



THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 15 2020-04-10

Health & Wellness Response The Industry of COVID-19

Emergency Preparedness Kits Planning for the *Next* Crisis

Easter Eggs 2020 Style Painted from the Heart

*Plus:
Beats from the Basement
Being Social at a Distance
and much more!*



CONTENTS

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

Features

The Health & Wellness Industry's Response	4
-------------------------------------------------	---

Articles

Editorial: <i>Reality is Setting in</i>	3
Don't Get Scammed.....	7
Book Review: <i>Mary Shelley's Frankenstein</i>	16
Social Activities While Social Distancing.....	18
The Food Challenge: <i>Baba Ganoush</i>	21

Columns

Fly on the Wall: <i>COVID-19 Can Suck an Egg</i>	8
The Struggling Student Rants: <i>Emergency Preparedness Kits</i>	11
Course Exam: <i>BIOL 204</i>	15
Beats from the Basement: <i>Feist</i>	20
The Study Dude: <i>The Zombie Methodology for Grad Success</i>	22
The Creative Spark: <i>Ten "Write What You Know" Mysteries</i>	24
Dear Barb: <i>Isolated Issues</i>	27

News and Events

AU-Thentic Events	6
Student Sizzle	14
Scholarship of the Week.....	26
AUSU Update	28

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

Editorial Reality is Setting In

Karl Low



I was planning, this week, to write an editorial about the Alberta Government's new legislation that allows them to create new legislation, and create special enforcement forces for that legislation, without ever having to have the new rules debates in our legislature. Tied to the emergency health regulations, this could allow them to do such things as unilaterally ban abortion in the province, or restart the eugenics program (if you don't know Alberta's history, this is one of the black spots on it) all in the name of public health. Will they? Probably not. But that they're giving themselves this ability is concerning. But then I got sidelined simply by the quality of the articles we have this week.

This is one of our better issues, folks, and while I'm expecting probably about three to four more issues that will be loaded with COVID-19 related content before people, writers included, start to become bored with it, this isn't that issue. So a good portion of our content is dealing with, in one manner or another, the fallout and reaction to the disease. In fairness, a reaction—and

call to (in)action—that most of us have never seen the likes of during our lifetimes.

I want to specifically note our feature article this week, where Natalia Iwanek gives a scathing review of the Health and Wellness Industry's response (not to be confused with the medial industry) to COVID-19. One line that struck me particularly from that article was where she notes that "I am torn between feelings of compassion and feelings of irrational rage," My immediate thought was that her rage does not seem that irrational to me. But you'll have to read the article and judge for yourself.

Also this week, we're featuring a Fly on the Wall. I'll be honest, I often don't feature these because they can be a little too dense, a little too abstract, to be the kind of reading that appeals to a wider audience. I like them for how they make me reconceptualize certain things, but I understand how that may be an acquired taste. But with this being easter weekend, a look at the history, meaning, and implications of Easter egg panting, especially in the context of COVID-19, struck me as something everybody could get a taste for.

Finally, the Angela Pappas brings us another Struggling Student Rants. In keeping with the COVID-19 theme, she's looking at Emergency Preparedness Kits and providing a lot of decent resources that you can use to create one, if you haven't already. I tend to feel that things are going to get worse yet before they get better, so the idea of being prepared, even if it winds up being over-prepared, might be something to consider.

And if that isn't enough, Xin Xu steps a bit away from her usual look at foods and reviewing to bring us some ideas of what we can do to keep ourselves amused in a time when so many of the things we used to do are closed or unavailable to us. It's worth the read if only for the link to a site that lets us play board games across the net. Like I needed something else to procrastinate with. But if you're up for a game of Catan or the like, and (obviously) can't get the gang together to play, then this might be a solid option.

Plus of course, we still have reviews, news, events, scholarships, advice, and more. So stay safe, wash your hands, and enjoy the read!

Self-Care & the Health & Wellness Industry's Response To COVID-19

Natalia Iwanek



Despite its seemingly altruistic name, the health and wellness industry has been steadily profiting from COVID-19, unconcerned with medical professionals' dire predictions of the pandemic's ultimate human cost, as well as society's current needs. Although the industry's exploitation of individuals' insecurities is not a new phenomenon, during the current pandemic, it feels particularly unethical.

In recent years, the health and wellness industry's marketing strategies have focused on nutrition, fitness, beauty, and anti-aging sectors, with a variety of celebrities and social media

influencers promoting brands and techniques. To this day, media overflows with celebrity endorsements for diet and workout tips. Although the industry purports to be accessible to all, it typically markets products and services toward a certain demographic, namely those of upper to middle class, able bodied, white women. A leading example of this is a well-known celebrity wellness blog, which touts toilet paper for over \$900 USD, 18K gold dumbbells valued at over \$125,000 USD, and a thousand dollar water filter.

The industry's catchphrase is often "self-care;" a focus on prioritizing one's needs, rest, nutritious meals, meditation and exercise. However, while some trace the idea of self-care to historian Michel Foucault, today's modern self-care movement stems from the words of many women of colour, including feminist and poet Audre Lorde and writer and activist Angela Y. Davis, considered self-care to be a radical political act, protecting and preserving the Black community. After her diagnosis with cancer for a second time, Lorde stated, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. Instead, "[i]t is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

Since then, various activist, feminist, and queer movements have taken up this message. However, by marketing itself to a certain demographic, the wellness industry negates the idea that true wellness requires addressing systemic and structural inequalities, such as poverty, institutionalized racism, discrimination, and barriers to health care. Self-care means community care; it also means racial justice, disability justice, and gender justice.

Recently, amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, the health and wellness industry's actions have been particularly unsettling, including those of yoga studios. Although the roots of yoga can be traced to ancient Indian scripts, the core principles of yoga were set during the fifth century BCE, including analyzing perception and cognition, raising and expanding consciousness, and being a path to omniscience. Unlike its spiritual origins, today's yoga has been commodified into a \$27 billion dollar industry, with paraphernalia, seminars, retreats, clothing, and even classes, such as drunk yoga, with poses such as Twerking Downward Dog, as well as Alpaca, rage, naked, and

reindeer-forms of yoga. In addition, despite yoga being a way for people to control stress, maintain mental health, and ease pain, it is often expensive and inaccessible to many.

Recently, some yoga studios have become increasingly predatory, in a time when society needs them most. Although understandable that, as businesses, they have overhead costs, some are simply charging similar fees for online classes, while many longtime members have much less disposable income and increased stress. Amielle Christopherson, a student at the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus, states, "When all of this started and my yoga studio talked about having sessions available online through Zoom, I was excited." This excitement was short-lived. She continues, "Despite the fact that many people have lost their jobs, are waiting for EI to kick in, and are unsure of what's going to happen, my yoga studio hasn't changed their prices. And while I understand that it's tricky (their instructors also have THEIR own bills to pay, etc.) it also leaves those of us who find ourselves without income in an unfortunate position. I can't afford to shell out \$15/class when I can find free alternatives elsewhere. However, those free alternatives aren't with an instructor I really like and a class I've come to enjoy and find comfort in. The sense of community I'd built in those classes is now inaccessible to me in a time when I could really use them because I don't have enough money to access it, which seems counter to what yoga (and health and wellness in general) is all supposed to be about. It's disappointing that a practice that should be there in times of need is blocked by a paywall, even while I understand the difficulty in bringing down prices."

Other yoga studios may even be endangering their clients. Delta, B.C's Bikram Yoga Delta has recently promoted the misinformation that hot yoga can prevent COVID-19, to which B.C.'s health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry retorted that yoga studios are, in fact, the perfect place for the virus to spread. When bylaw officials arrived to investigate, the owner refused to stop their class, leading the inspectors to suspend the business license.

Fortunately, positives have been seen in this grim situation as well. Some studios, such as Kamloops's Yoga Loft are offering a free online 30 days of gentle yoga and meditation, while others are offering classes by donation.

In other predatory behaviour, the health and wellness industry, which often promotes extreme weight loss goals, has also been profiting on people's vulnerabilities during this time. An example of this is the various online MLMs, or multi-level marketing, which offer a range of wellness products ranging from skin care to vitamins. Fears of weight gain and social media trends, such as Instagram's #corona15, in which various online coaches and influencers offer tips on avoiding weight gain (a 15 pound gain being the meme behind the hashtag) during the pandemic, have led to an increase in sales and promotions on weight loss products.

This trend is disturbing, as fatphobia, or bias against someone based on their weight, remains a factor in our society, including the job market. Concordia University's assistant professor Angela Alberga's research into the topic reveals, "fatphobia doesn't just affect job growth, it creeps into every aspect of a person's life." Along with career limitations, she believes that fatphobia causes psychological harm. The University of Alberta's Mary Forhan, PhD, believes, "Weight bias ... [makes] assumptions about a person's value, aptitude, abilities, goals and attributes based on their body size and shape. ... Limit[ing] ... opportunities for a person to engage and participate fully in roles and activities that are meaningful or necessary." Fatphobia or weight bias can be dangerous to one's health as well, as the idea that the controversial BMI, or body mass index equals health persists to this day, which often results in dismissive behaviour and poor care by health care professionals.

Unfortunately, these examples are part of a much larger pattern in the often-problematic nature of the industry. Calls for vegan lifestyle may not take into consideration the social costs, such as the plight of migrant field workers, or food deserts that exist in impoverished areas, or the difficulty of doing so in a society in which fast food is cheaper than fresh foods as a result of lack of super markets and farmers markets. At times, the social costs are even greater, with traditional and nourishing foodstuffs no longer being available in their communities of origin, or the harms of monoculture as seen in the examples of soy's deforestation and quinoa in Peru. A reliance on crystals for energy and healing, is not often discussed with consideration of the global mining industry's lack of regulation. Often no guarantee exists that these crystals were not mined along with conflict copper, gold, and cobalt, which are known for various labour abuses, exploitation, human rights violations, and environmental harm. Other examples include the appropriation and overuse of white sage, traditionally used by Indigenous communities and the commercialization of sacred Ayuhuasca ceremonies.

In addition, for those with health problems, health and wellness industry proponents often interject unsolicited health advice in the form of helpful suggestions, or "But have you tried ...?" Recommendations include the staples of the industry: yoga, MLM vitamins and supplements, veganism, energy crystals, and green smoothies. Those on their receiving end of this advice often feel compelled to reveal intimate details about their conditions, as they try to explain why they cannot simply try a vitamin or drastically change their diet. Although often coming from a place of kindness, these suggestions imply that all bodies are the same, without taking into consideration human uniqueness. More importantly, they invalidate an individual's experience, as well as placing the blame on individuals for their continuing illness; surely, one could heal if they truly tried. Unfortunately, no amount of kale, positive thinking, or good vibes will cure autoimmune conditions, mental illness, Autism spectrum disorder, diabetes, or cancer. In addition, the movement to "cure" some of these conditions often inspires fears of a slippery slope to eugenics.

AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

Talk to a Librarian Drop-In Session: Using E-book Readers

Wed, Apr 15, 9:00 to 9:30 am MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library
news.athabascau.ca/events/talk-to-a-librarian-drop-in-session-april15
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

MBA for Executives Webinar

Wed, Apr 15, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
news.athabascau.ca/events/mba-for-executives-webinar-20200415
Register through above link

Research Webinar Series: Why Open Educational Resources are essential for blockchain solutions

Wed, Apr 15, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MDT
Online via Skype

Hosted by AU
news.athabascau.ca/events/research-webinar-series-oer-for-blockchain
Access Skype link through above link

AUSU Council Changeover Meeting

Thur, Apr 16, 6:30 to 8:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AUSU
www.ausu.org/event/april-council-changeover-meeting/
No pre-registration required; e-mail governance@ausu.org for meeting package

Talk to a Librarian Drop-In Session: Using E-book Readers

Fri, Apr 17, 3:00 to 3:30 pm MDT
Online

Hosted by AU Library
news.athabascau.ca/events/talk-to-a-librarian-drop-in-session-april17
No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

All events are free unless otherwise noted.

For many communities, the very idea that they are in some way inadequate, faulty, and in need of a cure, is incredibly offensive, as well as dangerous.

Speaking from personal experience, when my illness first appeared, I was bombarded with well-meaning but ultimately misguided suggestions on how to cure myself, including energy healers, meditation, yoga, green smoothies, and vitamins. Although I support the idea that a powerful mind-body-soul connection exists, what has truly given me some semblance of my life back is my team of medical professionals who monitor my complex symptoms. The implication that I remained ill, stemming from my lack of resolve, was insulting and hurtful.

Admittedly, during this pandemic, positive thinking and focusing on health and wellness assuredly has benefits. However, perhaps what is truly needed right now is the idea of self-care as community care. As we struggle, we should not forget those who will be disproportionately affected—those of the lower socio-economic levels, the elderly, those living with disabilities and chronic illnesses, marginalized communities, migrant workers, sex workers, communities of colour, as well as undocumented individuals.

As the media constantly reassures the public that only a small percentage of people will die from COVID-19, remember that every single one these individuals, including myself, has a right to life. How unfortunate that empathy is often revealed only by putting a face to statistics, how truly sad that, we, as a society have become so desensitized to death in our communities, and worldwide. Human life should matter in the abstract, not only one's relation to others or contribution to society. In our current economic system, in which the health and wellness industry exists, production and consumer spending are valued above all else. My life, as well as many others, are considered expendable.

Although I had come to this realization long ago, the implications are much more terrifying within this context of our current collective trauma. Who deserves to live, and who is considered a necessary sacrifice? Unfortunately, although we are still in the early phases of COVID-19, reports have already surfaced of the rationing of life support for weaker patients and pharmaceutical companies withholding medication, while thanking patients for their “sacrifice.” As a result of Trump's unproven claims about certain medications treating COVID-19, many patients with various autoimmune diseases, now find themselves facing a shortage of their medication. In Canada, there have been reports of doctors stockpiling and prescribing the medications for friends and family, one of which I currently take.

Recently, as society struggles with isolation, which I am accustomed to, I am torn between feelings of compassion and feelings of irrational rage, knowing that while many will survive this, many will needlessly die, as well as knowing that many will come away from this experience with no greater empathy for those who live this daily reality. When this is all over, perhaps, instead of supporting industries that market “cures” and narcissistic self-care, we instead create a true wellness community, one that takes the time to understand and appreciate the different life experiences and inherent value of its varied members. Admitting that structural problems exist in our society is not negativity, as often derided by health and wellness proponents, it is the first step to validating the experiences of those most often silenced and moving forward to resolution.

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Fly on the Wall COVID-19 Can Suck an Egg

Jason Sullivan



Easter Eggs, 2020 Style

Imagine back, way back, to 4500 BCE at a humble hunting and gathering settlement in Western Ukraine. That's where the earliest paintings of decorated eggs were discovered (Baring & Cashford, 61). What joy these ancient people must have felt at the advent of spring! 6,600 years later their painted treasures convey a delicate brilliance familiar to us as we celebrate Easter. Nowadays Easter is celebrated as "the first Sunday after the full moon date, based on mathematical calculations, that falls on or after March 21". It's possible that ancient astronomers may have held to that same date for spring celebrations. The stars, unlike our cultures and lifestyles, are basically timeless.

Framing Easter Egg Reality

The world's largest Easter egg, a Ukrainian 'Pysanka', is displayed in Vegreville, Alberta. The

Pysanka's splendid and intricate decorations are a reminder that in artful celebrations what matters most often transcends the mass-produced simplifications on offer from the passing and seasonal world of consumerism. In a year where wanton shopping is frowned upon, the opportunity arises to engage in the custom of egg-painting. What counts as normal Easter behavior is contained by an invisible framework of expectation and Easter eggs, as art or confection, are no exception. Normal appears to have no boundary; it's disguised as natural. Georg Simmel describes how this framed reality appears and disappears with sleight of hand akin to the dispensation of eggs by an Easter Bunny: "Within actual space an object can be touched, whereas in a painting it can only be looked at; each portion of real space is experienced as part of an infinite expanse, but the space of a picture is experienced as a self-enclosed world; the real object interacts with everything that surges past or hovers around it, but the content of a work of art cuts off these threads, fusing only its own elements into self-sufficient unity. Hence, the work of art leads its life beyond reality" (Simmel in Goffman, 249). Whether an egg or a moment feels authentic depends upon the production of a believable performance.

Eggs Painted from The Heart

Many of us know that the word Easter derives from words for Estrus, signifying the many pregnancies, peregrinations, and germinations endemic to the inchoate blossom season. Painting eggs allows us to express ourselves anew in a dialectic of growth and production. Unique and irreplaceable, just like our AU journeys through academia, Easter eggs can express all that we are and yearn to be. Painting one's a solo, individualized project, even as we share the process with others at the table. This year, as we are sheltered in place rather than bustling through a marketplace, we might as well enjoy the unique creative capacities derived from the act of painting Easter eggs.

What does the shared joy of egg-painting signify, though? The devilled eggs are in the details, as it were. First, we have to drain (or suck!) eggs from their shells (although some folks forgo this step and hard-boil their eggs, the better to eat them with). In any case the key component is the preparation of a pristine canvas on which to project our colourful desires. Inside is an empty shell, an apparent nothing; *rien*, as Louis XVI famously wrote in his hunting journal the day the Bastille, unbeknownst to him, was stormed by revolutionaries. With Easter eggs it's what's outside that counts and that's precisely because we project what's inside ourselves onto that smooth oval surface. While Hallowe'en pumpkins tend to be trite or comic, there's an ethereal, even sultry, joy in utilizing our inner artistic side to paint eggshells in tones gentle or brash.

Goffman's Dramaturgy: The Drama of Creative Urges Meeting Social Norms

Another small Alberta town, Mannville, had a famous export to the world named Erving Goffman. His sociological studies of the drama of everyday life, whereby we each pull off a performance of ourselves in a range of given settings, set the frame for how social theorists observe and record human interactions. We're always in a social reality, never truly alone with our thoughts without socialized feelings of self-awareness and conscience. So the definition of a situation, and it's corresponding framework, conveys a metamorphic kaleidoscope of colour, hue, and tone. Meaning is a collective, social, process that creates a believable reality. In playful times, like during egg painting, make-believe involves a playful act that exists solely for pleasurable ends. Such timeless moments of joy are best enjoyed as they are, rather than with too much premeditation. Says Jacob Brackman, a moment's inevitable ephemerality means that its meaning can never be repeated in all its glory: "once the vision's devoured, mulched and incorporated, unless it has been frozen somewhere, its moment...is lost forever" (Brackman in Goffman, 16). To truly enjoy Easter as we are is to dispense with expectation and embrace traditions as we imagine them to be. In other words, to make Easter personal, as AU similarly allows us to personalize our education.

How we act only appears natural after a period of learning what counts as normal. In each cultural setting crucial claims of authenticity are on display: whether our behaviour and dress pass as appropriate in a given setting depends on the interpretation of others. So to paint an Easter egg is a chance to share creativity with others while also breaking the bounds of the frame of expectations—an egg is our blank slate of expressive possibility.

Comedy thrives on exploring the consequences of what Goffman termed *breaking frame*. In Easter egg-painting it's practically unheard of for an egg to be adorned with a crucifixion scene, complete with blood trailing down and around the egg like a runny yolk, for instance. Creativity has limits based on the frame defined by the group. Thus, each moment of social life is, for Goffman, a performance on a stage or in a courtroom where a jury of our peers decides whether our actions fit the code of respectability. What feels right in an instance is thus problematized; we're surrounded by cues and reinforcements that herd us, lambl-like, into pastures of respectability.

What counts as an appropriate performance is laced with ambivalence, however. As Goffman is apt to slyly add: "whatever it is that generates sureness is precisely what will be employed by those who wish to deceive us" (Goffman, 249). Easter advertising in normal years is a good example; cheap chocolate becomes plentiful as though the Easter spirit comes prepackaged in garish colours. Easter celebrations likewise can seem a bit contrived. Yet, when unusual behaviour is permitted (when 'breaking frame' becomes a temporary norm) magical things can happen.

For decades my hometown had an annual 'Easter Egg Drop' of thousands of eggs from a helicopter. Kids would scurry in all directions to scoop up the booty and there would be inevitable collisions and scuffles. It was like throwing meat morsels into a chicken run. The ensuing pandemonium was a rare instance of helter-skelter public activity breaking the normal frame of social interactions. Perhaps it let off some steam from what, like every Holiday, can feel like a stultifying occasion.

Goffman would have loved the Easter egg drop, I figure, and he'd have been fascinated by viral videos of idiots fighting over toilet paper as though their sustenance depended upon it.

Even the best performance of Easter fun requires an active participation of others akin to suspension of disbelief in a short story. In fact, the more fantastical fun becomes, the more it serves to uphold the abject myth that real reality is somehow less fake than the make believes we engage in. Social life never 'just is' and we can rarely just 'be ourselves'. Yet, we can overcome contrivance and demonstrate how much acting goes on to make the social normal happen. To flip the board at a games table thus becomes a potential praxis for life itself; painting Easter eggs at home during this troubled time likewise represents a challenge to the 'loss' of access to the capitalist marketplace.

Painting eggs is an opportunity to exfoliate our spirits, then, and this to break the albumen of social isolation. The real world of our lived experiences comes to fruitful expression when we translate it onto a creative canvas: in this case, an egg suffices to embody a transubstantiation of our intangible yet authentic dreams onto a tangible, physical, landscape. If social distancing were lifted today there would still not be a store where one could purchase that sense of exhilaration from painting an egg and saying 'I made this, this is me!' As Henry Miller put it in a book title: *To Paint Is To Love Again*.

So, if Easter feels a bit hollow this year, we can remember that all social interactions are a bit hollow in that we're expected to act in approved ways regardless of how authentic they make us feel. Easter this year might feel surreal or abnormal, but it was all a bit of an act anyway; we make the world appear as it does, but our outer realm is naturally separated from the inner life of our heart and mind. A great opportunity awaits us this Easter if we choose to embrace it: a chance to make our time in isolation with our beloveds an experience and expression that is truly our own.

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The Struggling Student Rants Emergency Preparedness Kits

Angela Pappas



A Necessity Not to be Laughed at.

Most people are, by now, at least a couple weeks into their social distancing. Some AU students are already used to staying indoors since there's no need to venture outside; we already get a great education through AU. Others were already working from home before this and are well-familiarized with telecommuting. Many AU students even live in remote areas, and these people tend to have a great survival mindset. They understand what emergency provisions should, and shouldn't, look like. Yet, the panic and chaos that ensued last month, for the majority of the population, is an obvious sign of how underprepared society is.

Most people didn't expect this to happen this fast and at such a large scale. Only underground-bunker survivalists are smirking right now and thinking, "I told you so." The importance of being better prepared for next time is now obvious. It's not a matter of if there will be a next

time, but how soon it will happen again once this storm has passed. Risk management and legal blogs are now warning organizations that this new state of affairs is not going to be a one-off. Society needs to have a better resiliency strategy going forward. Stowing away a few basic emergency supplies at home is no longer something people laugh at. Many agree it is essential in keeping you and your family safe during crises.

If you're still a skeptic, keep in mind things could have been much worse, like in other countries outside Canada. Not only could all the grocery stores and pharmacies have shut down, but the power could have gone out; the Internet could have gone down; water treatment plants could have all come to a standstill. Even the hospitals could have closed shop, leaving us with no essential services whatsoever. This is why I'm such a persistent advocate of each family sitting down together and formulating a clear, no-nonsense plan. There's no better time than now, since we're all indoors together, even though we're all isolated. The one obstacle I perceive, nevertheless, is that knowing where to start is no longer as inherent to human nature as it once was. As a society, we have grown comfortable with how there's a grocery store or the nearest Starbucks simply a few blocks away. We even have the luxury of all our necessities and treats now delivered right to our front door, with the click of a smartphone button.

So how to plan? A good place to start is the Canadian Federal government. They suggest having at least 72 hours of emergency supplies and rations available at all times ([Public Safety Canada, 2018](#)). Their website also has some very good resources, including basic emergency kit checklists.

A very reputable colleague and business continuity leader at [ISM Canada](#) gave the [Saskatchewan Risk Management Society](#) a brief lecture and presentation in 2018. This presentation focused on

how to fully prepare for a crisis like this. A couple tips she shared, which stuck with me, are incorporated in the summary given below. I am ashamed to admit, however, I never did find time to put together the zombie apocalypse backpacks she had suggested (sorry Shannon!).

Once we get through this pandemic, the backpacks will definitely move to the top of the to-do list. Regardless, the whole subject is fascinating. Virus or no virus, humans will always be susceptible to external threats beyond our control. Suddenly, the Americans with their underground bunkers don't seem so crazy after all.

Emergency Food

There are tons of websites out there selling emergency survival food and various food kits. A well-known emergency preparedness supplier is 72hours.ca. Their headquarters are in Burnaby, BC, but, there are other companies out there, as ready and willing to take your cash.

There are quite a few cool products out there, especially for the avid survivalist. Being the frugal one, however, I personally feel emergency survival food kits are just packets of really expensive, freeze-dried meal-replacement powder. I'm all for preparing, but with common sense. These emergency freeze-dried foods are just plainly impractical and could cover a mortgage payment instead. You can just as easily prepare meal kits by making a trip to Costco or even your local dollar store.

But you shouldn't get carried away and just start throwing anything and everything into your shopping cart. Kawashima, Morita, & Higuchi published a study in 2012 in the *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, assessing emergency stockpiling tendencies, at the household level, of emergency food supplies and drinking water. The results were a bit disheartening. They noted, "Urban residents ... may in fact be more vulnerable because they tend to take food supplies for granted. Emergency preparedness is thus also vital ... to minimize nutritional vulnerabilities" (p. 114).

The first point to keep in mind is that while every person has different dietary needs, you also want to aim for practicality. You aren't preparing for long-term sustainability, you're preparing for short-term survival. Therefore, you want to aim for foods that are nutritionally dense and forgo the Twinkies for now. If you're uncertain about where to start looking, there are plenty of resources to get information from—searching for them isn't always obvious, though. A good place to start would be the U.S. Department of Defence. They have, unsurprisingly, funded countless studies on how to keep their soldiers going in survival mode. Log in to the AU Library, or even open up Google Scholar, and look up "Emergency Food" or "Military Ration Bars" to discover some of their whitepapers. You won't be disappointed with the collection of reading material. The main theme throughout is consistent—emergency survival foods should have a long shelf life and high nutritional content. Some quick tips follow:

Edible

The very best emergency foods are items your family will actually eat. In emergency situations, you don't want your family to reach the point of starvation before they start to eat the Styrofoam.

No Prepping Needed

You should aim for food items which are easy to prepare, or need no prepping at all. It's unlikely you'll find time to look up a recipe on Pinterest or will be able to track down a muffin pan and Pam, in the middle of a nuclear attack or an alien invasion.

Lightweight

Next time, we may not have the luxury of being quarantined like we are in our current situation. Call me crazy, but it's possible we'll all have to start running for the hills the next time something happens, with no warning or time to prepare in advance. Therefore, emergency food should be light enough to carry around and, consequently, unless you plan on feeding the masses, emergency food in bulk should be avoided. This is because most foods with a long shelf life only stay fresh until you break open the seal or jar. After that, you better make sure it doesn't need refrigeration or is completely consumed in one sitting. Carrying around giant cans of five-pound beans in your backpack for days, only to have your picky toddlers eat two bites and then throwing it all away, would be enough to make anyone go postal.

Finally, let's not forget the emotional side of dealing with an emergency. Comfort foods and smells often help those going through rough times crack a smile, possibly just when it's needed the most.

Emergency Sanitation Supplies

Now, to address the other side. It's not the greatest thing to think about, but look at what just happened. We will forever be remembered throughout history for our toilet paper hysteria. Avid campers understand that plumbing will likely be unavailable after a major crisis or disaster. You also have to consider that any given situation could call for the masses to remain indoors—or outdoors—with no plumbing for months. And if you think that sounds horrible, imagine being cooped up not just with family, but with many other strangers and with no concrete deadline to look forward to. I foresee the ER being flooded with people suffering from bowel impaction already—if they are able to remain open, that is.

The nonobvious solution some urbanites are aware of is camping toilets or emergency toilets. While there are websites out there selling five-gallon buckets with toilet seats glued on them, for \$50 a pop, putting something together on your own is just as easy. You'll need an empty five gallon bucket, which you can get from Home Depot or your friendly neighbourhood family restaurant; 10 or 13 gallon trash bags; several plastic grocery store trash bags; medium-absorption sawdust or peat moss; and a pool noodle (yes, you read that right). Don't forget the toilet paper!

Store all this with the remaining of your emergency supplies, so if you ever need it you know where it is and you can assemble it quickly. When the time comes, where you need to use it, place the ten-gallon trash bag in the five-gallon bucket. Then, line the bottom of the trash bag with a handful of the sawdust or peat moss. On top of that, insert the plastic grocery store bag and fold it over the rim. Cut a slit through one side of the pool noodle, all the way down, and place it around the bucket rim for a comfy sitting. Add another handful of the sawdust or peat moss in the plastic grocery store bag, and you're ready to go! After each use, tie the grocery store bag closed. Leave that bag at the bottom of the five-gallon bucket, and fold a new bag overtop that. Once the five-gallon bucket is full, you can transfer all the contents to a large trashcan — or whatever you can find given the situation.

But if you're not handy and insist on spending your cash, you can search for "Emergency Bucket Toilet Seat" on Amazon or 72hours.ca. Additionally, for those readers feigning shock and disgust at the above instructions, please let me know how your search for a "proper loo" goes in the middle of a FEMA, Public Safety Canada, or Canadian Red Cross rescue and relief mission. See what I did there?

Regardless of how we carry on with our days indoors for now, things will eventually return to normal—whether it's in a week, a month, or six. And we will all likely forget and move on. That is a small part of what it means to be human. We will all, once again, start running around, like chickens out of the coop, and reminisce of the opportunity we had to stand still. This can be an opportunity to let the days simply pass through mind-numbing entertainment. Or we can choose to spend time with our loved ones, let go of some stressors, and be better prepared for next time. Let's all try not to forget all the promises we made to ourselves, to our fellow humans, and to our planet -- even if we do all return to business as usual.

Siri, remind me in six months to start putting the zombie backpacks together

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Angela Pappas is a part-time AU Certificate student who enjoys learning and discussing anything personal finance and personal development related.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.

AthaU Facebook Group

Olivia asks about other students' experiences in appealing an assignment grade; lots of good feedback from students who have been-there-done-that. Madison wants to add a Psyc major to her existing degree without putting in another four years; responses point her to the "add a major" option and also to AU's advising services.

Other posts include scheduling exams through ProctorU, self tests, waiting for courses to appear in myAU, alternatives to paper exams, and courses COMP 200, LBST 330, and PSYC 323.

reddit

A trio of queries relating to courses ADMN 233, HADM 339, and MGSC 301.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Feel like you're transitioning from parent to homeschool teacher? We've curated the best tips, guides, courses, apps, tools, and more, to help parents navigate the online learning space. <https://bit.ly/2JAzg6r>."

@austudentsunion tweets: "We know #AthabascaU students are often juggling a lot of life commitments in addition to their studies, like work and family. If you are balancing a lot in your life, apply for our AUSU Balanced Student Awards, worth \$1000 each! Apply online by May 1. ausu.org/services/scholarships-awards/."



Course Exam**Brittany Daigle**

BIOL 204 (Principles of Biology I) is a three-credit introductory general biology course and the first of two introductory biology courses that will prepare students for second-year biology courses. This course is designed to help students learn more about the nature of life, and topics include enzymes, cells, cellular respiration, photosynthesis, classical genetics, modern genetics, and molecular biology. BIOL 204 does not have any prerequisites, however, senior-level high school biology is strongly recommended. This course is not available for challenge.

Students should note that this course is delivered via an individualized or grouped study with a take-home lab component. Students who register into BIOL 204 will be charged a laboratory fee.

Principles of Biology I is made up of sixteen chapters, two assignments weighing ten percent each, two lab reports that weigh ten percent each, lab results worth five percent, a midterm examination weighing twenty percent, and a final examination for the remaining thirty-five percent. The sixteen chapters within this course cover many topics, such as energy, enzymes, cellular respiration, cell cycles, genes, chromosomes, DNA, photosynthesis, and much more. To receive credit for BIOL 204, students must achieve a course composite grade of at least a “D”, or fifty percent, and a grade of at least a fifty percent on the final examination.

The midterm and final examinations for this course must be taken online with an AU-approved exam invigilator at an approved invigilation center. It is your responsibility to ensure your chosen invigilation center can accommodate online exams.

Victoria Reid is from Edmonton, Alberta, and is a licensed practical nurse working in the operating room at the University of Alberta Hospital. She is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program with a major in Health Sciences. She explains that she “originally enrolled in 2015 in the LPN-BN bridging program. After about a year I decided I was actually craving a new career entirely and transferred into the science program.”

When asked to explain BIOL 204 to students who have yet to take it, Victoria states “Biology 204 (Principles of Biology I) is a very comprehensive course covering prokaryotic and eukaryotic diversity and cellular biology. This course is a prerequisite for nearly every higher-level biology course at Athabasca University and other institutions. It gives the foundation of knowledge needed to study further biology courses.”

As for the structure of the course, she explains that there are “two assignments which are a combination of short answer, definition/comparison and multiple-choice. There are several home labs, two lab reports, a midterm examination, and a final examination. The textbook is very necessary. All of the learning is from the required readings, and there are no supplemental materials. I also found that the study guides are not comprehensive. The exams for this course are formatted exactly like the assignments. There are multiple assignment versions and doing them all is an excellent way to prepare for the exams. The examinations are no more or less difficult than the assignments.”

When asked if she would recommend this course, Victoria states that it was “one of the most challenging classes I’ve taken, and a lot of work between the vast amount of information and labs and assignments.”

As for any tips or tricks to completing this course, Victoria states that “Khan Academy and crash course videos on YouTube are really helpful for understanding them many cellular processes that are taught in this class.”

Victoria also advises students who plan on enrolling into [BIOL 205](#) or [BIOL 207](#) (Principles of Biology II) to “hold on to your coursework from BIOL 204. It comes in handy when writing the lab reports and for succeeding in the in-person labs.”

Victoria’s had a good experience with her tutor for BIOL 204, stating “My tutor gave me topic summaries via email and was very responsive to emails and questions. She was a fair grader and gave a lot of great feedback in a timely manner.”

Whether BIOL 204 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics discussed above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning a lot of interesting material surrounding the topic of biology principles.

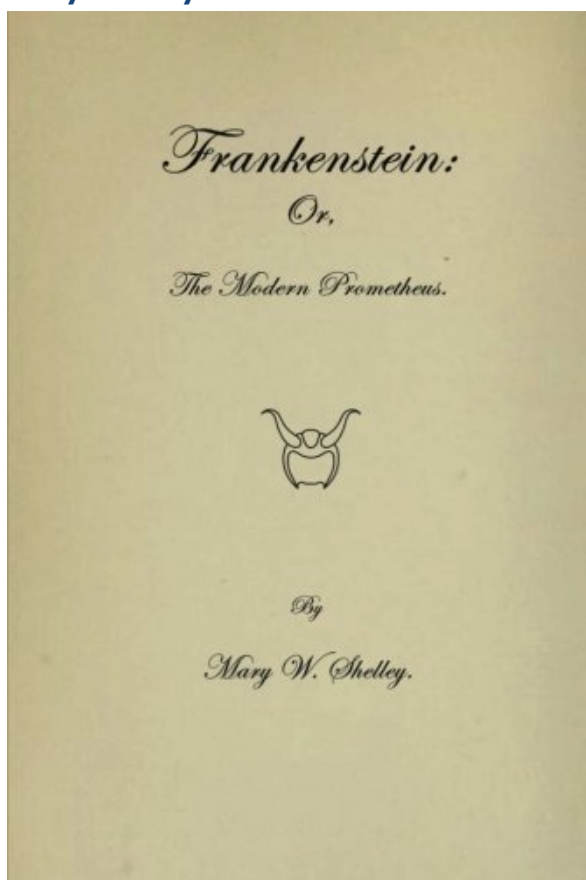
Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.



Book Review

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*

John Buhler



Faced with the current COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of social distancing, travel restrictions, and self-isolation, many of our regular pursuits and pastimes have been curtailed. This situation has affected schools, offices, stores, restaurants, bars, concert venues, airlines, public transit, and even fitness facilities. With everyone staying home and cocooning, it may be a good time to revisit at least one influential example of classic literature. While it may be more difficult to get our hands on a new copy of any book right now, several sources, including public libraries, provide online access to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (originally titled *Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus*). A quick search of my local library’s site, for example, brings up numerous e-book editions of the novel, including *Frankenstein: Annotated for Scientists, Engineers, and Creators of All Kinds*, a Spanish language version, downloadable audiobooks, and streaming video adaptations. Clearly, it’s an extremely popular story.

First published in 1818, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* belongs to the horror category, but was also instrumental in creating the science fiction genre. In the novel, Victor Frankenstein collects and connects parts from dead bodies, creating a living being. As soon as it’s brought to life, however, the scientist is repulsed by his creation, leaving it rejected and abandoned. As revenge, the creature murders Victor’s younger brother William. Even though Victor knows that his creation is the murderer, William’s nanny, Justine is blamed for the death, tried, and executed.

There are three more deaths in Victor's circle: the murder of his friend Clerval; the murder of Elizabeth, his new wife who also happens to be his adopted sister (suggesting that Victor's experiment wasn't the only problem affecting the family); and Victor's father, who dies from the combined grief of losing his son William, the beloved nanny Justine, and his daughter-in-law / adopted daughter, Elizabeth. Frankenstein eventually loses his own life when he attempts to hunt down and destroy his creation.

Modern readers may find the novel's pace slow, and dialogue wordy and overly elaborate, yet it's consistent with the literature of that era, and frankly not particularly intimidating. It's interesting to note how the narrative's point of view also changes over the course of the novel. It begins from the perspective of Robert Walton, the captain of a ship exploring the arctic, and his encounter with Victor Frankenstein. Frankenstein continues the story, relating his early life, scientific studies, his single-minded effort to improve upon humanity, and the creation of the being that he instills with life (but never names). The creature then describes how he teaches himself to read and write, his struggles and his loneliness, and his demand that Frankenstein build a mate for him, a demand to which the scientist initially agrees. Afterward, Frankenstein again takes over the narrative. He decides to abandon his efforts to create the companion, and then witnesses his creature's retaliation. Finally, the story concludes with Walton as the observer as Frankenstein dies and the creature disappears.

While it may be written in an older literary style, Shelly's novel successfully conveys an eeriness surrounding Frankenstein's single-minded scientific pursuit, and then the threat posed by the creature turned stalker and killer. In some ways, this early 19th century story seems to be a predecessor of the engineered and weaponized superheroes and supervillains that are part of the recent X-Men series.

Shelly's novel exhibits the spirit of discovery and enquiry that characterized the early 19th century. Captain Walton, who relates part of the story through his letters, is on an arctic expedition when he encounters Frankenstein and the creature. Though Shelley provides no details about the manner in which the creature is brought to life, we do know that around the time of the novel's writing, there was speculation that electricity could be used to reanimate the dead (which Shelley hints at in the introduction to the 1831 edition of the novel). Shelley's story also reflects the grim practices of medical science in the early 19th century, since in order to build his creation, Victor Frankenstein harvests tissues from the dead. At the time, body snatchers were actually stealing corpses for use in medical education, and over 10,000 bodies were stolen from British graveyards between 1800 and 1810.

While the practice of body snatching may have ended, Frankenstein's continued relevance comes from the ethical questions which it raises. Shelley's novel about a man taking on the role of God – and unleashing a monster – has implications for scientific experimentation on humans, genetic manipulation including the merging of human and animal DNA, the development of synthetic life and artificial intelligence, the harvesting and sale of human tissues and organs, human-induced climate change, and environmental devastation.

Unfortunately, many people are only familiar with cinematic versions of *Frankenstein*. (Many people also mistakenly believe that the creature is named Frankenstein). These films tend to feature an assortment of electrical contraptions that arc, spark, and crackle, the mandatory laboratory assistant (Fritz or Igor), and a mob of angry torch-bearing villagers chasing a monster with a flat skull. (Did Victor Frankenstein forget to replace the dome of his creature's skull after he inserted its brain?) Most of these images come from a 1931 Universal Pictures film directed by James Whale and starring Boris Karloff as the creature. None of these dramatic touches appear

in the novel. More importantly the films usually fail to give a sense of the novel's depth and complexity, and they overlook Shelley's suggestion that parenting and education make vital contributions to the development of character. Her intelligent, articulate, fast, and nimble creature is often depicted in film as unthinking and silent, only able to move slowly and awkwardly. Frankenstein's abandonment of his creature, which is so central to the original story, and which turns the creature into a monster, is rarely explored in cinematic adaptations of the story. While Shelley's novel reflects the issue of nature versus nurture, most films fail to consider this debate. For readers who might have an interest in this original, profound, and compelling story, the novel is well worth the effort.

John has his BGS from AU and started writing for The Voice Magazine while he was taking it in 2003.



Social Activities while Social Distancing

Xin Xu



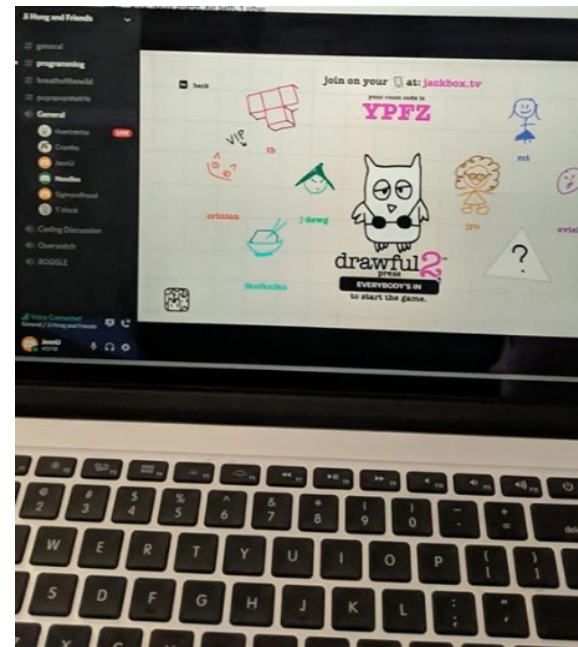
My cranberry walnut muffins turned out well after one baking lesson on Instagram

During this strangely apocalyptic time that appears straight out of a dystopian thriller movie, social distancing has been the centre of everyone's daily vocabulary. Social distancing is critical and could be the key to our future of reuniting with friends and our communities. However, in the meantime, social activities are still very possible using technology. One of the key changes in lifestyle surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic is staying connected from afar. Without these connections we've been accustomed to, we may feel frustrated and anxious. What are some strategies to stay connected without physically being together with loved ones and our community?

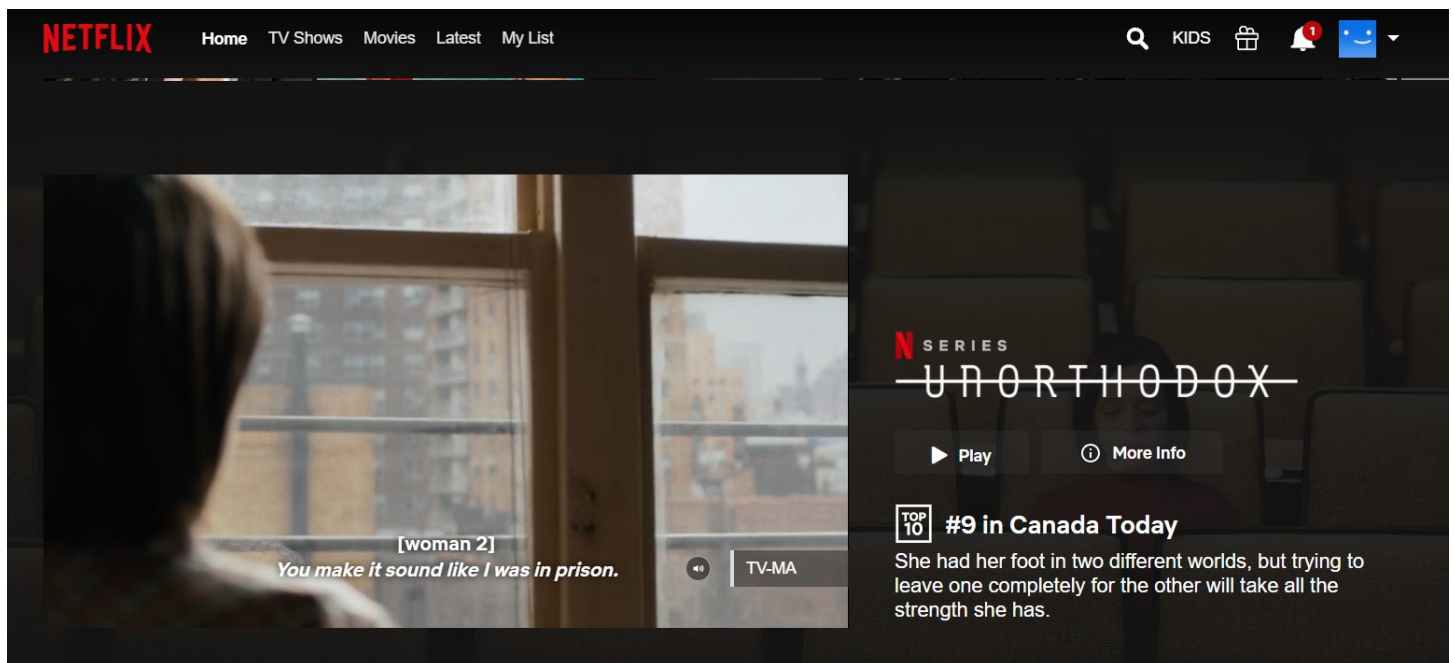
1. **Group cooking lessons:** Many celebrity chefs have begun hosting their own cooking classes online. Chefs like Jose Andres and Massimo Bottura have nightly episodes of Kitchen quarantine on their instagram accounts that share recipes using ingredients in your own fridge. No trips to the grocery store required! Others have created a live stream of themselves and their family cooking together virtually. If you're into developing your culinary expertise, these channels are a gold mine and can help make the whole quarantine experience more humane.
2. **Video Chat:** No surprises or gimmicks here. Regardless of whether it's professional or personal, video conferencing is a great way to stay connected. Sometimes having a heartfelt conversation helps keep us closer together during this uncertain time.
3. **Group workout sessions:** One of my favorite finds this week was group workout sessions that can be hosted by professional youtubers or even your own friends. Group workout sessions are excellent because they help keep us accountable during the pandemic. One of my personal worries is the challenge of snacking incessantly paired with dormant behavior

since the pandemic was declared a month ago. If the pandemic continues for months, it could impact our physical health as well as our mental well-being. Therefore, group workout sessions can be a solution that hits two birds with one stone.

4. **Online board games and party games:** Even for someone who doesn't regularly commit to video games, this was an eye-opening find. Particularly, many online games allow multiple players to join via their electronic device. For example, Jackbox games has an excellent online platform that is simple to use and fun. Instead of heading over to your favorite board game cafe, these virtual board games can help pass those Friday nights. Another great online platform is <https://boardgamearena.com> that offers a variety of games for both free and premium members.
5. **Group movies and Netflix binging:** While Netflix subscribers have jumped up since the start of social isolation, watching movies or TV series does not have to be a solo activity. In fact, instead of enjoying a movie with your housemates, try video conferencing an entire group at the same time. You might find that the little laughs and comments makes the experience of binge-watching Netflix a lot more humane. Besides, who wouldn't want to have a full-blown discussion after the first episode of Tiger King?



This online group drawing game makes Friday nights a memorable time



Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot breeder and tea-connoisseur.



Beats from the Basement Feist

Milica Markovic



Mid-2000s music was marked by a battle of the opposites; you either jammed out to Flo Rida's racy "Low" at your *low*-budget school dance or daydreamed to Colbie Caillat's relaxing "Bubbly" during a sunlit recess.

Originating in Calgary, singer-songwriter Leslie Feist's contributions to indie folk-pop place her in the latter category. With a robust yet angelic voice like Florence Welch of Florence and The Machine to warm up the studio and her Juno Award-winning album, *The Reminder*, Feist was a crowd favourite who loosened up the craze-filled music charts more than just a smidgen.

Granted, while her lyrics are poetically thoughtful, some of the tracks overstate their ambience to the point of stultifying the listener. One example is "The

Water", which implicitly references Peggy's Cove in Halifax as the backdrop for how desolate and uncertain human life can be because of how it disconnects from nature. The music should've been ominously engaging, but instead is just another one for the lounge.

Luckily, the majority of the album makes up for it, with "Honey, Honey" as a truly spooky song by contrast. Feist sings about someone she misses and is unsure whether he will return to her from his exciting travels out at sea. What follows are hauntingly sweet "choo choo train" vocals, the 8-bit-style effects the acoustic guitar manages to recreate, and a weeping electric guitar reminiscent of Chris Isaak's "Wicked Games". Clearly, there's no time to cry when there's art to be made.

"I Feel It All" is another one of Feist's mature pieces. She addresses the importance of balance and responsibility in human relationships; these ideas can be abused, leaving people hurt, unless we promote growth through honesty and goodwill. The song picks up the pace with bouncy piano chords, and her vocals become more passionate as it goes on, compelling you to reflect on the relationships in your own life.

The clever metaphors continue in "My Moon My Man," in which both she and the production sound like a charming blend between Nina Persson of The Cardigans and Sara Bareilles, just more mysterious. Much like the moon's phases, Feist's in-song partner goes through different moods, causing problems in their romance. Even though she feels she should leave, the love that is there means a lot to her, and is uneasy about trying with someone else. I think many couples who experience rough patches will relate to her words; when you care for someone, you're more inclined to learn from what's going wrong and how to fix it to grow together.

Finally, I can't sign off without mentioning her critically acclaimed hit, "1234". It is one of the cutest songs I have heard in my life about the naivety of teenage crushes. The highlights for me are the brass section's march and piano glissando that's like the happy ending to a children's movie.

Nowadays, Feist isn't in the spotlight as much, but you can still occasionally catch her on the radio. Newer artists in the genre seem to be emerging though, like Torontonians Barbra Lica, so it's good to know there's always room for those quieter moments amidst all the noise.

Milica Markovic is a Toronto AU student enrolled in the MA-IS program with a BA in criminology and political science.



The Food Challenge

Baba Ganoush

Corey Wren



Two weeks ago, I challenged my three kids to think of a country they would like to visit. I further instructed them to choose a few dishes that we could cook, which would allow us to explore some of the culture unique to that country. My youngest, who is six, said she wanted to try food from Egypt because she misses one of her classmates that was born there. An unfortunate side effect of COVID-19.

After a little research and some discussion, we were able to find a few recipes, but I had to put my spin on them too. Our favourite was incredibly easy to make and lent itself well to dipping. Baba Ganoush is a simple recipe to make and required very little prep, so do not let the steps below discourage you; I've tried to be very thorough. Plus, it's packed with flavour and nutrients.

I hope you enjoy it!! Stay tuned next week for a little dish from Russia, with love.

Baba Ganoush

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

This dip is considered vegan and is gluten-free.

Ingredients:

One eggplant – sliced ¼" thick

Kosher salt

Olive oil

1 clove of garlic finely minced

2 TBSP Lemon juice

2 TBSP tahini

2 TBSP cilantro roughly chopped

Tahini is a sesame paste, and it's available in ethnic isles at most grocery stores. It's usually in a decent size plastic jar, and it is also an ingredient in hummus, so use it often if you like hummus.

Directions

1. Place your sliced eggplant on a wire rack over the sink or a cookie sheet. Sprinkle with liberally with salt on both sides. You are looking to get some of the moisture out of the eggplant.
2. Move one of the oven racks to the highest position, and turn the oven on to broil.
3. After 10 minutes, rinse the pieces under running cool water. Place on a towel and pat until dry.

4. Then place them onto a baking sheet and drizzle with some olive oil. You may use a pastry or silicone brush if you would rather. Brush both sides of the eggplant with the oil.
5. Place the tray into the oven and broil for 3-5 minutes per side. You want it to brown slightly.
6. Once both sides are brown, you may wrap them in foil for five more minutes then remove the skin. Alternatively, you can use the eggplant as is.
7. Place the browned eggplant into a food processor and pulse about 4 times for 3 seconds each time.
8. Add in the tahini, 1 TBSP of lemon juice, and garlic. Pulse again for another 5 seconds. Taste it.
9. Add a sprinkle of salt for adjusting the seasoning and pulse again for 2 seconds. Taste it again. It should be slightly bitter from the lemon juice if it does not then add the rest of the lemon juice; this will also thin it out a bit.
10. Recheck the flavour, and add more salt if you think it still needs it.
11. Add in the cilantro and pulse for another 10 seconds.
12. If you think it looks very thick add a little water to it to thin it out, you should have the consistency of mayonnaise.
13. Transfer to bowl and break out the pitas!



The Study Dude

Marie Well

The Zombie Methodolgy for Grad School Success



What's methodology? Surely a zombie can't teach that! Zombies have no brains. But if it's simplified enough, well, you've got Dr. Zombie.

Dr. Zombie is going to simplify one of three key parts of most any graduate level thesis: methodologies. That way, you'll perform like a rock star come grad school time.

But first, be warned: my grad program required a 3.65 GPA for entry into the master's program; 3.8 GPA for entry into the PhD. No-one told me that. My jaw gripped the floor and tore out the tiles when I discovered that I fell short of the entry requirement for the PhD. I joined the enraged ranks of befuddled zombies. If only I had been warned,

But now you've been warned, so you can hyper focus on your goal while the day is young. You've got grad school success streaming through your blood. And you're destined for a PhD.

First, let's dive into the big three for your high-achiever grad degree: When you write your thesis, you'll likely need at least three chapters: (1) methodology, (2) literature review, and (3) theory. If you can start reading books on methodologies, the literature, and theories right now, you'll get a head start by grad school. I've never clued in on how master students are supposed to read ten

or more seminal texts within two years, but we pull it off. And that's while we collect our data, pick a topic, choose a theory, craft a question—and write the darn thing. Ah, pressed for time!

But, for now, let's get you a head start on methodologies.

Wisely choose your methodology. And cozy up to a zombie who mastered that methodology. “Many disciplines have established methodologies which prescribe the selection, combination and sequencing of the methods and techniques to be employed” (19%).

Zombies just don't “get” that quote. So, please give the doctor the honors:

To grasp “methodology,” you should know the difference between a method and a methodology. I see methods as tools for collecting your data, such as focus groups, interviews, or surveys. Methodologies, on the other hand, often use those tools but in a strategic way. Think of it like a zombie chef would at a baked brains bake-off. Methodologies are the recipes, tools, ingredients for baking brains—the shebang. Methods are merely the tools: oven, bowls, baking dish, whisking spoon. Your data are your ingredients. And the baked brain is your final result.

Let's look at this baked brains bake-off metaphor more closely:

The method (the baking tool) might be observation. Observation is a key tool used in a methodology called ethnography. Ethnography can be used to analyze, say, zombies confined to libraries. After careful observation of the zombies, the results (baked brains) might include a list of the zombies’ survival strategies such as theft, carnage—and brain cloning for the more educated. That's one tear-jerking bake-off!

The arts degrees often take up qualitative methodologies such as ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research, and narrative research. If you don't know what those mean, don't worry—just look at Dr. Khamzina's presentation (page 33 of 64) for quick, simple descriptions. The simpler your understanding of grad studies, the safer you'll be.

The Open University says, “All disciplines require an appropriate application of methods, in order to ensure rigour. Hence, one key skill is the demonstration of an appropriate knowledge and competence in choosing and using research methods. This skill includes: knowledge of the main research methods used in your discipline, including data collection, record keeping, and data analysis” (19%).

Translation: you've got to dig your jaws in every methodology and method your department uses. At least, nibble from each until you satisfy Dr. Zombie. (Hint: buy the methodology text in your department's graduate level methodology course. Devour upon arrival.)

The Open University says, another required skill is the “detailed knowledge, and competent application, of at least one method critical analysis of a standard method in your discipline that you have chosen to use in your study, showing that you understand both its strengths and its limitations” (19%).

Translation: pick a methodology that makes sense for what you're studying. There exists instrumental methods in chemistry, mathematical methods in theoretical physics, research methods in biology, research methods in computer science, and research methods everywhere else.

If that didn't get the brains scrambling, then check out these thesis topics in computer science, mathematics, communications studies, psychology, physics, and music/dance.

Don't let those thesis titles scare you. Grad students try their best to make their papers inaccessible to zombies. But now we've got methodology. Argh!

Start studying methodology now. Dr. Zombie guarantees you'll have all the brains you've ever dreamed of come grad school time!

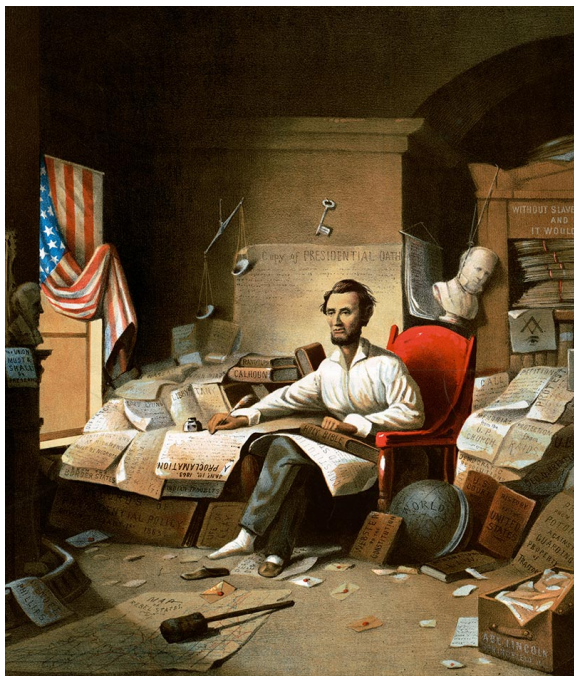
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The Creative Spark Ten “Write What You Know” Mysteries Resolved

Marie Well



When facing a blank page, write what you know. But what if you feel like what you know is not enough—or way too much—to fit a page? Or what you know feels too foggy—or too dull—to write? Then what? Those are mysteries about to be solved.

Mystery 1: Dull life? Nothing about your life is dull. “You don't have to have led an unusual or exotic life in order to write. You do, however, need to raise your level of perception above the ordinary. Writing what you know means being aware of your own world, both past and present, in as full a way as possible” (15%).

A trivial dynamic can have big implications for a plot. For instance, a mug of green tea might foreshadow a hero's plight to rescue an uncle dying of cancer.

During trivial moments of your day, journal those moments in detail. Describe the swirling froth in the green tea, heaped on top like a bed of dull gray ice. You might find a way to weave the symbol in your story to

denote a mood, character psychology, or some other nuance.

Mystery 2: How do you bring thrills into your life—and stories? Vary what you do. “You will not be able to see all and everything anew each and every day. However, you can use tactics to keep yourself alert: cross over the road and walk on a different side, or sit in a chair that you don't usually use” (35%).

I once watched a video of an author who claimed that readers read to gain wisdom. By changing things up, we explore more of what life has to offer. And that may translate to wisdom.

Mystery 3: What should you pay heed to for exciting stories? Your senses. “If writing is a perceptual art then perception should involve all of the senses, not just the visual. You must also start to smell, feel, taste and hear the world you are trying to realise” (41%).

I read in psychology that the sense of smell held the key role in the taste of food. Can you believe that? Your nose matters more than your mouth when it comes to the taste of food.

I also read a near death experience story that said every blade of grass, every tree—even the blue sky—in heaven gave off a wavelength reminiscent of music. If that sounds crazy, there exists a condition called synesthesia where people see colors in sounds. Your sensory world matters.

Mystery 4: How do you describe the inexplicable? Use metaphors. “We often need to use metaphor and simile to describe our perceptions. Even the most established writer struggles and strives to find phrases that can translate perception in an original and meaningful fashion” (71%).

Metaphors can get their inspiration from animals, nature, humans, mythic stories, and so much more, according to a book called *Farnsworth's Classical English Metaphor*. I believe that any abstraction can be randomly linked to any physical thing, producing an original metaphor. The only trick is linking the metaphor to some meaningful context.

Mystery 5: What if you find yourself in sensory overload? Cue into a sliver within the woods. “Eventually, when coming to write your story or poem, you will realise that, like perception, writing is also selective. You will pick the details to be included and excluded: which detail acts as a useful repetition, and which detail might be redundant” (35%).

In scriptwriting, you want every word to advance the plot. The details you draft in the script must have significance, perhaps as a symbol of an emotional state or of a character's backstory. Be selective.

Mystery 6: What if your details seem dull? Notice something new. “Details attain significance, for you and consequently for your reader, not just through being dramatic or unusual. Often they will attain significance because they are being noticed for the first time, because a usual or habitual perception has shifted” (35%).

When I go to sleep at night, I feel peaceful. But after writing an article on zombies, I noticed late night sounds of sirens and muffled screaming. I also felt an eerie chill where my toes peeked out from under the covers. As I noticed these new sensations, I thought, “That's the last time I draft a zombie story.”

Mystery 7: Why bother with sensory details? They give your character depth. “On their own, sensory perceptions don't tend to mean that much. They depend on a context in which they can be brought to life: for instance, that of a character” (49%).

What your character dwells upon is usually reflected in what they notice. If you're revved about buying a sports car, you'll notice a Corvette. Similarly, if you watch videos showcasing the beauty within other people's souls, you may notice a glimmer of light in someone's eyes you may otherwise have missed.

Mystery 8: What should you share other than your sensory experience? Pieces from your past. “There may be times when you will wish to use episodes or elements from your life experience more or less directly. Often you will use just fragments of your own past. You might like to use a single aspect of a character, or a place, for instance. You might like to use a turn of phrase that your grandmother used; you might focus on the feelings of being lost on the first day at a new school. There is no rule for how much or how little you can use” (58%).

For a while, I recreated my past into a traumatic event. I then underwent a spiritual transformation, so I now see more of the beauty and kindness I had enjoyed: the hugs, the birthday parties, the ‘I love you's', and so much more. Pieces of our past are scripts that reinforce our main narrative. But when our narrative changes, we may recall our lives much differently—for better or worse.

I met a woman who wrote a book about her abusive childhood. This woman was stunning—tall and blonde—and successful—the kind of woman who made you think, ‘I wish I was her'—but she hung her head in a trauma she couldn't shake. I wish I could've awakened her to the joy of letting go—of refocusing on the good.

But that was the stage in life she faced. The fragments of our pasts we focus on reflect our stage in our journey.

Mystery 9: What if your memory is foggy? Tweak your memories for story-telling fame. “it's important to realise that you will not betray the truth of any particular memory by failing to stick

steadfastly to certain details, or by changing elements, or by not having a total recall of events” (58%).

We go through a process of “making sense” of our memories. We assign them meaning and magnitude. For instance, a bad memory of trauma can turn into a moment of peaceful forgiveness. What is trauma for one may be trivial for another.

I read that we often remember things wrong, too. That means many of our memories may be problematic. I think savoring our beautiful memories, and letting go of our heartaches, brings us the greatest life.

Mystery 10: What is the end-all-be-all of writing about yourself? What you write may shock you. “Often a different kind of truth will emerge from the activity of writing about elements of your past and your everyday life” (62%).

Many of my memories were skewed to favor my role. But other people may have different memories of the same event, skewed to their favor. For instance, a sister may be hurt by a brother's words. But the brother may not recall those words, but feel justifiably hurt by the sister's reaction. I think that's the joy of writing: we unravel our own biases.

Writing what we know, places us along our path in our journey. Perhaps that's why writing what we know feels like a mystery. We are all at a certain stage in our journey, and the act of writing might reveal where we need to be at the close of the book of life.

References

Open Learn: Free Learning from the Open University. (2016). *Writing What You Know*. U.K.: The Open University. E-book excerpt.

Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: TD 4-H Agriculture Scholarship

Sponsored by: TD Bank and 4-H

Deadline: May 31, 2020

Potential payout: \$2500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be 4-H members, at least 16 years of age, Canadian residents, in their final year of high school or CEGEP, and planning to attend university or college in September 2020 in an agriculture-based program. Read the full [application guidelines](#).

What's required: A completed online application form, including info on 4-H and community involvement and an essay, a reference letter, and proof of academic standing.

Tips: Check out the other scholarships for 4-H members on the same page.

Where to get info: 4-h-canada.ca/scholarships





Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Isolated Issues

Dear Barb:

Hi, I am going crazy! I have been self isolating for weeks. I am a single person and normally I like my own company, but this is getting to be too much. I am doing everything I can to keep busy; I work in a clothing store so I can't work from home. I have read all the books on my list, watched all the Netflix I had intended to, finished my puzzle and now what do I do? I go for walks numerous times a day. I used to take my dog with me but now when I ask if she wants to go for a walk she runs away and hides, so I go by myself. Some mornings when I wake up my feet are aching. I used to wonder why, I figured it out and it's all the walking. I talk to my family and friends as much as I can, but since none of us are doing anything, there is really nothing to talk about.

My stress level is escalating, as I'm sure are most people. I know you are probably in the same boat as the rest of us, but maybe you would be able to offer some suggestions on how we can keep our sanity throughout this pandemic?

Thanks, Carly.

Hi Carly:

Thanks for your letter. Yes, we are all in the same situation if we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. It is difficult to be isolated and even more difficult if you are alone. If you are with your family, at least you have someone to talk to, or

get on your nerves at times. Carly you seem to have done everything within the first few weeks and now you need to pace yourself, which means create a daily schedule of things you want to accomplish. This will give your life some routine and something to look forward to. Walking is good, physical activity and will relieve some of the stress, but have certain times to walk. For example, go for a walk each morning and evening, and maybe only take your dog on one of these walks.

It is extremely important to stay in touch with family and friends. Even if you touch base every few days, just to make sure everyone is coping. If you have a vehicle and are able to get out shopping, offer to pick up a few things for neighbors or family who are not able to get out. Leave the items outside their door and have them transfer the money to you. It's also very important that you not spend a lot of time watching the news. You need to keep up to date, but don't bombard yourself with negative information. Try to watch the news in the morning and in the evening, that will be enough time to keep you updated on any new developments. It is essential that we all remember this is temporary and will end and we will get our lives back.

So, Carly, stay positive and be kind to others.

Email your questions to 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.



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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Apr 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting May 1](#)
- **Mar 15:** [May degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Apr 16:** [AUSU Council Changeover Meeting](#)
- **Apr 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for May](#)
- **May 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Jun 1](#)
- **May 15:** [Jun degree requirements deadline](#)

COVID-19 Updates

We are aware of impacts of COVID-19 on your studies, and are dedicated to keeping students informed about updates being provided by the University, as well as the impacts to your studies and the resources currently available to you.

The AU Students' Union team will work from home until further notice to help flatten the curve. The best way to reach us is by email at admin@ausu.org.

COVID-19 Updates from Athabasca University

For updates related to COVID-19 impacts to your Athabasca University studies, and who to contact for assistance please check the AU website:

- [COVID-19 General Information](#)
- [COVID-19 Questions and Answers](#).

AU has outlined some great supports for students impacted by COVID-19, including free course restarts, course extensions, exam rebooking fees waived, & more.

If you have any questions not answered in the links above, please contact covid@athabascau.ca

Mental Health Support

AU has a [mental health and wellness program](#) through Homewood Health to provide students free counselling, as well as coaching and services on mental health & wellness.

If you are looking for immediate support from a professional counsellor, call Homewood Health:

1-800-663-1142 (English)

We urge everyone to be kind and patient, wash your hands, practice social distancing, and stay safe!

AUSU Open Mic Podcast

AUSU has been busy finding ways to reach out to our members, including **two more podcast episodes!**

Episode 25:

We Asked...He Answered...AU Uncovered!

This is the podcast every AU student has been waiting for. AUSU goes behind the scenes with the Athabasca University Registrar, Richard MacLeod, to get the BEST TIPS regarding everything AU - like understanding AU's timelines, registering for classes, student aid eligibility, applying for convocation, and so much more. This podcast is jam-packed with the top questions' students have about studying at AU with answers coming directly from the source. Richard doesn't disappoint in this exclusive interview for AU students.

Starring: Athabasca University Registrar Richard MacLeod and AUSU Executive Director Jodi Campbell.

Episode 24:

COVID-19 and Athabasca University

AUSU chats with VP External and Student Affairs Natasha Donahue about the impact of COVID-19 on Athabasca University students and where you can find the latest information regarding the pandemic.

Starring: AUSU VP External and Student Affairs Natasha Donahue and AUSU Executive Director Jodi Campbell.

[Click here](#) for all AUSU Open Mic Episodes!

Available for free on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and [Pocket Casts](#) (search "AUSU Podcast") and on [VoicEd](#).



CLASSIFIEDS

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