The Mitre
1994-1995

Bishop's University
THE MITRE
1994-1995
101st Edition

Editors:
Craig S. Bowman
Erin McLaughlin

Bishop's University
A Special Thank You:

We, the editors of The Mitre, would like to take this opportunity to thank the kind and generous contributions of Dr. Noni Howard, Bishop's University Class of 1971.

Table of Contents

Cover: Bishop's University, in watercolour
by Kay Kinsman

The hackneyed poem, Aaron C. Davis ............................................................... 1
South East Light, Frank Wildig ......................................................................... 2
Pen and Ink Drawing, Lisa Lenethen ................................................................. 3
I Wrote To The Great Poets When I Was Fifteen, Noni Howard ......................... 4
Celebration, Barbara Hokham ........................................................................... 7
Why?, Shanti ........................................................................................................ 10
Reality Is A State of Mind, Zane ........................................................................ 11
Engraving, J.L.G. ................................................................................................. 12
Bloom, Steve Polley ............................................................................................ 13
Stories Told In New York State, Carolyn Lloyd .................................................. 14
(When My Song Cries Out), T.A. ....................................................................... 16
I am a voice, Heather Coutts ............................................................................. 17
Photograph, Cara Whipple .................................................................................. 18
CWC–Friend, Anonymous .................................................................................... 19
In Waiting, Carol Fontaine .................................................................................. 20
Cornered, brad steinberg .................................................................................... 21
(peter had grey eyes), devyn booth ...................................................................... 22
La fin des temps, Melanie Roy .............................................................................. 23
The Funeral, Kate Waters ..................................................................................... 24
Illustration, Kay Kinsman ................................................................................... 26
For W.C.W., Erica Naish ..................................................................................... 27
Innocence, Steve Polley ....................................................................................... 28
T.V. Torah, h.e. zurbrugg ...................................................................................... 29
The Dwarf, Alex Megelas ..................................................................................... 30
The Performance, Andrea Robinson ..................................................................... 32
Illustration, Chris Adamson ................................................................................ 33
About Fishing ................................................... brad steinberg ............................................ 34
A Dance of Vampires, Daniel Gwyn .................................................................... 35
Photograph, Cara Whipple .................................................................................. 35
X.Y., Nick Zacharias ............................................................................................ 46
Sunny Nursery Rhymes, Lisa Lenethen ............................................................... 47
Hanged men could dance the jig, Aaron C. Davis ................................................. 48
Les Jeux Sont Faits, Kimberley O'Shea ................................................................. 49
Bev, W. Andy Knight ............................................................................................ 50
First Fruits, Catherine Dean ................................................................................ 51
Kevin’s Poem, Erica Naish ................................................................................... 57
Illustration, Zane ................................................................................................. 58
What is Love?, Laurie Hannan ............................................................................ 59
Preface

In 1990, editor Peter Crowe described the desperate plight of the under-funded Mitre: “Canada’s oldest university literary publication deserves better than to simply be discarded as a financial investment gone bad”. After last year’s encouraging rise in popularity and financial support for its centennial edition, we are pleased to bring you the 1994-1995 edition of The Mitre.

Our forty-four contributors this year have donated a vast array of poems, short stories, graphic art, photography and one-act plays, ranging in theme from love, life, death and fishing. The Mitre has fully risen from its previous crisis to once again display the talent of the Bishop’s community and communicate our ideas to the world (or at least the people who read it).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our contributors and the many people who made this publication possible. Of worthy note are Canadian author D.G. Jones who took the time to be an adviser at our creative writing workshop and Liz Harvey of the S.R.C. who gave us needed direction. Additionally, we would like to thank Heidi Zurbrugg and Melissa McNeil of the English Literature Club, and Dr. K. McLean of the English Department, for their valuable support. Word of mouth was crucial to the promotion of The Mitre therefore we would also like to thank the faculty and students who helped to spread the good word. A final thank you goes out to our friends who put up with us for the past few months.

This is the presentation of the culmination of our coordinated efforts. We hope that you find it both engaging and entertaining.

Erin McLaughlin
Editors
Craig S. Bowman
THE HACKNEYED POEM

This poem is to you.
You are made of my words.
This goes far beyond
want
casual need.
It’s desire.
What
I have written,
you already know.
You must hear it
from me.
I drew you in;
you won’t turn
back,
not now
and certainly not here.
It’s a pity,
it’s your life.
Such a little waste.
Desire is such a wicked tool
I didn’t want to use.
You are now in the slaughterhouse,
I am now
behind the axe.

A Davis
SOUTH EAST LIGHT

I hold my son to the south east light,
To watch the sun rise
in those radiant eyes.
He glistens in golden translucence,
playful and eternal.
Over a placid, ageless sea,
he laughs and embraces me.

I hold to the world my most joyful gift.
Stand gloriously blessed
with our backs to the west.
Far from the shadows in the hours to come,
the howl of wind, the fall of snows,
With his warm, liquid smile,
both kind and beautiful,
He calls to the sea
and the sea responds.

Frank Willdig
I WROTE TO THE GREAT POETS WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN

For Irving Layton

and asked them for a personal criticism of my poetry. I had just won first prize in a national contest and my poems were appearing in “The Sherbrooke Daily Record” and I was full of myself.

They wrote back and said that it was very nice of me to have considered them but I was too young to criticize. Why not go and see the local poet/professor in my area, Ralph Gustafson. Surely he could help me.

My mother had bought me a new suit for the occasion of meeting the great professor. It consisted of a matching jacket and skirt (very short), hat, purse and spats to put over my boots; and I was tweedy, rich in oranges and burnt almonds and blaring reds the colours of autumn and much-used couches in frat houses.

All this together with white gloves and blouse made up the ensemble. I was determined to appear thoroughly professional.

On the auspicious day I knocked on the right office door of the humanities building. “Come in,” a deep resonating voice commanded

As I gathered up my sheaf of poems my palms began to sweat inside my spotless gloves. The kindly professor flared at me from across his expansive desk. I extended my few poems toward him.

Musing in the good western light he turned away and lit his pipe. He could have been an English country gentleman just off his horse taking his leisure in his manor house for all to see.

Tall, silvered, turtle-necked and black hawk eyed his houndstoothed jacket embellished with thick leather at elbows and cuffs the man was a living image of himself a mountain not to be traversed.

“Poetry!” he said throwing up a hand. “It’s a bad business. Don’t get into it. My advice is don’t do it.”

He stomped around. He looked at my poems. After a while he said, “You do realize, of course, that you will be committing yourself to emotional and financial ruin, don’t you?”

I answered as the bride and bridegroom of the Muse: “I do.” I said.

Not able to dissuade me, the light streaming on his silver hair his pipe fading, he spoke:

“You know, you have to sleep up to get anywhere these days, ... to get published.”

With a flourish he turned towards the setting sun and was at once lost in a glow that engulfed his head.
In an instant epiphany I knew that everything hinged upon my imminent reply; the next words out of my mouth had to be brilliant. I waited for my thoughts to crystallize until they became as finite as snowflakes or diamonds. Finally I replied: "Is that how you, Professor Gustafson, got published?"

Noni Howard
12-29-94
Class of 1971

**CELEBRATION**

Brilliant sunshine filtered through the dense leaves of massive trees from the bright blue skies overhead. I sat quietly in a tree, watching my mates soar across the jungle floor, swinging gracefully from vine to vine. We are not known for our grace, nor for our beauty, yet I saw it in their every action. I reached for a banana and slipped it from its skin with deft fingers. Settling back to eat, I heard a rumbling in the distance beyond our grove, but thought little of it. It could have been anything from gazelles to elephants. It was, of course, humans. It all happened in a heartbeat. I was happily nibbling on my banana when suddenly I was wrenched from my perch and surrounded by a suffocating darkness. I never even saw the man who grabbed me. I struggled against the confines of my prison, screaming as only one who experiences sheer terror can. My efforts were futile. Exhaustion threatened to overcome me, but I would not succumb. I wailed incessantly until finally I felt a sharp blow at the base of my skull. An unintelligible order was barked at me as I slipped into a state of blissful unconsciousness.

I awaken, memories receding in face of reality. I am no longer shrouded in darkness, but I am no less imprisoned. My limbs are bound by heavy clasps that allow me to stumble along, yet prevent me from moving with ease. A similar band, which is connected to a nearby post with a heavy white vine, is clasped about my neck. I try to lift my head to get my bearings, but the weight of the clasp is too much for my neck to hold upon my weary shoulders. My head drops back to the ground with a sickening thud. A heavy, stifling smell permeates the area. It reminds me of the peculiar scent that clings to a dead gazelle in the plains after a pride has fed. It frightens me, and I choke on the bile rising up in my throat. Suddenly, the full consciousness overcomes my lethargy. Humans bustle about, making loud, harsh sounds whose resonance stings my unaccustomed ears. The ground underneath me is cold and unyielding, so unlike the soft dirt floors of my home. I am surrounded by huge, solid masses that encase the area. I don’t even see an opening by which to escape. There are objects scattered about that I can only assume were once trees. and other, smaller ones, crafted with some foreign material, make high, grating sounds as humans collect them.

A man stands before me. He is tall and imposing. I fear he will return me to the prison of utter darkness. As confusing as this stifling place is, it is preferable to the darkness. Anything is. My mind screams a plea but I cannot allow it to escape my lips, for I recall what happened the last time I tried to cry out. I would rather be awake to face my fate.

The man unties the heavy white vine from the post and leads me roughly across the room by my shackles. He is impatient, tugging at my neck with the vine, but the binding is too heavy for me. I am still unable to lift my head. I feel the friction tearing at the tender flesh of my neck as I am literally dragged across the floor. Suddenly, the vine slackens and my head falls, once again, to the floor. I look up to see another man arguing with the first.

“What do you think you’re doing, you idiot? You will damage its neck. It must look appealing for our guests. Take the iron band off the neck and pull by the wrists.”

Noni Howard
12-29-94
Class of 1971
I, of course, understand nothing, only that the pain in my head has receded. I look up to the man in gratitude, but he has gone. The other continues to pull on me, only the vine has been attached to my wrists instead of my neck. I follow willingly, thankful for the reprieve.

We arrive at a long island in the centre of the room. The man reaches behind it and emerges with a clear object filled with translucent amber liquid. I recognize it as one of the objects that makes the horrible, resonant sound. I squawk involuntarily as the foul tasting liquid is forced down my throat. I choke, but my captor pays no heed. He merely pauses for a moment and resumes his task. I hear the other man return.

"Give it the red wine instead. It provides a much nicer flavour. They won’t pay much for that garbage."

The foul liquid stops its descent down my burning throat. I have been spared once again. It’s nice to know that I have a friend among these beasts.

When my friend leaves, a new liquid is forced past my lips, though it tastes marginally better than the first. I begin to feel light in the head. My actions are no longer graceful as they once were. I am clumsy and can no longer walk. My shackles get in my way and I trip. I feel as though my brain must be drowning in red liquid, yet he continues to feed it to me. I don’t understand what is happening to me, yet I realize that I am powerless to prevent it. It shames me that I can no longer walk. I think perhaps I am losing my mind, but my thoughts are still so vivid that it seems unlikely.

The man has stopped feeding me. He picks me up and carries me into another area. He knows that I cannot walk. Vaguely, I wonder why I had not noticed this opening before. The leading vine is removed from my wrists, but I am still bound. I am stuffed into a tiny wooden casing, barely large enough for the width of my shoulders. I struggle, but I cannot move. Only my head emerges from the casing. I try to cry out but I find I have no voice. Only a soft murmur passes through my lips, for my jaw is now locked in place and my throat is swollen from the burning liquid. I cannot move a muscle beyond those in my eyes and mouth.

A substance that appears to be cold, hard water is packed around my neck. The chill seeps quickly through my bones and I shiver uselessly. Someone places greenery around my head. I see a banana to the left of my cheek and am reminded of my grove in the jungle. Suddenly frantic to return home I struggle once again, but my actions are still weighted and clumsy. I succeed only in bruising my shoulders and twisting my neck. I settle down, for I can do nothing more now but rely upon the mercy of man.

My box is taken back into the other room and attached to the centre of one of the wooden objects scattered about. It seems to be a circular board with four trunks holding it above the ground. Smaller, similar objects surround it. I am locked into the centre, my garnished head resting above the surface. Other humans file noisily in and arrange themselves on the wooden objects that surround me. Food is brought in on round disks and placed in front of people. They smile and laugh as they feed off these disks, making terrible scraping noises that seem to bother only me. My traitorous eyes refuse to close and I watch in helpless anguish as my vital tissue passes between their smiling lips. I grow weak for my mind is no longer able to function with so little substance. As my blank eyes drift shut for the last time, I hear someone speak.

"That wine really adds a nice flavour, doesn’t it?"

"Although this story is fiction, the events are not. These methods of preparation are still practised in some Asian countries today. The information for this piece was obtained from:


Barbara Holdham
WHY?

A bus through the unknown
fatigue, oppressive heat
dust inhibiting breathing
understanding only the thoughts in my head
foreign voices surround me.

STOP the air erupts
the window shatters.
I'm thrown to the floor.

Noise!
Confusion!
Chaos envelops me...

Looking up,
searching for reassurance,
finding eyes of fear.
Blood flowing... Pain.

A woman.
Incomplete, her beauty destroyed.
Life lost in youth.
By a military bullet.

WHY?

REALITY IS A STATE OF MIND

Every life is a flame ... if all the
sparks that surround you were to give
up and go out, by what light should you
walk? If all their warmth were
extinguished by the cold, heartless
winds, by what fire should you warm
your heart?

I see you flicker and die, some
suddenly, some fading, and some
fighting for every breath. It is as if I am
a mirror and I reflect each of your
flames: as you die, I lose more and
more of my own light. And when you
are all gone, do I, too, cease to exist?
Is there really nothing more to me than
your light?

Zane
BLOOM

Swallowed Temptations
that would never see the light
Lost in my confusions
that flutter with failing flight
I've seen the darkness
which shines so very bright
It's eating up my patience
and I'm losing my child's sight
But from the corner of my mouth
I can feel it starting to bloom
Coming from deep inside of me
from a dark and hidden room
It starts with anticipation
that releases all the doom
It ends with a smile
but the feelings always loom

Planned to live in silence
that seemed to sound like rain.
Planned to live inside myself
that seems to feel like pain.
Got a penny in my pocket
that seems to hold my dreams.
Got a wishing well that's empty
that seems to hold my screams.

Steve Polley
STORIES TOLD IN NEW YORK STATE

As the story goes, Pat Dean’s car blew up, fizzled, pouf! ta dah! down to nothing. Pat Dean escaped without a scar, canoe intact. He’d had the canoe strapped on top for a river trip. He had one book, too, in the car which did not burn. The book was a Jack Kerouac novel. So, Impromptu Crazy Pat sat down in his canoe, with his book, on the side of the highway and awaited help.

People who think they are a Jack Kerouac novel should not tell stories because they tend to lie.

Pat Dean is forgiven. I never saw him smoke seeing as I only saw him in Camp with children about, but surely he did not. Long streams of smoke would follow him. I know, in a lampoonish fashion, he, himself a handsome lampoon. Banal and handsome, hand poised with a Lucky Strike. Pat Dean was. Too old for camp. Too ruckus raising an influence for young ones. He wore faded patched golf shorts at all times, fifties-style sunglasses, flip flops. I will remember him in ten years as he described himself once, T-shirtless, stranded and ebullient. In the god-damn canoe.

I was a skinny, shy seventeen-year-old in this time of Pat Dean. I’d never been to New York before, though I passed through. The trees were plain, the lake cold. Taco Bell seemed like a dream. I boated on the boat of a senator’s son. I braved tornados with campers under my arms.

When it rained at the Gorge, the senator’s son and I would let the children slide all over in mud, mix a tiny drink, and play cards in the tent. When we heard them scream, we knew they were having a good time. Though we lived a Great Romance, he cheated at cards, and held me slyly.

As the story goes, Belinda Blue, the World Champion Waterskier, lend off a gang of sharks in the Straits of the St. Lawrence. Not only that. Belinda Blue slaved electric eels: Belinda Blue slept alone in the dark woods in the North of Canada. Belinda Blue, classy and smart, discovered trap doors and saved children. Nine little girls in Cabin Five. Heads pressed into pillows, shivered to think that their counsellor knew Belinda Blue personally. They accepted my story that they were girls. I see, now, from my perch at a dormitory window in a snowy Eastern Townships college, far removed, that they did not like my skinny legs. I looked like one of the kids. The sun on the skin made my hair turn white and my face glow gold. I had many friends who were boys. In the United States, amazingly, people still went on dates. The senator’s son asked me to play mini golf; then the Waterfront Director, to the beach: then a scammer from Florida, to a bar, with fake ID; then Cam Smith, Outpost Director, out to supper on a Saturday. I participated in each excursion with blankness in the eyes.

The senator’s son tried hardest. We drove to Barcelona, once, and ate submarines at a place along Lake Erie. I picked songs on the jukebox. The air was very fine that night, as if too delicate to settle on the earth. It stayed pink for a good while. He talked about himself and his brothers (three charming bastards who ran around with greater authority than any other camper, received more mail, kissed more girls, and sailed best). The senator’s son was the same, but bigger. He had a full line of very large, white teeth. We had one conversation about religion in which, as I remember, he interjected, “Jesus is great!” It seemed so unlikely that he would think so, having slept with the Virgin Mary, a wide-eyed Junior counsellor who played the part of Mary for Christmas in July. We stopped at the Gorge, quiet without our charges, so he could drink his steady share. The night fell and fell. I had a vision of my date, for a silly moment, as a Kennedy: beautiful, Catholic, and American to his bones. I pictured his quaint, beat-up VW in flight. I saw me screaming soundlessly at the bottom the Like.

Over the three months I stopped speaking. I learned that to be looked at was my contribution. As if to counteract a lascivious skinniness, I ate seventeen pounds of goulash and pancakes a day. New Yorkers are not fat. They are not skinny, however, in a way that non-New Yorkers are. Even from my perch five hundred miles away I do not know what I mean.

One time, I cried. I sat in the Camp kitchen alone, off hours, eating Batman cereal straight out of the box. Snowy Walker entered and saw me there. He turned on the main light and came close. “What’s the matter?” her asked. I sighed. If you saw Snowy you might laugh, so clean he was. He had white-blond hair and a white-scrubbed face and big bones and tallness. And he was strong, and he was tidy, and you pictured him at the head of a great big boat, with flag unfurled. The U.S. Marines will transform anybody into Mr. Clean. “Hey, honey, what’s the matter?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, something must be.”

“I know but there isn’t.”

“You’re just sad.” I nodded. He wrapped his arm around me. One huge finger made circles on my skin. I thought of Snowy Walker giving swimming lessons during the day. And how he threw only the pretty, bathing suit-clad girls into the air. He let them pass their Red Cross levels. He let the darling ones win. Snowy Walker smelled so clean, and yet what I remember most was the smell in the kitchen of yeast and sweat. I pass no judgements, at least I’d like to say I don’t. Enclosed in snow, I think of my home as cold as a stone and New York as a dazzler. Winter comes to New York too. My lean looks gained some notoriety. They might remember me for that, though nothing of what I said or did.

Carolyn Lloyd
When my song cries out
Silence, is all that I hear
That which pains my depth
I cannot begin to utter.
Tho' my soul languishes peacefully
I cannot see the truth which is Holy
Asked to be enlightened by light
Yet green is all in my soul
Seemingly death has engulfed my eyes
For I can't fathom the depth of her heart.

I AM A VOICE

see the voices
on the box
they dance they win
they talk

hear the voices
in the car
they breathe therefore
they are

what is human
what is real
you can't see
you can't feel

i am not human
i am not real
i can see
i can feel

i am a voice

Heather Coutts
You meet me in my dreams
But it is not you
The image is yours
But the voice belongs to another
In my dreams
I am told of your destiny
Your life’s map
And of a girl in a far away land
She is waiting for you
I am told of your beliefs
And what is expected of you
That I must leave you
Let you be—to do what you have to do
My thoughts of you must escape me
But will they, as you are so great
Sometimes they overcome me
I just want to reach out to you
To touch you—let you know how I feel
But I stop myself
As I remember your life’s map
And the girl who is waiting for you
Will you ever know how much I care
Only your destiny can tell

Anonymous

Cara Whipple
IN WAITING

Being in waiting
is a bit like
hoping for everything,
expecting nothing,
watching a sunrise,
and not seeing it,
swimming in the ocean,
and not feeling the salt,
preparing a feast,
and not tasting it,
like dying,
and going to Limbo.

Carol Fontaine

CORNERED

Fury burning deep inside,
I grit my teeth and try to hide,
the venom running in my veins,
my face turns red but not from shame.
I cannot let the demon out.
All I want to do is shout,
out my anger and my pain,
against the clouds against the rain,
against the woman I can't hold,
against the sneering faces bold,
against the forces that dictate,
my future and my fate.
So I raise my fist against the sky
defiant to the end.
If you want to make me die,
but I will never bend.

brad steinberg
(PETER)

Peter had grey eyes and a withered grin. He was born last week and ate ricecakes under a chestnut tree.

When Peter was young, he had blue fingernails and he thought of me often, but, it wasn't about him.

Maybe...

Then again, maybe it was.

When he died, he died peacefully, with no fuss, no bother. No one was there to tell him. To hold him. At the time Peter had big glasses and a spotted tie.

Peter had grey hair and a withered frown. He died last week and played the fiddle under an apple tree.

When Peter was a teenager, he was meek and I thought of you often. It wasn't about cornflakes...

I think.

Then again, I think it was.

When he ate, he ate happily with no mess, no spills. Everyone wanted to be there to see him. To cook for him. At the time, Peter had a false nose and low self esteem.

Peter had green butterfly wings and a righters pin. He was lost last week and played pattycake in a field.

When Peter was weak, he had a crooked smile and he never thought anything. But, that wasn't it.

Or maybe it was everything.

When he cried, he cried in his sleep, quietly. No one was there to comfort him. To chase them away. At the time, Peter had a big heart and a lot of pain.

Dewyn Booth
Mr. Sharpe checked his watch as he hurried up the steps and stood nervously inside the door of the empty funeral home. By the musty sunlight that dared to enter the room, he could see that everything was exactly as planned and this fact put his worries to rest. Slipping quietly into his place, he was relieved that so far he was right on schedule. Settling back slowly onto the cold satin of his carefully chosen casket, he mused weakly to himself that it might not be so difficult to rest in peace after all. Mr. Sharpe was glad that he had finally been able to convince the funeral director to allow this rehearsal. Even Mr. Sharpe, bearing in mind all the merits of such a rehearsal, considered the idea rather bizarre. However, not bizarre enough to prevent the distinguished old bachelor from carrying it out. Actually, Mr. Sharpe was surprised that someone else had not already thought of holding funeral rehearsals. There were wedding rehearsals, plays rehearsals, graduation rehearsals... every kind of rehearsal except for funerals. Mr. Sharpe had attended too many hastily planned and poorly performed funerals to allow his friends to remember him, a highly efficient and organized man, in such an uncharacteristic way. So, he had planned out his funeral down to the smallest detail and had sent invitations with explicit instructions attached to all those likely to attend. Now his careful preparations would be carried out, in practice, of course.

Mr. Sharpe checked his watch again; it was one o'clock pm. His guests should be arriving any minute, providing they were following his instructions properly. Mr. Sharpe fretted silently, trying desperately not to fidget. All his life he had been an extremely active man and it was not until his recent heart attack that he had found himself having to slow down and take it easy. In fact, it was this taking it easy that gave him so much time to worry. And one near-death experience was enough to spur his worrying into action. This action.

Voices. Mr. Sharpe’s ears perked up. He stopped squirming and closed his eyes, doing his best to relax and look convincingly dead. He could tell by the discussion and familiar tones that his minister was going over some final details with Mr. George Wintock, Mr. Sharpe’s oldest and closest friend. Mr. Sharpe lay perfectly still as they stood over him and mourned the loss of his fine friendship. Mr. Sharpe almost shared their grief when he heard the traces of regret in their voices, but he forced his mind to concentrate on the instructions that were yet to be carried out. Finally the guests began to arrive. He could smell from the sickeningly sweet perfume wafting over the casket that his dear kind neighbour, Old Mrs. Simmons, was there. The faint clinking of his former secretary’s favourite charm bracelet gave away her presence and Mr. Sharpe knew that her husband held accompanying the acrid smoke of his smelly cigar. The cigar certainly was not part of the plan and Mr. Sharpe, hoping that no ashes had fallen on his best suit, struggled to keep his annoyance from spreading across his face and from ruining his distinguished and peaceful countenance. Otherwise, each and every guest who had received an invitation came and followed their instructions flawlessly. Mr. Sharpe could only hope that things went so well when the real time came. The small personality differences that made his guests so lovable and unique were easy to play upon in his instructions and helped him recognize each guest as they stood sombrely over him. One guest wept so bitterly that Mr. Sharpe felt like sitting up and consoling her that he was not really dead, but he dared not make any action that was not already part of his careful planning. After everyone had found their places according to the elaborate seating plan, the minister began his carefully prepared tribute to Mr. Sharpe. Mr. Sharpe held his breath and tried to enjoy the service instead of worrying the entire time. It really took all the effort he could muster to keep from popping up in his casket to make certain everything was still going according to his plan. The minister’s eulogy was practiced and polished and was so flattering that for a while Mr. Sharpe actually stopped fretting and rather enjoyed listening.

When the curtains were drawn one last time for the closing of the casket, Mr. Sharpe climbed from his resting place and waited quietly in the foyer for the service to finish. He was in very high spirits as he saw his guests off, quite proud that his reputation as a distinguished businessman and friend allowed him to make such an odd request upon so many fine people. Quite satisfied with the day’s events, Mr. Sharpe returned home to his quiet-paced life. In his last months Mr. Sharpe did little save worry that something was sure to go wrong and wonder how he could prevent it. Presently his worries ceased.

Kate Waters
I lie here thinking of you;
When the leaves are red
And the wind is cold.
With the hope that
You are sleeping;
Dreaming of me,
When the sky is blue
And the water warm.

Erica Naish
Class of 1994
10/93
INNOCENCE

If I were to die a little boy
could I live my life my life in innocence?
My life filled with all the love of God
Flowers, birds and the pure act of rain
No thought of the real world tragedies.

My child’s heart is lost within the years
In utter casualness it slipped away
with as much mystery as it came.
My deep ignorance of a child’s heart
has killed the innocence of my soul.

Stolen before the realization
I will struggle to find the answers
of life, love and a child’s vanished heart.
Perhaps in the creation of life
my innocence will appear again.

Steve Polk

T.V. TORAH

For those of us who do not read books—we who follow the electronic prophet, the new messiah—life is simple, almost pastoral. We sing little ditties (“Always Coca-Cola”), we tell simple stories in rambling ways, and we make bawdy (body) jokes that often include flushing toilets and women with big hair.

We all have our place in the electronic sub-culture: those who read books advise and we who absorb live in the way handed down to us. We follow simple creeds (“thou shalt stay tuned” and “thou shalt not touch that dial!”). We do not Geraldo during Oprah, which separates us from the other clans, the “soapies” and the “muchies.” But regardless of creed, we are all united in our past and our future. We can recognize one another on the street and say by way of greeting, “Remember the time Bo Duke lost his memory and Boss Hogg convinced him Bo was his son?” And then we’d chuckle, reliving the warm glow that emanated from the Spirit Box.

Ah, the days when sitting too close to the face of God meant instant blindness. I saw that once on one of those really bad Sunday morning cartoons. I know you know what I mean. Moses saw the face of God and it blinded him. The glass must have protected me. But yet did I sacrifice my vision for the true light of faith. And I regret it not. Would I trade it all to be six years old again, to see the coyote hit the ground with that ring of dust? Or to see Spiderman flying through the city, firing webs into the sky, and pondering the eternal mystery of what he found from which to swing? Would I trade it all? I don’t know. It would be sweet to live again when Three’s Company was spontaneous, commercials were a little slower and quieter, and only a few cartoons had action figures, making them truly special.

It matters not, for our time is past, we are growing old, and a new flock is in need of guidance. New clans are rising with a new technology, the old ways are being forgotten, and only a few of our traditions survive in re-runs. So we look to Dave and bizarre British comedy to lead us through to the promised land.

In television can we find new life, again and again. In television can we express great emotion without expending any effort. In television can we see the world and make new friends without ever getting off our couches. My mind is as programmed as prime time on NBC. and dammit Jim, I like it that way. Lead us unto salvation, may your warmth be not long from us. Let your words be mine, your thoughts be mine, let your worlds be mine. Let us prey.

h.e. zurbrugg
THE DWARF

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there was a castle. Not a particularly big or nice castle, just an average castle in an average land (although it was a bit cold in the winter). In the castle lived many people with many different personalities and interests and the least of them all, was the Dwarf, but we’ll get to him later.

You see, the people of the castle liked to have fun; you could say that it was their specialty, what they were really known for, as opposed to the warcraft of their warriors, the might of their magicians or the jest of their jester. Well, the jester used to be pretty funny, but then he turned in his big hat and decided to sit at the Lords’ table. But I digress.

Now throughout the years, they had toiled away at perfecting the art of enjoying themselves, to the point even, of making it a science. This, of course, caused great disappointment to the new Chancellor of the Barnyard, who, having acquired a fancy education down south, wished for new ways through which people would amuse themselves, safer and quite often without ale: as you can imagine, the later was much to the dismay of the elders. But then again, the Chancellor himself, tall, gangly, bearded, balding man that he was, was the cause of much gossip within the castle walls. Some even insinuated that his motives weren’t all that saintly and that his too-often present smile, was perhaps a little forced. He had even been called a dunce by one of the sages.

It was one of the Chancellor’s tasks to work hand in hand with the other overruling bodies of the castle, of which the Council of Lords was the most powerful; it being largely made up of enterprising sons and daughters of rich merchants. Oppressively, they endeavored to rule the lives of those they had sworn to serve; You see, most of them were power-hungry and evil. They played amongst themselves subtle games of power, creating secret alliances and backstabbing one another. Those of them too young or dull witted to fully comprehend often sat, if not uncertainly, then at least silently, at the monthly meetings the Council held. Amidst the lengthy discussions, they most often twisted their thumbs, acutely but nevertheless appearing like the simple minded morons they truly were.

Under the orders of the Council, and fearsome to many, were the Red Guards. Recruited from the barbarian hordes, they were huge, beastly, slow-witted goons, capable only of thoughtless violence. They were most often used by the Council to savagely abuse the late night revellers often found late at night wandering the courtyards.

Second only in power to the Council, were the Purple-Sashed Rectors. They were mainly responsible for the well being of the castle’s inhabitants as well as a general enforcement of the palace rules. They were an elitist group. Proud of their colors and positions of favor within the hierarchy of the castle, they looked down on the commoners, scorned them privately, as they believed the extensive training they had received had made them higher beings.

Amongst all of them, the Dwarf stood alone, for he hated everybody and everybody had made it clear that they reciprocated these feelings gladly. He hated all of them with a passion, a passion which he disregarded regularly, once every week, in the courtyard. Through the use of bad, overly garnished poetry, he freely shouted the disgust he felt towards authority. Nobody really listened; they went on to the tavern and drank for the one or two hours he would spend out there and come out only once he had gone back to his hovel. There the Dwarf would be alone, miserable and bitter, composing further poetry with which to insult those in power.

Such was not all there was to life for the Dwarf, however. You see, once in a while, the Dwarf would wander upon a young maiden, and he would become infatuated with her. Before, he had usually been too shy to approach them with his feelings, fearing rejection. This time though, the Dwarf believed he had struck gold. The one he had set his mind to, was young and luscious, as all of the previous ones had been, but in addition, she was clever. Full of wit, she marveled the sages and she had been friendly to the Dwarf, greeting him on several occasions; she had even once, discussed his poetry with him, complimenting him on what he had thought was a particularly clever stanza. The Dwarf was filled with hope and spent the next few evenings making plans about how he would approach her and pledge to her his undying love. One night finally, he felt he had it. He would bathe, gather up some flowers, and rush to her to do the deed. The next morning he did as such, sloshing some water on his face, armpits and genitalia, putting on his cleanest shirt and furtively stealing a few begonias from the neighbor’s window-sill. He then rushed to the main hall where he knew she would be.

He had arrived too late however. As he neared the building, he saw her exiting through the main gate, her hand resting on a Purple-Sashed Rector’s arm. As was apparent by their fine garb and the delirious crowd, they had just been betrothed to each other. Even worse, the Rector was the one he hated the most, for he was one of the most loved. The Dwarf ran home in tears and started to unleash his venomous anger upon a virgin sheath of paper. The following weeks and months, the dwarf’s disposition grew darker and darker. His poems slowly becoming more accusatory, more like slander upon a virgin sheath of paper. The following weeks and months, the dwarf’s disposition grew darker and darker. His poems slowly becoming more accusatory, more like slander than prose. Eventually, the authorities became tired of him. They pressured him to depart the castle, first through insinuations, later through outright exhortions. One day finally, they simply kicked him out. The Dwarf then wandered for a while in his misery and one evening, coming upon some woods, hanged himself and the people of the castle lived happily ever after.

Alex Megelas
THE PERFORMANCE

Ripples slowly appeared across an iridescent pool as a lonely fish cautiously poked its scaly head out into the cold misty afternoon. Realizing his solitude the fish dove back into the water to make an attempt at performing his youthful rendition of Swan Lake. Everything he had learned in his short life was to be integrated into this one concert for his creator. With a kaleidoscopic display of talent he produced an intricate program that only the wind dared witness.

Andrea Robinson

Illustration

Chris Adamson
ABOUT FISHING.

I've caught a fish on a line,
but I don't think that it's my time,
to decide while standing here on shore,
to keep this fish, and fish no more.
Or to cut this line and try and see,
if another fish is more suited to me.
But will the fish I let go survive,
where the weak perish and the strong thrive?
And what if too late I realize,
that the fish I let go was really a prize?
As I pretend to listen to the flapping gills,
the thought of being alone brings chills,
to my heart and to my soul.
So do I reel in and put away my pole,
my reel, my rod, my bait, my hooks?
Resign myself to only look
at all the other fish in the ocean blue,
whom I cannot touch let alone pursue.
I know that this fish likes my bait,
but I don't know how long I'd have to wait.
Before a bass or maybe a trout.
likes what I have casted out.
What if I catch a fish full of disease,
that bites into any hook it sees,
with gaping mouth and cloudy eyes,
the type the whole world will despise?
I don't want to fish for food,
I want to fish for fun, though it may seem rude.
I don't want to make a decision,
until I'm sure it's the right season.

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A DANCE OF VAMPIRES
A Neo-Shakesperean Play

Dramatis Personae

Fidelan. Renowned swordsman

Capernica. Witch

Mirelle, Arris's sister

Wallen, Fidelan's servant

Arris

Machael. Prince of Vampires

Sir Reginald. Mirelle's husband

Ketch. Wallen's cousin

Scene 1.

[A market in Aiglegrisl]

[Enter Ketch and Wallen from opposite sides of the stage.]

Ket.: Do my eyes deceive me? Or is that the unpleasant face of my cousin Wallen, I see
before me?

Wal.: Sweet Lady of Chance save my nose, or do I smell a sack-swilling sloop, kin to me?

Ket.: Wal, you stalwart defender of artichokes, how do you fare?

Wal.: Greatly, coz, and profitably so! Know you my new master? Fidelan, the greatest
swordsmen of the Five Realms!

Ket.: Aye, I have heard rumour of such a warrior. How much have you to pay for his
company?

Wal.: Best gamekeeper of wine bottles, such a jibe, although expected; I consider
downstream even from the hovel where your wit dwells.

Ket.: Indeed it is! Come to my master's best hunting ground and over a glass of his
fondest fowls' blood, we'll tell each other our latest lies!

Wal.: Ho, fair queen! Hast thou seen the Coins at thy feet?

Ket.: Look they soar to the Sun!
[Enter Fidelan]
Cap.: Return to thy woodpiles, peons!
Wal.: Of course! King of Staves, insert thy wand twixt the chicken joists!
[Fidelan blows a sharp note on his flute]
Fid.: Watch that the Knight of Swords cross not thy path! Nor that he have cause to
trump thine ace! Doth not the deck contain the Fool and the Knave of Cups?
Well, we have the company of each. Hie thee hence before Judgment comes! Or
mine shall do unto to you as the Emperor did unto your namesake at the Tower of
Rojiche!
Wal.: Flee, coz. my master is sorely ired!
Ket.: What, he is not some gentle maid calling to her lambs? What a windfall it is to
have such a wall which obscures not the truth!
[Exeunt Wallen and Ketch, with haste]
Fid.: I apologize for my lackey, my good mother. What he has not in wits, he has in
loyalty. He would follow me into the Underworld, if there be opening be wide
enough for him. Pardon my manners, I am...
Cap.: I thank thee, sire. I forgive thee in thy choice of servant. However, I cannot
pardon thy manners as they have committed no sin. Can I repay thee with
services returned? Does a man of thy nature desire to see the score to come?
Fid.: Why not? There is no harm in pieces of paper.
[Cap. sits and spreads out her cards. Wal re-enters, unseen]
Cap.: A man of arms, an artist of the sword.
Among thy fancies, finds one flute and fair play.
As sharp as thy steel are thy wit and senses.
Wal. [Aside]: Any fool could divine such of Fidelan: greatest of heroes and hero to the
great! And more. I would do so with my eyes shut!
Cap.: Any wight holds thy word as wealth warily given.
But as a pendant of pearls, is precious and permanent.
With damsels, thou hast danced and dallied, but delayed
Giving thy glove, which would make glad many a girl.
Wal. [Aside]: Women talk from young to old. This dame sees with her ears. Justice hath
more sight than her.
Cap.: Fortunes on the wheel, wilt thy heart be won.
By one who'll be thy blushing bride.
Wal. [Aside]: Marry, he'll certainly not!
Cap.: Deep love will die, by despair and devotion.
A blood-foe sunders the blessed bond of love.
His rotten race's name is writ vampire.
One shall spread your wife's essence.
Then his hand will hollow out your heart...
Fid.: Enough! Cease this foul farce! Thou cannot see with these cards any more than
I can hear with my sword! Who has poisoned your thoughts against me? By the
Great Dance, I'll have no part in this charade! Look at me woman! That I may
see thy face, as by my name. I'll [Capernica faces Fidelan] slay every blood-drinker
in the Realms. else my name be not Fidelan. From this day forward, no vampire
shall see me and live to hide from the sun's rays. Take this purse good wyrd-
woman.
[He turns to leave]
Cap.: Thy wyrd is fixed. Why seek you to fight it? The Court Above has written the
score. They decide when the Celestial Fiddler stops. They are not burgomasters
seeking status. Their love of their muse does not allow their instruments to sound
false. A reed judged guilty, is condemned to the brazier.
Fid.: What is a concert without a fugue? What is a rose without thorns? A painting
without a wall? Beauty cloys unless the palate is cleared with ugliness. If their
harmony is marred, so be it. I will arrange my own symphony! I'll not be a lamb
to a shepherd.
Lackey Wallen! Find me garlic, stakes and a hammer.
Wal.: Tis not time for the midday repast.
Fid.: Not for a stew, but for vampires!
[Exeunt Fidelan and Wallen]
Cap.: They say the wheel, fortune, doth spin a-like
The years of war which run slow for men,
Worthy. The plan the gods write cleverly,
Will even slower seem to man, who need
To count the years. It need not be
Recouted whole, the adventures which
Our virtuous and noble man encountered
Upon his quest. Go we ahead to when
One prophecy of mine is found to be,
As fair a see. as any can but wish.
[Exit Capernica]

Scene 2

[Garden of Sir Reginald's castle. Morning]
[Enter Arris and Mirelle]
Mir.: Dear sister, thou art strangely silent and morose in the face of fortune. Thou hath
been rescued from a vampire's castle by the most renowned swordsman in all the
Realms. Furthermore, by this longing gaze, I would wager he hath asked you the
question. Hath thou said "no" to him and now do question your judgment?
Ari. "No" to him? When Fidelan rescued me from that sun-fearing one, I did not expect
him to ask. He hath never asked any maiden. Indeed, some maids think it a peril
to be rescued by him, for fear of a broken heart.
I was not disposed to his reputation, for while he is noble, there was a grimness to
his purpose, which I liked not. Yet when I looked into his eyes, there was a spark
which he tried to conceal. In the weeks of traveling from that foul castle in which I
was imprisoned, the spark grew slowly into a flame, which grew despite his
attempts to smother it. It has spread to face and heart.
Ari.: Thou hast an unclean spirit, Mirelle! But, yes, to other parts as well. His fire has lit my heart as well. No, it did not spread. Slow in building, the spark in the cell was in both our eyes. He sees it in mine as I do in his.

Mir.: And yet he still does not ask for your hand? Has he a wife of which I have not heard?

Ari.: I think not. else the whole world would know. He has asked me to marry him, but...

Mir.: O, dear Arriis, do not injure thy heart with such thoughts. Thou must take action.

Ari.: And now, you nudge him out of his own bed! Fidelan hath more pride than that!

Mir.: What! The Lord of that accursed race? Thou art correct in thy fear, dear Wal.

Fid.: I would not risk the wrath of the Great Judge upon thee.

Ari.: Thou wouldst not risk? Who says thou art responsible for my life? I would risk anything, only to be with thee.

Fid.: Nay, only to pierce his heart.

Good morning, Madam Mirelle. Sweet day to you, Mistress Arriis. Is it the morning sunshine which make roses bloom so beautifully in your garden, Madam?

Mir.: Kind sir, your eyes are faulty. I have planted no roses in my garden.

Fid.: Then what are the four I see upon thy cheeks and those of thy sister?

Mir.: O, dear Arris, do not injure thy heart with such thoughts. Thou must take action. Take thy destiny into thy own hands. Remember the holy contract is between two people.

Ari.: And to other parts i'll wager!

Mir.: And now, you nudge him out of his own bed! Fidelan hath more pride than that! It would mortally wound his pride. Still it is this pride which stands in our way.

Fid.: Do you know what this hand brings? It brings that which it took away and worse! It would mortally wound his pride.

Ari.: Fidelan, hath thou been struck by the sun's rays, for thy meaning is as obscure as this day is clear.

Fid.: No. Do not leave. Do not ever leave. Sit and watch the tower cast weird shadows over the herbs, like...

Ari.: Then I will ask thee to accept my hand, head and heart. Two you know of, but not in words. His fire seeks to meld with mine. His eyes say as much. However his mind restrains his tongue for some reason. Some hidden secret in his memory bars his way to the ring? Or, may hap, do I not fit with his prejudice of wifehood?

Fid.: Not of vampires, but of causing thy downfall. It is already scripted.

Mir.: Yes, and her husband. He is a most learned man. Unfortunately, he learns about me and not himself. Pardon me, I must not speak ill of thy kin and my host.

Ari.: I wish you would speak of ill my kin, if it pleaseth thee. There is little I would not permit to please my saviour. O, but why do you turn from me? Have I displeased thee? Shall I leave?

Fid.: Thy face is pale and thy manner faint. Here, give me thy hand: I will guide thee to the shade of the rowan.

Ari.: Where was he seen?

Wal.: Provided thy intelligence is of short duration, nothing can disturb me.

Fid.: I fear not, master: Macheal, the Prince of Vampires is near at hand.

Mir.: I fear not. master: Macheal, the Prince of Vampires is near at hand.

Ari.: Then I will ask thee to accept my hand, head and heart. Two you know of, but one you do not. Not far from here dwells an enchantress who know the strange paths and steps of magic. She must knows some dwoemer which can protect us from our fate.

Fid.: Thou art cleverer, by far, than I am! For long weeks my heart and brain hath been in a whirlpool of the foaming waves of destiny, in which I have struggled to keep my ship of love aloft. Yet thou hast calmed these turbid waters with the nearest puff of wind. Dearest Arriis, wilt thou allow a fool to come hither. I do not wish any delay to our joining.

Wal.: I do not wish to disturb you, sire.

Fid.: Thou art cleverer, by far, than I am! For long weeks my heart and brain hath been in a whirlpool of the foaming waves of destiny, in which I have struggled to keep my ship of love aloft. Yet thou hast calmed these turbid waters with the nearest puff of wind. Dearest Arriis, wilt thou allow a fool to come hither. I do not wish any delay to our joining.

Wal.: I do not wish to disturb you, sire.

Ari.: My sister runs a castle beautifully.

Fid.: Yes, and her husband. He is a most learned man. Unfortunately, he learns about me and not himself. Pardon me, I must not speak ill of thy kin and my host.

Ari.: I wish you would speak of ill my kin, if it pleaseth thee. There is little I would not permit to please my saviour. O, but why do you turn from me? Have I displeased thee? Shall I leave?

Fid.: No. Do not leave. Do not ever leave. Sit and watch the tower cast weird shadows over the herbs, like...
Scene 3

[Fidelan heads towards the keep]

Ari.: I understand thy grim vow, Fidelan. I know the walls of a vampire's cell. Perhaps others are likewise entombed by this Macheal? My conscience wishes thee all speed. And yet my soul craves thy presence.

[Amis rejoins Fidelan]

Ari.: I understand thy grim vow, Fidelan. I know the walls of a vampire's cell. Perhaps others are likewise entombed by this Macheal? My conscience wishes thee all speed. And yet my soul craves thy presence.

Fid.: So too does mine thine, dearest one. However, the chains I have tied myself in, cannot melt the adamantine bonds I have forged.

[Exeunt]

Scene 3

(The dining hall of Macheal's castle. A balcony opens to the outside, letting in the bright moonlight.)

[Enter Fidelan and Wallen, the latter has a long chain of garlic around his neck.]

Wal.: Aren't you repelled by garlic?

Fid.: Werewolves are known to have devoured all the priggers of prancers in these parts! Silence, faithful lacky! Our foe can hide as well as a bat.

Macheal appears from a shadow

Mac.: Awfully impolite of you, Fidelan, to enter without knocking. You've been depriving me of many of my servants. Terminating, well, all of my vampiric ones. Still, some of them were getting ideas of rebellion. The rumours I sent in your direction, were very effective.

Fid.: [Contemptuously] Human beings?! Thou art a mockery of a human being and civilization!

Wal.: [Shocked] Aren't you repelled by garlic?

Mac.: No. It varies from vampire to vampire. It's basil I can't stand. Do help yourself to the sherry. [to Fid.] I don't suppose you would consider changing your targeted species to werewolves in return for, say, a baronage of your own?

Fid.: Die, unclean spirit!

Mac.: A duchy? Such ingratitude. It is you who will suffer. [Fidelan charges at Macheal, who parries Fidelan's sword thrusts with his bare hands. Wallen attempts to assist Fidelan but merely gets in the way.]

Fid.: Had you reckoned the scope of my might? Or had you assumed I was as weak as those lackeys of mine you slew?

Mac.: Had you reckoned the scope of my might? Or had you assumed I was as weak as those lackeys of mine you slew?

Fid.: Does a housewife reckon the power of a cockroach different from that of an ant before she crushes it?

[Fidelan stumbles on the bottle. Macheal delivers a mighty blow, which staggers Fidelan. Wallen attempts to assist Fidelan but merely gets in the way.]

Fid.: I did offer you an alternative to this fracas. However you have refused it. You will soon suffer more than you can imagine! [He strikes Fidelan again] When I have finished mulching you into vegetable matter, I shall seize your Arriis, and bestow unto both of you my eternal blessing! A cage of your broken bones will stay your hand as you gaze eternally outwards at your unattainable love! [Fidelan rises too angry to speak and clumsily though ferociously attacks Macheal] Yes, you'll be nothing more than eyes watching me receive the affections of sweet Arriis! Is she not like one of the eternal poems? Your anguish will become proverbial! Men will say "I suffer like Fidelan" and friends will gather to comfort him! You will become a monument to torture! Agony will be measured by Fidelan's. Fidelan, you will become a paragon of torment!

[Fidelan stumbles on the bottle. Macheal jumps at him and pins the vampire with his sword to the floor just in front of the balcony.]

Fid.: Laugh now. abomina...

[Exeunt]

Scene 4

[Waits An excellent blend. Sir Vampire.]

Wal.: You see, Fidelan, your servant abandons you?

Mac.: A general can conquer with or without a camp ester. [The fight takes Fidelan and Macheal off stage, from where its sound can be heard.]

Wal.: Many, who would have thought it? This necklace is only savory not safety. The drinkers of wine dark blood, inhale the essence of blood red wine. Cats flee the cream jug and cheese nibbles mice. Ah, me! [Stretches, and yawns] Seeing my master needs no assistance, I think that the theft of forty winks would not be amiss.

[To Macheal] You've been depriving me of many of my servants. Terminating, well, all of my vampiric ones. Still, some of them were getting ideas of rebellion. The rumours I sent in your direction, were very effective.

Mac.: Awfully impolite of you, Fidelan, to enter without knocking. You've been depriving me of many of my servants. Terminating, well, all of my vampiric ones. Still, some of them were getting ideas of rebellion. The rumours I sent in your direction, were very effective.

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[Fidelan stumbles on the bottle. Macheal jumps at him and pins the vampire with his sword to the floor just in front of the balcony.]

Fid.: Laugh now. abomina...

Wal.: [Shocked] Aren't you repelled by garlic?

Mac.: By the Dark Gods! There was more to this one than I thought! I must remove this steel spine from my belly. [Tries to remove the sword, but fails] This shaft is too firmly wedded to the stones below. My strength wains as Pheobus prepares to wax. His rays will soon evaporate my body as my soul was long ago. Ah, misery! Ah, Fidelan, a curse upon you, swordsman! A curse, yes, received by this kiss! [Macheal bites Fidelan] When the sun sets this evening, you will be the object of your hatred! Yes, I will laugh. I. Macheal, Prince of Vampires. will laugh now. Fidelan, thy doomsmith laughs!

[Laughs until the sun rises and kills him]
Ari.: The wind blows a sad rain today. The clouds are in a ferment, sometimes grey, sometimes black, sometimes revealing, sometimes not, always changing. Faster and faster, do the sun's veils gallop the sky. And yet their slow, fierce manes swish with infinitely ordered chaos. A losing race horse, the ground steams in frustration. Forever is it fixed while its opponent rushes by. Like this day, the scene extends forever.

[Enter Sir Reginald]
Reg.: Pardon me. Milady, but a hag of foul description is here to see you. Did you send for her?

Cap.: [from off-stage] Of course, she did - [Enter Capernica the Witch] - you scaramouche! Do thou think that I wouldst venture out on this foul day, if she had not? Greetings, fair Arrisis.

Ari.: Greetings, wise sorceress. I trust thou needest no more information than that my messenger gave thee?

Cap.: I needed not even that. Spirits told me long before thou sent for me. Long before.

Ari.: I see.

Cap.: Do thee? Are thou like me and have the gift of true sight? No matter, true sight is not required. Indeed, it is to be avoided like thy fate.

Reg.: You talk in riddles, madam.

Cap.: Do I? Riddles are but truths from a different point of view. For instance, who are never killed by vampires?

Ari.: Other vampires, but i have no desire to become one: the sun's rays are life to me.

Cap.: Perspective, my dear, perspective. Thou look, from a human position, human. [Starts to chant]

Into a mirror magic. I do meld thy mettle.
In which, each eye looking with earthly eternity.
Will see with joy, and wisdom withheld.
The face of a fellow, a friend in the foe.
By nature all are narcissistic. Need I pull the knot?

Ari.: So anyone one who gazes upon me, will think me a friend? A vampire will not be tempted by my blood.

Cap.: Thou hast the proper view of my wyrd-twist. A vampire hates the sight of a fellow's black ichor.

Ari.: I knew I had reason to put faith in you! Here take this necklace in thanks.

Cap.: My lady, thou honourest me more than I merit. I can only see the steps to come. [Exit Capernica]

Reg.: You trust such chimney listenings and drainpipe blessings?

Ari.: Do I? Riddles are but truths from a different point of view. For instance, who are never killed by vampires?

Reg.: What dost thou see through the window?

Ari.: Clouds and mist. What a dark day! Why do you ask?

Reg.: As much as I expected. Oh, I wish my Fidelan would return!

Ari.: Good-by, sweet flame, we have separated forever. I am promised to the dark places.

Reg.: Hush, husband! Calm thyself! Hush, husband! It is after midnight, and he flies on the winds! We must move likewise!

[Exit Reginald and Mirelle]

Ari.: Her cast gave the beholder's to mine. Oh fated one! I love thee...

Fid.: What spell? Capernica, the fate-finder has been here? My name! Thy blood is red, not the dark ichor of the nosferatu.

Fid.: What spell? Capernica, the fate-finder has been here? My name! Thy blood is red, not the dark ichor of the nosferatu.

Ari.: Ah! Fidelan! What madness has taken my love? By the Lady, it is the blood curse on you. The spell! Capernica's incantation!

Fid.: What spell? Capernica, the fate-finder has been here? My name! Thy blood is red, not the dark ichor of the nosferatu.

[Enter Wallen, Reginald and Mirelle]

Ari.: Her cast gave the beholder's to mine. Oh fated one! I love thee...

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Reg.: Never, do you hear! Guards! Aaahh! [Fidelan seizes Sir Reginald] Put me down!
Fid.: Thy blood will taste very sweet, pompous poltroon.
Wal.: [Advances with garlic] Back kind lord!
[Fidelan drops Reginald. Exeunt Reginald and Mirelle]
Fid.: Thank you, faithful Wal. The blood thirst is coming on. Hand me your sword. I will die near my love, in the light of dawn. [Wallen hands Fidelan his sword] Go now, I do not want company.
Wal.: No, sire. If I had helped you kill that vampire, I would not have to help you now.
Fid.: Thank you, it is a weary dance to the edge of the underworld.
Wal.: I guess the witch could see every step.
Fid.: Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha. I wonder at your jest. Dance Masters.
We, the dancers cannot fathom what waltz
Thou hath composed well. In disturbing
Thy pattern, by our attempts, vain, to see,
We without wisdom lose our step and fall
Out of the dance. Stumbling, we collapse
At thy feet. Yet, have I not followed
The tune thou composed, to which all man
Who are but mortal, must skillful listen
To dance your tune whatever be the note.

So why should I begrudge thee? My dance
Hath it not had a merrier tune than most.
My steps hath been well turned, and my spins
Well-timed. I'll not end stumbling,
For I am sure, when I did gaze upon
The cards, Sires, thou knew the many steps
That composed the fugue I did dance thee.
We all must dance. Judged are we by the way
We take the tune. Well. I've danced it long enough.

Stained baton! Thou must thy wanderings but cease
The Fiddler stops at dawn. Lend me the strength
To pay him.
[He drives the sword through his breast, pinning himself to a shutter]
Oh Arris!
My Partner, on thy toes have I stepped.
Let this be thy final tune. Fiddler! Quit
Thy melody 'Tis my turn to play a dance.
[He plays the flute, until the sun rises and he collapses letting the flute fall.]
[Chutes]
X,Y

Here's the line:
"Hey baby - nice parabolas!"
If I use the right angle
2 derive your equation.
Maybe you and I can
Take a tangent
And find a function
  on a horizontal plane.

Just give me a sine,
And I'll extend my vertices
  into your ellipse
Allow me positive axis
And I'll divide your pi
With the root of my median:
  make you hyperbolic with my logarithm -

Or exponentially better yet
(If you aren't opposed to polygon)
We can add some cosines
And have ourselves 1
  radical origin.

Nick Zacharias

SUNNY NURSERY RHYMES
with thanks to Paul Dehn

sunlight, so bright,
burning in my face at night.
i hope i may, i hope i might,
have the death i die each night

shimmer, shimmer, desert sun,
making shadows as i run.
up beyond my heart of gloom
like a trumpeter of doom.
shimmer, shimmer, desert sun.
making shadows as i run.

one gold eye. one gold eye.
see how it sits! see how it sits!
  on the horizon like a bloated balloon.
his hate and its heat at the apex come noon.
and i don't think i shall ever see the moon.
through one gold eye.

innury spinnery spun!
a solar flare on the sun!
it struck my eye
and made me cry.
innury spinnery spun!

hey diddle diddle
the romantics fiddle
(i want to jump over the moon)
my spirit weeps to see the sun
and the fiddlers lose their tune.

little miss sorrow
sat in her burrow
collecting her tears in a jar.
the sun up above
told whispers of love
and mockingly laughed from afar.

Lisa Lenethen
HANGED MEN COULD DANCE THE JIG

How I envy the potential
of a hanged man.
He could watch the sun
as it sets.
wait all night,
and swing around to watch it rise
He could see for miles
from his perch in a strong tree.
He would be so still that birds
would land on his shoulders.
and nest in his hair.
He could scare away crows,
catch and play with the wind.
swing in his tree,
and never get cold if it rained or snowed.

Instead, he does nothing.
He idles on his string
and pendules in lazy arcs,
ever lifting his head
to the light of day.

A Davis

LES JEUX SONT FAITS

Standing in mum's
wedding gown.
Part of the game.
Too short. Too tight.
Too much cleavage.
STAND STILL, they tell me.
Pin pricks
tongue tricks
mind fix.
Constrictive, abrasive ways
rotting patterns
sluice
direct to new play
No costumes
No lines
No fake drama.

Kimberley O'Shea
My mother likes to say that Tira did not suffer fools gladly. While that may be true, my sister’s drosophilic attention span cannot be attributed to intellectual ennui. That a story might be in the telling was not only an affront to my twin, but morally repugnant. It never occurred to Tira that interrupting people if they went on too long or asking them what the hell they thought might somehow reflect back on her. Early in life she took up an annoying habit of deceiving words and adding suffixes like fingy, whatsis, and whoozit.

Such family grievances fall into the background after marriage. After you draft a new list of petty annoyances. Apparently Neil had a long lost. My punishment for having been intolerant of Tira? I always told me ex-husband that he would miss the things in me he hated most if we were ever apart (if pictured a death separating us and not the earnest but persistent attentions of a 22-year old student); the way I forgot to swallow while drinking, my clumsiness, my workmanlike approach to food. A year later I passed him at a department store cosmetics counter, admiring the moneyed effect of complimentary maquillage on his young protege. Even I had to stop to marvel at her face, still dewy under a veil of Clinique, Chanel, Lancôme, and Revlon. “You were wrong,” he whispered, breaking away from his companion.

I’ll tell you something though, while I don’t miss the way my ex-husband cracked his chest and jaw, or the whistling sound he made through his teeth when the conversation became uncomfortable; I miss my sister’s blunt ways, every day. I learned to live by Tira’s rules: to avoid discussion on abstract art or little movies, although I sometimes think my sister had to work at her ordinariness.

When my sister affected phrases like “right happy” and “wicked hard” and “youz guys”, my mother marvelled at what she called a linguistic decalcification of language fomented by the language community. Since she had taken a night course in linguistics (out of no special bias, it was merely available— at another time and place, we would have been forced to venerate the Campbell’s soup can, or mourn the undoing of Camille Claudel: which would have been advantageous to me, and not Tira) we were subject to various esoteric, mildly funny linguistic jokes, that hinged on confusion between opposite and opposite and various multilingual cognates such as “comme ci” (come see) and “eso si ques” and (S-O-C-K-S). If I so much as split an infinitive around my mother it was considered an obscenity; Tira however, answered to a higher calling.

“Have you ever noticed,” my mother said passing around extra bread for us to sop up our raspberry sauce and hot brie cheese, “that the phrase youz is never used unintentionally. It is an alternative form of the second person plural which has the altogether sensible sound of many archaic past participles.”

“Like yclept,” I said.

“No, not like yclept Rita. I just said, the more sensible sounding past participles.”

“Well if people still cleped each other...”

“Yclept,” my mother interrupted.

“Well ‘e could have been cleped on the ear,” Tira said.
Mother smiled.

"Whatever," I shrugged my shoulders, and poured another glass of wine.

"In any event," my mother said, "that is the thrust of language communities."

"Right up the sphincter of grammar," I said just aloud.

"Get some perspective. Failing that, get a life!" My sister wagged her finger at me.

"Who gives a damn about whether you split an infinitive or dangle your participles?"

"I'm impressed Tir? I didn't know you knew the meaning of those phrases. Next you'll be parsing sentences."

"I'll be parsing sentence on the two of you in a minute," Mother mugged shamelessly. "But seriously... But seriously folks," she said, doing a terrible Groucho Marx, her favourite trick for hijacking the conversation. "What some would call lower culture is eventually embraced by higher culture. Better than that, it is assimilated, absorbed, like good gravy on bread." She ignored me groaning in anticipation of the next line. "Like raspberry sauce on baguette."

"What is that a new syllogism, as raspberry sauce is to baguette?"

"Metaphor, or conceit dear, certainly not syllogism. Language is all--egalitarian," my Mother said, getting up to get the dessert.

"Can we stop this stupid conversation?" Tira said.

"Of course dear," my mother said sweetly. "What would you like to talk about?"

Mother was easily indoctrinated. I used to picture her professor as God with liver spots. I couldn't have taken my mother's educational sound bites on an empty stomach, nor the inexplicable favours she displayed for Tira.

Although my mother did not involve us in the ostentatious sartorial displays that are childhood rites for most twins, she couldn't resist naming us Rita and Tira. Many's the wiseacre who called us Toora and Loora. My mother bristled at us being referred to as "the twins" and made an above average effort to interest us in different things. She needn't have worried. Although I love Tira with all my heart, there was never any danger as "the twins" and made an above average effort to interest us in different things. She needn't have worried. Although I love Tira with all my heart, there was never any danger.

Myself, I suffered from the "Red Pants Syndrome" which I tried to explain to Tira who, of course, wouldn't hear of it, although she remembers the story, and the slacks, more than she pretends. Mum bought me these horrible, expensive red pants for my birthday. Every time I put them on, 1 let myself in for sheer torment at school. Total strangers would stop me to make disparaging remarks about my pants. I used to take them straight from the laundry basket and deposit them back in the wash, but they had a way of turning up on the end of my bed, with my freshly ironed underwear and yellow ankle socks. "What a wiener," Dougie Graves used to say. What's next tie-dyed doubleknit?" He dubbed them "the menstrual trousers", shortened to minstrel. Finally, I was referred to as "The Wanderer", so when Tira asked to have them I was thrilled to be off the hook. Now Tira wore them to great acclaim. She had no time for insults and called them her Toreador pants. She was often asked where she got them and two kids in the next grade went out and bought a pair.

Tira sees my own chronic despair as an inborn lack of practicality. No one would ever accuse Mother of being impractical. Maybe it's a trait passed on by my father, though I wouldn't know. Just as I claim Mother nurtures Tira's baser instincts. Tira accuses Mother of encouraging my weakest characteristics, the kind you hope a child will never inherit, Tira says. She says you've never just go to a bank and state you business there's always some connipition if over a cheque issued a couple of months ago which you still haven't cashed yet but you wouldn't never get it all cashed, that would just be too easy--you must get $216.00 cashed and leave $3.25 to cover a money order that might get cashed before your next pay-cheque. I seen you go to the teacher's desk to ask about something we'd just learned. You could never move without seeing the whole thing. I used to watch you break into a cold sweat, over-interpreting the teacher's instructions. Asking for clarification. Claridge hated when you used big words in her class. I remember her shouting you down while you stood beside her chair asking her to explain a question, until you left the class. I did like the quiet click the door made, although I'm not sure if you'd decided to leave the classroom and get that automatic detention why you didn't just slam the door, like I did. You never thought you were worth sticking up for."

It is a coercion and a contradiction of biology. You see yourself in your twin, and you don't. You're close, and you're not. You've seen all your birthdays together, started your first period on the same day, realize looking at your sister that your pubtrum is too long, your eyes too far apart, and your chin not pronounced enough. Tira and I were born within 17 minutes of each other. Technically, I am the older twin, having shot the rapids first, but Tira would probably have started developing a little before me. I read that when I was pregnant with Laurie. I knew surprisingly little about birth and female sexuality for someone who is a trained nurse, but I've never been interested in Obstetrics or Pediatrics, preferring to work in Geriatrics. I suppose I am an oddity in my field, preferring Geriatrics, but if I quit tomorrow I'd worry that no one would be around to rein in the ones who like to tie bibs around the residents and call them Gamy and Gampy and run the lovely buttercream cakes the cooks make by putting 85 candles on them. The cook and I have been secretly adding my cache of hoisin and black bean paste to the chicken stir fry. Tira was really the one cut out for nursing but when I announced my acceptance into Nursing, she chose to apply her organizational skills and her razor sharp tongue to a job in customs. She thought we were pretty dopey to live in the same city, let alone confuse all the hospital staff working separate shifts.

When we were born, one of us nearly died, but Mom won't tell us which one. It was a big topic of conversation when we were kids. We used to have arguments over which child it was. I was sure it was me, because Mom was so hard on me; Tira was sure it was she, for opposite reasons.

Mother used to boast about reading her own pregnancy results. Before the doctor verified her condition she came home and told my father. She also told him they'd be having twins. Mom says Dad never believed anything she said. She says it's why she left him. I don't remember. All I remember is that he was movie star handsome, but perhaps I'm only seeing photographs when I think of him. After Mother married Montgomery, she continued to work as a lab technician. It was a condition of their pre-nuptial agreement that Mother continue her hospital work. Her job survived the boom in home pregnancy kits, which my mother proclaimed a total disaster. These strips of litmus
paper and so-called sterilized vials will usher in a new population explosion. What’s an out-of-work, excuse me, redundant lab technician supposed to do? operate out of her home?”

When Monte was 40, (before he and mother officially acknowledged their friendship) he inherited a company that made cork products (bulletin boards, knickknacks). He used his investments to get licensing for the “Comic Striped Floor” - “Read it and sweep!” which became a lucrative business and gave proceeds to various literary causes.

Tira and I always wondered what it would be like spending every day examining other people’s piss. It was Tira who asked Mom right at the wedding reception, was she a scientist? She said she honestly couldn’t imagine being compulsive enough to quaff someone else’s, let alone your own. “Water water everywhere and not a drop to drink. Water water everywhere and how the boys did shrink.”

Mum laughed, raising a toast to our family. This is so typical of Tira though, straight from the brain to the mouth and endearing people towards her in the bargain. Had I even made a comment on the appropriateness of the groom’s sister wearing a hat with a black veil, my mother would have killed me.

So maybe it was Tira who nearly died. In grade school. Tira was merciless with Carol Jean who brought peanut butter and pickle sandwiches. She whined away her time tirelessly kicking the ankles of Paul Wandsworth in protest of the encroachment of his desk. She used to add up the number of times Miss Ellard said and also made note of the fact that while Miss Ellard shaved the front of her legs, the back clearly resembled the swaths of lawn left over when Kent Wendel cut the lawn. Although I loathed Miss Ellard there was something that touched me about that line of hair whiskering the back of her legs. Although I endured days of silence from my sister over the fact that I swung my legs. There was something that touched me about that line of hair whiskering the back of her legs.

Tira had my mother’s gift for extemporizing. She had a coat rack she’d made a C-. despite the fact that kids lined up to look at it. During those months Tira and I spent a lot of time putting fruit side by side in various conditions and never replicated it. My leg tinged as I ran my hand over the red glossy piece of the lemon.

My mother was a hoarder, saving up bottles and cans, decorating the Christmas tree with pop top garlands. She dried our boots using and old hose from a shower cap style dryer. We used to lie on the carpet basking in the white noise from the reconstituted boot dryer. We’d run in and out the door, like assertive pet cats, just to get our boots dried. I loved the feeling of warm boot on my cold feet. It lasted a few minutes, until you could feel the chill in your shoulder blades and the small of your back, but that little residue of warmth felt comforting.

Tira had my mother’s gift for extemporizing. She had a coat rack she’d made from a huge piece of driftwood she found at the beach one summer. She’d had to roll down the window and stick it out one side just to fit it in. The first thing you noticed in her house was her technicolour carpet made of stitched-up carpet samples.

I used to have dreams, of travelling in a car, and I’d look down and see that I didn’t have a thing on. So I’d undo the carpet from the car hump and fasten it around my shoulder with a brooch I’d found lying under the seat, and I’d take a beach towel off the front seat and tie it at a la Dorothy Lamour, around my waist and I’d tuck a couple of banknotes from my purse into the front of my cape, for moral support. I used to wake up so happy from those dreams, so I must have had it in me too, that desire to re-draft life.

And I think sometimes that I should have known; that something was in the air.

The week before, hunting an elastic from the celery in the crisper. I took the lemon out of the bag containing the red peppers. The nipple had relaxed into concavity, in sympathy with the ridge of the pepper. It had also taken on a pink tinge and a glossy consistency, just around the rim and I held it up and touched it. I had noticed this chameleon phenomenon before, when Tira and I were kids and I’d saved the fruit and brought it in my schoolbag to Mr. Evans’ class and he’d been unable to explain it.

I told the class that I thought it must have had something to do with DNA and that my mother had told me that it was like with twins—they never stop growing together. even after they’re out of the womb, only they don’t have to be touching. They can be miles away and they’ll be doing their hair the same way, or growing a mole in the same spot—Lamarckism I told him it was called. My mother told me later that it was in fact not Lamarckism—that Lamarckism was a response to environment.

“Your mother studies the properties of pee,” he said.

“Some biologist you are,” I yelled over the laughter of the class. “It’s urine.” I rhymed it with Murine like Tira. I was just this close to having all the books off my desk when Tira threw her schoolbag at the side of his head and shocked herself by landing the target. Tira had a notoriously bad arm. She used to cover all the degrees of the compass before she let go of a softball. There was this momentous quit. Everything stopped and he rushed for her, but she ran through him and he grabbed me instead. He took a pointer to my backside saying “You can deliver this to your sister.” I was so stinging from rage, I think my endorphins kicked in to protect my battered backside—until later when I howled in pain, lying to my mother, telling her I had fallen off the box horse. I walked carefully back to my desk, picked up the fruit and said, “Interchangeable DNA,” my point exactly and walked out. I never apologized to him, but I did tell him that my mother had not called the fruit business Lamarckism—that I had extrapolated that from something else she’d said and I just didn’t want him to think my mother had said something she hadn’t. I did however remind him that she said it had something to do with DNA.

He was so fed up with me that when I presented my model of a DNA molecule, (an old catheter strung with wire, the molecule marked with coloured bread tags), he gave me a C-, despite the fact that kids lined up to look at it. During those months Tira and I spent a lot of time putting fruit side by side in various conditions and never replicated it. My leg tinged as I ran my hand over the red glossy piece of the lemon.

People who work in Gerontology and Palliative care sometimes hope to gain immunity from suffering; to suffer vicariously. Perhaps I was one of those, once.

Death is not so quiet, not even quiet death. People usually know something is up. Disease can warp a personality so much that in the end you are saying goodbye to a stranger and you pray for God’s mercy; for him to strike the doctor in change of acquisitions dead before the order for his next piece of life-prolonging equipment comes through.
The man at the funeral parlour told me he was ecumenical. He volunteered to say some words for us. We never believed in God and I didn't want a priest coming in, remarking in trenchant sympathy, 'Well I guess Tira Colby was a good person.' or worse still, making cryptic allusions to the fact that she'd committed suicide or sick accidental puns, 'It's a bitter pill to swallow when someone commits suicide.' Tira used to read pop death books that talked about going through a tunnel when you die. Hard to look at the piece of hosepipe as anything more than a telephoto lens. The dryer hose was more like the classical tunnel of death, ribbed and full of warm inviting breezes, a reverse umbilical cord. I thought of Tira and me, face down on the carpet listening to sound of the boot dryer blasting the insides of our soles and I wondered if heaven was like this gorgeous white noise that you walk into that no one can interrupt.

The funeral director mustn't have been informed that we were twins, for he had to turn his face from to me lead the prayers.

Catherine Dean

KEVIN'S POEM

He sleeps
And does not wake;
Not for thunder,
Not for rain.
At peace
And perfect sleep.
Not until morning
Or until my gentle footsteps
Stir him;
To ask
Where are you going?

Erica Naish
Class of 1994
WHAT IS LOVE?

Hot, burning, insistent,
Comforting, soothing, warm.
Jealousy, anger, pain.
Joyful, funny, caring.
One emotion, so many feelings.
Painfully happy,
Excitingly boring,
Infinitely ending.
What is love?

Laurie Hannan
(THE STARS ARE DANCING)

The stars are dancing way up high.
Waiting for you to come visit the sky.
Stay for a while and you'll learn very soon
How it feels to be in love with the moon.
Stay even longer and you will see
What it's like to be in love with me.
For you are the moon and I am the stars
And the dancing going on is dreams of ours.

Lori MacDonald

HOURGLASS

This ancient ruby, broken marriage ring, still symbolizes love this day of all.
The colour of hibiscus this garment I ceremoniously shroud to the whisper of
your name in the breeze. The moon will be full tomorrow yet now I breathe,
waiting, and one more hour and St. Valentine will be framed in the future.

Still I send my rhythms of love out into the universe because your
name is one not marked in stone but shuffled in the prevailing winds
of change - silhouetted by shadows of the moon which delivers
the quick tides of today which tomorrow will be yesterday.

Red ribbon pinned to Myself. Love in the time of AIDS.

Soon I will find love that shows no sign of decay
but the sex that shows I'm human bonds me to you -
a piece of dust in the whistling, whirling wind
today you reached out to me in your moment.

The way you smile & bite your lower lip
my name not be uttered from your dart-
ing tongue to stab me in the heart
your embrace in the night of
nights, not the light of day.

Lovers caught in the web
out of time our eyes met
I protect my cautious heart
from you in the frantic night

Using condoms I'm in full sight
of the self in the pouring red sands
we dare not love but make it sublime
this day of days, yes, we are testing waters
since we are a part of the universe talking about
your religion and how you must now sacrifice.

I know I must escape your lips that parch in the sun
before I can again breathe freely in the clean, open air.

I wish it were you because you become me in a fiery embrace
but why you become others too is to me a dark, untold mystery
why you can't be me and I be you too I'm sure is written in stone...

somewhere...in the desert we will latch onto each other again and again
before we see the light in the darkness of the darkest swollen ruby red night...

Being human is an art that requires many canvases...a final sweeping stroke of the
camelhair brush and we can still find ourselves - apart - a part of the universe which
captures imaginations, cradles hopes and exposes fears - exists beyond life and tears;
divine, pulsating universe which becomes us always & forever so long as we free our hearts.

Jane Lee Pankovitch
Class of 1986
IN LOVING DEVOTION

The shadows are moving in.
Quietly, stealthily.
I watch as the envelop you-
Pulling you closer,
Further from me.

In vain I protect you
Wrapping my shroud of love
About your weakening state.
Beating back
This hideous darkness.

No! Not her, not my beloved!
But each desperate breath
Carries you further from me.

Crossing the threshold of a
New world
You hesitate, smile, then
Continue to climb.

Helpless, I long to follow.
But the doors have closed
Leaving me behind.
We must part.

Our glass encased world
Now shattered.
Freely you float -
Soaring higher,

You
Home to
To carry me

For Night to claim my soul
Waiting
Watching
Patience.
I sit quietly now.
Bittersweet tears are shed.
I feel your peace.

higher.

Erin Baker

THE FOLLY OF ARMOUR

Last week
I bought a suit a armour
And donned it,
Sure that it would save me
From Cupid’s arrows
And all the implications.

Decided to protect myself,
Against those who will toy
With my heart,
Against my own vulnerability,
Against my own insecurity,
This suit of armour will protect.

Yesterday I discarded my suit;
Total protection is non-existent
And not recommended
For anyone who wants and needs
To be touched despite the risk;
I will go slowly,
But without the suit.

For in a suit or behind a mask
You become untouchable,
Unreachable,
And afraid of letting your
True self out.
You become a non-entity with
Defence your sole philosophy.

I would rather suffer
Than be invincible,
Locked inside an ivory tower
That no one can reach.

Carol Fontaine
DRAINING ENCOUNTER

My heart sinks
to the floor
the blood pumping
and pulsing
growing puddles
trickle outward
close to not touching you
but not reaching
I pull my heart
up
from the dust
swallow hard
return it to
its place.
Beating fast
murmuring
Never again
never...
Blood swims,
engulfing
the drained vital areas.
Rushing
crazy feeling
crucial
cruel.
Pass you
Finally past you.

Kimberley O'Shea
TWO OUT OF THREE

After experiencing a magic bond with another person, it is hard to accept ordinary friendship. I had a special connection with someone once. I remember lying in my bed, calling to him. Sometimes I called to him because we had fought and walked away, and sometimes just because we hadn’t seen each other for awhile. Whatever the reason, I couldn’t sleep and felt I really needed him at that moment. When I said I was calling him, I don’t mean I actually picked up the phone. I mentally summoned him. I will use a common-place example to try to explain. The first concert I went to, I didn’t realize that encores were fairly standard. I felt as though every person had to want the band to come back. Every voice had to be raised or they wouldn’t return. I added my voice and my complete wish to the chorus of noise and the band came back on. When I “called” to my friend I wished for him with every part of me, without doubt, with complete need and belief. When I did that—and it wasn’t a regular occurrence—he would appear under my window, winter or summer. It is hard to accept that most people do not listen to their instincts after something like that. It is also hard to be realistic.

I had a second friend. We had an agreement that if we needed to talk to each other we could call at any time of the day or night. We’ve been friends for years, and even though we don’t live in the same city and don’t talk as much as we used to, we still call. We never worry about work or exams or missed sleep. Once, with a new friend, I telephoned very late. This third friend had insisted that we were special to each other. He didn’t pick up the phone, but asked me the next day if I had been the one who had bothered him with a late call. Needless to say he didn’t ask why I had been telephoning at two a.m.

I read a popular quote about holding hands and sticking together when going out in the world. The day I read that I asked the same friend to hold my hand right before we were about to dart across a busy intersection. He ran ahead of me and later said he didn’t like “public displays of affection”. Some things are apparently not meant to be.

I read a book recently about a ditched lover who couldn’t seem to get over the loss. She couldn’t accept that the person who had loved and shared so much with her had changed her mind. Whenever she ran into the lover they would have an awful discourse, shouting “Fuck you!” Or, “Hey, that’s mine! Give it back now!” The protagonist would then flash from the present to poignant moments from their shared past.

Circumstances, timing, it is so strange. Are misunderstandings really just surmountable, explainable, unfortunate misunderstandings? When do enough of them add up to an obvious mismatch? I went from the closest boy-girl relationship of my life to a friendship in which I tried to tell the other person everything. He did the same, and he wasn’t exactly the sharing type. We believed in each other, and yet we were so wrong.

I have a friend who walks away when she realizes that a friendship or relationship is not going to work out. It doesn’t matter how much she cares about the other person, or vice versa. If she logically assesses the evidence and concludes that it is not in her best interest to stick around, she ends it and doesn’t look back. I envy her self-preservation, her ability to divorce herself from all romantic notions that if you care enough you will find anyway. She undoubtedly saves herself and whoever the other person is from a wealth of unfortunate disappointments and the slow death of hope.

I try to generalize my mushy weakness to a societal problem. Romantic notions of heroic, Even institutional non-acceptance of a speedy natural death: How is it better when it is prolonged? When people are seen to slowly descend to their lowest point instead of making a more graceful exit? The prolonging breeds a pathetic hope. A belief in some unexpected and miraculous outcome. It is then so much worse when the end comes. The knowledge that a great deal could have been avoided if a more realistic approach had been taken earlier. And interventions breed interventions. The more heroic attempts at saving a friendship—I ceased discussing hospitals a while ago—the further attempts that will be made. And so often, MOST often, in vain.

Sometimes I can’t accept a loss at cards. Two out of three, I say. Best of five, and so on. When I do this, time gets wasted. And now, no longer discussing cards, I find myself at the end of the largest collection of near-misses, interventions, heroics, and two-out-of-threes that I’ve ever racked up with anyone. I feel that I have been running back and forth across the front lines, dodging disaster. It turns out the hill wasn’t vital and we are evacuating. It wasn’t meant to be. After all those cycles of renewed belief, it REALLY wasn’t meant to be. The magic I’ve seen is a rare commodity.

H.O. Pattee
MEMORIES

The smell of salt and coconut
rhythmic reggae
motions in the dark
images repeating in dreams
stories told
untold
remaining to be told...

A dark-eyed stranger
red-bearded friend
smiling girl
shared laughter
stories told
untold
remaining to be told...

Rooms together
crashing waves
black sand beaches
engraving of memories
stories told
untold
remaining to be told...

Shanti

Adrian Greenlaw
LEANDER DROWNING

The madly rushing sea swarms near to me:
I had once thought her touch gentle and warm.
How quickly now those thoughts from me are shorn
As the icy grasp of the bitter sea.
Like a lover, embraces ardently.
By the humid water my life is torn.
And the shore afar is a sight forlorn,
Yet even now I sink, so it must be.
Fair Hero, why does your light flicker, dim?
Why to ambers must the once bright fires die?
My heart, my soul, drowns in this darkness here.
Fair Hero, I am blind and cannot swim
In this salty sea, although I still try:
No strength have I to wipe away one tear.

Lisa Lenethen

NOVEMBER

1.
The cool winds blow
We know them well
Towns grow sleepy
As darkness comes earlier
Music flows through the streets in the
Haunting airs which float about
Seasons of smoke, mist
Changing times
An end and a beginning
Yelling out nothing
The wind pushes all around
Driving down that rain
Which will soon be snow
We pray to keep it away.

2.
Here she comes
I sense her coming
through sheets of rain
warm today
a nice change
I watch her come
my false god
I pray to her
until I am
thrown into heaven
for my sins
how I need her
in the night
in the day
soft faces
deserve kisses
and I pray out
my penance.
3.

This is the season
A time for sensation
Days change like trickery
Each moment brings new

the nights of November
Full of air
The snow falls slowly now
For the moment it is
Welcome

I walk on down empty streets
Lamplights like stars
Glorified by the falling snow
I walk on home
To say my prayers
Before I sleep.

Aaron Doucette

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BURY

Under asphalt, under falling snow.
In the growing darkness of a winter night,
A line of hurtling vehicles rush through the landscape.
Over a hill and out of sight.
By half-painted farmhouses, rusted wire fences,
Empty businesses on a silent main street.
By broken windows, and old farm machinery,
Half-buried in weeds and sacks of wheat.
By the once gleaming tracks that now lie torn up,
That carried the last of the misbegotten.
By-passes are built around these lonely places,
Soon to be totally forgotten.

Hunter's shells sleep in overgrown fields,
Shot from their long silent guns,
And the only souls left are withered old widows
And their slightly simple grown sons.
Ancient Anglo-Saxon street names fade.
On rusting signs, unread by those who remain
Ignorant of a past, even if it were theirs.
Would find as foreign as the Moors of Spain.
Stillness abounds in these arteries and veins.
Churches, desanctified await the wrecker's ball.
In one of these houses an old woman dies,
And soon there'll be no one at all.

Frank Willdig
ELENA

For Irving Layton

No, your face wasn’t split
down the centre in Dachau
or a boot laid over your throat
in some hellish joke that was the war.

although that did happen
it was your mother fleeing
and you were scarcely a child
captured up in Stalin’s defecation.

instead you were smashed
right between the eyes by the rifle butt
of a young army captain out on a
drunken raid of the small town
and you opened the door to his shouts.

How would I have known this
looking into your startling pretty eyes
as you sit in the restaurant booth

the safe place
you have taken yourself out to

alone
on Christmas Day?

Noni Howard
Class of 1971
SCARS

I am dead: my heart, my soul, but not my body.
I feel the hunger, the pain, the hopelessness.
I can’t cry, or spit out the thick dust in my mouth:
my body needs the liquid.

I hear the gunshots and the bombs hit as I
 crouch down in the rubble.
How many killed this hour?
How many friends, family, innocents?

I am afraid to sleep, the nightmares come then:
 I dream about the death I’ve seen,
 I dream that I’ll be next.
If I sleep it could get cold, I could freeze
to death.
Be killed for my clothes, or no reason at all.

This is my life, I don’t remember a better time.
The enemy has made it so.
Who is the enemy? For us Innocents, the enemy
is on both sides. both powers. Both races.

What have we done that is so punishable?
Why are we used as political pawns?
Innocents in a game of greed.

See what you have done.
You, with your anger and hatred.
How will you rebuild the devastation you
have caused, or will you even try?

See the rags on my back, the pain and scars
of war on my young face.

I live here, but I have no home.

Heather Coutts

DIEU
FIN DE RÈGNE

Un jour, Dieu se fatiguera
D’aider tous sans reconnaissance
D’aider chacun sans dependance
Comme moi, il se fatiguera
D’avoir tant aimé sans demander
D’avoir tant donné sans compter
D’avoir veillé sur les préférés
Pour les empêcher de trop tomber
Comme moi, il se fatiguera
De toujours recommencer à zero
De s’efforcer pour rendre ce monde beau
De sourire même si le bonheur est faux
Comme à moi, un jour viendra
Où il prendra toute passion
Où les cendres de l’espoir s’envoleront
Où il ne pourra plus supporter le moindre son
D’une remarque, d’une question
Où il aura perdu pour tous toute émotion
Saul peut-être de l’amertume . . . une brève impulsion
Fera place à la déception
Il vous regardera vous détester
Puis il ira prendre le thé
Bien au chaud, chez l’autre Divinité
Il lui dira qu’il a gagné
Ce pari vieux de deux mille années

Mélanie Roy
RAPE VICTIM

What can I say to my friends?
How
should I feel when
I don’t know
my father’s name?

A Davis
This is an example of the 18th century epistolary style.

D.N.K.

Dear Dave,

Quebec appears strange if you don’t live there for any amount of time, especially Estrie, which after a year I called Micro-Cosmus Ca Nada. All the paradoxical memories that I couldn’t fit into my gestalt of Canada on the West Coast came together and made sense here.

I guess a memory I had of Delbrook that never quite fit (you will probably not remember) was when we once had a youthful talk about immigrants and my comment was, among others, that you were an immigrant too. Your adamancy that you were not, your adumbration of why you were not, in a conversation that was “teenage general”, surprised me so much that it stayed with me and only fits into the Canadian gestalt thirty years later.

Two Quebec books that I’ve read since arriving are Les Negres blancs d’Amerique Nord by Pierre Vallieres and La Belle Bête by Marie-Claire Blais. They’re both in English and you might enjoy them as a look at the other side of the “Huard” (Looney coin).

I appreciated your comment, when we were fishing once, that alternative education is in direct competition with me. I liked it because I feel that competition is good for education in a dialectical sense, a passionate sense of education. But in a country whose three key words are Peace, Order, and Good Government, Socratic questions are not wanted.

But peaceful suppression is a very expensive business as our deficit proves. Put this next to the United States and its manifest destiny and my economics and education degrees couldn’t help but see the macro picture in Micro-Cosmus Ca Nada. I had to do something objective, put my money where my mouth was, so on Nov. 1, 1994 I bought American Dollars (not many) and planned a trip to Mexico (Belize actually) for January to buy depreciated Mexican goods and free trade them to Canada. I couldn’t make the trip but the prediction was correct.

Jock will remember the Winnipeg General Strike and the passes that were necessary to go to the North Shore during the depression and I see the same things happening differently with The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy and the planned transfer of health programs (financing) to the provinces. The Honourable Ralph Klein has started already.

Nevertheless, all this has to do with a play I am trying to put together in my head at this time. Estrie and Quebec have a culture of music and the two musicals that have actualization, self realization through meaningful education; and Canada must try and co-opt education into right accent, right comportment, and right socialization. These are the first things you must learn to proceed at both the University of Sherbrooke and Bishop’s University. I know both first hand and they both have very large phonetics departments to reinforce the point.

Unfortunately, the ideas for my play keep coming back to a conglomeration of Brave New World and 1984 (Veillons sur Nous) in a milieu of Clockwork Orange or The Assassination of Jean Paul Marat as put on by the Inmates of Clarenden under the direction of the Marquis de Sade, all of which I showed to my Academic 12 students in my second year of teaching.

Dave, what this is all leading up to is that it’s unavailable in Quebec and I wondered if you could find it in B.C. for me. I think that it would be easily identifiable in Micro-Cosmus Ca Nada especially since the topic, generally speaking, is French.

I’ve enclosed the Wilmink pictures and the “Gals are in charge here” article since you know Ernst, and secondly, I always thought the gals were in charge, especially if they were Alpha Plus (Brave New World). Behind every successful man is an A+ wife and/or A+ mother.

I’ve included La Traversee du Naparima and the Grosse-Ile pamphlet because I wanted you to know that to be ready for the new economic fascism, manifest destiny of the United States, Canada (and I believe Axworthy is the good man who did wrong) must try and change the insidious welfare mentality of the indigenous indigent Canadian to self realization, self actualization through meaningful education; and Canada must try and change the internalization of the demeaning counterproductive words “migrant” and “immigrant” into that of pioneers. We are still a very new country, too new to be at the 1984. Brave New World, etc., level of development.

I truly believe that the United States will delay its manifest destiny if Canada can get its economic house in order but I fear the next budget for its effects on the poor. I believe there are other ways, educational ways, of transvaluating values from a welfare mentality to a dynamic, creative mentality that Canada needs.

By the way, the referendum doesn’t have a hope in hell. It’s just a useless industry that is partially responsible for the economic state of Canada. The Liberals (prov.) use pot de vin (bribery) and the P.Q. use chantage (blackmail) to get bigger transfer payments from Ottawa. It’s very obvious in Micro-Cosmus Ca Nada.

And finally, as teachers, we should never forget that all you needed to get into Law at U.B.C. in the 60’s/’70’s was a B.A. pass; for Education you needed a “second class”. It’s easy to see in Micro-Cosmus Ca Nada that we Canadian educators have a very big responsibility, if we are to delay Manifest Destiny.

All my love to you, Cathy, Jock, Jean, and family.

David

David Nigel Kilbev
SEASPEAK

I want the Ocean to tell me her secrets. Her waves move in pendular motions about my ankles, grabbing them, holding them, giving me something to stand on, even though I've never seen the ocean look so deep. We took this vacation to reconcile our differences. I look sideways at Robert and try to recreate the feeling I used to get in my stomach when he said he loved me. He says it now because he has to, because it is expected. My whole body knows it too. I cross my legs and lean closer to Robert. He moves away. I wish more than anything that he'd just take my hand. I look out at the horizon. I want to float to the other side with just Robert and I on this raft. I want to be free of her.

I think her name is Michelle, although I am never really told. The whisperers, the ones who spoke behind my back just called her "the other woman". Their gossip was an incessant gnawing at my ears. I know she is with us now. Even though she isn't here, she is sitting between us like a wall, violently pushing us apart with her arms. Robert sees me looking at him. He smiles at me. It is an empty half-smile out of politeness; his lips are barely parted. Instead of taking my hand, he picks up a book and begins reading. He looks up at me again and wonders why I'm looking at him so intensely. I want to look away, but I can't. He used to look at me and understand; he used to be able to look through my eyes to a secret place inside me. But now beautiful, blond Michelle had walked into my secret room and placed a veil behind my eyes so that Robert couldn't see inside anymore. I am still trapped inside that secret room, still loving him, but knowing he's not there. He returns my stare vacantly. I feel like I'm sinking deep into the ocean; she is swallowing me whole. I am heavy because I am so empty. There is still passion in the Ocean; she cradles me on the raft in her undulating arms and, for a moment, I am comforted until I look at Robert and remember what I'm supposed to forget.

I drag one hand behind the raft and, tired of waiting, I place the other one in Robert's. I feel more love from the Ocean, wrapping her white-capped fingers around mine.

"Robert." I start slowly. He looks at me scornfully for noticing something I'm supposed to ignore. He returns to his book. I realize that our love is impossible. I want the Ocean to wind me in her arms and bring me to her floor where I may lie, like a buried treasure, and wait to be discovered again.

Heather Kelly
Because of our scrawny necks and chests, and Drew’s pale-eyed stare, and the gingham dresses Mother had Hill and me wear, we looked, in old photos, like Depression-era kids.

Drew died in the well when he was four.

We lived on weekends in an ageing house in the country. Summertime had us peering around as if through an overexposed camera. The sky seemed whiter then, and hotter, and our hair burned with the heat. The neighbouring farmer once asked Daddy if we were albinos. Hill and Drew and me.

I was the one who thought I heard him scream.

In the barn, we kept rabbits. They had beady eyes and sat, sullen in their cage. I wanted Daddy to shoot each one dead; I hated their eerie presence. Brown droppings fell from the cage onto the floor of the loft, leaving a rotten smell mixed with hay.

Mother said Drew was going after the groundhog, probably.

None of us neatened up when we returned to the city. We still looked thin and poverty-stricken, children of another time, even though it didn’t make much sense. We lived in a four-storey townhouse in Montreal West. My room had brown slats for a floor and old-lady antique lamps. In these years, I drew pictures on paper with pencil, and folded them up and hid them under my bed. I drew body parts. Hill caught me once. She showed me how to draw them better.

The farmer down the road, the one who thought we were albinos, told Daddy that the well should have been boarded up when we first moved in.

Mother wrote books of poetry as a hobby. One poem was published in the newspaper, Honourable Mention. I peeked at a book and found a poem given my name. The only line I remembered was: “She pokes at things and jerks her eyes.” I did not like the sound of that. Better to be compared to a summer’s day, I had thought, miserably (and at the same time, self-applaudingly for my clever reference to Shakespeare.)

When Mother first emerged from the kitchen, running to Daddy, I noticed two things: she had no eyes and the grass turned black from the shadow of her feet.

Hill played tennis on weeknights in Montreal West. The courts could be biked to in under five minutes. I sometimes watched her, straightness to her teeth, and straightness to the line of her shorts. I caught the balls that landed outside, settling in the well-groomed lawn of the park.

Daddy threw the stones off the well, I remember, and he threw one so hard it knocked down the pole of the laundry line. Gingham dresses fell to the ground.

More recently, Mother joined a Book Club in the city. They discussed Pride and Prejudice, Simone de Beauvoir, Nadine Gordimer’s South Africa, themes of The Stone Angel. Sneaking around in my parent’s bedroom, again, I found a poem about stone angels - a spin-off, perhaps, of those literary dialogues? The poem, however, seemed to be about Drew.

“Who heard a scream?” said Daddy. “Anyone?”
"He was yelling," I said. "I didn’t.

"It’s alright," said Daddy. It was not alright, I knew. Later on that year, I was slapped for not eating the lettuce in a sandwich, or forgetting to close a window when it rained; slapped, apparently, for no reason.

If the three of us stood in the barn, the light of the sun danced through the cracks in the wood and landed on our skin. We became transparent, kaleidoscope-like, mottled. Drew loved to play war, an activity so laughably stereotypical for an only son. Mother didn’t have the energy to despair. Since he could make the best gun noises, Drew acted as Enemy. Hill and I, our brother’s elders, hid. Hill liked the loft as hiding spot; it was high-up and exciting. When we hid together, she made me lie low, so low my face was sunk in rabbit poo.

"Jesus Christ," said Mother. "He had five eggs for breakfast." She told them that at the hospital, too, as if to prove that he had once been strong, was strong still. "Five eggs"

That fall, Hill made it to the Championships. It was still too soon for her to care whether or not she won. Nothing would matter for a year. Hill took the city title for her division and acquired a brand new racquet. I sat in the stands, eyeing the hot dog booth, until Daddy finally handed over some change. What were you supposed to do? That’s what I wanted to know. Everyone seemed to think it was alright to play tennis. "A release," my mother said. The request for a hot dog, on the other hand, was insensitive, to say the least.

I hated the fact that they took him away. A little Drew body, though soundless as a rock, was better than no Drew at all.

Surprisingly, Daddy did not sell the house in the country. Hill and I roamed the field beside the barn, picking up rusty nails as an unexplained act of duty, and talked about bad things, lipstick, farts, sex, and beer bellies. After a while, Hill tired of me and joined Mother on the porch. I realized, then, that I was the only skinny one left.

I overheard a fight between my parents in the city, in the winter. Daddy accused Mother of romanticizing Drew’s death. I heard him say it, just like that. He said that the circumstances of his death were not poignant and it could not be said that Drew was ever a perfect child. Bullshit said Daddy. The wall of the well crushed his head so he looked half human.

When it rained on the tennis courts, I shivered as I watched. Hill, pretty and straight, played on, oblivious to my presence, except when she expected me to pick up the balls that escaped the cage. The balls, held close to the nose, reeked of rabbit.

Indeed, we were a hard-up family. Drew’s round eyes, nearly white, may show up one day as a photograph in a history book. War casualty. War baby. Victim of the 30’s Orphan. He had that lean edge of beauty to his face that lends itself to those of lyrical mind.

Carolyn Lloyd
PODS

One day, long ago... well actually... not so long ago, last week, I had too much to drink. I drank so much I thought I was a turnip named Joy. But I really wasn't, I was just drunk. I was actually sent here by my alien leaders to leave pods in your basement. Not turnip pods, you understand, that was just once. These are Bish crowd pods, complete with ball caps and fancy autos.

My badventure started when I moved into the Beta house—actually it was a beat-up garage that they rented but called it a house. I had stored my pods in the basement, so when the health people showed up to close the place, naturally, I was upset. I told the health inspector about my plan to take over their bodies and rule the world with these new-made clones—he said, "Don't make me bring the narcotics squad in." So I told him I was actually a drunk turnip named joy, he laughed a little, and then I zapped him with the bop-gun. "Flashlight" I cried in triumph, as he funkled into the night. Then I decided my work was done here so I got into my 1978 Impala and drove off—their case comes up Friday. I repeat, I never inhaled.

Shelley McIntyre
Heidi Zurbrugg
DISGUSTING SOAP

Xavier, a Canadian exchange student looking for summer work.

Gord Strotsy, a portly cheese maker and brother of Geddie.

Geddie Strotsy, a chain smoking, messy haired, schizophrenic who likes talking to the audience and brother of Gord.

Linda "Moose" Strotsy, niece of Geddie and Gord and a cashier.

Mrs. Grieg, a Norwegian businessperson, no relation to anyone, she speaks with a heavy Norwegian accent.

Various voice overs you should know enough people.

WESTERN NORWAY

(This play is not set in the present, past or future but can be if you want.)

SCENE 1

(8:00 PM, the same day. Gord is mopping the floor. Enter Xavier from the front Exit.)

Gord: Ferme!

Xavier: That’s not Norwegian.

Gord: Neither are you.

Xavier: I came for the job.

Gord: There is no job.

Xavier: The Employment Register said you were looking for a general labourer. Here’s my resume and references.

Gord: Fucking Norwegians. (Pause.) We’re not looking for help. I don’t want your shit. Go bitch to the bureaucrats. Fuck, they hate me. Everybody hates Canadians. It doesn’t matter where you go. No sense of humour, those people.

Xavier: So, you’re Canadian?

Gord: I see. I know what you’re at. Yes, I remember the great days of the Canadian Empire; we had comedians and big turkey dinners: everybody wanted to come over to our house for dessert; curling was the rage everywhere. It makes my nipples hard just to think about it. But where’s it left us? That’s what I really want to know. What have we become?

Xavier: I’m taking architecture in Oslo.

Gord: I don’t care.

Xavier: I’d really like to go back there. (Pause.) Support a student. We would make a better world, if we could get money to go to school. (Beat.) Anyway I was born in Toronto, grew up there.

Gord: A Canadian, eh? (X nods.) Can you paint? (X nods.) Come back Monday 9:00 am.

(Blackout.)

Male Voice 2: Do you love to stay clean?

Female Voice 2: Sometimes

Male Voice 2: Do you like to get high?

Female Voice 2: Always.

SCENE 3

(Monday 9:05 am. Moose is reading the complete works of Edgar Allen Poe behind the counter. Enter Xavier from the front. Moose casually drops the book and gives him some notice.)

Xavier: Do you speak English?

Moose: And French and Swedish but mostly Norwegian.

Xavier: Where’s the boss?

Moose: What boss?

Xavier: The guy that hired me.

Moose: Geddie?

Xavier: Could be.
Moose: Gord?
Xavier: Dunno.
Moose: They're the only people I know.
Xavier: Probably one of them.
Moose: Probably. (Pause.) The paint's in the kitchen.

(Blackout.)

FV1: Lester, don't!
MV1: Just one fix, baby.
FV1: Nooo!
MV1: Mmmm, minty!

SCENE 4

(Tuesday same time, same stage directions. Xavier crosses to the back stage door and pull out a ladder. He sets it up centre stage, then goes back to get some pink paint. He starts to paint the top of the 'fourth wall,' then stops.)

Xavier: Why don't people ever come in here? It's just been you. reading the complete works of Edgar Allen Poe. Over and over the same page.

Moose: I like this page
Xavier: Where's ... Gord and ... Geddie?
Moose: Drinking. They drink from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm everyday, then come and make cheese. If you came in on time you would see them. They say what you did to the corner but Geddie thinks you should work faster and ugh ... "not be so fucking artsy."

Xavier: Oh. What about customers?
Moose: We're Canadians. They hate us.

(Blackout.)

MV1: Our warmest greetings
MV3: Lesesal less gradesstokk.
MV1: The Canadian government has always prided itself on-
MV3: (Very angry) Ekne drík'ke/vare dokumen't tilhols/sted!
MV1: Did I say something wrong?

SCENE 5

(Wednesday. The ladder and paint haven't moved.)

Moose: Geddie says to ... "Pick up your fucking shit when you're done." But Gord said you were doing a good job and that you should eat as much cheese as you can.

Xavier: I don't like cheese.
Moose: Sucks to be you. This is a Cheese Shop.

Xavier: I know.
Moose: Gord said if you say no: "Shove the fucking cheese down his throat." I think you have to.

Xavier: Well, if it's free ... 
Moose: That's what I always say.

Xavier: Your cheesemakers are really eloquent guys. Nice to see they're setting good examples for all us Canadians abroad, eh.

(Her interest peaks.)

Moose: I didn't know you're Canadian.

(Blackout.)

MV1: They think I'm a nice guy. But peace treaties aren't enough. Working for the U.N. isn't enough. They want war, blood, carnage, evil. Well I'll show them. I'll give them more then they ever dreamed! (Maniacal laugh.) Ahhh! Minty!

SCENE 6

(Thursday. Xavier is still working of the forth wall. Moore is still reading Poe. Enter Mrs. Grieg from the front entrance. Moore casually drops the book and gives her some notice. Xavier pauses then goes back to work.)

Mrs. Grieg: (In broken English.) May I use your facilities please?

(X_everything stops.)

Moose: Ugh, ugh . . .
Xavier: Through that door and to the right.

(Exit Mrs. Grieg through the upstage door.)

Moose: Thanks.
Xavier: My pleasure.

(Awkward moment.)

Moose: What if she comes out?

(Blackout.)

Geddie: No! Don't touch that!
MV2: It's science Geddie.
MV1: It's a national treasure!

Geddie: No! It can't be like that! Please!

MV2: Just taste it.

Geddie: Never you Bas-
MV1: Hold him down.

(Sounds of a struggle.)

Geddie: Mmm minty!

SCENE 7

(Friday. Xavier and Moose are about to kiss.)

Xavier: They say people who work closely together eventually form an attraction.

Moose: But this is so predictable.

Xavier: That's what makes it right.

(They kiss.)

Moose: Tasty.

(They kiss again. Gord storms in from the upstage door. Xavier runs across stage in shock.)

Moose: Uncle Gord!
Gord: Don't give me that shit, where's Geddie?
Moose: I dunno.
(Gord desperately crosses to Moose and pulls her over the counter by her apron.)
Gord: Don't lie to me, girl, where's my brother? He-
Xavier: Hey!
Gord: This is family stuff, kid. Take a break and eat some cheese. (To Moose.) Has he been eating his cheese? (To Xavier.) You haven't you little pencil eyed freak! (To no one in particular.) Look at that skin that posture. Here! (He reaches under the counter grabs some cheese and throws it at Xavier. Xavier scrambles to pick it up.) Of all the balls. We invite this boy into our home, he comes up everyday -late for work,- does a half assed, artsy job to a fucking cheese shop and then, (Beat) then he has the putrid balls to refuse the hosts' cheese! Eat, you Bastard! No more blab! Eat! (Gord turns back to Moose and inspects her fingernails, between her teeth and checks her breath.)
Moose: Where did you see him last?
(Gord tentatively loosens his grip slightly)
Gord: He went to the bathroom at about five.
(Awkward moment.)
Moose: Was there any soap left?
Gord: A little. But that's not important right now. We're closing the shop. I want you two to search the fjord and I'll check the air ducts.
Moose: Do you think he fell off the fjord, Uncle Gord?
Gord: If he did you should be able to smell it.
Moose: I don't know. I'm not very good at looking.
Gord: Brian boy will help. (To Xavier.) Eat, you Bastard! (To Moose.) Take a basket of cheese and make sure he eats it all. (Beat) then he has the putrid balls to refuse the hosts' cheese! Eat, you Bastard! No more blab! Eat! (Gord turns back to Moose and inspects her fingernails, between her teeth and checks her breath.)
Moose: Yes, Uncle.
Gord: You can do it, sweetie, it's just like cutting brie.
Moose: I'll try.
Gord: That's a girl.
(Moose grabs a cheese basket from under the counter.)
Moose: Come, lover, we have to dig up a body.
(Gord desperately crosses to Xavier and pulls him out of the front exit. Gord pulls out the knives behind the counter and inspects them. Blackout.)
FV3: You know I'm married.
MV4: You wouldn't be hot if you weren't. Come on baby give me the good stuff.
FV3: Eat this, big boy!
MV4: Mmm Chicken!

SCENE 8
(8:00 pm. Enter Geddie and Mrs. Grieg, they have the appearance of two people who have gone through an intense thirteen hour period of sexual intercourse.)

Mrs. Grieg: You are a minty boy. I've never seen a person do such things with soap. I'll never forget you, Geddie.
Geddie: I think I've fallen in love but what can I do to blind her of my weaknesses. I must lie my petty faults. (To Grieg.) When all the soap disappears people get suspicious. We've gotta be careful.
Grieg: Ohh, Geddie it's so delightful you must get me more.
Geddie: But my little spearmint. I don't think I can.
Grieg: You've seen the way it makes me feel, my liver boy. I can't live another day without that minty satisfaction. Please Geddie, for me, for us, for everything!
Geddie: Gord, would never let me have that soap. He's a very strict man and thinks it's bad. I can't go against him. He thinks I'm improving. I'm not. I can't-
Grieg: We'll have to find a way to convince him. liver boy.
Geddie: I-
Grieg: Don't think, do. It's the American way, is it not?
Geddie: I'm Canadian.
(Awkward moment.)
Grieg: Never mind that, no more excuses. Geddie, get me the soap and I'll make sure you'll never go hungry again.
Geddie: Gord, would never let me have that soap. He's a very strict man and thinks it's bad. I can't go against him. He thinks I'm improving. I'm not. I can't-
Grieg: We are little people, Geddie. thinking is not for us, hunger only matters. You understand now? We must mint again. Only I can make you happy, you know that? (Geddie nods.) That's my liver boy.
(Grieg kisses Geddie deeply, then exits through the front exit. Geddie pauses to think then goes behind the counter and takes two large cheese knives. Sounds of a commotion come from outside. Moose and Xavier holler for Geddie offstage. Geddie dives behind the counter. Moose and Xavier enter from the front entrance, drunk and stoned.)
Xavier: (laughing,) . . . and then he runs out with this big bag of grass on his head and screams, "How are my teeth? How are my teeth?"
Moose: You are evil.
Xavier: Architects get wild sometimes. (Beat.) Oh, look! More cheese!
Moose: No don't!
Xavier: Why?
Moose: That's Gord's cheese. He'll kill you.
Xavier: Kill me? Nobody kill's me. I'm Stencil Man! Whenever trouble arises I just change the whole motif and make the world a more passive aggressive place. The forces of evil fall at my effeminate feet and offer me espresso. No one can stop me. I'm . . . fuck what's the word . . . neat! Super, super neat. (He laughs.) Come here baby and let me show you my real superpowers.
They embrace and kiss. Gord storms in from the downstage door. Moose pushes Xavier and he passes out. Gord glares madly at them both. Gord crosses and inspects Xavier's eyes.

Gord: He’s stoned.
Moose: I thought it would be a better way to get him to eat the cheese. He did. See.
(She shows him the empty basket.)
Gord: I’ve see you’ve grown attached.
Moose: Kind of.
Gord: At least he’s getting fat. Fucking artsies are always so damn anorexic. (He licks his lips.) Mmmm, yes, he does have potential.
(Gord exits back from where he came.)
(Moose inspects his stomach for a second, sighs and returns to her book behind the counter. Blackout.)

FV4: You wanna know the best things about Europeans? They all have bad backs.
Xavier: Every one?
FV4: Every fucking one. the government keeps hiding things on the ceiling and no one ever notices, money, drugs, little sketches of their relatives in compromising positions, name it.
Xavier: Wow!
FV4: So what do you say?
Xavier: Sign me up.

SCENE 9
(Saturday 9:05 am Xavier and Moose haven't moved.)
Moose: Hi?
(No response.)
Moose: Hello.
Xavier: Salutations.
Moose: You have to leave.
Xavier: Leave?
Moose: Yes, leave.
Xavier: Where?
Moose: Where you come from. I don’t think you like it here anymore.
Xavier: Sure I do. Things are just started to get-
Moose: Get out.
Xavier: Why?
Moose: Don’t tempt me.
Xavier: Tempt you with what?
Moose: My family’s not nice. I’m not nice. Genetics and stuff. You don’t want to know us.
Xavier: Maybe not but I do want your money.
Moose: We eat people. Well, we eat Canadians. You have to leave. Gord thinks you’re smart and he doesn’t trust smart. But more important we haven’t eaten in over a week. You don’t want to know us when we’re hungry.

Xavier: Everyone has a dark side, even Luke Skywalker.
Moose: The only reason they leave me alone ’cus I know how the cash register works. Math complicates them. Makes them feel more then human. That’s not a good thing for cannibals. They can get edgy.
Xavier: I can understand that.
Moose: You can?
Xavier: I understand most things but what I really understand is a lack of family values. You’re not healthy here.
Moose: Where should I be then?
Xavier: A wise man once said “Olso is always nice.”
Moose: Really?
Xavier: Yeah, they have a whole Canadian underground there.
Moose: Are you trying to get me to come with you? (X. nods.) I’ve never eaten anything else (beat) but I want to try. Before . . . (beat.) But what if we’re caught? They could find us. The underground would be roasted like chicken.
Xavier: Would they follow us to Canada?
Moose: Never. They hate Canada. It’s only good for meat.
Xavier: Then it’s settled. Immigration is gonna have one nasty gun fight on its hands!
Moose: Really, wow! I don’t even know you’re name but thank you, thank you - Oh no! My ankle’s twitching, it can’t be -
(Moose runs to the front entrance and looks through an imaginary or real window.)
Moose: It is! Some Norwegian person is coming! We’ve got to hide!
Xavier: Where?
Moose: Quick, the ladder!
(They climb to the top off the ladder and make themselves as still as possible. A few beats later Mrs. Grieg enters. She is carrying a large shopping bag. She crosses to the counter puts the bag on it and pulls out a piece of disgusting looking soap, (dirty brown and black.) She checks to see if anyone is looking then takes a bight out of the comer of the soap. She instantly looses her balance and wobbles as if deeply drugged. Geddie bursts in from the back entrance and catches her before she faints.)
Grieg: Mmmm, minty!
(He hits the lights. Blackout.)
Gord: Here, try this.
Geddie: After another hard day saving Canada from those evil Scandinavians I’ll eat anything. (Sounds of chewing.) Mmm, Chicken.
Gord: Not quite.

SCENE 10
(A few minutes latter. Xavier and Moose are still motionless on the ladder. The bag, soap, Geddie and Grieg are gone.)
Xavier: Think they saw us?
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Moose: No chance.
Xavier: But Geddie...
Moose: Schizophrenic.
Xavier: Was she eating that soap?
Moose: Of course not. I know about soap.
Xavier: You do? I mean...
Moose: Schizophrenic. In '58, Norway bought off Lester B. Pearson with the Peace Prize. In '68, when he was Prime Minister, Canada and Norway signed a treaty to destroy the world with hallucinogenic soap. Pearson forgot to tell Trudeau and that's exactly what happened. We abandoned Norway but they never forgot. It's all too clear. Norway, cheese, cannibalism, the same formula for evil Pearson invented. Your uncles are planning world war three! Did you know about that?

Xavier: No.
Moose: Maybe you should open a practice.
Xavier: You're very slick, but I know you're wrong. Gordie's just a cannibal, he doesn't care about politics. And Geddie has always eaten soap, even before they put drugs in it, it's just a chemical imbalance or part of his schizophrenia or something like that. They're really very nice. They try to sell cheese to a world that hates them. How can this be wrong?

Xavier: Everyone is nice, Moose. That's why there's evil. Even if your uncles don't know it, that soap is noxious and foul. What if someone else found it, a Norwegian. They could turn the world into a bunch of soap eating schizo-cannibals like Geddie.

Moose: So? Civilization isn't really that great anyway. (Beat) Why bother?
Xavier: You've gotta point.
Moose: It hasn't really worked. All the efforts to civilize this planet have just ended up making it worse. Look at mighty Gorgi and his Mongols. Or Sergeant Staplebottom and his Merry People. What about Lester B. fucking Pearson? What are we trying to save? Civilization sucks. People suck. But no one's actually gotten away with global domination. Maybe that's what we really need. We need a few billion lobotomized mint junkies. A good ass kicking, and century of oppression may just save the fucking planet!

Xavier: Wow, I never thought of that. You're pretty smart.
Moose: You think I'm pretty?
Xavier: Smart, but...
(She kisses him. Enter Gord, he has just returned from a night of drinking.)
Gord: Shut up, girl! Have you tried my special cheese?
Xavier: I'm not allowed.
Gord: That's right. I guess little Linda didn't completely take you for a spin. This cheese is special. My brother Geddie invented it in 1963. It has a thin layer of soap.
Xavier: Mint Soap.
Gord: How do you know that? (X. shrugs.) As you may know Geddie has a special flair with soap. He worked with C.S.I.S. as a special soap operative. But when things went awry we had to escape. Geddie is a good man. He had a change of heart. He couldn't destroy the world, not with soap. The thing he loved couldn't be used to kill. Do you understand? This is special and rare, but it's harmless. Now that you know everything are you prepared to die?
Xavier: I barely know anything.

Gord: Too bad. Knowledge is bliss. Prepare to drink your bile. (Gord pulls out his longest knife from the counter. Moose lunges at Gord but he dodges and she trips and slides across the stage.) We were having seconds thoughts, because of Linda and all. but now that you know the family secrets. (Shrugs.) You know

(Gord grabs Xavier and leads into the back exit. Moose recovers and chases after them

(Gord grabs Xavier and leads into the back exit. Moose recovers and chases after them

Blackout.)

FV5: Oh my God. look at his teeth! Doctor get in here quick!

Xavier: (Muffled) Wha-

(Sounds of shuffled feet.)

FV5: See.

MV5: Good lord. I never thought I'd live to see the day!

FV5: You see, look at his wisdoms.

MV5: I never thought I'd actually see into the mouth of the Messiah! Quick get the novocaine!

FV5: Yes Doctor.

SCENE 11

(A few minutes later. The door bursts open. Gord comes out backward reeling from a hard punch. He rolls across the stage and wipes some blood from his mouth. Geddie enters looking stronger and more posed then ever before, blood drips from his mouth, hands and apron. After a few seconds Geddie flings himself on top of Gord and throttles him. Grieg staggered on the stage frantically.)

Grieg: Geddie no! Don't kill. Don't kill. The jail sentence is too long. My liver lover you must be reasonable.

(Grieg pushes Geddie away he rolls over as Gord struggles for his breath Grieg rushes over to comfort Geddie.)

Geddie: Jealous! You don't know anything. We're in love, aren't we?

Grieg: Like mountain goats on a ferris wheel

Geddie: See, she's a poet, Gord. Poets are never evil.

Gord: Where did you find this woman?

Geddie: In our bathroom.

Gord: Figures.

Grieg: Very suave. You Canadians with your big, my space is bigger than yours, attitude. You can fuck yourself, Canada boy. We're in love and you can never stop that. Get him my liver boy!

(Geddie lunges on Gord. A struggle ensues. They exit in the kitchen fighting. After a few seconds Moose bursts in from the back supporting Xavier who is dressed in a robe and wiping steak sauce off his skin with a towel.)

Moose: Wow. I've never seen anyone fight like that.

Xavier: I told you I've got special powers.

Moose: I know, but steak sauce? I always thought there was just one kind of sweat.

Xavier: You're naive but I love you.

Mike Booth
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Editor - *The Mitre*
Students' Representative Council
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The Mitre 1994-1995