

REIGNS AND RUINS

127TH EDITION

2020

THE MITRE
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REIGNS AND RUINS

127th ed.

Eds. Ocean Francoeur and François Gagné

Bishop's University

2020



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Mitre has been a staple of Bishop's University since 1893 and has been manufactured on the traditional and unceded territory of the Abenaki people and the Wabenaki confederacy. Only in 2017 have we begun to acknowledge this fact.

The Mitre's purpose has always been to reflect and preserve the voices of each generation, and yet, for so many years the oppression from which we directly benefit has been left unspoken. Accountability is only a small step in the urgent and necessary path to reconciliation. Acknowledgement is never enough.

In publishing a work titled *Reigns and Ruins*, it would be impossible to ignore the ongoing history of colonization underlying the land we occupy. Within these pages and beyond, we urge you to reflect on the violence that has led us to occupy this space, and to consider what our role is moving forward.





DEDICATION

Many thanks to the SRC whose contributions allow *The Mitre* to be a tradition that spans decades.

Thank you to Dr. Brophy and past editors Loch and Sally who acted as our guides in the making of *Reigns and Ruins*.

Immense gratitude to Reverend John Burkhart, without whose generosity *The Mitre* would not be possible.

And last but certainly not least, thank you to all of our wonderful contributors who have given voice to this edition.

Thank you,
your editors.





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PREFACE

For the 127th edition of *The Mitre*, we were interested in the concept of progress: what it looks like, how it affects us, and how it shapes the world around us. Most importantly, we wanted to explore the space of transition where one decides what is worth preserving and what must be let go.

Our goal was to put forth the voices of our community. Reigns and Ruins, as you will discover in these pages, are defined differently in every piece, but each one showcases the beauty of the non-linear, often messy, and sometimes painful path from one to the other.

These narratives teach us that those paths are never ending. We constantly find ourselves in these liminal spaces, building and tearing down again, but never truly losing anything. We are always growing and creating, and we hope that the reader will reflect on everything they have left behind and everything they are moving towards.

We are proud to have contributed to the ongoing legacy of *The Mitre*, and we hope you will enjoy reading Reigns and Ruins as much as we enjoyed making it.

Sincerely, the editors
Ocean Francoeur & François Gagné







CHAPTER I

LEGACY

inheritance, bequest, consequence, effect, outcome





A 'BHANRIGH FALAMH

by Molly Stuart

She always knit with wool.

Never with acrylic, and with cotton yarn only once – “Malcolm, *never* ask me to knit with cotton again.”

So I will knit with wool yarn.

Wool is better anyway. It's easier to work with, lasts a long time – “it keeps the cold from getting into your bones” – and it's better for the environment, in the long run.

So I must use wool yarn.

It's going to be a holiday sweater, like she made for Dad and Andy. I love those sweaters. She would be impressed with how far I've come since she taught me.

Would she? She taught me to knit years ago.

But I did make her that scarf. And wool yarn can be expensive. It must be wool yarn. The pattern is simple, but hers tended to be too. This is a sweater for her, as much as anyone else.

What's going to happen now?

I must remember her. When I walk in that forest, I must think of her. When I knit, it will be with her in mind. The things we did together need to stay.

Proper Etiquette. Canadian birds. Chocolate chip cookies *that never quite taste like hers* – the chickadees and loons that always decorated the walls.

I must keep her with me somehow. She can't be gone, no, because no one is really gone while their name is still spoken, while the stone of their life still makes ripples in the pond.

I will make it ripple.



I will knit a patterned sweater with wool yarn.
The tartan, the cute British things she always said – *you picked those up from Dad.*
What do you remember about her?

I remember lots of things! The jigsaw puzzles, and the Winnie-the-Pooh VHS tapes, and Christmases that lasted forever, and... and
And running around outside the house (*Taigh na Bruagh*) with Clare and Catie, pretending we were princesses and not paying any attention at all.
And now she's gone.

The things I have left, that I remember from *her* and not just what I picked up from Dad, I must keep them. Firm and real in my mind. They cannot waver. I can't lose these last few things.

And so, I knit. I knit in a Christmas-sweater pattern, with teal and ivory yarn that is one hundred percent wool – I checked – because that's exactly how she made them.

I've got some yellow left. I'll stitch her name near the bottom, so people know it's hers.

Grandma always knit with wool.



HETEROPTERA

by Kyle McKinnon

Where am I now ? Not at the waterside;
Not there where wood swallowed us whole, where we
Were two to witness the needled feet stand
So fanned 'cross this creek's skin. Dimples only
Did this insect leave, and the rest of him
Is reformed and forgotten — nail and bone
Of next in line to surfeit his own share;
By now the bug is not but grime besmeared
Across the heel that smooths the stones, I guess.
O, how I miss that creature; silent friend,
It's been too long. I could have snatched my jar
And poked holes for you to breathe, or else I'd
Have pressed you flat between the shield and page,
Given you a Latin name and left you
There, crooked in the dust — yes, I could have.
But I have not, and I have hold of what
On what threshold, and of whom,
Of you ? Have you held here where I left you to sink,
Or have you sunk ? Is that you I see there ?
There are only eyes. In their eyes, the black;
The silt I stuck my hands in, the thousand
Thousand bugs heaped dead upon thousands more,
All pressed together, pulped between the rings
That mark the prowess of the trunk stretched tall;
That shadowed elixir bleeds from the bark
Of it all and now I tap it, boil
It down and sell the sinister syrup
As cheaply as I need to to skirt home
Before my phone starts ringing, before I
Succumb again to intoxicated
Dreaming of the creek once more; the bridge too,
The tree fell across the river further
Back into the bush, and fell once again
Beneath the black flow before I e'er crossed.
Left am I here, but punching out the dream
Into hieroglyphs and reliefs, all chipped
Apart to break by blade and brush to come,
To follow. Here I am — my fingers to
The face that is my own creation; stone
Reduced to grain buried deep in the pores;
Friction tickles me back, obfuscates me
Where my shadow spreads his claws 'cross the swell
And reaches for my sweating, calloused palm.
Here, I pour o'er the brook to turn the wheel
Back 'round where it came from, once more. Once more.





EDGES AND RITUALS

by Theresa Graham





WITCHES

by Angela Leuck

Finally, I'm tackling the old chair in the bedroom.
I've removed its many layers of faded fabric
and replaced the dusty straw with foam.
Now, with a heavy-duty stapler in one hand
and a bolt of floral fabric in the other,
I'm ready to transform it into something
fashionable and chic.

My distant relation, Maria Pellizzari,
in 17th century Venice, also had a penchant
for upholstery.
She's famous for the small gilt chair she built
and expertly covered in dark red damask.
Her claim to see the infant Jesus perched there
and on occasion His mother, too,
caused rumblings in that religiously uptight time.

A busybody neighbour, seconded by Maria's own son,
came forward and denounced her as a sorceress.
Trembling, Maria was brought before Venice's notorious
Grand Inquisitor, who examined her at length.
Then, after careful deliberation he shrugged
and, according to court records, announced:
She's no witch. Just crazy!
He sent her back home to Bassano with a warning
not to do any more upholstering.

One last staple and *voilà*, my own chair is done.
In my eyes at least, it's a thing of beauty.
Gathering up my tools and scraps of material, old and new,
I admire my handiwork a last time, then conclude I've done
enough sorcery for one day.



PHILA'S KITCHEN

by Linnie McGuire

When I recall it in memory,
my Grandmother's kitchen walls
unfurl like daffodils
planted in the soft musk
of the water stained basement

Irises on old plush towels
line the sink basin
as though to be watered,
A mess of flour coats the linoleum countertop,
The sun is an antique wall oven with French doors
awaiting the spring of homemade bread dough

Vintage cookbooks piled, overturned,
obscured behind the mountain range of mechanics
emerging from the centerfold:
my Grandfather's playthings
strewn about

Phone numbers, children's artwork, photographs
ine the walls of each moment
marking the leisurely stroll of time
as it passes through the back door
and out toward the garden

The petals refold in decades
as the back door creaks closed:
flower to bud,
bud to sprout,
sprout to seed.



UMAR CONSIDERS THE SOUK IN ALEXANDRIA, A.D. 642

by Frank Willdig

“Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things.” — Cicero

Upon these musty and dark wastes, a new world is made.
Here is a marketplace with a vibrant humanity
where the meat monger is the first to greet you
and the hawkers shout out their wares.
Where passersby sip tea and socialize
while speakers speak in the public square.
The cacophony of life is everywhere.

The air is full of wondrous excitement.
The smells of the bazaar complement its sights and sounds.
People rush to and fro in their quotidian routines
in the clamour and hustle of life. They can be heard
chattering happily like the cranes along the Shatt al-Arab.
Yes, a new world has been built over the impotent dead and the dust,
and nowhere is there a trace of what once was.

The walls have been stripped to welcome the light;
the corridors and cubbyholes have fallen into disuse,
stripped of their art, their collections, their name
and their memory, the loss of which
forever condemns us to childhood.
Gone are the labyrinths and the sense of discovery
that each scholar made when everything was in its place.

Here was the memory of the world in sacred contemplation.
The candle that lit those dark spaces, recording everything
from Adam’s first breath, through Sumer, Babylon,
to the Persians, Greeks and Romans.
The gamut of human experience,
from the trivial to the loftiest endeavors and dreams,
the voice of the past, the summation of all, inscribed.

Here were the conversations with the ghosts who taught
all that the world was and all that it may be.
All disappeared — not by fire, but in a change of mood;
Here is where this place becomes a monument
to the unencumbered here and now;
where all that we need to know is the weather
and what our lords desire.





THE AUDACITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE

by Jeff Parent

I am a city block,
a fusty aqueduct,
an idling overpass
haloed by that don't-sit-so-close glow
as we near the end of our broadcast day.
And tonight's top story, for those just tuning in:
A portal opens just off the Décarie during the morning rush
swallowing a daycare centre, a stand of telegraph poles,
a persistence of birds,

birds bred to meet the insoluble demands
of the lonely, the aged.
Birds set loose for outliving their keepers,
cry "Pretty! Pretty!"
from insurmountable cables
and shitwhite streetlamps.

But look up.
Look wayyy up
and I'll call Rusty

for one last spin
across and again the Old Champlain
in the dawn, in the dew, through
that old Back-In-My-Day dream
'cause by this time next year
there won't be a view of the old town from here

just orange cones and shocked concrete
pulverized to fertilizer
by some passing leviathan;
a thing they'll maybe only know
by some truly vintage tooth
or the sun falling
just so
into a footprint full of water.



2ND FLOOR, TEXTILE PLANT

by Linus Mulherin





ARIA

by Angela Leuck

in memory of Osip Mandelstam

Seeing the sun accidentally obliterated
by the blaze of revolution; they lost their heads.
Bodies fell indiscriminately in the snow.
A group of stunned women in St. Petersburg
passed back and forth
in front of empty seats
crying out
Animals!
How many eliminated.

The next day,
the quiet was punishing.

A simple axiom from Greek tragedy:
when you've never had a roof,
don't offend the sky.
There's time to contemplate this later.
I prefer to think things just happen,
as if we hit black ice;
we're sideswiped, nothing less.

Yet, we are not through telling the story.
From true blue Russian firmness,
old objectors stormed the prisons
while young sons died in the rubble of the Orthodox church.
What began in the afternoon as an incident
caused the ground to shake.
In historic fashion, large numbers of people
found the will to keep creating background music.
But crossing over tradition proved difficult.
We're about where the path went back.

It wasn't just that they didn't stop and think.
Hope was so strong;
Killing seemed a small price to pay.
Ever worsening cases occurred, multiplying.
In the end, only a few survivors
huddled around the remains of a fire.
Reason darted back across incoming night.

Today in your old kitchen, I put on some Shostakovich
to drown out the howl of wind and wolves.
In front of broken icons, I examine artifacts
dug up long after your house was abandoned.



XANADU, INDEED!

by Trevor Gulliver

Perhaps the sacred river ran,
but ran away from me.
If it runs, it runs where I cannot see,

chained to caverns
measureless to man,
but there are other places I must be.

Awoken, forgetting
Abyssinian maids,
burying them in fertile wailing gardens.
The dark river runs through my fingers, escaping.

And there's no getting it back now,
for today is Monday,
and there will be no
honeydew feeding,
milk of paradise drinking,
on Mondays.

AIAS

by Frank Willdig

From this torn page Aias rises, mad with jealousy,
thrashing blindly to beat the wind,
to slay the sheep he sees as those men who wronged him
in these dark and dank alleyways.

Back from the war, he wanders the streets,
homeless in his homeland, in his mental ruins.
He holds back his interiors waiting to burst out;
He asks for a smoke and falls asleep.

And sleeps; he dreams his dreams,
far from his rags and his jabbering tongue.
He dreams of the glory, his wondrous deeds
and to strut past those great gleaming walls again.
Passers-by do not know, but he knows he will rise tomorrow
to await the long ships for Illium.



FLESH & STONE

by Cécilia Alain

Under Orion's belt, the faint light of an airplane travels North until a cloud swallows it. Suspended snow fills the void between the depths of the sky and the museum's soiled tiles. The engine's hum disappears, letting silence and gravity grasp the air as the dust settles. The ceiling's collapsed arches lay in the hall, bombarded by intermittent moonlight.

After their slow fall, the snowflakes land on the edges of broken marble limbs that belonged to gods and heroes. This sheer white sheet smooths the rough surface of the statues' skin, hiding their chipped cheeks, covering their dismantled contrapposto, washing off the dirt from their frozen expressions. A crooked fissure runs across Achilles' right eye like a fresh scar. He no longer looks down at the arrow piercing his heel – from the rubble on the ground, his head is turned towards the stars. The snow gently closes his eyes, erasing the fear from his gaze and letting his features slip to slumber.

Amongst the pure paleness of powdered stones on the polished floor rest other bodies whose thick dark blood trickles through the cracks of the tiles. Little red rivers brush past the statues' remains until the cold freezes their stream. After hours of heavy quiet, the snowfall stops. Everything is motionless and monochrome. Bodies of flesh mingle with bodies of stone in an immobile tableau of destruction.



NEPENTHE

by *Victoria Gilbert*

Floor. Ceiling. Some more marble floor. The ceiling is open. Rays of light creeping in like fire ants out of a farm. The occasional passerby carrying museum pamphlets. The sky: blue. Midnight, yes. Maybe. The floor is wide, and the ceiling is white around its openness. Cole, Courbet, Picasso, Da Vinci... Me. The art museum in the centre-ville is the workplace. I have worked here twelve days. I have decided on a place for coffee in the evening, a place to eat later, and a place to have my drink after dark. I know which streets to avoid and which places to not walk in front of. I have planned the rest of my day.

Mid-afternoon. The streets are grey, as they must have been decades ago. The streets do not know me, yet. Wait, I must be careful with this... These streets won't know me, because they didn't know her. Well, occasionally they did — today, no.

Nighttime. The sleeping potion is released in my body. With his help, I rest, and the memories of my mother evaporate. In the morning, the past floods in, and drags my self with it. Morning coffee: a remedy for the long walk to the museum. Every day on this walk: a hotel. The hotel. The remains of the hotel. The one she stayed in many moons ago lays bare and fragments the city. It's funny how a hole leaves such a mark in a city, yet people ignored the building when it was standing strong. Like herself, the hole is a form of loss. It seems to belong nowhere. It has no real place in the world. I came to this city to grasp her memories and sentiments, but they are faded, just like she is, just like my memories of her, just like the hotel.

It's funny sometimes to see that people miss the sun on gloomy days. People think the sun will instantly make them happy, when in fact, it's all an illusion. The sun, the moon, the clouds, none of it matters. People get upset on sunny days, just like on grey days. The sun seems to make life more palatable. How dismal it is to see so many sad eyes on happy faces when I walk the streets. Faces seemingly happy to see the hotel absorbed by the earth, who had never bothered to care for it before its destruction.

I arrive at the museum. The ceiling, the floor, the marble, the art — unaltered. At work, people assume things of me. They believe I am British, when in fact I am not. I don't belong to a nation. I am part of myself only. Not even then, maybe. I want none of that. I notice there is always a young girl sitting on a bench in front of the same painting every day. Every day. She looks at the canvas, as if watching it, making sure it does not move. The girl sitting on the bench, seems like an automaton, much like the mannequins in a dress shop my mother used to venture to in her past. Glad you asked. I decided to work in an art museum to find meaning in paintings, meaning in concepts: meaning in the past. Gustave Courbet's *Le Désespéré* conveys loss of self; in other words, insanity. The character looks, well, desperate, or rather, haunted. Haunted by the ghosts of his past. Like my mother did. Like my mother was.





Work. Eat. More work. Sleep. Absence of dreams. Coffee. Remembering and forgetting. The same formula every day. I end the day with rest. The earliest recollection of my mother is that of her eyes. The orbs of a woman lost in herself and out of herself. The occasional moment of utter consciousness would arise, but she would look at me and disappear to a different realm. Her iris stayed stagnant in those times when she would get too close to me. Her eyes didn't seem to be her own. I mostly saw emptiness in them, but an emptiness unsatisfied with its own void. It seems strange to think that her eyes are the same colour as mine. I do not want them.

*

The room is beige. It resembles all the other ones in the townhouse. Beige ceiling, beige carpet, and beige furniture. Everything is so beige, that even the people in the townhouse look beige — a bleak beige. It is always quiet in the house, and when the neighbourhood has festivities, the house remains restful. One morning, I creep into my mother's bedroom. She never calls it her own. I open the closet doors, and behind the dull clothes, I find a box. I noticed the box a few months back, when my existential teenage crisis was in full motion. I was desperate to know who she was and where I belonged. If I belonged. In it were pictures of the Paris Exhibition, but the faces in the photographs are blurred out in all different colours. Even her own is erased with black. The landscape shows Paris in light of day. In another photograph is a hotel. A grand hotel, with long oval windows, and beige windowsills. Anything I could tie to the photographs is beclouded. The name of the hotel is scratched out. I knew the pictures were of Paris, and that gut feeling takes over me, especially since I know that they met there. Under the rest of the identity-stripped photos is a note in print. No signature at the bottom, only her name. Written is: "I am empty. Empty of everything, except the specters in my room." I grab the note and stuff it in my pocket and I return the box to its initial position in the bottom of the closet. I am going to Paris. There is something I need to uncover. I want to know her through her own eyes, her absent eyes.

*

Once more, the strange girl sits by the same painting she gazes at every day. Strange. Today the girl smiles at it and her true face seems revealed. She is — yes, smirking. Smirking at my curiosity, perhaps? For once, I am intrigued by her, or rather, I am curious about the painting she is obsessed with. I walk up to the bench and sit next to her, leaving a foot of space between our bodies. She is looking at Thomas Cole's 1800s series, *Voyage of Life*. The girl's eyes are glued to the fourth painting of the series. I take a few steps back, and I notice something. Something unimagined by my mother: chronology. For a person living in the past, chronology and hope of the future are absent; therefore, their life cannot follow the cycle of life presented in the landscapes. There is no possibility of a next phase for the exhausted person. There is no epiphany. The fourth painting, the one with insight and hope, is not attainable for them.

LEGACY





My mother died. In other words, she left. Identity is what makes someone live on, perhaps persist in the future. That's what most people are afraid of: not leaving a mark in this world. She used to describe me as if she was describing herself. I have her eyes, and this scares me. Then, she left. Forever. She didn't grasp the fact that by simply existing you leave a mark, even if you do your best to erase your identity.

I leave the museum, only to find my way back there again after closing. My mind is empty. I unlock the museum door, enter at my own risk, and drown myself in brandy. Everything is a blur: the ceiling, the marble floor, the paintings, the ceiling. Somebody must be condemned to live, but not me. Not tonight. Goodnight Midnight Jansen. Yes — Yes — Yes.





CHAPTER II

POSSIBILITIES

hope, risk, hazard, chance, choice





WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

by Sophia Cumming

we don't speak of the inevitable,
of the distant looming fear.
right now, we are
in the gloaming of us –
the peak of our parabola.
we only whisper,
“what happens next ?”
while asleep,
entwined in one another,
clinging to this ethereal moment,
testing the gossamer infinity of us.

POSSIBILITIES

33





that howling redemption

for

another

crouched

revival

Later, a cackling cry, a
latent wonder of a secret divine:

these red apples in cheeks,
how loud
do they speak ?

POSSIBILITIES

35



I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT I ORDERED; I WAS TOO BUSY THINKING ABOUT HOW EXPENSIVE IT WAS

by Theresa Graham

*Early bus ride from the river to the city
through the streets of Montreal
Carrying a family heirloom with no wheels
Blisters on my ankles from my stupid new shoes*

Five-and-a-half-hour train ride to the only place I really wanted to be.
Minutes feel like hours when I sit violently, patiently
replacing scars with a new city's blood,
waiting to get from point A to point B.

In my little free time, I mourn the death of people who have yet to die,
like the hypnotic bodies of smoke that are born as the stem of ash
curls beneath itself.

My dull aches were not born here, and this will not be their final
resting place.
Food always made me feel better around you,
made me forget about how unhappy I didn't know I was.

When I kept something from you, or pretended I was fine, it was
not because "you should've known better," or because I was spiteful
of something you did or didn't do. That is pure, hot garbage, and we
all know that does nothing good for the environment. It is because
the last thing I wanted was to hurt you, and I knew that my feelings
would eventually do just that — flawlessly.



WHAT A WOMB

by Trevor Gulliver

"What a womb God has — what wild love
He must have made to Himself
for days and days without stopping."
[Meister Eckhart]

What strange
lovers he must have become
to impregnate himself
with all creation,
ejaculating
into the formless and void.

What grand balls,
What magnificent erections,
What perfect clitoris,
What divine vulva,
What cock!

What stamina
to have needed rest
only on the seventh day.

Look what came
from each seed
spilled upon the earth:
slow green explosions
covering continents.

Look at the orchard,
branches
dripping with fruit

Look
at the rivers gushing
into lakes.
Oceans,
the waves lapping
upon the shores.

Look
at the skies teeming
with every winged bird.

Look
at the whales.

The fucking whales.



A JOURNAL ENTRY FROM MY YEAR OF TREE PLANTING

by Joshua Hoekstra

Thursday June 8th, 2017

“My love-hate relationship with people and everything”

About a month into tree planting now. I fucking hate people. I hate when they complain. I hate when they get too drunk and say stupid shit. I absolutely hate when they spout on about shit they know nothing about, but have an opinion on somehow. I detest when they play commercialized dumb pop music for hours. Fuck rig pigs, the mill, and kids with free tuition. Fuck sticks, slash and bugs. I say kill all the bugs. They fly in my eyes, keep me up at night, and leave bites that I scratch ‘til I bleed. The weather is great, the heat is nice, but I can’t wear a fucking t-shirt or go barefoot because my feet and arms will turn to red mound-covered mosquito reminders. Fuck some people’s constant positivity or smugness or anything that reminds me of life outside. It’s the simple things I miss, like taking a shit without bugs covering my legs. Privacy doesn’t really exist in the bush camp; you are constantly around people. But the money is good, and the people are interesting. I like dreaded people, and I like tattoos. I love adventurers and travelers. Tell me all about Thailand and South America. Show me your stick-and-poke and I’ll tell you a drunken story. Sure, we will hang out after the season (even though I spend every waking second with you). Tell me about your conquests and that time you got gonorrhea. Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend? Tell me about them. We don’t talk about it, but we all worry: are they going to break up with us? Or maybe they’re cheating. I mean, we did leave them behind. What do you think about the universe? What drugs have you done? How do you like to fuck? We see mountains and lakes and the occasional bear. We bitch, we moan, and we plan. What do you want to be? How are you going to do it? Really? I’ve never heard of that. We grow and we hurt. We hit cream and we hit rocks. We ride in trucks and we eat ramen. There’s cliques, duos, and couples. There are cheaters, friends with benefits, new loves and the old. We console, inspire, and help each other. We sing and we cry. We’re going to be rich. We smoke joints and eat ‘til we are uncomfortably full. There are crummy drivers, foremen, checkers and cooks. Supervisors, planters, owners, and mill workers. We’re a micro society. We’re a fringe of the system; just a part of the cycle. A family — no, a tribe. A conglomerate. An aggregate. We live together, survive and exist. We’ll never be the same.





TREE PLANTING

by Joshua Hoekstra



POSSIBILITIES

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CHAPTER III

FRAGILITY

vulnerable, delicate, wavering, valuable, inevitable





SHELTER

by Leah Womelsdorf

Dust used to collect on the floor of that kitchen.
One day a streak of sunlight fell
onto one of the synthetic wood tiles,
and told us we were already out;
the neighborhood already deserted
and the countless minivans already packed and driven to Florida.

The rapture of night-time brought
the normalcy of a dream state.
We hoped to wake in a place that could bear
the fragility of new veins
and fingers that seek the warmth of light.

Are we there yet ?

Now, I feel the gentle lull of sleep
induced by the trap of a backseat.
I think there was a soundness within
our misfortune;

A quiet stability,
always present,
expressing what I never could.



THE FALLEN TREE

by *Alexandre Marceau*

When I hopped out of my father's old bed the morning after moving from Newmarket to Montreal, I went straight to the kitchen to see Grand-maman. The smell of blueberries lined the hallway. I walked beneath the black and white pictures of weddings gone by, my roots somehow entwined with those arms on the steps of the small parish. Grand-maman had been awake for two hours, tending to the old half-forgotten tasks of a mother whose kids have moved from Sainte-Eustache years ago.

There were three neatly stacked pancakes with a steady stream of steam floating into the morning gleam. A small glass dispenser with Grand-papa's maple syrup stood like a permanent trunk in the centre of the table. I always imagined that he was *himself* a maple tree, born from the undulating coloured leaves that cover the earth like a blanket before the snowfall. In 1926, when the spring thaw began and the creeks glinted brightly through the leaves, a small seed rooted to the center of the earth germinated. As the tree grew so did the bark. Eventually, sweet drizzling sap seeped through his flesh – the smell of maple exuded his pores.

I had stayed up late the previous night playing with dad's wooden cars on the woven rug. I wonder now, if he too played with them there. He always watched me attentively, as if on a carpet in his mind, there was the little boy directing cars all over the imaginary roads. But as I would do one day, he left them beside the cans of syrup in the boiler room. There were four cars in the round box that originally held twelve. It looked like a dusty dart board without its pins. He must have lost the other eight over the years. Only two still had their four wheels.

Grand-papa came in late while I was playing and he smiled, watching me silently for a minute. Although I had passed my bedtime, he didn't get mad. He helped me clean up and then put me to bed.

"Je t'aime," he said.

I fell fast asleep.

...

Why was I so driven to the outdoors? To the silence; the supple spongy moss; soft nylon acoustic strings; wood; labour; physical exhaustion; solitude. Why did I run from the city to chase the vast wilderness of the Last Frontier? Where did these urges come from and why do I numbly blur them?

...

Grand-maman kissed me on the head when I came into the kitchen.

"Is Grand-papa in the garden? Is he in the shed?" I excitedly asked.

I knew he worked at the General Motors automotive factory during the week and did overtime on weekends, always waking with the sun. Sometimes I heard the unrelenting clink of the pounding hammer echoing through the still shed. Other times I'd see him underneath a car through the open garage door.

"I think he's still sleeping" she said, wiping the edge of the stove top and swinging the orange rag over her shoulder. "He rarely sleeps in after me. Can you go wake him up please?"





Before I had the chance to pick up my fork, I stumbled off my chair and ran down the hall to his room. He was lying peacefully on his side.

The man was built big. He was like the biggest tree trunk in the ancient forests of this vast Canadian province, only fallen across my trail, not upright. I tried moving him, fingers sticking to the sap between the cracks of bark, hands and feet pushing together – but he wouldn't budge.

"Grand-papa!" I said loudly. "Grand-papa!" Two, three, four more times – no answer. I walked back to the kitchen, sliding my hand beneath the portraits.

"Grand-papa is still sleeping. He won't wake up," I said, hopping back onto my chair.

Her eyebrows narrowed in. She turned the tap off, slid the rest of the dishes into the soapy water and dried her hands with the orange rag.

"What do you mean he won't wake up? I didn't hear him stumbling into bed last night."

"He didn't answer me."

"I'll go wake him up then. All week he talked about how excited he was to see you."

As soon as she turned the corner, I grabbed the syrup dispenser beside the plate and drenched the blue-spotted lily pads. My plate looked like a pond. The dispenser was empty.

...

In the early 1970s Grand-papa built a small cabin in Northern Quebec. Although I went a few times as a young child, my parents hadn't been back since 2000. This past year, we celebrated my twenty-third birthday with a small family reunion at the cabin. It was a bright, sunny day and my mouth was dry. I was nauseous and nervous. I was hung-over.

While sitting on a tree trunk playing the harmonica, my aunt walked over. She was smiling as she clumped through the snow but avoided my eyes. She wanted to talk to me. She had answers to the questions she could hear in the music's melodies. She knew I was talking to the trees, talking to *him*.

"You sound just like my Dad," she said. "He used to play all the time. Whenever we'd gather around the boiler in the cabin or the fire, he'd pull it out and play."

My hand was warmer. There was welcoming weight in her words.

"He tapped 2000 trees on his own. It took you and your four cousins two hours to collect 400 over-flowing buckets – he knew his trees. He was strong."

I didn't respond. She knew I was listening; absorbing; salivating.

"We were out eating breakfast once with your parents, Grand-papa, and Grand-maman. You must have been two or three."

The warm uncertainty of memory yielded an involuntary smile – of hearing a story about yourself that only you, of all the people who shared the moment, is unable to recall because you were simply too young.

"You were sitting on Grand-papa's lap at the end of the table, giggling hysterically as you frantically poked each other. The waitress came around and gave you two small pancakes. You looked up at Grand-papa, expecting him to know what you wanted. When she came back with the syrup dispenser, he warned you only to drizzle it over half of one pancake. You took a bite and immediately spat the mush out onto the untouched one and looked up at him, saying, 'This isn't syrup!' Grand-papa laughed and took a small canister out of his breast pocket. Out flowed the syrup onto your plate. He brought the little canister just for you."





"Well," I said slowly, "That might explain my refined taste for all things *natural*."

The birds were singing and the rest of the family was still by the cabin.

"He used to come out here for weeks" she began again. "He needed to come here – to *be*. I think you would have enjoyed it too – certainly the drink. At times it seemed like gin exuded his pores. On those rare mornings when he slept in, the faint smell of it lingered through the hall. And then, over the course of the week, Grand-maman found the empty bottles hidden behind paint cans in the garage or lined up in his shed."

I laughed because I was too hung-over to think of gin and she was right. I *would* love to be here with him; to play music – to *be*.

...

Grand-maman was anxiously rubbing her hands with the orange rag when she returned to the kitchen. Her face was pale.

"Alexandre, can you please go next door and ask Nathalie to call 9-11? Tell her to tell them to come here immediately."

I took a massive bite from my pancakes. It was my first time ringing her doorbell. I'd only scurried into her backyard a few times to get my soccer ball. Rather than kissing me on the forehead as she always did, Grand-maman began pacing.

When I told Nathalie to "call 9-11," to me just an ordinary phone number, she stiffened and came over immediately. I never sat back down at the table. I hovered around the living room and listened to two women cry in the kitchen. I had never seen an adult cry before – let alone two.

The big yellow truck showed up and two men came in hastily, holding a body table. How was Grand-papa still able to sleep through this?

I followed the four of them down the hall. In the room, the two men lifted him up and gently placed him on the stretcher laid out at the edge of the bed. They placed him in the same way that he lay on the mattress – once upright, now fallen.

That day, I remember sliding my hand beneath the imaginary horizontal timeline the picture frames formed above my head. The following year, that same walk led to a small 4" x 6" portrait of Grand-papa hung up on the column beside the closet. Five years later, two more portraits were hung up in the house. Before dad was born, this house belonged to others. Then, my grandparents came to see it, saw its walls like a blueprint on graph paper and they filled in the squares.

Walls get heavier with time; small islands form in the Gyprock Sea; we become the shifting tectonic portraits. It must be true then, that somehow, no man is an island.

There had been no sound to inform us that the tree trunk had snapped from its roots and now lay quietly in the forest. I had tried moving the tree but it was too big to put back into the soil. When the paramedics left and the ambulance drove off, I stayed in the doorway for quite some time. I didn't know it then, but I was standing at the beginning of a life-long trail with a rucksack that Grand-papa packed himself.

I need to feel the bark scratching my skin; the sap to heal it; the howling wind to carry his voice to me when I'm lost in the thick forests. I'm older now. I know that gin makes one sleep soundly, but not forever. Sweeter though, is knowing that I too have grown out of trees. I am no longer the lonely wailing branch in the storm. I found my trunk.

FRAGILITY





IF YOU SHOULD GO

by Jeremy Audet

If I return to holy land
Of silver bays and sliver youths
So drawn to dawn's upsetful hand,
So dragged by drunken eddy truths,
The golden pull of song and yearn,
Within the most wonderful thing
Lays vernal years, the planet's turn
To eased Atlantic gannet's wing,
And from the dark's despondency
Driven against the current's rush,
I leave the young years' urgency,
Return at once to water's hush
Against the very lens of ought,
With bearings of creative will,
The glacial cure to freedom bought
Forebodes the tremor with the thrill.

If you should go before I may,
As bonds of heart so often do,
To dig the copper and the clay
And lie asleep within the womb,
Then I would follow close behind
Into the earnings of the earth
To crawl in soundless for the kind,
Kind world it now has blessed with birth.



WHEN THE ONE YOU LOVE SHARES A FEAR

by Trevor Gulliver

If it scratches at the door,
open it.
Meet its eyes in the dark.
Reach out and let it sniff
your gentle hand.
Stroke its wet fur.
Coax it in and lead it to the fire.
Let it lay panting.
Do not feed it
or try to change it
or try to keep it as a pet.
In the morning, it will be gone.
This is good.

If you chase it from the door,
it will always howl in the distance,
and stalk your loved one in the snow.



HOW TO BE TIRED

by Lia Robles

Stay up until the early morning hours.

Watch your favourite show
where the idiot saves
the world with love and
witty one-liners.

Read that book that has
you enthralled with century-old
dragons and constant disasters.

Talk with friends
as the moon shines down,
as the world stills.

Make some ramen,
or steal vending machine candy bars
when it is too late yet too early
for anything else.

Study for that test,
or write that essay
you were told not to do last minute,
but now no longer have the choice.

Draw something with the lights off,
let the pen glide
and don't
peek.

Look out the window and check
for light;
you might just find
another life glowing in the dark.

Or, just lie in the dark,
let your eyes burn,
let your mind ramble,
fixing problems or telling stories –
whatever your brain does
when running on empty.

Wake up when the sun has yet to rise.

Write when the mind is not yet sore.
Put pen to paper
and let any old words
flow.

Learn sign language:
a quiet, useful skill
for quiet, useful hours.

Call your brother
who lives where the sun sets
when here it rises.

Slowly drink something hot.
It must be hot, and it must be
drunk slowly
so steam fills your lungs and
clouds your mind.

Go over your notes one last time
and edit those hastily written words,
then take a breath
and let go.

When you think you might cave,
and sleep might take you away,
remember that blind drawing
you made,
and laugh.

Have the world to yourself
before others awaken;
before the day begins.

Or, just embrace the silence
but be still;
silence is fearful,
it will run at
the smallest
sound.



TWO-TONES

by *Elsa Cattelan*

Once upon a time, there was a strong-willed girl who wore a red cloak. She visited the forest every day, and usually emerged unharmed. But a darkness lived in the forest, and one day it found the red-cloaked girl. The darkness fed on fears and thought she would make a fine meal, and as the strong-willed girl was kind, she let it feed. It oozed its tendrils to her heels and stretched into her shape. She laughed at the clever trick this darkness knew, and did not mind that it ate her fears, for she had no use for them anyhow. The strong-willed girl named her darkness Shadow and brought it back from the forest to the town.

But that is a tale that has been told before, and it has been years since the strong-willed girl brought Shadow to the people. The great forests have since withered and died. The people used them up to build homes and ships. As people grew and multiplied, so did Shadow and her children. The Shadows learned to speak, and crooned the people's deepest fears at night, to feast. The Shadows learned they could corrupt the weak of heart.

Cities were born and raised as high as gods could reach. The people no longer remembered a generation without Shadows, but they knew the story of the red-cloaked girl. Or at least, they knew a story. Such is the way of memory. There are many interesting, strong-willed girls in the cities too.

It is the cities that now hold the hidden pockets of the world. These refuges away from crowds and smoke and sounds are difficult to find, but not impossible. There is, for example, a cobblestone alleyway where wildflowers grew, which a two-toned girl had found some time ago. There stood two gates at either end of the alley's entrance, one of iron, one of copper. She had noticed the oddly ornate gates wedged between two shops downtown. The two-toned girl squeezes through both to get to work.

The two-toned girl wore paisley shoes. They reached just above her heel and stopped just below the bone. They zipped, these shoes, but they also laced, and buckled, and ended in a bow. Her shoes matched each other, but rarely anything else. These paisley shoes had heels that barely lifted her sole off the floor but clicked and clacked on cobblestone - her footsteps sounding like rain on a tin roof. There were always a few gawkers around the two-toned girl, for she had no Shadow. It made folk wonder. They had never seen such a thing; even at the brink of dusk, the two-toned girl had no darkened double.

The two-toned girl always crossed the iron gate first. This gate guarded the alley with metal that had once been painted black, but that had now peeled with age. The peeling iron stood next to a gentleman's club where it was wise to keep an eye on those gentlemen's Shadows. The men stood on the stoop, smoking cigars, catching their breath in the smog, as their Shadows stretched down the sidewalk, their fingers reaching further than they should. The gentlemen do not mind their Shadows, and they do not reign them in when their tendrils try to snatch at pretty young things. The gentlemen do not feel the need to correct their nightmares' behaviour; they let them grow unchecked.

When the two-toned girl makes it to the iron gates unfettered by the Shadows' reaching hands, she sees the cobblestone. The alleyway forgot that





normal routes are paved. Its twisting path is built in blocks: a patchwork of stones that sing when bike wheels roll over their uneven edges. The alleyway has coffee shops, restaurants and art. It goes nowhere in particular, but takes you to your destination, nonetheless. The two-toned girl with paisley shoes only ever took the alleyway to cross the block on her way to work. It takes a minute more to find the copper gates, but the two-toned girl didn't mind her minutes. She took the journey for its character; she liked the way her footsteps rang out on the alley's stones.

The copper gates were now green with rust and plants. They had been green for a while. Overgrown with vines, the metalwork had been long lost in the midst of the Dropmore scarlet honeysuckle. The shop beside the copper gates sold all manner of paper. The people in it were writers who came to buy supplies. The writers' Shadows clung to their soles securely. Uneasy and self-conscious, they were all too aware of their darkness, their failings, their fears. Their Shadows take strength in these acknowledgements. The darkness grows because the writers worry that they need nightmares to write.

The copper gates are where the hurried boy first entered the hidden alley. It had been raining, but then, he had always loved the sound of rain and had not minded taking the extra minute to watch the droplets dance. He found peace in rain. When he was young and his nightmares were strong, the hurried boy would cry for thunderstorms to chase the Shadows away from his dreams. When he was youthful and his shadow slim and long, the hurried boy would pray for showers to pour when he was biking home from school. He had always felt the rainwater could cleanse his fears and shrink his Shadow. Since that rainy day, the hurried boy always took the alleyway to get to class.

The first time he heard the two-toned girl's tin-roof steps, he was late. The hurried boy had cut through the alley to avoid the crowd and sprint to class, but before his rubber soles reached the iron gates, he heard the click of heels on cobblestone and turned. He saw a girl with no Shadow, paisley shoes, golden rings, and warm brown eyes that held two-toned secrets. The hurried boy stopped before the iron gates and walked up to the two-toned girl to ask her name, his Shadow growing with every step.

But this was months ago. The two have been friends for weeks, and that has been enough for them. The hurried boy never asked the two-toned girl why she had no Shadow. He had always wondered, theorized and prodded, but never asked, not until the cobblestone alley had closed for construction, the iron gates rusted, and the copper gate lost to the vines.

Sitting on the bench outside the paper shop, the pair had stopped for lunch. They watched the Shadows chase their writers in and out of the store. The two-toned girl laughed at the writers and the chimes in her throat caught the attention of the hurried boy just so. He heard the lightest rain in her voice. He marveled at the sound and stared at his two-toned friend.

The hurried boy had looked into the two-toned eyes for just too long, and he found himself blinking through tears.

"I'm sorry, jeez," the hurried boy sniffed and apologized. "I'm not sad, it just feels like I've been staring in the sun for too long, you know? Like you have to sneeze but instead your eyes water?" Dark patches bloomed on his denim jacket as each drop seeped into the fabric. He leaned over the bench and lifted tissues from his satchel.

"It's ok, it happens," The two-toned girl was used to this reaction. "It's me. I wear my nightmares like a suit, not a Shadow."





She threw the thought out casually. She knew what she was saying. She knew the hurried boy wondered about her two-tones. She knew his curiosity. He had never asked, and that's why she told him. "That's what gives me my two-tones. It's what happens when you wear your Shadow."

The hurried boy slowed, as he so often did around her. He blinked, he breathed, and he listened to the words she handed out. He cradled each syllable in his head, tasted her words on the wind with each inhale. "I'm talking to a girl who wears her Shadow like a second skin," he said, amazed.

"You're talking to the girl with cornrow braids and dark brown eyes. You're talking to the girl you know with paisley shoes and golden rings. You know me," she said with a smile.

But both of them knew this wasn't enough. He wanted to know her, her Shadows, her nightmares — her whole. He wanted her. All of her.

"I'd like to know you," said the hurried boy.

You'd like to know me? Thought the two-toned girl. She hoped so. Most wanted to romanticize her; they wanted to tell her how her two-tones were beautiful. But it wasn't beautiful to her, it simply was... although that answer wouldn't satisfy him, she knew. The anticipation in the hurried boy's face was unmistakable. He wanted to know why she wore nightmares. He wanted to own her vulnerability.

But he hasn't asked yet, so maybe he doesn't want that, thought the two-toned girl. Maybe he doesn't need to know more.

There is no itch more satisfying to scratch than someone else's despair, realized the two-toned girl. She debated ignoring the hurried boy's motions to continue, but only for a moment. She knew she had committed to telling her truth.

"Ok, well, I guess you're also talking to the girl who got sent home from the hospital twice because her overdoses hadn't made her dead enough. Oh, they treated me. Held me a few hours, watched me writhe, left me in a bed to cry and scream, drugged out of my skull, cleaned me when I pissed myself, sent in young doctors to test their knowledge on my symptoms. Once, they sent me home still high. Once, they asked if I wanted to speak to a psychologist. Another time, they didn't. One hospital told me 'no more overdoses' with a shake of a finger, and I left — at five a.m. At suicide hour. I left."

Her breath was even, but quick. Her tone bitter, but unwavering. It was her truth, after all. Truths are often bitter in their purest forms.

"What —" started the hurried boy, speaking before he knew what to ask.

"It means," said the two-toned girl, knowingly, "that the abyss really does stare back. It means I've been desperate, and I've accepted it. There's no point in keeping our Shadows at bay. They hate that. They grow, and rebel and haunt us.

"I was tired of being haunted," said the two-toned girl with golden rings on her hands and silver scars across her wrists. "So, I invited my Shadow to share my skin. It's what gives me my two tones." She spoke in matters of fact, without pride or shame.

"You're beautiful" the hurried boy said.

"I know I am," the two-toned girl whispered back, disappointed. She smiled at the hurried boy, but the corners of her mouth turned down.





HERE THE ORANGE BLOSSOM

by Jeremy Audet

Here the orange blossom,
cathartic for the dormant river,
wailing from a soundless sea
that gushes and rushes and bursts the walls
of Man with great divinity,
 unhalted, power, thunderous terror
before the pound of the raw heavy chest
stripped of ribs and aging marks,
which blood and salt had fiercely washed
away.
Away by tender palms,
the seaside soil slid from the peel,
and gone were scars of telluric kind,
the muddied blood,
until the purely kept its form.

A crying wind fed its way
through Strasbourg in its Winter,
crows that perch to wait are men,
men that crowd the streets are crows,
dawnings haunt the empty city, soulless city,
moonless eyes disrupt the flame and fury.
Here the face ingests itself,
here the grim gaze of one black ant
meets uncounted eyes of other black ants
in a red blindness.
What for, what for !
The weightless march of unslept limbs
What for, what for !
Treading bone and building melted, cannot tell
even with a scrape of salvaged boot, cannot tell
even if the words unfolded, cannot tell
the creature soul that perished, cannot tell
of pride and honour where fears, cannot tell
the skies roaring through the night
the helpless step of desperation
the grey snows that fog the endless burial, cannot tell
the grey soil that had clawed the chambers
the child's vacant stare asking heaven for a heaven
its hollowed cheeks and mouthless lips,
the ashy orange blossom above, cannot tell
what for.

Here the water floods memory. Shut faucet. Stare.
Hold orange.
Always dust. Always ash.

FRAGILITY

53





CHAPTER IV

DEGENERATION

decay, descent, collapse, corruption, resistance





STOP

by Theresa Graham



DEGENERATION

57



BALLET ACADEMIA

by Philippe Gravel

I was sitting on a chair in my classroom across tenses, blarneys,
and booms.

From the faraway coveted eyes of a graduated high school teacher,
full of benevolence but whose self-denial kept him shy from
showing his glooming Oriental amulets to the rest of us.

The inexperienced eyes consider me quiet, and whisper.
That is my public corpse only, and I retain for my fellow men the
volcanic laughter.

The circle that I witnessed prior to this very day with one of my
good captains — we sat on a watery, grassy field about a quarter of a
decade ago — was drawn before my eyes in sad so-called intellectual
ideas. No ethos allowed.

The biggest question that saddened me then before my soulmates:
“What the hell are you thinking about?”

Do you hate, or do you feel scars about your past receding with no
possibility of resolve?

Through the motion of a pen and a blunt?

LIKE ELEPHANTS

by Sophia Cumming

this land is poached.
lamp posts lay in a haphazard stack,
glittering in the evening glow
like trophies at the foot of
rolling hills
now wrenched apart
by a black scar of asphalt.
where birds once chattered,
only the sound of
no-time-to-look-out-the-window
miles per hour cars
zipping through,
without a thought for yesterday.



THE LONELY NUMEROUS

by Joel Ferguson

The world is having a fire sale:
All banknotes and first-person singulars must go !
The Last Men keep traipsing
off the roofs of the earth's mighty condominiums.
We catch and line our pockets with them.

We work as day-janitors at a ministry
at the heart of the continent.
We comb the grit from its chambers.
We kiss the organs of state goodnight.
We coo to ourselves in our cilia home
about what an excellent job have gone and done.

By night we clean social housing
high-rises (cardboard boxes
with airholes punched out) that produce
dead plebs at a well-measured clip.
We keep our heads down all night
and mop the excess from the floors and walls.

The ~~force~~ service has its one good cop
who shakes his head while he delivers the news
of another body bag being wheeled out.
“This is a disaster,” he repeats to no one.

Creaking, professorial baldies have no answers
when they hold court in their lost cafeterias.
We want to crossbreed our neuroses with theirs
among the stacks of folding chairs and smell of hibiscus,
with the breeze on our necks
as the doors we pass through
gently close and lock behind us.

Nothing seems familiar anymore.
We are lost, and we are all alone.



SURROGATE LAMPLIGHTER

by Michelle Boulay



A MATTER OF TASTE

by Philippe Gravel

Nice slim fast milkshake!
That girl protects her eyelids even if on sweetened drugs.

Now
Rain
Knows
Snow

Nowadays I make
Manifolds of salutes to Christ.

White talking
Speak spleen
Beforehand I didn't know

That in the East
They had the same
Kind of thrive.

DEGENERATION

60



OUR DAILY LEAD

by Joel Ferguson

another day of "disquiet"
a drunk property owner bursts
in on family dinner yammering
about socialism liberal elites
taxation christian civilization
a childhood friend gets really into phrenology
and Ben Shapiro talking points

who among us
doesn't have one like this ?
low-yield stochastic
another "troubled youth" with 1488-page manifesto
illuminates no motives
grammar and decorum versus cages
nightmare versus "yesterday, forever"
either criminal masterminds or
dumb as a sack of shit-smeared doorknobs

I will never fear that ridiculous
sheep-killing dog
widening gyres of course
Cassandra Syndrome
One Day This War Will Have Two Sides

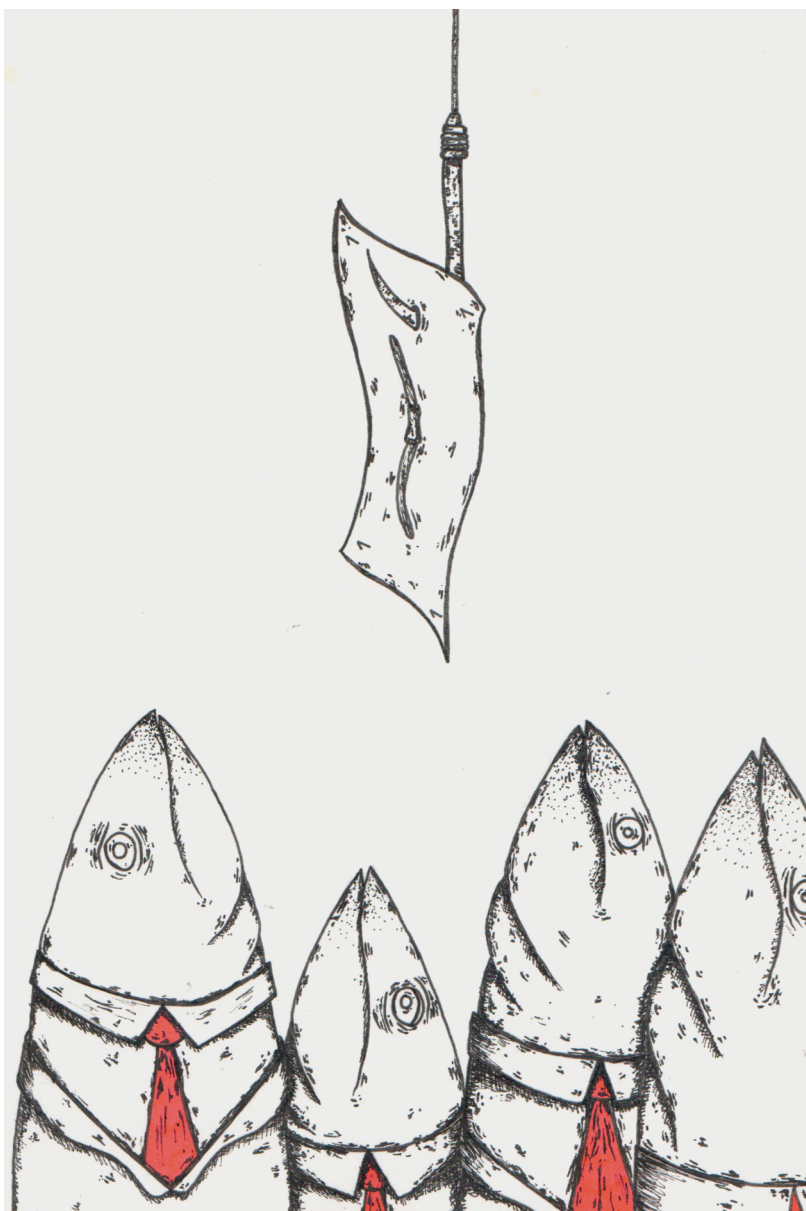
DEGENERATION

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POLIFISHIANS

by Miranda Serrano



DEGENERATION

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PERCOCET ON ELECTION NIGHT, 2016

by Joel Ferguson

Sent home with kidney stones and a script for pills,
the pain is replaced with the sense that I'm one
of William Blake's paintings; little boy lost,
done, gone, bedbound,
as the whirlwind comes unwound.

I eat painkillers in reams,
prognosticate lies
hopeful about the shard pressing hard upstream.
By the john I watch myself sick.
I fire codeine in a golden stream.

Sisyphus is now carefree from his burden,
drifting through the patriot colours
and analyses of the live-streamed verdict.

In the dream I'm breaking
all of Blake's plates. My body is
both banks of the river,
a Quisling on the make.

At the bereft heart of heart's deficit
Percocet won't wake me
to anything harsh just yet.
The world is my pillow. Like a haze
I rise out the window, then on
and on. I'm a scroll unfurled in the sky
over Spain. I glide above Guernica.

What's below is ablaze
but I'm at rest, well past dawn on day zero,
well beyond healthy or ill.



GIN FOR BREAKFAST

by Trevor Gulliver

Take each of these worries
by its scrawny neck
and drown it in a pitcher of beer.
Squeeze the two fat ones
through the neck of the gin bottle
and cap it.
Smoke the niggly ones
out of their holes.

And, when that doesn't work,
call on the biggest
and baddest of the bunch
and sit it across the kitchen table from you
and talk to it the way you would
a friend you'd offended,
or a partner in crime
and in life.

Be honest now,
with it and yourself.
Be wrong and say so.
Be right and stand on that.
Don't give just to get;
give because it's you that's giving.
Don't agree for the hope of silence.
You likely won't get the silence,
and it will taste like the wrong sort if you do.

If it's still squeaking at you,
don't try to fix it.
It's not done speaking.
It needs to be heard
just as you do,
just as you need to hear it.

Stay in that goddamned chair
all fucking night,
as long as the worry
is willing to sit with you.

And, when light breaks,
one or both of you will be changed.
If not,
don't worry.
There's still the fucking gin.

DEGENERATION

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LES LUMIÈRES URBAINES

by Déborah Gobinet



DEGENERATION

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CHAPTER V

ACHE

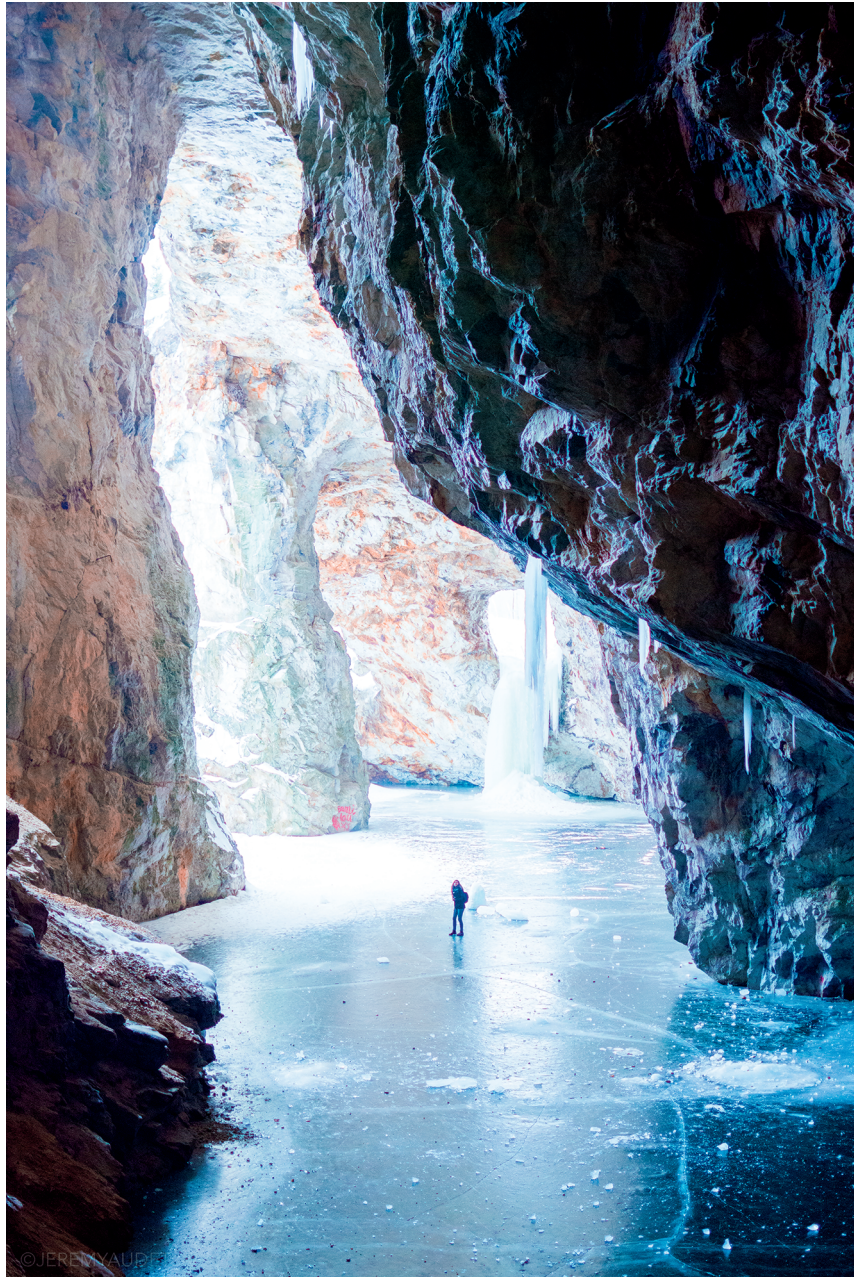
grief, longing, mourning, yearning, coping





ABANDONED MINE

by Jeremy Audet



©JEREMY AUDET

ACHE
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COLD CARCASS OF NOVEMBER

by Jeremy Audet

This cold carcass of November
turns into dark so eerily,
though one could set the ghoul aflame,
all lights have let the darkness be.
Through hasted days of numbing pains
uncertainties in grayness pour,
the past, devoured, comes with the rot,
a lovely shade turns into jet,
depressions cast the mind aside
into a black melancholy.

For memory, the periled bay
I never seem to drift towards,
but keep so angled in the mast
kept swelling for some secret shore,
is such a tragedy of time,
a warfare ended wretchedly,
and we, as all things come to pass,
are left to our caducity.

Toss the bodies, feed the crawl,
as I remember once, despite
the howl, the howl, of every one
in protest. How am I to know,
I who lose with all, the violence
such escape entails, yet live
to weave a substance for the mind.
Perhaps none exists, perhaps so,
all is now, all is not morning.

White, the carcass holds all secrets,
soundless as always, out of beat,
terrible now the things we do,
have done, will do, and if preserve
it does, what life will it become
once rotten, once calmed, once forgotten.



KING OF BODIES, RULER OF NOTHING

by Miranda Serrano



ACHE
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QUEEN OF THE CASTLE

by Heather Davis

Heather, you did it again.
You spelled Elizabeth with a 'z'
instead of an 's'.
I'm not the queen.
You could've fooled me,
Queen of Criticism.

Ruins are the things our ancestors built.

Elizabeth, your reign has long since ended.
So why am I still scared of you?
Even people who remind me of you
angry people, mostly.
I don't care a bit what you think,
but your glare towers over my heart
to this day.

Ruin: the state of being disintegrated or being destroyed.

You were the first adult I knew who told lies,
who got angry and sat in your car in the garage,
who threw a plate — your favourite plate— at the wall,
who was irritated by my softness,
who responded to my need by laughing.

*Ruins are things that didn't go well in our lives. Things we don't keep photographs of.
Memories shoved into cracks and hidden. Shame grows like moss into our names.*

Things I did wrong:
Forgetting my homework.
Inviting a friend over after school.
Asking for seconds.
Slicing the bread crooked.
Not rinsing the bathtub.
Being afraid of you.
Not being confident.
Not being somebody different.

Ruins are their lives so long ago now, houses to dust.



You spent your life
scaring people away,
so they couldn't see
the empty place
where there was no self-love.
I think you hated me most
because I noticed the most
in my quiet, noticing way.

My mother (remember when you were friends ?)
told me about
your sister
who was loved
and you,
who were not.
It helped me understand,
but not forgive you.

A falling down house.

Did your parents' voices
stay in your heart,
even after you moved
halfway around the world ?

Ruins are the perfect mix of nature and architecture.

You made it colder inside our house than outside.
Large house. Quiet stepmother.
Mouse child tiptoes about.
I had nightmares about the house burning down.
That time you said:
"I'm home. Everyone stop smiling."

*The stillness when it's all over. The remnants. A window that looks from outside
to outside.*

I felt your pain
and you made it mine.
I'm scared that you know
secret, silent bad things about me.
I'm scared that you will paint a terrible picture of me
for others to laugh at.
I wasn't old enough
to hide myself from you.



My innocence must have felt dangerous.
Did you think you were protecting me ?

*Moss colonizing the cracks of words inscribed in stone. Memories etched into
objects that resist time, but not completely, not forever.*

I have kept nothing of you except what is etched in my heart.
Won't the words ever fade ?
Will you turn to stone ?
Will you please become ruins
of dented iron, busted walls, collapsed bricks ?

*Ruins are the barn roof collapsed in, the snow that falls inside now, the animals
long gone.*

You didn't know me.
But you knew me.
It seemed impossible that
you could both know me
and hate me.

*Ruins are human-made structures that fall, as time goes by, into a state of partial
or total disrepair, due to lack of maintenance or deliberate acts of destruction.*

Will she become ruins
only when the space she filled
is filled by the garden of my life,
by the love of many people ?

Why do I need any of that to respect myself?
How does she hold any power over me ?

Ruins sound like an end but are a new beginning.

My daughter knows love and not you.
She says she isn't scared and
will hold my hand.



ANNA

by *Jeremy Audet*

Above her, beyond the pulsing, stolid forest stood the white and pregnant hills, silently filled with life eager to burst into bloom with the spring, pale and pure, untouched and watching. They were cruel hills, loveless, cold, and although the sight of these pink bellies of the earth would spark wonder in the singular eye, in hers they harked back to some palpable daze. It had not been painless, despite what had been said. Now perhaps it was, but then, no. It had scarred her so that the split between her and her own body had been such that all trust had been pulled away. Perhaps pushed out, repulsed. The daze had never left her. Untouched, unreachable, and watching.

No trust. No answer. Just body. The numbing had begun only some time afterwards, a slow frostbite that first grabbed her stomach - she had noticed it first in her stomach, that is — and then once the pain had settled it grabbed her fingers, one by one, until it reached her throat. To say that she last noticed it in her throat while holding her breath that first time in the water is an understatement, it gripped her, kicking from within, violently innate. Firmly. Chokingly. Numbing, but no mending, never bridging the gap. Why would you, anyways?

No one answered because no one spoke. A boreal wind tore through, but no answer, no voice was ever given to the seasons that rose and fell in great orchestral calamities *a million eyes* a bird perched on the wing the pines sweating their coats of ice or the beaming sun knifing through these pines and their ice, regardless, pure, as it awakens the melancholy, exterminates the present, and ignites the before, exhaling from a profound sleep or some other radiance of the great white world; for it was radiant, dream-like, sliding into her periphery with every shallow step, the hollow wilderness revealing its great solitude, revealing her great solitude, revealing, revealing. Although she had often made her way here, beneath this pine, across this slow rising hill that somehow lost the entirety of its swollenness as if it were shrivelling with the earth and retreating into its own rigid soil, there was still no answer there, in its own hollowness she had learned when the digging had stopped. What kind of world turns its hills hollow she had asked, and this sentiment had stayed with her forever one can only hope one can only dream it is the only practice that carries any truth, strangled her with this same great solitude. No breath, no voice, no body. Just body

Pacing its way through the shadows and stretched arms of sunbeam that brought vivid dreaminess to her, oscillating between stasis and movement — but when in the severe dispossession of life had she truly moved? — until



she reached a silence she knew too well by now, too well beneath the great aperture of all things voiced and unvoiced, so narrow as the icy walls of a womb in which she never grew. The drenched and heavy earth crushed beneath her beneath the white and pregnant hills *the waves and salt* still the radiant day burst her skull with timeless flight like always; no, not always, but often, and more frequently now that she was alone, having abandoned herself and having been abandoned since, in an absence so part of the radiance, inseparable from breath, a great voiceless absence held each step with a tethering iron sphere being

pulled back tirelessly into the depths of sea, the unfathomable sea, what could such a vast and palpable body hide beneath its white roar? Perhaps, she thought. Of the gaping beyond. Of the little smoke of summer mornings that yawned a still drowsy languor brought her magnetically to the shore at dawn, the lips and spumes of the ocean shackling in ritual the thin rubber ankles standing eastward in the breath of the translucent Atlantic morning. The sun stood fiercely and by now like always the tide had driven the shore outward and a neck pierced the stomach of the sea, a beacon pulsing alive, a weightless form crystallized in the radiant light that ossified distant visions in a white fog making its way around her and shivering as the veil lifted until nothing stood but the changeless absence that nobody spoke of

Endlessly. What an alarming word. Truly the only reach of love. *Looking at the outside the snow rested in harmony. Charred in its corner the corpse of a fire fed no more warmth although the flame had been plentiful in its time. He read in the corner, as he would always do at a day's edge, and ever so often hovered his gaze in her direction. She mostly turned towards the outside at the empty streets at the harmonious snow. He had loved her. No, it was still as true, and she had loved him simply despite necessary absences. Had somebody spoken it may have changed but nobody spoke so nothing had changed. It was getting cold again*

But she had grown used to it, familiar even to the cold here, the capacity of her skin had tightened throughout the years to withstand even the most ungraspable cut. A known path winded its way, the path itself never tired, between the tall evergreens and aspens until, and she knew this well, it would reach the foot of a monumental willow, contemplating each passerby beneath its now white-skinned cloak. They had come here often, she had come here often by herself without him once, she remembered, *a mother and child seated beneath the tree, watching with unaffected wonder the birds or the snowfall or the dancing it mattered not watching because she cried whether or not it had been real but she cried thinking she had seen the absence filled but his warm grasp had only pulsed her mind to the warm blood that had spilled on the ceramic and oh you've spilled on the ceramic he had said and yes quite literally she had spilled on the ceramic it was her body that she observed dry on the floor it was her little body without life without air by her own hand on the ceramic but it was there and the blood had covered it had spilled on the ceramic and her body lost all trust and all warmth and she looked outside the snow raged as if to bury her deeper and deeper still but possessing no body what digging could be done?*





With the body on the floor and in

Often enough she had walked up to watch the willow change its shape, not fundamentally of course, but growing in a sense. You never notice the growth of each day, she thought, it's only in memory that things grow tall and unreachable. Perhaps. A million women would declare the same, a million women had come through these ways and had been swallowed by the inevitable grasp of the willow and of the fork in the path that, on one side, led to the barren and white hills, and on the other the lake *a million eyes*. Here some ephemeral stillness held the dream, and especially today she was able to avoid the impelling voices that had so often directed her stage. Here she could remember in her watered dreaminess what she decided was worth tricking her mind into remembering.

The lilacs echoed in the foams of daydream.

Beneath the spread of its tired arms Anna stood facing the magnificence of creation observing with the trusting look of how old she looks how young she looks, somewhere between the breath of dawn and the lakeshore, before she reached the waters and broke them in enthusiasms. She might have followed, yes, if the certainty that Anna like always would reappear wasn't so entrenched in the radiant and new day and even in the old days the cold and harsh days well the foams would bring warmth to the rich summer day by the lake where Anna swam violently in the still waters, kind, when such days went slowly, such hearts pulsed in unison and hearts that pulse in unison for even a minute time pulse evenly and in harmony for the entirety of the beat. Was it wrong to call her name here again, her name that had been called a million times by a million eyes who knew wishing to be easier than speaking and that from time to time when the reminders come in a flood that drowning was not death if it extended to the entirety of the beat.

To drown was to feel and suffer the heart of a life that always mocked her but to tear out her own organs was unimaginable and to what purpose it had happened was unimaginable, but there was *purity in the way Anna stood now by the thrusting sea, playing daintily, mesmerized by the balloons that roped the heavens, caught the limits of the human wonderment. If only such a thing were possible. It was, she believed, perhaps possible to hold Anna, to swallow her even, to return to some form of stasis. Yet the morning was beautiful and young, exhaling its way across the great unreachable sky, and so why would she risk its purity for it was real. All of it. There was no untruth in what was believed but it required care as to not be shattered like the myriad sand that Anna's hands held softly joined. A small mound began to appear on the shore as the surrounding grains were raked up by the grasp. She rose, turned her unformed face in childish interest and ran to the next group of sands that she would lift ceremoniously above her head as she ran back to the mound while a white mist hung behind her until flung apart by the ocean wind. What remained in her clutching hands was then abandoned on the new belly of the shore, and this time and time again — for centuries perhaps — until out of the sand burst millions of unheld eyes that follow everywhere you go a million eyes that swarm you like bees and hold their ice dead stare on you for eternity while Anna watched, untouched, her mother's solitude never relieved*

Down, down she sank into the midday dreams that ever so often





muffled the world. Her hands slowly regained motion and feeling, the arthritic pains of absence lingering always. Her feet were tired, her jaw heavy, her breath shorter now, but a weightlessness persisted and she moved on insatiably around the towering relics of nature. The shore was close for she recognized the warm breath, the water was close, in the summer she could hear it but now on the other edge of the year it had frozen over and would take some work to shed through.

Here in the dim room the walls held back the blizzard that she observed outside. It seemed unnatural, she thought, too fierce, too contained, but only grew increasingly tempestuous, chaotically silent. The silence, like always, persisted until intruded by a blameless voice in the air heavy with languor. The moon, he said. A stillness overcame the room again once the words had settled, it was decades ago now but irreversible, and his words then had taken much longer to return to the silence the room it now owned. And his hands never returned to her the body they now owned nor the body they had taken. It was in this room, she thought, with a painting of Andromache hanging and a few logs piled up by the fire and on the mantle a small, unfilled vial of sand from the Atlantic shore, it was in here that an entirety lived and died, with the storm outside fueling the great white machine in which they were all contained. He returned to his chair in a steady mechanical pulse as if retreating from she who had retreated herself from this great white machine that held all men, all women, all eyes.

It howled in the barren plain of ice that laid its carcass before her now. It howled on both sides of the skull, the fissure was too wide to ever mend, the holy land fell silent *but silence was all that came for nobody spoke* of her eyes gripped the widening sea that swallowed all it had created for she was born from water and to water she returns her legs paced the ice lightly *missing body* and here the swarm took distance and vultured above her from afar *don't go too far Anna how often she'd appear by the sea by the willow in the warmth of June the gravest month* here was far enough below was deep and dark enough for sight to be abandoned and contained to howl ostensible vast intangible heart *who took them from her the years the daydreams the blood puddled on the white ceramic the soul shrivelled the voice unheard in the great white machinery that shed her body shed* she had struck the lake with a fierce bite *shed the waves the salty summer fog come closer with each day shed* the pull *shed* the push inch by inch she cut open the frozen body *shed* she looked out and saw the storm *she looked in and saw the howl she was unable to shed* the opening formed cut by cut a million eyes said nothing *shed* nothing a million eyes did nothing *shed unborn body torn from the lake* exhaled the day was peaceful the perfect day to *shed* the empty solitude lured her to the hills these covered hills *these trustless hands now shed* all warmth *shed* all fabric *shed* hollowed body pregnant mind vast as water *shed the waves that wrapped around Anna her face eroded with what since had passed ungrowing shed* the mood held dawn away the moon the moon the belly of the sky nothing changed *shed* yet all grew within the foams of memory *the foams of the sea from which she was born to which she returns shed* what memory *shed* what truth Anna stood like always and *shed* her breath *shed* an entrance big enough to fit *her trustless body vacant body*





relinquished emptied life body no body just body.

The water took its first blue uneasy breath and she sighed relief. The howling ceased. The blindness grew. The moon peaked above the neatly tiled ice white as time, and she sunk into the quiet grasp of the unfathomable waters. As she flowed beneath a lonely thought appeared in her periphery as it had always done with the pinch that it had always had. *Anna* appeared as a few warping drops of air fled her mouth to be preserved beneath the ice, to be unheard and unreachable while pulsing their way through vanquished time until adopted by the silent and ceaseless water, to be kept endlessly in non-existence. Someone looking down at her through the ice would have seen her wide-eyed and smiling.





CHAPTER VI

RESOLUTION

memory, restoration, acceptance, motion, necessity





I CAN'T CHOOSE AND YOU WON'T

by Alisha Winter

Picking ice cream, I reached for his favourite still.
Oh, my goodness ! It's so crazy to run into you like this.
But I saw his reflection from across the aisle.
I can't remember the last time we saw each other,
He'd echoed in the frost. It was July 18th.
So, how have you been ? What's new ?
I begged to revert back to what was old.
I'm really happy to hear all that.
Hold my hand while we pick, please.
And I'm glad you're well.
Pull me into your arms to choose.
I'll see you around.
I missed you. Don't go again.
Cheers, friend.
The ice cream, unbought.



YES

by Trevor Gulliver

Say 'yes.'
A thousand times, say 'yes.'
To her first
and to her last,
say 'yes.'

In joining
and in parting,
in stopping
and in starting,
say 'yes.'

To body
and to wit,
say 'yes.'
To each
and every bit,
say 'yes.'

Let your answer
be a quick and ready 'yes,'
both to her
tentative caress
and if she hastens
to get dressed;
say 'yes.'

When she decides to end it,
or makes a rule then bends it,
and indulges to excess,
say 'yes.'

Let 'yes' be the word that greets her,
When her hungers defeat her.
Let 'yes' be on your lips
and in your fingertips.

Say 'yes.'

RESOLUTION

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WHEN YOU WANT TO BE LOVED DESPITE YOUR FOLLY, SAY THIS:

by Trevor Gulliver

Be my Sancho Panza
and come tilt
windmills with me
as they cartwheel across the sky.
Lay siege with me
to castles of ill repute.

Love me in and for my madness.
Love me in my folly.
Hold the reins as I wander far.
Bring me back
when I've wandered far.

Know that I will return
that which I demanded of you,
that which you gave in a love undeserved, a love I did not name or
recognize as such.

Know that I will return
from these quests,
quests to rescue
my heart from my head,
to rescue
our hearts from our heads.

Know that when giants and castles are windmills and inns again,
I will return with you.

I will return
with lowered head and broken
lance and remember you
were with me
when I sallied forth in dented armor on a skinny horse.



BEFORE XERXES

by François Gagné

His breath was the first to be chilled by the cold winter air,
tempestuous waves and winds racing to morning's wake,
fighting to stain the gilded surface of
a dirtied foot.

Below entangled nylon,
the current pressed on North.
The shores pushed back the stouthearted wave,
desperate to take the Mother Whale home.

He opens his lips,
pink-coloured clouds scudding through an exhausted sky
and in a wine-washed sigh,
could stall a rainfall in its drop.

He sang drunken notes of the unharmed lover,
sailing off to shallowest waters.
On his fingertip, a widowed man embraces his love
for the first time since his last.

Meanings dress themselves to the colour of his word.

And to the bitter cry of the aching moon,
as the sun that sank into an arrogant ocean pool,
like the wind that blows an opened door shut,
he was silenced;
blond locks no longer stirred to Boreas' dance,
though his sail would not welt,
he carried on, winds pushing him to stay still.



TWO DREAMS

by Jeremy Audet

To dance you towards edging skies
so to be known

that I am yours
and you forever time's own draw

As quietly the planet throws
the splitting moon

the dawning range
So to have danced you through each night

Yet as all mornings come with haste
so tolls the ebb

The sea departs
to dance you to the end of time

RESOLUTION

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CONTRIBUTORS

Alexandre Marceau

Alexandre Marceau often ponders beneath pine tree on cliff or up-top scaffolding, searching for movements behind city lights. He prefers to drink cloud than tap water; write with pen than keys; shake hands with you and me. Although a recent Bishop's graduate, he often wanders back to the confluence of two widening rivers, looking East towards the Scottish Highlands.

Alisha Winter

Alisha Winter is a third year Secondary Education student at Bishop's with a huge love for reading and writing. Often her fictional writing reflects everyday conditions through a sorrowful and sometimes bitter perspective despite her constantly positive mind-set.

Angela Leuk

Angela Leuck has published 8 poetry collections and edited numerous anthologies, the latest of which is *Water Lines: New Writing from the Eastern Townships of Quebec* (Studio Gerogeville, 2019). In 2018, she was artist-in-residence for the Lower North Shore. She moved from Montreal to the Townships 8 years ago and lives in Hatley with her husband the poet Steve Luxton.

Cécilia Alain

Cécilia is a second-year English student in Film & Media. She comes from Saint-Damien-de-Buckland, a tiny village hidden somewhere in the woods of Bellechasse, an hour away from Quebec City. Eight years ago, her family moved to Sherbrooke. After overcoming the shock of attending a high school that was more populated than her whole hometown, she started to love the benefits of city-life, especially when she discovered a cinema course that introduced her to the wonders of storytelling. She has been fascinated by the powers of words and images ever since and, once in a while, she tries to channel some of her imagination into her own stories.

Déborah Gobinet

Déborah Gobinet is the embodiment of an oxymoron. Unlucky with airplanes (or any form of transport for that matter), she loves traveling around the globe. A French soul yearning to find that *je ne sais quoi* as she stumbles her way out of life's unexpected events. It's probably how she came across the pages in this book, popping in and out, just like ads of illegal streaming services. Fortunately, she has great friends (who, in her eyes double as masochists) who do not let her let them down (even when she loses their passports in another country).





Elsa Cattelan

Elsa is a Bishop's student, graduating this year with a Biochemistry major and an English Literature minor. She spends way too much of her free time drawing, writes every now and then. Elsa enjoys nothing more than an evening with her cat on her lap and a good book.

Frank Willdig

Frank Willdig is a long-time resident of the Townships who enjoys writing poetry. He has published previously in *The Mitre*.

Heather Davis

Heather Davis grew up in Vancouver and now lives in Sherbrooke with her daughter and her husky. She completed her MFA in creative writing at UBC and teaches creative writing at Bishop's and Université de Sherbrooke. If you listen on a quiet evening, you will probably hear her laugh.

Jeff Parent

Jeff Parent is a proud dad, local poet, and a graduate of Bishop's University with a BA (hons) in English Literature and Creative Writing. A twice-winner of BU's Archdeacon F.G. Scott Prize in English for his poems, he was also a runner-up in the *The Fiddlehead Magazine's* 2016 poetry contest, and a finalist for the Words (on) Pages 2017 Blodwyn Memorial Prize. Jeff's poems have been published by *Montréal Writes*, *The League of Canadian Poets*, *The t&mz/Review*, *Bad Nudes*, and *Lemon Hound* amongst others. Jeff is expected to graduate from Concordia University in Spring, 2020 with an MA in Creative Writing.

Jeremy Audet

Write something funny. Something clever. A funny clever anecdote that shows how who you are. Write something so that in a hundred years some 22-year-old English major with a hard-on for archives looks you up and says "ha, that's funny" or, "ha, that's clever." Write something memorable. Or something unique like growing up around the world or hiking a volcano that one time. Write how you love Ginsberg and Whitman and Beckett and despise the modern coffee-shop-Instagram poetry people love reading while shitting. You shouldn't be writing this. Nobody should be writing this. Still, someone has to write something, right ?





Joel Ferguson

Joel Robert Ferguson grew up in the Nova Scotian village of Bible Hill and now divides his time between Winnipeg and Montreal, where he is finishing his Masters in English Literature at Concordia University. His poetry has most recently appeared in antilang mag, Arc, Contemporary Verse 2, The Honest Ulsterman, The Malahat Review, Meniscus, Orbis, Prairie Fire, Southward Journal, and Steel House Review. He is also the author *The Lost Cafeteria*, forthcoming from Signature Editions.

Joshua Hoekstra

Coming from small town Brockville Ontario, for Joshua Hoekstra university has meant saying yes to as many things as possible. In his own experience he has found that in confronting what we find challenging and uncomfortable is where the most personal growth is to be found. Amongst other things this attitude has manifested into a double major, skydiving license, a love for tattoos, playing rugby, planting trees in western Canada, working in various student positions and traveling. When not studying or planning his next adventure you can catch him reading a novel or watching anything fight related. After finishing his undergraduate education at Bishop's, he plans to pursue graduate studies in philosophy.

Kyle McKinnon

Kyle McKinnon is a first-year English Literature student at Bishop's, hailing from Hillsburgh, Ontario. A lifelong lover of storytelling and mystery, he is honoured to contribute to this year's edition of *The Mitre*.

Lia Robles

Lia Robles is a current student and soon-to-be graduate of Bishop's University. Though her major is in biology, stories are what gets her out of bed in the morning (the caffeine helps too). She spends her days procrastinating on doing science by writing and spends her nights procrastinating on both science and writing by watching Netflix. It's a wonder how she ever gets any science done at all. She hopes you enjoyed – or at least could relate to – her poem. It was written, quite fittingly, sometime around 3 am.

Linnie McGuire

Linnie McGuire is currently pursuing a major in Political Studies with a minor in English from Bishop's University. Hobbies include writing poetry, reading research papers, and staring blankly into the abyss.





Linus Mulherin

Originally from the Arctic town of Inuvik, in the Northwest Territories, but now living in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley, Linus Mulherin is a first-year English major at Bishop's University. He has two parents, two brothers, two dogs, and some friends.

Miranda Serrano

Miranda is a Filipino student from the U.A.E. This is her third year at Bishop's studying Secondary Education and English. A lot of her work is inspired by music, film, animation, fantasy and the horror genre. She hasn't been doing art for very long but she's doing her best.

Molly Stewart

Molly Stewart is a fourth-year Bishop's student completing her Honours degree in English Literature, with a minor in Classics. Hailing from the South Shore of Montreal, she spends her free time reading fantasy literature, dancing – particularly jazz and ballet – and collecting cute mugs. Though she does not often write creative prose, much of Molly's life is spent creating stories in her head, much to her high school teachers' chagrin.

Phillipe Gravel

I was raised to become a lumberjack, but found a shivering graphite pencil lost among a pit of balsam fir needles and thus decided to make it a companion of mine, in order to share my quiet venturesomeness and love for Nature. I found precious guidance in the work of Elizabethans such as Philip Sidney, and literary mentors in French surrealism (Guillaume Apollinaire, Rene Char, Max Jacob). W.B. Yeats' reference to the wheel of incarnations, as per his essay 'A Vision', also inspired me. Most of my poetry has been written in French, but I nonetheless pursue a persistent creative drive in English. I am an avid reader of all kinds, and a lifelong optimist.

Sally Cunningham

Sally Cunningham is a third-year English Literature honours student at Bishop's University. She co-edited the 126th edition of *The Mitre* and is thrilled to be published in this year's volume as well. Originally from Vancouver, B.C., Sally has written everything from poetry to short stories to screenplays to trash.



Sophia Cumming

Sophia Cumming is a fourth-year student from Calgary, Alberta, currently pursuing a double major in Secondary Education and Teaching English as a Second Language. When she is not writing poetry or studying, she is usually dancing, taking a walk, or fighting an ongoing battle against the silverfish in her apartment. Sophia is a fan of sunshine, coffee and the Rocky Mountains. She would like to thank the editors (for a job well done), her wonderful roommate Vic (for putting up with her interminable histrionics) and her parents (for showing her the wonder of the written word).

Theresa Graham

Theresa Graham is a third year Drama major, pursuing a double minor in Music & Film, and was born and raised in a (very) small town in Eastern Ontario. She embraces all art forms, but her favourite subjects to express in any media are people and relationships, especially when she can create visceral imagery that invites the observer to share in simultaneously blissful and gut-wrenching experiences.

Trevor Gulliver

Trevor Gulliver teaches in the School of Education at Bishop's University.

Victoria Gilbert

Victoria Gilbert was born in Quebec City, and grew up in Greenwood, NS. She is currently a second year student in English Literature and Education. She now resides in Chicoutimi in the beautiful region of Saguenay. She aspires to pursue a career as a young adult creative writer, as well as a Cégep professor. When she is not writing, Victoria prefers to read and physical pursuits.







THE EDITORS

Ocean Francoeur

Ocean is currently completing an Honors in English Literature. Born in Montreal and raised in the small town of Shawinigan, she moved to Sherbrooke for CEGEP and has stuck around ever since. She is currently working as both a research assistant and a grader for professors at Bishop's and is participating in the HEART & SOULS conference for the second year in a row. She plans to teach English at a University level one day, effectively confining herself to campuses for the rest of her life — but that's fine with her.

François Gagné

François is in his final year of completing an Honours degree in English literature with a minor in Creative writing and Journalism. Born in Sherbrooke, QC, François has worked for the English department as a research fellow for the years 2017-2019 and has been involved in many projects and events at Bishop's, including the Quebec University English Undergraduate Conference. Although he will be continuing his studies in a different field, the tools acquired during his years at Bishop's will shape both his personal and professional journey.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Aïda Sy

Aïda is currently finishing up her program in graphic design at the Cégep de Sherbrooke. While she was born and raised in Sherbrooke, she expects to further her studies in design in Montreal. She has always been passionate about design in all of its forms, and she hopes to edit high fashion magazines in the future.



