



in medias res

Exclusive
interview with

Arthur Slade

*The Govern's General award
winning author of 'Dust'*

EDITORIAL POLICY

In Medias Res is a journal devoted to the dissemination of the liberal arts in light of the Christian intellectual tradition. Our publication's title derives from the Latin language, the ancient tongue of the Western Academy and Church, and denotes the state of being "in the middle of things." We select a broad range of publications, such as articles, essays, travelogues, reviews, poetry, fiction, and art, which represent the thought cultivated in various programs studied at the University of Saskatchewan. Indeed, the university must contain something of all these disciplines to be called a *universitas*, a whole which has sufficient diversity and

depth to merit its name. Situated as we are amongst many ideas, both within the University and the wider world, we are well-advised to reflect critically upon the principles that constitute our culture. The purpose of this paper, then, is to foster the intellectual growth of our University's students, to confront the philosophy of contemporary society, to reflect upon the Western tradition, and, peradventure, to incite the human soul. Students, faculty, and alumni are encouraged to contribute to this publication, and anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Editorial Board is most welcome to contact us for further information.

All submissions and inquiries may be directed to
inmediasres@stmcollege.ca
 Visit us online at www.stmcollege.ca/imr



CONTENTS

ESSAY: "The Philosophy of Living as One"	3
SHORT FICTION: "Second Chances"	4
SHORT FICTION: "The Memory"	6
MEMOIR: "Small Jars, Big Gifts"	7
SHORT FICTION: "In The Depth of Darkness"	8
SOCRATIC PESTILENCE: "Be required to subsidize studen-run publications?"	9
POETRY: J. Sterling, Azure Ides-Grey & Ariana Reinhart	10
SHORT FICTION: "Too Much Time at Home #1"	12
ARTICLE & REFLECTION: "The French Connection" & "On Resurrection"	13
PRO et CONTRA: "Was the Supreme Court of Canada's decision to legalize physician assisted death a good thing?"	14
CULTURAL EVENT: "IMR Attends: <i>Student Performances</i> "	16
SHORT FICTION: "White Feathers"	18
INTERVIEW: "Giving The Prairies A Voice: Interviewing Arthur Slade"	21
BOOK REVIEWS.....	23
POSTCARD STORY	24

EDITORIAL BOARD:

James A. Hawkes
 Sarah Johnston
 Jazmin M. Kurtenbach
 Joshua D. Kurtenbach
 Jeralynn A. Leptich

Faculty Advisor:
 Darrel McLaughlin



The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the editorial board or of St. Thomas More College. Individual copyrights belong to the authors.

The Philosophy of Living as One by *Flaviu Vadan*

Ever since the beginning of time, humans have been living in an ecological utopia with nature. In the last couple of centuries, even though previously living in harmony, humanity has witnessed a “detachment” from Mother Nature. Many writers have satirized this “detachment,” but one of the most remarkable ones is Karel Čapek. R.U.R (Rossum’s Universal Robots) by Karel Čapek presents humanity as a society that desires a labor-free world by creating robots. The idea of a labor-free world is very appealing in Čapek’s play. It is a topic that is subjected to philosophical discussions by many of the play’s characters such as Domin and Helena Glory, but there is one character who totally opposes this idea. Alquist, who is the builder and chief of construction of R.U.R, comically opposes the idea of a world free of any work. He manifests a belief that romanticizes work by attributing very important moral values to it, such as virtue and honor. Personally, I do agree with Alquist’s philosophy because it brings together people and motivates them to live as a unity.

Firstly, Alquist is a unique character in Karel Čapek’s story. His uniqueness is derived from the fact that even though he is the builder of the robots, he satirically opposes the idea of living in a world of robots – a world that uses robots as slaves for the happiness of human kind. The act of living with the robots means that humans would not have to work for anything. The consequences of this cause people to distance themselves from one another, and therefore distance themselves from their communities. From Alquist’s point of view of this, we observe that he has a tendency to exhibit a behavior and an ideology that is associated with socialism. The idea of living in a society that is based on common ownership (Commons, 2015), where other fellow-humans can use everyone’s work product, feels right for Alquist. We can identify his tendency towards a working-society from his discussion with Domin: “Alquist: Domin! Domin! What you’re saying sounds too much like paradise. Domin, there was something good in the act of serving, something great in humility. Oh, Harry, there was some kind of virtue in work and fatigue”(R.U.R, 21). Alquist’s belief emphasizes the concept of “work and fatigue” in a romantic manner that has the ultimate goal of bringing people together. The act of working, together with the idea of a powerful community, encourages a spiritual “rebirth”. A spiritual “rebirth” represents a return to an “edenical” state where humans live together with nature as a whole.

The concept of a more naturally inclined world is a reason for Alquist to also manifest his religious personality in front of other characters. From Alquist’s discussion with another character in the play, Helena Glory, we notice him giving an example of one of his prayers: “Alquist: ... Lord God, I thank you for having shown me fatigue. God, enlighten Domin and all those who err. Destroy their work and help people return to their former worries and labor. ...”(R.U.R, 34). We notice Alquist portraying work and fatigue as a divine gift that teaches him how to appreciate the life he has been given. Even though Alquist is the socialist model, he still has the power to manifest his religious beliefs. The act of praying, which is totally prohibited in a socialist state, signifies an inner battle for him. In this case, the burning wish of a socialism inspired working society and the religious ideal are romantically brought into the same equation. Ultimately, these motifs will drive humanity into aspiring to a more natural world.

Secondly, over the course of the play, we witness the beginning of the end – the destruction of humanity. In this case, humanity’s destiny is to be destroyed by its own creation – the robots. Alquist, who will finally be the sole survivor of humankind, expresses his opinion on the situation by blaming technology: “Alquist: I blame science! I blame technology! Domin! Myself! We, we are at fault! For the sake of our megalomania ...”(R.U.R, 56). By blaming technology for human extinction, our character gives the final argument in trying to convince his community that a natural world would be humanity’s best option for a normal and safe life. At this point in the play, the “detachment” of human kind from Mother Nature is finalized. In the present scenario, it is clearly indicated to us that nature will always be triumphant, with or without humans.

Ultimately, Alquist remains the single survivor of all human kind. After the robots cause a mass extinction of humans, they choose him as the single person to be left alive with the purpose of helping the robots reproduce. The situation that Alquist is found in – the fact that he is the only one left – accentuates his uniqueness. We notice Alquist’s “singularity” from his introductory speech in Act III: “Alquist: ...[He looks in the mirror.] Oh, you poor face, reflection of the last man on earth! ...”(R.U.R, 71). By using the interjection “Oh” through his speech, Alquist manages to desperately mark his miserable existence as the only human left. Being the last person alive, Alquist’s survival could be considered a divine gift. It may well be God’s will that had chosen him as a “technological prophet”. From Alquist’s last speech, we understand that after the whole disaster of human extinction, the world has finally returned to its “edenical” state: “Alquist: ... life will not perish! It will begin anew with love; it will start out naked and tiny...”(R.U.R, 84). The use of “naked and tiny” signifies purity and a whole new beginning for the world which, indirectly, was Alquist’s wish throughout the play – a return to a state where humans, together with robots, would live in harmony with nature.

In conclusion, Alquist’s capabilities of romanticizing work by attributing it moral values such as virtue and honor conclude his uniqueness. Through showing faith in humanity, Alquist manages to teach us – the readers – the importance of being self-reflective and conscious in our behavior. Most important, at the deepest level of interpretation, he teaches us to love and respect one another.

Works Cited

- Čapek, Karel. R.U.R (Rossum’s Universal Robots). New York: Penguin, 2004. Print.
Commons, Creative. What is Socialism?. World Socialist Movement. 2015. Web. 29. Jan. 2014.

Second Chances

Kenneth Catton

"Hey there sweetheart." she said, looking at the man across the aisle.

He wasn't sure if she was talking to him, but when he looked around he realised he was the only one there. He was confused, and he had no idea who he was or where he was or why he was there. Nothing. He was on a train, that much was obvious, and it was winter and there was a lot of snow. It whisked up around the windows into little crystal white whirlwinds whenever the train ploughed through a drift. The sky was clear and he could see the snowy tips of mountains far off in the distance.

"Yes you!" she said, looking at the man with a smile.

Now he had to answer. He put forth an effort to return a confident smile but it came across as scared or nervous, and for good reason all things considered. In the end, he resorted to stalling.

"You first." He replied softly, and then, after clearing his throat he continued with his full voice, "I'd hate to give someone the upper hand in a conversation so easily."

"Okay, okay. Fair enough. My name is Añejo." She said in a clean but distinct Spanish accent, "Now that you have the upper hand, would you kindly tell me your name?"

"Ron." He blurted, but didn't know why. He hated the name Ron.

"Why don't you come sit with me Ron?"

He knew he shouldn't but for the life of him could think of no good reason why. There was something comfortable about her; some inexplicable air of familiarity. It didn't hurt that she was gorgeous and seemed to be interested in him. He stood up and shuffled across the aisle, cautiously sitting next to her about half a foot away. She turned towards him and asked,

"Where are we heading today?"

"We?" He replied.

"Yes, we. If I know you—and I think I do, Ron—I know you'll be taking me along with you."

"Is that right. Why should I do that?"

"Because you like me."

"Oh, you're just that charming are you?" he said, slowly becoming intoxicated with her beauty. His confidence grew as they spoke.

She leaned in and whispered in his ear,

"I am."

The man couldn't help but agree, she was.

"So... Where are we going?" She asked again.

"Well, I'm getting off at the next stop." He replied.

"I guess I'm getting off there too." She said, holding his gaze intently.

He picked up on the innuendo, and his mild curious arousal wicked up into a full metal sexual excitement. The way she said it was clear; this thing could happen... if he wanted it to. And why wouldn't he, he wondered. She had looks, a sense of humour, and her mind seemed to

be perpetually in the gutter; the perfect woman by most accounts. She was curvy and smooth with smoky skin and radiant hazel eyes. Her dark blue dress clung to her body relentlessly.

But something didn't feel right. Some lingering sense of dread or guilt was building inside him. He could see no reflections to gauge his own appearance against hers, but he could see that his gut was hanging over his belt and his clothes were a bit dirty. It was obvious she was much better looking than he. That wasn't it. The thing that really bothered him was that she gave the impression that she knew more than she was letting on. It was both unnerving and exciting. Somehow surreal. Almost unreal. He decided to play it cool but cautious. He had an idea.

"Okay, why don't we play a game while we wait to get off?" It was sexy when she said it but felt creepy coming out of his mouth. She didn't seem to mind.

"I love games. What game do you want to play?"

"Let's play truth or dare. Do you know truth or dare?"

"Oh yes, it's my favorite. See Ron, you know me better than you think! I'll go first. I choose truth."

It had started to snow in sheets outside the train. As they passed through alternating patches of heavy snow and sunshine, the window behind the woman would transition quickly between bright clarity and translucent obscurity. In one of the clearings he saw a blue half ton pick-up truck on its side about thirty yards into the field. Its windows were smashed and it had blown in with snow. He didn't mention it, but it caught his eye while he carefully considered which question he should ask.

"Where were you going before we met?" he asked, thinking it might get him some information on where exactly they were.

"I was just along for the ride Ron. That's the truth."

He didn't know what to think of an answer like that.

She was just riding around, alone on a train in the middle of nowhere? Not only that, she seems to be sexually interested in a complete stranger with a big gut and dirty clothes. It didn't add up. He began to think that she must be up to something. Maybe she drugged him? That would explain a lot. Was she planning on robbing him? As the man looked into her eyes wondering what her motives might be, he noticed they were slightly dull and bloodshot.

"Your turn Ron."

"Okay, I choose truth too."

He spoke with a subtle hint of suspicion in his voice.

"Are you married?"

"No" he replied.

"Then what is that?" she said pointing at the ring on his hand.

A blunt feeling of guilt rumbled across his chest while he looked down and spun the gold ring on his left hand with the thumb and forefinger of his right.

“One question at a time.” He replied in a low voice.

“Fair enough, Ron. My turn now, I think I’ll take truth again.”

“Okay Añejo, if that is your real name—did we know each other before we got on this train?”

“Oh, good question Ron! You’re a clever man. We did indeed, very well too.” she said while she looked fixedly at the man and smiled.

He slid away on the seat and turned to look directly at her. Why did she wait to tell him? Why let this whole big charade go on. He wasn’t sure if she was telling the truth or just playing him. While he looked at her he saw that she wasn’t as beautiful as he first thought. Her hair had somehow lost its sheen, and up close it no longer seemed to flow as it had from across the cabin. It just sort of fell limp to her shoulders. He looked out the window behind her and found that it was completely white with fog and blowing snow. He was getting annoyed with her furtive little responses.

“Are you gonna tell me how we know each other or just sit there smiling?”

She just sat there smiling.

“Tell me what’s going on! How do you know me?!”

“First of all Ron—and that isn’t your real name—don’t raise your voice at me. If you want answers, you’ll just have to keep playing the game. Now it’s your turn to answer, unless of course you choose dare?”

“I guess I’ll be taking dare then, because I don’t have any answers. But you knew that already didn’t you?”

“I did.” She said with a strange look of contempt on her face. Her skin seemed to have lost that sensual brown hue, and now had a creepy yellow tinge with a harsh, almost scaly texture. Even her voice had begun to annoy him.

“I dare you to kiss me.” She said, her voice fading into a raspy growl that hung on the word kiss like a hissing snake. “Everything will make sense if you’ll just kiss me.”

At this point, the man needed answers and it was clear that she was the one who was in control. She had been all along. So he leaned in and cautiously pressed his lips against hers. She was right, everything came flooding back. His first date with his wife and their first kiss later that night. The first time they made love, their wedding day

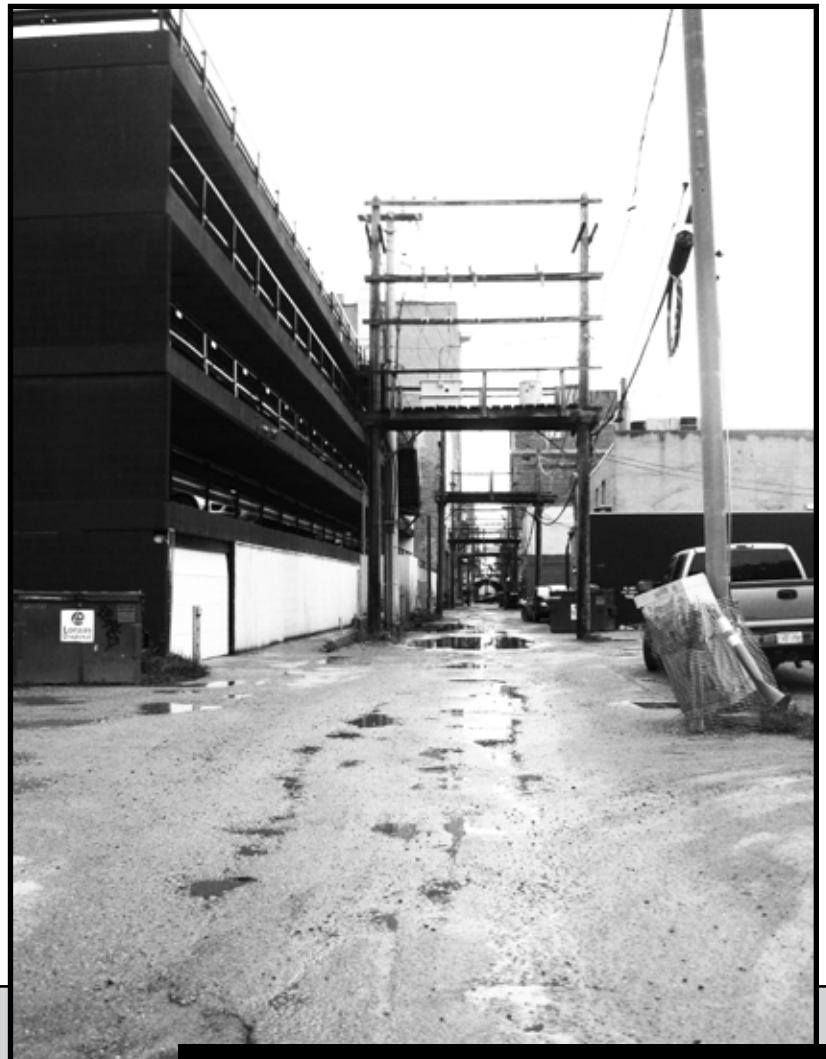
three years later, and the tears they shared when their son was born. He also remembered the night he promised to quit drinking after passing out and almost burning down the house with a cigarette; the only time he and his wife ever really fought. His drinking had always annoyed her, but it had never caused any serious friction until that night, so she made him promise to quit. And he did.

These memories sent him into alternating fits of anger and guilt as one final memory entered his tortured mind; himself wrenching forward the seat of his blue pick-up truck, and pulling out the bottle of fine Dominican Rum that he had stashed for the last four years. He felt comfort having it in there, if things got bad he would always have a bottle. Now he was ashamed to have been so weak. So willing to wash away his life and his love in the sterile spit of this lecherous demon over a silly little fight about money.

He tried to pull away, but it was too late. He felt the serpent’s cool tongue pour down his throat and wrap tightly around his heart. He felt it squeezing—he felt it pulling—he felt it crushing—until the precious organ refused to pump another thin ounce of blood.

Then he felt cold.

Then he felt nothing at all.



ARTWORK:
TUSHITA PATEL

The Memory

E. A. Tamor

Bogdan Doborgeanu hobbled up the stairs using his old crooked cane and sat down on a ledge outside of St. George's Romanian Orthodox Cathedral, on a crisp October day in downtown Regina. As he sat down, he felt the pain leave his right leg, and he settled down to think about his life. A cold wind cut through his old suit jacket and straight to his frail bones. He shivered and as a cold tingle started at the base of his bent spine and quickly moved up it, inflicting numbness upon each vertebrae making it feel like cold steel. He raised his callused, arthritic hand to his mouth, and played with the coarse, bushy, white bristles of his beard, as if counting them. His fragile blue eyes stared vacantly at the cold cement of the stairs, in deep thought. For being 93 years old, the years did not seem to take too much of an effect on him, but inside he could feel his bones creak and ache, he knew he was dying. A slight breeze caught some loose hairs upon his head and tossed them about, like the string of a kite anchored to the ground. But Bogdan was not fazed. He had been through much more; he slowly drifted out of reality as he thought about his childhood.

Bogdan could not remember exactly when he was born; he only knew he was born around 1911, in the city of Constanța in Romania. His family was poor, living near the busy port, where Bogdan would pick up different words from the foreign languages of the sailors. Their house was a small wooden structure, with only two rooms, an eating room and kitchen, and a common bedroom where they all slept. The roof did not stop the rain very well, and the walls let the wind through almost every day. His mother tore old clothes which were no longer fit to wear and hung them up in the window to try to stop the wind. The warm colours that were filtered by the cloth entertained him, reminding him of the beautiful stained glass windows of a church. His father worked at the docks and would often come home late in the night tired from work, but would always come to check up on his children. Bogdan was the youngest of seven children, four sisters: Adela, Andreea, Corina, and Daciana, and two brothers; Dumitru and Carol. Bogdan could only ever remember Carol and Daciana, as the rest of his sisters were married and moved away before he was born, and because Dumitru was in the Navy he did not see him very often. Before he was born, Bogdan's parents had a child, who was born very ill; he died only a few days after he was born. After months of prayer, Bogdan's mother conceived and gave birth to him, the name Bogdan means "God given." Their family was very religious, and went to church every Sunday, and Bogdan's mother took him to church to pray every day, a tradition he still observed. But when he was only five years old he remembered hearing the news that Romania decided to invade Transylvania and thus enter the war. This frightened Bogdan's mother very much, she did not want to lose her remaining children. So she scraped up all the money she could find, and packed two small bags full of stale bread, and sent Carol and Bogdan off to Canada where they had relatives living. The trip was long and cramped as there were many people trying to leave. On the boat there were large rats with their hair wet, smelling of garbage, and their eyes beady and red looking as if they belonged to demons. Carol and Bogdan spent most of the day praying that they would make it to Canada and that his family would be safe back home. Bogdan also listened intently to the English speakers on the boat, he knew very little and now he hoped he could listen more, and possibly learn it.

When they finally arrived in Canada, they had to take a train to Regina where their Aunt and Uncle lived. The city was not nearly as spectacular as the one they had left, but their new home was fit for a king compared to their old one. The fall leaves on the trees were dazzling colours; reds, browns, and yellows, they were all new and all beautiful to the boys. But their joy soon turned to sorrow when their Aunt told them that Constanța had been taken by enemy forces. Bogdan did not understand too much of what was going on, being only five, but his brother who was aged 14 years was very frightened. To make matters worse, Carol had become ill on the boat, but the disease remained quiet until recently. And now he was in need of serious medical attention. Carol's eyes were completely red. The lively brown, replaced with a fading grey and the whites with a hellish scarlet. His skin had a yellow tinge, and the smell radiating was awful. He would complain of feeling unbearably hot and was constantly sweating although his temperature was below the normal level. His cough sounded like he was trying to breathe underwater, and every breath was laboured. The Doctor said the illness was past being treated, and they should just leave him to rest. Then one unusually cold October night, Carol died.

Bogdan did not remember hearing the fate of his family, although he knew that by now they must certainly all be dead. He had never heard anything from his Aunt, maybe she kept the letter from him which spoke of their fate if they had been killed in the war. Or maybe, if they survived the two years of occupation, a letter asking for them to return home never arrived or was lost. Bogdan liked to think that, but in his old age and wisdom knew that was foolish. The port which they lived so close to had been attacked, he only now hoped that they died quickly and that they did not suffer or die in pain. He thought of his mother, and how she cared for him for the first five years of his life. He did not remember much about Romania, but he would always remember her beautiful face, and how she comforted him. He grabbed his cane and slowly stood up, pain immediately shooting up his leg. He slowly made his way up to the open doors and walked inside. He sat down in a polished wooden pew that was scarcely more comfortable than the stone ledge outside the grand building. He reached into his pocket and grabbed a weathered mătănii which his mother had given him before he left. He fingered the soft wool and stared at the wall to the right of the iconostasis at the front of the church. He focused in on the large icon of Jesus holding a jewel covered Bible and displaying a sign of blessing. The eyes penetrated like two searing hot knives into his heart and soul. Not causing pain or pleasure, but instead a strange sort of comfort. Then Bogdan slowly closed his eyes. He began to pray, "Doamne Iisuse Hristoase, Fiul lui Dumnezeu, miluiește-mă pe mine păcătosul..." then he died.

Small Jars, Big Gifts

by Miriam Clavir

My Aunt Kammie led a small life. An ordinary life. A fairly unlucky life. But a life that left me, her niece, with indelible good memories. Each spring and fall I preserve these recollections quite literally as I cut and boil eight pounds of rhubarb or a basket each of peaches and red peppers. Small jam jars can preserve memories as much as condiments.

From WWII until more than thirty years later, Kammie spent her daytime hours in her mother's Toronto hat store. She lived with her husband in the basement flat of a house that had her ever-present parents on the top floor, and us in the middle. My mother was her surviving sister. Aunt Kammie read women's magazines and kept a flower garden, one my dog regularly dug up. In the 1950s when I was a proud Toronto girl and of course a Leafs fan, my team scored often enough on Saturday nights to keep me jumping up and down on the floor of our living room. Eventually Aunt Kammie or Uncle Peter would come up the stairs and gently remind me that our floor was their ceiling.

What I remember most about my aunt and uncle's basement flat, though, is the pantry. Even as a young child, even after we got TV in 1955, as a special treat I would be allowed to open the door to the cool little room downstairs at Kammie's and see the neat rows of preserves, the rich brown of Branston Pickle glistening beside the deep red tomato Chili Sauce. I loved best the glowing colours of the Peach and Pepper. In January, in the middle of a snowstorm, we would open a jar and taste summer.

I wish I'd been old enough to follow the cooking details when Kammie made her preserves. I recall only one, important to a child: not to touch the two hot red peppers that went with the dozen sweet ones in the Peach and Pepper. But as I try to duplicate her recipes, I need to know how she prevented the peaches from turning brown during all that cutting up. How did my aunt not slop the makings on the rims of the jars during filling—or did she? How did she get the inside of the jar clean if the funnel had hit it, before the paraffin wax needed to be poured?

Why didn't I ask? Kammie lived into her late eighties; I had plenty of time. As an adult, I didn't even ask her the larger questions. Was she as content as, to me, she appeared? Was her life, for example in comparison with the opportunities I've had—university, a good job, travel—would she have described her life as "small"?

Perhaps my aunt didn't see her life as circumscribed, only "circumstanced". She'd had her share of major disappointments, for instance not being able to have kids, and then there was the deep tragedy surrounding the death of her husband, my beloved Uncle Peter. Around 1960, as he approached the age when the company he worked for would owe him a pension, he was fired. I don't know what reason was given. He tried selling insurance. I remember papers filled out with the sea-blue ink of his fountain pen. He didn't succeed. After the awful repudiation from his original, long-time employer, a dozen rejections a day trying to sell insurance sank his life, and he committed suicide in the parking lot outside the building where he had worked for so long. Kammie, in fact all of us over the following few years, left our flats in the Toronto house, to different dwellings and stages of our lives.

In summer now my garden has peonies, just like my aunt's did. Although I still remember the way my dog enjoyed her garden, the peonies are the only flowers I recall with any clarity, either because of their impressive size and red colour, or because I can still recite a poem we memorized in grade school, the Canadian poet Bliss Carmen's Peony, which ends with the lines:

*The medicine for heartache
That lurks in lovely things.*

Spring is when I make Kammie's Branston Pickle, since its base is fresh rhubarb. It's not that my Branston is the best; making it, I still slop over the jars and often have one or two that don't seal properly. (These I happily keep for myself.) My house, like most in a city these days, doesn't have a pantry, but every time I reach into my kitchen cupboard I'm reminded of the big memories these small jars hold. Whether there is a world of pleasure in a peony or a pantry, I know now that a life that appears circumscribed can be lived, and will be felt in all its dimensions, in full size.

In The Depths of Darkness

James Hawkes

Archie was sleeping, or trying to. He knew that there was nothing lurking out there in the dark, but nonetheless his ears were perked, ready to catch even the smallest sound. His parents had told him that monsters did not exist and of course he believed them, but still... who was he to simply trust that they knew everything?

Following a creak emanating from somewhere in the house he rapidly pulled a blanket over his head and trembled in the hot, black confines of his blanket for eons before, fearing in the stale air that he would soon begin to suffocate from lack of oxygen, he poked his head out of the covers, braving the dangers in darkness and sucked in the crisp night air. While doing so his

eyes darted about the room, briefly resting on the glow in the dark stickers he and his mother had arranged into constellations on his ceiling a few months before. Archie was no fool of course, rather, with wisdom exceeding his seven years he had ensured that a set of trained eyes were keeping watch to alert him should any monster try making a jump for the bed. His most beloved

stuffy, a tiny Beanie Baby German shepherd he had always called Doogy was keeping watch outside the blankets for him. If any lurking monstrosity should happen to come out from under the dresser and make a dash for the bed Doogy could be expected to provide warning and hopefully a good fight.

He then placed his head on the pillow again, flipping it over so that he could feel the cool side. Trying to sleep was truly one of the most unpleasant parts of his day, he was forced to lay down on this uncomfortable bed, in the darkness, and the best he could hope for was to fall asleep, perchance to dream, most probably to face horrible nightmares. He had always wanted to experience falling asleep

and part of his difficulties in getting to sleep was doubtless attributable to his attempts to remain sufficiently alert so that he could remember the experience of going to sleep. He had not managed it yet, but one of these nights....

He was a little concerned about security at the moment, for some reason his bedroom had a closet in it, he could not understand why for the life of him. What possible purpose did it serve? He hated clothes, and thought all he owned resided in the dress anyway. It just held old junk in the day, and he did not even want to speculate about what it might contain in the depths of darkness. It finally dawned on him that the closet door was slightly ajar – had his mom

left it that way, or had something opened it? Had some dark spirit, its vile essence coalescing within the darkness been slowly, ever so subtly and quietly been opening the door? A sudden creak forced poor Archie back to cower beneath the covers. “Be brave,” he whispered to his stuffed duck, who was a bit of a fraidy-cat “monsters aren’t real you know.”

This last statement was intended for the rest of the dozen or so stuffed animals he had keeping him company under the blankets.

After what seemed like eons keeping his stuffies company and trying to keep his mind on any topic but what could be lurking outside the safety of his blankets he slowly drifted into sleep, and would be quite disappointed with himself in the morning for not having been paying enough attention to remember the moment when he fell asleep.



*Socratic Pestilence:
The Campus Gadflies Ask...*

Should Students be Required to Subsidize Student-run Publications?

For each journal issue, members of the In Medias Res editorial board assail the University of Saskatchewan's academic community with a quasi-philosophical question, after the fashion of Socrates.

Student publications can be invaluable as a means for students to express themselves and hone their skills not only in writing but in editing as well. Nonetheless, it is impossible to equally represent all voices, and if students do not feel represented in these publications then they may fairly ask 'Why should I pay for them?' I believe an opt-out option, similar to that existing for the U-Pass, would be preferable.

James Hawkes – History, CMRS & Political Studies

Fees for the Sheaf are included in student fees. \$7.67 for T1 and \$7.67 for T2. Multiply that by the amount of students (around 20,000) and you are left with a bill of around \$300,000. Why should students pay \$300,000 a year for a select few to sit in a comfy office on campus writing heavily biased stories that no one cares about? We should claw back all of their funding, give the losers a domain name and let them write a blog for all 4 of their readers. The sheaf is a clique, their editors are biased and unprofessional, it is costly, and printing it is bad for the environment

Erik Carey – Agriculture

I think that students supporting student run publications is a noble thing, but I do not think that they should have to support any one in particular. There are numerous student publications on campus but only one gets direct fees from the students which they may not opt out of. I think that students should be able to choose which publications they would like their student fee to go towards.

-Anonymous

"Should students be required to subsidize student run publications" seems to ask two distinct questions. One question regards collectively funding certain endeavours - usually common goods, or things that are commonly believed to be important for those who need them, and that would not be commonly accessible without such funding. I think this is worthwhile and important.

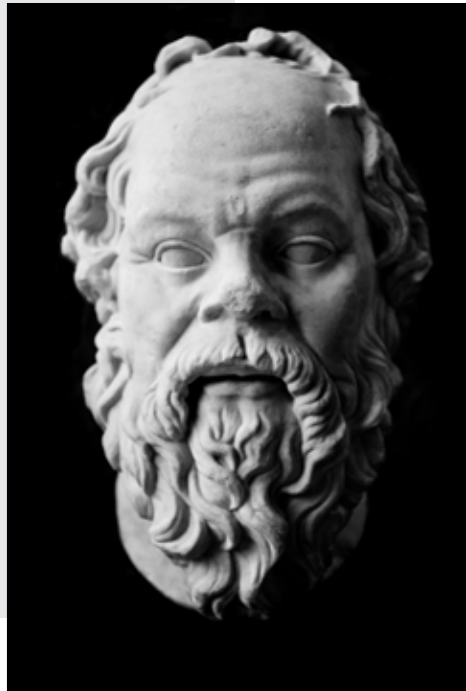
The second question regards whether or not student-run publications constitute a common good. My answer is that it depends on the nature of the publication. Despite the proliferation of alternative media online, I think that a local, student-based publication is potentially valuable

for a campus community. That said, this value is not so inherent that the publication shouldn't have to meet a standard of quality, relevance, and accessibility in order to be subsidized by students. But it's important enough that efforts should be made to enable the publication and its quality, because without collective funding, it probably wouldn't be feasible.

Desirée Steele – Political Studies

I think that students have a duty to at least acknowledge that publications run by students are an important part of campus life. They provide information and services which are targeted towards the interests of the student body. If a mandatory fee of five to ten dollars a semester is all that is needed then I don't believe there should be any major objection to subsidizing student run publications.

Alex Quon - English



Poetry

FIREBALL

Lost in dark
 Too dim to see
 They happen on
 An ember tree
 And blowing soft
 Upon the spark
 In hope of light
 Ignite the dark

Thus does flame
 To wind devote
 Just as trumpet
 Announceth note
 To carry forth
 From land to land
 The hopeful word
 Till all is spanned

J. Sterling

AUTUMN'S RIVER

Near Autumn's river in November
 caught between being and time
 My body pressed against a stone
 My temples shifting with the thoughts

Staring into waters
 without a reflection
 and surely it has
 no interest in my eyes

Pour this river into chalice
 Every drop stained with bronze
 like the crowns abandoned
 many moons ago

The river leaves me cold
 as it drowns the days
 Memory and chalice
 are the beggars of my soul

To hold your head
 in my senseless hands
 Apathy towers over
 the will that I possess

Azure Ides-Grey

A NEW APPRECIATION

It was today I finally appreciated
The true beauty of our magnificent tree
With its roots protruding deep beneath the earth
Survival of utmost importance
With its trunk providing great strength and assurance
Knowing there is always a fight ahead
With its branches entwined in each other's arms
Reaching for the warmth of the sky
With its leaves a dark forest green
Minus the few starting to golden
Preparing themselves to surrender
To the cool, breezy nights of fall
With the birds fluttering throughout
Playing games, seeking shelter
Its beauty has me in awe
Capturing my gaze, a faint smile on my sunburnt lips
I've come to realize
This is Mother Nature at her finest
This is the way earth is intended to be.

Ariana Reinhart



ARTWORK:
JESSICA SHIRLEY

Poetry

Too Much Time at Home #1

by Shirley Cuschieri

Nov. 24, 2011

I look in my fridge - often - sometimes just to make sure nothing has moved. Same with cupboards. You know why? Because if I was a serial killer, that would be the first thing I would do... slowly drive someone crazy, mess with their head - move stuff, see if they notice... but, I digress.

I found a big fat almost prune-sized raisin on the bottom shelf of my fridge this evening. I KNOW it was not there last night or this morning... if I even looked, and I KNOW I can't recall ever even buying something like this...

So that can only mean one of two things... either a small animal put it there, who also happened to figure out how to open my fridge door, climb in while carrying the prune-raisin, and leave it right where I'd see it, not in the back somewhere... or... OR... somebody put it there.

I look around, fridge door still open, at the other contents - they're all mute... silent, see no evil, hear no evil, blah blah blah I KNOW ONE OF YOU KNOWS SOMETHING! - but I don't let them hear this inner scream because who or whatever put this mutant raisin in my fridge is probably still here - so I'm looking around and I try to figure out what combination of shit I've eaten could possibly cause this crazy man-sized raisin to accidentally fall on to this bottom shelf, nothing... no clues.

So by now, I'm almost positive that my landlady has come in and fucked around in my fridge for no other reason than to just be a voyeur and she may have accidentally dropped one of her ridiculously huge genetically modified raisins in my fridge... case closed? No. Not satisfied. How will this end? Not sure... I close the fridge door without taking the turd-sized raisin out or even moving it. I will probably conduct the same kind of mind twisting investigation the next time I look in the fridge... and who knows - maybe whoever or whatever did this will leave more clues next time.

Maybe they'll get sloppy. For now, I'm not showing any fear. Fear will drive you crazy, my friends.

The French Connection

By Helanna Miazga

The last couple of months have been very exciting for the Museum of Antiquities. The Museum has recently made known to public research done by Assistant Curator Helanna Miazga that Napoleon Bonaparte once owned the 17th century CE bust of Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general. A bronze bust of Hannibal was mentioned in a memoir on Napoleon written by his private secretary Claude Francois Meneval.

Helanna built her research upon what had already been discovered by Catherine Gunderson, Curator/Director from 1983-2009, and Paul Hamilton, professor, now retired, of Art and Art History. In the late 1980s, they discovered that the bust was made by François Girardon, sculptor of King Louis XIV of France, or his protégé Sébastien Slodtz. With the new announcement of the bust's previous ownership, the academic and historical value of the bust of Hannibal continues to rise.

Judge John C. Currelly donated the piece to the Museum of Antiquities in 1989 in memory of his mother Mary Newton Currelly. Judge Currelly inherited the bust from his father, who received it as a gift from an art dealer that purchased the bust in a New York auction in 1939.

Research will continue to determine how the bust travelled from the gallery of Girardon, to Napoleon's salon at the Chateau de Saint-Cloud, to the Museum of Antiquities gallery.

Located on the University of Saskatchewan campus, the Museum of Antiquities houses original and replica art works from the ancient Near East, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and medieval Europe.



ON RESURRECTION

Azure Ides-Grey

There is an interest in the dead and dying in the world today. I won't say that there is a lot of it, but there is some. Actually, there may be a lot of it, but it's not the most observable to the proverbial eye. The angle in which I am writing from is that which pertains to a Christian perspective.

Thinking about bourgeois popular culture, I consider their attempt to warp gory folklore into modern interest. I think about artists who glibly take photographs in graveyards because of a sight's aesthetics. "I'm going to kill you" has become a child's catch phrase - though this leans more toward murder, which is worse than the dead and dying, which is further very concerning.

And I think about my own bittersweet practices of nostalgia. With certain memories stored inside my brain, there is this spiritual hesitancy to take them out. I know that these images are not intrinsically amoral, but there is an almost immediate warning about the danger that could become. This is conviction for the one who yearns, the unwanted yet necessary caution. And truly, there is lacking in a practice such as nostalgia. It is to look at a photograph with all that your eyes can gather, and never have it be enough to sustain the mystique of your desire.

To hold an interest toward the dead and dying might seem grotesque, but I propose that the actual problem is trying to restore what has died. What does it mean for the Christian to reminisce and desire for the past to become the present? It is the initiation of a false resurrection.

Pro et

PRO

By Elle Eriene

Was the Supreme Court of C physician assisted c

The right for complete bodily autonomy, that was victoriously won by the Supreme Court justices' courageous act of striking down the archaic ban, is a testament to Canada's continued commitment to the rights of the individual. While there are some ways in which we as Canadians are not completely in control of our bodies, it is still necessary to celebrate this momentous win for freedom.

With this ban on the right to die with dignity removed, those who are face with a medical death sentence or unbearable pain are able to freely live until they feel they are unable to carry on, saving them from months or years of slowly fading away into nothingness. We are given yet another way to be in control of our health, and this new found agency is what we need to offer those dying. The opportunity to exercise their agency, a fundamentally innate human experience, one last time, so that they may die in peace without the anguish of long hospitalization and increasing dependence on another is the peace that so many people long to have.

The right to die with dignity not only benefits the ill but also those around them. Family members, especially middle-aged women who typically care for their aging parents, will no longer be required to care for their dying parent or parents, or need to financially support them until the end of their long decline in health if their parents decided to die with dignity. The right to die with dignity is not so different than a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, except for one main thing, the patient does not need to die in such a scary manner, they can be comforted through a death like sleep, rather than dying in pain from a heart attack or gasping for their last breath.

While it is a celebrated accomplishment, it however does not go far enough. Those with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia like Korsakoff's would be considered unable to consent to dying with dignity, even if there was a living will indicating their desire to die peacefully before their complete history fades from their memory. Surely those who are currently having their memories wrenched away from them will soon be given the comfort of dying peacefully rather than in a disorientated and frightening state which unfortunately occurs currently, as their living relatives look on in fear feeling utterly helpless to help their loved ones.

This new found right is not only beneficial towards the individual, but also for Canada's burdened health care system. We will need fewer palliative care specialists, which we already have far too few of, and on the other hand it improves the choices people have in their end of life. Doctors are now able to give their patients the compassion they deserve, as in Canada a doctor's goal is to help their patient's overall well-being. Doctors are faced daily with critically ill people dying in painful and frightening ways, and now they are able to give those who consent the ultimate act of compassion, a dignified death.

Contra

Canada's decision to legalize death a good thing?

CONTRA
By Agatha Leben

In the first place, for the Supreme Court of Canada to find a right to “die with dignity” via physician assisted suicide within Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms under the right to life turns jurisprudence on its head. In *Rodriguez v. British Columbia (AG)*, which was only 22 years ago, the Supreme Court found that suicide, because it destroys life, is antithetical to the right to life and is not protected by Section 7. Although attitudes of society change it is important to note that some of the justices who ruled in the majority on the *Rodriguez* case helped draft the Charter! A ruling like this can open the door to interpretations of other sections in a way that is antithetical to how they are written.

Although this ruling gives the government a year to pass a new law, there are people already challenging the court saying that it did not go far enough, that this “right to die” should be extended to those who are unable to consent, such as dementia patients. The Supreme Court ruled that those suffering and able to consent may invoke this right to die. However, they did not specify clearly enough what suffering entails. Those who may feel that they are a burden on our publicly funded healthcare system thus suffer emotionally from this feeling and may feel pressured, whether directly or inferentially, to invoke this right. This also opens the door to family members pushing elderly parents whose care may be seen as a burden on them to consider this option, even if it is not something they themselves want. We should protect the vulnerable instead of enabling ways for them to harm themselves or be harmed by others.

One of the things that doctors and nurses stressed after this ruling is that there is a need for more palliative care so that it does not come to a decision by a person to end their life. There have also been bylaws passed by colleges of physicians across Canada lately that do not allow physicians their right of conscientious objection in cases where a patient requests physician assisted suicide. These would require a physician to administer or refer a patient to a physician who will administer the drugs that will end the patient's life, even if they feel it is not in their patient's best interest or it goes against the morals of the physician to do so. It should not be that professional organizations such as physicians colleges force a member to violate one of their fundamental freedoms, freedom of conscience and religion, in order to enforce a newly found right to death.

One of the things that the Supreme Court said was that there would be restricted access to physician assisted suicide to only a select few. However, if the “right to die” is indeed found within the right to life, how long will it be until the “right to die” is expanded to encompass all who enjoy the same right to life? Similar promises were made to the Belgian people, but as of last year, their access to assisted suicide has been extended to children who make this decision themselves. This very well may happen here also, as children already have Section 7 rights, how long will it be until this new interpretation of Section 7 applies to all?

IMR ATTENDS STUDENT PERFORMANCES

CULTURAL EVENT INTRODUCTION

This winter the In Medias Res editorial board attended two student based performances on campus: Origins performance series featuring the UofS Wind Orchestra and the UofS Jazz Ensemble; and Persuasion put on by STM's Newman Players.

I - Is there a value to attending live performances opposed to recordings?

JMK - Everyone knows that music is meant to be performed live. A tape can't capture the ambience of a venue or the feel of the crowd being swept away by the rise of each crescendo. There's something special about being in a room with people who are so passionate about their art. It changes the way you experience music.

JAL - Attending a live performance, whether it be a concert, play, or recital, is great thing to do and experience to have, for a couple of reasons. I find that when you attend something live you can really take in the atmosphere and feel the emotions that are being conveyed. With a recording, you just don't get that. It is beneficial and exciting to sit in a room with a large group of people experiencing the same thing you are. There is a sense of solidarity and enjoyment that you get from sitting next to someone who is crying during a emotional scene, or hearing the boisterous laugh of a man taking in his favourite scene. Even being part of a standing ovation makes you feel good and like you are a part of something important, whether it is important to few or many. Moreover, it is an opportunity for those putting on whatever show it is to interact with the audience. This allows for a more personal and intimate or custom experience. Something you can't experience if you watch a recording. Plus, it is important that we go out and support local artists or college clubs in whatever they do. By being present and offering a "congratulations," a "good job" or simply giving an applause lets them know their dedication and hard work has been appreciated and worth it. So yes, I would say there is tremendous value in attending live performances.

JDK - I think there is an inherent value in attending live performances as opposed to recordings. The atmosphere is completely different between a live performance and a recording. With live music I enjoy hearing the warm ups and practise and seeing the set up. Before the wind orchestra performance began they were all doing their final tuning and tests. The cacophony of many instruments sounding at once at the same time as the buzzing of the audience speaking just made the polished performance while the audience was silent and attentive stand out that much more.

SJ - Of course there is value in attending live performances. There will always be something special about attending a live performance, whether it be a concert or a play. Listening and watching something on your own creates a very different atmosphere, being on your own is very intimate. The raw energy of being in a crowded theatre with hundreds of people is missing when you choose to stay at home. It is a whole different level of social interaction, and I think that is important in this new age of technology. There is also the benefit of supporting local companies and artists. If we want to keep enjoying local live performances, we will have keep funding it.

JAH - There is a spontaneity and vigour to live performances that simply cannot be replicated by any recording. To see performers physically on a stage just a few feet away from you is an unmatched experience.

Modern Visions: 50th Anniversary Exhibition

II - Was there a particular movement or scene from the performances that stood out for you?

JMK - While I enjoyed the jazz ensemble, I liked the wind orchestra's selections more, particularly 'concert etude op. 49' composed by Alexander Goedicke & arranged by David Morlatt.

JDK - I really enjoyed Pusza, Four Gypsy Dances the most out of all. It was a very well arranged piece that involved everyone in the wind orchestra as well as some very good percussion. I also really enjoyed Hurrah Storm Gallop because of the use of voice from the musicians and how it caught everyone in the audience off guard. That was probably my favourite isolated moment, when for the first time everyone put down their instruments for a second to shout "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" only to quickly pick back up with the fast moving piece.

SJ - This may be a strange answer, but I really enjoyed the transitions from scene to scene. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges with live theatre is making do with the space that is available to you. Trying to create an entire set is incredibly hard work, and it is even more difficult when you have a play with many scene transitions. Having been in a theatre performance group for 9 years, I fully understand how difficult it is as an actor to swap out props and move furniture around without making a lot of noise. This particular group of actors and actresses did a fantastic job. Their acting was obviously really well done, but I admired their flawless performance behind the scenes as well.

JAH - With the brass band's performance I found them particularly enjoyable when they offered a prior explanation as to the religious or scientific meaning inherent in the music.

III - Do these performances have an intended audience?

JMK - Perhaps they do have an intended audience, one that will understand the subtleties of the performance, but I think those who haven't studied music or drama or even read Jane Austen would be able to walk away understanding the performance at a popular level.

JDK - I do not think they have an intended audience, but I do think that some people may get more out of different pieces or works than others. For example, the piece Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most was originally a popular vocal song, I feel that someone who is more familiar with the original song

SJ - To some degree, every form of art has an intended audience. There has to be some target, or the artwork won't connect with anyone. The play that I went to was adapted from a work by Jane Austen, and I loved every minute of it. The people around me enjoyed every minute of it. We all laughed together, and we experienced the characters happiness together. However, I am a huge fan of Jane Austen. I brought my mom with me to the play, and while she enjoyed the show, her experience with Jane Austen doesn't stretch beyond Pride and Prejudice. She didn't seem to understand the jokes, and I don't think that you could understand them if you weren't familiar with the subject matter and the social conditions of that time. But just because you may not be the audience that the artist intended, that doesn't mean that you are incapable of enjoying it.

JAH - I think that both performances were intended to be reasonably accessible, although the appeal of music was perhaps more universal. The play was excellent, and certainly accessible for those who have not read the novel, but its complexity of plot and diction would perhaps inevitably have a more narrow audience in mind.

White Feathers

Stefan Draskic

~ B ~

They called her B, short for a name even she had forgotten, as she lay in the empty tub with her hands underneath her blouse over the arching C-section scar. Her hips were too narrow; her gynecologist had said when she was in labour with Kristina. The scar only grew more pronounced and distinct, as she gave birth to August, and then to David. It was innate for her to forget her name, only to remember theirs.

The wall she faced was empty. Only a week ago, the tapestry of two cats, one white and the other black, hung there encased in a frame. B had sold the frame, and rolled the tapestry amongst family photos, paintings, and even house plans that had never come to fruition. She rolled them all individually in pieces of her own clothing and packed them in one of the suitcases.

It seemed strange to her that her life and the lives of her family could fit into seven large suitcases tied with layers of cheap tape. She had sold everything that didn't fit, not just the frame. It was these things that would remain of them. Pieces of furniture and clothing, stranded in houses she had never stepped foot in, nor ever would.

It wouldn't have been as difficult to move to a different city, even to a nearby country. But this was across the ocean, to a continent known for its cold, Oh Canada, how she hated those two words.

In the morning, on the day they were to move, she had woken up drenched in sweat clutching the C-section scar underneath her stomach. B believed she had had a dream, a terrible one, where cries of despair echoed from the vast emptiness surrounding her, until she woke up and opened her crusted eyes as wide apart as possible. She turned from one side of the bed to the other. She leaned on her elbow and saw David fast asleep with his fingers still intertwined in the ends of her black hair. Gently with the back of her forefinger she brushed her baby's soft cheek, from the corner of his mouth to his temple. Dry.

B untangled David's small fingers from her hair, and crawled on all fours to the foot of the bed. August, still afraid of the dark had crept in the middle of the night there, yet again. Morning sunlight waned across the nine-year-old's face, and through the dust in the light B could see that there was no trace of tears. She covered August's shoulders with her blanket and got out of bed.

B wanted to make sure that it had been a dream; she wanted to make sure everyone was all right.

She tiptoed carefully around the bed towards Markus. She knelt down and rested her folded hands over the mattress. There was no need to touch his face. It was as dry as a desert.

B left the bedroom, and crossed the hallway on her tiptoes before she leaned her ear against Kristina's door. She heard nothing at all, so she pushed the door ajar and quietly

on her toes walked up to her only daughter's bed. B studied Kristina's face. When she and Markus had told her of their decision to move to Canada, their daughter had thrown a tantrum that left B on the verge of tears in the bathroom.

When Kristina turned in her sleep, B took a step back. Then Kristina woke up and opened her eyes in surprise. B saw that that her daughter's eyes, too, were dry.

"Are you crying, Mom?" Kristina whispered.

B shook her head. "Go back to sleep, Kristy. Go back to sleep."

Kristina leaned against her arm.

"It's too late now, isn't it? You can't change your minds?"

"No. We have tried too hard. Spent too much money and trouble, to see it pass us by."

Kristina rested her head back on her pillow, in defeat.

"Please leave," she said.

"We will be happy, Kristy."

"Get out."

B never cried much and she took pride in that. Now, the tears suppressed in her youth were spilling out. The empty walls only burdened her with more sadness. Outside at least it all seemed the same. The cherry trees hadn't moved; neither had the tulips or the daffodils. The freshly cut grass was just as sharp against her feet, as it had been last year when Markus had cut it for the last time before the end of summer. The old abandoned barn stood rooted in the garden in the midst of broken pieces of machinery. The pair of barn swallows had returned from the east. The geese's discourse was just as lively as ever.

There were only four geese, but one could hear them from across the street. The largest one, the one with a leg thicker than the other, was accompanied by a much smaller goose with plumage just a hue darker. She strolled with confidence alongside the only gander in the group. On the top of her head, she carried a small bump completely covered in white feathers. She carried it like a crown, and August called her the Queen. The other two geese trailed close behind the first two. They seemed so lost, searching for something they couldn't quite pinpoint in their small minds. B had always felt bad for them, but she never really knew why.

When they were goslings, the fowl were quite fond of August. Whenever they saw him, they would follow him as if he were their mother. When he was bored, he would run around the garden with his hands outstretched as if he were in mid-flight, and behind him the goslings would stretch their little featherless wings and run after him. It was great fun, but it didn't last. Markus wouldn't allow it.

B had known by the way her son had pressed his large front teeth over his lower lip that he had been furious. Whenever Markus was out, B noticed August sneak into the garden. He would kneel beside the four goslings and pretend he was a goose. She saw him spread his folded legs, where the goslings rushed and huddled together. She had almost choked on her can of Coke, laughing. Unfortunately, it all ended there. Markus was just as stubborn as their son. "They are food, not pets," he would always repeat.

~ August ~

August looked nervously around his classroom, filled with twenty other children. He had known most since grade one, others he had known since kindergarten, and a select few he had known ever since he could remember. August ran his tongue nervously over the roof of his dry mouth

when the school bell rang and all his classmates rushed to put their books back into their backpacks. He sat in his desk and watched them all cluster against the door, like a stack of dominoes eager to fold over one another. Their teacher wouldn't let them leave yet. She was an older woman, who had worn black ever since her father had died. August remembered when she had come to teach them, with a large hole at the heel of her black stocking. He didn't think she had ever noticed it, because she always came back, with that same hole in her stocking.

"Before we leave today, I hope you have all said your farewells to August." The teacher smiled at him. "I hope you have a safe trip." She reached out her hand and shook August's, before she pushed her way to the door and opened it for all the dominoes to fall.

August thought he was the last one in his classroom until Oksana tapped his shoulder.

"You're so lucky, August," she said ruefully. "Send me a present will you? I wonder what kind of toys they have over there."

When he returned home he stopped short at the sight of two swallows gliding low across the road. He jumped to try to catch one as it flew over his head and across the green doors that lead to his yard. When he opened the doors, he didn't see the swallows. All he saw were white feathers being carried by the wind, like pollen in a forest filled with blooming trees. The gaggle of geese he had grown so fond of were nowhere to be seen.

~ B ~

They were having a going-away party that night. The geese were kept for that purpose only. B watched Markus catch the gander first. He was the easiest to catch, because of his bad leg. Markus held the goose's body between his legs, and the head with one hand and the base of the gander's neck with the other. Gently, he placed the gander's neck against the wooden stump. B held on to the axe as she looked at him.

"You should have explained it to him, you know. You had the chance yesterday to tell him we were going to do this."

The gander writhed uncomfortably inside Markus's clutch.

"Drop it now," he said.

"It would have made it easier. Now it's too late."

"He wouldn't have understood. He's a kid. He would have gotten angry no matter the circumstance."

"You don't give him a chance. Maybe he would have understood. Maybe —"

"Just drop the damn ax."

B sighed as she tightened her hold on the wooden shaft. She was determined she was going to decapitate the gander. She even spread her legs and pressed her toes against the ground, when the distressed Queen called out from the distance.

B dropped the ax on the grass.

"I don't want him to hate me. Not now."

~ August ~

He had collected a handful of feathers from the pavement where his father had plucked the geese. He carried the large wing feathers in his hand and examined them carefully. For a long time he simply gazed at them, before he named them: Queen, Captain Hook, Bagheera and

Dickon.

August ran inside the house and placed the white feathers in his rucksack, which had been prepared for the trip. He was about to zip it closed, when he heard his father's heavy feet on the kitchen's hardwood floor. When Markus entered the living room, his shirt was covered in dried blood. August clamped down his hands over the rucksack.

"Pass them over! We can't take them on our flight." Markus grabbed his backpack and took a hold of his feathers. "Don't cry," Markus said as gently as he could, which wasn't gentle at all.

August watched his father throw the feathers into the garbage can. When he went to change his clothes, August didn't wait long before he rushed to the kitchen on his tiptoes. Quietly he opened the garbage lid and hid his feathers underneath his shirt. He then ran to Kristina's room as sneakily as he could.

"Where's Mom!" August asked slightly out of breath.

"She's sleeping," Kristina said as she moved David from one hip to the other.

"I need your help!" August pulled up his shirt to show his sister the feathers he had tucked inside his pants.

"You're such a fucking dumb ass."

"Can I hide them in your room?" He said nervously.

"No. Hide them in the barn, for god's sake. Then when we're about to leave just sneak em in, when Dad isn't looking."

He nodded without thanking her and rushed out through the hallway, past the kitchen, outside, feathers firmly in his hand now. When August came back, his father was watching the news on the television, with David quiet and still in his arms. Markus turned to August and then back to the news. He pointed at the screen with his fat muscular finger.

"This is why we're leaving this goddamn country, August. There's no future for you kids here. There's nothing left here, except family and friends."

"Mom says that's important."

Markus pressed David closer to his chest, uncomfortably. "Sometimes we have to leave everyone behind, if we want to live a proper life," he explained.

"What if its their birthday? Won't we have to come and visit them? Buy them a present?"

Markus gave a short and quick laugh. "August, you won't see anyone you know for a long time. You'll hear from them, but you won't be with them." Markus sighed loudly. "Go wake your Mom, she needs to get the table set."

August nodded politely and walked slowly across the hallway to the bedroom. He didn't want to leave his friends, or anyone else for that matter.

"Mom, Dad says you need to get things ready for the guests."

His mother opened her eyes slowly. When she saw him she made room in the covers, and motioned for him to come lay beside her. August rested his head over her shoulder and thought of the geese. Soon, he would fly like they never could.

~ B ~

They were all seated outside, beside the empty chairs their family members and friends had left behind. The going away party, which the geese had been killed for, had ended. The farewells were said. The children cried. Markus

didn't and neither did she. The night had set, but none of them were tired, their eyes round and glossy, pained and bloodshot, but never empty except for David's.

Markus glanced at his watch. "They're going to pick us up soon, to drive us to the airport."

Kristina covered her mouth as if in disgust. She jumped out of her chair and rushed inside the house. B followed. She found her daughter in the bathroom, with her mouth and the tips of her hair covered in vomit. Kristina retched, and B ran her hands quickly under the running water in the sink. With her hands still moist she wiped the vomit from her daughter's mouth.

"It's alright," B said.

Kristina closed her eyes and shook her head.

"It's alright," B rubbed her daughter's back.

Kristina started to wail. She suddenly turned to her mother and began to shake her head violently.

"It won't be all right, Mom! It's just going to be us from now on. How could you let us do this? Why can't you see that we won't be happy?"

B couldn't look at her daughter, not the way she was now. She took a handful of paper towels and cleaned the chunks of goose flesh off the toilet seat.

"Look at me!" Kristina bawled. "Nobody will know who we are! When nobody knows us, how can we even matter?"

Kristina hoisted herself up from the toilet and washed her face in the sink. She left her mother kneeling on the cold bathroom tiles. B waited for Kristina to turn around, to come back to her, to say she didn't mean it, to smile and say that this was for the best, but she never did.

B closed the door and turned the lock. She ran to the window above the tub and struggled to get it open. She breathed in the summer air as the tears slid across her face. The C-section scar burned and she curled up in the bathtub, like she had done for days each and every night. She never wanted to see her children this way. Was the price of a good life, their happiness?

When she had heard him through the window, his sobs drowning out the summer grasshoppers, Markus knocked against the bathroom door.

"B? They'll be here in fifteen minutes."

She climbed out of the tub and rushed to open door. B starred straight into Markus's eyes. "Where's August?" She asked suddenly.

She must have looked at him with such concern, because Markus immediately looked around the hallway, before he ran to check the empty living room, he had seen him last in.

B dashed to the kitchen and saw Kristina with the tips of her hair wet, sitting on the couch with David asleep in her arms.

"Where is he? Where is August?" B asked her daughter.

Kristina pursed her mouth "He's in the barn," she said. "I told him to go to the barn."

"How did you find me?" August asked. He carried the rucksack she had prepared for him on his back, and in his hand he clung to the goose feathers.

"Dad won't let me have these," August raised his feathers.

B leaned against the barn's amber coloured wall and slid to the ground. She opened her arms, and August nestled

himself in her embrace.

"Is that why you were crying?"

He nodded.

"You worried me. I heard you through the bathroom window." B wiped August's eyes dry.

She wanted to take him and run away. She wanted to hide until their flight tickets expired. They didn't have money for another set, nor would they ever again. All the money they had saved was for those five tickets in Markus's pocket. If she were to run, they could start over again. They could live the way they've always lived, even if it meant that her children wouldn't have a future to live for. There would never be a future in a country like theirs, in the midst of Europe, where no one cared to look.

The two barn swallows suddenly flew in through the window towards their cup like nest in the corner of the barn, right above them. B and August raised their heads. The pair of birds inspected their nest meticulously. Each New Year the swallows came back, and this year it was just the same.

August looked down at his white feathers.

"Dad says I'll never see my friends again. Is he right, Mom?"

"I don't know." B paused. "But you have these feathers don't you? As long as you have them, you'll remember your home. You'll remember the geese you loved and you'll remember your friends ... and if you forget, I will remind you." B wiped the newly formed tears from her son's face, "But for now, all we can do is place every little piece of home, right here." She pressed her index finger gently to his chest, "And try to never forget."

August hugged his mother tightly. The swallows suddenly flew out from their nest and circled the barn in one full swoop, before they flew back outside. Then she realized with the echo of the swallows' song still in her ears, that they weren't flightless like August's geese. They were like the swallows, who always came back and B hoped as tightly as August held on to her, that they would too someday come back just like the swallows, even if only for a little while.

"Here, let me hide these feathers for you." B said.



ARTWORK: ALYSSA KUNKEL

Giving the Prairies a Voice

Interviewing Arthur Slade

Arthur Slade is an award winning Saskatoon writer and alumnus of the University of Saskatchewan. He has written novels for both children and adults, in addition to comics and a biography of John Diefenbaker. Many of his novels, such as the Governor General's Award for Children's Literature recipient *Dust*, are set in Saskatchewan, demonstrating the influence of the environment upon this Prairie-writer. Slade has worked in a diverse array of genres, running the gamut from horror to historical to steampunk. [He was kind enough to answer a few of IMR's questions....]



Copyright Black Box Images

While at the University of Saskatchewan, was there any wisdom shared or were there professors that have influenced or inspired your work?

Absolutely. I did take English 265 Creative Writing from Elizabeth Brewster. She was a very thoughtful teacher. It was so good for my writing life to meet with other writers and to know that I wasn't alone in the world. Plus the class forced me to write poetry, which I hope somehow made my work more poetic. I also am thankful for the comments of Professor Denham on some of my work that I shyly handed to him one day. And I blame Professor Parkinson (Norse Myths) and Professor Harris (Old Icelandic Literature) for addicting me to Norse myths and stories, which became the basis of my first published book series.

When you began sending out your manuscripts, were there any resources available to help you improve and refine your writing? What do you think helped you develop your plot-driven style?

One of the most influential organizations on my career is the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. I first joined when I was sixteen and have been a member for over thirty years now. I remember sending in my short stories and having them read by Bonnie Burnard. I had no idea how lucky I was to be working with her at such a young age. So in terms of being an open community that had many other examples of successful writers, the SWG was a great resource (and still is). I believe my writing style came out of the fact that I've always enjoyed reading stories of a fantastical nature: science fiction, fantasy, horror and those stories do tend to be more plot driven. So it was natural for me to write in that manner.

Your novels seem to be targeted to younger readers. What motivates you to write for young people? Is it a conscious decision? When you write for youth are there any special considerations or themes you think are important to explore?

This will sound a little corny, but I write for the child within. When I was younger (say 10-13 years old) I would completely disappear into a book and become a part of that world. So that

is who I am intending to write for. It isn't conscious in the sense that I think about the audience during the whole time I'm working on a book. First I just write the story in a way that seems to be the easiest and most natural way to get it out. It's in the later drafts that I (and my editors) tend to think about the audience and where the book should be tweaked to make it more in tune with their mindset. I'm not as concerned about what themes I explore. I believe those come naturally with whatever story I'm writing. My main goal is to get the story out.

***Tribes, Ghost Hotel, Jolted, and Return of the Grudstone Ghosts* explicitly take place in Saskatchewan, namely Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, while *Dust* take place on a farm in rural Saskatchewan. What about this province or more generally the prairies has inspired you to set your novels in this region? Has growing up in Saskatchewan been your influence for these novels?**

Obviously growing up in Saskatchewan makes it much easier to write about this part of the world. I don't have to do as much research! But, as an author, I like the idea of the fact that stories aren't just something that happens "over there" in some far away and more interesting place, but they happen right here where we are living. We do have an incredibly interesting history that hasn't been explored and explained to us properly by "the powers that be." Part of that is living right next to the US tends to make us think that everything is happening in the US. *Jolted* is an example of how I wanted to write a somewhat fun and dark story about a boy who has the problem of lightning being attracted to him. But the fact that he goes to a school in Moose Jaw allows me to explore some of the history of our province (Jerry Potts being a fine example) and slide some of that history in-between the cracks of the story. Or perhaps I should say the

history is the mortar of the story. The prairies in general are a beehive of creativity, especially the writing community, and that has to do with the stereotypical long winters and the isolation of the landscape. Writers are more likely to stick close to their furnace and write. But on top of that people like Tommy

Douglas started the Saskatchewan Arts Board (the first in North America) and that support has helped to foster these writes. To give the prairies a voice. I'm eternally grateful for that.

Your works seems to be greatly influence by classical and Nordic mythology. What is it about mythology that interests you? Do you think there's some intrinsic worth to studying mythology?

Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology were my staple diet when I was younger. I think it's natural to gravitate towards reading about those myths when you're younger. They're the basis of so many of our stories. Where would Lord of the Rings be without Norse Mythology? In many ways mythological stories are the stories of superheroes and super heroines. They're like us, but far more interesting and powerful. So that aspect was very attractive to my younger mind. Now I see mythology as the way we started telling stories and I try to use those myths to make my stories more interesting. Besides, when thinking of Norse culture, who wouldn't like a society that regarded being clever with words and with a sword (or axe) as equally important?

Recently your work has shifted from novels placed in the prairies, towards a series following the journey of an adolescent coming into his own in an alternative Victorian era. What motivated the switch?

At the time I started The Hunchback Assignments steampunk wasn't really making its vaunted comeback. I wanted to write a series that payed homage to all the classic British (and French) fiction that shaped the literature we read now. There would be no science fiction without HG Wells and Jules Verne. No horror without Robert Louis Stevenson, Mary Shelley, and Bram Stoker. So my intention was to write a modern version of these novels. Or at least stories whose roots started in the classic Victorian fiction.

Modo, the main character of The Hunchback Assignments, plays with the well-known Hunchback of Notre Dame character but with a unique twist, not only is he a well groomed and highly trained agent, but he can morph his appearance. Why did you want to revisit this beloved character? How does this unusual hero add to the story you wanted to tell?

It's curious where ideas come from. I happened to be reading The Hunchback of Notre Dame at the same time I was perusing Sherlock Holmes. And I had the odd thought: what if the hunchback became a detective? That would make his story a bit more of an adventure and maybe more appealing to a younger audience. He wouldn't have to hang around and ring bells all the time. But it became clear to me that he couldn't solve crimes if he appeared in his regular form. People would know that he was there to put the murderers away. And, well, the murderers

would run away. So I gave him the ability to change his shape (an evolutionary adaption). Finally, I decided to make him a secret agent so that I would have the whole world to play with. So again it was my way of paying homage to both Quasimodo and Sherlock Holmes. I also found it intriguing to have a

Besides, when thinking of Norse culture, who wouldn't like a society that regarded being clever with words and with a sword (or axe) as equally important?

character with a disability who is also a hero. He still has to face so many prejudices because of his appearance and yet he has these amazing abilities. So that gave me a lot of material to play with in terms of creating a character that was different from the original Quasimodo.

Recently, you published Modo: Ember's End, which is a graphic novel. In what ways do writing graphic novels differ from other novels? What was it like to work collectively with another artist? Did Christopher Steininger (the illustrator) and yourself work together to plan the pages of the novel?

With the graphic novel it's much like writing a movie script. I wrote out the story describing what would appear on each panel on each page. Then Chris would come along and magically (with hours and hours of work) turn those words into illustrations. We decided that the script would be the schematics for the story, but that Chris could change the story or the panels if he found a better way to tell the story. It really is a lot of collaboration and we ended up with a much better book that we would have if we just stuck exactly to my script. Plus if I had done the drawing it would have all been stick men and women. Not fun.

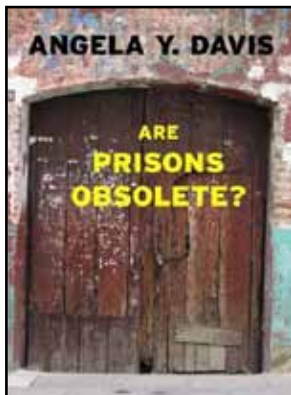
You're currently the writer in residence at the Regina Public Library. What does it mean for you to be able to help and guide burgeoning writers? Has it influenced your perspective on the Saskatchewan writing scene?

I visited the writer in residence office in Saskatoon many times during my formative years. It's curious how their advice back then keeps coming to me while I'm commenting on the work of younger writers. It's a way for me to pass along some of those tips and tricks and to be encouraging. But it's also very invigorating. There are so many great stories out there and interesting storytellers who are just waiting for their moment to find the right stage.



ARTWORK: THILINA BANDARA

Book Reviews

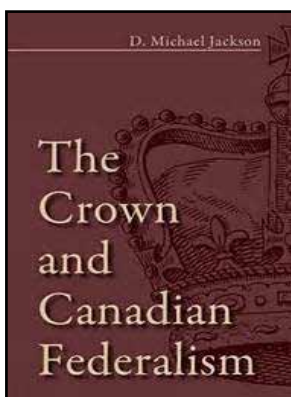


Are Prisons Obsolete?

by **Angela Y. Davis**

Reviewed by Jazmin Kurtenbach

This quick read written by prison abolitionist Angela Y. Davis provides compelling arguments to consider for the abolition of the current "prison industrial complex" of the United States of America. Though she writes convincingly about a system seemingly incapable of being redeemed, her concluding chapter which the entire book leads towards falls flat leaving this reviewer disappointed at its missed potential. She begins by discussing the history of the USA's penal system and its links to the cruel practices of chain gang prison labour which was but another way of keeping slavery alive. She continues by discussing the Auburn style and its use of solitary confinement which was criticized from the beginning of its appearance by many people including Charles Dickens. She presses on by detailing the gendered structures of prison and the results of these extreme power imbalances. She argues quite well about the issues ingrained into the USA's system however her book is concluded in a five page chapter that makes the reader question if this prison abolitionist has actually considered what could take the place of prisons or even how to implement a change to the system. She offers introductory-level sociological knowledge as sweeping statements of improving crime rates and rates of addiction through increase of social funding, free education and open access to treatment centers though she does acknowledge that not everyone would choose treatment. She leans on Merton's strain theory when suggesting a redistribution of wealth is necessary to lessen the strain people experience which is theorized to be the root of crime. Though she offers more or less common place answers to crime prevention, she offers little to answer what would replace the current system of incarceration or what would happen to those currently in prison. As a scholar she produces a well-researched book yet her haphazard seemingly last minute attempt at concluding this argument for abolition completely destroys her argument. This is perhaps an example of how the prison abolition movement is often overlooked as some utopian pipe dream as she fails to propose a solution.



THE CROWN AND CANADIAN FEDERALISM

by **D. Michael Jackson**

Reviewed by James Hawkes

The Crown and Canadian Federalism by D. Michael Jackson is a timely work, given the recent revival in interest in the monarchy both in government and academia, which offers an excellent overview of the role of the Crown in Canada's constitution, both historically and in the present. Jackson brings his many years of practical experience as a leading protocol expert and organizer of royal visits to this text. Offering an insider perspective on the role played by the Crown in strengthening the status of the provinces in their perpetual tug-of-war with Ottawa.

A central theme of this book is how, far from being an archaic anachronism, as it is so often portrayed, the office of Lieutenant Governor plays a crucial role in the vitality of Canadian federalism. He does a fine job of explaining how Lieutenant Governors improve the status of the provinces through ensuring that the power and legitimacy of the Crown does not just emanate from Ottawa but that it is also embodied at the provincial level as well. Of course this is not quite what the drafters of the British North America Act would have wanted, but Jackson is rather blasé about such things, no supporter of strict constructionism he. But of course, as he emphasizes throughout it is by that inherent flexibility which gives our system its inherent strength. In summary, this book is an excellent primer on the often overlooked role of the provincial viceroys in our system of government, filled with amusing anecdotes and valuable knowledge.



YVONNE DUTALLAS

POSTCARD STORY

"What's a postcard story? A postcard story is a condensed piece of storytelling in no more than 250 words. Use drama, poetry, humour, and dialogue to write one. Anything goes. There are no restrictions except the word limit. Stretch yourself by writing short." *Guy Vanderhague*

February 18th, 2015

Today I've lost all hope. My sick body had won this round yet again. ~~Broken~~ Shattered, I wept on the bathroom floor until my ever-faithful Ted came and scooped me into his arms. Holding me close he gently brushed his lips against my neck attempting to seduce a smile upon my face, knowing all too well what has caused my state. Though he strongly held me close, I knew he too was close to unraveling. Our savings fund dubbed "The Hannah Fund" is completely barren; it feels like such a waste, completely my fault. Though I had willingly devoted my most fruitful years to the joys academic pursuit, I can't help but feel the pain of my cystic body betraying me time and time again. I knew all along that those tugging fears were the truth that my body tried to warn me about before it was too late, but I so disconnected from my flesh rejected the idea.

I wish I could rewrite my life. - Jen



In Medias Res

St. Thomas More College

1437 College Drive

University of Saskatchewan

S7N 0W6



By Jazmin Kurtenbach