



THE
NITRE

PROPERCEPTIONS

THE MITRE

POWER & PERCEPTIONS

129th Edition

Eds. Linnie McGuire and Cécilia Alain

Bishop's University

2022

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129th Edition

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TO

The Burkhart family
for their inestimable generosity

The Students' Representative Council
for its steadfast support

And, most importantly,
the wonderfully creative contributors
whose talent brings colour, breath, and life
to *The Mitre's* longstanding tradition

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.

Power was stolen from the First Nations who are the traditional stewards and protectors of the land upon which we are standing, and their people's perceptions were silenced for far too long. In performing land acknowledgements, we seek to invoke the power of truth, of inclusion, and of advocacy. We wish to invite Indigenous people's perspectives, points of view, and voices into our ecosystem of collaborative creation.

This act of naming is only the first step towards reconciliation; we must hold ourselves accountable. We must tackle the difficult conversations that call out both prior and ongoing injustices. We must face this discomfort in order to deconstruct barriers and rebuild a more equitable, all-embracing space.

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EDITORS' NOTE

When we first started to imagine this edition, we thought of it as an apeirogon. This type of polygon—named after the Greek words *apeiros*, “boundless,” and *gonia*, “angle”—stands out from the realm of geometry by presenting a countably infinite number of sides. Much like the mathematical complexities of such a form, life, too, is composed of boundless sides, boundless angles, boundless voices, all arching over our past experiences and influencing the present moment.

By selecting Power and Perceptions as our themes we hoped to honour the diversity of perspectives within our communities and seek to explore how each of these points of view constructs its own unique narrative. We wished to turn our gaze towards the intricate landscape of power dynamics, events, bonds, memories, and details that escape our immediate control. We wondered how such elements grow into turning points that influence our understanding of our world, and how we find ourselves perpetually tangled in these ever-complicated webs.

As editors, our primary role consisted of juggling with these spiky questions until they could be granted a vital spark of life by our contributors—the true magicians behind the work you now hold—who graciously presented to us, and now to you, their well-wrought words, carefully-crafted stories, amazing art, compelling creations, and so much more. Here is a web in which we enjoy being tangled...

Given the finite space that the following pages grant us, we must admit that our scope is not as boundless as an apeirogon. Nonetheless, we hope that in this volume you will find a glimpse of realities both familiar and unfamiliar to your own, small snapshots of this universal, interconnected map in which we are all entwined.

Sincerely,
Your Editors, Linnie McGuire & Cécilia Alain



**“The molecular architecture
of my migration”**

— Angela Leuck

SUFFICIENT

by Judith de Poncins

I was five years old
I was watching the rain falling
Falling rain is beautiful
Cause non-falling rain isn't rain at all
And water is beautiful
I was playing with the grass
And talking to it
As a five-year-old would do
But I was not aware of that
At that time
I was playing, you see
Not thinking about the grass
Cause if you think it stops talking
And silent grass is like dull clouds
No colour
Now grass does not talk anymore
It seems mute
As if growing up has rendered daily things
Not enough

IT'S AUTUMN AND I WANT TO FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU

by Sophia Cumming

september first, and right on time,
starlings begin to gather.
the air has a sharp kick to it,
ushering in the season in gusts,
murmuring secrets between the trees.

we meet at the playground,
just as twilight turns it numinous,
volleying nostalgic glances
back and forth,
while my hair tangles in the wind.

together, we sit on the swings,
which creak under our weight and
smell the way blood
tastes when i bite my tongue,
sour and sharp.

dusk slips away and we are left
with the distant glimmer of headlights
reflecting off our irises,
and kissing the first hints of gold
in the great poplars that frame the park.

GROWING PAINS

by Casey Hebert

My brother used to say that if you caught a falling leaf, you got a wish. He and I would run around the bus stop after school with our palms up towards the sky, hoping to catch a good grade on a test, a favourite meal for dinner, or a night free of homework. He would ride home with pockets full of wishes and scatter fallen leaves on his nightstand, saving up the magic for when he knew he could use it. His nightstand became a piggy bank of wishes, storing and collecting leaves until he was ready to spend them. I wondered, were the wishes cumulative? Like saving up tokens at the arcade to get the biggest prize, or buying additional raffle tickets to better your odds. Was his nightstand worth more in magic than the single leaf I traded away before I had even set foot on the bus home? Desire back then was a tangible thing, and to me, it looked like a browning, dried-out oak leaf.

Now, I walk the wooded path alone. When I look at the carpet of red, yellow, orange, and brown on the ground, I see wasted potential. I text my brother “will you be home for Christmas?” I wonder what happens to a wish that no one caught. I’m getting too old to chase wishes, I think as I watch the leaves fall down around me. My brother and I haven’t run after leaves in a decade, and his nightstand sits devoid of magic. Instead, it holds my mother’s water glass, her night time reading, the earrings she wore throughout the day. Magic of childhood further lost to the ravage of time. Some wishes never change, even when the circumstances do.

I’m not in on the inside jokes my family tells anymore. My mother counts the bottles of wine my father drinks in a night and tells me about them in the car ride to the mall. My boyfriend tells me that his family wears paper crowns at Christmas. *I wish I wish I wish*. I crawl under my hedgehog-printed bedsheets at night and imagine my brother’s

nightstand, overflowing with the leaves that he would hoard like I now hoard memories from a bygone time. What I would wish for now, given the currency. When the clock strikes 11:11, I try my luck. *I wish I wish I wish.*

Huddled under the covers of my twin-sized bed, I cramp from the ache of growing pains, though I don't feel myself getting any taller. Instead, I live an adult life low to the ground with my palms stretched out to the sky, hoping to catch a familiar piece of luck. That someday I might reach it, or that someday it might fall into my hands.



DIGITAL SINK, digital painting
by Luke Munro

HOME

by Lucie Casinghino

Listening to the podcast *This American Life* is an exercise in nostalgia and loneliness for me. Away from my home, an American in Canada, I seek comfort in the NPR programs of my childhood. I have been doing much of the same in other facets of my life, seeking out familiar favorites to take me home. Even as I am catapulted into the most radically new stage of my life, I find myself fleeing into the past for comfort. I cling to familiarity, delving into the world of memory to craft idols of protection out of books, movies, TV shows, anything that might tell me, “Yes, yes, you are home with us.”

So I press the play button on my podcast app, and suddenly I am home in my kitchen, the delectable smell of my mother’s cooking wafting through the house. I sit at the counter while she stirs the sauce bubbling next to the pot of water coming to a boil on the left burner. The warm yellow glow of the lights in the kitchen fall over us, bathing us in warm tones, with the cool air from the skylight coming in from above. That square of nighttime blackness disrupts the white of the ceiling, and a smattering of stars pierces through that darkness. My mother and I listen in comfortable silence to the soothing intonation of Ira Glass’s voice.

Then I shift back to the dining hall as I lift another forkful of stir fry to my mouth, and I am no longer a room away from my father writing in his journal in the living room, my dog laying next to him on the couch. My siblings, younger and older, are not above me upstairs in their rooms doing whatever it is they do, talking with friends, listening to *Lemon Demon*, playing *Disco Elysium*. No, I am having dinner with a podcast playing in my earbuds, and I will not be eating my mother’s homemade and beloved spaghetti with sauce in twenty minutes. Instead, I shovel the stir fry into my mouth, then spear a piece of chicken and bring it to my lips, pausing at the insightful comment the segment’s guest makes. Then

I continue this ritual of consumption, a necessary task, not wholly unwelcome, though the repetition wears me down.

I remember earlier in the year while a woman was giving a talk on mental health, she went on a tangent to explain an exercise in which you imagine sucking on a lemon. She led us through a demonstration where we were to close our eyes and imagine a kitchen, familiar to us, imagine its details, the light, the floor, whatever various appliances littered the countertops or table. Then we were to imagine a bright yellow lemon on a chopping board, making sure to picture it vividly in our minds, taking care to observe its pores and the smell of citrus as we cut it into halves, then quarters. We were supposed to imagine holding up one of those quarters and taking a bite. The point of the exercise was that supposedly at the end, when you bit into the lemon, your mouth would begin to water. In the end, it just made me ache for my home and the kitchen that lays just beyond the entrance.

I end up crying almost every time I call my mother. Something about seeing her there but not being able to just go downstairs and talk to her whenever I want hits me like a punch to the gut. She'll turn the phone camera around so I can see my dog lounging next to her and I catch an eyeful of the living room, the red walls, the photos and art and piles of books, and once again I realize that is my home, and I'm not there. I hear my father's commentary in the background as he searches for a poem he read in a collection and made him think of me, while my mother comforts me as I cry over what amounts, in the end, to nothing. She explains that this is normal, and hard, but that I will get through it, as my father rifles through pages. He reads to me a poem by Ursula K. Le Guin, and this too is a form of comfort, his own personal brand of it. So I wipe away tears and tell my father that it's a lovely poem, thank him for sharing it, and tell my mother that I understand, I know that this is just a part of a sudden transition, one that hurts but is ultimately worth it. I ask about the movies

they've been watching, which turns into a conversation about the movies we'll watch the next time we're together.

One day I miss class since I am too busy being concerned with the fact that my career has ended before it ever really began, because I read a Ray Bradbury short story so amazing that I realized I will never write anything nearly as good, and as such should never write again. I wail into my pillow and wait for my mother to pick up the phone, lamenting my lack of artistic genius, bereft in the loss of my creative spark. My mother eventually picks up, and guides me through this moment of despondency and giving up, comforting me with a lightness in her voice that comes with the knowledge that this will pass, and I will write again. This understanding comes to me soon enough, and I can now stand back and love *The Veldt Room* without wanting to walk into a lake for the fear that it will always eclipse me. For even if that is true, I have not been put into this world to write the next great novel, but simply to live.

I have started doing yoga at my mother's behest, and have found it actually helps to center myself. I favor bedtime or wind-down yoga in the evening after I put on my pajamas. I watch the videos on YouTube, and Yoga with Adrienne has become a part of my nighttime routine. One thing she says frequently is, "Breathe like you love yourself," and every time it makes me stop while doing an extended child's pose, or whatever else it is she is taking me through. If I had discovered this years ago, I might have rolled my eyes at such an impossible task, to breathe as though I really cared about myself, but now I think I can do as Adrienne suggests, and I inhale through the nostrils and let the breath out with a sigh.

I begin to make plans as easily as I make friends, and fill my calendar with assignments and little breaks for reading and writing. I put up the postcards that I have collected on my walls, let my closet fill, leaving clothes at the bottom to collect with the shoes. My desk becomes cluttered, and old discarded papers, books, masks, flash cards, receipts, all fill the space.

Back to dinner and the episode of *This American Life*, I walk home after my meal concludes, quirking a quick smile at one of Ira Glass's jokes. The orange light from the street lamps and buildings makes the wet road and paths glimmer and the puddles shine, the rain pattering down makes it look like everything is sparkling. I trudge up the path as the episode plays, holding the door open for someone after fumbling for my key card at the door. I make my way to my floor, ready to play Kentucky Route Zero, slot the key into the lock as music plays through my earbuds, and I am home.

MIGRATION

by Angela Leuck

The imprint of my hometown's magnetic field is emblazoned on the underside of my eyelids, a constant visual map. My cells carry the isotopic signature of where I was conceived.

Olfactory cues—sagebrush and pine, the wildflowers on the hills behind my parents' home—and other features of my childhood environment—every turn of the river back up the canyon—make up the molecular architecture of my migration.

All of which is encoded in my wandering son's DNA, a novel genetically programed orientation preference, cunningly engineered to help him find his way home.

A TOWN

by Kendra Buchner

I live in a town

A small town

A town where you have to walk miles just to reach a sidewalk

A town of alcoholic fathers and overworked mothers

With rambunctious children forced to play outside

Blue blue skies

Blue blue rivers

Blue blue collars

Blue blue people

A town where there's nothing to do

But to go to the next town

To tailgate at the Tim Hortons

A town where you just drive to the next slightly bigger town

To the next slightly bigger town

To a medium sized town

With more diversity and the same amount of adversity

Until you realize there still isn't anything to do,

So you go to the city

Until you realize the city is scary

And expensive

And boring too

You laugh at this little town

I laugh at this little town

But sometimes I wonder

Will I be stuck here

Decaying slowly

Only to end up a Lion's club member?

Drowning in blue blue skies
And blue blue rivers
Suffocated by the blue blue collars
Only to be a blue blue person?

SON OF NO FATHER

by J.J. Walker

‘Forgive me, Father, for I’ve sinned. It’s been two weeks since my last confession.’

‘What are your sins, my son?’ I hated when they called you that; “my son.”

‘Well, I’m a writer. Which mostly means I’ve got no fuck- sorry, no money.’

‘Yes?’

‘So, I sell drugs.’

‘Hmm.’

‘I don’t use. I’d never use. Not the hard stuff that I sell...’

‘Yes...’

‘But I was at my spot, the other day. I’d written a few half-decent stories that morning; I posted them off to the magazines.’

‘Have you heard back?’

‘No, not yet.’

‘Ah.’

The Father was quiet and the sting of the old oak in my nostrils and his breakfast cigarette breath broke through that god-awful glory hole of a confession grate which lingered between us and real, human connection.

‘So, around 10 A.M., I was stood at the usual place in town. Just behind the fishing tackle shop on the car park, do you know it?’

‘I don’t fish.’

‘I didn’t ask if you fished, Father, I asked if you knew the place?’

‘I don’t know the place, my son.’ Again, see, it’s demeaning. Nobody else had ever called me their son, what gives him the right? That’s the way I see it.

‘Anyway, I was stood about waiting for the usuals. Young girl, Alice, comes up to me—she isn’t really a regular but I’ve seen her once or twice. I wrote a poem about her that got published, you know? She doesn’t know about it, though. It was mainly about her smell. I don’t think I’ve ever smelled anything like her before, it was so fresh. She smelled like lemongrass but better. She asked how I was, how my writing’s going... I told her about my short stories that I’d sent off and what one in particular was about; a child murder and uxoricide, infidelity and all that. I think it might be right up your street, Father.’

‘Congratulations on the poem, but I don’t think so.’

‘Oh, well thank ye and fuck ye, then. Anyway, she was stood beside me, half-listening, half-out-of-her-fuckin’-mind. Sorry, I know I shouldn’t swear in the house of God, it’s a nasty habit.’

‘You’re forgiven.’

‘Already?’

‘No. Go on, go on.’

‘Right. This Alice, she’s a good-looking girl but a junkie if I’ve ever seen one. It was a shame to see her stood there, scratching her arms and

watching the world through glassy eyes. It was a shame to see it. I sold her her stuff and long story short; she overdosed that afternoon. Her friend told me this morning, and I figured since I was passing and it's been a heavy weight on my mind since, I should tell you about it.'

'Hmm.'

There was a silence between me and the Father for a little while. I imagined her face in my mind but she looked like the shadows of stained glass from here, now. As nothing but a memory.

I heard the main door open and close, wiring thanks to rusty hinges then slamming shut thanks to its weight. A pair of heels walked slowly down the aisle getting closer among the ringing sound of the door still echoing. They stopped outside.

'Three Hail Mary's, my son.' Cheap let-off, I thought. 'We all have to do things we sometimes don't want to do and the results of these actions must all be a part of God's plan, do you understand? But if you reveal a weakness, God provides strength. Do you understand this plan?'

If you reveal weakness, God will provide strength. I liked that. It was a poor excuse but it was poetry.

'I don't think I'll ever understand a plan like that. But, thank you.'

I stared up at the crucifix hanging off the door in front of me. It was leaning forward which made His whole ordeal look all the more painful. His eyes of metal were looking into mine of flesh and for a moment I thought He winked at me, or winced as His hands slid to the end of the nail and there He hung. Jesus was the original son of no father and now two-thousand years later, born godless maybe we're all fatherless by default.

‘Jesus was the original son of no father, surely?’ I said.

‘What do you mean, my son? He had a father. In fact he had two.’

‘I wonder if Alice has a dad out there somewhere crying right now.’

‘She might, and he might not be crying.’

‘And what does that mean?’ I waited for his response but nothing came through. ‘You don’t even know do you?’

This man christened me and taught me all the hymns, I thought he’d have more of an answer than that. Even my brother took confession with him when he was alive. Every Friday. Now he’s gone and I come to him for help, how fucked am I?

‘I’m just saying that it doesn’t sound like she came from a loving place. That’s all, my son.’

‘Stop calling me your son.’

After the whole In Nomine Padre spiel was over, I sighed and stood to leave. The woman who had come in a few moments ago must have been sat outside the confessional waiting. I could smell her. Father pushed the usual crisp fifty-note through the wooden grate and I slipped back the usual bag of H. All was forgiven and the crimes of Gods and Angels continued.



THE SALESMAN, PART 1, collage
by Liam Riddle

THE SIXTIES: UNIVERSITY DAYS

by Steve Luxton

The weekly gathering went off in a shabby
pipe-hung room in a barely converted
Victorian-era University Power plant.
—not an unsuitable nook for
a graduate seminar on Revolutionary Marxism.

The young professor, small boned and somewhat rodent-like,
possessed a theologian's brain and piously convinced manner, but,
while an upstanding scholar of the politically correct, I suspect
would probably have suffered *some* doubt
and perhaps got a little sweaty before
having you shot.

But a university seminar is not a tribunal,
though most of his students thought otherwise.
Already confirmed Stalinists, Trotskyites and Maoists, etc.,
they were “seeking an education” only nominally.
Rather, they were drawn to this talk-zone of naked ideology
to announce the only Truth and condemn the heretics,
i.e. the evil s.o.b.'s across the table.

All of which, giving the young professor his due,
he liberally permitted. When, as a chosen representative
of a small group of politically less zealous students,
I protested to him about the yelling matches,
he maintained that energetic, even shrill exchanges of ideas
were creative, while, to my complaint that
the seminar had become a struggle among Marxists
not a study of Marxism—he saw the former
as full of excellent opportunities for learning.
—With the proviso: there was to be no violence.

Suspicious, fast-to-rage fanatics,
the extremist students insolently slouched or militantly
sat ramrod straight during their intense denunciatory debate,
they sneered at the devilish beliefs of their fellows,
ranted and leaked fountains of spittle.

Nevertheless, in conformance with
the young professor's rules, (he had, despite
their accusations he was a hypocrite and the capitalists' "running dog,"
held onto the right to award grades.)
They refrained for weeks from violent outbreak.

When it came, it came unexpectedly.
The students were forbidden to distribute political brochures
promoting their views while in the classroom.
That afternoon the Trotskyite tried passing
something to the Maoist *under* the seminar table.
The Stalinist, a thin-lipped, ferocious woman, spotted this
and, shouting at the outrage, snatched at the former's wrist.
Amidst a furious shower of political leaflets and epithets
a shoving, lunging, wind-milling fistfight commenced.

The seminar table scraped with a noise like a wounded beast,
tipped and fell. People flew off
their chairs backwards. The young professor also.
The melee grew general, though many
weren't sure who meant to do battle and who didn't,
and if so, what was their precise leftwing affiliation:
premade pledges of alliance were not always honoured in the pinch.
Where I stood back flat against the wall, my eyes
were on the professor.
He was back on his feet, again and again demanding: "Stop!"
Then, realizing his appeal was in vain, he darted to the aid
of a student whose head, gripped by another student,
was being repeatedly bounced with a "Bong"

on an ancient metal pipe.

The perpetrator was a big lad, but soon, after a quick fumbling but then an effective sequence of wrestling holds, the Prof gained the upper hand. Now it was the big student's skull that rang on the pipe.

The room went hush.

Everybody had abruptly stopped to watch.

A few clapped, but some muttered now it was clear as day that the scholar was a "fucking fascist."

Finally the professor released his victim.

With a sigh, everybody's attention turned elsewhere.

A pair of students cooperated to right the overturned table.

The Trotskyite began scooping up and straightening his tattered brochures.

The Stalinist sat on an uprighted chair, eyes on the ceiling, and pursed her mouth.

A few of the disengaged students looked across at the academic's victim, then at the shiny spot on the dusty wall pipe.

The subdued thug scowled and flipped his head sideways.

A few students then slipped out, but most resumed their places at the table. Having picked up his lecture notes, the professor sat down once more at its head and began sorting them with a view to continuing his presentation.

He began calmly as though nothing had happened, when a blue uniformed squad of security guards suddenly burst in and its burly leader sharply questioned the professor about all the noise, and whether everything was alright?

Was he sure about that? The professor denounced them for acting like the university was a police state. Later, when they had gone, he glared at the remaining students and joked that if he had *his* way, the big fascist and his minions would be shot!

CHILDHOOD HOME

by Safia H. Senhaji

“Where are you from?” Maia asks, being politely Canadian and also simply interested in getting to know me better.

I fumble awkwardly, like every time someone asks this question. Normally I answer with, “I live in Laval—it’s near Montreal.” Alongside, “it’s complicated; I moved around a lot when I was younger.”

The fierce urge grips me to simply say nothing, or to angrily ask how that’s her business. Or at the very least, plead for more clarification. After all, “where are you from” is a complicated, multifaceted question for many—including me.

I have had many childhood homes, in fact.

One which I barely remember, small and cozy and hazy. The only memories to be found are in pictures; my family at the beach, dark sand and grey wooden docks and blue-grey sea. Myself in a pink winter outfit, ready for the slight snow and cold. My paternal and maternal grandparents cooing over my crib, and then my brother’s.

One where I grew up, little white stones making up the façade. Outside the window, red bricks and bright blue doors. There was an apple tree with inedible apples, small and bitter, that would litter the green front lawn like leaves in the fall; always a game of chance as we stepped gingerly and attempted to navigate between each fallen apple. Neat houses, dogs barking, the neighbour blasting his speaker in defence against two rowdy children. It was a time of bike rides to the park, drawing chalk on a red-brick driveway, splashing in the pool with my brother, extended family barbecues on our green-painted porch, eating crumbly chocolate-chip cookies outside in the summer because they were too messy to be eaten inside the house. A home mere blocks away from my cousin—all dressed up on Halloween night, trading candy there with my brother. All of us

almost like siblings, even if she was an only child, though my brother and she were like twins and me the odd one out.

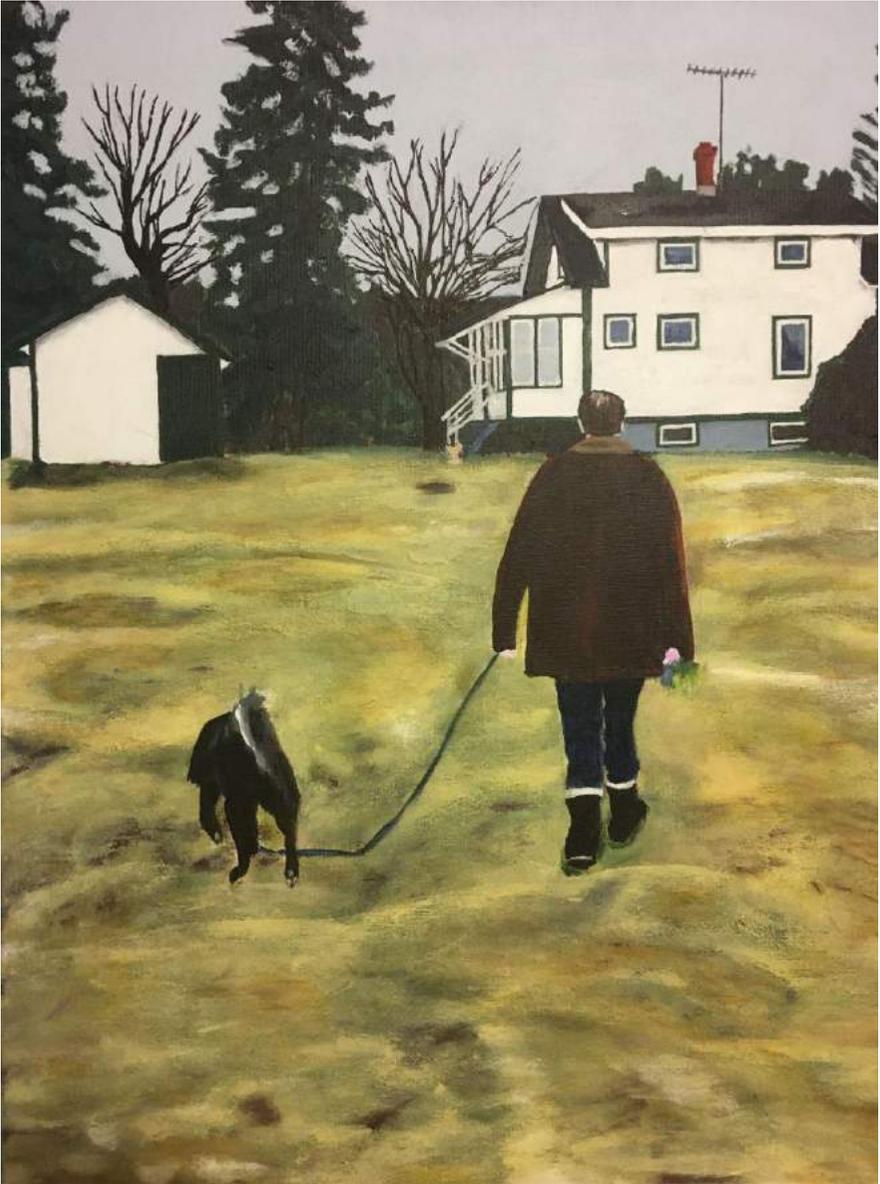
Then there are the others. I remember narrow streets with women covered head-to-toe in black, a sweltering sun, the language—one I could not understand. Drivers who clump together in packs. Signs warning for camels instead of moose. The call for the prayer, a melodic constant, the world stopping when it pierces the air. Picnics on roadsides with friends on plastic mats. My dad offering to take us to empty and brightly-coloured amusement parks (but don't dare ask about that traumatizing boat ride). My brother and I playing hide and seek in a small apartment of marble floors. My mother watching Arabic-dubbed anime with us, helping us with complicated homework, ready to go toe-to-toe with the school administration when needed.

After, a maze of tan apartment complexes, white walls and carpeted floors inside. I remember narrow roads, a small playground, a squat red-brick church so unlike the gothic, green-roofed ones of Montreal. Air raid sirens for tornadoes, tires unequipped for even a millimetre of snow. Movies we watched on our black faux-leather couch, often from Redbox for a movie night in, as a reward for good behaviour. My mother narrating books aloud to my brother as we coaxed him into a love of reading. A shared bedroom piled with boxes that were allowed to stay. Building boats out of the plastic salad containers to float in the bathtub, cars out of shoeboxes, creating our own fantastical worlds, arguing yet always making up. My brother and I against the world.

When does childhood begin, and where does it end? Is it an age range, or a mindset? A series of interconnected but separate memories?

The world outside my childhood home was a constant change of scenery. Mine is an ever-evolving universe, one of revolving memories, a litany of people and things replaced over the years. Friendships that do not always stand the test of time and distance. A lifetime of moving, year after year. To be able to describe the world outside one's childhood

home—well, that requires home to be a permanent place, rather than a family of four. I suppose, then, that childhood means learning and growing up through the years. From a newborn to toddler, tween to teenager, until you are fully grown and ready to go out into the world. Boxes and albums full of pictures. A mosaic of memories.



DOG, MAN, AND HOUSE ON CAMPUS, acrylic on canvas
by Trevor Gulliver

SPRING MID-MORNING

by Sophia Cumming

soft wispy mist floats
through a still bare thicket
at the edge of the slowly thawing pond.

the frozen water is the unsullied
grey blue of an almost sunny day,
and stubborn oak leaves from last fall
rustle across the ice.

ashore, snow melt makes the ground
appear to molt, as tufts of moss,
somehow already green, peek
through the mud, eager for the clouds to part.

the wind smells like rain,
the gulls are calling,
it is spring again.

GROUNDHOG DAY

by Angela Leuck

You are on the road/where you shouldn't be / my husband says he's never
seen a groundhog on the road / you must have your reasons / we all do /
maybe they're not always the best ones / it's my birthday and I feel
carefree / it's sunny / a perfect day to drive cross country / cross the road
/ I slow the car / you are probably just coming out of hibernation / leaving
your burrow to gaze above ground / all those months under the frost line
/ nothing but darkness / one breath every six minutes / now on a day like
this / almost breathless / stepping out / the sun so warm / so bright / you
relinquish safety for spring / but today is not your day / blinded / you
amble towards the car not away / it was quick says my husband / nothing
you / I / could do / that brief taste of spring / back to darkness /
underground / every six minutes / not a breath / today is my birthday.

UNSUBSCRIBE

by Nick Fireplace

“Proffer your grief,”
is advice for the young poet.

I am not a young poet.

I am writhing, prickly.
Like a fox, say,
or a dog
run down by Public Works.

What do I know about

about

*sacred offerings
of pomegranate,
swollen, red,
the heart of childhood
appropriated,
coursing sweet,
down November's grave chin.*

What do I know?

Revisions to the tax code.
Estate planning.
A lump on my inner thigh.

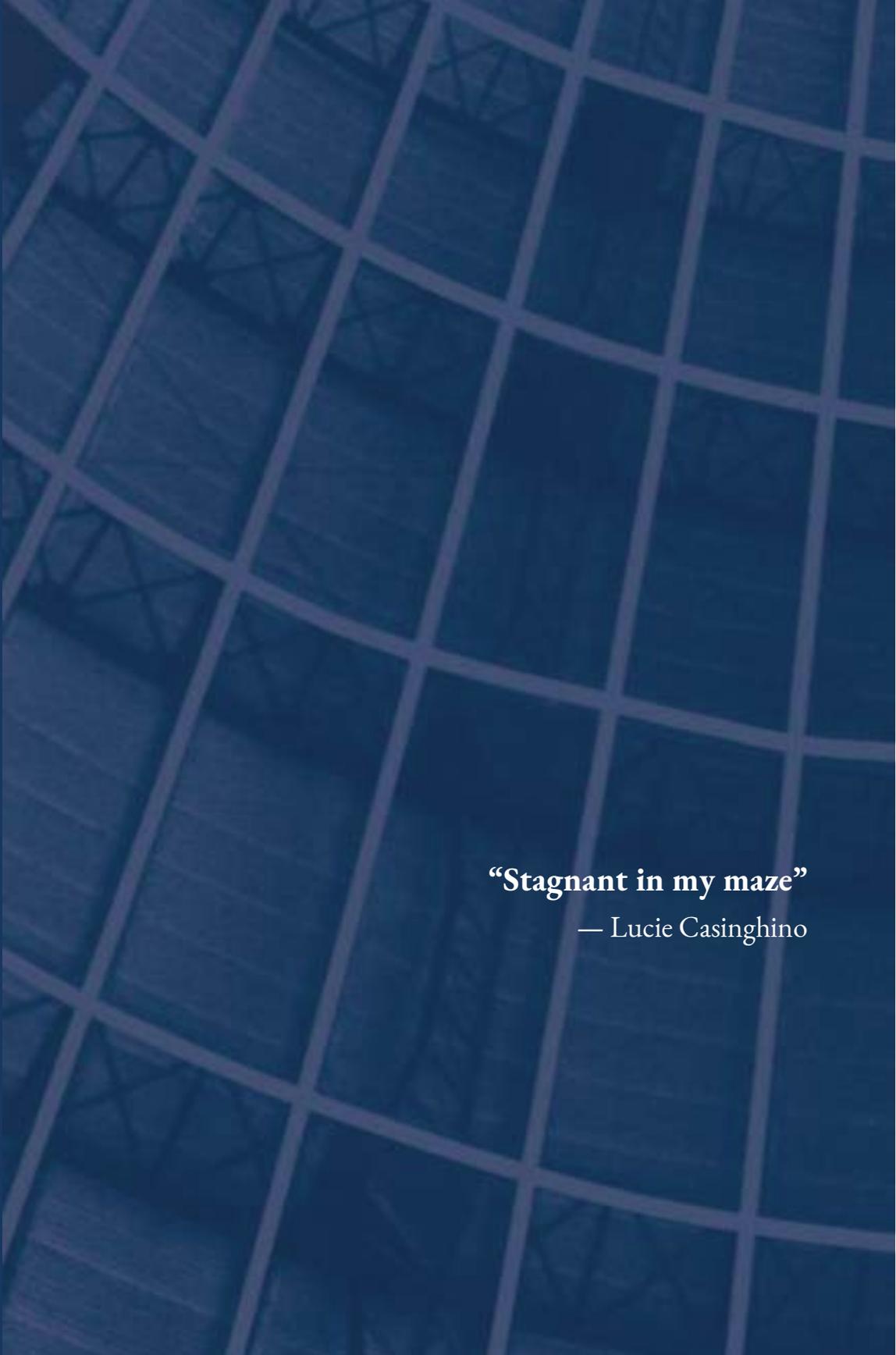
How are these poems?

And by the time the writer
is just a body in the reservoir

will it occur to them to ask,
“Whatever became of his dog?”

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Please unsubscribe me from your mailing list.



“Stagnant in my maze”

— Lucie Casinghino

THE MYCOLOGIST

by Noah Toomey

From sporulation, I awaken. Born
out of the darkness, through dank desolate
detritus I emerge; I bifurcate
until we bear an individual bourne.
Our parasitic dark half dims the light
as a depressing and destructive force
to our host; master of the evil scourse.
It seeps vitality and thrives despite
our mycorrhizal half which cultivates
life; working day through night, it propagates
the light. Astonishingly nourishing,
always impelling us towards flourishing,
but still the rift remains within our bourne,
so as mycologist, I am reborn.



FAR OUT, digital photography

by Owen Baker

NEW YORK CITY

by Lucie Casinghino

I

I commune with the rats in the subway tunnels
They are my people, full of filth and beauty

At night we scavenge for scraps,
Scurrying about on all fours,
There are crescent moons of dirt
On my knees and palms
From crouching down
My body was not made for this,
And yet I love this life I lead

From below the grates
I catch an eyeful of moonlight,
Clear and bright even when diluted by thousands of miles

Then there is the sudden whizzing by of the subway cars
I scamper away,
Back flattened against the concrete walls
Waiting for the danger to pass

II

I eat sumptuous greens
Doused in vinaigrette
A meal fit for a king,
Or in this case a hurried businessman

His container discarded in the trash
Left too long in the sweltering summer heat
To be dug out carefully by my hands
Salvaged from overflowing garbage bins
Tossed to a crowd of famished rodents

Leaving some for me

A dinner to savor,
So abundant it becomes unbearable
Until I am forcing down bites of wilted lettuce
To be thrown up later

My stomach too weak to handle such rich food
Unlike the rodents I now call family

III

There is no easy way through
Still, it is what I have chosen

Sometimes I do miss the feeling
Of sun on my skin
But there is the glow of the subway stations
The bright light coming from the vehicles themselves

So I skitter about from track to track
And the rumbling of the subway
Echoes in my gut

HAPTICS

by Casey Hebert

Sitting together on the couch

An island to ourselves

You and I want to share this space alone

High-fiving over your success

I will be your champion and help you champion yourself

These applauses take two of us

My hand burns from our touch

Clasping my hand and dragging me off

I'll go anywhere with you

Don't let go

Wiping your tears

You don't have to endure this alone

I am here

See how I care for you in moments of hurt?

(I love you)

Hugging you

The truth doesn't matter, I just want you

We're good

Please stay

Toying with the hole in your jeans

I want to touch you, and this is a mindless and playful way to do it

This touch is not a confession

I can feel your bare skin

Helping me up, feeling your muscles

You are strong

I am safe

Covering your mouth with my hand
Don't speak ill of yourself
I'll protect you from your vicious mind
(This is the only way I can feel your lips)

Hugging you goodbye (twice)
If we must part, let me first feel you close
I won't put distance between us until I've closed this gap
I wish I didn't have to let you go
I wish I didn't have to go
I will tell you tonight
I love you

THE HALLOW BRIGHT

by Amie Godward

We sat on the floor
A candle between us
Dipping our fingers in the melted wax
Watching it harden into grotesque peaks
His face so close to mine
I could almost hear his thoughts

A moth surprised me
Entranced by the candlelight
Stumbling around our little campfire
He thought I wanted to kill it
Press its wings with my misshapen fingertips
But I wanted to save it
We enjoyed its company
For 20 minutes or so
Before it suddenly,
Without warning
Took off
And plummeted into the pool of molten wax
It was over in a second

I gasped, its suicide shook me.
When he saw I was upset, he told me, “no, it’s beautiful, it’s life.
How do you know how much you want to live if you haven’t wanted to die?”

The next day he got a tattoo of
A moth on his wrist.
I didn’t have the courage to ask what it meant.



GOT A QUARTER? digital photography
by Owen Baker

LAWS OF HAUNTING

by Mercedes Bacon-Traplin

Perhaps I will be a poltergeist
So you will not be able
To pretend I wasn't there
Not with the books you so love
Flying from shelves at each turn
Not with the paintings you hang
Clanging to the floor with each step
Will you fear me?
Or will you know it's me?
Will knowing it's me make you
Fear me even more?
I wonder if you will leave,
Scared from your own home

I know not the laws of haunting
But if they permit me to follow
I will

I will lay in the snow with you
I will watch Jeopardy with you
I will stare at the stars
From car windows with you
Because I will never be quite done
I think I will haunt
Perhaps you, or perhaps your shadow
If they are not one and the same
I will kiss your eyelids at night
So when you wake with a start
You might feel me

I will remember your words
The way they sounded as you made them

The way they tumbled
Spilled from your lips like wine
Or sometimes brandy
I will remember them for you
I will take them into my palms
So that when you die
A while down the line
You can go peacefully without them

LIONS IN THE GOLDEN SQUARE MILE

by Frank Willdig

The staircase leads to a plywood door,
an eyeless façade and a gaping mouth,
as if pleading to speak, to protest its fate;
and its slow descent to desuetude.

Roofs ruined and towers overturned,
the flight of stone stairs shudders with age,
hawkweed and plantain in the concrete cracks;
this skeleton awaits the wrecker's ball.

I stop and spend a quiet moment here,
and consider the lions at the front
with the comfortable comportment of doges,
these serene guardians of the old order
still hold menace in those hidden fangs,
and sovereign power in their sheathed claws.

Though granite-formed, the elements proceed
where the skilled work once shone.
in these well-wrought walls the cracks appear
in the time-worn sinews and the chipped mane,
the fragments crumble and by the rusted rail,
the seasons prevail, if the stone cannot.

McTavish, Simpson, McGill and McCord,
stern and steadfast Scots, the ghosts
whose names still haunt the streets,
who once held sway in that halcyon day
now rest forgotten as these prideful kings,
their roar a whispered hush of air.

MINOTAUR

by Lucie Casinghino

I sit, stagnant in my maze
Red string pulled as taut
As muscles flexed,
A runner with arms
Outstretched at the starting line

I stalk and stare at the winding corridors
Bones littering the porous stone floors,
Soaking up blood and the sound of screams

I was born blind,
A kicking, screaming, scratching thing
Bull in a china shop of flesh
Covered in blood, and so I remain
My birth a calamity,
Act of clawing ruin
My fate is twisted by unseen hands
They immured me in this maze

So come, watch this great beast fight
Come, watch a queen's son stomp the ground
And charge, horns first

MEN!

by Steve Luxton

I glance from a pale blue European dragonfly
banking artfully round a mid-current rock
(a perfect, unreachable angler's spot)
to where, on shore, my Serbian friend Serge
wags his long fishing rod and
mutters past a cigarette:
"No bites yet!"

This morning, driving to this river at the Bosnian border,
after much talk about his favourite author, Hemingway,
he explained to me how,
at the onset of first Yugoslavian civil war
he'd deserted his regiment and fled the country,
thus playing no role in the terrible
massacre of Muslims at Srebrenice
not very far down the Drina.

Smart move! I said to him, though
his young, high-strung wife, Olga, still chafes about it.
Her criticism, I have learned, is not patriotic.
In a nearby town cafe, she complained to me:

"He only thinks of himself. Take, for example,
our honeymoon: Where did we spend it,
and doing what?
I stayed in the hotel while he spent the whole week
on the Drina fishing his favourite spots."

A professor's daughter, she was
born and raised in Belgrade.
While a student at the university, she
met, fell in love with, and accepted the proposal

of a promising village lad.
–A risky catch!

I think: Parking a bookish city girl here by The Drina
seems pretty insensitive even
for a devotee of “Papa.”
(Though it’s true that the rod and line
are also my choice
when seeking diversion.)

Then, she continued, just a week after the honeymoon,
her new husband deserted the army,
kissed her, wished her *au revoir*,
and grabbed a plane to Cape Town.

A Farewell To Arms sans the girl.
Though this Katherine *did* live to fret:
“And now he never shuts up about how good
the fishing is in South Africa!”

Whatever: with him I don’t touch the subject,
not even with a whippy, eight-foot pole.
Now, five years later, while not far downriver
UN forensic specialists probe nearby limestone slope
seeking mass graves,
his ex-commander stands trial for war crimes,
and Olga is beginning to talk of divorce,
Serge expertly perches on boulders and
deftly casts a wet fly
after *hutchchen*–bronzed Danube salmon,

While I, unlicensed and thus unable to dip a line,
enjoy the shade of river bank shrubs
filled with snagged fertilizer sacks
from factories that, during the wars, were

converted to the production
of explosives.

“Still nothing!” Serge calls,
his heart set on catching and showing me a salmon,
but also fearing he’s neglecting me.

He cares in his fashion.
I yell back above the river’s seethe: “Serge, no problem!”

And for the time being there isn’t.
In a fool’s paradise, we two take pleasure
in being men without war or women—or, for that matter, fish.
All morning we selfishly catch nothing.
Or anything us.



DIVE, 35mm black & white film
by Luke Munro

ACHILLES IN ASPHODEL

by Frank Willdig

A grey sameness holds and an endless day
prevails across this dark and dismal plain;
the shadows speak and whatever they say
will not assuage their state of loss and pain.

No words of kindness can be understood,
no sympathy shared nor sweet kisses felt,
there is no summer breeze, not a shaded wood,
as these are the cards with which he's been dealt.

Here is a gloomy, dank, and mirthless place,
the ashy meadow and the treeless waste
where disembodied voices fill the space
and the hopes for tomorrow are erased.

A sunless expanse where one hopes that sleep
would wash away each and every memory,
but all he hears are those who wail and weep
and who amble about aimlessly.

In this broad vale, the air is damp and cool,
no fleece or human touch can comfort him,
no voice can soothe and no refreshing pool
can ease each atrophying useless limb.

Locked in his body, alone in his thought,
he awaits the ferryman as he nears
and reflects on his own desperate lot
as the attendant suddenly appears.

She tends to the flowers that fill his room,
he has grown to despise the asphodel,

he curses the bland tones matching the gloom
that makes it the perfect flower for hell.

Such are the vicissitudes of this life;
he once convinced himself of the promise
of power and fame won through war and strife,
now those dreams and deeds have come down to this.

The conquest of foes and the closeness of friends
do not seem to matter in Asphodel,
the ferryman comes when the story ends,
to the very same darkness in which all dwell.

YELLOW IN REVERSE

by Sally Cunningham

In my mind, the plane crash plays in reverse. The crowd on the beach slowly sits down to watch as shrapnel sings up out of the glittering bay. The pieces arc upwards, constructing a cloud of smoke, the largest and brightest piece climbs back the slowest. Suzie, on our pink patterned blanket, leans back, her hands shooting outwards from her mouth to embrace the sky. She loves air shows. Loves the beach. Loves me.

Slowly, in the blink of a sun-drenched eye, the little plane is whole again. The tail is on fire and will be for a while. Arms in the crowd sink down to stop pointing as the plane hums backwards into formation with the five others. Banana yellow, all of them, seamlessly weaving smoke plumes in and out of Dutch braids. Five mechanical canaries winging on the early evening's tangerine sky. Only one trail bleeds thicker, then thins out to be indistinguishable in the show. And then nothing. As though it will never happen, never did happen. Suzie's fingers reach up to caress the clouds, her eyes shine glossy and hopeful in the Before of it all. Before the first glint of yellow was ever spotted in the sky. Out of the sky. In the ocean out past the barge. Sinking.

There were no fireworks that night. Sometimes the show must not go on. The wreckage became a new sort of show, for those without kids and without remorse. Five slow landings. Sirens howling over the water. People on boats, fishing pieces of plane out of the bay like rubber duckies in sandy bathwater. I think I called a yellow cab and went home. I think Suzie left long ago. I think I floated in the water. I think in the harbour I became a plane that became a boat and then nothing more.



NATURE FIGHTS BACK, digital photography

by Jolène Lessard

THE PRICE WE PAY FOR LOVE

by Roxanne Migneault

For one blooming love came the loss of another; for one beautiful flower came a seed of weed. For one life was brought into this world, another was taken away. As Eden looked at her lover, she feared she had made the wrong choice.

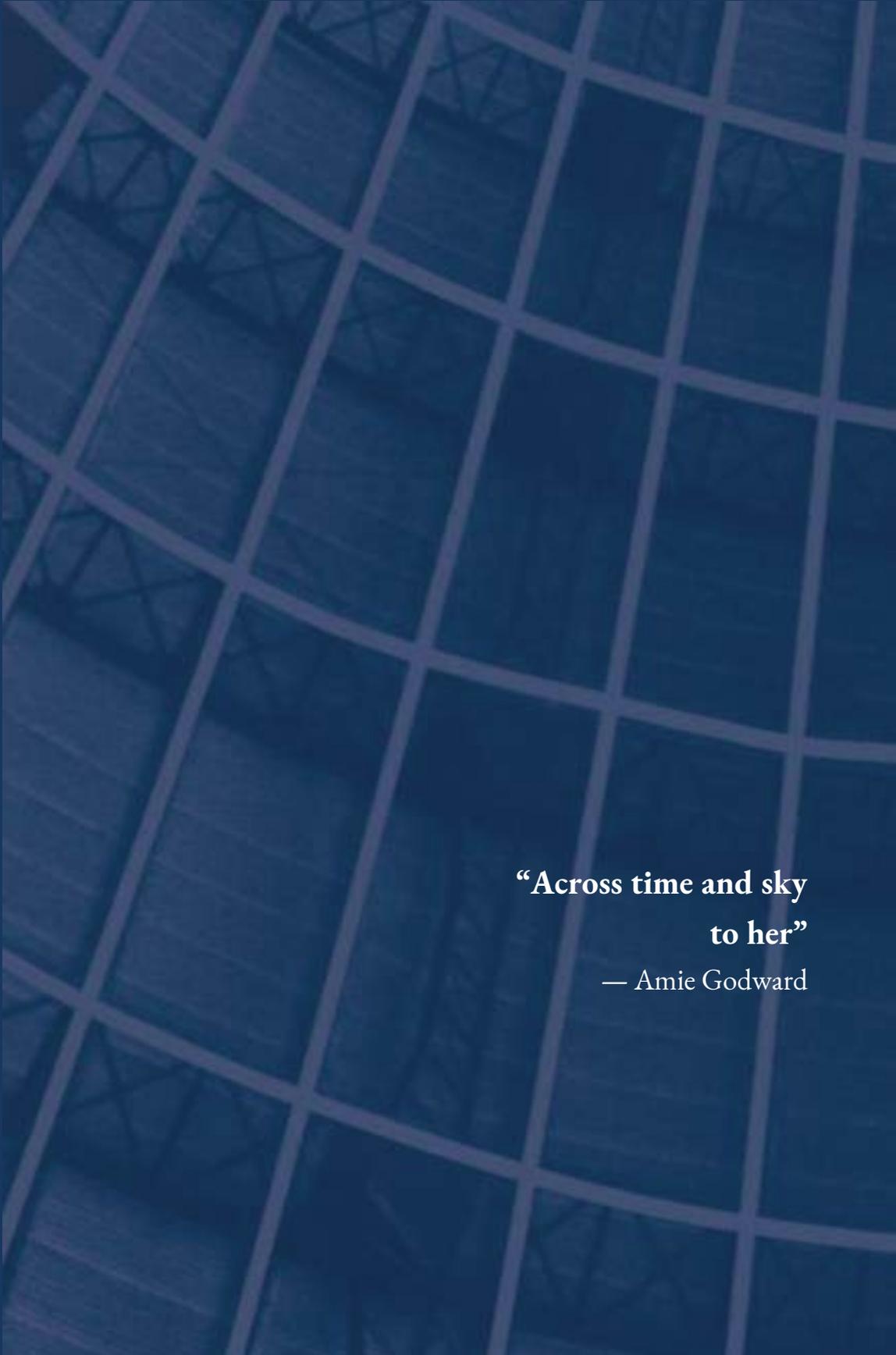
Her brother's angelic face was everywhere. On every wall of the house, on every piece of furniture that could withstand the weight of a frame. She felt like she was a prisoner of a mirror maze, confined to stand in the middle of thousands of versions of him instead of her reflection. She felt like there were no escaping him: his face so alike hers, his smell so familiar, his smile—him, her twin.

She hated to see his pictures. They never could capture his person adequately. They were too standstill, too anchored in the capture of a second in his lifetime. This boy was a flame that could not be extinguished; his smile would warm anyone's blackened heart at the simple sight of it. In those pictures, anyone knew that they could only see a glimpse of what he truly was.

Eden could not remember how it happened. She only remembered sharp breathings, painful gasps, and screams, hers or his, she would never know. She felt cold. The dread and the hold death had on her was permanent. Even in this room lit and warmed by a fireplace, Eden could feel death's breath on her neck, freezing her into the core of her bones, reminding her of the price she paid for love and for magic to exist.

The temptress was existing like no one around could see her. She was a beacon of energy within a room of indifference. Everybody was indifferent except him. Eden's lover was trailing the pretty girl's lively presence with his eyes like there was not enough time in existence for him to take in the sight of her.

Eden knew it would be the last of him that she would see, feel, and hold when they walked on the way back together. She knew all along that his choice, whatever it may be, would never involve her. She knew now that she had given up everything for a glimpse of time with someone whose only wish was to be someone else's. Eden wished he could lie, that he could pretend she was the one thing to make him whole. Nevertheless, instead, Eden could foresee the future of her lover and the temptress, together, as clearly as she could imagine her own, the one she could get back if she were strong enough. All that was left for her to do was scream. Eden screamed for hell below and heaven above to change their mind. She screamed, and just like that, a spark lit aflame inside her, and the world turned dark.



**“Across time and sky
to her”**

— Amie Godward

PANDORA

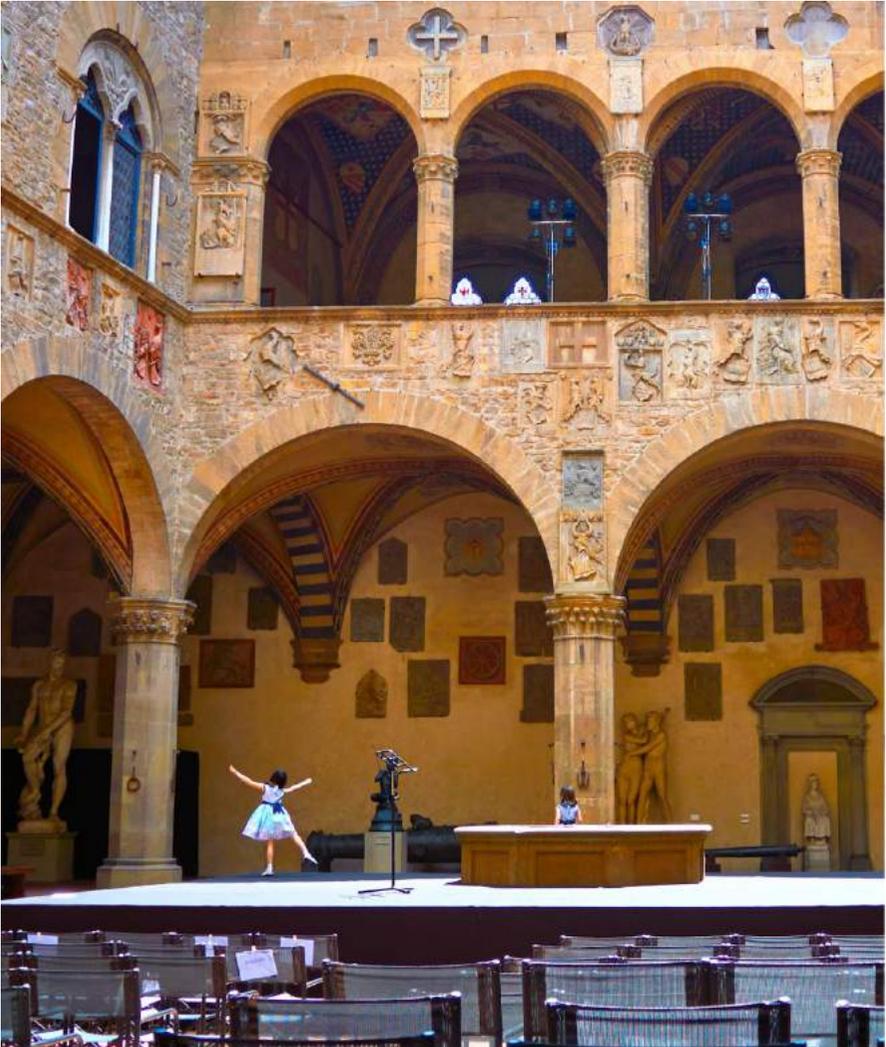
by Sophia Cumming

how did pandora feel
when she realized her own
disastrous misjudgment?
the moment her infallibility shattered
like so many broken dishes?

was there a second to feel her curiosity sated,
before she shook hands with chaos
to pay for her satisfaction?
could she breathe as every horrible thing
screamed and clawed its way past her?

i imagine her knocked over,
horrors encircling like a hell-bound tornado.
and as she collapses in her own
destruction, an iridescent glint
flutters out from the overturned jar.

i most want to ask
how did it feel to glimpse
that first infinitesimal
flicker of hope?



VUOTO, digital photography
by Donovan Faraoni

MY LIFE IN THE SKEW

OR ALPHA HAPPENS, BELIEVE ME!

OR I AM ALPHA (YES, STATISTICAL POWER IS REAL!)

by Jill Mathers

Professor Dale Stout's Psychological Statistics class got me thinking (he would like that). Statistics offend me. The premise of statistics is to discount low probability events. Reject that they happen, or blend them with the higher probability events so they don't stick out so much (called, appropriately in my eyes, the "mean"). It is mean! They are to be either ignored (as in when determining the mode, or the most popular event), or put somewhere else where they "fit" better, like on some "alternate" distribution where they have more results just like them, and they are less unique. That offends me. Perhaps because I feel like most of my life is a low probability event.

Let's just take a look at the big events, keeping in mind that a low probability event is 5% or less (alpha). Statistical power starts at alpha. I entered kindergarten when I was 4 years old (1.2%). I entered university (the first time around) when I was 17 (1.4%). When I got married, we didn't know when the minister was going to show up, so we just started the reception first, then took a break in the festivities to actually get married when the minister was able to get there (no statistics available for that one, but I bet it is in alpha!) When I was 29 I won a car on the TV game show *The Price is Right*, and went to the showcase showdown (1.8% probability of even getting called to play a game). I was admitted to the Vermont Bar without going to law school (.02%). I read the law while I clerked and passed the Bar Exam instead. I suffered from anovulation and infertility, but got pregnant without intervention, and had a beautiful daughter, born with a midwife in attendance in my dining room. Oh yeah, the OB/GYN said I had about as much chance to get pregnant without intervention as winning the lottery. When I was 9 months

pregnant, I won \$10,000 in the lottery (1 in 899,278 chance). I entered university for the second time when I was 55 years old (.20%). And those are just the major events. I can assure you that there is a high probability that I am going to be engaged in a low probability event.

So where does that leave me? Where does that leave those of us that have lives with a high probability that we will predictably fall in the alpha of the null hypothesis distribution? If we get chosen, we don't get to live there, we need to be put into a NEW hypothesis, an alternate distribution where we are not in alpha. But what if I WANT to stay in alpha? What if we alpha dwellers DID have our own distribution? What would that look like? How would such a distribution be useful? What could it predict? What is NOT likely to happen? Could that be a niche? What if the members of a population wanted to be like the different people, and not like everyone else in a population? And what if they could only be different if they were consistently different from even the different people in the population? Could there be such a distribution?

Now, I am only in PMA 260, the first level of psychological statistics, so perhaps there is a distribution that fills this bill, and I just have not learned about it yet. I would imagine the distribution to be flat, a bunch of skews where the probability never rises above 2.5 %. A 95% percent interval would never be higher than a 5.0% probability of occurrence of any given event. A distribution where ONLY low probability events live. The information from such a distribution could perhaps be used to extrapolate what might be an unlikely event for most of a "normal" population, but a likely event on the...oh...this distribution needs a name...I will call it the CU hypothesis distribution, for "Consistently Unique."

I had a highly intelligent uncle who was a rocket scientist. Worked for Martin Marietta at Cape Canaveral. Never went to college. Instead, he wrote JFK a letter asking for a job in the new space program (he was an electrician in the US army) when he got discharged. He was the last

inspector that the unmanned rocket program had to get the OK from before the rockets were launched. He was an obese, insulin-dependent diabetic who drank like a fish and loved everything sweet. He lived to be 92 years of age. He would definitely be on the CU distribution.

Perhaps the CU distribution can be used to find those people who are more likely to “beat the odds.” Looking to hire/recruit inspired, open-minded members for a team that can destroy barriers, expectations, and typical outcomes? Look for those who are consistently on the CU distribution! Want to invest in the new stock that will be the next big breakthrough? Look for CEOs on the CU distribution!

I may need to develop this distribution if it doesn't already exist. I wonder how many women over 55 years old have taken Advanced Statistics, out of all the students who have ever taken Advanced Statistics! I wonder how many, out of those, ever invented their own distribution so they could fit in somewhere! I see another appearance in alpha in my future!

Thank you, Dale Stout, for being a professor in the alpha. One of those that are few and far between that inspire students to think in ways they may never have thought before, to broaden their horizons, and to make a daunting subject very much enjoyable. I appreciate your time, effort, attention and flexibility.



SEARCHING FOR STRAWBERRIES, digital photography
by Owen Baker

MY MUM, BACK HOME

by Amie Godward

There's power in these curls,
this nest of defiance

I inherited from my mother.

Her perfect ringlets

falling effortlessly

without pretension

and my twisted branches

perched atop my head

defiant and untamable.

I resented them,

scorched them to ash,

cursed every wave.

I painted them

and stripped them

and tugged at their roots

Until they were stolen,

erased like her

and suddenly years

of yearning for distance

and longing for distinction

disappeared with the wind

And all I could think of

was her hair on her shoulders

and how it shone in the morning sun.

There's anarchy in these curls,

they are mine.

She gave them to me.
They are wilderness
and courage
they are resilience and rebirth
they are my connection
across time and sky
to her

And now
as I hold each curl in my hand,
delicately entwining my fingers through the strands
I thank each one
gentle as birdsong,
and think of her
my mum, back home
and hope somehow
she is proud

WOMEN ARE NOT LUCKY

by Manu Bissonnette

It's hard being a woman in a man's world.

Oh, I know the world is not so sexist anymore. I know the time of corsets and stay-at-home moms is gone. I know I can aspire to a greater future.

I'm lucky that women fought for my rights before I was even born. I'm lucky that they were courageous enough not to accept their limitations. I'm lucky that I can do whatever I like.

No man is lucky to do whatever he likes.

When a man plays hockey, he's shaping his personality and learning discipline. When I play hockey, I'm fierce enough to dare do it.

When a man likes cars, he's found a hobby that will make him happy. When I like cars, I'm a tomboy that grew up with brothers.

When a man goes into business, he's on track for a successful career. He's a born leader and he's driven. When I go into business, I'm taking risks that I hopefully calculated well enough. I'm bossy and overconfident. Hopefully, my outfit is professional enough and I'm taken seriously. If he chooses education, he's found his vocation. If I choose education, I'm choosing a safe path. If he wants to be an actor, damn he's courageous. If I want to be an actress, hopefully, I have a plan B.

When a man walks down the street late at night, he's getting home. When I walk down the street late at night, hopefully, I get home.

When a man is bragging about his recent one-night-stand, he's had fun, good for him. When I brag about my recent one-night-stand, I should call him back in case he's the love of my life.

When a man is in a serious relationship, he's selfless enough to give up his right to see other people. When I am in a serious relationship, am I getting married soon?

When a man says he doesn't want to have children, he's prioritizing his career. When I say I don't want to have children, I'm going through a phase. I will change my mind because my life will feel incomplete if I don't.

When a man has a dream, inspiration is all around. Other men who have shared his dream in the past jump in to help him shape his ideas to life. When he reaches his goal, he's worked so hard, and it has paid off. When I have a dream, I'm setting myself up for a difficult journey. I'm seeing too big and maybe I should downsize my goal because there are so few women who successfully carried out the same dream in the past. And when I prove everyone wrong and succeed, I got lucky.

Am I lucky for having equal chances? Am I lucky that other women fought for my rights, that they were so undermined that they had to take it to the streets? Am I lucky that I can play sports, go to university, and choose my own path?

I am not lucky if being able to do what I want is considered lucky.



FEATHERS AND LACE, 35mm black & white film

by Luke Munro

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

by Kendra Buchner

When people see me they think
she's a cool girl
cute as a button
actually she's super sexy
really funny
she's just oozing with charisma
smart as Albert Einstein
"Wow, I wish I was her"
"How does she do it?"
I'm the best person ever if you think about it really
#girlboss

But they don't know about my facade
and really it's hard being so amazing, beautiful, gregarious, and hilarious
I just never thought at 20 years old I would struggle with
getting out of bed
brushing my teeth
taking a shower
going to class
defeating that deep gnawing pit of anxiety in my stomach
trying not to cry everyday
trying to clean up the emotional mess of crying everyday

The worst is when I am feeling my best
and I see all my adoring fans
they scream my name
and fawn over me
but then I am alone
in my room
and I tell myself
I am not famous, funny, fabulous, or fantastic
I'm a fraud

I'm a fraud who sinks in a pit of despair
who's a grimy rat girl
in her rancid rodent room
filled with doom and gloom
at first I thought my fate was written in the stars
that I'm a mess for being a Gemini sun, Sagittarius moon, and Scorpio
rising
turns out I need to heal my inner child
because of some unresolved trauma or something
and recognize "trauma responses"
who desperately wants to impress others
because sometimes she feels like she couldn't impress her parents
or some loser person from high school
but I really just want to impress myself
I want to make an impression on you

But they say you have to fake it to make it
so that's what I do everyday
#girlboss

REPLACING

by Amie Godward

The first time I let a man touch me after you
I felt every word you ever said evaporate
A cloud remained
And by the third, fourth, fifth,
A spotless summer sky

Men who celebrated me
Came and went
And with every last kiss
A little piece of me returned

I found myself
I was reacquainted with the woman I once knew
Long before your storm had settled into the curves of my soul

Time; it's a healer
Your words, once bullets through every inch of my hand-made armor,
Are now lines from a shitty script I was forced to co-write

Every memory of you touching me in anger
Has been replaced a thousand times
By soft fingers tracing line, curve and edge

My screams, once of pain, fear, sorrow
Are now drowned out by sighs of pleasure and unforgiving bliss
The kind you will never know

UNWORTHY

by Kendra Buchner

a small small body would make me a big big hottie
but why can't I be a big big hottie in my big big body?
I should be worth my weight in gold
But the more I weigh the less I'm worth
My beauty isn't worth to behold



BODY IN PROGRESS, acrylic on canvas

by Isabel Davies

KATHERINE

by Mercedes Bacon-Traplin

There is a simplicity
In my mother's cooking
Her slow movements back and forth
The placing of dishes on the table

She has a cloth thrown over her shoulder
She smiles at the food she makes
Her home smells of oil and spices
And she always smells the same

The pans and pots crackle and hiss
As she seasons and stirs like a dancer
And she cooks with a spirit
So warm and alive

I wonder if I'll ever feel that way
I do wonder if I'll ever love life
Enough to smile at my cooking
Or to pour my heart into each dish

I wonder if I'll ever be
Alive enough to taste the sweetness
Or if each bite will stay bitter
Grit like coffee grounds on my tongue

My mother cooks like a woman in love
And I eat like a woman who is empty

GLASS

by Haley Jameson

The words came from
my mouth like sculpted
glass. And finding them
meaningful, I gave them
all to her.

The words that broke
from his mouth were
painful. He forced them
into my hands as
they crashed and shattered
against my skin. Like
crystal, the shards pierced
flesh and drew blood,
but left only surface
wounds.

My kisses were band-aids
as I said I
was sorry. I promised
to never be like
that again.

They were only small
scratches. They'll heal, and
I'll forget them.

But I shouldn't be blaming
myself. You are the
reason I reacted that
way.

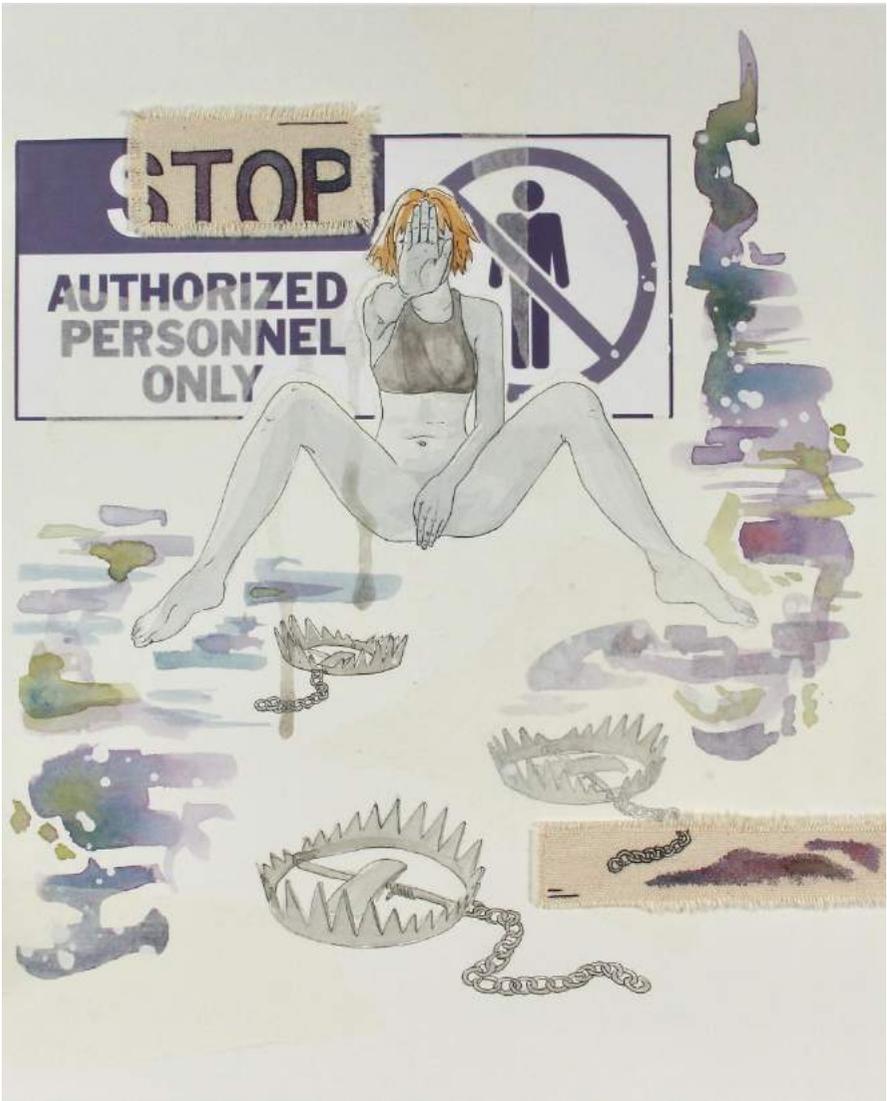
I pick up the
broken glass, put it
all together, a crude
imitation of his love,
a bloody mess of
apologies. I give it
back.

This is why you're
controlling, because you twist
my words. You turn
the conversation around so
I'm the one to
blame.

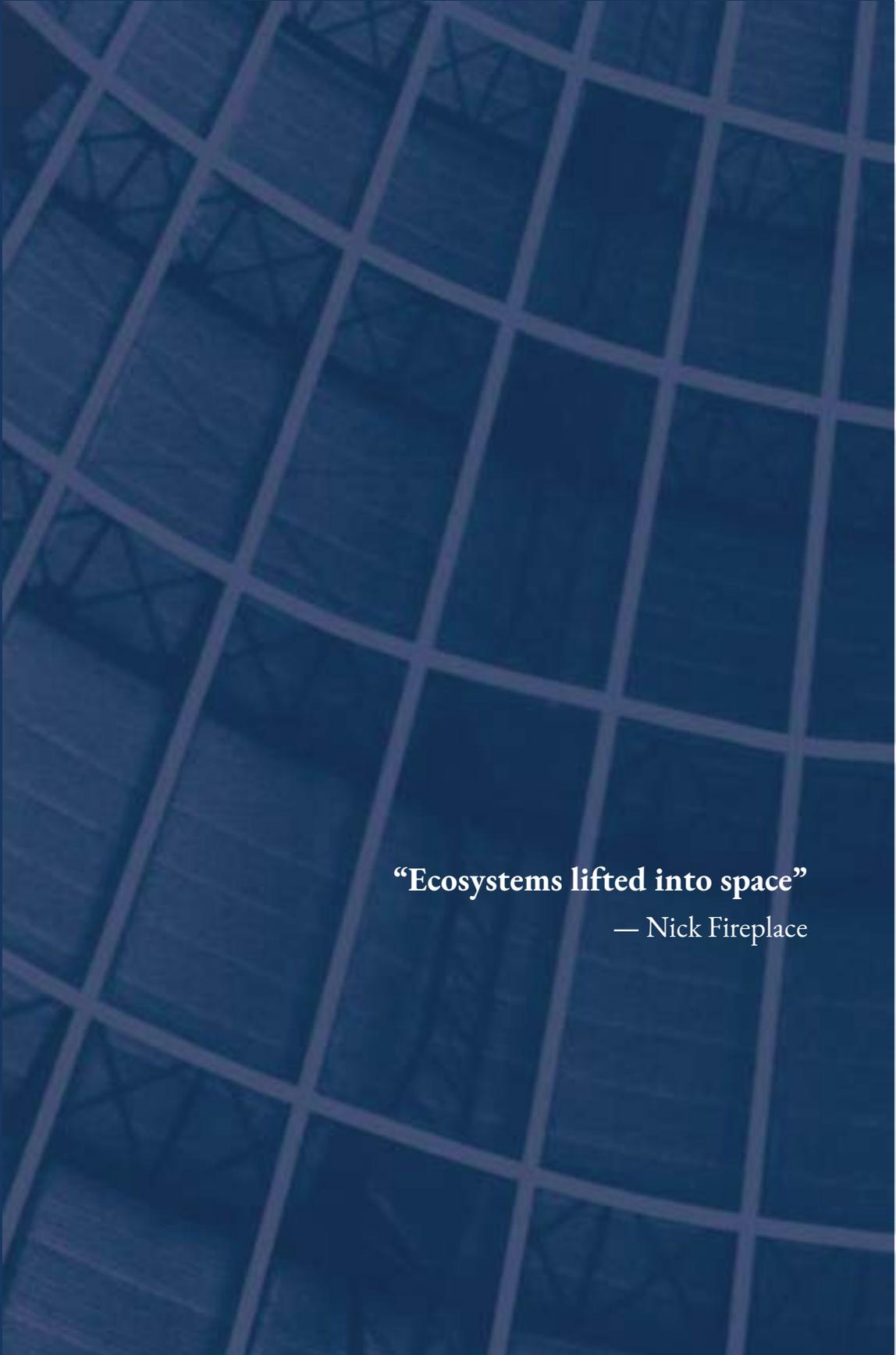
I watch the cascade of glass
fall from his lips,
again
again
feel it all shattering
against my skin, the
small nicks scarring overtime,

I don't know if
I even want to
see you when you
come home.

creating callouses,
becoming numb
to the sting.



AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL, collage, watercolour & ink
by Océane Dessureault-Opalewski



“Ecosystems lifted into space”

— Nick Fireplace

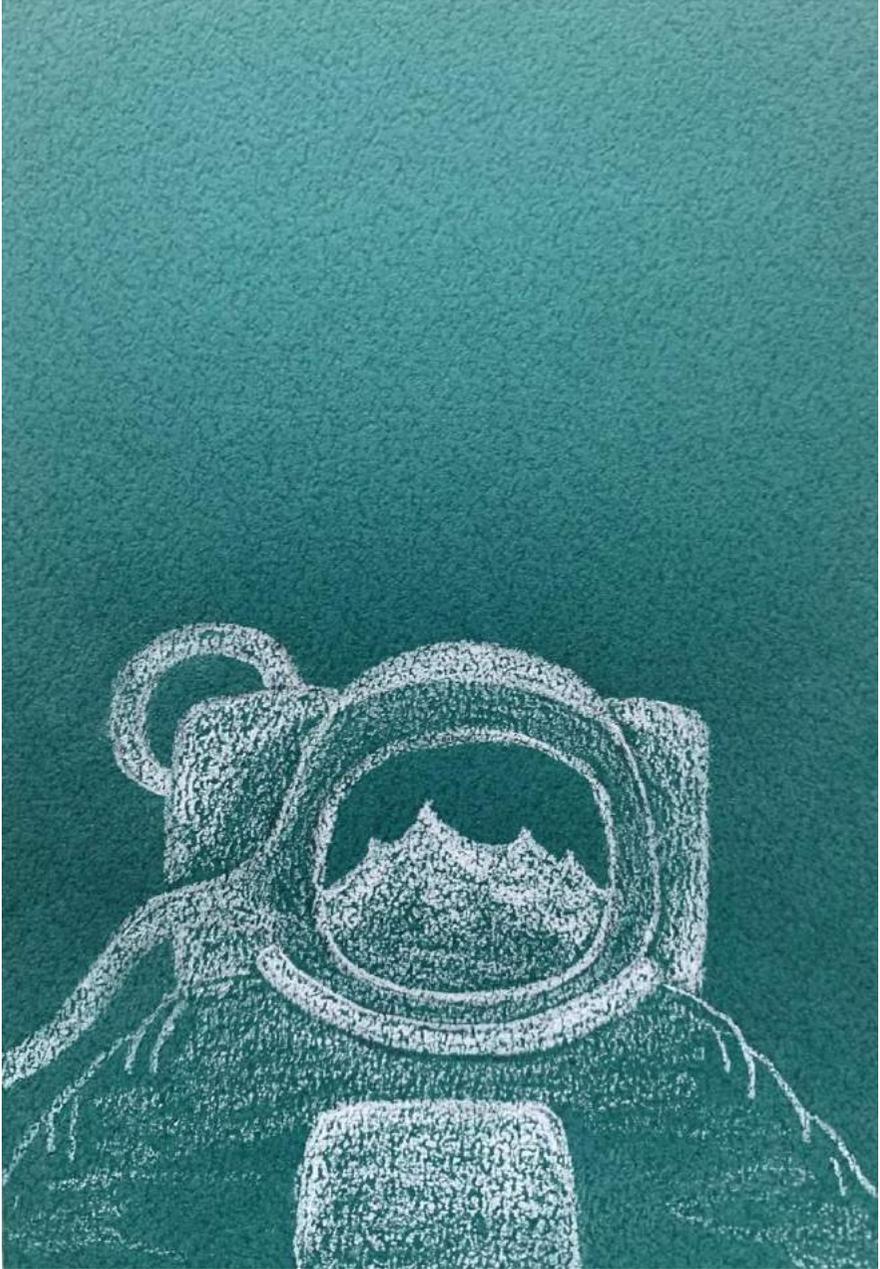
SUNGRAZER

by Lucie Casinghino

I cut out paper planets
A crinkling cosmos
This handmade act of heresy
Makes these worlds all my own
For I too take part in the act of creation

Comets dash by, skittering across the sky
Twinkling stars tickle my fingertips
I brush them aside, let them rush by
Turn to face the center of my universe
And there she is, blazing brightly
My sungrazer

So close as to reach out and touch
Her heat does not register
Against my fiery surface
But I can imagine it kissing my skin
So hot it feels cool against my outstretched hand
Reaching for her
Then the rotation continues
And she is pulled away
But she will come back
I know I only have to wait



A VOYAGE THROUGH WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE,

pastel on paper

by J. Frassetto

HEATWAVE

by Sophia Cumming

the late june air reeks
of rotting fruit and souring blossoms
like a city's worth of sweat, as
hundreds of gardens melt
in the cloudless afternoon sky.

lilacs and peonies and mock oranges
spend days fermenting
in the interminable sun,
blooming feverishly
as their desiccated leaves wilt.

the sun sets with opalescent cotton candy
clouds floating on a deep aquamarine sky
whispering at the tangerine horizon,
mirrored on the unrippled reservoir,
glassy for lack of wind.

hours after sunset, the heat
still clings to my skin, thick like water.
that night, i dream of swimming
the rush of cold nipping my legs as i jump in,
my body submerged in an otherworldly cold.



MOVE IN DAY, 35mm black & white film
by Luke Munro

BEDTIME

by Frank Willdig

Here's a boy sent to bed early,
and having no say in the matter,
disregards the adults in the other room
and turns his thoughts to the worlds beyond.

He rises quietly from his bed,
alive to the night, the starry dome,
full of ambling fireflies, distant train whistles
and crickets filling the air with a steady drone.

Scorpio scuttles in the southwest,
the summer sky spins and his imagination
takes wing, he makes do in his exile,
and conjures his world to proceed.

He would rather sit up here tonight
free to explore those storied realms,
those dream-filled heavens,
over vast and exciting spaces,

full of dragons, gorgons, magical ships,
bulls, princesses, heroes and bears,
sextants and whales, swans and eagles,
the vivid mind swirls.

Here is a happy solitude
full of the freedom to wander
the night full of wonders
where everyone has a say.



MISTY TOW HILL, digital photography

by Owen Baker

I KNOW YOU

by Amie Godward

I recognized your face
From a dream I had when I was six
And your voice
Matched a song I heard on the radio one rainy Sunday

The curl of your smile
Reminded me of a painting that hung on my grandmother's wall
And the feel of your skin against mine
Was like the breeze on that perfect day last Spring

Your childhood stories
Were my own forgotten memories
And your secrets
Are written in my teenage diaries

It was like stepping into my story;
Stepping into your arms
You echoed back every dream, fear and love
Like living in a mirror

FIRST SNOW

by André Romeo Lacroix

I watched her fall with peace and grace
Amongst her brothers and sisters.
The wind rushing them upwards and down
Until on the ground she is softly placed.
Such vibrant life, yet lifeless still
When above the meadows and trees;
What little time she had to be
Unique, carefree,
Then lost within the conglomerate.
She became one with all.
No longer herself, no longer an individual.
Trapped high on a branch or the base of a trunk
Or atop a field of green.
To be rolled up, compacted down,
Thrown carelessly.

HIDE & SLEEP

by Isabelle Vincent

Years have passed and here I stand, alone in the backyard I grew up in.

My winter boots press into fallen snowflakes as a faint cry for help echoes in the empty space.

I wander around the field, finding no body to the voice. A second drips by, a minute, then an hour. I decide I can't continue my search anymore, encumbered by frostbite and despondency.

I lay on my back, creating a perfect dent of my body into the frozen blanket.

Snow White. Mix with water. Paint a thin glaze.

The voice grows louder.

I rest alone with the plangent aching, gazing into the midnight sky of nothingness. Entombed in my memories, I drape the blanket over my frail body, finding solace in its cold embrace.

The eerie screams paint the white duvet blue, with sadness melting into the seams and carefully-sewn threads.

They are sculpting me into the person they wanted me to be. Their masterpiece is almost complete. I allow myself to be a canvas for the growing gloom by fading into the landscape.

Indigo blue. Mix with water. Paint with light strokes.

I always thought there was a comfort in blending in... In hiding.

The tears in my eyes, now the last visible part of my body, shine in the moonlight and peek out like two droplets of sap. With a thrash, they are covered, immersing me in a pit of darkness.

Colours may be beautiful, but they also hide in shades.

Charcoal black. Mix with water. Paint with heavy strokes.

In the depth of my slumber, I spot a figure lurking far away. Running closer and closer to her, I sense a familiarity in her pain... In her cry for help. Only inches apart from her I freeze, realizing that I am staring at my own reflection.

The cry falls silent.

PANSPERMIA

by Nick Fireplace

It all looks so desperate from here.

Entire ecosystems lifted into space.

You can't imagine the engines involved.

I am gold.

I am shivering.

I am biting my fingernails.

An abiding apparition
paddles across the lake.

A modest swath conceals the privates,
all worldly possessions in a waxen purse.

You can't imagine the engines involved.

It looks so tragic from here
but stunning
in the new sun.

FISH FRY SONG

by Linus Mulherin

Lobster Jesus on a boiling cross,
Legs tee'd out on the lip of the pot.
A sturgeon swims – he is the one.
Neptune takes his boney son.
Flounder in a skillet with outstretched fins;
Don't you know – he fried for your sins.



MINERALOGICA II, digital image
by Donovan Faraoni

THE LIGHTS HAVE GONE OUT

by Angela Leuck

A light in the chandelier
has burnt out,

and two of the
four spotlights.

In the loft,
one after the other,

the overhead lights
have flickered and expired.

Yesterday
I went to buy bulbs

at the hardware.
And bewildered

by voltages, shapes,
models & sizes,

I, unlike God,
threw up my hands

at the intricacies
of light.

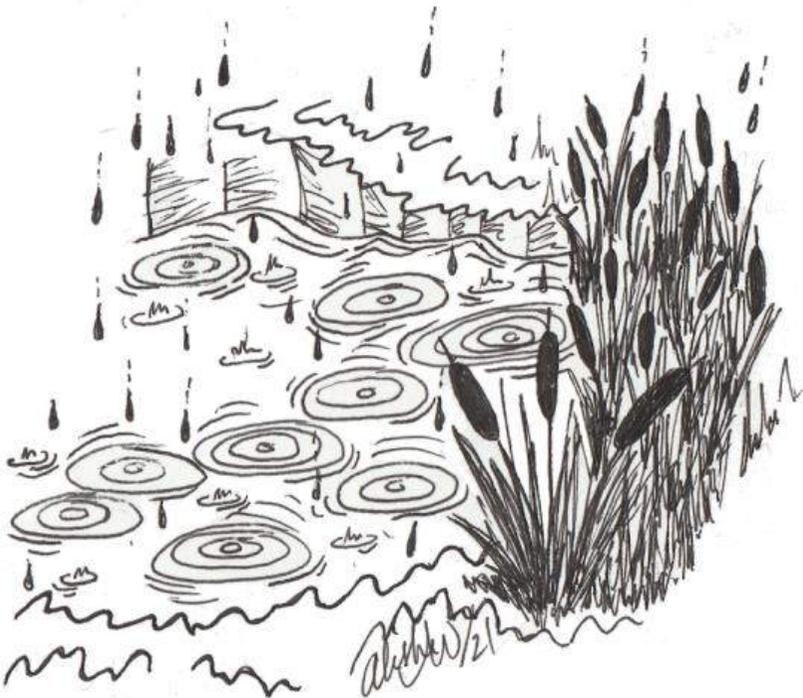
A DELICATE SHORE

by Alisha Winter

The first raindrop broke the tension,
But it wasn't the one that flooded the lake.

The first pebble loosened the soil,
But it wasn't the one that eroded the shore.

The first hateful thought entered your head,
And it wasn't the one that caused you to falter,
But it could be the one to insight a disaster.



STARGAZING

by Sophia Cumming

entangled on my bedroom floor
our bodies press into my soft carpet,
stuck in the gentle haze that comes
just before you fall asleep.
unsure where i end and you begin,
we are stargazing at tiny plastic
constellations, when you tell me
that the flashing light of my smoke
detector is a shooting star.
i only wish for this moment
to be infinite.

CONTRIBUTORS

Mercedes Bacon-Traplin is an emerging LGBTQ writer from Whitehorse, Yukon. She has had a passion for writing from a very young age. She is currently finishing her Bachelor's in creative writing at the University of Alberta and intends to pursue a Master's in creative writing. In many of her poems, she explores themes of gender and queerness through her perspective.

Owen Baker is a fourth-year student who is from Ottawa, Ontario. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time outdoors and doing photography. Although his next adventures are unknown, he can't wait to have a good time!

Manu Bissonnette is a second-year Hispanic Studies student with a double minor in English and TESL. Her love of writing stems from her love of reading, as she likes to write and read all types of works in different languages.

Kendra Buchner is a second-year Education and Drama major with a minor in French from Pefferlaw, Ontario. This is the second time her work is published in *The Mitre*. She enjoys making others laugh, astrology, thrift shopping, and rock n' roll.

Lucie Casinghino is a creative writer from the United States, currently attending Bishop's in the English Literature program. She usually likes to say that her writing has been most influenced by Shirley Jackson, Ursula K. Le Guin, Mary Oliver, and the films of Hayao Miyazaki, though this list varies depending on the day.

Sophia Cumming ('20) is a fan of coffee, sunny days, and a good belly laugh. She is always delighted to have her work featured in *The Mitre*.

Sally Cunningham graduated from Bishop's ('21) with a BA in Honours English Literature. She was the co-editor of the 126th edition of *The Mitre* and has been published as a poet and short fiction writer in *The Mitre*, *Bishop's Alumni Magazine*, and *Riddle Fence* (forthcoming). Currently, she is pursuing an MA in English with a Creative Thesis at the Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Isabel Davies graduated from Bishop's in 2019 and is currently pursuing her MA in Religions and Cultures at Concordia. While most of her time is dedicated to her studies, she enjoys dabbling in different arts and crafts when she can.

Judith de Poncins is a second-year student of Liberal Arts, from France. She has always liked writing because she thinks that it embellishes fears and helps her comprehend her perceptions and the ones of others.

Océane Dessureault-Opalewski is a fifth-year Psychology and Fine Arts student also minoring in Mindfulness and Contemplative Studies. She spends most of her time getting lost in her art, a video game, a book, or the forest. The rest of her time she spends trying to provide for, and be a good mom to her furry and leafy babies.

Donovan Faraoni is a second-year student pursuing an interdisciplinary Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Political Economy. He strives to capture unconventional perspectives in his creative works in digital imaging and sculptures using organic media. He is currently advocating for new solutions at the local community level to recycle plastic waste in inventive and sustainable ways.

Nick Fireplace is a fully sentient Atari Writer. Nick Fireplace enjoys long walks on the beach at sunset and hates mean people. Nick Fireplace lives rent-free in your heart.

J. Frassetto is a mature art student doing her best to see life through better eyes.

Amie Godward, originally from the small town of Halifax in the North of England, has found herself in her third year of Psychology at Bishop's, and her seventh year wandering around Quebec. She inherited her love of all things artistic from her Granny, for whom she continues to put pen and paintbrush to paper. There is no greater way to capture her attention than the promise of a good cup of Yorkshire tea.

Trevor Gulliver teaches at Bishop's and, to keep it together, sometimes paints or writes poetry.

Casey Hebert is a 2021 Bishop's graduate currently working in research and communications. Despite writing two pieces for this edition of *The Mitre*, she can't write a bio to save her life.

Haley Jameson is a third-year student from South Carolina. She is working towards an Honours degree in English Literature with a minor in Creative Writing and Journalism.

André Romeo Lacroix is a soon-to-be graduate of the English department with an Honours in the Film and Media concentration. He hopes to build on his film portfolio before beginning his journey through a Film Production Master's program.

Angela Leuck is a poet and publisher. She is the editor of *Emergence: Contemporary Women Poets of the Eastern Townships of Quebec* (Studio Georgeville, 2021).

Jolène Lessard is a 21-year-old English Literature Major. She started doing photography about three years ago. She loves going on the occasional hike and finds it really fun to discover new places and capture some fascinating and enchanting scenery.

Steve Luxton is a retired teacher—John Abbott College and Concordia University—who presently lives in Hatley, Quebec. An author of poetry, essays, travel material, etc. his latest book *Lift Off the Roof: Harmonica Blues Poems* by Shoreline Press will be released imminently. He is presently the writer in residence at the Lennoxville Library, Quebec.

Jill Mathers is a mature undergrad student enrolled in the Sports Studies major with a minor in Psychology. She is interested in how the brain and physical activity interact to improve athletic performance and increase health and longevity. She commutes to Bishop's from her home in northeastern Vermont.

Roxanne Migneault is a second-year student at Bishop's, on her way to do an Honours in Classical Studies. She has way more books than shelves to put them, and she was labelled as the one who would always read fantasy in school instead of the assigned readings. Her stories are rarely set in realistic settings or conditions, which is why Roxanne would never survive any of them. Also, in her writing, people usually find similarities with myths and fantasy stories, which she guesses is expected out of a Classics major, minoring in English literature.

Linus Mulherin is a third-year English student from Nova Scotia. He has two dogs.

Luke Munro is a third-year Fine Arts and Education major. This is his second time completing the graphic design for *The Mitre*, in addition to being published. He has recently been into hand-poked tattoos, becoming a dart champion, and making graphics for BU's Outdoors Club.

Liam Riddle is a third-year Fine Arts major from Vermont, USA. Their dream is to one day work in media as an illustrator or animator and have a booth of their own at a Comic-Con. When not drawing or attending conventions, they like to play the ukulele, sing, cross-stitch, crochet, and attend the *Spectrum* club on campus.

Safia H. Senhaji is a third-year Honours student in International Studies at Bishop's University, while also minoring in Creative Writing and Journalism. Reading and writing have always been a passion of hers, and she hopes to write and publish a novel someday.

Noah Toomey is a fourth-year chemistry student. He's fond of mushrooms, a bit less fond of his brain.

Isabelle Vincent is a fourth-year English Literature student. Writing has always allowed her to let her emotions run free, exploring different ways to write about her inner turmoil. During her off-time, she dives into her passion for singing. She often feels inspired by warm cups of coffee, lavender essential oil, existential angst, and watching drag queens death drop.

J.J. Walker is a poet, screenwriter and short story writer from the Black Country, England. His poetry has appeared both independently and in the anthologies of artists such as Carol Ann Duffy and Imtiaz Dharker. This is his first published short story.

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.

Alisha Winter achieved a BA in English from Bishop's last year and is now completing her B.Ed in Secondary Education ('22). She channels her love of creative writing to inspire her students to pursue the craft.

EDITORS

Cécilia Alain is a fourth-year student with an Honours in Film and minors in Creative Writing and Fine Arts. She comes from a tiny village in Québec, which yielded both her accent and her love for well-told tales. She will always be fascinated by the power of words and images, and she feels honoured to watch the talent of creators unfold through this edition.

Linnie McGuire is a fifth-year student from New Hampshire with an Honours in Political Studies and minors in English and Economics. She is endlessly fascinated by the complexity of the ever-changing world we live in, and is immensely grateful to have been able to help continue the legacy of *The Mitre* this year.

