

314 words, column #36
Java Talk
(for January 3 to January 9, 2008)

Every Age Is The Best Age

Engrossed? Definitely! Preoccupied? Yes! Obsessed? No!

Writing lists is part of my creative process. Lists in literature are very effective. *Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel, is rich with delightful examples. However, creating my end-of-year-lists-for-the-new-year tasks have taken me days, and as I wondered how I could possibly do all of this again next year, I remembered how I was once told that being obsessed was a good quality for a writer. Still, this word does not express how I enjoy what I am doing, nor does it acknowledge the amount of work that goes into writing.

Nevertheless, being so engrossed didn't leave me much time to write this week's column, but it did inspire me to look through my folders where I have been keeping clippings for the last seven years about people who are mostly well past 100.

Some of the included pieces are about scientific efforts that could greatly increase our life expectancy, and some are arguments by those who are opposed and appalled at the idea of living so long, plus there are many hilarious cartoons. I don't suppose everyone appreciated Cam Cardow's cartoon (July 2002) where a woman says, "What a wonderful senior care facility. Do they treat you well here?" to an old fellow who then says, "I'm on staff, Lady." I also found an article by Marlene Hobib who, in 2001, wrote how "[a]gism, the negative characterization of older people, it seems, is slowly working its way out of literature." She said that up until recently, either the elderly weren't being represented in literature, or else, like "Hagar Shipley, the elderly central character in Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*," they were stereotyped as "crotchety."

As for myself, I have written about some contemporary long-lived role models in my previous columns, which can now be accessed from one of my new-for-2008 lists at www.deidrehill.ca/other.html, and of course, my literary fiction is filled with them.

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