you." Then I asked her why she said he was going to unfriend me. This was all done through email and facebook chat. I have not heard back from her since the last email. Not sure whether I should contact her, or just leave things up to her?*

**Cara.**

Hi Cara:

It sounds like there is a lot of miscommunication going on. Frequently this happens when you text and email, rather than speak face to face. Perhaps when your friend said her boyfriend was going to unfriend you she spoke without thinking, you overreacted, and now she doesn't know how to fix it. Tina needs to explain to her boyfriend what has transpired as he is probably thinking you have an issue with him, otherwise, why would you unfriend him? This situation could easily escalate to the point where the relationship may end if the four of you don't sit down and discuss things. Contact Tina and suggest a neutral place where the four of you could meet. I don't think you really want to throw away a fifteen year relationship. Hope this helps.

**Dear Barb:**

*I am having problems with my girlfriend. I know she has been seeing other guys behind my back, but I really love her. She keeps promising me that she won't do it again, but she does. Do you think I should end this relationship or keep trying. Help!*

**Ken**

Hello Ken:

You don't mention how long you have been in this relationship. Has she been doing this throughout the whole relationship, or is something triggering her behaviour. If this were a new occurrence in a long standing relationship then I would say go for counselling and try to find out what's going on. On the other hand if she has been carrying on like this throughout the whole relationship then maybe she is just not ready to settle down into a committed, monogamous relationship. In that case, it might be time to say goodbye and move on.

Thanks for your question!

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

## Comic

Wanda Waterman

# THE NONPARTISAN: ON BELIEF



Jews and Muslims are so caught up in their little rules and rituals they hardly know what's right or wrong anymore.



Christians and Buddhists have pacifist leaders, but they can't wait to pick fights with the Muslims.

And those New Age spiritual types think they can just chuck tradition and make up a new religion that serves their own selfish interests.



Atheists are the worst! Always trying to shove their blind cynicism down everyone's throats.

Golly! I guess it's best to just believe in nothing!



Heavens, no! Ya gotta believe in the ILLUMINATI! I'm tellin' ya, that alien race of lizards rules EVERYTHING!



WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



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

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## THE VOICE

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