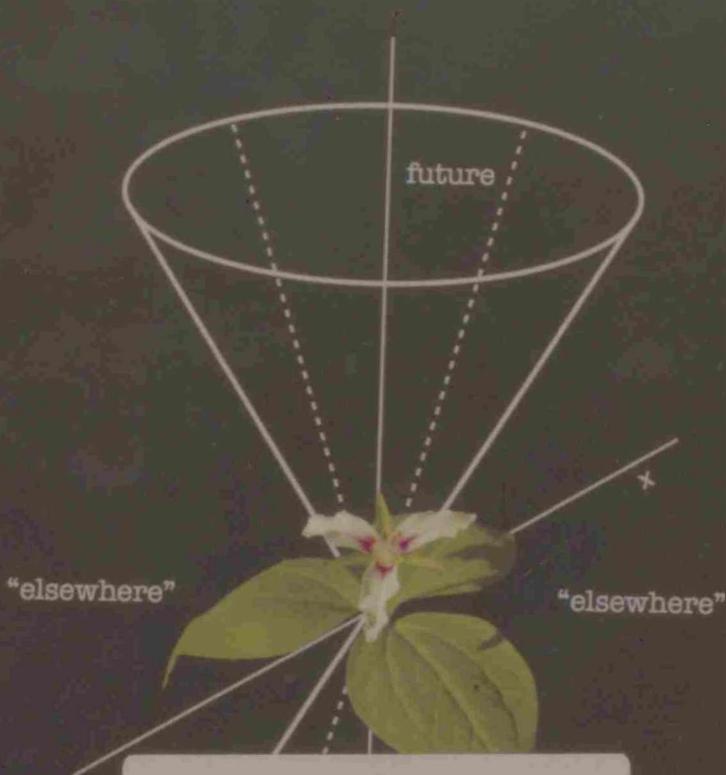


THE
MITRE



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The
MITRE



A LITERARY
REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF BISHOP'S COLLEGE
LENNOXVILLE, QUE.,
CANADA

125th edition

2017-2018



The Mitre is a gathering of voices in spacetime, and every gathering needs a meeting place.

We are standing on the unceded land of the Abenaki people of the Wabanaki confederacy. The true name of Lennoxville is Nikitotegwasis, meaning “little forks”, which refers to the meeting of the St. Francis and Massawippi rivers. For millennia, the Abenaki people travelled and thrived here. They are still thriving, and still fighting for their ancestral rights.

A land acknowledgement is never enough. Reconciliation is a complicated process, and acknowledgement is just the very beginning of the story.

Please keep this in mind as you read, and as you walk.

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125th edition

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PREFACE

Everything exists in a context: every body, every sentence, and every eye.

The theme of this edition poses a question for purely selfish reasons. I believe that truth is grounded in the physical world—probably in a mountain somewhere—but I’m physical, too, and I have a notoriously hard time getting grounded.

You, though, reader, or writer, are a tower built of places, people, and moments—and I wonder if your tower is as elaborate as mine, or if it was just as painful to build, or if it also seems to collapse from time to time. So I thought I would ask. How do you find your footing? Do you physically move your legs? Does somebody help you? Do you have a home? Are you trying to make one?

The results of those questions fill this volume. These are the stumblings of Bishop’s University, 2017-2018, the 125th year of The Mitre. Every edition of The Mitre is a snapshot of our community in space and time, and I think that we stumble pretty beautifully. I hope that this edition can capture the fluidity of our individual and collective journeys, through history, through spaces and social contexts, with all of the diversity and confusion that entails.

*- Rosemin Nathoo
Editor, 2017-2018*



The Young

Stand shy at the door, tip-toed
to fly to nothingness once more —
door to the room of the
sound of your voice and the
drive of your gesture, the
meaning and being of you.

Come into yourself,
Dip into yourself.
Someone gave, left
a green thing growing secretly within you,
to be plucked and given back when
time ripened.
Enter, and lead your pale self out to the sun.

Ann Dodda

The Mitre, Lent 1954

THE ONION

Caleigh A. Cross

I couldn't do it, could you?

not with the way its stalk had grown out of the
crack in the pantry door,
craving,
daring me to make soup, to grow a blade of grass
it was life, and dead set on it,
however futile and fetid, however hapless
I put it to sleep in the sweet dark dirt to marinate in springtime
what choice did I have?
I am trying to tell you to be an onion
be a tender green leaf reaching around
the door of the ones who would slice you
devour all the air you can find
let grow like summer
and have light
and give root
and never, never wilt

FROM THAT BREATH AND EVER AFTER, I OWE

Helen Holmes

I think if I distract my gods with a car that will never be safe,
a life on wheels,
holes in places built of hot metal
they will turn away from the holes in my heart
where happiness can seep in
they will allow those small moments of success

they will not tear it down

from the steaming engine to
the rattle in the end

the dust behind

as they are owed

SISTER ME IN THIS PLACE I TETHER

I recognize the sounds of all our cars leaving,
but not mine

Mine leaks on this driveway, and I circle tethered

I bark at the moon changing face
beg that the clouds bring the pollen of new places

I will travel on the wind only
They will sister me

LILY ON THE BUS

Marguerite Dakin

Light wash mom jeans and a perfect brown belt. Hair half back with pieces sticking out. She can't pass a tree stump without counting its rings, can't listen to Haim without shaking her hair. She stands on the bus, scrolling through 752 unopened emails, searching for sale alerts. She lets the Montreal potholes jostle her. In town for a week, she's already fallen into the public transit monotony. A text from her mom. She pushes the notification away, switches to Instagram, keeps scrolling.

DARK WAS THE NIGHT, COLD WAS THE GROUND

Frank Willdig

Dark was the night and cold was the ground,
as we moved through the wood without a sound,
the moon, suspended like a porcelain eye,
seemed to watch over us as we passed by.

In stillness and shadows small creatures stirred
yet no sign of life could be seen or heard,
pathless and stumbling as we made our way,
blindly while the night had nothing to say.

And in that darkness I reached for your hand,
as you gave comfort in that wintry land,
we promised ourselves we'd witness the dawn,
and stand fast till all our demons were gone.
It only takes love to be gentle and kind
As worries and care will pass from the mind.

THE UGLY DOG

Nina Dbouk

My mother's home had not been this crowded since she and Dad renewed their vows, nearly a decade ago. The dusty curtains and worn-out hardwood floors, the unpolished silver and chipped plates, would mortify her. She left behind two men who were useless when it came to hosting. She would complain that she never received any help around the house, that she regretted every day not having had a daughter after my birth, only to finish that thought with a stroke of the cheek and a smile sweeter than honey. Her smile always reached her eyes. It crinkled up her skin, which had grown papery as the decades passed. Neither my father nor I minded her aging half as much as she did. She remained eternally beautiful in our eyes, and we took her exasperated sighs at anti-age commercials and unconscious neck tugs with a great deal of amusement. "You need to humor them," Dad would say. "And never use the O-L-D word," to which Mom would snap, "You know, Frank, I may have never gone to college but I did learn to spell."

Dad sat in his recliner, more exhausted than I ever saw him before. His jowls sagged, and his skin seemed to cave inwards. He looked terribly sad. It felt almost cruel to make him go through with this. My chest constricted and I had to look away, as a sharp pain settled between my breastbone and shoulder blades. I ran my knuckles up and down my chest, casting my eyes to the ugly dog painting my mother insisted was an Edvard Munch. It was the darkest, most depressing excuse for a painting—and I was acquainted with the New York art gallery scene. We were never convinced of its artistry and joked that we were waiting for an opportunity to dump it in the recycling bin. Now, I couldn't bear the idea of throwing it out. She had loved it for a reason—one I might not understand, but a reason nonetheless. I wish

I knew what it was. When you think of questions to ask, it's often too late.

Connor slipped his hand around my waist, pulling me out of my reverie. I turned toward him, and leaned my weight into his body, resting my forehead gently against his. My eyes burned. When I'm upset, I have a tendency to forget to blink.

"Dan, you should go talk to him," he murmured.

"I know," I let out a deep sigh. "I just need a few minutes."

My father was eighty-one years old. He was one of those lucky few who never looked their age, which upset my mother immensely. "He never hydrates his skin," she would mutter, "how has he avoided wrinkles?" *If only you could see him now, Mom.* The years had caught up to him in the space of a couple of months. He was winded after standing for too long, and his hands constantly tremored. I cast a glance back in his general direction—Frank was like the sun; it was dangerous to look directly at him.

Oblique streaks of afternoon light filtered through the window behind his chair, and dust particles aimlessly floated above his head, some gently coming to rest on his feathery wisps of salt and pepper hair. His navy suit was ill-fitted, cut too large at the shoulders and the pants too long for his shrinking frame. He may have filled out the jacket in his sixties, but those days were over, and his shoulders now curved inward ever so slightly despite his best efforts. But if I told him this, he would tell me to stop acting like a fag, and that a suit was just a suit.

"Daniel," a voice called from the other room. I watched my father, gauging his reaction. Nothing.

"I'd better go check on them." I untangled myself from Connor and pulled at my sleeves. The living room opened into the dining room, as per my mother's remodeling. When my parents bought the house in the '70s, the first bullet point on her renovation list was to

break down the wall between the rooms and have a large, open space. The second item on her endless list was to paint the walls an *in-your-face* sunshine yellow. Who were we to challenge her?

My aunt Martha, my mother's sister, was unwrapping more plates of hors d'oeuvres. "Pigs in a blanket?" I couldn't help but remark, eyebrows raised.

"Why not? Dorothy loved them. She'd get a kick out of it." Aunt Martha looked a lot like Mom—the same blond hair in their youth, and the same white hair now. Yet, she never held a person's gaze with the same panache. Martha was always a little less sure of herself, whereas Mom was a go-getter. She was not afraid to walk the extra mile, even if she had to walk over somebody to get there.

"I suppose." I reached for one and popped it in my mouth. My aunt gently slapped my arm away.

"Toothpick!"

"Nobody saw," I said, almost choking on the poor excuse for food. "Plus, my hands are clean." Nobody told you that even at forty-two you still needed to justify your manners.

I helped her set out the comfort food that neighbors, friends, and family had brought to the house, placing platters on the kitchen island and on the dining room table. My cousins and their spouses were entertaining the guests, mingling and catching up. Why were weddings and funerals the only occasions that called for being civil in large numbers? Sure, at weddings people drank too much, but that was only to make it bearable and to get your money's worth back for the plane ticket and hotel. Thanksgiving and Christmas were shits-fests, where some old geezer always had to put in his two-cents and spout something racist or problematic. But weddings and funerals, now *those* were sacred.

I made a mental note of who was here and who wasn't, so that I could send thank-you cards to the latter. At least they were polite

enough to stay away. This was not to say that nobody loved Mom or wanted to pay their respects, but at least they didn't feel the need to do so publicly. They would probably send flowers and a Hallmark condolence note, and that was enough in my books.

When I couldn't hide out in the kitchen anymore, having wiped down the counters enough times for my aunt to ask if I was "one of those OCD people," I retreated to Connor's side. Connor, however, had in the meantime gone to speak to Dad. Traitor. I debated whether to make small-talk with my parents' neighbors, the Zimmermanns, but I wasn't that desperate to get out of speaking to my father.

I loved Dad. I had to give him this: he did his damn best with me, when I didn't make it any easier for him. He tried to build a happy home for us, and was even happier to hand over the reins to Mom. He never walked out on us, didn't have a drinking problem, and didn't engage in any affairs. He kept a 9-to-5 job for forty-four years. He was the embodiment of the perfect, all-American, baseball-playing, church-going husband. But God, if he hadn't made mistakes. Decades later and it was still hard to overlook those shortcomings. It didn't matter that he was from an older generation, as Mom tried to justify—he was still responsible for his words and his actions. Mom wasn't here anymore to defuse the tension, or call him out in ways I never could—not without getting enraged. It was up to us now, to sort it out like men.

"Hey." I pulled up a red fold out chair Martha had brought in the car earlier, and sat beside him. Connor smiled, pride filling his eyes, and gently nodded. He discreetly retreated while Dad turned to me.

"Hi, son." He smiled. In his wedding photos, he was the spitting image of Clark Gable, mustache and all. He still looked handsome. It was a question of attitude, and my father never let himself grow old. He still saw a thirty-something year old when he looked in the mirror, I was sure. Was this motivated by arrogance—or fear?

Frank and Dorothy, Dorothy and Frank. The couple of a lifetime. When Mom got sick, Dad never complained once. He took care of her until the very end. He refused to put her in hospice care, despite the strain it put on him being eight years her senior. I will always remember the evening we came back from a late-night run to the emergency room. We were rattled—we had silently thought this was the end. Mom stayed overnight to be monitored, and I drove Dad home so he could pack a bag of essentials and a change of clothes for her, since she was whisked off in her hair net, nightgown, and fuzzy socks.

The house seemed so empty with just the two of us returning. For such a petite woman, my mother sure took up a lot of space. She filled it with that feminine touch we brutishly lacked, and with her overflowing love for us, wedged between boldly yellow walls.

"Maybe it's time to start considering other living options, Dad," I tested as he crumbled into a chair, feverishly pale. "You can't keep doing this. It'll kill you."

"I am your mother's caretaker. I'll decide what's best for her." He looked up. His eyes reflected how scandalized he felt.

"I'm not trying to undermine your efforts. It's just a lot of responsibility on you." I tried a different approach. "I want to help."

"I am respecting Dorothy's wishes. This is her home; her life is here. Unless you're offering to move in and help me look after her?" His eyebrows knit together expectantly, waiting for me to prove him right.

"You know I can't do that." I shook my head, running my hands through my thinning hair. "I have a home, with Connor." How easily he managed to frustrate me.

"So you like to remind me. I'm sorry to hear that you don't consider this your home anymore," Frank shot back.

"Don't be like that, Dad. You know that this will always be my

home. But don't pretend that you approve of Connor or that you would be okay with him living under this roof with me."

"Well I—"

"You made it clear," I cut him off, "that my husband is not welcome here."

"Of course Connor is welcome here."

"As my spouse? As the man I share a bed with?"

"Don't test me." Dad shot up from his seat. "I tried to be understanding, and I did as much as I could to make this work. But you need to make an effort to see it from my point of view."

"Your point of view?" My eyes widened incredulously. "Yes, shame on me for forgetting what a failure of a son I am. What a source of disappointment I am to this family. How much you and Mom sacrificed for me, just to have a son who turned out to be gay."

"I have done as much as I can. I have made effort after effort, trying to make you feel at home here, you and your *husband*. You just won't let me forget—"

"Let you forget how you refused to come to the wedding? How you told me you would pray for my soul? How you refused to speak to me for five years after I left this place? Should I continue?"

"No," he sighed, falling back into his seat. "You can never forgive me for those things, I know. I'm sorry for how I initially reacted, but I have tried time and time again to make it up to you. Some things, son, I just can't accept."

"You can't accept my love for a man, which is just as real as your love for Mom."

"No, I won't lie and say I understand what the two of you share. But I won't fight you anymore. I'm too old, and so are you."

Dad coughed, pulling me back to the present. The sun had passed behind a cloud, casting the room in shadows. Mom's yellow walls were vibrant enough to mimic sunlight, or something close to it. As I

searched his face, there was no more fight left in him. Mom was dead and she took him down along the way. I glanced at Connor, who was politely pretending to be interested in something Mrs. Zimmermann was saying.

"It was a nice service." I tentatively extended an olive branch, waiting for its tip to poke him.

"Very nice." Dad nodded. "Father Christopher is a good man. Your mother liked him. She said he had—"

"—Integrity," we finished together.

"Your mother sure knew how to pick 'em." He chuckled. "What a woman. I remember when I met her in high school and invited her over for dinner to meet the family—my mother, she said to me, 'Franky, a girl like that only comes along once in a lifetime. Don't let her get away.' And I didn't. I was sixteen and I knew I'd found the love of my life."

"I never heard that part of the story."

"There are many." He smiled at distant memories safeguarded in the back of his mind. "She was the real deal. Before her, I must admit, I was a bit of a player. But she got me in line the moment she smiled at me in the hallway."

I offered a mirage of her smile, her only feature I'd inherited, imagining them as a young couple discovering the tenderness and mysteries of love. Dad may have had his flaws, but he was devoted to his wife the fifty-five years they were married.

"She's at peace now, and that's all I could ever want for her. She suffered for so long..."

I didn't say anything. Dad took my hand in his for the first time in a very long time. He looked straight into my eyes, with that piercing, controlling gaze of his. One that comes with fatherhood and responsibility. As I looked away, overwhelmed, my eyes landed back on the ugly dog painting. Jesus, it was hideous. The mutt's brown fur clashed

horrendously with the walls. Mom either had avant garde taste in art or a ticklish sense of humor. Things weren't fixed between us, but her death left a life's worth of empty space which her love had once filled. We would finally need to grow up and work toward reconciling our home. For her sake.

MTL. CAB RIDE

Emily Liatsis

Pin Striped Suit with a business card;
Paid for my cab and requested me for dinner.

"I have an exam in the morning"
— a future to uphold
you picked the wrong kind of sinner,
I'm too busy for temporary gold.

DRONING ON

Dawn was upon us.
As we watched the evening sky disappear into a pink and purple sea,
the familiar hum began.
Every morning while driving across the sky,
the automatic species' song lulled us to sleep
as the sun did its duty,
and we went into a dream
where what once was, was still there,
when we didn't drone on and on
about the wait to be awoken,

For a sense of purpose is long gone.

POETRY'S HOME IS AN EMPTY BOTTLE

Haydn Juby

Some look to the greats for motivation,
Shakespeare and Keats are their inspiration.
They write with grace and skill and value
Because they don't know the same trick I do.
You see, my friend, I prefer to be risky
Because my muse is scotch whiskey.

Perhaps my method is bizarre,
But Hemingway was said to live in a bar
And Fitzgerald was known to type
With a brandy and tight-packed pipe.
Certainly, my keyboard never moves quicker
Than after a glass of that sweet brown liquor.
My stubble, stench, and drool
Might make you think I'm a complete fool,
But I swear I reach my purest intellect
When I'm completely wrecked.

You see, stumbling and leaving my tab unpaid
Are just the unique tricks of my trade.
My work is a distillation of smarts,
Crafted delicately with burps and farts,
To make you see life's finer truth,
And that all wisdom is 80 proof.
In fact, I only write when the whisky talks
Because I drink my rhymes on the rocks.

Down in lovely muck I've lain,
Sipping on that fermented grain,
To write for you my sickly rhymes,
So you may reminisce of drunker times.
But also remember to never forget
That whisky is the writer's greatest asset.
To be sure, poetry's home is an empty bottle
But only if you're willing to write full throttle.

AND I FEEL FINE

Virginia Larose

I can name you every stain on these once-white sheets and tell you where they came from. That one's from Jessica. That one's from the time I decided to bring an entire pot of spaghetti into bed. That one's from the time I came home piss-drunk. Literally. I washed the sheets once, but the stains didn't come out, so I just decided to leave them. I need more reminders of my failures anyway.

I don't have the willpower to get out of bed just yet. The cracks in my ceiling are more entertaining than anything else I'll encounter today. I can never get over the fact that one of them is in the exact shape of a swastika. Strangers coming over to my house will think I'm a damn neo-Nazi. I look over at the clock-radio on my bedside table. I push aside a few beer bottles and used condoms to see that it's 1:34. Wasn't I supposed to have an interview at 1:30? Shit, I better get going. Looking through the organized heap of clothes in the corner of the room, I manage to fish out a pair of socks (which also used to be white), jeans, boxers, and my favourite T-shirt. "Make Me a Sammich." Genius. It has a hole in the armpit, but it's not like I plan on going on any roller coasters while I'm at this interview. They don't smell too bad, so I throw everything on, spraying myself with air freshener on the way out.

"I'm sorry, but you're just not right for this job."

"... as a busboy?" I reply.

"Yes, I'm sorry, and we're just not hiring right now."

Toolbag.

"So," I begin. "You decided to interview me for this job, ask me a bunch of bullshit questions, pore over the details of my academic and employment pursuits, only to tell me that you're not hiring right

now."

"Yes, I'm terribly sorry."

Wow. He's not even trying to make excuses. That's new. Normally, I would just let this waste of my time slide, but I woke up with gum stuck in my hair, and I've had about enough.

"What are you, some kind of bourgeois piece of shit? Feasting on the blood of your enemies while the rest of us plebeians fight for your scraps? Fuck you, man. They told me integrity was dead, and I guess they were right!"

"Um, sir—"

I walk out the door, smirking. He'll feel bad about that for a solid six minutes, before remembering that he has to go kiss the owner's ass and polish his silverware.

Walking down the street outside the restaurant is the smallest pair of ankles I've ever seen, accompanied by a girl who looks like she's spent her entire college life reading Sylvia Plath and discussing feminist approaches to street signs.

"Did you see Sarah's post on Facebook this morning?" Small Ankles says.

"Yeah, but c'mon, it can't be true," Sylvia Plath Worshipper insists.

"I dunno, she heard it on the news, so it must have *some* credibility."

"Bull."

"A ton of other people posted about it, too! There has to be some truth to it!"

I can't take any more of this back-and-forth, asinine bullshit, so I double back and take the long way home. It's through alleyways and shit, but as long as you don't mind seeing people eating out of garbage cans and admiring their own feces, it's not so bad.

Jesus, the sky is black. Guess there's a storm coming. Fuck, I'm going to have to put towels under the windows again. Shitty apartment

windows.

Hobbling over to the fridge, I notice Angela has stuck a post-it right on top of a posed picture of the two of us smiling that she insisted on displaying for all to see.

Hey asshole, you forgot to put the garbage out again.

Ain't love grand?

I've never really understood this obsession with picture-worshipping. Piling countless fabricated moments into photo albums like sacred relics to be shown to future generations who won't give a shit about pictures of strangers? That, or it's just narcissism at its finest. Honestly, photos are just posing with a face plastered on like wallpaper that you decide you don't want seconds after putting it up. Ugly little pink roses that looked great in the store, but stuck on the walls of your home, start to look more like little pink assholes. Can't return it now, you've stuck your paste all over it. Might as well just live with this shit you don't want. Photographs are useless.

Finding mustard and bread, I retreat to the sanctuary that is my bedroom. I smear dripping amounts of mustard onto my white bread, take a massive bite, and turn on the television.

"This just in: a meteor three times the size of earth is heading right for us! We repeat, this is not a drill! This is the end! It's the end of—"

God. There's never anything good on television anymore. I switch over to one of those television programs where a whack of people live in the same house and have sex with each other. I can't get enough of that girl who dresses up as a duck. There's something ridiculously sexy about a girl who dresses up like an animal. I wonder what Freud would have to say about that. Perverted bastard.

Fucking mustard on my sheets.

Noticing that I can't ignore my bowels any longer, I amble on over to the bathroom. Angela's on my ass to clean it all the time. We're the

only ones who use it, why would I need to clean it?

Angela has taken a sharpie to the toilet paper.

Hey fucker, we need toothpaste.

I wipe my ass with it.

My phone rings. It's Greg, Señor Dickhead himself.

"DUDE. Didn't you hear? The world is ending! It's all over at midnight tonight! Something about a giant meteor heading right for us!"

"Oh yeah? Naw, man, this is the first I'm hearing of it. So, you still coming over for nachos later?"

"Naw, bro, Leila's having a party tonight. You know how it is: end of the world, girls wanna bang. I'm gonna try and score me some jailbait tonight. You know what they say: If it's tight, Imma bite."

"Alright, cool, man, cool. I'll see you later."

I hang up the phone.

Giant meteor? But I'm supposed to pay my student loans on Tuesday.

Is it seriously necessary for pharmacies to carry so many kinds of condoms? Like, red ones, blue ones, yellow ones, green ones, condoms that glow in the dark. They all serve the same purpose. At the end of the day, you're just going to tie a knot in it and throw it in the garbage. And who are we kidding, Magnum? Is the amount of people who actually need those so large that it merits manufacturing them and lining them on the pharmacy shelves? The majority of their sales probably come from young college freshman douchebags buying them just to display them on their nightstand.

"Wow," they'll imagine the girls saying. *"You really need Magnum condoms? I have to go down on you now!"*

Too bad the later disappointment will be enough to detract from the entire evening, which was no doubt romantic and well-played.

I'll never understand those condoms that go from cold to hot when you're having sex. It's supposed to like, excite her lady-bits or something, but honestly, it just feels like someone is setting fire to the length of my penis. The one time I did try them (a freaky girl named Lillian, who liked me to wear rubber gloves and meow when she went down on me), she screamed and bounced in a way that resulted in me holding ice on my tender area for a week. Never again.

There are people running all around me, carrying everything from electric toothbrushes, to Ritalin, to armfuls of deodorant. Damn, people are sure in a mad rush today. I turn back to the condoms, deciding between two things. One, whether to get old-faithful or try something new and fun. Ribbed, for Angela, maybe. Two, whether I want to go with the twelve-pack, or the bulk thirty-six pack. I settle on the thirty-six pack of old-faithful and head to the cash, impulsively picking up a pack of gum on the way.

I notice the crunch of broken glass under my feet, and a breeze coming in from where the window used to be. I guess people really need their pharmaceuticals today. Big, burly men are loading cameras, speakers, and lots of pill-packs onto a truck parked right outside. That's a no-parking zone. Idiots. Even a little old lady is climbing down through the broken window, her cane in one hand, Depends and several pocket knives in the other. A woman is sobbing uncontrollably while choosing photos on her phone to develop.

While I wait at the cash for an employee to come ring me up, I notice a girl outside, phone in hand, taking photographs of the vandalized pharmacy. Probably uploading it to that website where people post pictures of their food getting cold, and those outfits and makeup jobs they're too embarrassed to wear out-of-doors, but want people to be impressed with anyway. I forget what it's called.

She turns the camera on herself, and gives a pouty, sad face, looking like one of those dogs with the big, flappy ears and droopy, red

eyes. What in hell are they called?

I can almost hear the shutter snap, because the pout melts off her face as quickly as it came, like someone took a cloth and wiped it right off. She walks away, eyes glued to her phone, probably testing filters for each photo. She'll be at it for the next hour and a half or so.

I wait for as long as my patience will allow, and still no employees show up. What, is it a holiday or something? I decide that I can buy my shit some other time, so I leave it on the counter and climb outside through the broken window. It's closer than the door.

Bloodhound. That's what they're called.

Man, people are going nuts today. Everywhere I look, people are hugging and crying. Keep it in your homes, man. Emotion has no place outdoors.

"Oh my god, I love you too! More than anything in the whole world! You mean so much to me. I can't believe it's taken me this long to say it. I love you so much!"

"Mom, thank you so much for raising me, I owe you the world. I love you. Goodbye."

Everyone always uses such cliché phrases to express themselves. Their entire lives have been chosen for them by Disney and advertising. If it's not scripted, they're not interested.

Speaking of, I gotta get home before my show is over. What time is it?

I see Nadia waving at me frantically. How she's managed to wave, I'll never understand, because she has two bags the size of flat-screen TVs in her arms filled with shit from the liquor store.

"Man, Nadia. What'd you do, rob a liquor store?"

She laughs uncomfortably and looks at the ground.

"Yeah, something like that. It's the end of the world, right? So I just figured, why not? You going to Leila's party tonight?"

"Naw, man. I think I'll just make some nachos and watch *Will and Grace*, or something."

"Yeah, that sounds good. We all need a night off once in a while, right?"

"Totally. Well, I'll see you around, I guess," I reply.

She drops her two monstrous bags and flings her arms around me.

"I just can't believe it! It's so unreal isn't it? I'll miss you so much!"

What the fuck? I haven't said more than twenty words to this girl in the past six months. I mean, sure, I bagged her once, but that was years ago. Is she into me again or something? I try not to get a boner while her tits press hard against me.

I walk away, trying to find an interpretation of her actions towards me that makes any sense.

After two hours at the grocery store (they were out of the pre-grated cheese, and I had to fight off a middle-aged man with a handlebar mustache for a block of actual cheese), I'm home, and ready to make my nachos. I carefully lay out my salsa, tortilla chips, sour cream, cheese (I don't own a grater, so I had to rip it up into small pieces with my hands), and some pickles I found in the fridge. I don't want to turn on the oven, because the electricity bill is due on Thursday, and I don't want to make it any higher than it needs to be. Raw nachos will do. When I slam the fridge shut, the picture of Angela and me falls off and floats to the floor, slipping under the stove. Fuck it, I'll get it later.

I picture everyone at that party at Leila's counting down like it's the motherfucking ball-dropping on New Year's Eve. Well, New Year's is always a let-down, so I'm determined to stay home and make the most of my evening.

I bring all my ingredients into bed and begin to make my nachos. I look at the clock—11:35. Time flies when you have nothing to do with your life. I put in my DVD copy of *Will and Grace* and stare into

the abyss.

"*You're as gay as a clutch purse on Tony night. You fell outta the gay tree, hitting every gay branch on the way down. And ya landed on a gay guy... and you did him. No, no, honey, your gayness can be seen from space.*"

Oh Karen. You're too much.

My enjoyment of fine television is interrupted by an eruption of noise outside. Screams and yells come into my bedroom from the open window. Sirens of all kinds echo in my tiny studio apartment. I hear a guy yelling "Gotta get high! Gotta get high!" over and over, before I realize that he's actually shouting "The end is nigh! The end is nigh!" I walk over to the window and slam it shut. I'm not going to miss Karen's snappy punchlines over this!

I look up at the swastika. Dammit. I'll have to do something about that soon. I can't be living with a swastika above my bed.

Damn. Salsa on my sheet.

I look over again. 11:59.

I check all the beer bottles on my nightstand. There must be at least one with some left in it. Bingo. A little skunky, but it'll be fine. I cheers *Will and Grace*, and bring the nearly empty bottle to my lips.

Here's to you, fuckers.

Three.

Two.

One.

Cheese.

GROUNDED IN TIME AND SPACE: THE HUMAN CONNECTION

D. Jacob Gerlofs



*Models: Jules Gigon, Gwenyth Clark, Theresa Graham, Nick Lefebvre,
Christina Alessandrini, Amelie Auger, Thomas Watson*



COLOUR ME GREY

Emilie Hackett

Quentin woke up in a puddle of water. His sheets, damp from sweat, clung to his back as he sat up. He looked out the window. It was the same grey sky, but it was darker. There were no clouds this time. *Finally, a nice sunny day.* The weather had been dreadful in the past few days, and Quentin liked to think that it somehow was correlated to his own mood. Shirley always thought that was foolish. Quentin reached to his right, where she used to sleep. She wasn't there. He could still smell her sweetness in the air, or maybe it was just a bad habit. When he had nightmares, Shirley would embrace him with her cold body to cool him down. This time, the nightmare was about her.

A warm breeze hit the nape of Quentin's neck. It was the closest thing to human touch he had felt in the last week. He dragged his way out of bed and headed for the kitchen. He didn't have much time. He reached for a banana on the counter. It was soft and had dark spots. He always struggled to pick them out at the perfect time. If they were too firm, he knew they weren't ripe. Yet, once they were covered in black dots, they were too sweet. Quentin knew it was all about timing... it always was. He grabbed a mug and poured himself a cup of coffee—freshly brewed every morning at 8:02 a.m. on the dot. He liked his coffee black and strong. Shirley liked it light grey and incredibly sweet. Yeah, maybe they weren't meant to be after all.

His cellphone rang. He looked down and sighed, wondering if he had the patience today. He picked up anyway.

"Hi, Mom."

"Good morning, Quentin! How are you, my dear?" Her voice was shrill. "Oh, honey, how I wish you could see this sky! So blue. Your dad and I went to see the sunset yesterday at the lake, actually. You

would have loved it.”

“Well, I’m sure I will one day, Mom,” he groaned. “To what do I owe this lovely phone call?”

“So, my friend April’s daughter just got back in town, and I think...”

“Are you trying to set me up again? Will you give me a break? Last time you tried to play matchmaker I met Shirley. We both know how that went. I don’t have the time nor the patience for this.”

“Well, am I the one who forced you to date a girl who wasn’t your soulmate?” she retorted. “You knew you wouldn’t Pass, dear. Now live with it.”

“I am not having this conversation again. Have a good day.”

He slammed his mug on the counter, coffee flying everywhere. Surely his mother knew better. The last few months had been miserable. He and Shirley both knew there was no way it could ever work, but they tried. If he had known he would lose his friends’ and his mother’s respect along the way, he wouldn’t have bothered with all of this. He had been greylisted—as Shirley would like to call it—at work, too. His colleagues whispered and giggled when he would walk by. So much for politely explaining why he was dating someone and hadn’t Passed yet. What a fucking mess.

Quentin spent the next half hour trying to collect his thoughts. He left for work in a hurry, forgetting to lock the door. He ran to the bus stop and hopped on at the very last minute, banging on the bus door to get in.

“Relax, man, it’s a wonderful day,” said the driver. “We’re not in a hurry here.”

He ignored the driver and sat in the furthest seat. He looked up. Two advertisements were dancing at him. “Cheat your Passing and buy our specialty coloured lenses!” said one. “Feeling grey? Find your soulmate on Match.com” said the other. Quentin scoffed. He would

much rather never Pass over than be that desperate. The bus stopped, and Quentin jerked forward, interrupted in his thoughts. An elderly woman entered and sat next to him. He looked straight in front of him, trying to avoid any eye-contact. He had no patience for a Chatty Cathy today.

“Oh, sweet Heavens!” she gasped. “Young man, you have the most beautiful brown skin. You must make your Mama proud.”

He often got that reaction from paler, older women. His arms were tense.

“Um, thank you, Ma’am. You see, I haven’t Passed over yet, so it’s...”

She gasped and leapt out of her seat. “You poor thing! Oh, don’t you worry. You will find the One, I just know it. Soon you will see the true beauty of this world—the blue skies and the pink sunsets, the green dewy grass and the violet flowers and the...”

“No, really, I’m fine,” he muttered.

She went on and on; Quentin was missing this, Quentin was missing that. He glanced at the itinerary. He was still three stops away from the office. He couldn’t take the blabbing anymore. He rose from his seat, punched the stop button, and ran off the bus. He stood on the curb while the warm sun beat down on his face. He could feel tears building up in the corners of his eyes. Veins throbbed on his temples. He called Mr. Foreman and told him he was sick. Whether or not his boss believed him, Quentin did not care.

He spotted a bench a few meters away and slumped onto it. This was a quiet neighbourhood. Every home had thick, dark lawns, all neatly trimmed to an inch, surrounded by pale picket fences. Quentin closed his eyes. Was he really a freak? Was it truly that odd to not have Passed over at the age of thirty? Why was dating someone who hadn’t physically changed your world so wrong? Were those ‘colours’ everyone talked about such a sight to see? His whole life had been de-

fined by shades of grey. How could he unlearn that? He liked to think that he didn't need colour to appreciate the value of things. He didn't know what Shirley's hair really looked like, but it was soft and glossy and felt like home. He didn't know what her eyes looked like, but they were dark and bright at the same time. They tried so hard to make it work. They truly did. But she gave up. Her words still rang in his ears. *I feel like I'm wasting my time, Quentin. I love you, but I know you're not the One. You know I'm not the One. The longer we keep this going, the further we are from Passing over. With other people.* His tears had turned to sobs. He held his head in his hands and tried to muffle his whimpers, incongruous in the silent neighbourhood.

Get it together, Quentin. Shirley's right. They were both running out of time. It was for the best. He walked away from the bench and back to the bus stop. The next bus would come in two minutes. He wiped the tears off his face and inhaled. His mother loved to say that an advantage to having brown skin was that no one could tell if they had cried or if they were embarrassed. Their faces never turned red. Shirley's cheeks would grow darker against her pale skin when he would tell her she was beautiful. That's the most that he knew about the colour red. Oh, and that strawberries were that colour too. It all seemed grey to him.

He hopped onto the empty bus, cherishing the opportunity for more quiet time. He got off at the city center and walked around the main road. Curious, he joined a crowd surrounding two street dancers. He made his way through the mass, not quite seeing the action yet. Next to the dancers stood a tall pale woman wearing a long dark dress. She narrated as the dancers moved in sync to the music.

"Why are we told that we must Pass over?" she yelled. "Why are we burdened by the illusion that love is necessary? Love yourselves!"

There was muffled, collective laughter, but she was frightening. She glared around the crowd, squinting her eyes. They all went silent.

"My name is Maria, and I am glad to tell you that I have not Passed. I am proud. I am worthy despite my sight! Grey is beautiful."

A dancer grabbed her from behind and propelled her into the air. She landed with grace and twirled around.

"If you are like me and have not Passed, step forward!" she cried. "Do not be afraid. You are normal!"

One or two onlookers stepped forward, shaking. The dancer dropped her back on the ground and she approached the two. She spoke to them, but it was inaudible. A few others came forward. Quentin looked down at his feet. He tried to move his left foot, but it was heavy like a brick. He had begun to sweat again. He shifted his leg forward and looked around. There. He had not Passed. He was tired of being ashamed. He heard a cry in the crowd: "Oh my god! Oh my god!" He heard police sirens. The crowd began to disperse.

"Alright, people, move along!" an officer shouted. "There's nothing to see here, let's go."

Maria and the dancers picked up their belongings and ran. Officers cleared the scene and followed the troublemakers. Quentin had seen enough for one day. As he walked away, he heard another shriek—"Oh my god!" It was that same voice from the crowd. He could not see her—she was hidden behind a husky policeman trying to calm her down.

"Officer, please, leave me alone! Something has happened, I need to stay here. I need to find my One!"

The officer wouldn't budge. "I'm begging you! Sir, please let me go. I think I've just passed, but I don't know with who!"

Quentin pushed past another fast-formed crowd and approached the officer. As he turned, he saw her face. He was hit. Time stopped. She was still struggling with the policeman when she met his gaze. Her whole body relaxed, and she leaned towards Quentin. He looked at her eyes, and then behind her. *That's odd,* he thought. *They're the*

same colour as the sky. The sky is a funny colour. now. That's weird. Her cheeks flushed, growing darker than her pale skin. Was that... *red*? He gasped.

"Sorry, officer, she's with me," he said. "We're all good here."

He shrugged and dropped her into Quentin's arms. She gazed right at him, still silent. She looked up and down his body, then stuck out her hand, amazed.

"My mom always said that my skin was pink. I just thought it was light grey."

He held her tight against his chest, looking over her shoulder at the city around him. Most of the buildings were still grey, but the sky was simply breathtaking. He understood what his mother meant, now.

"My name's Anna. I saw you step forward in the crowd and then my vision started changing."

"I heard you scream. It happened when I finally saw you. I'm Quentin."

They found a bench and sat there in silence for what felt like hours. Quentin couldn't talk. He could only look. He could finally see the colours everyone talked about. The grass was 'green,' the sky was 'blue,' his skin was 'brown,' Anna's cheeks were 'red.' He knew what those things meant, but he still could not grasp it. He had waited for this moment for so long. Thirty damn years. He couldn't help but think about Shirley. He wondered what she would look like now. Were her eyes like Anna's? Did her cheeks flush the same way? How could he possibly think about her after Passing over? After meeting his actual soulmate? His mother said it was one of the difficulties of it all. You met someone, knew they were the one, by some crazy divine-like intervention, and then you had to get to know them. Had he clung onto Shirley because he believed that he would never actually Pass? It made sense, now. He could not be with Shirley, because he

had to be with Anna. He realized how arbitrary such rituals were, but was he really going to deny his soulmate just because he did not know her yet? He needed to give Anna a chance.

She had been quiet, too. She looked serene. She had a constant smirk. She had the prettiest eyes. Quentin knew that he could never forget those. Regardless of his history with Shirley, Anna was the first woman he truly saw.

"Sorry, this is a lot to take in." She sighed. "I had these expectations in my head and I just... I don't know how this works."

Quentin smiled. "I think we'll have to learn together. I just want to see everything."

Anna nodded. She rested her head on Quentin's shoulder. He looked up at the horizon, and saw the sun slowly descending in the sky.

"How do you feel about an hour-long road trip?" he blurted out.

"I mean... sure! I have a car."

They sat up and made their way downtown until they found Anna's car.

"AH!" she exclaimed. "I had no idea what this car looked like. I'm embarrassed."

It was bright pink, just like her lips. She asked Quentin if he had a driver's license. Most pre-Passing citizens didn't.

"My parents insisted that I get mine anyway," he explained. "I just take the bus now, it's easier."

He sat in the front seat and Anna handed him the keys. She grabbed his face and kissed him. Her lips were soft and sweet. She pulled away. He grinned.

"I just had to." She giggled. "Okay. Where are we going?"

Quentin started the car and drove away. Two streets later he was on the highway. The bright yellow sun inched toward his eyes. They still had time.

"My mom always tells me about sunsets. We're going to the lake. We can see for ourselves if those damned sunsets are all they're worked up to be."

She gripped his thigh and smiled. It was new, and it was different. They were going to be just fine.

FRECKLES

Skylar Dean Davis

I have always been fascinated
By the trees that dance around me
Blooming flowers
And everything that breathes
But lately I am more intrigued
By the freckles on your skin
And the constellations that lie within

HOLY HANDS

elsa Cattelan

Holy-hands, the rumours are true, thought Fletcher. I knew the club was edgy... but who has the nails to keep a grand piano so out in the open? The thing is unavoidably ostentatious. I mean jeeze; it's a D.C. Bar for Kali's sake. I understand that they've an image to maintain, but deaf culture aside, why keep a beacon of suspicion when you can't even hear the music? You might as well put a nail polish stand outside, to hell with propriety. What the finger fuck was Leonardo thinking bringing me here?

"Done letting your mind race yet?" said Leo. He had, of course, been watching her reaction. They took turns in that respect, watching each other. "Fletcher, stop staring at my arms and look around you. Kali's hands, Fletch, stop acting like a prude in a nudist colony and walk around with me."

Leo's arms were safer to stare at for Fletcher right now. The tattoos that kept him stitched together were all done in shades of white. Their nakedness was eye-catching to her against his midnight skin. His moon girls, she calls them. Her favourites were the bands just above his wrists. Their chaos swirled into treble clefs and half notes, disappearing under his mittens. She had never seen his hands, but Leo wore the most high-cut mittens he could find, and only a truly innocent soul could think that the tattoos ended where his mitten-lines did.

"Leo... what in the name of idle hands do you think you're doing?" asked Fletcher. Her voice knew what he was doing, that was why it cracked. It was her brain that couldn't catch up and needed to ask.

He was taking off his mittens.

I've never seen anybody's hands before, though Fletcher. Not even Sasha's and we did everything we possibly could together and why the

fingers is Leo doing this to me right—

“Fletcher, girl, you’re killing me, that’s why we’re here. Look around, really look around, how many mittens do you see?” It would be easier not to look, easier to walk right back out the way they came in. But those damn white lines didn’t blink when they stared her down.

“Well, Leo, I see a bar with loose morals. I see wood, everywhere, stained and worn but carved. Carved well; carved without mittens. I see scuffs. I see wobbling tables that forgot they were the designated driver. I see scandal.” There was scandal not just in the hands that had become expressive, flitting through the air with entitlement. The bowls on each table were filled with unpeeled oranges, candies in wrappers, pomegranates, and not a utensil in sight. We are surrounded by aphrodisiacs, thought Fletcher. The air around her was thick with the smell of waking up in the same clothes but a new room.

“Ok, you’re freaking a little, I get it,” Leo said with calming confidence. “Look at the walls, Fletcher, look at what they have up on the walls.” His naked fingers turned her chin up, heating her entire face and ungluing her eyes from the floor, but not quite unsticking her eyebrows from the top of her forehead.

“Oh my Kali, Leo, you know just what to say,” whispered Fletcher.

There were paintings, everywhere. Hands contorted into the strangest of acrobatic marvels. Fletcher could feel the words they were trying to tell her. She knew that the hands were speaking, that the poses had meaning. In an attempt at translation, interspersed throughout the paintings, steady letters ran around the room:

This is what happens when the gloves come off. A bird in the hand can fuck the mittens in the bush. Little girl, you’ve fallen into the wrong hands.

“These are all hand painted, there’s no one, *no one* who can paint that well with mittens on,” said Fletcher in near awe. No grandma

could knit mittens thin enough to allow for maneuverability in brush strokes. Not even sex shops sold leather mitts malleable enough to really let someone paint... let alone sculpt. “Leo, the clay... they have *clay... they...*”

“Oh, she must be new.” The voice had survived an attempted suffocation; it seeped out thick and sweet as molasses. The girl to whom it belonged was just what one would hope to find in a place like this. Her ears and eyebrows were armoured against attack, rung through with steel and jewels. The hearing aid curled against her skull shone metallic. Her hair had staged a coup against reality and decided to become the sky. Its blue tangles reached further down in front than the back, opposite to the sleeveless shirt she wore. It stretched to a collar round her neck and disappeared from her back until it touched her jeans. “Leo, you brought me someone wonderful, I hope.” On each finger, she wore bands. Her knuckles had become silver, gold and brass.

“Anna, do I ever disappoint? Anna: Fletcher, Fletcher; Anna. One day, Anna, this girl here is going to lead the revolution, I’m telling you, you should see her stuff, man. She’s got this storage space studio filled to the brim of unfiltered sculptures and mosaics, we’re talking naked-hand paintings *galore*—”

“Leo! What are you—I mean, I just met—sorry! Hi, Anna, I’m Fletcher, nice to meet you and oh...um, yeah, hi.” Anna held out her ungloved hand. Do I take off my mitten? thought Fletcher. No, Kali no, I can’t shake a girl’s hand after knowing her for three seconds.

Anna didn’t need Fletcher’s answer, she knew what she wanted. Before Fletcher could second guess her compliance, her mitten was off and Anna’s fingers were rubbing against hers. Heat was being passed back and forth, the circles around Anna’s knuckles warmed to Fletcher’s very, incredibly-naked digits. “Come with me Fletcher, I want to show you something.” Anna twined her pinky through

Fletcher's and brought her around the flamboyant piano to a wall covered in handprints. Staring at the patchwork-proof of human presence Anna began to talk, half to the girl next to her, half to herself.

"Do you think surgeons wear mittens in surgery? No way, medicine isn't limited by mittens, so why does art have to be? Do you think it was always like this? No! Look at that thing, that piano, how could that exist, how could we have a word for it, if everyone has always worn mittens?" Anna took Fletcher's hand, let it rest in hers and reached for the paintbrush lounging on the tipsy table.

"Our hands are the key to expressing, emoting, for Kali's sake they're the key to fucking ecstasy! You ever had ungloved sex?" A brush ran across Fletcher's palm. The paint didn't fall into the crevasses created by the lines on her hand, and for the first time she saw the intricacies of a palm. The white lines across her fingers shone against the midnight blue.

"What do I want? I want to try these hand gestures in public, I want to sell the finger circles I wear and I want to drum my nails in boredom. Did you know some legends say people could read futures in palms? Did you know fingertips were said to be unique to each person? People left them behind at crime scenes and that's how they got caught. I think that's beautiful. I want to risk getting caught. I want to put my weakness on display. I want to make art that means something, Fletcher; I want to show the world my fingerprint. Mittens give us a constraint, so I say we challenge it. This is how renaissances start, Fletcher, and trust me you want in; this is the dawning of the art world, babe." Anna pressed Fletcher's hand against the wall, leaving its shadow behind. Around the room were naked hands, stronger in their vulnerability than they were protected by covering. In the midst of flashing flesh, Fletcher smiled at the piano and at the girl who held her hand. Anna was right, she thought, I, want, *in*.



REVELATION

Samantha Maliszewski

FABULOUS SHADOW:

They fished me from this Quebec river
the face blurred glass, bones of wing
draping my body like nets
in a patterned butterfly,

and peeled green weed from scorched shoulders
and the dried wax from my thighs

Michael Ondaatje, 1966/1967

A TAKE ON MARGARET ATWOOD'S "THIS IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF ME"

Becky Blackburn

This is a photograph of me.

Within the blurs of
outstretched arms
and loose curls
caught in the breeze
of sun rays.

And peeking beneath
the wrinkles of mouth
corners and eye squints
are the markings left
behind from full hearts
and inspired souls.

This is the only photograph of me I will ever need.

EDMONTON

Rosemin Nathoo

even the magpie gets
ruffled in the rain,

but does she get lost?

a young man
(one bead on a string)
said that I belonged with them —
“the most beautiful of the corvids” —

but I no longer trust ornithologists,
and my fingers will never be white.

nevertheless, when I saw her half-fluffed
and failing to flinch
at my clicking gears
or loudly plastified legs,
she seemed to be a stranger, too,

and I felt a fleeting congruity --

maybe a magpie ruffled,
maybe a beauty disheveled,
but beauty all the same,
and somewhat natural here?

THE WALKERS

Frank Willdig

December is unforgiving
and relentlessly determined.

Through snow and wind
the walkers trudge

on a path they passed hours ago;
there's no path now.

There is no argument with winter,
no dissent is contemplated,

the trees crack, hawks perch
with yellow frozen eyes

and the sky becomes the indifferent grey
of a heaven drained of light.

FIVE IN THE MORNING

Samantha Maliszewski

Twinkling lights.
Empty streets.
A cold wind brushing the hair out of your
watering eyes.
No noise, no traffic, no flashing lights.
Just you and the city.
Natural meets artificial.
Both temporal, but one is built to last.
You emerge before the sun rises
as you are not afraid of the dark.
You are not afraid of being alone.
The twinkling lights act as guides
leading you to your destination.
One that only you know.
No one is there to deter you,
defer you,
destroy you, and watch you crumble
like concrete during an earthquake.
You are the earthquake.
You are the disturbance in this cold city.
Passively peaceful,
A blank canvas for you to explore.

FINDING YOUR FOOTING

Anne Hill

Metaphorically, “finding your footing” is meant to mean “finding your social status”. But for me the phrase belongs to the real world of walking down the hill on an icy morning. It is a daily experience through a long winter.

About a month ago, my daughter Mary phoned when her front porch was an ice rink due to rain blowing off the lake and freezing. “DON’T GO OUT,” she said. But I was on at the library and intended to go. Well, she would come and drive me down. I assured her that I would use my hiking pole, walk on the road, be very, very, careful, and find my footing. So her car stayed home, all covered with ice. Cars do have their uses on the roadway, and they uncover a lovely rough surface. One must move over for vehicles which are too big to argue with, but there aren’t many. Just enough.

The foot, that oddly shaped appendix at the bottom of our leg, is of such importance in our lives that it figures in many many ways in our language. Too many to list, some examples are: foot loose and fancy free, foot bridge, foothold, foot pad, foot note, foot-in-mouth disease, or a faux pas — a false step, tenderfoot.

The Latin word for foot, plant, turns up often too, though it is not always recognized as meaning “foot”. A plantation which, before there were surveyors, was measured and claimed merely by walking around it; to plant in a garden one uses the foot to tamp down the soil around the new plant; plantar warts are on the bottom of feet; the weed, plantain, is not native to North America, but came over here because the seeds are sticky and lodged in the boots of the Europeans. First Nations knew every native plant, and they recognized that this new plant grew wherever “white people” had walked, so they called it “white man’s foot”.

At one time in human evolution, we had four feet. It was much easier then to find our footing, but harder to invent things like traffic and e-mail and nuclear weapons. So up we came onto two legs, the better to use our hands and brains. It has not been easy. Balance is of the greatest importance and depends solely on two very small bones in the inner ear, which is very odd. If anything gums these up, as happens sometimes, a person cannot stand up or even sit up. Also, the rise onto two legs has had a bad effect on backs and knees. They weren't designed for upright walking and will have to somehow evolve further.

I was walking along the Capelton Road on my way to an art session when a little red car went by, bearing my youngest grandchild. Elbow out the window, he waved and shouted something funny to old Gramma stumping along with her third leg, finding her footing among the cars and trucks and frozen slush, and muttering her usual mantra when out in the wicked wide world: "noli temere", be not afraid. And find your footing.

SHOES

Samantha Maliszewski

Brand new,
shiny, in a
tissue paper filled box.
Lace them up,
button, zip,
slip them on.
step, step, step,
scuff,
scrape,
crack,
crease;
through mud,
sand, dirt,
gigantic puddles.
They survive like
roadmaps guiding you home.



AFTER THE SNOW STORM

Whipped by a riotous wind,
 shoals and eddies edge a wild, frozen sea:
 delicate curves of light and dark
 revealed by bright sun.
 A bird hops the crest of a frozen wave.

A hard, white expanse
 exhibits a line of dark trees
 sharp against a brisk sky:
 snow-blown fields
 after a wind-blown storm.

dedicated to Claudette

lynn pageau

1975

BLOOM

Giulia Maggio-Tremblay

"I'll be back before you know it," he said, tugging on his boots.

It would snow soon, and the path through the forest would be covered. Her supplies would last longer with only her there again, but not indefinitely. She bit her lip. The sooner he left, the sooner he could return. He would not just leave her here.

"Dahlia." His hand raised her chin. "Smile for me," he said. She tried to lift the corner of her mouth. Mal laughed, then hooked one arm around to pull her to him. She absorbed the rare gesture, her head fitting perfectly under his chin. She inhaled a wisp of wood smoke from when he'd stoked the fire, and the bite of brandy from her grandmother's stores. "I left you a book to keep you occupied. See if you can figure out why it reminds me of you." He pulled back and strode to the door, shouldering his bag.

Her hands closed on air, and she pressed them to her stomach. Should she tell him now, before he left? Maybe he would stay—but no, they needed provisions for winter. He had to go.

"Wait!" She had almost forgotten. She'd finished the gift just this morning and quickly retrieved it from the basket in the library. Mal arched a brow and she stood on her tiptoes to wrap the scarf around his neck. She teetered, and he caught her hips, preventing her from falling against him and ruining the surprise. Her hands still clutched the ends of the scarf, and the ivory wool that blended with his pale skin was stark against her brown fingers.

When she was steady, he stepped away. "Lock the gate." She nodded. "And don't worry, I'll be back within a week."

A week would not hurt. She didn't need to rush the moment. The news would make their reunion that much sweeter. When the ancient door thudded closed behind him, she ran to the window to watch

until the trees swallowed him up in darkness. She wanted to wave bravely if he looked back. He never did.

A week passed without any sign of him, and the wind howled past the house, a parade of banshees tearing at anything it met. He had likely decided to wait until the weather improved. To go out into this storm would be madness. She was being silly, and wringing her hands would only upset her and the baby.

Alone, the ticking of the grandfather clock assaulted her ears. Back to silence. She raced for the library, her worries for him like wolves nipping at her heels. In her old refuge, her eyes swept for a distraction, and paused on an unfamiliar volume placed on her armchair.

The book he'd mentioned? Embossed on the leather cover were the words *La Belle et la Bête*.

Once upon a time, she read, hidden deep in the forest, there lived a beast. But he was not a beast by birth. In fact, he was a prince who had been cursed by a witch—

She recoiled, dropping the book. What did he mean by this? He had said she would know why he had chosen this particular story, but she hesitated to continue. A beast in the forest. *Cursed by a witch.*

Just then, she felt it. A ripple of movement. She put her hand to the spot and it came again. A little nudge against her—from inside.

A laugh bubbled up and the room blurred through her wet eyelashes. He should have been here to share this moment. But all she had of him was the child... And this book he had left for her.

She swiped a hand over her eyes, shaking her head. He could not have meant the book to upset her. She had not told him everything she had endured before she stopped going into the village. He would not know what those words would mean to her. Beast. Curse. *Witch.* She still heard them, hissing on the wind.

But she was not alone anymore. She had him and their baby. If

he wanted her to read this tale, she would try to keep an open mind. Picking the book up from the floor, she lowered herself into his chair, imagining the chair's arms were his embrace. She read aloud, so the baby could share in the story.

The book told of a monstrous creature hidden in the woods who saved a lovely maiden by bringing her into his home. But when the maiden returned to her family, the beast waited, even when the date of her promised return passed and it seemed she had abandoned him. He wasted away until at last she found him and brought him back from the edge of death with her love.

The parallels had her rapt. Dahlia had found Mal cold and lost at the edge of her property, and brought him back to the manor. She closed the book and looked toward the window. The air was thick with snowflakes. Winter had arrived without him. Without the supplies he had promised to bring. Her stomach began to churn and her hand curled around her belly.

Perhaps he would only be later than expected, like in the story. She had to give him a chance to return. Mal was smart enough to realize the forest was nearly impassable, and to wait for better weather. The storm would have to falter soon, and then he would be back in her arms.

The axe was not by the back door. Where could he have left it? The hearth devoured logs as she tried to keep ahead of the tireless storm. Soon she would have to cut more for the first time since he'd been well enough to stand.

She searched for the axe in all the most likely places, then tried the hall closet. It wasn't there, but as she closed the door something inside caught the light, flashing golden. She swung the door back and saw the full length mirror, its dust sheet slipping from one corner. When she had taken all the mirrors down after her grandmother died, she

had tucked the last one in here. She stepped forward to grasp the looking glass, and dragged it out into the light.

She nodded when she saw it back on her bedroom wall. The movement drew her eye to the woman reflected in the glass. The years had changed her, stealing the roundness and colour from her cheeks. But the signs of who she was remained, inescapable. The skin, too brown for the sunless season. The eyes, a shade between lavender and lilac that no one outside her family would possess. *The witch's eyes*, the villagers had hissed when she'd passed. They peeked now through the heavy curtain of her dark hair. Would her son or daughter share them?

He had been gone longer than he had been with her, and stores were beginning to get low. She had found the axe, at last, but the child made her limbs drag and she had lost the habit of chopping firewood. Strands of hair escaped her hood, stinging when their frosted ends slapped her cheeks until her eyes watered. She could only manage to split a few logs at a time. But firewood did little good when she was running out of things to eat.

He would come back. He would not just abandon her and their child. Now she wished she had told him before he left. But would he not somehow know, somehow how much they needed him?

Days passed. Her stomach grew rounder and emptier. At last she only had enough food for a day.

Something was wrong. He would not have left her this long without a reason. She pictured him dutifully setting off to find her, then being tossed like a leaf by the malicious gale. He could be hurt, somewhere on the path like before or confined to a bed in the village. He could be waiting for her to find him... Or worse.

She cursed the fear that had confined her to this house since her

grandmother's passing. What if he needed her, while she sat here waiting? Regardless, she could no longer stay. Her child needed food and its father. In the village, she would find both.

She dressed in layers, and as she tugged on her barely-worn boots, a flash of purple brought her gaze to the mirror again. She approached, her hand lifting the hair from her uncommon eyes. The child kicked. When she dropped her hand to the spot, her eyes were covered again, shielded by dark strands. Hidden.

The long strands would whip into her face again if she went out in the wind. She could simply braid it... but another idea surfaced, quickening her heartbeat. Could she do it?

How proud would he be to see her there, unafraid and claiming her place at his side? She could see him smile as he held a baby with his auburn hair and her eyes. Their child would not have to hide. Love left no room for shame.

She strode away and got what she needed, then faced her reflection. She raised the scissor to the hair on her brow, and squeezed. Severed locks fluttered to the floor and her right eye was exposed. She shivered. It felt so... naked. The blunt bangs ending at her eyebrows only emphasized her irises. She raised her hand to the other side and snipped.

She packed the remnants of her food for the trip, and debated leaving behind the deep-hooded cloak she'd used on her infrequent trips to town, since it hid her face. But she needed the warmth and protection from the elements it would offer. Even now, the wind shrieked, audible through the foot-thick stone walls of the manor. It hadn't abated since he had left three months before.

She took a last look around the still entryway of the house. She had let the fire die out, and there remained no reason to linger. She opened the door and stepped into the blizzard.

The wind tore at her as it had assaulted him in her nightmares, and she pushed forward past the instincts screaming at her to turn around and return to warmth and safety. Her baby needed its father, and she would get him.

The trip that took an hour in good weather seemed to take half the day when she had to yank her boots from calf-deep drifts with every step. At last she reached the road that led into the village, which some thoughtful neighbour must have cleared. She followed it to the market.

She had known where he'd gone, but somehow it was still a surprise to see him there. Or perhaps the surprise was how she found him—laughing with a group of other young people, the ivory scarf still looped around his neck seeming paler against his wind-burned cheeks, his arm hooked around the waist of a delicate blonde woman.

Her stomach revolted and she lifted a hand to her mouth. The movement caught the attention of the blonde. Her eyes widened as she realized who she was looking at, and when she turned her hand curled over her ballooning stomach. Dahlia recognized the instinctive gesture of protection, and it pierced her like an arrow to the back.

The other girl grasped Mal's arm and directed his attention to Dahlia. His mouth dropped as he saw her, and when his gaze dipped she realized she had mirrored the other girl's pose. Mal's eyes lifted from the curve of her belly, which, though smaller than the blonde's, the cloak could not entirely disguise. There was no joy or recognition in his expression, and she knew. Telling him would not have made a difference, not really. He was going to marry this girl, if he hadn't already, and have plenty of *beaux bébés*. He didn't want her, or her witch-eyed child.

Heat flashed through her limbs and she flung back her hood, exposing her face to the pale sunlight. Gasps echoed around her but she kept her gaze fixed on his. She bowed as gracefully as she could with

the weight of the baby affecting her balance. And then she walked away.

She stopped at the first vendor's stall. "If anyone needs a healer or midwife, you may send them to me." The baker seemed not to hear, struck dumb at the sight of her purple eyes. It had been too long since one of her line had made such a bold appearance in the village. They would have to get used to her. She would not make it easy for them to forget her again. Her hand lifted to her belly. She would write a different ending. For herself. For her child.

I DO NOT FOLLOW THE NEWS

Frank Willdig

I do not follow the news,
all the news I need is out my window,
there's a puffy cloud in the late summer sky,
and a clump of turtleheads that catch the eye,
it's not going to rain today
and that's all the news I need.

I thought I'd take the long walk to work,
the children are back in the schoolyard,
a woman is walking her dog across the street,
a smile is fixed on everyone I meet,
I'm glad I'm taking the long way to work
and that's all the news I need.

No, I don't follow the news
and I am very glad for that,
the same news happened today as yesterday
only it happened to different people,
I am grateful I can do this,
and I wish everyone else could.

ONE NATION

Marguerite Dakin

These green hills, enclosing me. Red. White. Blue.
The young, the old, the firework parade,
years of generations wait for the new.
Hands still over hearts, but stripes gently fade.
Flickering faces, tiki torches wave.
Lean on the jokes, because reality
scares. Look for the helpers, home of the brave.
Home of the selfish, the stubborn and free.
She still watches the waves with a stony face.
The borders creep in, as temperatures rise.
We all must consider, is this our place?
Are these our people, are these our prizes?
Still, we are here. We choose not to cower.
Kneel or stand, we know our anthem's power.

DEAR FELLOW AMERICAN

Darcie Talbott

we keep pointing fingers
screaming until our painful words break
through delicate skin
and tear their way through
once innocent souls

we harden our hearts
into stone cold bullets
that we aim towards our own
without stopping to wonder
what are their dreams

we construct shields
from broken promises and pain
so we can survive
one more day
one more week
and if we're lucky
one more year.

FADING

Shir Shahrabani

Gaia
Ethereal beauty
Gowned in sapphires and emeralds
Tainted with coal and tar

Gaia
Goddess of singing winds
Mistress of dancing lakes
Deity of caressing tides

Forgive us, mother
For we love to watch the streams leak
Onto your bloodstained cheeks
Onto your trembling lips

And we know we must heal
Your broken body
Your crushed spirit
Your tired eyes

But perhaps,
We will leave you
In the care of our children
Instead

FIRST DAY

Shir Shahrabani

Pack your memories
into the charcoal car
It's time to leave
your heart behind

The sun, too ambitious
melts your past
This soil, once-familiar
absorbs your innocence

An old blues song on the radio
sounding thin and wistful and haunted
Your chest stiff
with cold nostalgia

Winding gravel ahead
driving west to the Eastern town
through emerald mountains
and deer-stained woods

You wonder whether those college kids
will accept you
into their world of scarlet cups
and plastered grins

Will you be okay?

"You will be okay,"

your new friend assures you
interrupting your thoughts
with kind eyes and a broken smile
that mirrors yours

A flicker of hope

A change of heart

A new beginning

Outside,
the breeze sings
of unspoken promises
of future bliss

NEW MEMBER

Marguerite Dakin

Bring your drink to the bathroom with you.
That's the first thing they taught me.
These boys are harmless,
probably,
but it's a good habit to be in.

Text me when you get home safe.
Call me when you're walking,
if you're by yourself.

Stay with your sisters,
always check up.
Lick your hand for the salt,
tap lightly to flip the cup.

Come sit with us,
drink some water.

We don't go to that house anymore.

You have to be firm with them.
You'll see.
They are unable, or unwilling,
to take your hints
that you are uncomfortable,
not interested,
scared.

Walk it off,
push them away,
don't smile.
You don't need to be nice.

FORWARD

Katharine Mussellam

You approach me with such curiosity. I am not wearing that shiny fabric the rest of you do these days. Nobody wears leather anymore, synthetic or real. Even cotton is scarce, I have learned, now that the bees have dwindled so much. I look alien to you, but you don't realise how foreign all of this is to me. It is quite literally ahead of my time.

You buy me a drink, which flatters me. It has been so long since anyone has found me pretty enough to do that. But I can tell you have far more interesting intentions than a sexual conquest. That's something I'm starting to learn about people of this time; they're always dying to talk.

You ask me where I got these clothes. I name the store and it's not one you recognize. They went under before you were born. You believe me when I tell you that I was born in the twentieth century, but also that I am only fifty-five.

How did I get here?

I wasn't always a traveller. I once happily spent a lot of time at home. I had a daughter. I can feel my face brighten as I speak of her and I can see you picking up on that.

My daughter was absolutely brilliant. She loved life and she put every fibre of her being into loving it. It was not my natural state, but she inspired me to change.

And change I did. Once she could walk, we went on so many little adventures together. I started to see things the way she did, lapping up every bit of wonder I encountered and finding it in the most unexpected places. Even on the darkest days, I could always count on her unbridled enthusiasm to cheer me up.

One day, when she was grown and had a burgeoning career, we heard that time travel had become possible and we both jumped at

the chance to try it out. So, we signed up for the lottery to participate in the trials. After we were chosen, we were informed that it would not be like in the old movies we had seen. It was impossible to travel back in time; you can only go forward. In going backwards you would have to move through times in which you already existed, but you can't duplicate yourself.

This fact alone did not bother us so much; what would we want with the past and the way women were treated back then?

Despite our excitement, we were hesitant in the face of this new technology, so we didn't travel too far on the first of the three trials we were allotted. We wanted to see how it worked, so we travelled forward just forty-eight hours in time, from Thursday to Saturday. If nothing else, we would not have to wait so long for the weekend.

When we saw that it worked, we became more adventurous. We decided that one of us would travel a year in the future, the other waiting in the present. I let my daughter go. It was a strange year, with her being absent. So much was missing. But I knew she would be back and we would each have a story to tell.

When she arrived the next year, she said travelling so far in the future had been electric; it had felt like moving and staying still at the same time. She did not know how that could be, but that was how it was and it fascinated her. Her excitement became mine. We subsequently realized that her trip had made it so there was one year more between our ages.

And that was when we got our really big idea for how we would use our third and final trial. We thought we were so clever. Thinking back on it now, I realize that our judgement was clouded by the bad medical news I had recently received.

Our plan was this: I would travel into the future next—several decades into the future. I would travel to be able to see my daughter at an age that I would only have been able to imagine, because it would

have been beyond my lifespan. Knowing that my condition would still allow me to travel, we excitedly made the preparations for the journey, making a time capsule of all of the most important memories to remember how things have been before we would see what they become.

We were crying when I took the final steps before I would make the journey, and I almost turned back as I approached the vessel. How I wish I had turned back. But I didn't. She said it would be our greatest adventure. She wanted me to see her older than I ever would have otherwise. As if I had drawn a better lot. She was convinced better days lay ahead.

And so I went. It took only moments for me. My daughter was right. I felt at once that I was in rapid motion and that I was stationary.

When I stepped out on the street, it took me a short time to recognize where I was. It did hold some resemblance to the place I had left, but it was also different. It was nighttime, but I'd never seen it so brightly lit up. Taxis whizzed by, and at first I panicked that none of their drivers were watching the road. But then I realized that while each cab had someone sitting in what I recognized as the driver's seat, they were not controlling the wheel as they conversed with the person on the passenger side. I laughed and shook my head. The people of my time never had to worry about intelligent cars making cabbies obsolete. Now people pay for the opportunity to have some company for a while as they make their way from place to place.

I stood in awe of the metropolis my home had become before setting out on my search for her. I tried to find some way of looking up her name and address, but I didn't understand how to use the Internet's new form, and people are so caught up in their personal screens now that they paid me no mind. But I wanted to see my baby, mature and in the midst of certain success. She had been so steadily on her

way when I left her.

I found the building she had worked out of and asked about her. The new, young secretary asked who I was to her. I said I was her mother.

She was so sorry, she said. Your daughter has passed away. It was six years ago. She made her car crash, on purpose. We thought she left no kin.

I collapsed right there. It wasn't supposed to be this way. All those years I gave up so that I could be with her at the height of her life — they were all for nothing. How lonely she must have been, trying to hold onto the promise that it was all so that we could be together later on. She went through most of her twenties, her thirties, and some of her forties undoubtedly facing the challenges I did at those ages, and probably more. And she couldn't come to me for help. I should have been there. What kind of mother am I?

I wandered aimlessly around the city for a while before I made my resolution. She would be disappointed in me if I didn't explore the world of the future when I was given the chance. So, I did what she taught me to do all those years ago. I let myself live for, and fall in love with, every sight. I wish she were by my side to do it with me, the way she used to be.

I wonder what she would think of it all—no, what she *thought*. Did she like having a self-driving car? What look was in her eyes when she saw her first holographic advertisement? Did she giggle when she first tried virtual hyper-reality, like she had done the first time she played a computer game? Did she become frustrated with humanity's ever-increasing compartmentalization of their lives? Was she, too, unable to communicate with others except for the occasional fleeting and disconnected moment?

I have no answers, only conjecture.

You and I are both weeping in the bar. At least in the future men

are allowed to cry. That is one thing you've improved since I left. Admittedly, it seems you've mastered energy efficiency, too.

You wipe your eyes and ask me where I live now. I tell you that I have no home. Then you ask me where I will go. I tell you it is where everyone goes—forward. I have to keep going as long as I can still stand on my own two feet and recall the moments that came before each present one.

I have no ties to one place anymore. I am coming to think that I no longer mind. I'm living for her now, though in a different way than before. If I am to discover everything, then I cannot have a singular home. I will go farther into the future. The company probably doesn't care about one missing time machine anymore. Perhaps I am the only one who remembers that I ever rode away in it.

In my travels I will find answers to questions I never thought I would have. My daughter and I often wondered whether humanity would ever reach an end. We'd argue about what the cause would be if it did. I'll find out for her, whether it will be climate change (her hypothesis) or nuclear destruction (mine). Or perhaps it will be something else. And I'll keep it in our time capsule. That way they will be our memories, not just mine alone. That will be my one constant, just as she once was for me.

MR. ROGERS AND THE HULK

Jeff Parent

Their furniture moving skills are legendary.
They brought this rug from the attic,
grandfather's big chair, the radio,
and they offered to carry the Cross of the Nazarene
in the Santa Claus parade—

I always like to see the children and the animals
and all the wonderful things on the Earth—
but the weather seemed pretty bad
so I said, "Take the rest of the day off.
Leave it. And pizza, my treat."

But Jesus help me, as babies eat soft food,
and the fish eats the worm on the hook,
they just chewed on the dried meats they'd brought
and because it's so cold where they live
one wears a suit of skin and fur,
the other a peacoat of many colours
and I think, "O Lord, I could just die!"

But, I appreciate they'd taken a load from my shoulders,
and we chatted about things:
art, railroads, swords, snow, the Blessed Sacrament,
this that this this that.

And yes, the Good Book says God should be first in our thoughts
but I really like these two characters;
I would continue with them as my main storyline,
with something to show their relationship outweighs all difference
and makes life as normal as possible.

YESTERDAY IS MY TOMORROW

Maree Collie

The world was beautiful
when I was seventeen.
With skin smooth and clear,
with body neat and trim.
I was filled with dreams,
fortified by confidence,
anxious to take on the world
and to find my place,
when I was seventeen.

Then the world turned
and I got old.
I don't recognise myself
in the mirror any more,
unseen by people around me,
tolerated by society,
my knowledge questioned,
unsure of the future,
now that I've grown old.

A STREAM

Anne Hill

I am enamoured of a small stream or, more accurately, by the memory of it. Memory does tend to brighten and enhance, I know, but I remember too the happiness that stream brought to me in my early twenties as I was struggling in my first year of teaching High School. I did not live at Mud Bay, where the stream ran through the property; my parents did in the last years of their lives. I visited when I could and called it 'home' because they were there. In fact, rather than any other place I've lived, and although I didn't actually live there, I still think of Mud Bay as 'home'.

The stream was very short. It rose in the woods a few dozen yards from the house, a spring coming up out of the ground sending clear clean water tumbling over stones, beneath ferns, down past the house to the bay where it dispersed itself in a small estuary.

For such a short stream, it was remarkably useful. In fact, it provided all the water for the house by means of a clever little device called a 'ram' that was set in it. This ram was powered only by the running of the stream. The water pushed a part of it up, sending a jet of water through a pipe to a tank on a platform on the branches between two huge Western Cedar trees. From the tank, the water ran through another pipe into the house whenever a tap was turned on or the toilet flushed.

The clanking of the metal part of the ram as it fell back into place could be heard day and night, a regular beat, reassuring in a way but not really heard consciously until it stopped. Someone then had to go out to prop some part of it with a stick until enough water pressure built up to start it again. So pleasant it was to sit there by the stream, among the ferns and mosses, waiting to remove the stick. Could it really have been so lovely? And did Shadow the cat really step soft-

ly out from under the bushes and purr in my ear? The ram, though small, could be called an industrial installation. But it seemed instead to have grown there in the stream as a part of nature, in perpetual motion like the stream.

Farther down, by the house, the stream pooled a bit, making it possible to dip a cup in for a drink. There was a post there with a nail for the cup. The never-to-be-broken rule of the house was that the cup remain there, not to be taken away to sit by the bay and sip the very cold water slowly. It was too cold to drink quickly. Because of the rule, and because of the extreme coldness of the water, I was rooted to that spot while slowly sipping. I had a fancy that it was magic water. As I drank it, everything seemed sharply defined, more real, as though I had never seen it before: the pattern of the bark on the great cedar tree; every separate frond of the ferns; the lights and shadows in the shrubs; the little creatures scuttling among the stones on the stream bottom.

Of course, it wasn't magic; it was only that as I had nothing else to do while I drank except look, I looked. How seldom I stop long enough to really look; and how much there is to see!

This was all about 60 years ago. At some time after my parents were gone, the house burned down. I'm sure the ram would not be there now; or the post, or the cup. But surely the stream is. I won't be back to see, but it lives in my soul.



LADYBUG 1



LADYBUGS 3

Helen Holmes

PICTURESQUE

Ryan Wickware

In this picture, there's a ridge of swaying gold.
Meeting that ridge is a stark void of blue
that questions the colour of heaven.
At the peak of that ridge is a home
built on the foundations of a family.
Beside this home is a dusty old truck
of a red you only get when the paint job doesn't matter.
In the bed of this truck is a full yield of the day's sweat and blood.
Across the yard is a willow that predates the estate,
but is as much a part of the family as Grandpa.
In this picture, there is a barn stuffed with more character
than craftsmanship or combines.
This picture is protected by the glass pane of my car window
as I pass it by.

In this picture,
there is a piece of a boy with roots he wishes to thrive on.



VANCOUVER SUNSETS



BIRDS OF PARADISE

Samantha Maliszewski

PLACE OF MIND

Keenan Wilcox

Do you remember the time when we stripped down on the banks of Big-Bear Lake, and how we skinny-dipped together in the cold autumn water—the moonlight bouncing off each ripple's motion and illuminating our faces against it? I remember how beautiful you looked. I remember your breasts rising slowly above the surface as we retreated back to shore, and I remember falling in love with you that very moment.

Do you remember when we drove four hundred miles just to see your sister for her birthday, and how we found out that night that she was pregnant—every line on her face scrunching as the smile moved through us? I remember how beautiful you looked. I remember the tears running down your lips as you kissed and held her, and I remember saying that everything was going to be perfect.

Do you remember when I asked you to marry me, and how I was so scared that my lips wouldn't open for the words—my whole body trembling with fear as I knelt down beneath you? I remember how beautiful you looked. I remember you crouching down beside me and looking right into my eyes while you kissed me—your soft mouth telling me yes in its smile.

I remember when you told me that you would love me forever, and how nothing in the world could keep us apart. I remember holding you in my arms each night and thanking God that you were mine, and how you wiggled your toes when you couldn't sleep. I remember crying for four hours when the doctor told me that you needed to go away to get better, and I remember how you were so strong and sure

that I would be okay. I remember the phone calls, and the letters, and the late nights alone while I waited to hear if you were okay, and I remember how all of my old friends wanted to see how I was doing. I remember praying every night that you would be okay. I remember it all.

Do you remember how much I loved you, do you know how much I still do? You are my whole life—my whole self—placed in my mind, and I will never forget how beautiful you were.

NEVER STOP HAUNTING ME

Kuna Zero

No, they're not nightmares,
these dreams I have of you.
They're my only chance to see you,
to pretend you're still around.

So if you're a ghost haunting my dreams,
please never stop.
There's no bringing back the dead,
but I'll take your spirit over nothing.

This way we never say goodbye,
always meeting halfway between life and death.
This way I don't lose all I have of you
after your life was drained away.

So meet me halfway,
haunt me like I'm an old house
that you spent your life in
and were never able to let go.

Wander through the hallways of my mind
with such frequency
the other inhabitants grow accustomed
to seeing a ghost among them.

Haunt me until I crumble
and burn to ash like you,
because then we'll meet again
in a place beyond dreams.

SHARED WALLS

Ryan Wickware

Four walls and a roof trap our lives between our ears.
Liberation is three yards through the kitchen wall, but
two shut doors keep it that way. Sometimes, I think death
envies the silence of our halls. The cries of old floor-
boards demand tiptoes even before bed. This is a place
where quiet begets only more of the same. This is a hush
known only to the lonely. We make coffee for the noise,
not for the wakefulness. After all, it would be easier to
sleep and be the ghost who doesn't know it is one. So, we
sit and stare at either side of the same wall neither of us
can break through. It's regular drywall reinforced with
the fact that nobody called today, and free time remained
free, again. Famous musicians are the only voices I have
heard in days, and our frustrated screams are stifled by
the fear of filling the void with anything but our strength.

BIRTHDAY DECORATIONS

Sophie Luu

CHARACTERS:

Drew, 35

Melissa, 33

SCENE: At a restaurant. It is six in the evening. Drew and Melissa sit across from each other at a table.

MELISSA: Mark and I are planning to go to the movies sometime next weekend. That is, if you're picking up Cooper like you said you would.

DREW: I am.

MELISSA: Well, you didn't last time.

DREW: That was three weeks ago.

MELISSA: Exactly.

DREW: Melissa, let me explain.

MELISSA: What is it this time? You burned your hand using the frying pan, your butt accidentally fell into the toilet because you forgot to put the seat down, you—

DREW: No, no more of those excuses. I'll make it up to Cooper. I promise.

MELISSA: Drew, the last time you said you promised, he was expecting to stay over at his father's for the weekend. And you didn't show up.

DREW: I had to remove my tonsils.

MELISSA: Couldn't you have gotten them removed another day?

DREW: I rescheduled my appointment six times. Seven times would have been crossing the line.

MELISSA: Crossing the line? And you promised to pick up Cooper how many times?

DREW: I have houses to sell. You know how real estate works. I don't have a live-in boyfriend who pays all my bills like you, Melissa.

MELISSA: Mark does not pay all the bills. He pays for everything except for the oven mitts. But that's just because he doesn't have good taste in oven mitts. They have to be heat resistant.

DREW: Right, so since I actually have to make a living, I don't always have time to—

MELISSA: But you always had time to pull on a baseball glove and play catch with Cooper.

DREW: I did, until they gave me more houses to sell. You know how good I am at selling.

MELISSA: You know what, Drew? Maybe I'll just ask Mark to play catch with Cooper.

DREW: Are you serious? Does Mark even know how to throw a baseball?

MELISSA: Well, he knows how to chop carrots. And onions. And he does it like a man. A real man. Never sheds a tear. He's learning how to peel potatoes now.

DREW: Wow, he doesn't know how to use a vegetable peeler? Some guy...

MELISSA: You should see how inept you are at chopping onions.

DREW: I have sensitive eyes.

MELISSA: Right, you're just not sensitive to other people's feelings.

DREW: Look, I'm planning a surprise party for Cooper's fifth birthday next weekend. Would you mind coming over to help decorate the place?

MELISSA: You can't blow up a few balloons and put up a few

streamers by yourself?

DREW: No, I'm a helpless kitten with tiny lungs.

MELISSA: I'm sure you'll manage. Come on, make Cooper proud.

DREW: I just thought we could do it together, like old times. How does Friday night sound?

MELISSA: Drew, I can't.

DREW: Why not?

MELISSA: Mark proposed to me last night.

END SCENE

INTERRUPTIONS

Becky Blackburn

A year ago on a warm autumn day
you filled this space so gracefully with care.
I only heard the sound of you at bay
with the sound of potential in the air.

You came as would an Indian summer:
Unexpectedly yet always welcomed.
And left rather with such rapid clutter
my mind could only hear this dismal hum.

Nevertheless, I walk in line with grace
mending the broken rhythm you produced.
And with the sound of each step, I unlace
the slipknots from my stomach you induced.

I will always invite interruptions
but will not be subject to destruction.

HOME

Janan Chan

Andrew was blinded by headlights. As the car came closer, he saw his father Tony, driving behind the wheel. He had new wrinkles and his black hair seemed thin, though he was the same man Andrew remembered.

"How are you?" Tony said, after parking and stepping out.

"Good," Andrew replied, and hugged his father.

"So handsome now, like a man."

Tony started the car and they drove away from downtown. The pedestrians had foreign haircuts and different fashions, and Andrew always looked out for what he could adopt and bring home. There were signs in windows shops or above, all displayed in Chinese characters, and Andrew quietly mouthed the ones he knew. He never fully learned to read or write Chinese. Driving through the city, he imagined an alternate version of himself who had stayed in Hong Kong instead of moving to Canada. In the crowd, he searched for someone like himself, hoping to make eye contact. As they left the city and drove through the mountain forest, Tony asked in Cantonese:

"Do you remember this place?"

"What do you mean?" Andrew said in English.

"We've been to this mountain before. Do you remember?"

"Yes, a long time ago."

"You were just a boy. Not like now. Now you're a real Chinese man."

Andrew stayed quiet but rolled those last words along his tongue. The light posts were far apart and except for the headlights, they drove in darkness.

"I asked if you wanted to get out last time. Do you remember?" Tony said.

"Hmm?"

"Last time, I asked if you wanted to get out. Walk the road in the dark. We did that as boy scouts. You should try it."

"I think I'd rather stay in the car," Andrew replied.

"Try. Look." Tony pulled over to the side of the road. "We'll arrive at the same place."

"No thanks."

Tony stayed quiet, exhaled a long breath, then turned to his son who was staring out the window. "You're just like your mother."

"What?"

Tony gripped the steering wheel. Andrew had seen this before when his father would become quietly angry and nothing was to be said. He was upset beyond words and no words could ease his anger. In the silence, Andrew dreamt of his alternate self. He imagined being called by his Chinese name. He would be fluent in the language and call and visit his mother in Canada, as opposed to only seeing his father every few years. Had he grown up here, maybe he could have hiked mountains with his father. Finally, Tony started the car and left the side of the road. Andrew looked around, and finding a CD, said:

"Oh, Faye Wong. I like her. Can I put it on?"

Tony glanced then said: "She was your mother's favourite."

Andrew put in the CD and her song, "Humanity", filled the air. The music was sweet, and he imagined his mother and father listening for the first time. He imagined them dancing, swaying on their wedding night, full of hope and uncertain of the future. Andrew turned to his father and began to hum along with the song. Tony smiled, and becoming less tense, allowed himself to sing the lyrics he knew so well.

"Amidst the vastness of heaven and earth, compared to what you could imagine," he sang in Mandarin. "The world is obscure. I cannot bear deceiving you anymore, but hope you will listen and learn. I

hope you will understand what to do and where to go."

They soon reached the summit, where cars lined both sides of the road. Street lamps illuminated the area. Families and couples sat on the hoods of their cars or on the grass. They parked and walked to the lookout point towards the city. There were black apartment buildings dotted with lights, and further in the distance low mountains. Andrew imagined every light of those distant apartment buildings full of people just like him. He imagined them bathing or eating, together or alone, people just like him. His father put a hand upon his shoulder and welcomed him back. Andrew stayed still as tears watered his eyes, he was a stranger to his own motherland. He turned away and asked if there was a bathroom.

"To the woods." Tony shrugged.

They walked into the forest and to separate areas. Andrew wiped his face and stood in the darkness against a tree. What sort of man was he that could not even read his father's Chinese, or appreciate the love of his mother in Canada. How pitiful it was to imagine himself as anything other than what he was. Only a boy thought of himself as multiple people, a man was certain of himself. Andrew breathed in. When he was steady, he returned to the clearing and met Tony.

"Hungry?" Tony asked.

"I think I should go home."

"I know a good dessert place."

"I think I'd like to go home."

Tony sighed and walked to the car. Turning back, Andrew could only make out the silhouette of his father in front of the lights. Andrew closed his eyes. The burning lights of the city swirled into the form of a glowing dragon. It transformed again into the shape of a man. The man, Lao Tzu, dressed in a watercolour robe, said to Andrew: "Go eat something sweet."

robyn bryant

TO THE POET LAUREATE

Where is the scarring passion of your youth ?
You must have felt it once —
Or so your illustrious title would have us believe.

But now your stanzas hang
On the romance of history
and geometrics.
And for the human touch
— the love —
You recall for us
The biological contortions of your past,
Your only passion
In clear syllables and minor grosseties,
So distant from our searing tenuous loves.

Or will we someday too,
Forget the strain of raging security
The touch of warm lips
And scathing tongues.

1968

THE CITY POEMS
(vi)

sometimes in the city you cannot close your ears.

oversensitized, you feel your body filling
with the putrid warmth of grating sounds.

but listen slowly to the rain:
concentration sets all motion slower
and the heavy single drops from the eaves
punctuate the constant tingling of the free-fall drops.

and when your mind goes further till the skull
is open to the pouring sky
each member drop becomes an entity
that sears and slices into your soul
with the curious pain of the dentist's syringe
which curls your toes but is tolerated because
the sensation is somehow pleasing in its curiosity.

concentrate :

your brain is all you feel -
a lump of ugly tissue that is you
and vulnerable like an ant on pavement.

EDWARD HARPER

Sandpipers and crippled seahorses
jostle excitedly
for a place in the last tide.

JOHN GRIFFIN

1967/1968

THE PLACE THAT STARTED THE END

Adrien Pasche

Red and blue flashing lights created a halo. The stroboscopic colors rendered a stop motion reality around Stani. "I'm gonna ask you to stay right here, sir." The officer pointed to a place on the sidewalk. Stani started to feel a warm sensation over his right eye. He touched it with his index finger and felt a swelling. "The entire cavalry is here!" he said to himself.

The map isn't the terrain, and the terrain isn't the maps. These were righteous words from Sanchez, skinny with dark curly hair and round glasses. One of his professors at the nursing school. An eccentric man, who went from computer engineering to nursing—quite a leap. This phrase stuck with him, and the more his life unfolded the more he would understand its true meanings.

The ambulance took off. Inside was the man that Stani just hit, now on his way to a local hospital. Stani remembered seeing fear in his eyes. The accumulation of patrols stopped at the intersection clustered the circulation. A fireman came to him and asked, "You gonna be alright, man? Do you want me to check your eyes?"

He shook his head. "I'm good, thanks."

The fireman got closer. "Your eyebrow is puffed, you're probably gonna get a black eye." Stani appreciated the attention, and for a second felt connected with someone. He walked away and got in the truck. At this point, only the police were still around.

He was from There, and he found There quite limiting, so he decided to come Here. But Here had its limitations, which made him wonder if he should go back There. This was the question that had haunted him for far too long. Their language was not his, which forced him to be creative in communicating with others. At first, it was an exhilarating experience—everything was so different. Going

out on the street was an experience in itself. The air, the palm trees, the smells in each corner; all his senses were heightened. Waking up in the morning was a complete delight, because he knew that he would learn a little more than the day before—grammar was all that mattered. People were friendly and always accommodating, although he detected a stress that he did not encounter before. Perhaps it was what defined the inhabitant of the city. For now, this was not of great concern for him, though it would be later on.

“Sir, I need you to spell your first and last name for me, please.” The officer was holding his ID in one hand, and the flashlight in the other. Stani looked at the officer, confused. His colleague had just asked the same thing.

“S.T.A.N—”

The officer cut him off. “Mister Stani, did you take any substances that could have affected your ability to ride your bicycle tonight?” Stani thought about the glasses of wine that he had before he left the restaurant. Each Sunday night, one of the regulars would come with two Pinot Noir and always left one bottle half full, as “an extra”.

“Mister Stani, I have to test you, do you understand?” The officer put the ID in his vest, and turned away from him while describing the field sobriety test.

Although the location and socio-economic realities strained his ability to understand himself lately, words were always there to trace a roadmap. Before leaving, when he was working at U.T.R.II, he started a dictionary. He wrote down any word that sounded interesting or just very specific. Early on, he understood that language could be great leverage in his life. Like colors in a painting, words could enhance something or render it into dullness. The importance was in the contrast—just enough but not too much. “Neighborhood” was a word that had that right musical balance. He really liked it, but it wouldn't help him to describe what was happening right now.

“I was riding my bike on Stevens Creek.”

The officer interrupted. “Where were you before that?”

The question threw him off. Stani realized that he had to come up with something plausible and simple. “I was at a friend's home.”

The officer was writing in his notebook. “OK, and then what happened?”

“Well, like I said, I was on Stevens Creek. I had my headphones on, and I saw the green light. I told myself I was going to make it, so I sped up, and right before I passed the light, it turned orange.”

The officer looked at him with a smile. “You mean yellow.”

Stani looked at him, baffled. “Yes.”

“OK, go on.”

“I realized, in the middle of the intersection, that cars on De Anza Street were coming toward me.” He paused, trying to think of the right verb to explain what he did next, but the lingering adrenaline made his mind clumsy. “I pedaled ...” his voice had a thread of frustration. “I mean I stood up on my bike, and I tried to gain momentum to accelerate.”

There was too much stuff, too many images and sounds, too many words to know, too much unfulfilled desire—definitely, too much desire. When it happened, he closed his eyes, sat, and tried to empty his mind. This meta move never worked, his mind was too reckless. How much did he really need to understand life around him and, to some extent, himself? He never regretted the decision to come here; after all, at some point in his life, it was his dream. Fuck dreams, what a waste and such an obnoxious idea. “Dream Big!” or worst, “There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure.” Who wrote that? Coelho, Twain... He thought Apple did it.

After hours spent at the scene, he was exhausted. Long after the ambulance and the fire truck left, the patrols started to retreat. There he was, alone with his bicycle. He looked back at the intersection,

which was almost empty at this time of the night. He pushed his bike and headed toward North Stelling Road. After a fifteen-minute walk, he was in front of a convenience store. He bought a packet of cigarettes and a soda. While walking toward his place, he chain-smoked three quarters of them. It was a warm night, with a clear sky. He looked at the foothill silhouette stretching in a half-circle around the city.

The white fences barricaded the residence. It was one of those gated places, one among many around here. This one pretended to be “luxurious” but offered nothing different from the others. He was sharing a room at The Markham Apartments. They were four men in one and a half bedrooms. The man on the lease was Swedish. He came here to pursue his career in the film industry. At this point, it was not really clear if he wanted to be a filmmaker, a producer, or if he was going for advertising or entertainment. The only thing that he was sure about was his confidence. Among them, the only native was larger-than-life. His morphology resembled Kubrick's, and he wore the same facial expression. Stani had a great deal of empathy for the man because he was like him—*un perdant magnifique*.

He couldn't go home. He couldn't stay put. He couldn't rest. At the gate, Stani turned back, and walked away. He drifted toward the bridge. In the middle of it, he stopped. From here, he could see the continuous outline of the mountains surrounding the city. They reminded him of the one he knew growing up. Below his feet, the ongoing stream of red and white lights blazed. Hundreds of drivers were dashing for a late sleep, or toward anticipated work. Who was the man he hit? Why didn't Stani see him crossing? Why had the man ignored him when Stani asked if he was OK? Stani thought about his corporate badge and the little blue apple on it, and he wondered what could have been his status in the company. What if he was one of the senior executives, or the main developer who had the next disruptive

idea saved in his head, and nowhere else? Now he could feel the pain over his right eye. The swelling was thick and the skin stretched tight.

He remembered what he said about dreams. He shouldn't have said that. Dreams were important—after all, they were the indivisible part of his personality—but he was at war with them. In contrast, words were tangible. Although he knew what to expect from them, he had a complicated relationship with them. Conflicts were everywhere: in spelling and in identifying their phonetic sounds. Still, they wouldn't betray their meaning, and they were constant, unlike his dreams. Fickle dreams. Gullible dreams. Fake dreams. One of his oldest dreams was about him sitting next to his father in a car, going down a road at night and facing an endless city. It was rather banal; in fact, it could well have been something he experienced, rather than dreamed. The unreal sentiment came from the sprawling city. He lived in the countryside; he never saw a city.

When he woke up this morning, his right eye was half closed. He dragged his lumbering body to the bathroom. All around his eye the swelling was purple with red dots. He felt groggy and nauseous. He didn't want to go to school, let alone to his work. What is he going to say to them—that he fell from his bike? He decided to call Vincent, who was a friend, although younger and immature. Nonetheless, he was someone Stani could trust.

“Man! Look at your face.” Vincent giggled. “Sorry, but it's bad. Does it hurt?”

Stani smiled but his face was tight and his mouth did not seem to move much. “It's not too bad, but I freaked out. The impact was so violent when our heads collided.”

“Really?”

“Yes, when I stood up and looked back at him, I saw red all over him. Then I saw the grocery scattered around and realized that it was only his tomato soup—the one in the transparent container from

WholeFoods.”

“What about the guy? Did he tell you anything?”

He looked at Vincent oddly. “No... He was lying on the ground, screaming, and he took his phone.” He paused and bit his lower lip. “It was unreal, the man took his phone and...” Stani mimicked the scene, his hand playing an imaginary phone. “He was like, *Siri, call the police.*”

Vincent burst into laughter. “What! Really, that’s crazy.”

“I know. I could not believe what I saw. First, the tomato soup, which reminded me of Daft Punk in the music video *Revolution*, and then this...”

Vincent, still laughing, cut him off. “Wait, what? What’s *Revolution*?”

“You have never seen their video clip? I forgot, it’s not from your generation. Yours started with *Discovery*, and this is from 97.”

Beginner, elementary, intermediate, and advanced were proficiency levels, and he was so eager to climb them all. In each classroom, the charts had different colours to represent each step. When his concentration started to yield, he would look at the graph and know that the road was long, but his commitment was tenacious. Outside the Montgomery station, right on Market Street, his school was in one of those tall brick buildings. Market Street was specific to its light. Beams would slice through parallel streets, chopping the skyscrapers’ shadows. The street had dozens of homeless roaming, muted by illness and sorrow. It was buzzing with activities of any sort. The pristine blue sky sealed: honks, and yells, engines and pedals, Asians and Caucasians all crammed together downtown. It was there that he learned a great deal of grammar and phrasal verbs, such as ‘rough seas ahead’.

After a fifteen-minute drive in Vincent’s rundown black VW golf, the two men were up at Hunter’s point. The heat was building; the

temperature was close to nineteen. The earth in the trail was dried up and turned into dust after each step. At the end of the path, there was a little wooden bench to rest on and contemplate the lookout. Vincent sat down, took out his phone, and texted. Stani walked closer to the edge where he could feel the breeze rising from the cliff. He could see the end of the Bay in the distance. At his feet lay the city that he despised, the unbearable city. He searched among trees, buildings, roads, and highways, for the location of the accident—the place that started the end.

FINDING YOUR FOOTING

Esther Saanum

My father was a carpenter, having learned the trade while serving in the RAF based in Gander, Newfoundland. He knew how important a footing was to a structure. "Every building needs a solid foundation." He was fond of this statement.

Dad liked everything strong, neat and reinforced: floors, walls, joists, beams, roofs. Doors had to hang straight and open cleanly without force, including cabinet doors. And no squeaks, no talking back. The lid of the wood box beside the cook stove was fitted with strong iron hinges. Dad contrived a hasp that attached to a wire on the wall to prevent the wood box lid from slamming down on the unsuspecting, most often his offspring, chivvied to fill said cavernous beast with firewood twice each day during the winter months.

Our family moved house frequently during the years we held together: possibly fifteen times over about 38 years. Dad and Mum raised two girls born during World War II. My brother and I were born many years later, nearly a generation apart. The transitions from one household to another were loud and complicated. But Dad had his rituals: banging the bed frames together while Mum prepared supper, hanging curtain rods and picture frames, sinking nails and screws into woodwork and walls with neat precision. He couldn't abide clutter or disorganization. We were put to work unpacking boxes and settling belongings and toys into dressers, closets and cabinets. The older sisters stayed put at Mum's side unpacking dishes and utensils and storing them in the just-cleaned kitchen cupboards. Those girls got to stay up late and did their rooms after our bedtime.

Dad had an awkward way of teasing us. He targeted our most self-conscious weaknesses and embarrassments. Mum would caution him not to be so mean. She said he was picked on while he was in

service. He still had his Norwegian accent and got called a 'Bo hunk'. Dad learned from other adults what my brother and I learned from the schoolyard: the playing field is uneven and everyone has to find their own footing, however rough and tumble and hurtful it may be.

Our father teased me a lot. He said it was to toughen me up. I guess it worked because I don't recall being particularly fussed about being called names at school. After that first day on the school bus when a big boy stole my ball and I kicked him, shamed him into giving it back, snot pouring down my enraged face, hauling great gobby sobs between the bad names I was calling him, the bus driver had to pull over and settle everyone down. He asked me where I'd learned that bad language. "My Dad," I told him proudly.

When my first child, a son, was born, my father was much taken with him. The little guy had a hard start, being premature, quite small, and ill. Seeing him in the incubator in Intensive Care at the hospital was a huge concern. Visitors were disconcerted, uncomfortable with the new baby's uncertain prognosis for survival. Dad looked at him, warming under the lamps overhead, nude except for a diaper. Spotting the child's oversize feet waving in the air, Dad declared, "He's going to be fine once he gets on those feet of his." I'd once been on the receiving end of my father's wit, in public, in front of a shoe clerk, when I'd been taken to buy shoes for basketball practice. "Just think how tall this girl would be if she hadn't turned out all feet." He'd all but shouted it. That's just how he was. Awkward.

I hadn't realized how hard life had been for our parents during their married life. During and after the war in the lean years of recovery and getting back on their feet, making ends meet had taken all their focus and energy. Looking back, they'd obviously still been on shaky ground when I and my brother came along.

My tiny wee son, of course, was challenged by playmates, his parents and teachers as he grew. He faced an unexpected challenge from

his baby sister, whom he had decided the new baby would be. He was adamant he didn't want a baby brother, because he would play with *his* toys. His baby sister developed into a very tough, decided little person, who always played with his toys. And he let her, beaming at her "vroom, vroom" as she pushed his Tonka toys along the floor. A particular delight for the big brother was to propel the little one in her stroller at top speed far ahead of me on walks, as she screamed "faster, faster!"

That premature boy today is 45 years old, standing 6 foot 4, wearing a size 14EEEE shoe, fulfilling my father's prophesy: "He'll be fine once he gets on those feet of his." There's *his* son now, a gentle giant, filling the same shoe size, not standing in his father's shadow, still finding his footing. It takes time.

The Builder

He took his toys, the little boy,
Beneath the cherry blossoms bright,
And spread their tin upon a spot
Worn smooth and bare and brown;
And all about that flattened place
The grass grew green, and maples
Piled their spring lace to the sky.

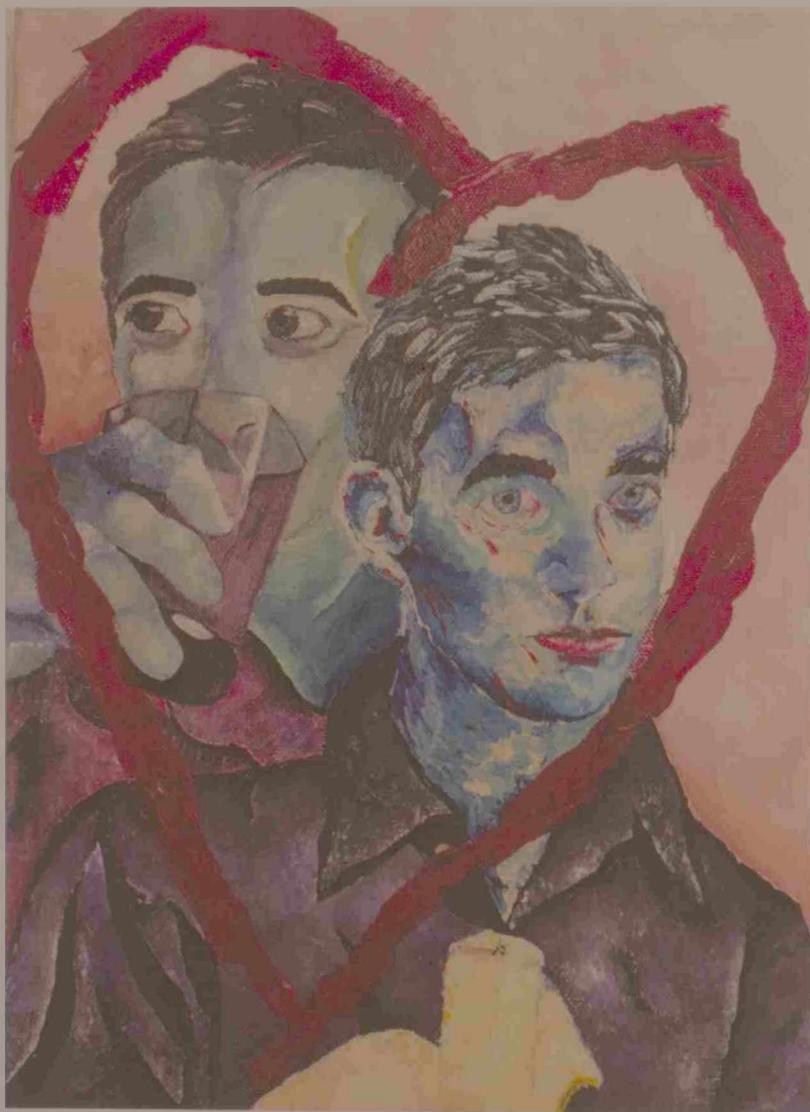
He took his plow, the little boy,
And scratched some roads that grew and traced
His grubby engineering skill
In spindly paths about that place,
So where the soil was brown and smooth
His child's imagination gouged
A web of roadways for his toys.

And on the roads he set his cars,
And on his rails his train he ran,
And there beneath the cherry blooms
He leaked a garden hose to make
A trickling stream to be his river,
And spanned a mighty bridge across
Of twigs that rang his ears of steel.

And all day long he ran his world,
In that bare spot ringed with grass,
And steered his cars, and switched his trains,
And loaded boats along the stream;
And thought himself God that made this place,
Though high above his ruling head
The pink blooms waved, and maples spread.

C. Hugh Doherty

Lent 1955



BROTHER

elsa Cattelan

EQUINOX

Heather Davis

On an equinox, day and night are of approximately equal duration all over the planet.

I don't know what it's like on your planet,
but mine shifts from light to darkness
in a second
skipping sunset

I'm happy
Then so tired
empty
How did I get all empty?
I want
I want
I don't know
I want tomorrow
I want to sleep
I want to dream
I want to slap my stupid neighbor
I want to be finished decluttering
I want to know where we will live
after we sell our house.
I want to know why
the light and dark
can't stay equal
all year long.
I want a computer screen
that isn't cracked

so I can see
what I'm writing.
Maybe it will please me.
That stupid dog having a fit.
There is always something.
That is what I will remember
about this neighbourhood.
Our house is listed now,
its mugshot online
even my daughter's room,
her personal details
now public.
How do I feel about that?
Kind of sad.
Maybe it's just a night to read a book.
I've been reading Archie comics
in the bath.

Hot nights with the door open,
the time I slept on the deck,
shoveling snow in the driveway,
burning food, opening windows
This house has been our skin
for four years.
Dirty, clean, sunburnt, growing wrinkles
I like lying on floors
when I need to feel grounded,
but the dog always comes
thinking I want to play



WINTER

Morgane Davis-Demers

HOME

Sky Princess

How can one describe home?

What is a home?

Is it an object in the material world?

Is it a place in the physical world?

Is it a being in the social world?

Is it a feeling in the emotional world?

Is it a state in the subconscious world?

Is it a quest in the spiritual world?

Hm.

I am not sure if it is acceptable to decide
which world matters and which one does not.

After all, time is an important factor to consider in this analysis.

In some way, home is a journey that never really ends.

A home can always be personified,
improved, rationalized and adjusted
to the reality you are in at the moment,
or the reality you plan to be in soon,
or the reality that you cannot let go of.

From a strictly logical point of view,
I think it would be fair to suggest that a home
is a general solution to the outside world.

Intuition tells me that this solution is more
a matter of magnitude than direction,
and that a home is probably a scalar quantity,
bigger than and non-equal to zero.

I would infer that the theorem of uniqueness
should apply since life is continuous,
and there always exists a solution
to the homogeneous equation.

I understand that the way the variables change through time
relies on my decisions and my capacity to trust the outside world.

I think that home exists in the inside world
as a solution to the outside world.

I believe the inside world is the only place you can never truly lose,
that it will always be there if you look for it,
and that is why home should reside in such a place.



Home Makus
Stuart J. McKelvie

Let us not forget
where Bishop's U. was builded
Abenakiland.

Nobel Bob pitied
the poor immigrant who wished
he would've stayed home.

But we newcomers
to Nikitotegwasis
find a sense of place

in Massawippi.
For Home is where the Heart is
- as in Ancient Times.

Photo by Scott Stoddard

LETTER TO PERCY SHELLEY

Yann Audin

"King of Kings am I, Ozymandias. If anyone
would know how great I am and where I lie, let
him surpass one of my works."

-Base of Young Memnon

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

-Percy Bysshe Shelley

London, 11th December
1817

My dear Shelley!

I wish to apologize for our last discussion, I now understand that I was inconsiderate. Please, let me try to make amends for what I first thought was over-enthusiasm, rather than the aggressive rant it became. I simply wish to explain the mental confusion I found myself in this last Sunday. I hope that you will forgive me, for I can barely forgive myself.

Please, understand that mere hours before our meeting, and my regrettable discourse, I had been troubled as never before. In my never-ceasing quest for inspiration, I had once again visited some ill-famed drinking-pit, the Black Anchor Inn. Saying so, I wish to add

1 From other correspondence, it seems that K. C. and Shelley had been close during their time at Oxford.

that I am not blaming my actions on ale (for I only had one that day), but rather on a conversation I had there with a stranger. I also don't want to over-justify my presence there: we already have discussed my less conventional sources for inspiration. For instance, the very room I was in was the birthplace of most of the characters you are familiar with in my poetic works. The Thrice-Dead-Woman and the boatless sailors are regulars at the bar, and within these walls I wrote all of "Ode to a Bottle" in a day².

As you pointed out so clearly during our last meeting, I find novelty (and thus inspiration) in such places only because I was never exposed to anything like it before a reaching adulthood. I guess this is the reason why I never failed to find something new at Black Anchor before. That being said, on that Sunday, my muse refused to come to me. I begged and prayed to Eurterpe³, and only Clío⁴ came. My head was filled with teachings of the past, as if I were back at boarding school, learning about the Empire, our colonies, our wars and our people.

Hence, on last Sunday, I found myself surrounded with promiscuity, strangeness, criminality, drunkenness, and oddity. I have never grown accustomed to the unsettling hotchpotch of Black Anchor. I was unsettled as always by the low-life crowd surrounding me: there were sailors, piper's wives, little criminals and foreigners⁵. Yet, I sat at my table facing two blank pages, the ink drying at the tip of my pen. The dark and smoke-filled room did not taint my soul with images, stories or rhymes. My mind remained a white space: fitting for a sol-

2 See K.C.'s complete work.

3 Muse of lyric poetry.

4 Muse of history.

5 Most scholars agree to the influence of French Orientalism on K.C.'s treatment of non-white subjects.

dier, but totally unacceptable for a poet.

I considered the problem at hand methodically, as I knew something wasn't right. If I could unravel it, there was no doubt it would teach me a lesson or light up some slumbering region of my mind. As I have spent years of my life writing stories about the place, most of the room was filled with them. I had woven a dense web of narratives over everyone around me. Maybe there was a mistake in its pattern - broken stories, plot holes or contradictory ideas. I set my mind to analysing this pattern to find any defect in the narratives I had super-imposed on the patrons, and which were entangled all together. It took me some time to realize that nothing was out of the place. I had bound in words a space that did not obey the same rules as we do, but without any inconsistency or incoherence.

As I failed to identify two narratives or characters that would contradict each other, I could not blame my previous stories for my white pages. My mind could put into words all that was meaningful in the room, but there ought to be some regions of darkness. Dark places where no words wanted to be attached. I sought for the shadows, to see beyond my web, but nothing was to be found. Nothing but dull dirt and some smoke, both so mundane I didn't care to write about them.

If my tales of otherness and amorality were untainted, and if nothing of importance had escaped my narratives, what force kept inspiration at bay? I focused on the dread that invaded me, the fear that I would never write again. This same thought had already crossed my mind many times in my father's house. Deduction drew me to a conclusion: I was close to something akin to the past I had fled. Something like boarding school or the residence of a military

man. Something strong enough it dominated the chaos of the Black Anchor Inn. Someone close to me had brought into this place the strength of a mighty Empire, and now, I could recognize him, for he was seated two paces away from me.

I may not be able to convey the effect that the sight of this man had on me. In the way he moved, I felt strength, his face had more harmony than a painting or statue and his posture would have made envious any general. I saw in him our troops, the colonies, our princes⁶, and the Church. He wasn't like a distorted version of our Empire, for he seemed purer. Kings and emperors would have bow before his bearing. It took me a long time to force myself to talk to him, but when I did, his voice felt like distant thunder.

Just like in tales and legends, he accepted to answer three questions for me, at the condition that I would tell his story to someone else who would then, tell the story again. I first asked him where his Imperial aura came from. Second, I asked why he had come to England. Lastly, I asked how his Empire had fallen.

To my first question, he answered with some North-African lore I was ignorant of. He told me I could see glimpses of it in Exodus⁷ and the Bibliotheca Historica⁸. He told me he came from a line that was old before Christ. They descended from the Pharaohs, "which once ruled an Empire very similar to yours". His family had been the ones that had covered in gold and marble the pyramids of Giza before it was plundered by legions of thieves. The peoples of Egypt, he told me, were not the same as his. They worshiped different gods than the ones

6 At this time, King George III was blind and mad, the 1811 Regency Act had George, Prince of Wales take on the Monarch's functions.

7 See Book of Exodus I and II.

8 Universal History in 40 volumes by Diodorus Siculus, see book I: Egypt.

he and his family had faith in, and they didn't have the will to build monuments like they did. He said his people are few now, they travel across their once mighty Empire to protect the few artifacts and sites that are left. Yet there are too few of them and the desert ceaselessly erodes away their monuments and cities.

As to why he had left his country, he told me that he makes a pilgrimage once a year to the site of an ancient capital. It is now abandoned to the desert near "Wose"⁹, and only a few remnants can be seen nearby the Necropolis. Three years ago, he found soldiers in red and beige lowering toward the Nile a broken statue with "toys of wood and ropes"¹⁰. The monument was a representation of his great-grandfather by one hundred generations.

As they took away the head, he waited for the thieves to go so that he could follow the relic. They left behind the base of the statue buried in the sand, too heavy for their machines. On it, he recognized the name of his ancestor, the pharaoh who had enslaved the Jews in Egypt. I told him the name of the Pharaoh from the Book of Exodus was unknown to any living man, but he sneered and told me the name. I could only believe him when he said with Holy certainty "Ramses, king of kings", and added he was called, in the Bibliotheca Historica, "Ozymandias"¹¹. The broken statue will soon reach our shores, and so he has travelled before it. His skin sets him apart from us, hence he lives with freed slaves and strangers. He waits to see the place where the statue will settle, so that he can go back to his continent.

9 According to recent study, Thebes was once named Waset or Wōse.

10 The same statue was almost stolen by Napoleon's men in 1798, but they fail due to a lack of engineering skills.

11 Greek name of Ramsesses II.

To my third and last question, he answered with only one word. One word and, and then he was gone. One word and I left the place. I had asked why his Empire had fallen, and he looked into my eyes when he said:

“Barbarians”

And he was gone and I, a barbarian, would never see him again. Barbarian, barbarian, you and I are barbarians. The King and the Princes, the Prime Minister and the generals, we are but barbarians.

The real Empire, his Empire is gone and gone and we play gods with our machines. We send armies of chimps in uniform, like my father, to steal what's left of humanity's only chance for greatness¹². I left the drinking-pit, to walk the streets of the most powerful city in the greatest Empire of our age. I couldn't help but be enveloped by an agitated meditation on permanency. I felt the length of a lifetime shrink to the point of mere seconds. A time-bridge closed the gap between eras long forgotten and the present day streets of London. It was a window from which I could see the many Empires that were, that are and that will be.

In my delirious contemplation, I could see the faces of everyone who had lived their Empire's golden age mingled into one visage. In that composite new face, there was one constant: a certainty of power and a promise of atemporality. A feeling we are familiar with in England today, like them, we think of ourselves as an absolute. Now tell me: In what way are we different from them? How is my feeling not exactly the same as the one they felt? Is iron more durable than stone?

¹² K.C.'s conflictual relation with the military would devolve further in his later poems: see his complete work.

Our wonders, just like theirs, will fade into obscurity. In a thousand thousand years, our Island will be nothing but rust, like sand in the wind.

Then I found myself walking toward the British Museum, where I knew I could find a sketch of the artifact. The forms of the statue matched the lines of his visage, I swear it on my life, they are the same. I cannot disbelieve what he told me for this is a proof of his lineage.

This is the mindset in which I found myself last Sunday. I lost my temper and my manners, I conducted myself like the barbarian I am, and for this I am deeply sorry. I now truly wish I hadn't compared my own little radicalities with your ideologies and your commitment to them¹³. I was wrong to compare the idea that art is fuelled by rebellions and otherness, and how my writing allows me to deal with issues of my own. Please, write to me, I can't bear the idea of losing you.

Your repentant friend,

K.C.

¹³ K.C. certainly refers to Shelley's essay *The Necessity of Atheism*, which caused his expulsion from Oxford in 1811.

ETERNAL SUNSET OF THE ANXIOUS MIND

Asha-Maria Bost

I am broken
slightly askew—
like a tie choking an Adam's apple
I need to flip the tie back
so it flaps—drooping
waiting to be pulled again.

All my bones creaking
like home during the storm
snapping—
like the stalk of the prom flower
that I kept for years
on my dresser.

Bam rap my knuckles on pine
the sound echoing through my ears
like my phalanges
inching inwards like a caterpillar
and extending like an exhale
to type these words.

Phalanges, pheasant, pharaohs
Sounds like someone got phlegm
stuck in their throat
trying to hurl it out
like a cat pukes its hairball.

I feel pregnant—

Bones, organs growing inside,
humans breaking out from the tailed fish
that marks the beginning embryo,
tiny eyes first then webs of skin
develop into slender fingers.

Disjointed joints, fake boobs
whales leaping over the streets
everyday images become distorted
inside the anxious mind—
red, pink, blue maybe a desert hue
merging mirage over the Sistine Chapel
to outline Jesus Christ and his disciples.

I deepen the cuts on my arm
Fissures of lines breaking
the first layer of skin.
Hacking methodically
one slice, two slice, four
skin is raw but the blood
is not enough to make it real.

It isn't real isn't it?

The lines look like cat scratches
from a bored tabby—
the cat arching in annoyance
when I twist each of its hairs in my hand
to see the mix of orange, white and black
that make up the cat's calico pattern.

Nothing is ever good enough
not the knife lines on skin
nor the grades written in red ink
nor the haze after six beers
nor the touch of my hand in the cat's fur
nor the words of comfort I give
to my friend six minutes before
the unfinished essay is due.

Anxiolytic, anxious, anxiety
these words churn up angst
shaking, thrashing, quaking
today's tests come to mind
and when I put my head on the pillow,
I see the questions
and my wrong answers.

VALUE VILLAGE

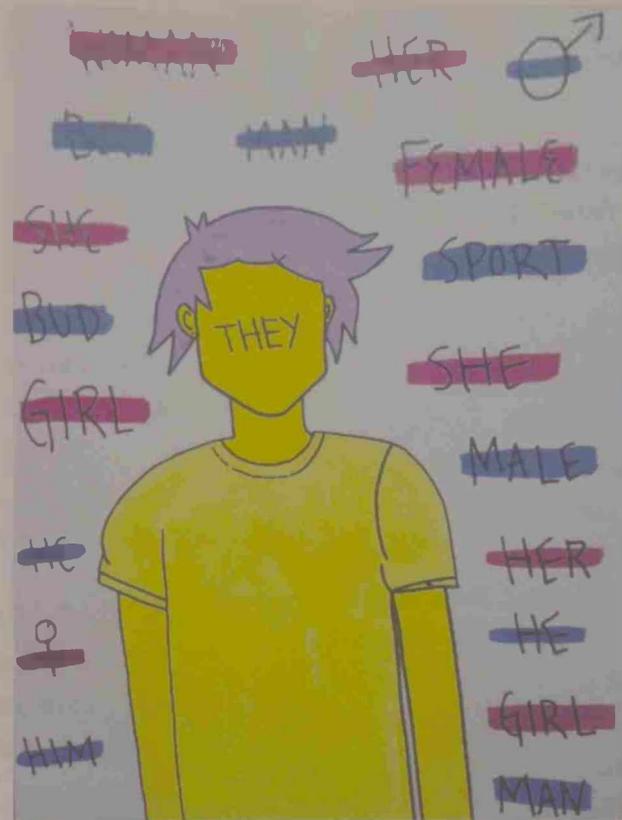
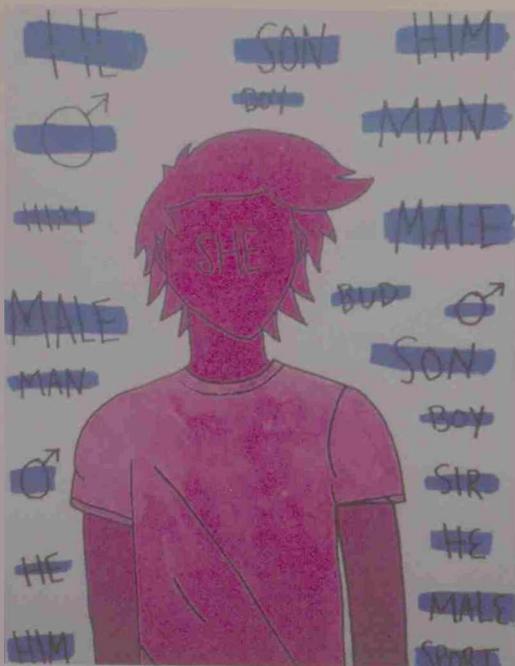
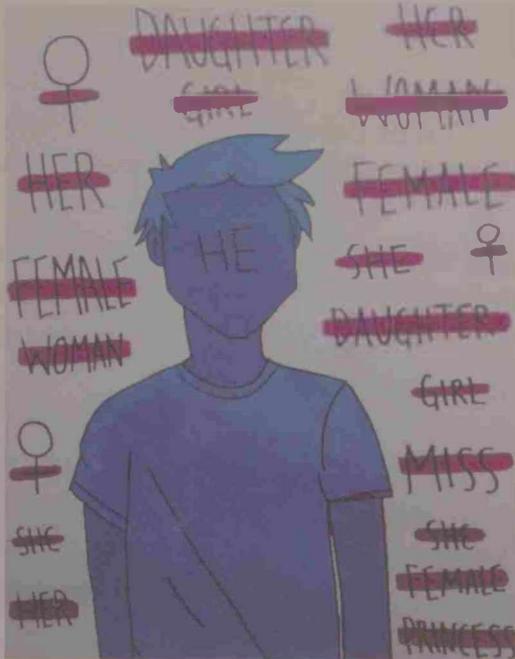
Helen Holmes

I've got six baskets in the car,
well, enough to fill the back

at the green door of the Value Village
he asks for all the bins,
so we pile the books in boxes
and he pulls out a pair of pants
to keep that don't fit
and a bag that's mine I can't let go
because it was expensive
and all this while the lady looks
like I didn't have it all together
so I whisper, as long as it doesn't return to my room!
and she agrees, fathers
and I think, my whole family

later, he brings a pile of excerpts
to a friend he thinks might "use" them
because he'd hate to just throw them out

it's polite
that they end in the trash after
we leave



PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Skyler Dean Davis

It is hard to break free of the labels and boxes society drowns us in. Escaping social norms is a beautiful thing. Finding home in yourself can be the biggest challenge one faces.

#destroygenderroles #notgenderidentity

VULCAN MEDITATION

Rosemin Nathoo

i.

I want to be still and steady, like
a fictional father-figure, or
a square-meter sheet of graphene --

strong enough
to hold others' mistakes,
to take lightly
my own failures, without
that shrill salty escape.

I'd like to be a home, the kind
that strangers are glad to enter, to be
a fortress, kind and
strong and
 silent,
 if need be,
and more than most of the time.

I'd like to be less human, to be
more structure than its
architect,
since emotions are exhausting and
the world needs a place
to put them.

ii.

I only miss the cats.

If I pull all the atmosphere deep
(like a photosynthetic satellite)
in a steady wisp down through my
arteries liver patellae et
 cetera
with every careful breath
to feed
this gasping autumn love affair
with pieces of myself,
this continuous air, this
aerated thread
stitching through disconnection in
meticulous convolution,

I hope I can be
together enough
to sit here alone
or to climb those really tall mountains
 over there,
 whose names I do not know,
 their peaks and their hearts full of snow,

together enough to walk anywhere,

since I always need a love affair,
since I've spent these years nurturing vanity,
since this province has both mirrors and trees

and I only miss the cats (!),

I think it may be working.

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE IT

Jeff Parent

We rabbits trooped up,
silver at our backs,
doubt waiting.
I knew them all.

Distance drove in red, steep,
a thousand metal lines
split the whole night apart.
This is men's work, all right.

They tore down,
broke simply,
we flat pieces of wood,
humming in the dark.

THE CUB

Angus Scott

Each wave rocked the boat as if to try and lull us to sleep. The salty air was accented by the stiff scent of gunpowder, sticking to the back your throat like autumn's first cold mornings. Whispered Hail Marys and intermittent dry heaving mixed with the sound of explosions and crackling gunfire on the beach ahead.

"Sounds like we sure are putting a dent in those fucking Japs," came a voice from behind me. I couldn't muster up the nerve to even give a nod. My hands were white knuckled around my rifle, clinging to my only hope of survival. The humming of a Jap zero suddenly came into earshot, followed quickly by the howling of its diving nose.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck... not us," I murmured as the howling filled my eardrums. The roar climaxed... and then, for a moment, there was silence.

In war you learn to notice these small moments. Moments of peace. The reality was, there was nothing peaceful about it. That was the reaper's minute. Silence was the sound of a man's last breath before passing on to the river below. For all I knew, I was already there. The grim scythe swung as the Jap zero crashed into the landing craft next to us. Shockwaves smashed against the walls of our craft, knocking me off balance into the man beside me. I quickly righted myself. Without pause, our landing craft continued, leaving the screams of drowning men to their fate in the depths below. One man stood up to look at the passing carnage. "Stop!... Stop the damn boat!" he shouted. "Our men are in the water. What are you do—" His body hit the floor with a thud. A lifeless thud. I rushed to his aid, flipping him over only to see that it was too late.

The metal casing of his helmet had peeled back into his skull where the round hit. Blood, still warm with life, flowed out of the

gaping hole and down his face. It met no resistance. Not a wrinkle or a bristle of facial hair stopped its path down his body. He couldn't have been much older than Jimmy... eighteen, maybe? I stopped myself. "He's gone," I shouted as I put the boy's body to rest. There was no time to worry about these things. Not in a moment like this. I shifted my focus back to the beach ahead. The sting of bullets against metal had begun to rattle the front of our craft. A sure sign that we were close. "Hail Mary, full of grace," I began, gripping my rifle tighter with each word. "Blessed art thou among wom—"

A voice suddenly croaked from below me, "Why did you let me die?"

My nerves were getting the better of me. I clasped my rifle tighter, closed my eyes and began again. "Hail Mary, full of—" I looked down. Cold fingers had coiled their way around my ankle. I traced the hand back up the arm to the bloodied face of its owner. The boy's eyes, once a fierce amber, were now black and motionless, staring right back up at me.

"Hal... why did you let me die?"

I screamed, kicking the hand off my ankle. The boy's body limply rolled across the now-empty carcass of the landing craft. Without thought, I fired a couple rounds into the corpse, each one nudging it into a more alienated position. Finger on the trigger, I cautiously approached the body. "Why would you do that to me, Hal?" whispered the corpse. I tried to pull the trigger and empty another round, but my finger wouldn't move. The head of the corpse began to twist around, crackling with each extra degree until it faced me again. The face was no longer the boy's, though. It was more familiar.

I shuddered as I realized, tears welling up in my eyes. "Jimmy... no, please... God no... I didn't realize!" I cried. I urged my body to kneel to his side, but I couldn't move. "Somebody help me! Somebody, please! Somebody fucking help me!"

The grey of the early morning had just begun to take colour as I awoke. Small streams of golden light flowed through the canopy and onto the jungle floor. Life sparked with the rise of the sun as howling monkeys swung above and tropical birds began to call for company. I rolled over in my hammock to check on Jimmy. He lay soundly asleep, his hammock swaying gently with each breath he took. I rolled onto my back and gazed at the world above. My eyes were weighted with sleep, but I forced them open. I had learned it was better that way. I looked down at my hands to find my fists still clenched. I peeled my fingers away from my palms. Each one left a bloody crevasse in its place, dug deeper and deeper throughout the night before. The night terrors had come in waves over the years, but nonetheless, I had grown used to their effects. I was doing better than most... At least, that's what I hoped.

A scuffle of movement rolled my rucksack away from the trunk of a tree on which I had laid it. The leather straps stretched as its contents fought for release from the canvas enclosure. I wiped my bloodied palms on my shirt and rose from my hammock. The jungle floor was moist with morning dew as it delicately embraced the soles of my feet. I strode toward the rucksack, treading carefully over the many occupants of the soil below me. With one swift movement, I pulled the bag up off the ground, suspending it with outstretched arms. The activity within promptly ceased, no doubt a result of the sudden elevation. Slowly, I lowered the bag back to the ground. I unclipped the buckles, lifted the flap, and peered down into darkness. A pair of amber eyes stared back at me. "Hey there little guy, how you doing?" I said softly, as I unscrewed the lid of my canteen. "Looks like you might be in need of a little water, what do you say?" I reached into my pack and wrapped my hands around the cub's body. He wriggled in my grip as I brought him into the light. "Now, now, I ain't gonna hurt you one bit. It's alright... we're just gonna have a little bit of water." My

words seemed to calm the cub, and his wriggling subsided. I poured my canteen into the dirt. Specks of dead leaves and tiny insects flowed away on divergent rivers as the main pool formed. I placed the cub at the edge of the watering hole and his tiny tongue went to work. "See? You ain't got nothing to worry about... Just a bit of water is all," I said as I stroked his fur. Beautiful animal, this one was. His coat, a brilliant orange with jagged black stripes, reminded me of the Louisiana sunset after a stormy day. Every stroke of his fur felt like running my hand through a barrel of freshly picked cotton, soothing my wounded palms.

"Well, ain't you just got the Midas touch," Jimmy called from his hammock.

"Nothing special 'bout the touch, just responds to a kind hand is all," I said, still gazing at the cub below.

Jimmy rolled himself out of his hammock, hitting the ground with youthful grace. He stretched his arms up to the sky, and let out a yawn. "Well, don't get too attached. Pretty soon you'll have to pay to see that beast. Better not try and pet him then. Doubt he'll repay your kind hand," Jimmy said smugly.

"Well, he ain't no beast at the moment, so don't be worrying yourself too much. Bad for the heart," I said with a wry smile. Jimmy laughed and came to pet the cub.

We sat in silence for a while, enjoying the warmth of the morning sun before we broke camp. The cub lounged against a nearby log, happy to be free of the rucksack for some time. A little while passed before Jimmy broke the silence. "You ain't been sleeping again." I remained still, not knowing how to respond. "I hear you crying out in the night, writhing in your hammock like the devil's got you in his grips. I call out to you, but you never respond. You know what they're calling it back home? Shell shocked."

I drew my gaze from the jungle floor and looked Jimmy in the eye.

"I know what they're calling it, Jimmy. I ain't shell shocked. Just a little bothered sometimes is all."

Jimmy kicked the dirt in front of him, his eyes intently watching me "When you first came back you were my hero. You still are my hero. Every day I wish that I could have fought. Can't help but feel like I missed the grand adventure."

I stood up and walked toward the cub, preparing to return him to his rucksack. "You ain't missed nothing, Jimmy," I said as I scooped up the wriggling ball of fur.

"Well, how should I know if I missed anything or not? You sure as hell ain't never said anything about it to me. You must have some stories. You didn't get all those medals for nothing."

I slid the cub back into the rucksack, making quick work of the straps to stem any attempt at escape. "There's no stories worth telling, Jimmy. Now let's get a move on. Day's wasting."

The air was almost as thick as the foliage that surrounded us. The sound of howling monkeys and dead leaves crunching underfoot paired with the sweltering heat. Sweat beaded down my forehead as I took another swing with the machete.

"How much damn longer have we got to go, Hal? I feel like we've been walking in this shit forever."

I didn't pause to acknowledge the complaint. I knew we were headed in the right direction but, to be completely honest, I wasn't sure how much longer we had to go. The jungle doesn't really let you think about distance. It's funny like that. The only thing you have time to pay any mind to is the next step ahead of you. If you're thinking about anything else, perhaps your gal back home, next thing you know you'll be tangling with a King Cobra and you'll never see that dame again. One foot in front of the other—that's my motto. It helps me keep my mind sound. Helps me make it home.

Hell, even I break my own rules sometimes. Just the thought of

home makes me smile. I can picture it now—Emily's probably sitting on the porch, book in one hand, glass of sweatin' sweet tea in the other. Soft wind blowing through the willows, excusing you for a moment from the August heat. The frogs singing in the pond as the day begins to fade into dusk. That big ol' belly of hers has probably grown plenty since I left, too. December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August. Should be coming any day now. Tried to avoid it my whole life, but somehow it crept up on me like a thief in the night.

"Hal, don't take me for no damn fool, I know you heard me. How much longer we got to go?"

I cut my stride and spun to face him. "Listen, Jimmy, I don't really have an answer for you. We been walking for a little bit now and I think we'll be walking for a little bit longer. Now could you quit your yapping or would you like to climb up this here tree and join your other loud-mouthed friends?"

Jimmy stumbled on his response "It's just that... You know... I been feeling a bit uneasy. Like something's following us. You ain't got the same inkling?"

"No Jimmy, I sure don't."

"Well... I been hearing noises, you know?"

"Jimmy, we're in the jungle. We been here plenty of times. You ain't hearing nothing that your mind ain't creating. Now, have some water, and we'll rest here for a minute." Jimmy nodded and strode over to a nearby log, scanning the surrounding jungle as he went.

I pulled the rucksack off my back. It seemed to get heavier with each passing day. Astounding how fast these things grew. I unclipped the straps, lifted the flap, and again peered down into the darkness. The same amber eyes peered right back up at me and the same wriggling body greeted my grip. When I placed him on the ground, he looked up at me expectantly. "Go on. Enjoy the jungle while you still

can. I promise you the New Orleans Zoo ain't gonna look like this," I said as I walked over to the trunk of the nearest tree. The pitter-patter of little paws followed me. I placed my back against the warped bark, slowly sliding down its textured skin until I was at rest on the jungle floor. The cub sat right in front of me, amber eyes intently staring back into mine. "Now, what is it I can do for you, little guy?" I said as I reached into my pocket. He had taken a liking to our beef jerky over the past days. I pulled out a piece and placed it in front of him. Eagerly, the cub batted at the jerky, swatting it left and right. Once sufficiently played with, the cub bent his neck down and pierced the coarse jerky with his tiny teeth. Then he began the long process of chewing. I looked over at Jimmy. He was still diligently scanning the foliage. His tension set me off-kilter a little bit. I couldn't help but begin to feel the same. The jungle had been rather quiet since we sat down to rest, almost as if we were being watched.

Jimmy's voice shot into my ear. "Did you see that? Hal! Did you see that?"

I lurched from my makeshift chair. "See what?" Jimmy had already stood up and grabbed his rifle before I saw it. It was a still day, but the ferns in front of us quivered as if being shaken by a strong wind. Something was moving through them. Quickly I rose to my feet, scooping up the cub as I ascended. The sounds of the jungle stopped. No monkeys howled, no insects hummed. A natural spotlight seemed to shine upon us. The quivering came closer and closer until it ceased. Like the beginning of a Broadway show, the ferns parted.

"Holy shit, Hal," Jimmy whispered.

A grand tigress emerged. The tigress did not growl. She did not bare her teeth. She silently stood, her amber eyes staring back into mine. For a moment, I was stricken in the grips of fear. But as I looked back into the tigress's eyes, I did not see a beast. I saw something oddly human. I saw a mother's sadness. The tigress paced into

the clearing and sat down in front of me. The cub, recognizing his kin, yearned to be released from my grip. Who was I to take away a Mother's child? I knelt, placing the cub on the jungle floor in front of me. I took in the feeling of his soft fur one last time before letting go. The cub scampered to his mother, nuzzling himself into her underside. I looked into the eyes of the tigress. Her amber eyes were glazed with tears as she welcomed back her precious cub. Silence gripped that moment. Then came two unmistakable cracks. "Jimmy, no!" I cried, but it was too late. The body of the tigress hit the ground with a thud. A lifeless thud. I ran to her side. The cub pawed at her body, still warm, but devoid of any life. Her mouth lay agape, tongue still drawn out from licking her baby's fur. Her face, though maimed by the entry wounds, still held the same expression of joy. It was her eyes that had changed. They no longer held the fierce amber which once glowed within. They were blackened with death.

"God damn... For a second there I didn't think we were ever gonna see the Louisiana sunshine again," Jimmy said. I couldn't look at him, I could feel my face burning with anger. Tears welled my eyes. I tried to hold them back, but my flood walls broke. They streamed down my face.

Jimmy hadn't seen me cry since we were kids. "Hal... what's wrong?"

I looked up at him. "There was no need for that!" I shouted, gripping the fur of the tigress.

"No need? No need! Hal, that beast was here to kill us! I just beat it to the punch." The cub began to whimper as he realized the fate of his mother. I picked him up and gently pressed his shaking body into my chest.

"You don't understand, Jimmy... The world ain't a place for mindless killing no more. It just ain't. You know, I saw a kid not much older than you lose his life right before my eyes. I see him nowadays

more than I see my own reflection. I live with that burden every day of my life, Jimmy. There's no death without burden, do you understand that?" Jimmy stared blankly at me. "I live knowing what it looks like to see the youthful sparkle fade from a young man's eye. And for what? Nothing. Nothing at all. You can't play God, Jimmy. It's not up to us. Life is not ours to meddle with anymore. It never has been... We may live, but we may not take."

I left the jungle that day and never went back. My son was born that August. Seven pounds, eight ounces. Emily says he looks just like me. As he's grown, it's become hard for me to disagree. Spitting image, most say. Every now and then we go for a long walk at sunset. We skip rocks on the pond as the fading sun glazes its surface. The air is full of the sounds of life. I cherish those moments—moments without the silence.

Bree flashed a closed lip smile, both arms stretched out on the counter. She tapped her foot profusely. Her hazel eyes were locked with his green.

"Can I get two cheeseburgers, two large fries and two root beers?"

Bree punched in his order on the cash register. "For here or to go?"

"To go."

"That comes to \$16.85."

He reached into his pocket for his wallet, then handed her a twenty-dollar bill and dropped eighty-five cents into her palm. The eighty-five cents slipped through her fingers and rolled on the floor behind the counter. Bree sighed and bent down to chase the roll-away coins.

"That explains why you're in such a pissy mood," he said with a mocking smile.

Bree stood up. "Yeah, that explains so much," she said as she closed the cash register. "Sorry, I only have quarters, dimes and nickels left." She dropped the change before his hand could catch it. The coins bounced on the floor before spinning like wheels going in all directions.

He blinked, then smiled. "That's okay," he said. "I don't need it."

"You're not gonna pick up your four dollars in change?"

"Nah. Besides, some bum might consider it his lucky night when he finds all this loose change on the ground."

"Oh, why, how considerate of you."

"Told you I was."

Bree rolled her eyes and walked over to bag the burgers and fries. She returned with the large brown paper bag and two root beers on a drink tray, then slid them across the counter.

"Thanks," he replied. He took the paper bag in one hand, the drink tray in the other, and made his way out the door.

"May I help the next customer over here?" Bree called out.

It was half past midnight when Bree swung open the door to leave Billy's Burgers. She could see her breath with every exhale. She pulled her collar past her neck and walked hurriedly towards the bus stop at the corner of the intersection. Shivering, she dug her hand into her purse to find she had only one knit green glove. She slipped it on, then rummaged through her purse for the other glove. She thought she felt the fuzziness of her other glove when her purse fell. Everything inside laid sprawled on the ground—her laptop, wallet, keys, phone, headphones, planner, notebook, blue pens, black pens, red pens, sticky notes, star stickers, black felt tip marker, chapstick, lipstick, water bottle, tap shoes, receipts, coffee stamp card, the other knit green glove, and her black binder—spread across the sidewalk. Bree moaned, whimpered, then stooped to the ground to collect her things. As she bent down, change fell from her coat pocket.

"Need some help?" It was a familiar voice, one she had heard earlier that night.

She looked up to find that it was that customer.

"Yeah, I'm that bum who found four dollars of change on the ground as I was cleaning up. Here, it's yours." Her bare hand trembled in the cold as she dropped the coins into his palm, only to miss by a millimetre. "Oops," gasped Bree. "I didn't mean to this time. I'm sorry."

"It's okay," he chuckled. "Maybe this time, some bum will actually find the loose change on the streets. Hey, is this a script?" he asked, flipping through a black binder.

"Yeah, it's just some play that I wrote for class."

"You go to Queen's?"

"Yeah."

"Me too. You should submit this to the plays festival next year."

"Don't think it's good enough."

"I'm sure the student directors wouldn't mind considering this—I wouldn't, and I'm a student director for theatrical productions."

"You are?"

"Yeah. I know, I don't look like it, do I?"

"I never said that. Anyways, I think I've got everything in my purse now. Thanks for helping," Bree said, standing up. "Sorry—what's your name?"

"Brendon," he said shaking her hand. "And you are?"

"The most pissy girl you'll ever meet." Brendon's face froze and his mouth gaped open. "I'm kidding. I'm Bree. Nice to meet you."

"Likewise."

"Well, I've got a bus to catch, so I gotta go. See you around?"

"See you around."

Bree ran towards the intersection between College and Maple Street, just in time to catch the bus. She sat down by the window and stared outside into the November night. A tall figure walked down College Street in the opposite direction. Bree wiped the foggy glass window. Sure enough, it was Brendon in his black leather jacket, carrying a binder under his arm—which was also black. Bree checked her purse for her black binder. It wasn't there. She jumped off the bus at the next stop and ran down College Street.

"Hey Brendon!" she called. "Wait up!"

THE NOVEL OF YOU

Gabrielle Lesage

Each day we tread the city streets
on a solitary journey
that can be quite literary
We progress like a book.
Our footsteps are like words,
their marks reminiscent of ink;
the trail composes a sentence
The ground is our paper,
its pages forming a novel.

A city is like a secluded forest
The narrow streets are dirt paths
The skyscrapers are towering trees
The hum of cars are mechanical chirps.
The people act like woodland creatures.
Each day is almost the same,
a day repeated over again
We immerse ourselves in its cold, calculating nature,
devouring the culture it gives us, absorbing all we can,
as if we can never get enough

But then we flip through our book
and wonder,
Are these our own words or that of another?
Do we walk for ourselves or for others?
We are constantly lectured, instructed, pressured
An intricate web of unfamiliar utterances
through this cacophonous whirlwind

We must find the lone leaf to bring us back,
back to the natural city of trees and birds.
Nature's melodic tune leading us the way
to an open path,
guiding us to our own passage.
We flip another page
and continue writing with our steps
This time creating our own story

The Living Song

I want to walk in lonely places

*As quiet as the day when it slips into the night;
To dream with fairy hands upon my brow,
To sleep with Love across my breast
And wake with Love remaining still.*

I want to breathe in aged olive groves

*Where air blows warm and cold upon my cheek;
Where twilight shadows painful sharpness,
Making the world a far, far place
Like the span of many thousand years.*

I want to stand above a sea

*And watch the white gulls at their play,
Dipping wings as does a soul which wanders free.
I want to walk the endless shore
Until the dying day has died with me.*

I want to walk in summer shining forests

*Where leaves blow warm to earth,
And make a magic-coloured carpet on the path;
Where time is but an aging power
Which sends new beauties to a darkened world.*

I want to fly above the world

*With wings as light and deft as air;
I want to breathe a song to charm the birds to sleep.
I want to wander long and far
Until my wandering reaches my song's end.*

— WILLIAM PROUTY

Lent 1953

COBALT BLUE*Chanelle Coates*

I thought Cobalt Blue's name didn't suit him the first time I heard it. It was the fall semester my sophomore year at Cableton University, during our first Intro to German class. The teacher stood in front of a shimmering whiteboard, pearly from its summer of disuse, and called out his name. When I turned, expecting to see a tall athletic boy with ash-blond hair, sapphire eyes, and a laugh that could boil my blood until my veins melted, he wasn't there. In his place was the actual Cobalt, who had a flat personality and looks so mediocre they got under my skin. Each lesson, I would try to figure out how the hell I was supposed to pronounce the words with umlauts, and I would always notice one more thing about him that annoyed me. He had these thin lips like my parents' that made me want to stab a piece of broken mirror into my thigh. Whenever the teacher asked him to read a passage from the textbook, he searched the page of his stupid loose-leaf version for ten seconds and then voiced a series of stum-bled, broken syllables.

Once, I saw that he got a 90 on his midterm. I wasn't fooled by it. The kid sucked at German and he would never come close to fluency. One day, my mood was alright so I tried my best to see something—even just one thing—that was special about him. I got up and pretended to go to the bathroom so that I could get a proper look at him, since he sat by the door. But there was truly nothing to see, not even slight bursts of green encircling his pupils. His eyes were the brown of dirt. Plus, he had more pimples on his chin than last week. Why couldn't he get it together?

I often ran across Cobalt when we weren't in class—it was almost like he was following me. Once, I was in the library, trying to satisfy myself with a chalky protein bar, biting into it and then pulling it

away from my face to look at the teeth marks I left in it. I was reading Margaret Atwood's "Death by Landscape" for my Canadian short story class when he dropped himself down on the couch facing mine. He didn't say hi, and the lack of a simple acknowledgment struck a match on my skin, his shyness making me simmer. He began eating his lunch, a dry sandwich, and I was mad to see him all alone instead of with friends in the dining hall where normal people ate. God, he was a loser.

Another time, I was walking across campus on my way to the swimming pool. Outside the shelter of the brick buildings, it was an absolute Iceland of late-November Quebec. I thought it might be a good idea to do a few laps before class so that I could concentrate more on the professor and less on the empty space. I read that endorphins can help. Wouldn't you know it, there was Cobalt in front of me on the slick footpath trying not to wipe out and looking like a turd in his no-name parka. He even wore a tuque with a big red pompom as if to prove that he was still a kid at heart. I was wearing one, too, but that's just because it was a snapping cold day, the kind that damages your hair. I didn't feel like seeing him any more than I had to, so I quickened my pace and passed him, bending my knees so I wouldn't slip and cut my face on the ice and rocks. As I did, I noticed his mitten-covered palm catch the winter sun and shine. Upon a second speedy inspection, I saw that he was holding a big diamond. I continued, thinking it was surely plastic but all the same wondering why he had it.

We went our own ways when we arrived at the changing rooms and, once we emerged from them, I wasn't particularly surprised to see that he had trailed me to the pool. I took some time to put on my swim cap, swirling my brown hair onto my head and slicking my bangs back with water. I sat on the edge of the pool, kicking my feet a little. Right before lowering my Wal-Mart goggles, I laid eyes

on Cobalt. He was slowly immersing himself into the pool. That was the problem with him: he couldn't be a badass and just jump in. He had to pretend he was concerned with choosing the right little paddle-board, dip in his toe, and wet the back of his neck. Then he got in halfway so that the water filled up almost all of his belly button. He was perpetually mediocre, a watercolor of someone else. Finally, *finally*, he went under and began swimming his laps. He was slow.

I started swimming, too, and I lasted longer than him. When he left, I took his lane because it was less crowded and there was an old man trying to share mine. I got halfway across the pool, to the spot where the floor plummeted to the deep end, and that's when I saw it: a fist-sized collection of shimmers. I stopped in the middle of my breaststroke and collected some air into my lungs. I swam down and, as I reached out, some synapses in my brain did their job and I knew what it was.

I left the pool area with it wrapped up in my cap, paranoid that the lifeguard would think I was stealing. I wasn't. He must have left it there on purpose. Who simply forgets a big gem, fake or not, at the bottom of such waters? And if he was dense enough to leave it, then too bad. It was mine now.

That night, when I got back home, I had no appetite. My parents were used to it, so they didn't press for me to eat. They were sitting at the table and my mom said "I've got some lasagna, Lany," in a tentative tone. I responded by shaking my head. "Okay," she said, standing up to walk softly across the floor and hug me. I let her, but my own arms remained limp. My mom tried and tried and tried, and my Dad did, too, but his face was less of a fortress than hers and I could tell he was nearly as miserable as me.

"Night."

"Try to get some homework done and a good night of sleep if you can, Love."

"*Als ob.*"

Mom smiled, probably thinking I was saying something witty in German like "of course" or maybe even "love you". It meant "as if". I sometimes wondered if I would ever sleep eight straight hours again.

I had a shower and the searing hot water felt good on my aching arms. The diamond was with me. I couldn't stop looking at it. After drying off, I went into my brother Landon's empty room. I tucked the diamond beneath his covers, aching to speak with him and for him to ruffle his fingers through my hair. Sometime in the night, I fell asleep on his carpet. My cheek was red and imprinted when I woke up.

A week after the diamond incident, I couldn't help but notice Cobalt leaving German class with a real-big chunk of sticky-notes that were bright like highlighters. His bag was on his back, so why wasn't the block in it? He trekked the snowy paths, not yet scraped off by campus maintenance, and ended up at the library. He went into the shelves and I decided maybe I should pick up a book. I noticed that the top note already had writing on it. When he peeled it off, the second one did too. Then he stuck all his notes into books. He didn't seem to follow a pattern. He picked them up randomly; I caught the title of one called "Projection and Re-collection". He pressed the squares of color onto the insides and smoothed them out in a diagonal motion with a wild look of pleasure in his eyes. I really didn't get the kid.

When he finally left, I hurried to find all the books I remembered and I read the messages inside. They were "kind notes" and "inspirational quotes". "Have a nice day," "Happy Reading!" or "When it's dark, look for stars". Why was he doing this? To brighten other people's days? Is that why he left the diamond? For someone to come across and lapse into a short state of wonder? I didn't understand Cobalt, and I wanted him to remain non-complex in my mind. If I stopped discovering his weird little ventures, I could stick to hating

him and move on with my life.

It was lucky for him that I was on the bridge, that starless night around the end of the semester, contemplating the surface of ice below it. Otherwise, he certainly would have jumped. It was nearly midnight on a Sunday, so no one was out. Except for Cobalt. I saw his figure approach the bridge, travelling by the sidewalk and made visible by the streetlamps. The lights were recently replaced and more fluorescent than the last ones—like new cars on the highway.

He stood beside me, saying nothing. His skin looked softer and more fragile in the night. Something came over me and, though liking him was no easy thing to do, I became positive that I did not want him to die.

"Look, Cobalt, you can't jump. Maybe your days are a segment of self-hate, or you miss someone so badly it feels like your stomach is eating your throat, but you can't. Do you wish you lived in some better town? Do you feel embarrassed that you have no friends? That maybe you drift through your classes with no end goal in mind?" My speech grew more urgent and I started to cry for him. "Why are you so sad? You can't leave now, you can't! Your parents can't afford to lose you!" He was looking at me and I was looking at the sky, too embarrassed to make eye contact anymore. I willed my shaking body into immobility, but it wouldn't obey.

I had been wrong before; there was a star. One star.

"I'll walk you home," he said, probably grateful that I stopped him from doing it.

For an instant, when he wasn't looking, I fished the diamond from my pocket and placed it on the wide railing. It was not a windy night, and maybe someone else would find it in the morning.

MY LITTLE SECRET

Gabrielle Lesage

The autumn leaves crunch under my feet
and a gentle wind welcomes me back
to my lonely gazebo.
I take quiet steps.
The creaking wood speaks to me
as I stand at its center.
The white columns encircle me,
constricting me to one place,
in a cage that gives me freedom.
I take a seat on the cold wooden bench.
Countless memories warm my heart:
the time I cried at a failing mark,
a sneaky kiss before midnight,
a messy picnic on a hot summer's day.
I run my hand along the banister;
the chipped wood is rough
and the faint smell of fresh paint still lingers.
A refreshing breeze grazes my shoulders,
urging me to remember.
I smile and rise from my seat,
looking back to where I just was,
different then, different now,
a changed person.
I reminisce about my past
and walk towards my future.

PARC MONT-ROYAL

Becky Blackburn

*This is where I used to play, she says
I used to want to be her
she points at the stone angel that stands
in the center of the park.*

*(it is a part of me, this park;
it fills me with the sound of hearts beating)*

I think to myself, you are that angel

*no one comes closer
to being that angel
than my mother.*

Montreal East

*Monday spread threadbare wash
from a third balcony to freedom down slanting steps
extended uncomfortably over an unshingled roof*

*where her plodding August feet fell flatly
gave rasps to the air with her third-storey voice
rebuking these gutter-soiled children*

*toiling with a one-armed toy
darting eager eyes that flashed hard
against the question of white face, a mother turned*

*a rose-lipped maiden, strolling Raoul le duc
to greet a lover heavy-eyed
this man with ditch-mud reeking*

*his swollen body at day's unrepentent end
holding the guttering candle
in his swelling unlit fingers, finding music*

*in this rocking chair (string for spokes)
rolling over an ocean of night jokes, slapping
the child-on-knee, watching the rose-lipped maiden*

*perched on cushion-padded sill
magnet his iron eyes as the large red rusty nail
sun disintegrating the sky, slinks under the tallest leaning house*

*this vacant lot with hard-pressed sand
where an old foundation, refracting sun, stretches
her drying skin tight.*

B. S. K.

Lent 1954

Bhinduka Yokalingham

WHEN I RETURN HOME,

everything appears the same.

My sister and I continue to watch Steve the tree

rise from a tiny seedling into a great sapling,

the pinkish-rose blossoms turn white again,

the lavender seeds in the sooty marble pot refuse to grow,

the broken washing line remains disconnected,

hanging by the downward pipe,

our unwanted, grubby oven still sits by the painted gate,

the noisy neighbours still pile their bags of

non-recycled rubbish in our bins,

we still lift the grimy lid with our hands because

no one has bothered to fix the bin pedal,

the shelved children's books carry a fine layer of dusty fluff,

our shrine is peopled with laminated images of

Hindu gods and goddesses,

the statues of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus sleeping in his manger

scatter on the shelf in a holy union,

the filing cabinet is cluttered with giggling mini-Buddhas,

one of which is still fanning himself,

the burning incense roams the air on a random Friday morning,

the fruity scent of the berry candle strikes me with

a silent wander of the mind,

the clock with the scribbled background Mum drew still

tick tock tick tock,

the old Dell computer whirrs and sighs in exasperation,

the drum of the washing machine thunders and screeches

as the clothes dance,

the burnt brown triangle on the ironing board stands out from the

faded, patterned cover,

chattering voices echo through thin walls and pierce my dreams,
the maroon-bricked walls peel with their crackling, aged paint,
that hassling wasp manages to break into our home again.

I realise that nothing has changed.

But what is different

is

me.

INSIDE AFTER

Jeff Parent

We could write beautiful things about
the middle of the night in our place
after the collapse, but it's so dark;
dark like the inside of a drawer with
a false bottom where one
might conceivably keep their
homemade pornography or
a bottle of migraine pills or
a gun-shaped hole in space
that swallows meaning whole
or words,
unpoetical words, pragmatical words,
words kept on hand for
unrealized mythic potential
peristaltic wormhole
ballpoint sunscreen
ontological theropod
to name a few
we haven't burned for hope.
So what now, now what, so
no VCR glare,
no refrigerator moan,
the answering machine resists interrogation
for want of a voice, then,
Shit, Jackie says, hey.
Hey there's a deer in the yard.
(We were expecting rats perfectly honest.)
A deer looking in, looking

for a meal, looking
to lay blame because
whose idea were industrial parks anyway?
Anyhow, now its back-end shows
that bolide flare so let's
we'd better
here just let's
climb into this drawer,
pull the room in behind us,
and go write beautiful someplace else.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

Asha-Maria Bost

I am from
the clang of the metal
as the skates trip over
the bumps in the pebbled ice.

I am from
frozen hair on frozen skin,
the winter dewdrops
of sweat freezing as they fall.

I am from
the dance of the shedding trees
whose leaves red and cracked in brown veins
snap under foot.

I am from
the burn of the Diwali sparkler
as the flame inches
closer to my fingertips.

I am from
the kingdom of the elephants
the land of the charmers
who dull the fangs of poison snakes.

I am from
sweat dripping, bathing the walls,
sheets, concrete, and bodies
and the freedom of the monsoon.

I am from
the Amsterdam cobblestone echoing

with the sound of bicycles
that travel faster than cars.

I am from
the stirring pot of tulips,
pepper, cranberries and aging grapes
blending into the perfect cheese.

I am from
a city where three countries meet
where war divided family along arbitrary lines
on the town's main street.

I am from
two haploid sets of DNA
combining and replicating into new cells,
tissues, organs, systems

I am from
the colonized and the colonizer
and am now a settler
on lands that were never my family's to take.

I am from
my mother hiding in the cupboard
from the panic of hearing plates
slamming against the walls,
wondering if Grandma is okay.

But they still ask: Where are you from?
I sigh because the truth can't be contained in a sentence
for I am a patchwork of locations, experiences
sewn into my DNA.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Caleigh A. Cross graduated from Bishop's University in 2014 with a degree in Cultural and Media Studies, with a minor in Creative Writing and Journalism. She's a reporter for the Stowe Reporter in Vermont, and lives in Stowe with her partner, six chickens and a blind dog. She writes poetry on Instagram under the handle @ginandton-ink.

Helen Holmes continues to live the student tradition of moving houses every year, and uses this discontinuity as inspiration. One day, she aspires to live in a house where pet geckos are allowed.

Marguerite Dakin is a Vermonter and lover of tea, cows, muddy roads, and all things purple.

Frank Willdig is a long-time resident of the Townships who enjoys writing poetry and quiet reflection.

Nina Dbouk is an American-Lebanese writer, born and raised in France, who spends much of her time reading, dreaming of pastries, and trying to convince people they should be feminists. Her writing strives to reflect the changing times, evolving mentalities, and daring people who bring color to the world.

Emily Liatsis is a graduating Film and Media Studies student. She has explored many artistic avenues throughout her life. She is an eccentric part of the student body who believes in self expression being the norm!

Haydn Juby is a fourth year Bishops University student in the process of completing a double major in Secondary Education and English. When he is not teaching, he spends his time writing and fly fishing.

Hailing from Gatineau, Quebec, **Virginia Larose** spends much of her time reading books, over-analyzing movies, acting in theatre, acting up, baking, and trying as hard as she can to be as different from her story's character as possible.

D. Jacob Gerlofs is a third year student at Bishop's University majoring in Neuroscience and Psychology and minoring in Drama Studies. Jacob also pursues photography professionally and artistically; he likes to integrate his diverse fields of interest as much as possible. In

his piece, Jacob explores the human connection in a disorienting and vastly empty environment through the lens of his camera.

Skyler Dean Davis spends most of their time being bossed around by their dog and eating pancakes.

Emilie Hackett is a third year English Honours student with a concentration in Literature. Born and raised in Lennoxville, she's a small town dreamer who spends most of her free-time writing anything, anywhere. Although she will be graduating this year, Bishop's will always have her heart!

elsa Cattelan is a biochem major by day, and tries her hand at art by night. She takes great joy in writing, watching cartoons with her cat, painting with podcasts on, and reading all forms of fiction.

Samantha Maliszewski is a passionate secondary teacher and a lover of crossword puzzles, rainy days, Walt Whitman, and her beloved football, Tristan. She tries to change the world by being compassionate, empathetic, and creative, while attempting to teach the people around her to do the same.

Becky Blackburn is a creative writer who has moved her way along from journal writing as a young girl to short story prose and, more recently, is trying her hand at poetry. She recently completed a year-long poetry project, where she shared a poem every day of the year on social media from January 1st 2017 to January 1st 2018. The Mitre is her first literary publication.

Darcie Talbott is a young woman finding her footing through a series of mistakes, challenges and occasional successes. Split between deep Canadian and American roots, she has begun finding solace through writing when merely screaming aloud fails her.

Ryan Wickware is a graduating Film and Media Studies student who has been exploring his passion for writing all his life. He is a kind and reserved individual who loves his school and lending a helping hand.

Originally from British Columbia, **Keenan Wilcox** is a professional musician, published author, and literature major studying poetry and religion at Bishop's University. He loves to write songs, poems, and prose, and has a deep interest in philosophy, political science, and

pedagogy. Keenan hopes to complete his masters in literature, and then doctorate, while continuing to produce and perform his music for audiences across Canada.

Katharine Mussellam is a fourth-year English student at Bishop's who loves to explore the variety of ways that art portrays the diversity of experiences. She believes in art's power to reveal and express truths in unique ways.

Maree Collie: She came from Australia; she saw Canada from the East Coast to the West Coast; and she left with new friendships, a love of theatre, and a fear of that cold white stuff. And... she saw a moose.

Anne Hill is in her 90th year and lives in North Hatley, near her daughter, Mary. She spends her time writing, reading, hooking (rugs), and drawing.

After years lost in romantic fantasies, **Kuna Zero** now works to finish his first novel and put his words to more use than fiction.

A third-year Honours student in English Literature from Bishop's University, **Sophie Luu's** first publication, a poem titled, "Oakwood Collegiate Institute" appeared in the 2017 edition of *The Mitre*. A believer in the make-believe, a hoper of far-fetched hopes and a dreamer of improbable dreams, she hopes to pursue screenwriting in TV and film.

Janan Chan was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada at the age of seven with his smart, beautiful momma; most of everything he knows is because of her, because she taught him how to be himself and to use critical analysis to always ask why? He has been writing since he was eleven, drawing since he can remember, and hopes to always stay creative.

Adrien Pasche is fascinated with words, and how they constantly shaped our understanding of our surrounding environment and define our experience in life.

Esther Saanum, an aspiring writer, wife, grandmother to four, dog lover and trainer, a 'people person', volunteers in the community

expanding extended family and acquiring new skills.

Heather Davis teaches children's literature and creative writing at Bishop's. She believes that writing is a social act and that art is energy. She also believes it's always a good time to bake a cake.

Sky Princess is a warrior who empowers herself through technology and education. She is a princess who rules her kingdom with the power of love and the warmth of the sun.

Emigrating from Scotland in 1969 and having studied at McGill, **Stuart McKelvie** joined the Bishop's psychology department in 1972. He has enjoyed being part of the local and academic communities here in the Townships.

Born of a Français and a Québécoise, **Yann Audin** is fascinated with unreliable narrators, inner monologues and meta-narratives. As both a Physics master student and an English major, he is naturally drawn towards science-fiction, but also to the Romantic poets and contemporary authors.

Sometimes **Asha-Maria Bost** forgets how old they are but they never forget the chills they get when a chord resolves. Asha's lived 22 years of writing, singing, crying, textbook reading and laughing wishing the last note of their song will play on forever.

Angus Scott is a 22-year-old author from Oakville, Ontario. What he will do with his life is still very much undecided. Through the uncertainties, he is confident that his passion for creation and creativity will be his compass on the adventure that is life.

Gabrielle Lesage is a graduating student who loves to explore the world around her. When she is not reading the latest book that has caught her interest, she is trying to find the next adventure around the corner.

Chanelle Coates loves to write stories, read, travel, ride her bike and listen to music while driving.

Bhinduka Yokalingham is a British exchange student studying English, Classical Studies, Fine Art, and Drama at BU. She is currently the presenter of her own show International Music on BU's Toast Ra-

dio and co-hosts The Lunchtime Disney Show (previously known as The 2 O'clock Disney Show). She has an obsessive newfound love for Timbits, Iced Capps, and Quebec City's maple syrup taffy on snow.

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THE TEAM

Rosemin Nathoo: Head Editor

can't sit still.

really likes plants, plant people, and sometimes chipmunks.

daydreams about the Arctic a lot.



Giulia Maggio-Tremblay: Prose Editor

A voice from the margins.



Jeff Parent: Mascot

Jeff is made of outer space and dubious nostalgia but aren't we all.



*"You're like... a dandelion!
You can fit in anywhere."*

*Sarah Shakil,
on the road someplace*

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY
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