

319 words, column #29  
Java Talk  
(for November 8, 2007 to November 14, 2007)

## **Every Age Is The Best Age**

*To Every Thing There is a Season*

Fall foreshadows winter. In northern Canada, the sun sets at this time of year and won't rise again until the end of January. Everything seems to be dying or ending. This can be a deeply sad time of the year at any age. But, after enough endings, we begin to see that they create our story. The sun rises again, spring returns, and new stories grow out of the old. To a writer, endings and beginnings are rich with potential. To a child, endings can be brutal and confusing.

As a literary fiction writer, I see life as a series of created stories unfolding with many twists and turns and developments until, finally, a resolution results in new growth that couldn't have happened in any other way, followed by many new stories, new characters, and new meanings. How the story is read makes all the difference: Whose story is this? Who's telling the story? When is it being told? Versions of our personal stories change with the years and make more sense, as previously unrealized details come to light.

Recently, my mentor, who lives in the Yukon, commented on how she finds having a child in the house to be a life-affirming process. I said I find writing to be life-affirming. Of course, she is my mentor because I admire so much about her, so I was trying to relate. She is the person I would have wished to be like. However, our life's experiences had already taken different paths long before we met. She now has four grown children plus several grandchildren ranging from toddler to late teen ages. Throughout the year, they celebrate birthdays and have their own meaningful family traditions, like most close families. I think it is wonderful for her and her family, and for others. But my life is about being a writer, and the best way for me is to be without children.

Deidre Hill

No doubt we both feel the same sick feeling when what matters to us is in any way threatened. It is more acceptable for a mother's need to protect her children than any writers' needs.

Since we met when she was a woman of a certain age, which is the age I am now, and since she is nineteen years older than me, instead of following in her steps, hers continue to inspire my own. She is also someone whom I can ask certain questions that the answers are probably so obvious to most, such as what does she mean by the idea that children in the house life-affirming. Being a writer and word smith, I tried to understand by looking at the dictionary definitions. Her background includes a doctorate degree in psychology and a career in counseling. What does life-affirming mean to her? As a psychology term, one of MSN Encarta's definitions is 4. psychology **positive statement of achievement:** a positive thought or statement affirming that a desired goal has been reached or is within reach. I think that her family reflect her most important goals successfully reached. I know her family love her very much, and I think this is also what is life-affirming. Meanwhile, she is thinking about my question before she writes to tell me in her own words what it really means, to help me understand. When I wrote to ask her, I said I hadn't been able to figure it out at all, although I imagined most people would understand what she meant, and that I was, however, almost certain that it was not my experience.

Deidre Hill