The Mitre
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Bishop's University
A literary tradition since 1893.
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I Can Sing a Rainbow

Matthew Eghill
Jason Lister
Frank Willdig
Michelle MacAlesse
Amanda McCoy
Andrzej Fister-Stoga
Jovic-Savic-Aleksandra
anonymous
Jason Lister
Amy Vallis
Genevieve Morin

Brecon Gaye

Jennifer Blanche
Jean Nairon
Ian Tait
Idli
Blair Cowan
Hollie Duval
Jovic-Savic-Aleksandra
Genevieve Morin
Brooke Charlebois
Amy Vallis
Jennifer Smith

Melanie Rada
Jean Nairon
Amy Tan

Summer

Green is Open
A Strolling Field
A Towering Forest
Green can be Ancient
Green can be New
Lucky Green
Fresh, Crisp
Bringing Beginning and End
I Return To Green
Roses and Webs

It was months before I went to her house to tie up the loose ends that lay within. Not because I feared memories and overpowering emotions, but to punish her the only way I could. I hated that house, her little sanctuary from the world and its problems. Though I had never been to it, I knew it would be perfect having been made immaculate from years of her moving, rearranging, even by an inch, until all seemed infinitely right. As if perfection was a defined quality that she could find if she looked hard enough. Yes, her house would be perfect, and her backyard would be filled with roses as only seen in Eden. Tended and pruned and coaxed into all they could be, her roses would be better than anything any florist could produce.

How I hated her collection of perfections, I had patiently suffered her shutting me and the world out, but my patience was spent once she dared to take herself, and any chance of reconciliation, out of this world. I wished to hurt her, to punish her. Despite that she was now beyond pain, I hoped her sanctuary would be dealt such blasphemies as invasion, theft, destruction, and fire tearing it down ember by ember. I prayed her roses, which she gave more motherly devotion to than her true daughter, would starve for lack of water, burn in the summer sun, and be eaten, digested, and defecated by a plague of insects, in my mind, her home and blooming babies suffered infinite and merciless destructions empowered by my wrath, and hopefully made possible by my neglect.

When I arrived the house showed no scar of scorching, no sign of unwelcome entry, and not one article of worth was missing. Her backyard was filled with roses, as I knew it would be. Immaculate they were, and no worse for the gardener's absence. They had fallen into more natural positions from lack of pruning, which flattered them with the possibility of what was once wild is so once again, nature returning to the natural. However, my dark prayers did not go entirely unanswered. Something had taken root amongst them. Something that would madden my mother? Perhaps even pushed her off the edge?

Amongst her beauteous blooms silver threads of gossamer. They stretched and wound throughout the bushes, creating a labyrinth of webs consuming her rose garden. They wound around each stem, thorn, and bloom. A delicate blanket of silver on my mother's pride. Here and there lurked the architects of the loom: arachnids. They contentedly balanced on their threads, waiting, so patiently waiting, for something to fall into their clever trap. Nearly as patiently as I had been...

I began to understand why, after all these years, after finally isolating herself from one and all, my mother had given up and searched for solitude in oblivion. She had shut out all of humanity, but had watched helplessly as the weavers wove into the rose garden she put all of herself into. My mother was always weak, and always flew instead of fought. She had flown so far already in search for peace. I could imagine her now, each hour of each day watching in horror as mere insects, thread by thread, took over her roses, and thread by thread, cut the last thread holding her weak spirit to this earth.

An Observation

passion's fickle flame scorches few fortunate souls

Julie Mayrand
Everything in her was broken, wildly dancing, dashing about the way the moon does on choppy water. She was out of herself, utterly out of herself, and walking through the forest, hardly knowing where she was going or what she was doing. The woods were so silent and still. It seemed so assertive. Dark, potent, cool. Silent. They seemed to take her will from her.

She was walking on a boardwalk, not too wide, with a railing on either side. The trees were not so close to the boardwalk, which only increased her loneliness and shame. In these living woods, this warm, moist place, she felt so barren. Cold. Unloved and unfulfilled, roting from the inside out. What was she doing in this place of births? She came to a marsh, a place of songs. She felt her consciousness expand; she began to perceive the faint marsh music. The hum of tiny wings, beating against the soft warm air; the rhythmic strain of a duck talking off skyward, the bugling of an elk in the distance. She felt her own breath, hot and thick on her parted lips, heard her heart drumming in her chest and was disgusted. Why was her body making its unworthiness known? She wanted to run, to leave this sacred church, but she was held by a force beyond herself, and trapped within herself as well.

There was an odour, not that of the marsh, but richer, a sweeter, smokier odour. The smell of sanctity was in her nostrils, making her quiver like a leaf in the breeze, penetrating her sense of fecundity, turning it, letting her give something up. It was not the warm scent of the marsh that was in her veins now, coursing through her blood. No, this odour was something else entirely. Just through the cattails she could see a little light, bigger than the lit end of a cigarette, but of the same bright calmness. She went to it.

There was a man. So calm and still, he was sweeping the smoke from the light on to his body, which was so perfectly fluid, so still in its motion that she was arrested. She could do nothing but watch him, and feel unworthy of this most holy person's regard. Her sense of her own barren, unfulfilled nature came back to her, sweeping over her and through her like waves breaking and lapping on a beached corpse. How dare she approach this man, this god? He was of a race so old, so sensual and pure, so sensuous. He seemed almost unconscious in this gentle massaging of the smoke, the way that he swept it toward his still and quiet body. She wanted to leave him in his meditation, but her wonder at his perfect repose compelled her into submission, into a rapt repose of her own.

He suddenly looked up, trance-like; his eyes were fixed on her. Two dark abysses of mystery, that was what she was looking at, and she felt herself falling over the precipices of his eyes with a deep and dreadful swoon.

He looked at the rock that he was sitting on, just beside the boardwalk, looked up at her. She pulled herself over the railing of the boardwalk, and let herself drop onto the smooth old rock silently. He held up the light. It was a braid of grasses, and the smoke that floated off of it was the source of the sweet odour that she had smelled before. As he had done unto himself, so he now did unto her, slowly and powerfully pushing the smoke over her quivering body, silently thrusting it through the still marsh air and onto her, cleaning her, reconciling her, making her new.

She was completely out of her own grasp, as opened and vulnerable as a new apple flower. But he was gentle, so gentle, pushing the smoke into her hair, over the smooth flesh of her shoulders, around her hips, letting its sensuousness and sanctity envelop her completely. She felt herself reborn, and the dancing particles inside became still, and one by one began to lie down and acquiesce to the soft and dark power that had overtaken her and given her rest.
Red Reflection in the Lake

Escaping to another world
Leaving the bottled days
The ones who are scared
Of their inner reflection

Spending the time
On running wheels
Letting my mind wander
With the swirling wind

Being able to walk
For moments
Having my outlook
Evolve with the sun

Laying on green planks
Hoping for that inner heat
Smelling the sweet familiar
To die in those fumes

Awakening to thunderstorms
Piercing wind slapping my face
And loving the noise
Water falling off the roof
To the leaves, onto my eyes
Sleeping in my open world
Protected by walls
Of uncertain bliss

Happy Depression

Tonight I observed
Your loss
And it didn't hurt
To watch myself
Losing

You have become
One of the predictable masses
I am found
And then realized
Glorified
And forgotten

It is the circle
My own process
I chase myself
To search for hope
Why do I escape them?
Why do they look around?
When I am right in front
Of myself

I am learning to turn around
And run the other direction
I am learning about me
I am learning that love
Is more important
Than anything preceding

So it didn't hurt
To watch myself
Gain

artist

paint the town red
she said
and handed me a paintbrush

I'll paint the town red
but don't ask me to draw you
a perfect circle
I said

glory was never my thing

how disappointed was I
when I discovered
the whole city
is nothing but

geometry

and red paint is
out of fashion

maybe it's a seasonal thing?

Amy Vallis
High Country Meditation

Hiking, up to the high country can become walking; meditation the rhythm of footfalls the cadence of lungs filling with and expelling air the mind begins to filter out all extraneous thoughts let go on the wind the walker becomes one with the mountain.

Up there all you have to worry about are the grizzlies.

The Passing of...

When you notice the sun Shifting in the sky You know you’ve been still Way too long... Indicative of time well wasted For the unsatisfactory feeling Of goodness Sitting and Setting.

Jennifer Smith

Ian Tait
Waiting For Spain

Days of you and I departed
collide with damned circumstance

Leave me dreaming
of a Spanish suntan
Ibiza,
the running of the bulls, Federico Garcia Lorca

cobblestone thoughts and dreams
of Vespas,
falling in love without language,
olive oil
Spain, Ibiza...

You legend, Spain
with all your horses
and noble lovers.
And what's all this I hear
about a war...?

Do you exist
velveteenly as in my mind?
Does your rain fall sweetly and
taste warm like the win of your valleys?
Do your vines of olive
sway with smell
the souls of men and NAZIs?

I shall find you dead or alive
or in thick Canadian slumber Spain,
you dark matador
dressed in festivals,
waiting in the hills and shadows of Europe
to enter the ring
and to gallantly slaughter my bull,
the bull I have for Spain, Ibiza...

Spain, Ibiza... open your breast
open your breast

Vermont

Driving south, winding
through the champagne countryside
of Vermont
I think of Hemingway and "Hills Like White Elephants"
and feel bad
because I should be thinking of Frost;
I think we passed him earlier
forking hay into the yawning mouth of a rickety shed,
with a healthy layer of February sweat on his brow,
while the adjacent barn
struggled to smile under the weight of the snow.

In Burlington there are streets
that smell like cinnamon,
or a woman's hair past midnight,
and the whole city sounds like a pan flute,

but it is in the hills
and in the crystal windows of smoking little shacks,
and in the way the meaty
legs of Clydesdales
collect together at the hoof
like ladders for apple-picking,
that winter is divine.

In my mind he is standing there with his breath on the air,
leaning on his pitchfork,
understanding in squints
why children always paint the sun yellow;
and watching his cows
congregate towards the decrepit stone wall
at the edge of the property.

The cows low,
watch each other with watery-sad eyes,
shift their weight nervously,
maybe make a joke or two about pissing ice cream,
huddle together and wait
for the summer just below their hooves.
Ant-Venom

Now, I heard that Tommy Douglas said
"Man can now fly through the sky like a bird, swim under the sea like a fish and
burrow
through the ground. If he could just walk on this earth like a man, this would be
paradise."

Sounds about right. [but who is Tommy Douglas?
This is all before my time:
Tommy Hunter?]...now we're talking icons.
This is a poem about poems
and a song about living then.
But there's no one around here
marrying into anything or keeping their word
like Vikings anymore.

There are just moods
and other door-hangers I've thrown to the lions
and I know lately
it's been more Rain Dogs
than Closing Time
and I'm sorry for that, but
doesn't this all seem a little too Southern to you?

- and then there's the anti-venom
that makes me want to
tomcat around
and walk down the halls
I've been too scared to walk down,
with a nicotine crutch and
the disillusionment that
only the young possess.

it's music

it's voices in a cedar cathedral
making love to each other
beside some cold lake in Victoria County;
with that favourite song
bouncing to the top
of hallowed walls,
the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in that
misty air...

it's music

All the notes
file into the straightest line,
when your feet sing to be running through life
and the feeling in your arms
makes you raise them
and invite the world
singing La na na na na na
La na na na na etc.
When you know you'll never find
that love that scares you,
or your holy grail,
or shoes that fit and look good
and it doesn't matter at all.

Untitled

The most beautiful girls in the country walk by me in Montreal,
a bevy of hair, skin and obese white shopping bags
- every one of them carrying lingerie I bet.

Giggling and dropping in and out of conversations of love
and other things in magazines,
in both English and French;

neither of which, apparently,
I can speak convincingly because
the most beautiful girls in the country walk by me in Montreal.
Journey

Friday, all.
tucking away,
narrowly escaping the
must-murky brown
of dull arced light
that hangs over Toronto
and places like it;
lke a parachute grasping it
at each end root
to softly float it into another week.

Safely nestled,
front seat of Dad’s pick-up truck,
wombed and entombed:
rough blankets and his jacket.
seats smelling like
wet canine and woodsmoke
there is the drive

leaning over his headlight
onwards in our journey
towards our mother
in the night dark,
towards the lake, fried fish
fried potatoes.

Our headlights spilling
into the roads
eating away at blackness
like Smith & Wesson bullets
making a Wild West cowpoke
dance in a dirt street
while the prostitutes scream and laugh.

Our headlights, his and mine
and us leaning on them
stumble our journey,
forge the way.
I began to lose...

I began to lose what I thought was my slam
until simplicity urged I put paper to pen.
Out again the paper rose
crinkled with the lines of fine art.

without doubt,
that one was right to say
I'd have nothing to say.

Today is my open forum
to talk of desperate measures

the pressures of being torn,
in the directions
of living others' form.

I cannot join that infusion of fall weather fancy
dreamlike dancing

if I know nothing of where I'd land

if we're to stall.

So best to plan one's own Take out no loans Leave my home Create my own singular form
Establish personal norm;

and find one more path, one more line,
some more room,

for roam.

S. Baker

The Kitchen Clock

I shall speak plain against the clock
that chimes upon our kitchen wall,
that endless gauge of corrupting flesh,
symbol if the ephemeral.
It is here I can see the ebbing day
in tattered photos and the yellowed page,
and the greatest sadness within my heart
is the thought of children as they age.

The clock speaks to me a sadness
that with each tick brings close to mind
the songless fields and the darkest nights
where fear is never hard to find.
You see, it is not for me that close of day
holds the greatest terrors here,
it is the thought of ones so loved
will not always be so near.

Frank Winklig
Posthumous Parade

Sam McNee died yesterday.
He was snarly and gruff.
Short sighted and tempered.

While he was living
He had nary a visitor.
Guests were not entertained.
He did not belong to Men's League
Slo-Pitch, Lions Club
or Schooners.
He was a church going man.

He was there to help rebuild
The Donaldson's barn
After the fire.
He donated generously
To the Youth Group
and Health Centre.
And it's widely known
That he pulled young Jimmy
Out of that burning wreck.
Which is why the whole
Town has come out
To celebrate him.
In a Posthumous Parade.

A. G. Kie

Patriarch

Strangely addicted
the one that was
in odd momentum
and all her eyes
He wasn't there
to quench the
Thirst
Hunger fuming;
that's not the worst...
She wanted it
to stay away
And all the same,
that very Day.
She held her
locked control.
A loathe apple
Rotten whole.

Sophie Griffiths

Distractions

Her cheek was pressed down into the soft, warm mud. In this position she was almost comfortable, except that her breast was positioned over a sharp pebble, and there was slight pressure at the back of her head. Lyrics from a Tori Amos song kept running through her head as she silently mouthed the words: Do you know Carolina where the biscuits are soft and sweet...

The grass here only grew about eye level, from her point of view. It was healthy and well-tended, and she watched a spider crawl up a tremorous shoot. Unfortunately, she tried to get some hair out of her mouth by blowing forcefully, and succeeded in disengaging the spider from its resting place. It hurtled into the lawn, lost from her sight. Great! She'd have to find something else to watch.

Her movements were rather limited however. She lay with her hands thrust back between her slightly opened knees. An enormous pressure prevented her from moving, her palms cupped and bloodless. With her knees planted firmly on the ground, her ass stuck up in the air "probably gleaming like a wet rock in this moonlight," she thought wryly. A light breeze soon cooled her a bit. The sweat on her skin glistening like dew before it evaporated on the wind. An ant came busily up to investigate her, but when it tried to venture into a nostril she snorted and sent the insect tumbling back towards whence it came. She decided to practice her vocab, spelling and sounding out words in her head. Garrulous, vestigial, impolitic, Ascendancy...

The door to a building on her left suddenly sprang open, spilling orange light onto the dark mud. She heard students' voices as they passed close by her, made invisible by the donated shrubs that littered the garden. The pressure behind her head increased, and she stayed quiet. She understood.

Perhaps she fell asleep. Perhaps her hands had become so numb she didn't know that her weight was gone. If anything, she had distracted herself so well she never noticed she was alone. Be what it may, she stayed there for a good long while, not even shifting to lay prone. Instead she rolled her eyes upward, and began counting stars. Not even she could tell you how long it took.

The Last Light Year

Finish your orange juice
It is time to go and watch.
I would carry you on my shoulders if I could.
But you'll walk beside me
through cities that used to be
must have been green
silver-gleaming in noontime traffic
as we wait for the sun to snuff out.
We have been expecting this
I am not afraid
I can feel your breath on the flesh of my shoulder
as the earth grows colder
and we are, at last, still
in the dark I am smiling.

Amanda McCoy
Poem From a Younger Poet To An Older Poet
For Irving Layton and Noni Howard

Your words are exquisite
fine tuned near perfection
beauty fills my thoughts
as you speak
in a voice
like no other —
with a harsh
soft
melodic rhythm

You have worldly knowledge
and experience
beyond my understanding
the master
of your domain.
Your spirit untied
to society's complacency
shining like the sun setting
against the edge
of the ocean
vibrating
reflecting moment
to moment
unafraid in your self-
determination
standing outside
and ahead of time
place, and knowledge
creating new worlds
with your vitality
and imagination.

As Einstein says
"imagination
is more important
than knowledge."
So what can I offer you?
but my ultimate respect
and admiration
for a living legend
a national treasure
and to take in
the creative force
of your breath
along with those before you
and with you
and to pass it on
to those that will
follow me.

Marlena Rose Skye
for my mentor Noni Howard,
an inspiration to me
Poem From An Older Poet To A Younger Poet
For Marlena Rose Skye

What can I give you that is not already
In your heart?

Your words are all your own.
I would have you own them.

I would have you take
the fragile world of change
into your strong capable hands
and mold it
to fruition.
The garden is in your hands and when you speak
the poetry of music shines like the sun in them.

I would be your One; more, I would be your Thou
that lives beyond memory.

Such is what love is...
It is beyond us both.

And that poetry and love are the two things in this world
that will never die.

Such is what I entrust to you with the certain knowledge
that you will not fail me.

Although the butterfly lives only moments
in this shining world its beauty breaks the heart
of the Great Spirit who made it.

So let your heart be broken by a single beauty.

the immortal wounds of God.


Winter

A cloud floating
A daisy blowing
White is Pure
White is Uncorrupted
White is Hot, Or Cold
The Empty Moon
A Glistening Snowflake
White Is Good
Can I be White?
Wrapped in black wool, sheathed in black night, we sat. Cool air kisses on peaceful faces. Tasting the evening, sweet on wine-stained lips. Silence. Night and quiet and comforting chills. Smiling widely with my eyes, I drank deep. Drank in this place, the smell of darkness. Drank full from my glass. Drunk on atmosphere; eyes open and hungry. As the last of the warmth shrank from the cobblestones, everything became unreal. Gentle words propelled forward on frosty paths, unearthing common secrets on foreign ground. Wine-scented laughter shattering the stillness, scheming golden heads bent together, we opened our minute circle to two more. Blue eyes gleaming through smoke, deep voices touched by something utterly distant, they brought knowing to our young ears. Devouring each other over poisoned glasses, thoughts flying, speaking in unknown terms. Silence. Laughter. Smoke rising, wine falling, we offered words of morality, dreams, hallucinogens. Sharing likenesses, exchanging experiences until glasses were emptied and darkness filled us with its ice. Parting strangers with remembering glances, we gathered our coats close and floated home.

Marisa Edghill

Unwilling Survival
The end is near. Warmth will soon fade into A memory, into A thing of the past as we Struggle to survive yet another Grey, bitter winter.

We are thrown into disillusion For four months. We enjoy the sun, We bask in its glory. We relax and feel as if she world Revolves around our small moment in time.

Then, reality. Wind, rain, sleet and snow Uninterrupted chaotic Gripping us in its jaws Chewing us and spitting us back out So it can chew us some more Reminding us that it cannot be stopped.

Jason Lister

Snowfall
I know a lot of people Who do not like the snow, They tell me it’s the cold and damp That they don’t wish to know They tell me it’s the digging out, The trudging and the slush, But all I see in falling snow Is a gentle calming hush.

And the chance to remake the earth With this cleansing of the land, Here’s the chance to cover up The blemishes of man. So bright and pure, so innocent, I watch these white drifts grow. Perhaps this is why the sun’s reborn And why children like the snow.

Frank Willdig

Prose Poetry inspired by Brigette Poulin’s performance of a John Cage composition Bandeen Hall, January 26th 2001

It is the perennial state of popcorn munching. And even stories about messed-up people are set to a beautiful score. This is not the natural music of life.

It is not the theme, but rather the distractions that catch pop redeem the room who coughs whispers.

Papers rustle and wet winter boots meet the polished floor. The eternal night-shift inside the body is never-ending stop and chugging. It’s always there, like the lonely street light, humming for a traffic of...well, two, tonight. There’s a car alarm in her head; it calls her when the phone rings and the stereo is loud.

Just a bit of randomness to naturalize our “music.” Don’t panic.

Listen to your nerves hissing and the keys juggling in a stranger’s pocket. Someone whispers; it’s not for you, or about you. Wet skins peel silently apart. And you can hear your scratching a lot better when you plug your ears.

Michelle MacAlesse
Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot

A whole new year was only hours away. Once again, nothing could live up to the marvel of continuing life and getting drunk seemed a poor tribute to human history. I tramped through unplowed streets almost obscured by brown sugar snowbanks, slipped my way to the metro station, wine clutched in a plastic bag.

Foolishly, I aimed to end my own year with closure and under my coat I was too well-dressed for the party: skin exposed, curves apparent, already shy beneath the looks of merely imagined strangers. I wanted to punish you for letting me stop loving you, finally get the reaction that never came when I ended things in the stale heat of our shared apartment.

Perhaps I should have stayed out in the deep winter, gone to Mount Royal with a toboggan and a thermos of coffee. Instead I encountered the sweet thick air unpleasant with the smell of sick and smoke and a mix of alcohols. You sat in a corner with two girls in your lap, hands exploring, too apathetic to feign civility or tact.

I had felt so pretty so together so complete without you getting ready that night, and now face to face I forgot why I used to defend your decisions. We aren’t going to be friends. I finally let go of the persistent feeling that you were rare, forgave myself, and turned towards dawning newness.

Amanda McCoy
Hiding

When it seems everything is burning
When everything is bleeding
And nothing will slow the rush
I close myself in

Darkness gives me comfort
Like arms around me could not
Darkness, in its emptiness
Fills me up
Darkness, with cold waves
Warmly soothes me

When nobody can help me
Darkness is my friend
Finding resolution
Is finding a small, black space
The silence listens
The simplicity understands
Darkness gives me hope
Through despair

I can think clearly
In darkness
Light brings everything back
Painful memories to look at
Darkness lets me forget

The Beginning

Seeing the cigarette butt on the floor
Which will soon be swept
Away brings about a great
Feeling of sorrow as I come
To recognise the filth
That I could become.

We are two entities,
Brought together
Through the cruel humour of Moirai.
She laughs at the crudeness of her creations.
Through despair
I resist the harshness
Of what will be, I continue
My fruitless attempts at staying clean,
Staying separate.

Looking at my stale surroundings
I realise she and I have become one.
Entrapped
Like prisoners,
Entranced
Like lovers,
Moving through we wait
For the end.

Jason Lister

Sleep With Me

I can’t sleep tonight
I couldn’t last night, either
Or the night before that
When my eyes close
I hear the conversations
That never existed
Except in my head
Words I never said
And I blink my eyes
to rid the memory unmade
But even when I’m awake
I am dreaming
I wish there were some voice
to drown out my dreams
to keep me from remembering
whatever wants me
to remember it

The floor is cold on my feet
And I can’t sleep
I pull fast the dark blanket, warm
And close my eyes again
Only to stir with the pressing
Knowledge of a nightmare so vivid I might
Touch it
And I hear the emptiness of a message lost
In the darkness
Wondering what I was trying to tell
Myself

I can’t sleep tonight
I remember tender touches
Lonely mornings
Empty afternoons
Dusty kisses
Hot tears slipping
Down a turned
Untouched cheek
Arguments that never existed
Questions unanswered because
They were never asked
Dialogue that was never meant to be
Time forever always full
But emptier still in longer hours

I dream now when I am awake
Finding tangibility in phantoms
Knowing that this insomnia
Is some manifestation that
Mimics my regret, unfathomable
Transparent
So what good is dreaming
Of a reality unspoken

I can’t sleep tonight
For O.P.

A wild and late English party, and exams with the sun, two previous acquaintances, stumbling, head down the hill, new friendship won.

For music, drink, stories, and confessions told, bring young men together, and bonds are formed, bonds that hold.

And though we avoid the pain, it comforts to know, another shares and feels your grief, and I watch in amazement as our friendship grows.

In Despair of Winter

As I watch from my chair, leaves alter, and shifting airs turn lively greens to bloody reds. We are all misled.

For winter is not the death that renews nature’s breath. He strangles all for its own beliefs, cruelly smiling, loving our grief.

Cold and ice strengthen his hold, windows slam and doors are closed. Men and women find only winter inside, he’s already struck, having raped his bride.

For My Grandfather

"Dive! Dive! Dive!"

Then not a sound to be heard except the depth charges, hunting, hunting their little metal tub and her crew. The sub rattles and creaks with the strain of withholding Poseidon’s pressure. Heavy breathing, stale, sweaty tears and urine soaked eighteen year old boys, fill the other senses. Nineteen year old veterans, too old to cry.

My grandfather, first officer, keeping silent, thinking of his wife back home in Swansea, with the beginnings of my family. The pounding recedes and men pass silent looks of joy to each other. The youngsters do not bother changing their pants. This day, among others, leads to worse nights, and my grandfather awakening his wife with sweaty sheets and his dreams of shattering metal.
My Grandparents and Their Cottage

I lay on the carpet,
my eyes need rest,
[swimming in the lake is always tiring.]
but I desire to remember
the scene before me.
A large room with wooden floors
dark with the stains of
many children.
Towels hang nearby,
drying by the fire,
that crackles and snaps,
enjoying the peace of the cottage.
At an oak table,
my grandfather, wise and wrinkled,
completes a puzzle which I could not.
Close by, rocks my grandmother
in her favorite chair,
reading a book
[that I would enjoy].
The fading summer light
shines through her
thinning hair.
As my eyes begin to close
I take a close look from
one grandparent to the other,
and see shadows looming,
approaching my family
and my anger grows.

Creating Future Idiots

A droning voice,
heads bent in,
pathetic,
concentration.
Minutes slipping away,
the monotonous voice continues on, and on and on;
"the theme of imitation..."
leading to pens twitching, controlled
by confused hands and
clogged minds.
The paper repeats
the voice, minds
repeat the lines, solid
in their memories.
They will preach the
repeated thoughts,
creating unoriginal minds.
You're taking that child and teaching him senseless!
You damage the mind,
you damage the dream, and
we feel nothing at all.
We think, nothing at all.

Spring

A Buttercup
A Butterfly
Yellow floats, flutters
sways and sings
Yellow Happiness
let it touch you
listen to Yellow's song
Yellow sings to You
Sing to Me
Every second Friday when my Dad picked us up we'd go for Fish and Chips. He's very English. The only way to be, according to him. He doesn't really say anything positive about anyone if they're not English, though he does admit that Italians make the best fish and chips.

We'd bring them home and my Dad would serve them onto three enormous brown plates. The largest piece of fish was his, not that anyone was jealous; each of us had enough on our plate to feed a small African country, and we had to eat it all. I would try to help by turning the television around to face the table while he served. As always he came and swatted me out of the way. 'Get away idiot. You want to break the bloody thing?' He really valued everything he'd worked hard for.

We ate watching Rumpole of the Bailey, which I despised, or Cheers if we were lucky. He always had dessert for us. More wonderful than the actual dessert though was that now we could have a drink. We would 'spoil our dinner' if we drank with it, so we'd be thoroughly parched by the time dessert came around. We always had grocery-store brand pop; it was cheaper than milk.

After that, we'd turn the television back around to face the couch and continue watching until my Dad fell asleep, at which point I'd go upstairs to read or do homework. My brother would stay there until my Dad woke up briefly to shout at him to get to bed. More often than not, that's where my Dad would stay until 4:30 the next morning when he'd light his first cigarette and stir his first cup of coffee.

On Saturday mornings that we were with him we had to accompany him on his grocery shopping excursions. We'd run out to the car, trying to be the first one to the front seat. If we got there at the same time, as we often did, we'd fight until Dad came to sew us and say 'It's your brother's turn, you had it yesterday,' or vice versa. We'd climb in after he'd opened the door from inside where it still smelled like Fish and Chips from their ride home the night before.

We'd arrive at the local Italian grocery store - fruit first, frozen products last - and line up in front of the same middle-aged, pink-haired cashier who would tell my Dad what beautiful children he has.

On Sunday's we'd relax. My brother and I would do homework, and if we asked, maybe, we could turn on the television or the radio or use the telephone. I also used to like to sneak around in the guestroom and look at old photos of my Dad and my Mom together, or see what old stuff I could find in the basement. My Dad kept everything - every item of clothing my brother and I had ever worn, some of my mother's old clothes that she'd left behind, every toy, models that he'd never gotten around to finishing, sewing projects that Mom had never completed - everything. But if I heard him get up from his chair I'd leave whatever I was looking at and go pretend I was reading.

We would wake up early on Monday morning. Dad would get us the perfect piece of toast and as soon as we'd finished he'd say, 'Hurry up and get your things together and get your shoes on. She will be here soon.' Then we'd sit silently and wait until my mother's car pulled up to the curb at the end of my father's driveway.

One night at my Dad's house, when I was eleven or so, I pushed back my covers and slid out of bed. Standing still for a minute to let the dizziness pass from getting up too quickly, I straightened my nightgown. Around one in the morning, the television broadcasting stopped, but the television was still on, filling the house with harsh static-sound. I waited for a few minutes in bed hoping that Dad would turn it off. Figuring he must have fallen asleep, I decided to go

down and do it myself. I was used to this.

I made my way down the brown carpeted stairs, avoiding the creaks, and looked around the wooden newel post into the living room. I breathed in the family scent. A smoky smell that always filled his house, regardless of whether my Dad actually had one lit or not. Edging closer to his chair, I heard his deep, steady breaths and checked to make sure his eyes were closed. Stepping lightly, I went and pushed in the ON/OFF knob on the television and the deafening blare stopped, and once again, I could hear the comforting hum of the refrigerator.

Turning back around I glanced again to my Dad in the beige and brown checkered chair, and noticed a thin stream of smoke rising from his left hand. I picked his ashtray up from the floor and gently plucked the smoking stub from between his fingers, desperately trying not to disturb his sleep. I pressed it down hard to the porcelain bottom, attempting to make a place for the butt amongst all of the others. I leaned over to brush the ashes from the arm of the chair and inhaled a rich whiff of Dad, a smell no one else in the world could own.

I stepped back and stopped, not worried anymore if he caught me awake or not. I watched his chest rise and fall under his navy blue polo shirt and noticed a few flakes of dandruff on his shoulder. His mouth was slightly open; I could see the gap in the middle of his front set of teeth, which my brother and I were both born with (our gaps, though, have since been fixed). I looked past the large bags under his eyes that never go away and into his deep-set, lidded eyes. Then I took in a view of his whole face, fringed with dark hair and graying sideburns. I wondered what he was thinking - or dreaming. I suppose my Dad must dream like anyone else. But I couldn't come up with much. Still, his throat began to get very tight. A terrible thought had entered my head. Someday he wouldn't be there. It became difficult to breathe, like someone was standing on my chest. Water began to gather in the corner of my eye. What would I do?

Then my Dad flinched suddenly in his sleep. The worry came back. I wiped the tear away and hurried off on tiptoe, realizing again that it was the middle of the night and I was not in bed.

Now I wake up in my mother's house every morning to hardwood and pink carpets and the smell of Lemon Pledge. We don't eat any breakfast, we can try to find something for lunch if we want it, and there are no Fish and Chips - only stir-fried chicken and peppers. We don't have dinner together really, and when we do it's awkward because there is no television to fill the silence.

My Dad writes once a week, we talk to him on the phone occasionally. I am happy for him that he left. He never liked Canada much anyway - except for the free local phone calls and the grocery store. He hated the cold, he hated the heat, he hated sharing the continent with my mother. Most of all he hated our spring. I remember him telling me about when he moved here, arriving in late April, and his first view of Canada. 'All the fields, all the grass - everywhere - it never gets green.' He doesn't really say anything positive about Canada. 'No trees, no grass - just a brown wasteland.' He doesn't really say much about his job that he couldn't find here. When he had to leave the bank, my Dad said that the most sensible thing to do was move back to England where he had a place to stay, as well as more acquaintances, which meant more connections. I think he just wanted to go home. I miss him. I don't know where to be every Monday night, Thursday night, every second Friday night and every second weekend. I know he misses me too, though he never says so in so many words. I know because of my brother and I saw him off at the airport. Just before he
went through the gate he put his bags down to adjust the silly tweed hat that he couldn’t pack. He
looked back at us and I noticed water forming deep in the corner of his eye.

Even in England, where in springtime there are brilliant white and yellow daffodils
everywhere, and three Fish and Chips shops in ever town, I think he must be sad.

I’ve decided I’m going to move to Italy when I grow up. They make the best Fish and
Chips after all.

Jennifer Blanche

Moment

At the foot
of Crawford notch
where the Sacco
tumbles over cobbles
and slows
into the valley
A morning hike
takes me
downriver
hop skip
from stone to stone
left right
over two
backtrack
then
longjump
to a flatrock
in the middle
where cross-legged
I can quiet sit
in the sun
and take in the snow
up on Washington

Down here
buds burst
but only where the sunlight
touches directly
in the shade
it’s still winter chilly.
The sun on my face
wool shirt off
the quietude of the moment
disturbed by movement
to my side
turning I see
a lad sixteen maybe
Bee-lining it along the bank
travelling
flyrod at his side
As he sees me
without breaking a stride
holds up
a brown
as long as his arm
and grinning
yells something
but I can’t
quite hear over the roar
of white water.
Before I can react
he’s gone on
the perfect communication
of that moment
swept down river
sometime to resurface
in a poem.
Hello love,
i thought you had forgotten me.

hopes and dreams are waiting at my kitchen table,
and peace of mind is knocking at my back door.
happiness is out back,
making sure the tears don't sneak back in...

hello love,
i guess you couldn't live without me.
did you miss how much i smiled,
or was it the taste of my pain that brought you back for more...

hello love,
i'm waiting for you with a shotgun full of indifference to keep you away...

goodbye love,
i guess i should have warned you,

i've changed,
and you can't touch me now that i'm on my own.
i know who i am,
and i know how to walk away from you...

Blair Cowan
L'amour sans titre à deux actes

I

Celle qui aimait
Reste muette dans le coin du miroir
Assise sur les ruines de ses rêves
Dans le brume des mémoires

Celle qui aimait
Enterre derrière le regard
Derrière les fenêtres de la poésie
Attendra

Que la monument de la solitude
Dans la tristesse de ses yeux
Glisse dans l'église de l'oubli
Qu'accroupi dans l'âme d'un homme qui attend
La démon contemple devient le silence des anges
La seule passion et le seul regret
De celle qui soit

Elle qui est là
Celle qui n'aime plus
Passe sans mots
Sans peurs
Sans pleurs

Elle comprend

II

Celui qui m'aimait pas
Reste torturé
Dans le coin du miroir de l'âme
Aneanti par l'innocence

Celui qui n'aimait pas
Enterré les cendres dans le Coeur souffrant
L'épreuve de l'amour qui n'existe pas
Derrière ses yeux de la peur, de la misère
Il attend

Que son visage déchire
Jouant l'héros entre des destinées
Devient le reflet de la sagesse, de la vérité
Que son néant réveille l'existence des ténèbres
Pleurant sur des vierges et des putaines
La mélancolie profonde à perpétuité

Lui qui est là
Pour une première fois
Commence le jeu vulgaire
Avec ses peurs
Avec ses pleurs
Il verse le sang de l'amour

Il comprend
A knowing glance in the darkness
and the distant whistle of a train as I watched you
fade into the background. You disappeared like a ghost, but
then you'd never been anything more than an apparition that
haunted my dreams. Daylight dreams that I mistook for realities. Although
I saw you leave, I never felt as though you were really gone. I carried you with
me in a suitcase of memories. You always hid just beyond my grasp in the
congregation of shadows that haunted my thoughts. How many times had I reached
out in the dark for you, only to touch the air? If only I had spoken out. If only I had yelled
after you. If only... I can still feel myself choking on the words I was trying to say, as you
backed away slowly, holding me down with your eyes. The weight of your gaze was too much
to bear. Ice blue. The storm in your eyes felt like lightening and burned through the mask
of every role I had ever played. Your stare ate through me like a disease until forgot what
it was that I had wanted to say. All around us, wildflowers swayed, soaked in moonlight,
their cries echoing on the wind; their petals bleeding into one another. Colourblind, we
stood oblivious to what was dying around us. Tears stung my eyes and then
evaporated into the wild sadness that hung around us like a mist. Rain fell
delicately, like thread of pearls, running through my hair. For a moment it
felt like your touch, but by then, you were too far away. I stood in
absolute silence while you vanished, leaving behind a shadow
of a memory, like an unfinished sentence...

Brooke Charlebois

Shadow

I am the darkness which will always remain
who follows your footsteps
and whispers your name
I linger behind you, a reminder, a refrain
who sings you sweet nothings,
plays all your games
I move with your gestures
and mirror your soul

I am your grey side, the blackness, the coal
I live without substance, burn without fire
I am your truth, mimic and liar
I chase without running, I follow your lead
I'm always behind you,
I'm the dark side you bleed
I'm not going to leave
you're mine 'till you die

I'm your nothing, your everything, a flicker, a sigh
so run if you will but I'll always be near
your each, darkness, the shadow, your fear

Amy Vallis
NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY
the dreaming tree