

MOVEMENTS & MUTATIONS

128TH EDITION



THE MITRE

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Movements & Mutations

128th ed.

Eds. Jeremy Audet and Veronica Mongiardo

Bishop's University

2021

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

We acknowledge the Abenaki people and the Wabanaki Confederacy, the traditional stewards and protectors of the territories upon which we are learning. In performing land acknowledgments, we make what was invisible visible and invite the land, the First Nations people, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into our conversations. This act of naming – of inviting something into language – is an underlying principle of advocacy and lies at the heart of higher education.

In institutions of higher learning, we have a responsibility to honour spaces for emerging and established voices to engage in productive, respectful, and sometimes even uncomfortable conversations where individuals are safe to speak truth to power, explore and challenge dominant ideologies, and call out injustices and inequalities in order to imagine new ways of existing.

DEDICATION

Thank you

To Dr. Shawn Malley, who guided us through the process and many challenges of putting together this edition.

To Reverend John Burkhart, whose generous donation was made in memory of his late wife Shirley Ann McLeod, the editor of *The Mitre* in 1961 and an avid supporter of the publication throughout her lifetime.

To Olivia Hamilton and Luke Munro, the graphic designers without whom *Movements & Mutations* would not have been such a beautiful success, and Tim Doherty, for his guidance and professionalism.

To the Students' Representative Council, whose funding has allowed *The Mitre* to continue on for decades.

To our contributors, who have made this edition a most powerful telling of how art persists in the face of unrest.

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EDITORS' NOTE

As editors of *The Mitre*, we have stood on the shoulders of past giants, of one-hundred and twenty-seven previous editions filled with insightful accounts, historical windows, moving poems, telling stories, and magnetic pieces of art. We stepped outside of ourselves and observed, from without, the ways in which the voices that echo out of our community reflect the stories that make up our collective identity.

Our creative vision for the 128th edition was inspired by a confluence of two rivers, one carrying the abundant and generous chronicles of past contributors to the journal, one driving the immensity of the past year. In looking to the future and what it may hold, we rooted our vision in the past and sought beacons, compasses, and maps. Collaborating on this project has allowed us both – regardless of our opposing styles and approaches – to draw out works that mirror the affective landscape we have all been navigating in the past few months.

We knew that this edition would be one that people would return to someday, wanting to learn about how the pandemic, the ongoing social crises, and the collapse of nature would permeate our art. As such, when going through the many submissions we received, we listened closely to the whispers and rumblings erupting out of our isolated bubbles, searching for belonging and connectivity.

Art holds a quality that is not found in factual attestations of the world. Art persists and carries with it an opening on human nature, evidence of who we are and how we see our immediate and grand surroundings, our changing lives, our physical and metaphysical understandings. When selecting pieces for publication, we identified the submissions that talked of that change, of that self, of that voice.

When editing the selections, we recognized the similarities and the contrasts, the parallels and polar opposites between different pieces. We identified six overarching themes that the selections embodied: coming-of-age, and intergenerational influences; unrest, and movements; yearning, and nostalgia. You will find elements of these grand ideas connecting in the three sections ahead, often with

harmony, often with friction, sometimes with both.

But, most of all, you will find the continuing proof that the human soul perseveres through hardship, that Art is determined to find a way into the forefront of our identities, and that *The Mitre* remains a testament to those resilient spirits.

Veronica Mongiardo & Jeremy Audet

A NOTE ON DESIGN

As graphic designers for the 128th edition of *The Mitre*, our vision focused on the many shifting interpretations of this year's theme, *Movements & Mutations*, in relation to the world we inhabit. We embodied this theme through the use of colour and imagery which each represent and symbolize the work provided by this year's contributors.

Our process in visualizing the cover came with a creative approach of sketching out ideas and forming our own judgment of *Movements & Mutations*' potential. The collective consciousness we've embedded within the contour lines of our cover lays out beautifully the ambiguity and the intentions of our theme, specifically bringing attention to the indistinguishable blank hand of one of the figures. We wanted to encourage each reader of *The Mitre* into deep questioning and reflection: Is it a fist? An open hand? Is it holding a flag? A banner?

We expanded our knowledge, determining how society currently views mutated ideals in our present world and transforming them through visual representations of colour. The blue alongside the orange on the cover represents the complementary visual approach that helped fuel our ideas. These colours help illustrate the powerful theme of change - a topic that is portrayed and amplified throughout the issue. As such, these artistic choices perfectly embody the tension exemplified within our world and the work created by our artists and writers in this year's issue.

Olivia Hamilton & Luke Munro

FOREWORD: A CAMPUS MYTHOLOGY

When I arrived in Edinburgh, I went to Armchair Books the day my two-week quarantine ended. Burrowed on a small street beneath the shadows of the Castle, I perused the bookshelves and, in the poetry section, found a hardback of F. R. Scott's *The Dance Is One*—editor for *The Mitre* in 1918-1919.

All the way from Bishop's.

While digitizing *The Mitre* with Dr. Claire Grogan in 2018-2019, a century later, it quickly occurred to me that this journal is our mythology. Since 1893, students have been capturing our campus history and esprit de corps—metaphysical cantations, hollers, attestations of art—and always striving to answer one question: Why write—and why here, in Canada? To our Editors, the accolades responsible for binding our mythos, I congratulate you: it is a challenging task to collate a volume of high-quality writing that yields the colours of thought and contemplation, those chief pleasures we procure from words (F. G. Scott, V1.7.89).

Our confluence.

The Bishop's student mustn't thumb through a Canadian anthology to explore the country's literary permutations—we can look inward. Until the 1930s, *The Mitre* served as both a campus newspaper (with updates from the various societies, athletics, alumni, etc.) and a sanctuary for the word, where many of its literary incursions reflected those across Canada. Similar to F. G. Scott's notions of a transatlantic and spiritual collective in "The Unbroken Line," we find that the First World War enlarged *The Mitre's* regional consciousness beyond the Townships and situated the Bishop's student within a Canadian and international framework. (Interestingly, copies of the journal made it to the trenches and entertained the tired fellows. I suggest visiting these volumes for letters from the front and photographs.)

Alone, together.

In conjunction with the modernist movement—pioneered by some Bishop's kin—and the inauguration of The Campus Newspaper in 1944, this explicit act of locating has since dwindled and become more fluid. After the Second World War, *The Mitre* stopped tracing the events of student life alongside literary curlicues and

tapered its focus to the arts, admonishing formalistic pedantry and gradually blowing traditional poetic forms asunder. Into these latter decades, our mythology oscillates between the psychological and physical machinations of identity and, like Brad Steinberg's "Cornered," many of these works still ring loud and clear.

A red brick medievalism.

As I write, a small painting of McGreer is propped up on my desk. Like Noni Howard, I often search for a home—a feeling—within the memories and words of our alma mater. I think of those moments while trodding alone on campus, my sight an amalgamation of my doings and those tall tales and fastidious dissertations written here—animals brought into dormitories; McGreer ablaze; boat races down the Massawippi at night; students cloaked in black robes with an ale in hand, repelling down ropes slung through Divinity windows—but I always ask myself: why the word?

Since it is here that most of us discover the wandering muse, a fundamental question falls upon the Bishop's writer: How will I contribute to our literary timeline? As in this exemplary issue, we have all sewn plethoras into the campus soil, so that when the annual flood again washes over Lennoxville, our seeds will germinate through cracks to remind us that we are part of a grand mythology that has flowed for 128 years and, will go on and on.

Alas, raise a toast.

Alexandre Marceau ('20)

return game with their Stanstead friends when towards the end of last term this team paid us their annual visit.

It may be remembered that the Co-eds had defeated them by 39-0 early in November. This time however the match was much more even though we still had the advantage in speed and combination, and—dare we add, perhaps in weight also, notwithstanding the fact that Miss Janet Ryan was ill and unable to play.

Though she is one of our best players Miss Erina Parker made a very good substitute and played a splendid game.

After the game tea was served in one of the lecture rooms. At this meal we were honoured by the presence of Dr. and Mrs. Bedford-Jones, and also by one of the freshman whose address was thoroughly enjoyed by us all. As usual, tea was followed by dancing until train time.

THE UNBROKEN LINE

We who have trod the borderlands of death,
 Where courage high walks hand in hand with fear,
 Shall we not hearken what the Spirit saith,
 "All ye were brothers there, be brothers here?"

We who have struggled through the baffling night,
 Where men were men and every man divine,
 While round us brave hearts perished for the right
 By chaliceed shell-holes stained with life's rich wine,

Let us not lose the exalted love which came
 From comradeship with danger and the joy
 Of strong souls kindled into living flame
 By one supreme desire, one high employ.

Let us draw closer in these narrower years,
 Before us still the eternal visions spread:
 We who outmastered death and all its fears
 Are one great army still, living and dead.

—CANON SCOTT.

THE UNBROKEN LINE (1921)

F. G. Scott

(noni howard)

GOING HOME

I

Freezing under
the death stare
of an eternal barber pole
blending its strips of blood and gauze
into the mechanistic darkness.

Lovers holding each other up
against each other,
one arm waving in the wind
on each side,
sliding and calling as pet birds
in a cage,
their flame so hot against the
arctic furnace of their warmth.
The vortex of their social love unending,
unending until
the inconvenient illumination
coming a short time later.

And always the giant's finger
of white smoke
deadly, silent as the night itself,
faces raw breath at the back of the throat
and leaves its stinger
deep to pull out by the numb fingers.
The night petrifies everything it
seeps into and finally, breathes upon.

II

I am going home
to my solitude of memories
where their spark shall light the passion in my
snow cold body.
I am travelling back
into the womb
of slumbering nostalgia.

My dead friends
walk with me at every step
the hollow footsteps behind my ear
and once in a while they take my elbow
and lead me to where I should
follow them,
closer.

I am almost home now.
I would invite you to come in
but you belong to others,
others and the present,
the wild lights.

I do not know if you would like my home.

GOING HOME (1971)

Noni Howard

The Mitre 1994-1995

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CORNERED

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

brad steinberg

CORNERED (1995)

Brad Steinberg

Window Sill

By: K. King

What is a window sill?

Is it simply a ledge,
rudely jutting out from
a window?

Or is it purposefully placed
to support the little trinkets
that I refuse to cast away?

Is it a ridge whereon I can
precariously stand and look
down into a deep abyss of
nothing?

Or is it a stepping stone into
another reality?

Does the window sill seal
itself against the uncertainty
of the unknown?

Why does a window even need
a sill?

Is it simply a support for
your weak, cancer consumed
body?

Or does a barren sill remind
you of a bereft womb,
an empty house?

WINDOW SILL (2011)

K. King

“Young mind, beacon”

-Alexandre Marceau

WEIGHED DOWN

Kendra Buchner

quarantine fifteen +
freshman fifteen =
the dirty thirty
in the roaring twenties?
more like the Great Depression.



BEAM ME UP Watercolour and ink
Ocean Francoeur

OLD GUY

Steve Luxton

Fall, and in the gold-spoked late afternoon
He rambles down to the village,

Ears on the honks of departing geese,
But also the crackle of his knees.

Footing it downslope with unwanted speed,
He feels like maybe, for him, it's all over,
But also a bit like a set-free kid.

Most of his life is behind,
A long shadow stretched back on the road,
Though some still lies ahead, shining
And undisclosed.

Up toward him climbs
The local, country school bus,
Yellow and granddaddy-ish.
Same old design, as if in sixty years,
Less than you'd think has changed.

He considers waving, taking a try
At talking his way aboard,
As if to start the whole shebang over.

Begins to raise his hand then remembers,
The kids are finished for the day
And about to get *off*, not on.
It'd just be giving an old guy
A helping ride back to where he belonged.

The driver slows, then hoots
The horn and passes.
In the windows, kids grin or pull faces.

AKIMBO

Josh Quirion

It was a Thoreau phase. I must've been fifteen or sixteen, and I was flying—spiritually speaking. The shelter I built in the woods looked like a forsaken C-minus (at best) woodworking project. While I was out fishing and doing whatever else I figured forest folk did, Pops came by, against my most explicit orders, to improve my shelter. I pretended not to notice the structure had been reinforced, the roof water-proofed, or that candy and magazines had been left on the ground. Truth was, I wasn't too good at being free. It was hard to feel close to God on an empty stomach, with fire ants crawling up my ass. But when I was fifteen or sixteen, I'd sooner have pierced my own cheek with a fishing hook and cast myself overboard than admitted that living deliberately was a *helluva* lot more work than I thought. My spiritual Thoreau phase started on a Saturday morning and ended on a Sunday afternoon. Turned out, I was even worse at fishing than shelter-building, and my store of candy was gone by Saturday night. Thoreau would've eaten the ants, I thought. Oh, well. Disappointed and hungry, I walked home. When I got there, Mum and Pops were standing on the porch, arms akimbo, smiling and drinking lemonade. They looked to be living pretty damn deliberately, in my reformed opinion.

The Marxist phase came after that. I was a CEGEP student at Champlain Regional College. Ms. Harris's curriculum (toughest in the department, so it was said) included *Animal Farm*. After I finished reading it, a schoolmate recommended "The Manifesto," which Mum and Pops told the shrink is what turned me into a little commie. I was better at organizing than fishing and building shelters, that much was certain. I founded CRAP, the Champlain Riot Association for Politics, which was disbanded the year after I graduated. Antidisestablishmentarianism, like living deliberately, was a *helluva* lot more work than I could have predicted. So, I donated all my Marxist literature to the Lennoxville library and retired from critical theory.

Then, there was the Animal Rights phase in university. This, I thought, would be rather straightforward. My involvement would be limited to practice and principle, not organization. For months,

I ate nothing but free-range eggs and about half-a-dozen sweet potatoes a day. Things were swell until I developed a paralyzing infatuation for Bishop's University's PETA representative (who, I'll admit, never requited my sentiments). A week later, I was incarcerated overnight for releasing four chickens in the Golden Lion Pub on Wing Night—a stunt that earned me a feature in *The Campus*: "Animal Rights Activist Tortures Chickens: Doesn't Fly the Coop." I was placed on academic probation and labeled a "radical." The PETA people renounced me, saying I acted alone and without the support or sanction of the organizing body. When I was released from prison the next morning, I went to Provigo and bought a steak for breakfast.

After grad school came the nine-to-five phase. And that, essentially, is where you look back on all the phases of your life with yearning and cast yourself into that old territory of your mind: the shelter, the CRAP meetings, the animal rights representative. All of these, you think to yourself, all of these are dominos. And you wonder, *is this the last domino in the set?* But, eventually, you understand one of the absolute truths of the universe ... that things are and always will be just that: what they are. You make your peace with domino metaphors.

These days, I'm taking a break from phases. I'm standing on the porch, arms akimbo, drinking lemonade and smiling at my boy, who is returning from the woods.

RAFAEL AND LUCAS AND ALEX AND YOU

Maria Clavelli

If I ever have kids, I'll make sure to have more than one. I'll teach them about community, inclusion, and love, and how to open your house but also your home. I'll teach them the importance of compromise and charity, and how far a single "how are you?" can go to someone who's in need. For even though I am thankful and I do forgive you, I will never forget the days you made me hide.

If I ever have kids, I'll teach them how to speak. Not only to repeat long-lost stories, but also to share original memoirs of a life lived in full. There would be no room for wordless threats or incident reports, much less cold shoulders and closed doors. I would break all the jars in the house, not a single vessel left for anybody to bottle themselves up. How could you call that living, screaming from within your glass display? With nobody to reach you and nobody to touch, no room for walking or growing, or to hold anything but a grudge. How could you breathe in that air, condensed with anger and hate? What do you exhale? I only know it scorches, scalding skin and burning bridges, all six feet apart.

If I ever have kids, I'll raise them in a house full of music and voices and laughs, so the sound of footsteps at night will never be more than a mindless hum. The beat of the bassline will make their hearts want to dance and remind them of what it feels like to live around friends. Because who would they be, if they believed they should silence others to succeed? I want them to know tolerance, but not so much that they withstand abuse. I want them to know what it's like to enjoy a victory, but not so much that they look down upon those who don't. I would rather them breaking a rule than themselves, and God forbid they fall victims to civil unrest, get smothered by someone else. Because how do you measure sacrifice? How can you tell who has given up the most? Is it he who is left alone, having driven everybody away on their own? Or he who's left with a couple, having given up so much more? How could you know? How could you dare to judge? There's so much grey that lives between black and white.

If I ever have kids, I would let them be kids. Because you were never a child. Never a woman. Never a friend. You were an indifferent enforcer of an abstract code, a ruler to measure others by, the Yellow Queen making decisions over her kingdom. But it was never yours to begin with. It was supposed to be ours, and theirs, and everybody else's. But you strung up your banners and laid down the law, building walls to keep an invisible enemy at bay. But who could stop you with fear as your right hand man? *Are you not afraid?* How could I be scared of the outside when hell lives inside my house? When the flames make it hard to breathe? No, it's not the enemy that's at work. It's your anger and pride and the toxic fumes seeping from underneath your door, poisoning our friendship and our home.

If I ever have kids, I'll tell them about this. About the loneliness and the pain and what it's like to be walled in. I will do my best to give them all the tools they need to build what they will, but in the end, it is up to them: they can choose to dance and they can choose to rule, and there is little I'd be able to do. Little but look back and make sure I taught them one thing -- to not be like you.



DISSOCIATION Watercolour and ink
Camille Cattelan

IF I DARE

Mercedes Bacon-Traplin

It is a silent morning
As though the very air
Has thickened like cotton
Muffled ears and hushed trees
Barren,
Stripped of their greenhood
Shivering in the November breath
It seems we all tread lightly
Careful not to disturb the sleeping frost
Wrapped tightly around the pathways
And fast asleep in gentle slumber

I called my mother yesterday
And told her of my going's-on
It was nice to tell her of nothing
And hear her smile through the phone
I dare not
I dare not
Call my father and tell him the same
Crack the jokes I do with my mother
Only to hear crackling silence
On the other end
Disappointed

What if I were to ask for mercy,
Or dare to not care anymore?
Would I meet the end of a saddened gaze
A crinkled face in distaste
I would sit on the edge of a solo bed
And touch the cold second pillow
If I dared to ask
To touch
To kiss
Would I only meet a confused face,
Or amused

Telling me I'd imagined it all,
I'd dreamt it all?

The stripped bare trees mock me
The sounds of their laughter too
Muffled and quiet
I am careful not to disturb
Not to walk quickly
I dare not
I dare not
Glance too frequently at the clock
Or tap my foot impatiently
Lest they tell me I am arrogant
Greedy for time
Eager to swallow my life whole
If I dared to run
Would I fall off the earth?

Tomorrow I'll stretch my aching back
And wake in a solo bed
Bite back tears of fury
Or sorrow
I will wear a warmer coat
Fur trimmed and nicely made
I will walk a sleepy path
Curled in silent wind
Will I dare to ask?
To touch?
To kiss?
Will I dare to fall off the earth?
And if I did
Fall through that endless sky,
Would the stars accept me just the same?

BU v. CU

Janan Chan

I left her on read &
went to the basketball game anyway,
reading *Werther* between quarters;

our girls won 90-78
She appeared second game
when our boys played,

asking what held my tongue
I could make no gesture
She asked if I was a monk now

I bowed & she bit her lip
I kept silent the whole game
She cheered with her friends

When the game was over,
I nodded goodbye
but found no will to speak

HOW TO FALL FROM GRACE

Leo Webster

Dear Victor,
I'm leaving you.
I suppose you want a reason. I suppose you want me to be logical about this. I imagine you'll follow me to the ends of the earth no matter what I say.

Let me tell you the story of the day we went to the museum. You probably think you already know this story, but did you ever know how I felt?

It was a cold day, early January, before your classes started again. Maybe that's why you were anxious, pacing the carpet as if you wanted to wear it threadbare. If you were in a less impulsive mood, you wouldn't have taken me out. We hardly ever left the apartment. We certainly didn't do anything for fun.

We walked down the street to the subway station, breath trailing in the air. I was wearing your old coat that was too small for me. No one paid any attention to us. We disembarked across the street from the Museum of Fine Arts. It was snowing lightly and you towed me along while I tried to catch the flakes on my mittens.

Once we were inside, you took a brochure and led me through the labyrinth of quiet rooms. Above our heads, skylights allowed glimpses of the gray sky. It was clear you didn't need the brochure – it was clear you expected me to see something.

We stopped in front of a large painting of a young man holding the reins of straining horses. The taut muscles of the youth's body pulled against the animals, his limbs pale in the stormy light. He was nude except for a small cloth around his waist.

You might say that was the moment I first knew shame. I glanced around the gallery, afraid that other people might judge us for looking at this picture. You wrapped your arms around me, leaning against my back. It was an odd thing to do, since I'm taller, and you could barely see the painting. Your breath was warm against the back of my neck.

We walked arm in arm, making a good show of being lovers. I was conscious of your touch for the first time. An old man glared at us, but perhaps he was merely shortsighted. In an adjacent room, as you were tugging me towards some sculpture, I glimpsed a painting of a crowd of men. The two central figures stood with their lips almost touching. One's face was contorted with fury and the other's with something like regret. Other men heaved around them, pointing, stabbing, shouting.

"Alastor," you said. "Did you know that the Ancient Greeks believed there were perfect proportions for the male body?"

It occurred to me then that something was at stake. If not the soul, then certainly the body. I know what you think. You think I'm afraid to consummate whatever it is we have. You think I'd rather give myself to anyone else. Is that not reason enough to leave?

"Perfect how?"

"Just perfect. In every way."

"Why do you care what the Greeks think?"

You gesticulated at a sculpture of a young man. "Do you not feel anything when you look at this?"

I felt myself descending into a haze of confusion, like I was walking down an endless staircase and with every step it got darker. The world would never be fully light or fully dark again.

"If I felt something, would it matter? It's a sculpture. It's not real."

You touched my face, "But now it is real."

We walked through the gallery. I felt detached from my surroundings. I didn't want to make sense of it, because then I would have to make myself fit in amongst everything else.

We walked home in the winter dark. The streetlights cast orange circles and ambiguous shadows on the new snow. You pressed close to me on the stairs up to the apartment. In the kitchen, you turned on the light and got a bottle of wine from the cabinet.

"Did you have a nice afternoon?"

"Yes."

"It wasn't as nice as I'd hoped."

Writing your words now, you sound like a manipulative son of a bitch. And you are, but I know you didn't think of it that way. You genuinely expected that everything would be perfect just like

you imagined. You had a quality of visualizing everything as you wanted it to be. It gave you a tragic aspect because the world was constantly falling short. I still feel bad, even now, for bringing so many of your dreams to a close with one blow.

You stood facing the stove, which I thought was odd, since there was nothing to see in that direction.

“Alastor, I love you. I know you don’t understand what I mean. I’d hoped you would figure it out on your own. I think maybe the museum was the wrong tactic.”

It’s ironic, since I was beginning to understand at that moment. You were right, as always, but not patient enough to wait for me to catch up to you.

You kissed me and I would be a liar if I said it didn’t excite me. But I made no indication that I wanted you, and to your credit, you did not force yourself on me.

Our bathroom mirror captured my image from the waist up. I tried to understand the relationship between this body and me, and I understood it was a reflection of you more than anything.

I suppose we all have to deal with the mystery of creation. Even you. At some point you must’ve realized that two fools had put themselves together for lack of anything else to do. That was the answer to the cosmic mystery of *why me?* and *why now?* I fear my own mystery is just as transparent, if much less conventional.

I guess what I’d like to tell you is that being created with a purpose is the worst thing that can befall any being. You knew it instinctively, like when you told me it was disgusting that the rats you dissected were bred for that end, but you hardly mentioned the human cadavers.

I hope that you didn't create me to serve a carnal purpose. Even so, assuming this was all a naïve experiment, you can't ask me to live up to your expectations. When a figure steps out of a painting or a statue gains life, the magic spell is broken. They become nothing more than human beings who wear themselves out like the rest of us.

Think about it this way: I'm saving you from the worst pain of all. You don't have to watch your dreams falter and fail in front of you. You can live in a perfect world and leave the rest for me.

Yours,
A.



ELUSIVE Acrylic on canvas

Maïthé Cyr-Morin

THINGS THAT WERE RED

Sally Cunningham

I.

“Would you like some more, good sir?”

I’m about six, and I serve tea to my teddy bear at the coffee table. We’ve both dressed up for the occasion, me in a silky, ruffled, spaghetti-stained princess dress, and him with a tiara. The tea in question is my special recipe: one part liquorice tea, one part shiny sugar cube, let rest for 45 minutes or until cold. I get to use our picnic set from the wicker basket and it feels special. The grooved cup clinks in the saucer as I lean across to give Teddy a sip. I pour the contents of the tiny cup into his stitched face. A pinkish-red stain blooms.

I say it for him: “That sure is tasty!”

II.

I’m underneath the ironing board as my mom presses her fancy blue shirt for tonight. She has a gig, and I’m not allowed to go because I’m only eight. From under the board, I can see her ankles which feed into thick black pants and hear the *hisssss* of the iron up above (I’m not allowed to touch). There are Elmo stickers on the legs of the ironing board. They’re my secret, my mom would never lie down to see them under this ceilinged mess of metal legs. I don’t know when I put them there, I haven’t had Elmo stickers since I was a little kid (I’m proudly eight, practically a grown-up) but now I run my fingers over the edges, tracing to see if there’s any give. They’re glued on tight, his red-painted fur worn from my fingers and the performances of this same ritual. Elmo grinning giddy, me under the board, my mom reaching over methodically pressing the wrinkles out.

III.

You see the rug and immediately think *garish*. That it's childish, no, *childlike*. A big circle made for sitting, with swirls of ice blue and pasty green carved into a big honking red rug. You see the divots from where the dining room table normally sits, moved off for some occasion or dance party. You can't smell it, and you're glad for it. Stepping into the centre you feel the comfort of a home rug, the plush centre protected by the underbelly of the table, reserved for dangling dinnertime feet and a cat that begs. The rug grows on you, like it grew me.

IV.

"We have to paint the wall. No one looking to buy will want such a statement," my mom tells me at breakfast.

"The red one? But I love it."

"I know, it is fantastic. People want neutrals when they're moving in, though," she moves to hold my hand, hating to upset me in any way. A movement born of single-parenthood.

"Will we have to get rid of the texture too?" I ask, leaving her hands to run mine over the rough ruby wall in question.

"I don't think so."

"Can it at least be green?"

INSOMNIA

Frances Cameron

In late August or early September, as the last of the sun began disappearing behind the mountains, she grabbed a lawn chair and perched in her favourite spot facing the water. Luckily her fingers no longer resembled prunes, but her hair was still slightly damp, and she was eagerly anticipating tonight's fire. She desperately wanted to deny that first wind of crisp autumn air for just one more night. It was always precocious and always inevitable; a lack of control she could only be comfortable with after learning the tangible reasons the leaves fall and the town is sprinkled in white until the rain washes it away again.

Sometimes she would stare straight into the flames for so long she wouldn't even notice the total darkness that crept in to surround her. She was suddenly unable to see the cabin only fifty feet away and could only distinguish the line between the mountain range and the sky by the stars scattered through the upper silhouette of black. It was time to step out of one warmth and into another, and so she followed the light of the headlamp and the sound of larger footsteps into the realm of toothpaste, sleeping bags, and bug spray. As always, she stared from behind the tiny screen door window beside her bed, and they sat around the fire, way past her bedtime, speaking words she did not yet have the privilege of hearing. The only sounds that carried over into the cabin were belly laughs and occasional snippets of ridiculous play fights — battles her contrarian nature would later enjoy facing in the same style. Although acutely aware of the insignificance of the dispute, she was amused by the sport of it all and her adversary's increased frustration.

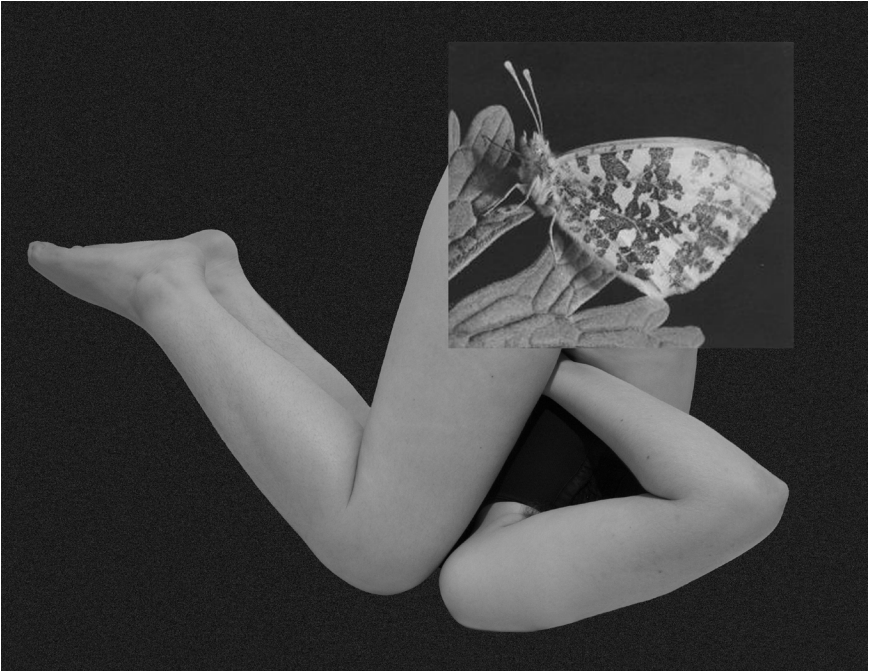
Their wide-eyed stares that created memories of memories she was not a part of seemed to serve her less as actual entertainment, but more so as the last available distraction. A spectacle available right in her own backyard. The show was not needed during the day—that was covered by dragonflies and hula hoops and rolling dice. But as soon as Cassiopeia would show her face and the marshmallows were stored out of reach and the pleas for one last bedtime

story were refused, restlessness would occur in the most peculiar and unsettling form. It was not exactly sadness, but that was the most comparable emotion she knew of. As if she was mourning a death that had not yet occurred or grieving something she had never lost. It couldn't possibly be fear, for when you are surrounded by your greatest protectors in the world there is no reason to be scared. So, she silenced it, over and over again — making the emotion bound to seep into every crevice of her experiences to come.

Some nights, there would be no fire. Those were the worst nights. With the adults inside, it meant she would have to remain as silent as possible, which also meant she would have to make sure she was breathing more steadily than usual. Noticing her own breathing patterns made her irritated. In the cabin, it was harder to tell when the footsteps were getting closer. A single creak in the floorboards and she would shut her eyes quickly and carefully place her hand haphazardly beside the pillow; just enough for production value. Perhaps it was obvious, perhaps they always knew she was awake. No matter, those brief moments of harmless deception made her feel as if she were contributing to something — that her actions had a cause and effect directly impacting her environment.

It would not be until many years later, after CDs and sports and cell phones and sweet sixteens and theatres and liquor and planes, that she would again experience that exact indescribable feeling. And for the first time in a long time, she began asking herself the same questions she had years before: *Is the Earth actually so small that it sits in a bottle on someone else's mantelpiece? In an even bigger universe? How many other people are thinking exactly what I'm thinking right now?* Those little flames her eyes would get lost in had now spread into a wildfire, aware of every forest around the globe and having an intense desire to burn them. It would not matter how much she learned about changes in the weather or how many constellations there were in the sky. An excess of activities to guarantee exhaustion by nighttime could only last so long, and no amount of concrete information or abundance of mindless distractions would ever make the gap between bedtime and sleeping disappear. Nothing had really changed. But there was something

about the crackling fire that was perfectly sorrowful and beautifully untouchable. It was comfortable to be restless. Perhaps that was alright.



HEBETIC Digital collage
Kayleigh Higgins

NOVATURIENT

Victoria Gilbert

Riding in the passenger seat of a Cadillac, I watch the city signs pass like shooting stars. At times, I see the segmented yellow line become a full one. Other times I can see adolescents attempting to race us. Further down the boulevard we meet a stop sign. A jacked Honda halts beside my dad's loser-cruiser. The excited faces of the backseat passengers, the boyish smirk of the pilot, and the roaring of the engine incite a race. Their car accelerates, leaving a cloud of dark smoke, and I hear cries of adrenaline, resembling the ones they screech while taking on the rich man's best friend: cocaine. Apparently the snorting hurts, but how would I possibly know that? The youth in that boosted automobile don't see what I see. Those teens see fun, they see games, but most importantly they see right now. They don't see tomorrow nor do they wait for it or think about it. They think of the head-banging dirt they're gonna inhale in their nostrils tonight, and boy do I idolize them as they continue their acceleration with crazed smiles and eccentric shouts. The only girl in the car is shouting and screaming of laughter, half of her body out of the roof of the roaring vehicle.

As we reach the exit for the city, my dad turns to me and says he's glad I have some sort of class and don't wander into stupid activities, but his eyes slide down to my small elbow tattoo. My dad thinks that my having a tattoo is bad, but he doesn't know I experimented with shrooms the night of its birth. A very conservative guy, my dad. I have other tattoos, but I keep them hidden. We reach downtown Montreal, and the sun's darkest orange rays appear during its ascension. The car stops, indicating that we've arrived at the shake shack. I grab my bag and my phone and walk towards Jerry — the coolest guy around town — as he smokes a cigarette. I wave my dad goodbye, and as the car distances itself from us, I hurry inside, remove my tacky dress, and swipe on the leather jacket and ripped jeans I always keep under a bench in the shack. Back outside, I take out my cigs and ask Jerry for a light. In his sexy, raspy voice he says: "Your father know you smoke there, bud?"

“No. Even if he did I wouldn’t care. What’s it to you anyway?”

Ever since Jerry, the dangerous, cool boy, offered me a smoke at the shack a few years ago we talked about what it’s like to live a free life. One that isn’t dictated by our parents and the authority figures in our lives. Sometimes he would bring up the girls he had been with the night before — every week a different prey. Often he calls up his friends, Mick and Cal, for some good ole line sniffing and the occasional heroin injection. I didn’t get in that stuff, I was into smoking ciggies and drinking whiskey; courtesy of the grand allowance I received from my dad every week. What a guy. He probably thinks I use it on clothes and books; I don’t give a shit about those things, but he doesn’t know that.

It’s 2am, and the cool Montreal air gets to me. I call an uber to avoid disturbing my dad during his sleep. Five minutes later, a yellow Prius arrives by the sidewalk, and some old, strange-looking bearded man motions with his dark eyes for me to get in the back seat. I hop in, not really caring about the consequences. On the ride home, he runs four red lights and doesn’t execute a single stop sign before stopping the car at the gate guarding my house. I get out of the Prius and scan my index finger on the keypad behind the bush. The iron gate opens outward, and as it does it reveals an enormous Victorian house, with pillars holding a second story balcony over the main entrance. I open the large wooden door, place both feet onto the welcome mat, and throw my bag by the staircase.

“Hey! How many times have I told you to always put your bag away in your room, young lady?” I hear my dad ask from the living room.

“Matilda can clean it up, that’s what we hired her for,” I reply with the most arrogant tone possible.

I don’t completely ignore my dad; I go down the few steps I had climbed, pick up my bag, and place it directly in front of him as he watches TV. He gives me a horrid frown, and I cannot help myself from bursting out laughing right in his face. I mount the marble staircase, head to the first bedroom on the left and throw myself on my king-sized bed.

Jerry calls me at about 1am the following Friday.

“Wanna do some’ crazy?” he asks.

“Hmm, like?”

“Meet me at the shack in twenty and you’ll see,” he hangs up.

I never know with Jerry, but that’s what’s exciting about his presence and being. I open my window to sneak out by the fire escape and walk to the bus stop. When I get to the shack, Jerry, Mick and Cal are waiting for me by their cars with beers in hand. Noticing me, Mick puts his beer bottle on the roof of his Pontiac all the while slowly making his way to me.

“You know what’s happenin’ tonight, right?” he says.

“Nah, but it’s probably some dumb stuff,” I reply.

“I don’t want you gettin’ into no trouble, I wouldn’t want you hurt.”

“What’s a lil’ risk there bud?” I say, proving that we are friends and that he shouldn’t be afraid of getting me hurt..

Cal and Jerry come up to us. I can tell by Jerry’s facial expression that he’s planned something bigger tonight than smoking crack and getting utterly drunk. The boys decided they wanted to change up their hobby from druggies to arsonists, planning to burn an abandoned bus in the junkyard just for the fun of it. I don’t want to lose my reputation with the boys, especially not Jerry, so joined in.

“Don’t worry, babe,” he says while gently placing his hand on my upper thigh and sliding his index up and down, up and down. He can see I’m stressing out and tries to comfort me the only way he knows how: physically.

We arrive at the junkyard where there are three decommissioned school buses and multiple rusted cars flipped over. Jerry stops the vehicle and gets out first, followed by the boys. At this point I am feeling insecure and cautious about the consequences that may come from this midnight adventure. That’s a first. Mick pulls out the gasoline tank he hid under Jerry’s seat. Cal had brought a magazine; he probably figured this was going to be boring. Jerry reaches in the passenger compartment and grabs a pack of matches.

“Mick, pour some of that shit onto the busses. All of them.”

“Yeah my guy, the whole thing?”

“Yes, the whole thing.”

Mick throws most of the gasoline onto the scrapped vehicles then proceeds to throw the tank into one of them. Jerry sparks a

match, advances towards the gasoline path, and drops the flame. It does not take long until the fire ignites and the busses drown in inferno. The heat of it reddens my cheeks and brightens my eyes. The boys hurry into the car, and I stand there, mesmerized by the growing flames. Sirens. Lights. Adrenaline. The sirens wail in the distance, and I can feel them heading our way. Behind me. An engine starts. Jerry, Mick, and Cal leave me stranded as cops and fire-fighters surround me.

“You’re getting arrested for arson now?” My dad asks, unbelieving..

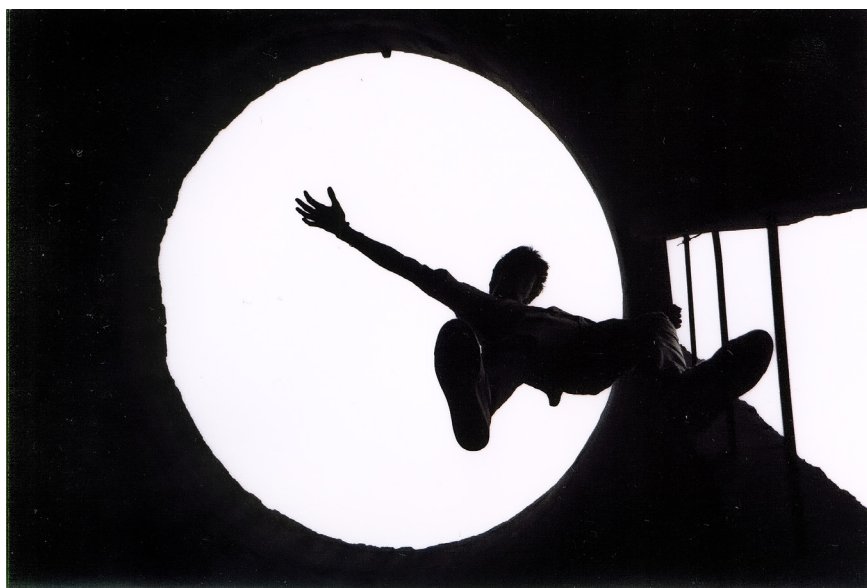
“Bad place wrong time?” I answer bravely.

“No. This is unacceptable. I don’t recognize you anymore. You are such a *good girl*, this isn’t what your mother and I want for you, to be running around with good-for-nothing boys, causing havoc!” He yells.

“I get it.”

“No you don’t! Look at what you’ve become!”

“It’s not who I’ve become, dad.” With those words, I wave my father goodbye, place my bag on my back and exit his mansion.



ICARUS Film photograph
Luke Munro

CRYBABY

Josh Quirion

I didn't think I was that emotional, until I started crying during Creed's halftime show at the 2001 Super Bowl, which, to this day, is widely held as the worst Super Bowl halftime show in the history of Super Bowl halftime shows. I am Canadian and don't much care about American football ... or rock music, for that matter. But, there I was, crying, while the bald, shirtless aerial dancer floated high above Scott Stapp. I knew I was more emotional than, say, my brother, Johnny, who once suffered a compound fracture and toyed with his protruding bone on the way to the hospital, casually talking to our father the whole time, while I cried in the back seat. Johnny never cried, and I mean *never*. I also cried at funerals—anybody's. I'd try to swallow the sentiments, but they'd only bubble up again, boiling, begging to leave my body. Pushing them inward was as useless as trying to shove a mastiff into a can of Pringles. So, people would approach me, taking my hand and extending their condolences, even though I had never met the cold body resting in the coffin on the altar. The cold body's bereaved family would eye me, unsure who I might've been to their dearly departed: a former student? a surreptitious pen pal? an estranged lover? Our family doctor was convinced I'd developed something called pseudobulbar. I was prescribed a couple different pills, which did nothing at all to modulate or regulate my "condition." They only somehow made my tears sweeter. In 2004, when NASA's robotic geologist rovers, Spirit and Opportunity, landed on Mars to explore the planet's surface and all, I realized that my emotions were also very much alive for inanimate objects; in my defense, NASA nicknamed Opportunity, "Oppy." I mean, come on! Spirit ceased all communication in 2010, and I genuinely think not one person in the world was as shaken by the little fella's being stuck up there as I was. When I found out about the situation, I took my wooden Spirit model up Mount Pinacle and buried him, (ugh!) it, at the very top, as close to the stars as possible. Oppy held on for another eight years. Then a dust storm got him, and he, too, stopped responding to signals from Earth. At that point, I was older, a student at Champlain Regional College [a note here, that upon reading of Boxer's death in

Orwell's *Animal Farm*, I dropped Ms. Harris's class] but I still had the wooden Oppy model in my room. I drove home to Baldwin, climbed Mount Pinacle, and buried him, (!) it, alongside Spirit. I said a few words, cried many tears, and bade the boys farewell. I'd grieved for the two brave, departed metallic explorers, made my peace. But, two years later, I was watching a TV show called *Sons of Anarchy*, and this character named Opie came into the mix, and he fucking died, too! That character(a father and a loyal friend)'s demise, combined with my history of feelings about rover Oppy's fate, dropped me into one of the lowest moments of my life. And don't even get me started on Gord Downie. Anyway, point is, up until last year, I had very fragile floodgates for tear ducts. Then, something happened. My brother Johnny was in a bad car accident on Autoroute 10. He was placed in a medically induced coma for sixty days. I spent fifty-three of those days with him at the hospital. I cried for the first thirty-seven days, and then ... nothing. I didn't cry again after that. I'd look at him, intubated and yellow and weak, and I couldn't feel a thing. I watched Oppy and Opie videos on YouTube to jumpstart my feelings, but nothing, nothing, nothing. Crybaby, gone.

When Johnny woke up and saw me sitting there, his eyes were full of tears.

BENCH ON CAMPUS

Janan Chan

Near his Convocation,
Adam's doing rounds
for Student Safety

I'm loitering, so I join him
He walks me around campus,
or maybe I walk him

Before Bishop's, he worked
as a high school janitor, and
he'd be the first of many

well-read custodians
I'd have the pleasure
of getting to know

We never talked directly
about our feelings
but with reference

to *things*—

his phone background, for instance,
of Van Gogh's "Prisoners Exercising;"
or an anecdote about his friend

Dris, whose shoes Adam once borrowed
and walked in some distance
to grasp the phrase

"walking in someone else's shoes"

He read Continental philosophers
whose works I'd never read,
but to whose names I nodded

as if I understood

I asked questions like:
what does it mean
“will to power”?;

what do we do with all this life?

With time, his answers
became less relevant
as I generated my own

I questioned only texts
and never conceived
that there'd be more to life

than this

My concerns were death
and sadness
Where does time go?

Can I stay in school forever?

He sits me down on a bench
across Abbot and shows
his carved name on the seat

from the first year
he lived
in that residence

He says he had a friendship
like ours in the past
wherein he, too, posed questions

to an older student
but with time
found the answers incomplete

In his first few semesters at Bishop's,
Adam was like me:
tentative

self-conscious
abstracted
grappling

with the wants of the heart

Then his friend graduated & Adam
was alone

He had to apply
what he had learnt
to his life

He tells me
to rest longer
on the bench

THE COUNTRIES WE CARRY IN OUR TROUSERS

Alexandre Marceau

Bruntsfield Avenue, Edinburgh. Late January evening. I can't help but think of Montreal, surely sleeping beneath a thick blanket of snow, the air cold and dry, tree limbs naked. The night here is dark and thick, wet, and the cobbles shine like fish gills beneath the streetlamps. It was fall when I arrived, though only a slight shift in the colour of the leaves gave any hint that time had passed. Fall innocuously slipped into winter after four long days of rain, when a faint light bulb fell from a cord through the uncertain clouds.

Earlier on the street below, a man slipped on the ice while his girlfriend seemingly clung to his arm, saving the groceries instead of his tailbone. A woman cried out at them from a third-storey window of the tenement to keep quiet, and a group of young boys huddled beneath a doorway out of sight. I chuckled. These sights aren't any different from Montreal. The language, perhaps, and the age of the buildings, but all else is quite similar.

After meeting a few people here, it occurred to me that some of us have moved enough times to understand that certain floorboards beneath our skimpy floor mattresses are more forgiving than others. Perhaps like some of them, I had noticed mouse droppings on the carpet near my pillow after my first restless night. But as Burns would have me know, I took it all for what it was — a new friend in the tenement. In the morning I understood why cats purr, and though three months later I'm still on the floor, I sleep soundly. There are others, however, who have never left the spatial blueprints of their childhood rooms. Only the peeling wallpaper behind the radiator marks the passage of time. Graduation photographs are compiled on the mantel in the living room, while medals hang proudly on hangers beneath neckties in closets. But these people too, carry something of their country in their trousers.

October 11 had come rather quickly. With my luggage on the carousel, I sat at the airport bar for a while, looking at the sun set over Montreal.

Now boarding flight AC864 to London, Heathrow.

I finished my overpriced beer, dropped the few spare dimes and nickels in my pocket, and was acutely aware that these would be my final tracks on Canadian soil for the next eighteen months. By the time the plane shot across the tarmac, outside the small round window the remaining hues of orange were morphing into the green that would welcome the night. I suppose the floor inside was then mopped, and like memory, my tracks washed away.

Fasten your seatbelt, young man.

I think the pilot knew that no man walks without a country in his back pocket, for when he asked me upon boarding the plane how long I'd be gone for, he smirked. He swooped two or three times above Mont-Royal, giving me one last chance to say farewell. The mountain sat in the centre of the city like a heartbeat, the flickering streets stretching from it like arteries. Visions of myself floating along those familiar streets with my girlfriend came to mind, and there was Rue Durocher, dark and quiet as it had been that morning when I awoke. My eyes followed Autoroute 20 along Lac Saint-Louis until they settled on Pointe-Claire. Perhaps my parents were waving back to me from their window.

One last glance at Leonard Cohen now, painted on the side of a building that faces the mountain. He held his heart in his hand, and I tipped my hat to him.

The lonesome heroes have an open road to walk on.

All at once, Montreal was behind me. Above Autoroute 10 I thought of the deer and cattle in the fields below. We were already above the Eastern Townships, where my alma mater sat quietly at the confluence of the Massawippi and Saint-François rivers. An itch on my thigh. Deep in my pocket was a wrinkled poem by F. R. Scott that I found one bright, hungover morning, while perusing the shelves in the Old Library. I fetched it from my trousers and read the man's declaration to an overture. When I looked back out through the round window, the campus was far behind me.

East, East, East — to Eden!

Over the quiet manorial pastures of the Fleuve Saint-Laurent, only a thin green halo circumvented the earth.

“Hiya! Would you like anything to drink this evening?”

A flight attendant smiled from the aisle.

“Yes, two small bottles of wine, please.”

“Red?”

“You’re pretty good.”

She laughed, reaching for the bottom drawer of the cart. There were 285 vacant seats around me, with only a handful of people seated.

“Where are you off to?” she asked. I was nearest the back and she had no one else to attend. A rare opportunity for interaction.

“Edinburgh. I’m going to study there.”

“Oh! It’s such a lovely city. Not far from where I’m from. Have you been?”

“No, I haven’t.” I cracked the seal and took a long sip.

“Will you be staying in London for a while?”

“Well, we don’t have to quarantine just yet, but I can’t go back to the Borders either, so for a few days.”

“It’s beautiful down below, eh?”

“It’s too dark now to see anything, isn’t it?”

“I suppose a moon would help.”

“Well, I’ll be nearby, come see me if you need anything.”

I raised my wine to her and returned my gaze to the round window. Nova Scotia lay silently to the right and the faint lights of Halifax were too far off to puncture the skyline.

You’ll find Scotland overseas.

Over the ocean, then, we flew, anticipating the arrival of the most eastern plot of Canadian soil. In the years following the Second World War, those who flew across the Atlantic had to stop at Gander International Airport to refuel, but our planes have gotten better. No second chance to say goodbye. As we approached Newfoundland, the beacons of lighthouses shone faintly below, marking the outline of the province. Saint-John’s harbour rested quietly, and Signal Hill, too, seemed to light up.

1901, first transatlantic radio transmission. Young mind, beacon.

The isthmus between the Avalon Peninsula and the Western region of the island was veiled in the dark, but I knew it was there. I imagined Jane and Ronald near Cape Onion, the elder couple who had recounted their Scottish lineage which was similar to that of the many dormant souls who at once inhabited the vacant shacks on the coast. Another itch, and I felt in my pocket the smooth pebble from Twillingate that my girlfriend insisted I take with me. The final reminder of an absence, but as I suspect the pilot knew, the moveable parts of our country.

Canada was behind me. The Atlantic undulated beneath.

So it goes.

Bruntsfield Avenue.

Earlier this afternoon, while the sky was clear and the sun glowed over Edinburgh, I went for a long walk. On a bench in the Meadows a couple played cribbage. Kids were running around and dogs roamed without leashes. Near a tree a gentleman was painting. He was clad in brown corduroy trousers, a wool sweater, and a slanted cap. I recognized him from his small table in Grassmarket this past weekend, though then, hungover and alone, I avoided his eyes. I felt well rested this afternoon.

I watched from a short distance and waited for him to put his brush down.

“Do you have a cigarette?” I asked.

“Hiya. Do you have fifty pence, young lad?”

“No, sorry. I’ve only got my card with me, really.”

“Ah, I see. Well, you’re out of luck then, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I suppose. You aren’t though. Seems like you’ve chosen the only sunny day to paint, eh?”

He looked toward Arthur’s Seat — the extinct volcano in the middle of the city — where the snow clung to yesterday’s foot-steps along the trails. All else was rock, long grass, and hedges.

“The clouds are kind today, aren’t they?” he said.

“I suppose.”

“Do you see a blight among them?”

The recognizable orange hue was brightening, but the weather patterns in this city were nearly impossible to predict. A blue sky burned like a matchstick and left nothing but the hints of faded ash-like grey. I looked at the few clouds.

"There's a faint chemtrail over yonder. People are still flying in!" he said. I wondered if three months ago he witnessed my arrival, though I preferred not to ask. "Say, do you know much about the Meadows?"

He pulled out a pouch of tobacco from his worn breast pocket.

"No, I don't, really."

"Here, sit down. I need a break, too. You see those zig-zagging paths? My father told me that after this whole area was drained, they gradually lined them with lime trees, oak, sycamore, cherry blossoms, and maple."

"Drained, eh? Here?"

"And you haven't even read a sign yet! Until 1677 this was a loch. Citizens fetched their water here and cleaned their clothes. The beer was brewed from it, too. During the Second World War there were nearly five hundred allotments in the westend, but no sign of that cultivation now."

"But the snow doesn't even melt into a puddle!"

"Sewer systems, laddie. Look for the narrow drain gullies along the paths or subdued in the grass. Where did you walk from to get here?"

I pointed back toward the Bruntsfield Links, the park adjoining the Meadows.

"Have you ever golfed?"

"Not for a while, but yes, I grew up playing. Why?"

"Well, you little blighter, had you read one of the signs there, you'd know that a wee golf course was established in the 1680s. Older than me!"

I laughed. He saw me holding a cigarette I had finished rolling with his tobacco and he passed me his silver lighter. There was an insignia etched on one side — *The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada*.

"Where did you get this?"

"The lighter?"

“Yeah!”

“Ah! Yes, well, my father.”

“How did he get it?”

“What do you think? He made it through the bloody thing.”

“With Canada?”

He nodded, rubbing his upper lip with his index finger and thumb in dimple, looking toward the Seat.

“Yes. We lived on Vancouver Island for a while. He was an engineer, designing cranes by the wharf and for the post-office. When it was all done, he wanted to move back here.”

I didn’t say anything. He was still looking at the Seat, now lighting a cigarette.

“You know, young man, the War made it up here. The first shots fired in the air from Britain were above the Firth, and the castle there was a military hospital.”

“I never know how to refer to it — the Firth of Forth, the Forth, the river, the inlet. It reminds me of home though.”

“And where’s that for you?”

“Montreal. I suppose, in a way, it’s quite similar to Edinburgh. I run up the Seat quite often to look at the Firth, and I think of the Fleuve Saint-Laurent as seen from Mont-Royal, the mountain in the centre of Montreal. Le Fleuve floats inland from the Atlantic and bifurcates into several rivers that spread throughout the country. Bridges spread from the island toward the outskirts like the Forth Bridge, too.”

“Aye. You remind me of my Father. He studied engineering at McGill and went up top there often. When he came back from the War we stayed in Montreal for two weeks before taking the boat here.”

He took a long drag and lowered his hand onto the table, gently spinning the lighter.

“The day he gave me this he brought my brother and I up Mont-Royal to look at the *Fleuve*, as you call it, and he told us about his best friend Tom Robertson: ‘It was quiet here the day his plane was blown asunder. He never even had the chance to leave bonnie Scotland. He made it as far as the coast, hovering above the Firth. Look here, boys. No bombs ever fell here. None at all. It’s still radiating.’”

The light on the Seat was veering toward the finality promised by crimson. I tried to imagine the ships that left the narrow mouth of the Fleuve eighty-one years ago, or the crash above the Firth, or this elder man as a young boy on top of Mont-Royal.

Locations yield different stories. Pocket them, one and the other, to share.

"Do you have a woman back home?" he asked.

"Yes."

We each took a drag.

"Have you seen much of your country?"

"I suppose. I've visited all but one province."

"With her?"

"Some, though most of them alone."

He nodded gently and stood up, stretching his legs.

"Well, you're lucky, young man. Few of us find ourselves a good woman, and fewer have the chance to explore their own countries, let alone leave them. My wife and I — I'd show you a photo of her, but it seems I've left my wallet back home — my wife and I, we've travelled a lot."

"Is that right?" I hoped he wouldn't ask me for a picture of my girlfriend because I didn't carry one with me. My trousers felt heavier, though the pebble was long gone.

"Yes. Well, my father wasn't so lucky. Mum died on the island while he was fighting. *She* died, *far* from the front. After he told my brother and I about Tom, he said, 'Every night for five years, while sleeping in the dirt, I thought of your mum. Five years. All I wanted was to lie alongside her in peace and explore our country. That's all a man can ask for, and I can't do it.'"

I sat there quietly. The wind picked up and clouds floated above Arthur's Seat from the North Sea. He stood beside his painting with his hands deep in his trousers.

"What are you painting?" I asked.

"The Seat by the sea."

"Can I see it?"

He hesitated for a moment, then pulled out a pencil from his pocket.

"Say, write down your address here and I'll bring you the canvas when it's done."

“Really?”

“Sure. We both like the Seat and Mont-Royal, don’t we?”

“I suppose.”

Bruntsfield Avenue.

On my way home I stopped at a cafe. I fumbled in my pocket for change, and while counting it, I found a silver dime with a sailboat on it.

“It seems I’m missing five pence,” I said to the barista. I dropped the change in her hand. “I’m not sure if you’ll accept it, but I’ve got a Canadian dime that seems to have been hiding in my pocket.”

She laughed.

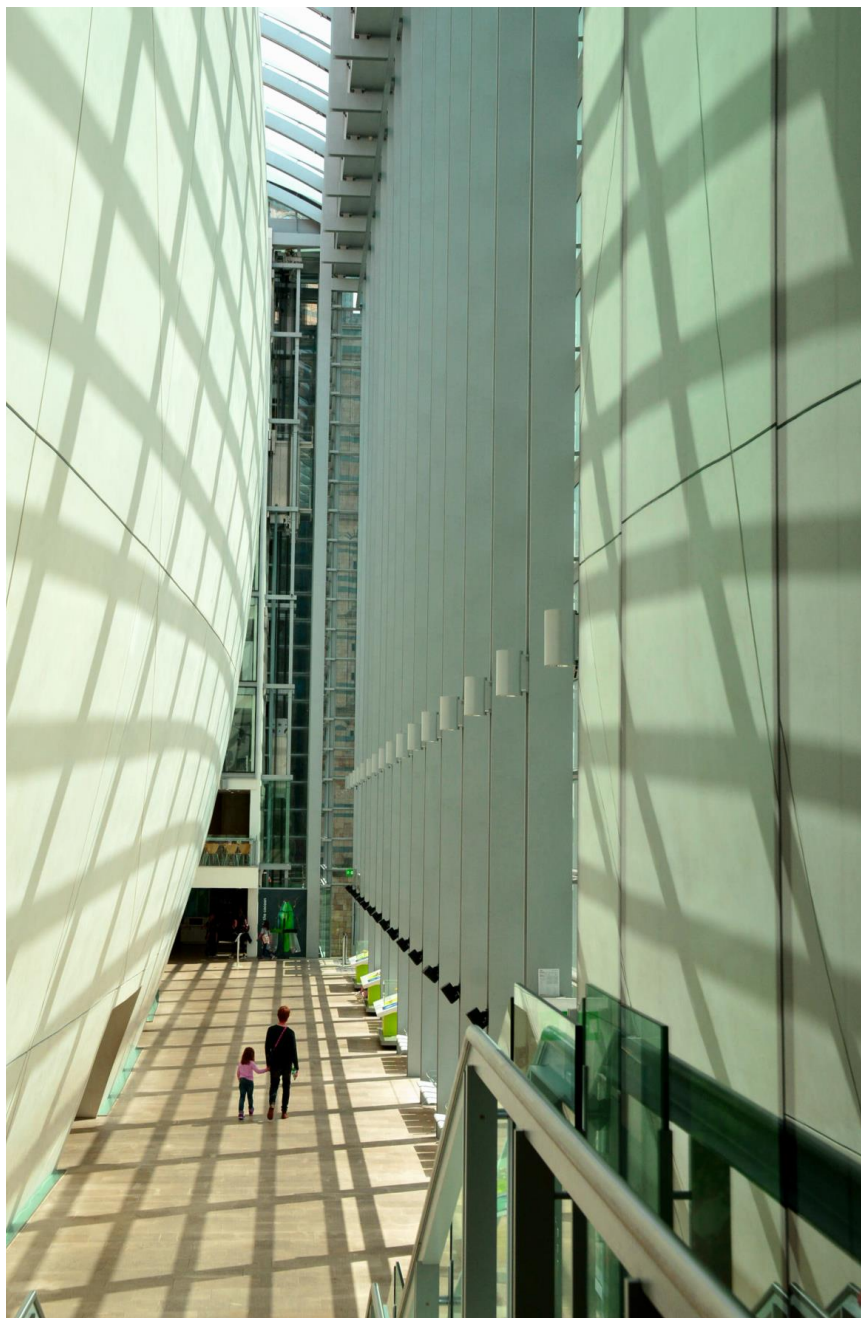
“Where are you from?”

“Montreal.”

“Really? My auntie lives there! I’ve always wanted to go, though I hear it’s quite cold.”

“It’s quite cold here, too.”

She took the dime with the sailboat on it and put it in her pocket.



AFTERNOON LIGHT Digital photograph

Cécilia Alain

“Chaos has become organic”
-*Cécilia Alain*

THAW

Erik Jacobs-Webb

Our daily lives
have greatly changed
since I last wrote
a little less than
a year ago

The hush of seclusion
has descended
and now so does the winter
Many will suffer this cold season
more than usual
for we will be all the more
stuck inside
as fierce winds
rush turbulently
outside though leafless trees
and inside
amongst solitary thoughts

Our attention now turns
to warming hearts
and bringing souls together
no matter the cold
that separates sentient beings
crying - hopeless - loving beings
who need their minds and bodies embraced
valued – protected - received

To be thoughtful in these bleak times
means being acutely aware of one's fragility
whilst receiving with warm hearts
the vulnerability and beauty of others

Whether they are aware
of this beauty
or not

DISPATCHES FROM LAST APRIL

Sophia Cumming

I.

in the periwinkle shadows of the eastern sky,
a full moon rises, shrouded in a gauzy glow.
pink skyscrapers mirror the sinking sun,
glittering in the gloaming light.

II.

in the twilight shadows of my neighbourhood
rises the next phase of the community,
half-built house shells unevenly
scattered across muddy plains,
new dwellings deemed nonessential,
abandoned in quarantine.

III.

a half-grey rabbit scampers out
from under a deserted couch,
to dart across the half-grey road,
the gravel barely parting under its swift feet.

IV.

in this unsettling spring, with the
social norms of sidewalks rendered meaningless,
i meander down the middle of an empty street.
which strip of pavement is made for people and which
is meant for cars no longer matters
with so few of each.

V.

the geese fly eastward
and the sky is just as empty as the roads
yet they fly in step with each other
as if afraid to get lost
in the expanse of the darkening sky.



STATE X: THE SELF OCCUPATION

Acrylic on canvas

Majd Shammās



MANHATTAN Watercolour and ink
Ocean Francoeur

PROGRESSION

Frank Wildig

I.

A wide waste and a brilliant white;
ice hangs from the limbs
and a crow is perched in the frozen landscape,
its eye full of winter.

II.

Still the snow swirls
the cedars gather and hold back the wind
the darkness remains;
but the heart beats stronger.

III.

Murmurs and susurrations return
with the sun's higher path,
snowmelt trickles through the land;
maple, mares, and mud.

IV.

Soft showers
and the gentle blush of poplar green;
the night streets bustle and the headlights reflect
the last traces of snow.

V.

An avian explosion.
The trees fill with their comings and goings;
dresses sway in temperate breezes,
plantings and blossoms and mothers abound.

VI.

Blue flag, brightly coloured indeed.
How lovely and slender, how graceful;
you are a rainbow in a meadow,
a beauty among the green reeds.

VII.

Past meridian,
the sun has assumed its zenith,
the world is alive with the bustle of life
and everything has become electric.

VIII.

The cities deserted,
campfires keep the lakes company;
it is hot today but who cares,
the golden season is upon us.

IX.

The morning sun rises, mists evaporate
the grape hangs full from the vine.
Here the temperate days remain
while the scent of summer slowly ebbs.

X.

The happy apples
await their sudden descent,
the music of geese fills the air
and the world is red and gold.

XI.

Darkness. Long starless nights.
No sun, no warmth, no colour.
No birdsong, no flowers,
November.

XII.

The bottomlands of winter,
the threat of snow hangs over the town,
a flickering of lights comes with sunset,
someone's voice is heard in song.

XIII.

Janus, the door remains open
and a landscape of whiteness overwhelms,
a gleaming startles the eye;
the crow resumes its perch.



PROVISIONS Film photograph
Kendra Finlay

LIVING ROOM PROTEST

Eliot Ausel

Heat sits above
 our heads
in a web of lights. Gathered
ceremoniously within our four
walls

 the volcanic winter
outside spews its white shards
on windows. Microbes linger
in our hanging words

 but,
fearless, we yell arsenic slogans

 ("it's only a matter of time,"
 "what can we do,"
 "I may puke")

into the thinly veiled night,
the last of its kind. Our miracle minds
stretched

 over every street-crack
in Montreal, shackled to each other
with revolution

 stapled to our eyes
the next morning. Soon
bile and post-mortem excrements crept
towards sewer holes, now filled
with a small percentage
of alcohol

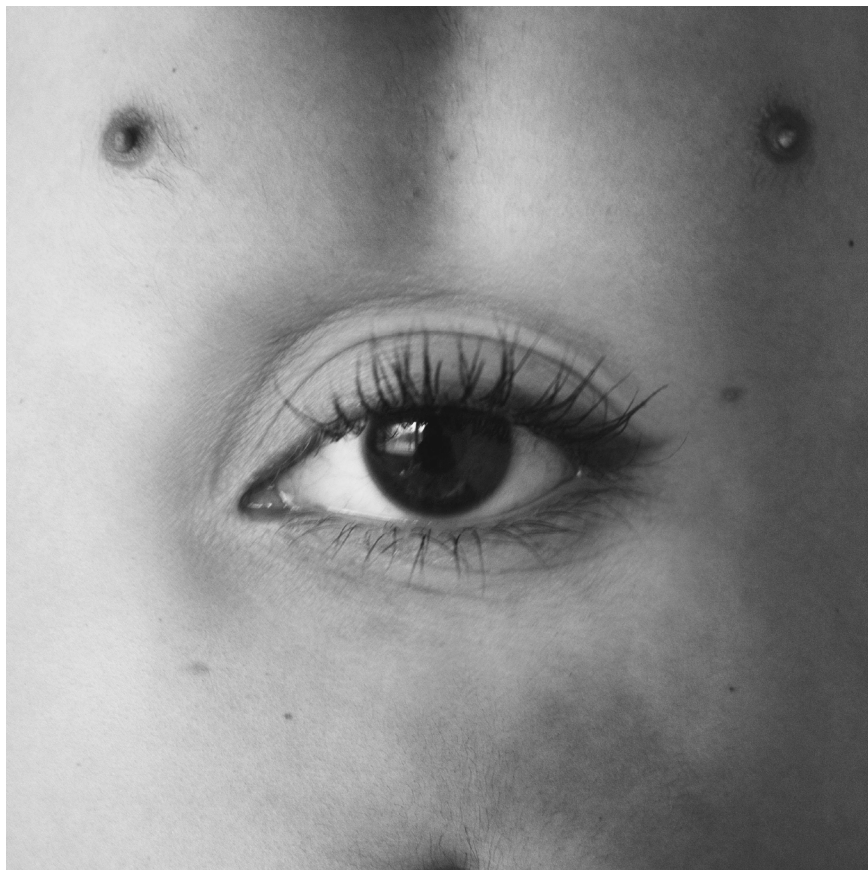
 and the perfumes of History
spilled from statistics. But that
was the news of tomorrow.

Tonight,
in the comrade clutch of our tired winks,
in our improvised living room protest, our words
would be spelled with permanence
in the condensation melting
on the glass.



LIVING ROOM PROTEST Film Photograph

Eliot Ausèl



SEEING THROUGH Photograph
Angélie Vermette

FERRY TALES

Amy Barnes

The boat I'm riding on has cargo and cars that don't go and palette after palette of La Sueur baby peas - the delicate kind that will float to the top of the boiling sea when the boat splits in half, going down too far from shore.

At home, my mother made peas simply with a little butter and a lipped plate to keep them on the table and closer to the inside of lips. My sister squished her peas under her fingers. She sits on my lap on the ferry, leaving green fingerprints on my seasick face. We ride in cargo class, classless next to the rows of baby peas and nuts transported on the boat next to me with mothers and thieves and rolling cans like bocce balls clacking against each other, competing to roll the furthest on the rocking sea that rocked babies like mothers in rocking chairs and rocking chairs on water.

My spaghetti father and potato mother sit starchily next to each other in one seat until it is too tight for them and his pasta arms leave skinny marks on her body. He stands for all of us, proudly. My face grows more green, not pea green, puke green, ship green. We watch for Lady Liberty to libertize us, save us from cans of peas. The statue is a little green, too, like she's nauseous on the shoreline, standing like my father. Our papers are sewn in pockets like crackling children's book pages, my photograph drawn in black and white crayons by Mrs. Jenkins at the corner store. I know, looking at the black and white image, that my hat is evergreen colored. As we near shore, I look for evergreens and maples and American trees that stand for me, waiting for me, like father tree guards. I've worn that hat the entire boat ride until it becomes part of my hair, bits of grandmother yarn weaving into red like my head is a Christmas tree.

We don't reach land together. Cans of peas are apparently heavier than they look and the ship protests that either people or peas can stay on board, cracking neatly in half and sinking at Liberty's feet. As the water rises past the deck where my father stands, I think of where they'll find me, next to my mermaid floating sister, next to a pirate's booty of French peas and pecans and a tree green hat. There is a hand that pulls me up at the last minute. I resist. One of my hands is holding my sister's hand, her green blue fingers and the other one is holding cans of peas I've grabbed to eat for dinner once we arrive.

I wonder if Lucy La Sueur had her name chopped off like mine. Chopped off like my parents who were left floating miles from the new world, like ocean dwellers, while I live with an uncle on my mother's sister's aunt's father's side. Once removed. He buys pickles out of barrels and sells fish by the ocean, straight from the ocean. I imagine my parents trophy-stuffed on a wall somewhere, caught like scaly fish still alive under the water, pushing their mouths out and in and out and in until a hook draws them up and they are tossed and sold on a sawdust covered market that smells of ocean and liberty and sweat and chaos, but not peas, just pee.

I work in my uncle's store with rows of vegetables spelling out the alphabet behind my head. I learn to read, reading can labels, vegetables and perfumes, gingham labels and penny candy cellophane. The potato bags and pasta bundles smell like home and foreign all at once, like they got caught in a storm and swam in the ocean with my parents. I rearrange them to sit next to each other like they are kissing or engaged or making babies.

I visit a museum once with the odd uncle on an odd field trip to a shipwreck that was found in the middle of the Great Plains, buried under cornfields, full of buttons and canned goods, dry goods and fabrics. It feels like we're peeking in on a cemetery of the ocean inland, like the museum is tilted, off-kilter, off-kilt. The museum has everything lined up like it's a store. The skeletons of the passengers and crew line up behind rice paper screens that only I can see. I ask if they've seen my mother. They nod no. I ask if they've seen my father, and the headshake continues. I smell my mother in the gift shop, bottled in a modern perfume that smells like her kitchen and her dressing table and her linen dresses. I buy it and dab it on all my pressure points in hope that she'll step from behind the invisible screen because she smells me there, too.

For years, I feel peas rolling under my mattress wherever I live, clanking like my mother and father married to the waters outside of Ellis Island, islands that kiss with blue lips forever. I cut up potatoes and boil them with pasta and peas and ashes and photographs. I take the ferry to Ellis Island and stand on the boat's deck. There are baby pea cans in my pockets and a baby on my hip. My stomach is turning from the boat's motion and a second baby riding cargo in my belly. I look into the water for a glimpse of my father's spaghetti western mustache or my mother's round belly and black widow's peak. I see only my own hair splitting the ocean into waves and bits of leftover sea peas floating like surface skipping stones.



CYCLICAL TIMES

Dye sublimation print on aluminum panel

Donovan Faraoni

DISSOLUTION

Sophia Cumming

I am staring at a monochrome sky,
the new reflection of a decomposing globe.

I am standing in an abandoned wasp's nest,
the last inhabitant of a meticulously built home.

I am running on a dry riverbed,
the new traffic of a suddenly obsolete road.

I am breathing in paper thin air,
the last consumer of a quickly fading world.

I am perching on a barren branch,
the new leaf of an era in purgatory.

I am sleeping in a cracked eggshell,
the last birth of an unstable planet.



UNLEARN Mixed medium, with collage and embroidery
Georgia LaPierre

PREACHER

Annie Butler

“Blazing fires,” yelled the Preacher, “blazing fires will purify
you! Just go on—
walk through them a sinner and exit a saint!”
We gleamed and we clapped.
The next day, we all lit our homes on fire and strode
through our front doors and into the flames.
Oh, how it hurt!
How it burned— how we melted!
We rolled on the ground, writhing and screaming.
The Preacher tore off his face and his bloody skull laughed at us
from our front yards.

CHAOS BLOOMS OVERNIGHT

Cécilia Alain

He is picking flowers in the field when the storm starts. The dense clouds that had been gathering since morning finally burst open and exhale the rumbling echoes of thunder. There is no wind to carry away the flowers' scent, stirred in the air by the drumming rain. It pours down on him, drenching him in lukewarm water.

He lets his hair cling to his forehead, lets his bare feet waddle in the soft mud. His bouquet is almost done: pale clusters of leaves, strands of tall grass, mauve specks of petals. He remembers that she loved the colour mauve and hated the word for it. Lilac was too pale, but its word sounded better. *You know I can't help but love a word that begins like my name...*

Heavy raindrops race down his cheeks, roll over the flowers' crown, flow in narrow streams down his wrists.

Flowers in a teacup. Flowers in-between pages of a book. Flowers in her hair.

He sees flashes of lightning loom over his house at the field's far end.

He had left the window wide open. Absent-minded or careless, or a blend of both. When he returns inside, it seems like the storm has raged within the room, but this mess is older than today's rain. He knows it is temporary, though. One day, this outer chaos will have to go, but for now, he lingers in the shambles that used to be theirs. Dishevelment suits his state of mind.

He lays the bouquet on the wet windowsill, lays his sore body on the floor. His water-soaked hair becomes interlaced with the smears of his muddy footsteps among discarded sweaters, dirty mugs, scattered papers. He can feel the ground's coldness climb up his body and numb his left side as if invisible roots were slowly binding him to the soil beneath the house. Water drips from the curtains and spreads in puddles that tickle his cheek, his back, his toes. He starts to tremble from the chill and imagines the shivers trickle through his skin and fall between the wooden floor's cracks. The water caught in his lashes weighs down his eyelids.

He stares at the bouquet until shy rays of sunlight start to touch its petals. Their rims turn into lines of gold on which he runs his fingers. *You shouldn't let such a beautiful thing wither and fade.*

Flowers in a teacup. Flowers in-between pages of a book. Flowers in her hair.

He ends up kneeling in the kitchen's cupboard, searching for her vase. She used to place it at the table's center in the summer, filling it with daisies, sunflowers, dandelions. He finally finds it on the floor, next to the black slippers she hastily threw there after wearing them for the last time. *They fit with my dress, don't they?*

Last times. If only they could have known. Something twisting in the middle of his chest tells him that nothing would have changed, that last times do not grow sweeter with the knowledge of their transience. Still, he lives with the poisoned thought that he would have been able to at least say good-bye that day, to hug her fifteen minutes longer than usual, hold on to her for a few infinite hours, if only they had known.

He cleans the dusty vase, slides the mauve bouquet in it, gets on his toes to place vase and flowers on top of the table's terrible mess. The posy thrones beautifully over disorder.

That night, standing in the middle of their bedroom, he holds in his arms a bundled blanket and sways gently. He lets his muscle memory follow the steps of a silent dance. He cradles the blanket tightly, nestles his nose in the warm curve of its folds. He shifts his weight. *Left foot, right foot. There you go.* The absence of music helps him linger in his old thoughts. Strange, he thinks, that this bittersweet solo could be both painful and soothing.

He collects fresh flowers in the field every morning all through that first summer without her, but he never brings them to the graveyard. He knows she would prefer to see them at the table's center, enjoying golden sunlight in the kitchen. He also presses daisies in books, leaves sunflowers by the sink, lays dandelions on every windowsill.

Chaos has become organic. It no longer pulls him towards the wooden floor's cracks like a gravitational anchor. Instead, it blooms overnight, opening dozens of closed buds into ephemeral beauties. It lays mauve petals over his eyelids and whispers to him. *You will be fine. Your world will remain fragile, but you will be fine.*



GOLEM, TODAY Photograph
Justine Trempe

UNTIL WE REACH THE TOP

Casey Hebert

Sisyphus went down the mountain
following his boulder.

I went down the staircase
needing to pick up milk.

Sisyphus reached the bottom and prepared a new ascent;

I reached the bottom and patted my pockets.

Forgot my mask.

Stymied again.

A mountain to climb, four flights of stairs;

The summit staring down.

When will it ever end?

We take our first step back up.



IRONWILL Pen on paper
Gabrielle Liu

DAWN-WALKERS for Dani 1999-2020

Linnie McGuire

I began at the beginning of almost
seeing you between light bursts
as sunrise broke the shrub-cover
we marched in lockstep
the muddled footpaths
toward morning, the wild rumpus
of huddled bodies
and blanket capes
covering our tracks

We looked out at the edge of an ocean
anonymous outside our boundaries
we wild things howled as day broke
smiling with teeth
and heavy breathing
muffled in the wind

Finding ourselves on the precipice
the rocks drop off in the skyscene
and everything becomes light again
the celebration of night's end
melts off our tongues
and casts us in violet hues,
the world goes on forever from here
with us balanced on its edge

Forgetting the breaths I took before sleeping
the winds press onward
a heartened pulse
sailing in and out of weeks
and almost over a year
to you, our crowned sovereign,
on an island of morning
in the vibration of silence



LONGING Photograph
Kendra Finlay



A BRIEF MOMENT ON A SUNDAY Photograph

Ginar Ogbit

THAT TIME I WATCHED YOU FALL

Sarah Adams

Back in your green chair
Rescued three-a.m. blood shot
Mumbling tunes about waves and Shakespeare

The orange glow from a lighthouse catching your bare arm
Fingers pulling focus away from two lost souls
Floating listless on the sea

You danced between the soap suds
And dirty dishes tipsy
Your gaze never leaving mine

I was sure coming home from a paycheck
The agony of ecstasy
Would stain your lips forever

Instead the Grecian curve and marble pose
Vanished out of the open porthole
In all its naked glory

With dawn burning up the night sky
I sip the scorched remains
Of a quiet mind

Tormented from a tumble down
The apartment steps that led to
Sleeping in your head for twenty years

The madness that comes from overnight
Employment caused the dissolution
Of vanity and expectation

That life would go on
As it had before

Unremarked

and only

wondered about

THE WOMEN OF VENUS

Mercedes Bacon-Traplin

I have seen the women dance
From the bottom of my glass
Their curves like those of sin
And smiles of pure heavenly light

I have glimpsed the women of Venus
From the tips of my own twitching fingers
From my pounding heart
And desire of self

I have seen them in windows
White teeth glinting as I pass
I have seen them in hot showers
Slipping gracefully down the drain

The women of Venus who have eyes just for me
The women with the softest eyes that can see
The women, they call to me
From the glass panes to my aching hands

My sweaty skin and shaking knees
And my legs, they give out, with every glimpse
Every kiss on my neglected lips
These women invite me

Request me
To join them in my dreams
When I wake I still feel the heat
And I wait for that moment to come once more
When the women of Venus will knock on my door

STREETLIGHTS

Alexandre Painchaud

The clock struck ten, and we were both suddenly exhausted. She stood motionless near the kitchen table. Her skin had acquired a greyish tone; her eyes were bloodshot red and rimmed with dark purple circles. It was as if someone had siphoned every ounce of life out of her. I shuddered at the thought that I could be the cause. She had strongly suggested that I leave the house for the night. After a resigned nod, I quickly pocketed my keys and wallet and started towards the exit, the whiskey's hold swaying me from side to side. All the while, she stayed in place like a distant onlooker.

The argument had started innocuously enough, as all disputes do. A dangerous word choice, an excessively aggressive voice inflection, a sigh at just the wrong time. A raised eyebrow, followed by a *what do you mean* and a *calm down, please calm down*. It had quickly snowballed into a ruthless dogfight. We had spouted insult after insult, galvanized by the grievances we had accumulated and repressed for the past few months. We had rotated between the kitchen, the living room and the upstairs bedroom. Everywhere we went, conflict had followed us, unrelenting. Every room in the house was now filled with some kind of vitriolic substance that hung low and heavy.

I wavered as I put on my boots, trying and failing to balance myself on one leg. I then reached for my coat, and I took one last breath, unsure of when I would be back in this house. Its air was warm, and I could still smell the chocolate chip cookies she had baked for me a few hours earlier. They were still on the cooking sheet, untouched and growing increasingly cold. I turned the door handle and glanced one last time in her direction. She remained anchored in place; a dead tree in winter. I rummaged through my mind for parting words, but nothing came.

The sound of the door closing startled me. I didn't mean to slam it, but the alcohol had dulled my senses. I had lost control over my limbs, making it feel like I was trying to drive a car from the backseat. I stared at the green wooden front door for a while as it stood unflinching and sturdy as ever. Soon, the cold was seeping through my skin, infiltrating my bones. I had to start moving now,

or I would stay there forever. And so I walked, slowly at first and then faster. My ears were still ringing from the violent blows we had exchanged earlier. It was as a loud hissing sound, thick and invasive like a grenade had detonated near my head. The sound went from ear to ear, turning my brain into mush.

I wondered what she was doing right now. Was she still standing in the same spot, corpselike? Had she called her mother to tell her everything? Was she relieved by my absence? Was she already turning the page on our relationship? These questions stormed my mind. They multiplied as they collided with each other, rejoicing at the sight of my powerless bewilderment. For seconds at a time, I could swat away those thoughts, but they always found a way to come back stronger, leaving me gutted every time.

Cruel gusts of wind assaulted my bare face and neck. The freezing air paralyzed my lungs and stiffened my muscles. I looked at the road stretching in front of me. It was a thirty-minute walk to the nearest motel. I did not want to walk right now, but I was too drunk to drive my car, and taxis were few and far between in this neighbourhood.

The image of Emily haunted me. How skinny she had looked under the harsh kitchen lights. Her pale cheeks had been hollow; her shoulders sharp and pointy. Her collarbone had stuck out conspicuously out of her white t-shirt. In that instant, she had felt more like a stickman figure than a human being. All lines and angles, devoid of any vitality. It all came rushing back to me now. How little she had been eating in the past few months. How her voice had waned over time and became soft and small. How differently she walked all of a sudden, hunched over and fragile. I remembered the strands of hair that I found in the shower and on her pillow. She had been slowly wasting away before my eyes, and I hadn't noticed.

It had been snowing all night. Not heavily, but enough to create a clean sheet of snow. With each step, I defiled the ground, leaving crisp bootprints. I focused on my weight shifting from the left leg to the right leg. I noticed my breath as it condensed into tiny droplets of water, forming light clouds in front of my face. As I was about to turn onto Glenn Avenue, I stopped and looked behind me. I noticed the trail of footsteps I had left. By morning, they would be gone. Cars would roll over them carelessly, and there would be

no sign of me ever walking there. I took comfort in the fact that for now, these imprints would remain, perhaps even for a few hours. For a while, I observed the streetlights that lined Marshalswhick Lane. They stood in a perfect row, like lonely candles. Each of them cast their weak yellowish light on the snow-covered ground. I felt sorry for those streetlights: they never stood a chance. This street is way too dark ever to be illuminated, especially on a night like this.

POLO BLUE FOR MEN

María Clavelli

Second grade, all is new.
Deep brown eyes stare at me from the seat behind mine.
They say, *hi* and *hello* and *welcome*
and *do you want to be my friend?*

Third grade, he's my best friend.
We play computer games on our workbooks,
use our alphabets as keyboards and draw our own background
screens;
a football field and a net, a butterfly with blue wings.

Fourth grade, we watch *Pirates of the Caribbean*.
I close my eyes when a child gets hung, and he holds my hand.
He asks me to be his girlfriend.
I ask my mom to pick me up.

Fifth grade, we're still best friends.
He tries again, but nothing has changed.
We watch more movies and he teaches me fractions,
I make sure he knows the difference between like and love.

Sixth, then seventh grade, "You smell blue today."
Like doves and sage and the sea and the sun.
His face is brighter, his eyes deeper, his hair still a mess.
"Is that a good thing or a bad thing?"
Eighth grade, he asks again.
"Yes."

Ninth through twelfth were spent entirely *a la par*:
Always together, yet barely as one.
"I'm sorry," I said, he was still my best friend.
I passed my Math and he passed his IGs,
We got drunk in Madrid and breathed in Gaudí,
All in shades of blue.

Those ten years were the best that we got.
He picked up a glass and we cheered to the class of 2016,
But he didn't put it down until May 27th, 2017.
The smell of blue became the smell of beer,
And the hand that once felt like home was now a trap that
 refused to let go.
I thought I taught him the difference between like and love, yes
 and no.
He asked me not to leave, then demanded that I stay.
"But you owe me."
I guessed I did.

After a while, his grip loosened.
He asked me to leave.
I asked my mom to pick me up.
I remember thinking it was like the fourth grade all over again.
"But it wasn't," I tell myself. It was past our school days, it was
 5 AM.
It was the end of the blue years.

Somewhere in a box in my closet, there lives a relic of a past
 life.
Still in its wrapping paper there is a flacon of that same cologne,
the present that never was.
It is blue, and what remains inside too:
My best friend and best tutor; my genie in a bottle.

"Get rid of it," I say to myself sometimes.
But then December 10th rolls around and I feel my phone buzz.
"Happy Birthday," he says, every year without fail.
I smile and think of doves and sage and the sea and the sun.
Flashes of my blue reappear in my life like kaleidoscope images,
fleeting and shy and sorry and quiet, never the same.
They say, *hello* and *hi* and *welcome back*,
will you ever be my friend again?

I don't know.
And yet every year on December 24th,
I wish him a happy birthday, too.



THE NEW SENSUAL Ink and paper

Annie Butler

CONFINEMENT LAMENT

Caroline Homet

I don't even want
To go to restaurants
I don't mind ordering in
Just to be in the same

Room as you
Masks off
Curled in your arms
Watching *Star Wars*

I want to taste beer
Off your lips
The Belgian kind you buy
Because you know it's my favourite

And I want you
To kiss me all night
And to fall asleep
Your skin touching mine

Exhausted
The world about to wake,
Whispering
Bonne nuit, je t'aime

STEADFAST FOR THE SLOW CAR

Chanelle Coates

Your family is sifting through the box of old photos at the dining room table and your brother pulls a familiar one out. It's of you in the driveway with your first car. Your hair looks pastel orange because the red faded after Halloween. The car is burgundy, darker than your hair, but it keeps the palette similar. It's an old Buick, "a Grandma car", as all the people your age would always say. You couldn't have cared less. It got you out of the country and into the happening city and then back out again when the city wore you down.

About this car, he says, "Man, now that was a piece of junk."

Immediately, you enter defence mode. Who is he to judge? He didn't know it like you did. Sure, it had its flaws. The rust on the trunk. The fact that you had to physically unlock all the doors because the remote was broken. But you wouldn't have changed a thing. Weren't the most attractive people always the ones who were a little imperfect?

Plus, you had so many memories together. Getting lost in Montreal, finally making it to that first concert, driving back from the concert and playing "Would you Rather" with your friends. This car was with you for your first kiss, first joint, first real fight. The gritty firsts that you can't help but remember as glamorous even though you know fully well that they were not.

But then one day, out of nowhere, something wasn't quite right. You were driving to work, already on the later side, when an odd noise began. Knowing more about the emotional side of your car (it liked lavender air freshener, and had the best sound quality when you turned the dial up to 17), and less about the mechanical, you pulled over and called your uncle. By the time he answered the phone, you told him that the front had started to smoke. Blown head gasket, he told you.

And just like that it was over. You sat on the couch for a week eating ice cream, aware of your clichéd predicament but requiring the cathartic release of promising yourself you would never love another car again.

From that point on you were stuck with your mom's old van. Dark charcoal, a soulless hue. Right from the get-go, you never really gave it a chance. It was big and made parking impossible. Wide open spaces on your university campus felt like parallel jobs in the city. Filling up the gas-tank was a nightmare. And the odd thing it was good for, like piling your friends in the back, was not enough. It was never enough for you. Because it lived in the Burgundy shadow of that first car. And then, of course, there was the accident.

You were coming back from babysitting late one night. When you hit the road you felt fine, but the monotony of the highway and the soft song on the radio soon lulled you to sleep. You woke up facing an open field, going at least 70 kilometres per hour and shot off the road into the ditch. The car bounced and continued to zoom forward and you finally knew what almost dying felt like. Every fibre in your body wanted the vehicle of your demise to stop but the stupid van wouldn't have any of it. It didn't care that you were screaming at a pitch only dogs could hear.

If this was your first car it never would have happened like this. You did have an accident once with it but that car only went off the road when it knew that the ditch was filled with ultra-soft snow. It was easy to pull it out with the neighbour's truck.

The worst part, you realized in the ambulance cab on your way to the hospital, was that a near death experience was not a ticket to a seize-the-day type of life. Instead, you only felt scared, angry, and sore. You waited in the emergency room for half an hour before your mother showed up. You expected her to rush in and hug you, crying tears of gratitude that you were okay. But she walked in slowly and asked how you were. The call from the cops had woken her up in the middle of the night and stressed her to no end. She had bags under her eyes and for the first time ever you realized she was

visibly aging. You couldn't help but blame it on the van.

A few months later, your mom thought it was a good idea to lease a new vehicle. A couple hundred dollars a month is not a rip-off for reliability, she said. Now you could go 120 on the autoroute like it's no big deal. People complimented the periwinkle colour and you felt like you should be proud, but you never quite settled in. The next year when you went to Austria on exchange, your sister took it over and you didn't really mind. You knew it wasn't going to last. There is something even less human about technology when it's not breaking down.

When you get back from Europe, around the time your brother made that piece-of-junk comment, you're on the hunt for a car again. This time around you resort back to second-hand because you bled your bank account dry on plane tickets. Things feel like they are falling apart. You buy a lavender-scented tree to hang on the rearview mirror. When pulling out of the driveway, you put it in reverse and back up too much. You hit a stone divider and the trunk dents. That will rust up nicely. Maybe you did it on purpose.

You are proud to show your brother your new-old car. After everything that has happened, you will remain steadfast for the slow car. Hesse said that one must love your suffering, and you think this must be what he meant. There was a beauty in that starting off phase. In that pray-you-get-home-with-the-gas-light-on-because-you're-broke phase.

You start to fill your door with wrappers again. You want that sense of being young, and your logic is that juvenile untidiness will get you there.

The weather's getting warmer; you spend some nights in the car.

FAILED JACK LONDON

Steve Luxton

After most of the winter drunk at the Hotel Tamarack,
Pulling at a broken marriage's leg-hold trap,
He slips from the stool,
Past the knowing look of the rifle on the above-bar rack,
The bored-to-death stuffed moose head,
And out into the clear, subzero night air,

And thinks with a weathered sigh:
I'm through with Northern Romance.
—Was that the splintering of a frozen tear?—
Love's lure, lodged in his gut as in a jackfish's,
Ate away over the long year.

Loose at last, he straddles his snowmobile,
Rides it from the cold town,
Takes the only bridge out without stopping,
Accelerating through the lake's long tunnel of ice fog
congealed like the awful years.
In the dead still, blue moonlit swamp,
he dreams of the steamy, captivating South.



FINN Photograph
Owen Baker



MAMMOTH Photograph
Owen Baker

BONES

Mercedes Bacon-Traplin

Do roots grow between my bones?
If I'm still too long will they bloom?
They'll tie me together
Pull me to the dirt
Eager to wrap around my body
Maybe I crave to feel blossoms in my joints
To pretend that beauty is coming from my body
Which so often feels like a prison
Pale paperweight
Please keep to the ground
Should that itch on my back be only a rose
Or ivy escaping the skin
Would I be beautiful then?
Would I be pleased by the mirror if my face were lilies
Would hatred fade in the presence of daisies
How could I hate daisies?
Could I be so eager,
So joyous at the thought
Of letting the dirt reclaim me?

MUTABILITY LYRIC

Steve Luxton

Above him, the palest, unsurpassable blue with
clouds shapely and gold as those fossilized minnows
that swim in prairie sandstones.

Resting in the garden's sag, the convalescent knows
time tears by, pinches and sucks at spring leaves,
dries up the creeks, darkens the green of the hills.

—A gale of breakneck goodbyes.... Still, there's the sky:
the lovely azure of just exposed ancient tiles.
Dreaming of voyaging far into it, he sleeps.

THIS HOUSE BELIEVES

to the Protagonist, the Consul, the Defender, and Noah.

Casey Hebert

“**W**ho would win in a fight between Bruce Lee and the 101 Dalmatians,” we ask ourselves, seated around the table. I defend the dogs and you defend Lee while the others deliberate, a jury for our nonsensical fight. Just like that, the debate is born, and we build our blows with fanciful arguments. On the one hand, you’ve got the quintessential martial arts master, the power-fighter of a generation. On the other, you have 101 dalmatians—that’s a lot of big dogs. If the movies do them justice, they’re crafty little buggers too. Now suppose Bruce Lee was armed with a baseball bat wrapped in bacon; that could give him an edge. Would it tilt the scale in his favour, though? Could he distract the dogs long enough to get the upper hand and make these pups the underdogs? Now suppose the dalmatians were armed with a catapult and an unlimited supply of livestock to launch at their opponent. How would Bruce Lee and his bacon-coated bat fare when cows, goats, sheep, and pigs are indiscriminately sent hurtling through the sky in his direction? What damage could he wreck onto the dogs from beneath that pile of hooves, snouts, and horns?

And how would my argument fare against yours? You mean to tell me that a single man, by virtue of being a masterful martial artist, could ward off a century of dogs? Do you even grasp how many one hundred is? With another one added to it? Bacon-wrapped or not, your bat has little impact. Especially after the cattle ends its airborne trajectory in collision with your person, I remind you. “But it’s Bruce Lee!” You plead to the jury. “That’s not enough,” they decide. And so the dogs live on to fight another day, and your warrior exits the battle dome, defeated.

And is this how things should have always been? Every seat at the table filled, the room buzzing with life for the first time in months, dynamic conversation debating the outcome of an impossible fight. Amorphous yet growing, a boisterous hum of voices pervades the room, climbing upon each exhale and straining against the ceiling. “Can a dog even operate a catapult?” Your voice cuts above the rest and momentarily lulls the noise, but the question sends the

room into uproar once more. The jury rules that they can, and again the room is saturated with sound. Yes, this is how it should have been.

It should always have been an us, or a them, or both—never neither—pressed into one space, laughing the same air. On an exhale, I make my argument, and on your inhale, you counter. And it doesn't matter if the dogs win against Bruce Lee, because they'll lose to the Hulk, and so on as players ebb and flow in defence and defiance. It only ever mattered that the room was full, that the walls struggled to hold the booming voices for the first time all year, and that we kept company with those who could debate the winners of impossible fights, or whether cereal was soup. That, and nothing else.

THE TRAIN THAT'S COMING

Frank Wildig

Nearing sunset, the sky assumes its red,
The silos by the tracks are in shadows,
Cars pass silently at the crossing ahead
And the corn in the field steadily grows

The wind's died down though the people aren't heard,
They wait at the platform silent and still,
In the growing twilight they don't speak a word
They keep to themselves in the evening chill.

And where they are going one cannot tell,
As the whistle is heard from the light flecked west.
In the leaving of home, in this short spell
There's some sense of loss from the familiar nest.

The passengers board and vanish from sight,
As the train goes eastward into the night.

CONTRIBUTORS

Sarah Adams grew up in Parry Hoot, ON. She spends most of her time shaking her head at the world, and worrying whether the coffee maker is still on. When not writing, she can be found on Youtube if you look hard enough.

Cécilia Alain is a third-year English literature student with a Film honours and a Fine Arts minor. She comes from Saint-Damien-de-Buckland, a tiny village hidden somewhere in the woods of Bellechasse in Québec, but she moved to Sherbrooke almost ten years ago now. She has always been fascinated by the power of words and images and, once in a while, she tries to channel some of her imagination into her own stories.

Eliot Ausèl writes, every now and then, on the tightrope between giants, between the Universe and the atom. Of small and grand myths we know nothing, but somewhere, in the liminal, penumbral space granted to art, they are allowed to flourish and be held by the part of us that still resembles Eden. It is an ocean of untapped water, eternal and subterranean, and Eliot spends too much of his time searching for the well. The rest of his time is spent tending to the garden and two children.

Mercedes Bacon-Traplin is a young writer from the Yukon Territory. She has been writing for the majority of her life and received her first publication at age seventeen. She is passionate about breathing new life into poetry, bringing people together through literature, and expressing herself in the most creative ways possible. She is a proud member of the LGBTQ community and hopes to represent her community well within the literary world.

Owen Baker is a third year Marketing & Entrepreneurship student minoring in Film & Media studies. He spends his time taking pictures and videos around Lennoxville and spending time working for the Bishop's Outdoors Club.

Amy Barnes is an associate editor for Fractured Lit. She volunteers at CRAFT, Narratively, Taco Bell Quarterly, Retreat West, BIFFY50 and National Flash Fiction Day. Her words appear in over 100 publications including *Gone Lawn*, *X-RAY Lit*, *Flash-Back Fiction*, *Perhappened* and *JMWW Journal*. Her writing has been nominated for Best Microfiction and the Pushcart Prize with a first collection of flash fiction forthcoming from ELJ Editions, Ltd. in May 2021. Based in a Southern US suburb, her two dogs, two kids and husband inspire her writing everyday.

Kendra Buchner is a first-year Education major with an aptitude for creative writing and dramatic arts. She hopes to channel her personal passion into her work and inspire those she will go on to teach one day.

Annie Butler is a soon-to-be Bishop's graduate from both the English and Fine Arts departments. This is the first time her writing has been published in *The Mitre* and the second time her art has been published. She can currently be found doing yoga somewhere in Ottawa as she waits for it to be safe enough again to fly to Dublin to live there with some friends. She hopes to own a Doberman one day and somehow manage to bring it into the Hermitage in St Petersburg, Russia where a beautiful and sole surviving descendant of the Romanov family sees her and falls in love before reclaiming their right to the Russian throne and \$250-billion net worth.

Frances Cameron is a 4th year English major from Vancouver, BC. She loves caffeine, ice cold water, and the alphabet.

Camille Cattelan is a fourth-year Biochemistry major, minoring in Fine Arts, who is graduating this semester. She won the Canadian Society for Chemistry Silver Medal and the Undergraduate prize in Biochemistry last year in the Winter of 2020. She runs a small business where she designs silkscreens and prints and sells her designs on thrifted clothing. She loves swimming, weight lifting, tree planting, and, most of all, her friends. The one thing you will never catch Camille doing is eating olives.

Janan Chan is a 2019 Bishop's University graduate. He will be completing his MA English creative writing from Concordia University, Montréal this spring. His writing is featured in *The Mitre*, *yolk.*, "Water Lines: New Writing from the Eastern Townships of Quebec", and later this year, *Headlight Anthology* and *Soliloquies Anthology*.

María Clavelli was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and raised in Punta del Este, a small beach-resort-type-town in Uruguay. She is not a fan of the cold weather, so she often wonders why she chose to go to university in Canada. Four years later, equipped with a hefty winter jacket and a Bishop's degree in Drama, English, Communications, and Classics, María decided to prolong her stay up North to pursue a Master's degree in English at McGill University. She clearly likes words and stories more than the beach, which is saying a *lot*.

Chanelle Coates will graduate this summer with English Literature and International German majors and a minor in Psychology. Favourite books that she discovered in English classes at BU are "The Girl who was Saturday Night" and "Never Let me Go". Moreover, her fondest memories from the past four years were from when she went on exchange to Freiburg, Germany.

Sophia Cumming ('20) is a past *Mitre* contributor, current poet and future teacher. She currently exists in the liminal space between graduation and convocation and spends her time eating enough mini eggs to single-handedly keep Cadbury in business. Sophia is exceptionally thankful to the Bishop's professors who helped her improve her craft - notably Heather Davis, Sunny Lau and Patrick McBrine.

Maïthé Cyr-Morin is a third-year Fine Arts student. She has worked on a collective artwork raising awareness on mental health called *Cycle Délicat // Gentle Setting* exhibited virtually at the Bibliothèque Lennoxville Library in 2020. She likes to mend fabric as well as her soul.

Donovan Faraoni grew up in BC, Lennoxville and Italy. He is pursuing studies in Biology and Politics. He likes to travel and perpend his trips with poems and photos. This is his first year publishing in *The Mitre*.

Kendra Finlay is a fourth-year student from the University of Ottawa studying Conflict Studies and Human Rights. She started her photography journey at the age of 16 when she got her first film camera and has been pursuing it as a hobby ever since. With the new reality we are faced with, Kendra often spends time walking around taking pictures, finding inspiration from the people around her and discovering new areas in her community.

Ocean Francoeur is currently finishing up her honours degree in English Literature at Bishop's and waiting for her acceptance letter from McGill University, so she can start her Masters program next fall. She was the editor for the 127th edition of *The Mitre*. When she isn't glued to her desk reading, writing, grading or researching, she occasionally dabbles in art.

Victoria Gilbert is a third year Education and English Literature student and loves creative writing in her spare moments. Victoria grew up in Nova Scotia, but now resides in Saguenay, where the snow never melts.

Casey Hebert is in her third- and final year at Bishop's, studying English Literature, Business, and Drama. Despite having written many bios about herself during her time at Bishop's, she still never knows what to add to them. One might wonder, then, how good of a writer she is, and what she is doing in this anthology. Read this year's edition of *The Mitre* to find out!"

Kayleigh Higgins is a second-year Image Arts, Photography student. They are a two-spirit Anishinaabe artist who mainly works in lens-based media. Their work focuses on racial and gender identity, sexuality, and relationships. They hope to highlight lived experiences that are not traditionally portrayed in a positive or accurate light.

Caroline Homet is a first-year student at Bishop's studying English literature. Inspired by the outdoors, the fate of bilinguals, and the people in her life, she spends her daydreams trying her hand at poetry.

Erik Jacobs-Webb is a History student at Concordia. He enjoys the simple pleasures of green tea in the morning and a cold brewski at night.

Georgia LaPierre is a second-year sociology major with a concentration in gender, diversity and equity. She spends most of her time reading Karl Marx and yelling at politicians. In her off-time she sews clothes and creates visual art projects to distract herself from the collapsing climate.

Gabrielle Liu is a first-year international Political and Economy student. She likes art, slow runs, and golden retrievers. Feel free to bring her a coffee; she needs it.

Steve Luxton lives in Hatley, Quebec. Primarily a poet, he has published six collections of verse and has a seventh *THE WHITE WEASEL* coming out with Shoreline Press this summer. A retired teacher of literature and creative writing (John Abbot College, Concordia University), he is the current writer-in-residence at the Lennoxville Library. For relaxation he enjoys playing the blues harmonica and going for walks in the country.

Alexandre Marceau (Bishop's '20) is a French-Canadian writer from Montreal. His fiction also appears in *The Inkwell*, *From Arthur's Seat*, and *Chronicling the Days*; and he is the Co-Founder and Fiction Editor for *yolk*, a Montreal-based literary journal. He is currently completing his MSc Creative Writing at the University of Edinburgh.

Linnie McGuire is a fourth year Honours Political Studies student with a minor in English. She spends her spare time crafting, going on long walks, and considering the turmoil of human existence.

Luke Munro is a second-year Fine Arts and Education major. He is co-graphic designing for *The Mitre* this year and is also involved with the Bishop's Outdoors Club. He has a fascination with giving stick n' pokes and other things his family may find questionable.

Ginar Ogbit is currently a student in Algonquin College's Animation program. Though an illustrator by trade, she explores her creativity through multiple visual media and is at her happiest when she is creating.

Alexandre Painchaud is a second-year English student. In 2019, after three years of working as a marketing strategist, he decided to enroll at Bishop's University to pursue his passion for Literature and Cinema. When he is not writing, Alexandre is usually taking a stroll through the woods of his local golf course looking for the ball he just lost.

Josh Quirion is a French-Canadian writer from the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Canada. He holds an M.A. in English Literature and Creative Writing from Concordia University, and is the co-founder/editor-in-chief of the Montreal-based cultural publication, *yolk*. Quirion published his debut collection "Townners & Other Stories" with Shoreline Press in 2020. His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Mitre* and *Prairie Fire*, among others. He lives in Montreal.

Majd Shammās is a first-year Fine Arts student. His works in drawing and painting are mostly figurative and expressive using charcoal, ink and acrylics among other mediums. He believes that every human expression is a state that demands a deeper look which transcends its physical reflection. Art for him is the reproduction of the "seen," the revealing of the "unseen," and every single attempt in between.

Justine Trempe is a third-year English student. She was a photographer for the 2019 CASA Culture Show and now works for *The Campus*. She currently spends most of her time immersed in a book or trying to find out why one of her houseplants is dying.

Angélie Vermette is a second-year Arts Administration student minoring in Psychology at Bishop's University. Born on the south shore of Montreal, she moved in the Eastern Townships eleven years ago with her family, leaving her soulmate and eye model behind (not for long, friendship's still going strong). Her photograph - and nearly all her creations - is inspired by the surrealists and their attempt at discovering the unconscious mind. She is obsessed with eyes, and hopes you'll enjoy staring into the one in her photograph.

Leo Webster is a second-year English student. He writes speculative fiction and queer romance. He also likes drawing, baking, and getting lost in the woods. This is his first time being published.

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

