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The Mitre



**Bishops' Univerisity Literary
Magazine**

2003

110th Edition

**Edited by
Amanda McAleer**



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EDITOR'S INTERRUPTION

I would just like to thank all those who helped me put the Mitre together, like Emily Evans, without her help and her computer I would have been lost. Thank you so much Aleksandra, you were the sole contributor of artwork to this year's Mitre, these pages would have been very dull without your beautiful contributions. I also would like to thank all those authors whose works appear in the Mitre, I was very impressed and thankful for the talent you lent to this magazine. I'm truly impressed with the content of this year's Mitre (yes, I'm biased, but that doesn't devalue my sincerity).

Lastly I'd like to thank my friends, my profs, and Bishops for four wonderful years at this University. I'll remember everything about Bishops with rosey nostalgia, and anyone that knows me knows that I'm not the cuddly nostalgic type.

Amanda McAleer

Examining Purdy

Jessica Van Horssen

Out of the corner of my eye comes the glass framing the front of the bar, reflecting what I desire: casual disinterest streaked with dried drips of water. Ducking through the door, my twitching smile matches the pace of my salty heart and I know that triumph is near, wounded and hiding. Ginsberg pursues a worn and sexually confused Whitman in a Californian grocery store and I hunt the only grey-beard my country has to offer: the Great Purdy. Running my hands over the carved top of the bar, I hear him breathing. Buckets of blood from long slaughtered bulls beckon me towards the ashtray that contains the most watery cigarettes and dried flower petals and I lick the stool sitting below it, tasting a senile warmth and an edge and an age that tradition turns to stone. Discretely listening to the half-full pint-glass whispering to the half-empty one in front of me, I hear the spirals of a song celebrating the grass of a land filled with rocks, and the scent of sandy denim and flannel invades my concentration. I break with my demeanor and frantically scan the corners of the room for Purdy with phrases beginning with "like" or "as" sparking my tongue and eternally ending with the bruised knuckles of a dedicated poem. My derelict daddy, always being a man obsessed with nowhere, is somewhere if not somebody in this stained burgundy pub and as I sit and wait for him to unfold from behind his chosen shadow, I take a package of matches from my coat pocket and strike them one by one until my fingertips are swollen and blushing from the attention of the flame.

a new word

Richard Vanderford

(), verb, ()-ed, ()-ing

used in just-through-the-door synchronization only, to explain that one

during a plat of rain, not too heavy, has found a particular unseen place where the drops sing sad songs on the long slide down one's face (sticking on the cheeks just beneath the eyes, the glow in street-lights) until they say a reluctant goodbye and fall to the shoes.

still warm but no longer in love.

the word is formally understood (when defined verbally) to mean that one has gone to the store (as requested) and found them out of what was asked for.

"I went to the store."

"did they have the milk?"

"No. I was ()ed"

please attribute it to me, but only if pressed to explain.

The Dead Author's Elegy

Amanda McAleer

Fiction once passed itself for truth. Now fiction is proud of its fabrication calling on a greater truth, capturing soul in a reflection of reality as in a fun house mirror. My fiction friends is pure lies--look for no lessons here. Leave your brain at the door--I have no use for it. Give me only your heart and entrails to play with--that is what I truly want. And who am I to presume to play with your bowls. I am, of course, the author--who else? Were you waiting up for Marley's wraith? Surprised to see me? Of course you are, you thought me dead! Or just a figurehead of wood, nothing active in my words. You thought they farted forth from the blank page like the holy ghost from fucking oblivion. Kill me, ignore me, ostracize me, psychoanalyze me into Oedipus, call me dead, and I will resurrect myself in every word you read to haunt you. Who else but the author would tell a story with lovely language to make alive what is essentially a lie? Who else would you seek out to lie to you and love it? Stop pretending I'm dead to you! It's like coming as you cry rape! Like saying you're lost alone as I lead you home. Let's not play coy any longer my love, I cannot know you, you cannot know me--we are separate entity. But we communicate with words, my myriad meanings wander through your wondering. Just because you cannot resurrect me whole from the page does not make me dead. Just because I cannot see you reading these words as I write them does not make you dead to me. Neither of us be dead--lest we be necrophiliacs.

Reading is not masturbation!

It is seduction.

I kid you not my love, I wear no sheep's clothing, my serpent scales you can clearly see--I am here to seduce you. This is no blank page you read your own thoughts onto. Call me inadequate--call me impotent!--which I am if I cannot seduce and suck you into ecstasy with my words--

but do not call me dead.

If I were, my little necrophiliac, your rough reading would break my brittle bones and you'd be beating off to ash.

The Doppler Effect

Sam Solomon

the sound of my thought
reaches my
External Auditory Canal my
Vestibular Cochlear Nerve
before the source
before you my
Hammer my
Anvil my
Tympanic Membrane
vibrating in stereo
signals your approach
your likely reproach

but when you are closest
the sound the idea
is already receding decomposing
gone

and then the shame
the familiar dull gray ache
clarity

my synapses whir click stagger
like some kind of frantic demented clockwork
tell me to run left foot right foot
and i do

i run
i run like there's no tomorrow no today
i run like there's nothing to be ashamed of
i run until I can no longer hear
myself my thoughts
gone.



La Famine

Aleksandra Jovlć-Savié

Noni Howard Award for Creative Writing

The Little Turn of Sadness by Amy Vallis was awarded Bishops University's Noni Howard award and second place in the Ottawa Little Theater Playwriting competition. In order to fit the play into the Mitre in its entirety summarizations are provided between excerpts. Please excuse the editorial tampering.

The Little Turn of Sadness

Amy Vallis

Dramatis Personae

Peter Mathews: aged twenty three, the come-from-away.

Jenny Boyle: aged eighteen, the daughter.

Ira Boyle: aged fifty, the father.

Mary Boyle: aged forty nine, the mother.

Claud Boyle: aged seventy five, the grandfather.

Jim Farrell: aged twenty two, the neighbour.

Scene 1, 2, & 3 (summarized)

In a small village on the coast of Newfoundland, early in the evening, Peter writes in his journal beside a rental card along an unkempt road, surveying the landscape thoughtfully.

The Boyle home that same evening. In the kitchen Mary and Jenny discuss Jim's dreams to move to Toronto. Mostly they speculate what Peter will be like, the mainlander from Toronto coming to stay with the Boyles as he researches Newfoundland culture. Jenny says, "There's no culture here. Just sad love stories of pregnant maids'n runaway men."

Ira, Claud, and Jenny meet Peter at the end of the road. Peter has come with a lot of luggage, a coat not appropriate for the weather, and is all ready noting down colloquialisms.

Scene 4

The Boyle kitchen not long later.

Mary: And there's Ira already up the lane. Lord have mercy Jennifer's got her coat open and runnen like a colt. Her cuffs are draggen in the dirt. Like her pop that girl, Jenny is behind the door when good sense was handed out.

Jenny flies into the house.

Jenny: He's here, Mam! He came in a brand new car and he's got a trunk full of things.

Mary: Get those boots off my floor Jennifer Jane. That'll do. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. I guess that's your pop chatten his ear off about

fairies and the like. Go and get the man's bags, Jim.

Jenny: He's been all over the country, Mam. As far as Europe. And he's handsome. He says that he feel in love with the fog on the way up here, Mam. He says that it's like being an angel wrapped up in a cloud, and when he drove here he thought it was driven through heaven and into paradise.

Mary: He said all that, did he? I've never met a man who loved the fog. He's got his head stuffed full of poetry. Angel indeed. Newfoundland paradise!

Jenny: I think he makes the fog sound real pretty. I'd like to walk through a cloud.

Mary: He's never seen a boat crushed upon the rocks because the poor men on board, all dead and cut to pieces at the bottom of the sea in their icy graves, never saw the shore because of the fog, now did he? And little Maggie Turner, poor little larnib, who fell off the Turn of Sadness...

Jenny: Quiet, Mam, they'll hear ye.

Scene 5

Five minutes later

(Peter is introduced to Mary. Ira objects to Mary's fusing over Peter, he asserts that Peter will "eat with us, sleep with us, rise with us, toil with us." Peter is here to learn, so "the boy won't learn unless he lives like one of us." Peter was born in St. John's, then his family moved to Toronto to open a business.)

Ira: And what is it you do in Toronto?

Peter: I'm taking sociology at the University of Toronto with a minor in history and cultural studies.

Ira: So the letter said. But what does that mean in your words?

Peter: I study people and societies and how they develop in different places, different regions. Why certain cultures turn out the way they do, why certain traditions remain and why others don't...The oral tradition. Stories. Songs. I'm writing my thesis on it.

Ira: I see you've brought your book to the table. Is that your research?

Peter: In a manner of speaking...

Mary: And you'll be taken notes about is in your book there?

Peter: Sometimes.

Mary: I'll be watchen over my shoulder the whole time.

Peter: Actually I'm hoping that won't happen.

Mary: Ira I don't like this one mite. He'll be paraden our dirty laundry all over his Toronto journals. He'll make us a laughingstock. Newfindlanders are not here to be made fools of Mr. Matthews. We may be old fashioned sometimes but we're not as ignorant as ye may think. We knows the rest of the country is already laughen as us and don't think we'll stand for it in this house.

Jim: Now Mrs. Boyle

Mary: Don't you 'now Mrs. Boyle' me Jim Farrell.

Ira: Mary I'm rightly sure Mr. Matthews isn't here to make us into fools or to talk about the state of your kitchen. Are you?

Peter: Hardly. My parents are Newfoundlanders after all.

Ira: And if all he's got in that notebook there is research maybe he wouldn't mind readen it to us from time to time so we can see how he's gotten along. Is that a fair bargain Mr. Matthews?

Peter: Actually...

Ira: And there'll be none of this skulken about the house. You'll do your share. We've got little use for your university's board money. We pay in hard labour, b'y, and we eat what we catch. You'll work on the boat with us. Plenty to learn there. We sing from time to time, too.

Peter: But...

Mary: Lord have mercy, Ira. He's never been on the boats before much less with a crank like you. You'll be carryen home a pine box that's what.

Peter: Listen...

Claud: Ah he's a stout lad. I was helpen my father when I was thirteen.

Peter: Thirteen!

Ira: Jim can show him what to do till he gets his wits about him. He's got some salt in his blood yet. He'll have his sea legs in no time. How does that sound Mr. Matthews?

Peter: I'd rather not if it's all the same to you sir.

Ira: 'Tisn't all the same to me.

Mary: Let the boy alone.

Peter: I'm just here to collect stories and songs...just...

Ira: You'll earn your keep like a man. There's no harm in fishen.

Some good salt air and the sea under your feet, you'll be a Newf before the sun sets.

Mary: For the love of God Ira finish your dinner and give us a moment's peace. You're after maken poor Mr. Matthews neglect his meal. Areh't ye hungry dear?

Peter: Actually Mrs. Boyle, I don't much care for fish.

The clinking of silverware as it lands on the plates. Seeing the look on Mary's face, Peter hesitantly takes a bite of his meal and promptly turns green.

Scene 6
Later that evening. The men sit in the living room near the wood heater. Jenny and Mary clean dishes in the kitchen.

Peter: I'm afraid I've offended Mrs. Boyle terribly.

Jim: I wouldn't give it another thought, b'y. She's real disappointed you didn't like her fish n' brews. She'll not hold a grudge though. Although I don't know how you'll get on liven off hardtack and tea.

Peter: So...What's there to do around here?

Jim: Well we weren't going to tell ye but now that I've met yet I'll let you in on it. After dinner we gets dressed up in our finery and goes aback to the woods. We lights a fire and sings some songs and dances and drinks some screech and pisses in the wind. When that's done and the wind and the moon's right and the piss goes the right way the little people comes and tells us that if we kiss the cod and then sacrifices it to the fire, there'll be good fishen the next month. Claud there knows a man who married one of the fairies and had good fishen the rest of the his life.

Peter: Really. What kind of dancing?

Jim: Now take this down in yer notebook Mr. Matthews. It's a Beothuk-Irish-Viking dance started way back when the settlers first came from Europe and met the natives and it just sort of developed over the years. Better yet, why don't yet get up and try t'? I'll teach ye. You can show it to your scholars.

Peter: I don't know. I'm not much of a dancer.

Jim: C'mon. It's easy.

Peter: I guess so...

Jim: Now put your arms out like this. And you hums a little tune like this. And your feet go round like this and you spins like this, and you pucker your cheeks a little like this, and stick your arse out a little more. Right then. And you jig a little like this and stomp a little like this. Now whoop like an Indian. And then you kiss the codfish. Would you like to kiss the codfish?

Mary: Jim what're ye doing in there to poor Mr. Matthews?

Peter: I've never heard of any dance like this.

Jim: Nah b'y. We sits a little and drinks, listens to the radio.

Peter: Right. Thanks so very much.

Jim: Would ye like a game of cards while we wait for the girls to finish with the dishes?

Mary: Cards and dice are the devil's device, and God's desire is to put em in the fire!

Jim: Yes Mrs. Boyle. Checkers, then? *(aside)* We'll have a hand of gin down at Abe's some night.

Mary: I heard ye Jim Farrell and you'll not drag the boy off to the likes of Abe Duff's. I don't need *four men sick on rum and tobacco on a Friday night, on of them who's like to slip off the Little Turn of Sadness gut full of rum on a foggy night and disappear into the sea forever and into God's hands like little Maggie Turner.*

(Ira leaves to take books to his daughter. Jim explains to Peter about now some boys only finish the seventh grade then go out on their fathers' boats, but Jim went out with Ira when he was eighteen because his mother wanted him to finish school. His parents went off the Turn of Sadness when he was seventeen, so he had to fish with Ira.)

Peter: I'm sorry. Your parents did what exactly? Went over...?

Jim: Died my son. There were comen back from Abe's one night driven along the cliff back to Heartstick Bay. It's a fair incline up the cliff. You could walk right off 't and drop right into the sea on a foggy night before you knew you'd lost your foofen. Before the last bit there's one last sharp turn and then the sea below you. On the wetter days it's hopeless for a car to make the climb, much less the turn. The tires will spin and the arse end of the car will slip to the right and hang over the drop. They calls it the Little Turn of Sadness because so many people have just dropped off into the sea and were never heard from again. Like my parents driven back from Abe's in the rain, heavy with the rum.

Peter: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

Jim: Nah b'y. It was a long time ago. We all got likkered at the wake. I'll inherit my father's boat and a house in two years...been helpen Ira since the accident. One day, b'y, I'm sellen the boat and moven West. Start my own business like your parents did. Nice little house with a big lawn where my kids can play soccer in the summer, and a pond for hockey in the winter. I suppose they got rinks out there for that though, eh?

Peter: What's stopping you?

Jim: I wants a family first. A wife and sons.

Mary: Stop chewen the man's ear off with your Toronto dreams, Jim Farrell. We all knows how you're going to go off and be rich and raise your family in some Godforsaken city.

Jim: Ah Mrs. Boyle. Ye wouldn't feel that way if I said I wanted to raise my sons in St. John's.

Mary: No I wouldn't. You'd be raising Newfinlanders. It's unnatural. Irs wants to go off and marry some doctor from Montreal, some Frenchman if ye please. I don't stop her though.

Peter: There's English in Montreal.

Mary: There's plenty English in Boston with Jen's sister Penny but that don't make them Newfinlanders. Poor Penny down there raising little soulless Yanks.

Peter: They'd still be in Canada Mrs. Boyle if they were in Montreal.

Mary: In Canada my nan's arse.

Jim: Didn't ye know Mr. Matthews? Canada smartened up and joined Newfinland in 1949.

(Peter, Jenny and Mary continue to talk. Ira returns. Peter still does not want to go out on the boat, so Ira declares that Peter won't eat what he won't catch.)

Scene 7

Claud and Jenny sit on the beach in the evening. The sun hangs deeply in the sky. The horizon is red while the rest of the sky is an indescribable indigo with winking stars. As the scene progresses it becomes night and a brilliant moon fills the sky and illuminates the pebbled beach.

(Claud goes as Peter comes walking down the beach from a day of cleaning fish with women on the wharf. Peter and Jenny walk and talk down the beach)

Peter: What do you care about the moon?

Jenny: I likes the way it makes a little silver trail across the sea when the water's still. You could walk right down it and all the way to Europe. Was Italy very beautiful?

Peter: I was very young...but yes, I think it was. I remember the way the sand felt between my toes. See, there aren't any seaside beaches in Toronto...I used to leap at the chance to get away.

Jenny: I'm not like you. I don't want to get away.

Peter: Really.

Jenny: You think I want to get away. Marry somebody like you and live in the city. Is it so inconceivable that I could like it here?

Peter: Maybe...Look. There's your moon.

Jenny: Beautiful isn't it?

Peter: *(reciting)* "What is day compared to night? Day, whose cold seductions leave me unmoved, whose empty sky burns with garish sun. Only when the flames dwindle and the ashes sweep across the blue is my heart touched by the radiance..."

Jenny: You believe in the sentimental.

Peter: I'd like to.

Jenny: See that rock over there? That's my rock. My sisters and I all had our own rocks and we'd stand on 'em and shout to each other down the beach and try to catch seagulls. And I used to think that the ocean would listen to my thoughts and do what I told it to. And I used to stand on my rock, just like this, and will the waves to get bigger and smaller.

Peter: Careful! That's wet granite! Will you get down? You're making me nervous.

Jenny: Then one day when I was willen the waves to get bigger one big one came and took my sister Penny out with it. My father and the men had to go out in a dory to reel her in. She was shiveren and wet and her lips were blue. I felt awful. I thought it was my fault.

Peter: You're a strange girl.

Jenny: And you're an obstinate boy. I can see it in your eyes you're thinken about your notebook. I'd love to get my hands on it.

Peter: You were looking in my eyes?

Jenny: You're so full of yourself.

Peter: And you stink of saltwater.

Jenny: *(reciting)* "Everything out of water began! Everything does the water sustain! Ocean, grant us your ceaseless reign! Were there no clouds by you outspread, were no rich brooklets by you fed, nor rivers down their courses sped, nor streams brimmed bed after bed, where would our world be?"

Peter: You know *Faust*?

Jenny: I can read Peter.

Peter: "...it is you who the freshness of life still maintain..."

Jenny: Is that so?

Peter: You're not like any girl I've known.

Jenny: You're exactly like the boys I've known.

Peter: Is that so?

Jenny: 'Tis.

Peter: I'll prove to you I'm not. Can any of your young men do this?

Peter sticks out his tongue and curls it.

Jenny: I hope not.

Peter: It's endearing.

Jenny: It's peculiar.

Peter: I can see you're hard to impress.

Jenny: Give me that notebook and maybe I'll change my mind.

Peter: Not a chance.

Jenny: Why not?

Peter: It's personal.

Jenny: Can't be that personal. It's about us.

Peter: Then you already know what's in it.

Jenny: So what do you say in there about me?

Peter: I'm writing in it right now that you're a presistent nag with no sympathy for a cold, wet, hungry stranger. So much for Newfoundland hospitality.

Jenny: Ah give off.

Peter: Fine. Let's walk back.

Jenny: I really supposed to sympathize with you?

Peter: Absolutely.

Jenny: Why?

Peter: Because. I've very alone in this extremely intimidating, wet province. My family is so happy that I'm finally here but I don't know what I'm doing. I can't even clean a fish without messing the whole thing up and...I need your help. I haven't got a single friend amongst your family or your neighbours. Pity me. Please. Pity me.

Jenny: Here. Take my scarf.

Peter: Thank you.

Jenny: Your welcome.

Scene 8

(Jim asks Mary's blessing to ask Jenny to marry him. Mary asks if Jenny loves him, he says he'll earn her love. He worries that Jenny likes Peter. Mary assures him that being a mainlander and about to leave Jenny doesn't.)

Scene 9

Peter's room at night. A knock on the door. Peter opens it. Jenny stands holding a bundle wrapped in a piece of cloth. (Jenny's snuck him up dinner.)

Peter: So what've you brought me tonight?

Jenny: Just a bit of pork chop. I couldn't sleep with the thought of a man starven in the next room.

Peter: Liar. You've come to butter me up and steal my notebook.

Jenny: Is't worken?

Peter: Almost.

Jenny: What would it take to convince you?

Peter: A kiss goodnight.

Jenny: A kiss!

Peter: A kiss.

Jenny: What sort of girl do you take me for?

Peter: A little innocent kiss.

Jenny: You've read too many stories about Newfinland girls Peter Matthews. We don't throw ourselves at every mainlander who passes through.

Peter: There's no harm in a little kiss.

Jenny: I won't give you a kiss.

Peter: No?

Jenny: No.

Peter: Then I can't let you see the notebook.

Jenny: You're a wicked man Mr. Matthews.

Peter: I'll take a bet with anyone you've never been kissed before.

Jenny: At least I'm not like your city women who go around kissen all the men they can.

Peter: How boring they are! Not one of them has the colour of yours eyes.

Jenny: I don't know if I should believe you.

Peter: What is it you think is in that notebook anyway?

Jenny: Poetry. I know there's poetry in you somewhere. What you said about the night sky, the fog... Nobody here talks like that.

Peter: So go to Toronto.

Jenny: I'd never fit in.

Peter: I hope not.

Jenny: Are the women in Toronto so very beautiful?

Peter: *(goads her)* Prettier than you.

Jenny: I'll make a deal Mr. Matthews. When you go out on the boat with my father I'll give you your kiss.

Peter: I can't go out with your father. I don't know the first thing about fishing or traps or getting up before noon...

Jenny: Learn. I can't keep bringen up your dinner like this.

Peter: I can't.

Jenny: No?

Peter: No.

Jenny: No fishen, no kiss.

Peter: You Boyles are going to be the death of me.

Scene 10

(That same night Jim is practicing proposing. Jenny watches him from the doorway. She turns to go, but he sees her. He keeps her from going. He almost kisses her but loses his nerve. They say goodnight.)

Scene 11

(Claud sits in the kitchen while Mary and Jenny make breakfast. Mary thinks she has seen ill omens. Mary encourages Jenny to consider Jim for a husband. They learn from Claud that Peter went out on the boat with Ira and Jim that morning. Ira bursts in supporting

Jim, Peter follows holding bleeding hands.)

Scene 12

Later the afternoon. Jim sits by the fire wrapped in a blanket and wearing dry clothes. Jenny finishes washing and bandaging Peter's hands. She exits to the porch. (They sit around talking about what happened. A rogue wave pounded the boat, knocking Jim overboard, Peter saved Jim's life.)

Mary: Jennifer! Come inside before the fairies get ye.

Peter: You don't believe in that nonsense do you?

Mary: Oh yes. Jennifer's pop had a first hand account with them years ago.

Peter: That so?

Mary: 'Tis. Tell him Claud.

Claud: One day I was choppen wood near me home in Fox Cove. When I finished I carried the wood to a nearby shed. Load after load I carried until the shed was full. Then I walked towards me house. To my amazement I found the chopped wood still lyen on the ground. I runs back to the shed only to find it still full. Then I hears laughter comen from the woods near the house. Thinken it was a few of the the b'ys playen tricks on me I runs over to share a laugh with them. imagine my surprise when I saw instead of group of little people, dancen in a circle and singen the most beautiful song I had ever heard. I sat down and listened enchanted by their sweet voices. When they finished they motioned for me to follow and I did as they wished. They were leaden me to the edge of the cliff. An old woman was strolen through the woods. She saw what was happenen and came to my rescue. The old woman put a hand on my shoulder and said, Listen to me, concentrate on my voice only. Do not look at them. Just take my hand and follow me. In a state of confusion I did as I was told and returned home safely. I often wonders what would have happened if that old woman had decided to stay home that night

Peter: That's an incredible story.

Claud: Tisn't a story Mr. Matthews. There are days I can still hear the little people singen out to me as clear as day. The ocean often drowns em out but sometimes it's hard not to listen.

Peter: I'm not sure any of my professors will believe it.

Mary: Ah no matter. Let em believe what they likes. Pop's like to chew yer ear off with yarns he's collected. Maybe tonight he'll tell you a chapter out of Peter Easton's tale.

Peter: Who?

Ira: One of Newfinaland's pirates my son.

Peter: I look forward to it.

(Ira brings out a jug of rum and the men sit around the fire and drink.)

Scene 13

That night, many drinks later. Jenny is on the porch wrapped in a blanket, reading by lamplight. The music from Ira's accordion drifts into the night air and the voices of Claud, Ira, Jim and Peter are heard singing. (After a few verses Peter stumbles out a little drunk, the music dies down and Ira and Claud go to bed. Peter reminds Jenny about the kiss.) The door opens and Jim staggers out, much drunker than Peter. He grabs Jenny and presses a kiss into her cheek.

Jenny: Get off me you rascal. Ye stink of rum.

Jim: I wanted to tell ye. You're a beautiful girl Jenny Boyle. I wanted to tell ye since we were children.

Jenny: Go home Jim Farrell before Mam catch ye out here maken an arse of yourself.

Jim: But you're letten him stay?

Jenny: Aye I'm letten him stay.

Jim: I knows what he wants. *(to Peter)* I knows what you wants. Don't think I don't see it. You're all alike, comen here and waitzen around with your notebooks and our girls. *(grabs Peter by the collar of his shirt)*

Jenny: Jim go home.

Jim: I am home. Why not Peter go home. It's always Jim go home. They all come here and takes what they want and then leave. Go home Mr. Peter.

Jenny: You want him to write this down for his paper Jim? He'll write about what an arse ye are.

Jim: Of course not. Why would anyone want Peter to go home. Everybody loves Peter now. I saw you. Moonen on the beach with Peter. He don't belong here Jenny. He doesn't love you.

Jenny: Jim he saved your life.

Jim: *(Letting Peter go)* Let him write what he likes. When he goes you'll still be here. And so will I. Oh Jenny my darling...With eyes like silver codfish. I loves you so. How d'ye like my poetry Jenny?

(Jim leaves singing, Peter remains reciting poetry)

Jenny: So you're a drunken poet.

Peter: I'm a fraud.

Jenny: What?

Peter: It's all a lie. They look at me and say oh you're the Newf. Do the accent. Oh you're the guy from Newfoundland. You must like fish. I'm supposed to be in touch with all of...this. Because I was born there. Because my parents are. But I'm not. You hear me? I'm not. Fog is just fog and I hate fish. Your beds smell like seaweed and I'm going crazy because I can't get out of here soon enough. I'm tired of pretending I like it. And I'm expected to already know all of this. You know your grandfather thought I could jia? Like that's innate or something. That's why I'm here. And I don't know anything. I don't know anything. God. There's no such thing as poetic fog Jennifer.

Jenny: You came here because you were paid to. You've been honest about that from the start. You've never lied to us Peter.

Peter: That changes nothing. You still want poetry and I still want my kiss.

Jenny: D'you believe in omens?

Peter: What?

Jenny: My mother does. The blind fell down and she's been spooked ever since. Someone's going to die she says. And last night she told me to scoop out half a boiled egg, filled the shell with salt and eat it. Leave a glass of water by my bed. I'm supposed to dream of a man who'll offer me the glass of water and that man is supposed to be my true love. I never believed in it before. My sisters never dreamed of the men they're married to. I told Mam I dreamed of Jim Farrell.

Peter: Did you?

Jenny: No.

Peter tosses her the notebook.

Peter: Here. Take it.

Jenny reads silently.

Jenny: This is beautiful. You really see all this here?

Peter: I don't know what I see. I know I see you.

Jenny: I don't know if I love Jim Farrell. Mam wants us to get married.

Peter: What does Jenny Boyle want?

Jenny: To be kissed.

Peter: I can't.

Jenny: A promise is a promise.

Peter: I can't promise you anything.

Jenny: I know.

They kiss passionately and enter the house together.

Scene 14

(Claud exits the house still drunk, disappears into the thick fog calling out to someone he thinks he hears.)

Scene 15

(The same night Peter and Jenny kiss goodnight in Jenny's doorway. Peter runs into Jim in the hallway, thinks Jim's about to deck him. Jim tells Peter he's wanted, Claud's missing, their going to search for the body.)

Scene 16

(Peter puts the notebook and an envelope on the kitchen table and picks up his bags to leave. Ira stops him, says the others will be back from the funeral soon. Ira tells Peter about the group of Newfoundland boys who fought and died in world war one, of which Claud was a part of.)

Peter: It's very tragic.

Ira: We're all about tragic stories Mr. Matthews. Isn't that right? One sad story after another. Maggie Turner who walked off the turn of Sadness like my father did in the fog hearing fairy voices. Pirate stories. The Carbonear Princess who married Gilbert Pike the pirate. Irish fairy tales and sad love stories. Isn't that what you came here to collect?

Peter: I should get going.

Ira: What will you tell your scholars?

Peter: I haven't figured it out yet. It doesn't matter now. Assure Mrs. Boyle. There'll be no mention of her kitchen.

Ira: And what should I tell my daughter.

Peter: Tell her I'm sorry...For her loss.

Ira: She imagines she's in love with you.

Peter: I know. But I don't belong here. For a moment I...I've left my Toronto address in case...

(Mary and Jenny are on the beach at sunset dressed in funeral garb, looking out to sea. Jenny sings Turra lurra.)

Mary: Your pop used to sing that to you when you were a child.

Jenny. *(resting her hands on her belly)* I remember. An so I shall sing it to my children.

Mary: Does he know?

Jenny: No.

Mary: And you're certain?

Jenny: Aye. Your grandsons will be Newfinlanders after all.

Ira: Jim Farrell will take care of her now.

Peter: They'll get married and raise sons together...Listen I...Thank you for your hospitality Mr. Boyle

Ira: Have a safe journey Mr. Matthews. I won't give Jennifer any hope of your return. Be careful going round the turn. It's a difficult passage.

Peter leaves.

The End

Edmonton, 1976

Emily Evans

There you are in matching
beige and white honeymoon outfits.
The photo glows
warm brown like most photos from the seventies.
Look out to the edges of the frame, where
Eyes are wide green swells that
sight delight in oceans.
Dead center;
two hands buckled
a petrified forest
or a cave.



À l'ombre de H. Böll Aleksandra Jović-Savié

Untitled

Jessia Van Horssen

Sun separated lashes leave jilted rays of deep blue across his red face that shimmers with the humidity in the air. He pauses in front of my peeling pale green house to admit to a random pedestrian his ignorance of the time, pointing proudly to his naked wrist as I knew he would, even as the disinterested passer-by moves greedily on. Only a small portion of my cigarette-filtered complexion is revealed through a corner of the peaked window, but perhaps out of boredom, nervous paranoia, or some hidden hereditary form of ESP, he finds it as he turns and leans his eyes toward mine. My ruby slipper window vigil slips as a modern form of Nancy Drew etiquette unravels my spine's heroic coil and forces me to duck.

Clenching my eyes shut I see his open to a time when neither of us could distinguish between the sound of birds chirping and beds squeaking, as both were so much a part of that nature-made distinct society where he emulated Hemingway and I charmed firefiles into the sun. The chance meeting of a militantly proud Nova Scotian boy and a central Ontario chick who'd never really thought about it turned into a syringe emptying tilt-a-whirl adventure for new material taking route in Anglo-Quebec where we were not oblivious to the geographical uneasiness in the air, but found our history of separation movements humorous and irrelevant as they appeared to be mere anitdotes designed to compete with more audacious glory. Acquiring a perverse taste for sweetened malt liquor cooled by the dew and warmed by our unadulterated laughter, we merrily merrily merrily played white picket house in a grey slatted cottage that was swept by tequila shots and treetops and oiled by our sense of what displaced regionalist rage actually was.

Digressions shaping our dependancies, we sank into the farcial realm of the literary canon as he spoke often in rhymes and always in riddles, tattooing the patterns of his mind as he played along the labyrinths of my rib cage. Placing parts of our old life up on tabletops and windowsills, our differences became fetishes to exploit during the hours of darkness as we sat waiting for the fainting Northern Lights to consecrate our blackened feet. We swore to each other that Elvis was the king and we were merely transgendered queens, sifting through the blood and sorrow of life until we could cross our legs into the earth to harmonize ourselves once again with our wilderness and to remember what music feels like and what trees could whisper to us if only given the chance. We were young and

drunk and vague when it came to the question of purpose, preferring allusions to spiders all suspiciously named Christopher Robin, who would relentlessly pursue us until we shrieked wildly that kickboxing and country music would be resurrected in the future and that there was nothing that we could do to disrupt the mysteries of faith—something we did not truly believe when we finally allowed our reservations to reach our senses.

He would tell me, "Your white candle shrines placed on shells found in lakes instead of seas leave me wondering why we continue to chase each other in and out of corners with our need to silence the silence."

Feeling the fury sparked in the atmosphere I would force myself to role of Eve, sighing that he was everything and claiming that, "The metaphors seeping feverishly from your tongue paint my skin shaken not stirred and I am left puzzled at how your journey to self-recognition includes the burlesque currents of salted earth that we have created and crushed into sweat-charged bed sheets in order to counteract our lapsed ideals," knowing that he would once more slam me against the door and feed off my ear lobes and neck hollows until he slowly shook away, the stubble on his cheeks pulling at strands of my hair, never realizing that my eyes were open, my feet were cold, and my brain was panting with the oddity of it all.

His misinterpretation of my remnants of another time were intensified by his desire to prove his hypothetical conclusions on the ornamental design of abated wanderlust wrong. "My obsession with you, white pine needles, and rocks smoothed by the water's caress has not been tamed despite my increased yearning to weave glistening puddles into the dark city pavement, quenching its thirst as well as my own." I would chant again and again as I burned my wings on the morning coffee shores of the Memphremagog, fearing the presence of something that would never be rebuilt despite its tourist attraction. The crumble of his brown whenever I chose to dance under the purpling clouds with or without him outside our kitchen window decided that it was time for him to run before he created too many more interpretations of my theoretical truth.

Validation curling my body upward to the window once more, I find the monotonous movement below having continued while my pupils dilated behind the darkness of my pounding lids. I straighten to change the nearest stick of incense and collapse exhausted and confused at the mystical ability a simple game of tag has to make someone 'it'.

Ice and Flame

Margarita Bizina

Green eyes travel from bed-head hair to temple, to cheekbone, cautiously resting for a split second on deep-brown eyes. They dart away, pretending to observe the surroundings the moment the owner of the brown eyes looks up. Green eyes tenderly and slowly caress lightly tanned skin, attempting to remain discreet. The heart is aching, as the hands cannot repeat the eyes' route. The soul tosses in agony, if there were tears they would turn into ice. The question hidden deep within threatens to resurface, occupying the consciousness, pounding in the confines of the brain. Is there something special, or had it all been a product of imagination? The reason tries to prevail—all spellbound gazes of deep-brown eyes were just a short-lived flame. The one of a match, that sparks, burns the flame, icy coldness emerges, hurting green eyes by ignoring their presence. The game continues, driving the mind to the brink of insanity, yet green eyes are unable to disentangle themselves from the fetters of attraction. They wander around, probe the aura of brown eyes, desperately searching for signs of reciprocity, and ponder how can they learn to trust, never knowing that brown eyes hiding behind the ice and flame defense are asking the same question.

Stretch Us

Emily Evans

1.
I don't really get to see the
tools (the techne apparatus)
long enough to remember what
exactly they used
to white out
(cause i think the colour of
vacuum must be white)
da would be un my hyster.
ga ga ga so i think of a big syringe. like a gallon syringe
with a dick
wide mouth
it's that mirror metal,
or hell, a bargain sweater,
shines but
you can't quite see yourself
in it.

2.
Fucking on my
back my first time
sucked, cause, I only
saw his cock sprouting from a bustle of hair
this pink meat exposed then digging further further,
i wish i had had a mirror, like the ones
on the ceilings of that bordello in Athens,
then he could have sat up and out of my way,
so i could see where it was all going, instead of this ambiguous
pounding
inside numb but pounding, like when i'd feel my pulse in my lungs
from to much far.
On my back, i couldnt see anything but that speed bump of pubic

hair
where somewhere under neaththere was space,
or I was trying to make space,
and tho i'd been told
"you'd be amazed at how much space there is down there."
it felt more like one of those finger traps
slid in easy all at once
and then went jerky, tight.
On my back, all tangled up with this body
I couldnt see my own cunt, or where the hole was, let alone what
to jiggle to make me come,
my cunt just looked ironed,
or plowed like snow.

and I was thinking that first time, so do I just lie here,
can this be right?
it all seemed a bit too easy
(and i
didn't even wonder why it felt like shit, i'd heard

"its supposed to hurt at first")
so then i just relaxed,
thought about fried zucchini, terracotta roofs, and stray cats.

3.
My father always
seemed like he knew
and then he got old.
My father, he grew tomatoes, and they were
sick but grew, stunted
but tasted
sour, quick, precise,
like him
and I
ate them up
while they were green.

4.
so I asked did I deprive the world of something?
I gave up that crazy invented cabin in the woods with that
little girl, who, in retrospect looked just like me.
That garden i'd grow, cause I was nurturing, and kind,
and good with my hands, and would lay the table
with wood bowls and salads with
clementine wedges and sunflower seeds. and that little girl
must have been a genius, and would have filled a gap in the
world, made it a better place.

and then I have to scarf
pah, my michael jackson idealism is about as shallow as
a monkey's ass. so I asked did I deprive the world of something?
when an action destroys Aristotle's precious potentiality and consum-
mates another.
potential is sucked, consumed, loved.

and then one day, as flippent as you'd say
pass the salt, my friend turned it around,
asked did you deprive something of the world?
it's spinning so softly all the time
spinning and beaming and waving so wide
that I dont even see it, and when I did,
those nights when I saw meteors fall, or maybe just watched
a bird hammering away a home
on discovery, its too late, cause no
one else was there
or if they were, we had to destroy the moment too,
drinking it, gnawing it, remembering it.

Untitled 1

Eva Grabowski

This too shall pass. I was told
when the word hit my ear,
summoning a forgotten wish,
to forever be deaf.
And time heals all wounds, they preached,
after I spent the night alone with my thoughts,
on a ground floor cot,
next to a metal toilet, and a camera,
behind endless steel bars.
It'll all be alright, they urged,
when unspoken fear crippled this body,
and quiet, private curiosities of unbreakable silence
were the only products, of such a despair.
Such a shame, they all lamented,
when it all went away,
and tears fell only because they were expected,
and though it was only a moment in time,
it buried forever the questions
which only then could have been asked.
Then they spoke no more, these voices of reason,
when the truth was buried;
such a truth they could never know.
But damn them for always having something to say,
except now,
when no one can explain to me,
why six feet
feels so far away.



Untitled Aleksandra Jović-Savić

Solstice

Ildi

In the dark side of the Moon
angry clouds
Rushing overhead
chasing the Sunlight
in an eternal hunt
the never ending battle
of the unyielding circle
The great storm brewing
as two halves fight
underneath the imposing stars
Quivering lightning bolts
Shatter the earth around them
And the ever roaring thunder
batters the tranquil peace

They bear old scars
the twin souls
of the forever war between them
Of the forever hunting clouds
Pregnant with rain
Waiting
patiently waiting
always waiting
For that one moment of destruction
of utter chaos
of ultimate torment
of pain and fear
of deceit and lies
of relieving tears
of throbbing passion
...Of the final truth

Standing, trembling
in the tomblike silence
Awaiting judgment
That will bring them into a brighter tomorrow
of the pyramid serpent's circle
And the halves will cease to exist
and we will become One.

From the Rubiat= A Psalm

Noni Howard

Dedicated to Elaine and St. John of the Cross

"A Loaf of Bread, a jug of wine, and thou beside me..."

for that would I give my earthly
treasures

for your single kiss,
my beloved.

my hand upon you would defile you
for I am not worthy;

my sins lie broken like the pottery
from Heaven

strewn upon the floor
of my disgrace.

Like Satan, most beloved by God
and Judas of Jesua

so we pick those
who at our right hand

must destroy us
and be cast from us

as unholy stones
in the river of Life.

Nay, not so, my Love; for thou hast
smiled upon me in my wretchedness

and offered me the Hope
of the Godhead in your silent embrace.

i look for you in the waters and streams,
the sky exploding in colours and brightness

and the land, fertile with grace
and the desert, barren yet teeming

with unknown Life
and see you in the sands

and every where, but i know not your name
or who i shall call you.

i have wandered in this prison
of my heart for your well to drink in.

my thirst for you is unsated
and i will not die

without your sacred mouth
on my lips.

grace me, unnameable One
my God, my Goddess.

with my barrenness, my shaved head
in the severity of *Your Law*

and your laughter,
as i once knew it

But spare me not
yet bless me in your Holy Name.

The Psalms of Love

Noni Howard

the unendurable magic
of our making ourselves love.

your hands wispers of flames on my breasts
my belly heaves
molten sweat runs from our tongues
our saliva drips from our eyes.

long later i carry the pain of you
hidden in my flesh,
all week i wear the mask
of your kisses
my tongue so full of love
that when i smile
poems crack and all my words
are lies.

the smell of your hair
on my neck
the fuck of you
my come dripping between
your legs
your tongue in my mouth.

SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL
FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE
AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE
OF THE LORD FOREVER

you are gifted to know love
to caress the warm air and make it
flesh
and flesh blood
deep and coming

ripe with desire and understanding
so that sacrilege and profanity
follows us
is all around us
seeking force to enter
the room with the altar
where you and i are holy
burning flesh to flesh.

||

you lie under me
farther than mountains under clouds
my wings pierce your smooth skin
i baptize you with my sweat.

my tears run into the rivers
of your come
my hands are full of you.

you are child beneath me
crying for absolution
i see your innocence and sadness
i forgive you your sins.
i have given you a new skin
to open like doors;
when i lay down the gifts
i have brought you:
my hands, my eyes, my lips
you receive my offerings
i give you no choice.

|||

i take off your outer skin
and you come naked to me
lay yourself down
upon my breasts,
i rock you to sleep
i sing songs in your flowing veins
i exhaust the day from you
and make it ours.

you are a thousand miles
below me
i carve out new patterns in your
aching flesh:
mountains, waves, whole trees and treacherous
valleys open to my touch.

with my tongue, my hands
my lips i give you this act
of worship.

you are mind.
you have no other gods
before me.

IV

you have no name but mine
repeat it.
see it shine before us
between us
let it spill off our tongues into our mouths
together.

i have built a great fire and placed you in its
numinous light.
you are the altar
the holy place
that i consecrate for my enjoyment.

you are the scabbard of my pleasures
the blood lust
the sea salt of my mother
the one breasted god that we
breast to breast
make whole.

repeat it.
repeat the names of god.

V

I draw the knife of my thought
over your throat
and suck you into me.

you become my blood
the rivers of your fears
flow into me.

I bind you with my mind
your body incarnate
I fashion with my hands.

the upturned breasts
perfect as alabaster, the soft belly moulded
by desire,
the swelling lips full to receive
my blessing.

turn and let me admire you.
turn and let me see
what I have done.



Sans Visage

Aleksandra Jović-Savić

Untitled 2

Eva Grabowski

Such a torrid affair it's been,
wouldn't you say?
Perhaps.
If only I had known,
how weak you'd become,
when I breathed your name.
Or how easy it would be to possess you,
within such a seemingly dull freedom.
Were you mad with fever
when you kissed the sweat from my breast?
Did you know,
that all the while,
I laughed with victory,
and even had to recall your name once or twice?
What horror, I think,
should I endure,
if ever you knew,
that despite the gifts and deep confessions,
you were just another dick,
molded especially for me.
And that you will never hold this heart in your hands,
and never will I give you the chance to see these scars,
might you wish to tear them open before they've healed.
I've seen the truth,
be it just for an instant,
and it swims freely in an ocean of warmth.
But you, unfortunately,
have become yet another sad sacrifice,
sputtering helplessly on the surface.

My Mantra

Richard Vanderford

I live to collect Aeroplan miles.

Each flight I or my husband takes on Air Canada, Jazz, Tango, Zip, or any Star Alliance partner rewards me with a predetermined amount of Aeroplan miles based on the region traveled to and the class of the ticket.

My CIBC Gold Visa card rewards me one mile per one dollar spent. All of my expenses are paid with it.

I collect Aeroplan miles in paying the rent and purchasing groceries.

I collect Aeroplan miles when buying music, videos or books.

I pray each night that a major appliance or automotive part will fail, so that I can purchase repairs or replacements and watch my balance grow.

I am a woman aged 35-39, who has completed some college and lives in a household of four with an income \$45 000-\$50 000

I leave the house 12-15 times each month. On 70% of these outings, I interact with an Aeroplan partner (such as Futureshop or Heriz car rentals), and can double or triple my points. Or win exiting prizes. Like a trip to Tahiti. Or a complementary car wash.

My chemotherapy treatments are paid with my Aeroplan Visa.

So are my husband's selections from Science Fiction Book of the Month Club, of which the first six are free with purchase of only two more books in a two year period.

So is my weekly outing with Ian, who I see on Tuesday evenings when my husband is golfing with Ron and our children are at hockey practice and Ukranian dance.

Hockey and Ukranian Dance were paid for with the Aeroplan Gold Visa.

And our monthly subscription to Better Homes and Gardens.

And the Hockey News.

And Amateur Wives in the Raw.

And my monthly plate from the Frankfurt Collection's Cherub Series.

I now have over 24 000 miles.

They can be redeemed for rental cars, hotel rooms, and, of course, flights on any Star Alliance Partner.

One day I will go somewhere great.

Queen St. Place

Jeremy Freed

My apartment is dirty and warm,

filled with other people's memories.

Leftover love in the fridge and taps that run with drunken laughter.

The couch is ever so faintly impressed with asses long-gone and smelling

like the cologne of some guy I'll never meet, or his girlfriend who ate saltine crackers from the box and cried a lot.

She lives in Albany now. She's a dental hygienist.

Her name is Stacy.

many many more...more than I'll ever guess. there are voices some-times.

And the ghosts come out to dance when I put Lou Reed on the stereo.

Stars and Bars

David Moon

Stars and bars

and tears

blowing in the wind

through the boughs we see

the bows and pomp

and circumstances which lead

an unending tirade

tyrants tire of fighting fire

with the fire of fear or power

or fire like the sun.

Staring too long and burning

your retinas catch

and inside, the rods and cones

direct a traffic jam through the

veinous and arterial pathways,

the blood of the city

carry us all in our inconsequential

life, or something like it.

What kind of death awaits

those in a city far away

whose fault is it?

Religion of reverence

refine our beliefs

refine their oil

redefine the reasons to repress their rights

stars and bars

and tears

stars of the night

look down on our eyes

wet from the alien prison

God bless Amerca.

God, are you there?



Sympathy is what we need again
Aleksandra Jović-Savić

my friend lisa

Richard Vanderford

the drawing in of breath
her having finished a sentence
and there's the drip drip
drip
of silence on rainwater skin.

ventilation hum will protect her
if she wants
but she doesn't.
she stands under windows in
the beautiful three a.m.
between two glass sunrises

striped shirt, fuzzy socks
watch left on parents nightstand
with studied abandon
(we all study)
time is a tired clerk scowl
running warm out of cold water faucets
into thirsty hands.
always late, but we've never missed a train
(actually) we always miss the train, but
there is cake for everyone.
I hope we don't run out.

Untitled 3

Eva Grabowski

How long and tiring is this quiet attempts,
only because the proper words
have yet to be found,
though I'm sure they are drowning somewhere,
in a sea of poverty.
Not enough time or waking moments can pass,
to finish this endless dream,
with only vague and forgettable interruptions;
an occasional scream of despair,
or that strange familiar moment
that evaporates,
more quickly than it appeared.
What hides under these words we use?
Must we lie until death to each other,
when we all know that a different world exists
in the safety of our own mouths?
How can we fight this,
when we are too busy feeding it,
ensuring its survival?
It will consume us, I think,
this fear of unity.
Only when it's too late,
and we are naked and alone
will we see it,
as it hungrily licks our struggles,
smacking its lips loudly,
as we whimper,
and beg,
for an absence of regret.
No more waiting in vain,
for answers that shall never come,
and no longer shall we rape ourselves

of what really can become of this life,
How easy these words are to write,
how convincing they sound aloud.
But could I scream out freely,
Such a common affliction?
Could I bleed this heart,
with only faith in such truths?
Still I try,
And still I starve.

Pieces

Emily Evans

the slow side of cigarette smoke
curling and whispering i breath rings like eternity
and marvel at the attractiveness of self destruction.

now you, all dolled up with curiosity
you're coy, deliberately passive,
sealed by furious sexuality.

tired of sure ground, pavement, lawns, chairlift trails,
i want to sink up to my neck in clay
stalking disaster
anonymous and naked
in poetry,
defense are asking the same question.

Once again in the green car

Jeremy Freed

Once again in the green car
we burn gas and thunder towards
the shimmering horizon.
Bakersfield, Palmdale, Lake Los Angeles
'We were somewhere outside of Barstow, on the edge of the
desert'...I say
Havens for crumbling autos
aluminum siding
and backyard livestock.
Oil & Filter, Mortuary, Smog Check
Joshua trees adorn the yellow sand seas like hairs on my leg
poking bristles through dry earth towards a scorching desert sun
'I could live here' I say
Salton Sea, Mojave, Borrego Springs
We pass fields of white windmills
blades churning air so dry it crackles
We stop. Climb a butte and survey the expanse of mottled brown
stretched before us and to all sides.
In the ditch where we've stopped, by my foot
is a rusted can.
'Cans turn into sand.' I say
I don't remember what you say to this.
Lone Pine, Big Sur, Baja California
Miles and miles of road ahead, wavering and watery with heat.
We turn back, into the sunset, to be home before nightfall.

F. G. Scott Award for Creative Writing

Until All The Cards Are Played

Steven Mann

Death is the outside force of life. Not answerable to Heaven, Hell or otherwise, merely faced with deadlines to meet. Very rarely is procrastination apparent in Death, some people get away with life for a while, but usually just on a whim. George Burns was a funny, funny man. However, sometimes Death is a little overambitious, its not as if there is an ethereal football game to throw on the TV during downtime, all there is to do is go about the task of ending consequential existences. Sometimes deadlines are beaten by a few minutes, hours, days, years and so on. This is when the ultimate in inconvenience occurs.

It truly is a disconcerting ordeal being dead. The process itself isn't too bad. One moment a person is dying, the next they are dead. It shouldn't be that big of a deal. Sure your life is over but that's the worst of it, everything else is supposed to take care of itself. You go to Heaven, stand in line, and enjoy the love in, or you end up in Hell. The system has some bugs.

Driving South on whatever numerical identity this highway was given due to the lack of any symbols the character along the route to warrant a proper nickname, Jason Fredricks was a bug in the system. A dead man driving could be an outdated description for O.J. Simpson in his white Bronco, but it is not supposed to have a literal representation. Yet here was Jason, dead at the age of 32 for the past week and a half, cruising in a blue Dodge. You would never know it to look at him though, basically because you would never notice him. One of the many foibles in the mid-afterlife crisis Jason found himself in.

Since the moment of his death he has been able to come and go as he pleased. Somehow the memory of beings struck by a

two thousand pound piece of metal on wheels escaped him, but then again how would you really remember a thing like that. So he panicked, grabbing people and throwing them about just to get some attention drawn to his being in two places at once. He threw them alright, but the results were not unlike the systematic punching of a blow up clown. Each time they arose as if nothing had happened.

The near invincibility of others, and the immobile doppelganger flung atop the hood of his car was a little too much for Jason, especially when added to the gambling debts and a pesky matter involving a girl claiming she gave birth to his kid. So in a moment of inspiration, he started running and screaming. This went on for some time until the unexpected, "Do shut up. You are just making an ass of yourself," originated from a pinstriper on a bench dedicated to the love of MJ and SB.

"You think you would try and have some dignity in death," the well dressed man decreed while absently flipping the sports page. The Cubs Win World Series. That game had set Jason back a few weeks ago. Avoiding the futile urge to decree his fully functioning state of aliveness, he instead asked the man, with the inclusion of a few extra words, what was going on.

"You and I are dead. That is why we can recognized each others' company. As for your intentions I have not the slightest inkling, nor do I care. I am just waiting to get out of here. You can feel free to take a seat and wait with me, although it would annoy me so if another were to go before me."

Another one? Get out of here? The educated dead man explained that there was usually at least one other member of the recently deceased about, wandering the streets of the city and just happening upon his location. "When you think of how many people die in this city everyday, I would say maybe one percent end up like us. I get the feeling that I have met them all since I have been waiting. In any case, they come, they sit, and then suddenly they are not here. I can only assume they end up wherever there lives have led their eternal souls to, but then again I've never seen the heavenly chariot, nor the sizzling elevator, so who knows?"

Jason was impotent to this level of metaphysics. His brief stint

in college only provided him with experience in the tools which allowed him to exchange insight into the communist undertones of the Smurfs, while giving up a burnt offering of Cannibus Sativa. Overwhelmed, he requested more in regards to why his usually effective pummeling had less then expected results.

"We are not a pair of God's plan anymore. We are dead. We cannot affect the living. On one occasion gentleman who spent a day here with me mugged a passerby, taking his wallet and hat. The mugged man carried on like nothing had occurred and a few moments later a strong wind arose blowing the hat off my companion's head and out of sight. The wallet also seemed to have vanished in the brief hat retrieval attempt. It seems all we are entitled to here are those things which we possess at the time of our demise, which is why not both naked I assume. The Egyptians seemed to know what they were doing. Now if you will excuse me, I have a crossword puzzle to finish. Feel free to take a seat, but do not feel pressured into keeping me company, judgment has already been made on us."

So Jason sat and waited. He didn't bother with the pleasantries of speech, how the business man had died, how nice the weather was, how he really didn't remember feeling a thing, because he didn't really care to talk to the veteran of the situation. At this moment all of his cognitive abilities were spent on trying to create the complete visual biography of his existence that he felt cheated of, and flipping the scratched up quarter he had in his pocket about his knuckles. He thought back to himself and Jimmy Sawyer picking a few dollars from their mothers' purses, so that they could buy the hard bubble gum that served as colourful ammo for their slingshots. Nothing was safe from their terror. Windows, squirrels, girls, all were at their mercy. Good days.

Then he thought about Denise, his high school lover. Did he ever have his way with her. Yet it was a two sided bargain, he was allowed access to the playground, and she had someone. Then Annie Hall came through Jason's path. That was the end of Denise.

He continued with this not so instant replay for sometime. He'd had a lot of good times, raised a lot of hell, broke a lot of hearts, and fallen in some pretty deep ruts by the end of it there. Yet out of sequence a memory of his God fearing mother came up. "Now

Jason, you're full of adventure and mischief and while you are young let your heart cheer for you. Follow the inclinations of your heart and the desire of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment."

Jason came to the conclusion that he may be screwed. This led him to another conclusion, the one he usually came to when he felt he may have to pay up on a debt he could not afford. He decided to run.

Bringing us to the blue Dodge, whose dent on the hood happened to perfectly match its driver (right down to blood type), cruising down the nameless highway. Jason was relieved to find that his car, which he more or less recalled expiring upon was as much still his possession as his scratched up quarter. So he jumped in, started driving away from everything.

His first stop was one of habit. He stopped for food at one of the off highway convenience stores with the parking lot that could easily accommodate a few diverted 747's. From the Dodge to the diner were the shimmering portraits of oil stains. Unfortunately, Jason noticed, none of them looked like Jesus.

A man sat at the curb of the diner humming a song so absentmindedly that he could have been humming it for centuries, but still with the energy to show that he could go for a few more. In his arms was the literal representation of the standard fatherly invention of the baby they could fit into the palm of your hand. With Jason's passing, the hummer abridged his melody by remarking he was just looking after the little fella until he could make his way up. Jason envied the fetus.

He took a seat in the corner, a habit of a man not wanting to be noticed. It was a good ten minutes before he noticed that he was not going to get served. After another six he realized he really was not hungry, which was just as good in this dead man's Denny's. His mind wandered back to the bio of his life.

After high school, Denise and the Annie inlude, came booze, drugs, gambling, and a semester (or was it two?) in University. The plan was in out, fuck around, get a business degree, and take a piece of the city which had left the Fredricks' on the bottom all of their lives. His father was disabled, so his Mom and brothers ran the

financial show. Jason was the youngest so got away with being the one to get educated. He tried, but some people are just not meant to succeed. Gambling was the only thing that allowed Jason to stay at, and on several occasions a good deal above, the financial line which allows a man to continue to exist. He lost three big times, but he only had to endure the shame the first time.

Three times he was interrupted from his frames of thought by the jingle jangle of the stare at the entrance bell. Each time he expected the flaming girth of Lucifer himself to come in exclaim, "There you are!" and then the eternal torment gets to begin. Even when it was obviously a flannel shirt, mesh backed hat, truck driving insomniac, he had to look for just a few more seconds to debate the possibility of satanic guise.

"This is crazy," Jason exclaimed. He was certainly a man to sit and wait, it was a great part of his last half dozen years, this time it felt like a poor idea. However, what if everything was cool, and he was A-O.K. in the cosmic scheme and had nothing but fluffy clouds and happiness waiting for him? What if he was trying to run from Heaven? What if this was it? What the hell is really going on here? He needed a song.

He went to the jukebox, which was full of more vinyl than an amateur production of cats. Throwing in his single quarter, randomly jabbing at a letter then some numbers he hoped for the best. His quarter tumbled through the machine, and right back out the "your money is no good here" slot. However the machine did continue upon its random set list.

"Oooooo baby do you know what that's worth? Oooooo Heaven is a place on earth," Belinda Carlisle's harmonies were never ever meant to exist within the walls of an establishment such as this. However, and being a Stones fan this made no sense to him apart from all the lovey dovey shit, he knew this song was preaching the absolute truth. So, if Heaven was a place on Earth, and it seemed Jason was still on Earth, then why not make a run for it. By all accounts spiritual admittance was not the most organized of systems, so as long as he can find it and get in, he very well could be home free. It was all crazier then just sitting in a diner, but he had nothing to lose. Grabbing his scratched up quarter, and praising it for putting

him on this new plan, he left the diner, hopped back in the Dodge and went.

Every so often he would feel compelled to stop. It was not the violent compulsion that accompanies the urge to go to the bushes, but it had the same sense that if he did not there would be a mess.

Most of the time a stop would just result in meeting a companion in necrosis. For the most part that had very little to say. They were just sitting around, waiting for the pickup. At first he would enquire as to where the location of Heaven was, since he had a car he might as well get himself there. Reactions varied. Most of the time they just laughed, some of the more religious ones really told him off. In any case none of them were of any use to him.

On one stop he met the musician. He was standing in front of one of the rest stops indicated to exist on exit signs. He was practicing his guitar, a beat up and bloodied Marin that seemed to gain a vampirical mystique from its unique staining. As Jason approached him he was greeted to what sounded like a medley of Bach, Metallica, and redneck incest banjo. It was perhaps the most impressive thing he had ever heard. The musician briefly stumbled about the sad tale of his car crashing on the way back from a gig...blah blah blah...they were all dead here. He was keeping up his craft, honing it, so that when the time came he would be prepared for the duel, convinced the pit was his fate due to an incident involving a groupie not making it back from a post show rendezvous. He was continuing on the fact that when the Old Fiddler showed up he would be able to take him in a challenge. More power to you buddy, was all that Jason could think. As for himself he was never very good with skills, relying on games of chance for his adulthood pastime. Something told him that a flip of his new lucky coin with the Devil would be a frustrating ordeal.

Night rolled by a few times. He hoped each time that Heaven glowed in the dark. This line of thinking only served to guide him to water towers, and industrial parks. However the search had succeeded one thing. It kept him from settling back in to another round of Jason's home videos, and if anything was sacred in death anymore, it had to be the completion of the flashback. One odd constant was every half hour Belinda Carlisle would come over the radio giving him

a bit of a pep talk. It started to bother him that he began to like, and randomly hum the song.

Then there was the round house. Quaint in its design, it seemed like it belonged on top of an administrative building or library, as opposed to the singular dome off the nameless road in an undeterminable part of nowhere. It was old, it was white, and upon further inspection, was unlocked. The inside reminded Jason of the meek not so white walled interior of simple town churches with the only notable exception that the room appeared huge. The inside mimicked the circular outside by providing the occupant dressed in what appeared to be the latest fashions of the early 1960s, huddled against the back wall engaged in conversation with his hands. They were either in the middle of Hamlet or perhaps an episode of Passions, in either case he continued for a good six minutes before the left hand finally acknowledged Jason.

"This is our house. The visitation is appreciated, but we are in the middle of something here. You can not stay, because then he would be able to catch one of us. As it is we are in a position where we can keep Old Nick from sneaking up on us. So if you'll excuse us, we're in the middle of act 1576."

"You intend to stay here for eternity? What did you do that makes you so sure that you're bound for Hell?" Jason asked the attentive left hand.

"We've all sinned, but how much of that Charlton Heston speech is just bullshit? Do you know? I don't. All I know is that I am dead, and that we do not remain here indefinitely, which makes the possibility of Heaven and Hell a lot more likely. So when presented the choice of waiting to see if I may get into Heaven, or guaranteeing myself a place in this Purgatory, I'll take my little round church."

Jason understood his point all too well. However eternity with this lunatic was an unacceptable certainty, plus he was not invited. The odds of finding an unoccupied round construct worth setting up shop in seemed low as well. Back to the road.

He drove until dusk and the final choral harmonies of "Oooooo Heaven is a..." faded on his radio two bars too early, the car stopped functioning. It had slipped his mind that gas would be required for the vehicle, gas which the laws of this side of not really



La rancontre--Beaute par l'erreur Aleksandra Jović-Savié

being, did not allow the purchase of. Jason got out and sat on the hood of his car, and awaited the finale of the sun set, which was occurring over the embankment to the right of the road he was traveling. Sure he would be cheated of a few more seconds of the sun, but he never appreciated it that much anyhow.

He began to think of his brothers, who had not spoken to him since he lost all of his mother's money in a bad bet. They actually talked to him quite loudly when it occurred. The silence did not happen until after Mom had died in a home. She never said a bad word about it to Jason. She told him when he had been there sobbing on her shoulder that she knew he had tried to make things better for all of them. He just had not the means to pull it off. That happened less than a year ago. More gambling followed, debts were created by not dismantled, and then the call from Denise.

The quarter was subconsciously passed from knuckle to knuckle, as Jason subconsciously watched the sun set, while paying closest attention to his inner monologue. The colors poured up from behind the hill. That odd pink that did not seem as feministically inclined as all others, a vibrant shaft of blue, and of course the red and orange that promised so much something that it would likely burn you out. It was all very pretty, soothing, and everyday. Except for the shaft of blue that was not supposed to be there. The thought of investigation crossed his mind. It was probably just another water tower, or at best a UFO but what good was that to him. Waiting seemed like the only thing to do. Besides, he may find himself on a direct shuttle to Heaven in half an hour, or the fire pole into the flaming depths of Hell. He was never a big fan of chance. He decided he would flip for it. Heads go, tails stay. Up in the air it went end over end, until its flight was interrupted by the mid air snatch of Jason's right hand. Slapping it down upon the back of his left hand, the result was solidified. The coin showed heads.

Traversing the embankment was a lot harder after days of practically constant driving. He thought he was about there. A sign would have been helpful, Entrance to Heaven, but all he was given was the sense that he was never, ever going to have to hear Belinda Carlisle's preaching anymore, because she was shocked into silence through the discovery she was actually right. Too bad no one was

going to hear about it. Saint Belinda would have made some good Saturday Night Live skits. He made it up the embankment of dead highway median style grass. At the bottom of the smaller downhill portion of the hill, there was a set of steps. They were rickety and not very uniform in construction, going up about seven feet and then stopping. Led Zeppelin would have been disappointed.

Jason again faced a moment of indecision. If he climbed these stairs to nowhere and nothing occurred, he would likely sit right there on the ground and begin his own hand puppet epic. Sure the alternative is bliss, but the stress of the entire situation had really begun to get to him. He would flip for it. Heads go, tails stay.

Once again the scratched coin flipped up through the air, although Jason managed to miss catching it. One more moment of anticipation remained before four possible steps of the ultimate anticipation. As he bent over to retrieve the results his mind wandered to when he actually obtained this particular coin. It was at the corner store he had stopped by just prior to the end of his life. The change for the candy bar he ate while in line, he remembered because it reminded him of the coin Two-Face always had. His hand reached out and grasped the coin, sure to maintain its decision. As he straightened to take a look at the biggest decision he did not have to make in all of his existence the war hand grasped his shoulder. The coin showed heads.

Anna Margaret

Frank Willdig

The old woman slowly turned to the page
to search for the deaths of those she'd known,
it's something to do when one's reached an age
in a dark street's single room, alone.

And there was young Will who fell through the ice,
at the age of twelve by the salmon creek,
she knew the neighbors, who found the boy nice,
she wept for the parents who could not speak.

The line at the wake was a mile or two,
it was something all the mourners could share,
it was something she found the time to do,
a magical grieving beyond despair.
Returning home to her paper and tea,
she resumed her watch with that ounce of glee.

Intellectual Masturbation

oliver kollar

She's not in for the intellectual sexual sex I want.
And she doesn't even listen to my hyperreal appeals.
She says "Fuck Foucault, can't make shit of Spivak,
Helen Cixous, well, she's simply non-issue."
I told her to think beyond social constructs
and throw ourselves into a really heady fuck.
So I took her to bed
examined her end to end
The next morning I awoke
And now she calls me her boyfriend.
So I left town, I needed to be free
Under the pretense of meeting McCaffrey
There we wine and dine, I wasn't going to be confined.

And when things slowed down we sipped our gin and tonics.
Anything to block out those scientists arguing about the
origins of phonics.
And like all good things, the conference is over
Now I'm back in Lennoxville with an intellectual hangover.

Oral Intercourse

oliver kollar

Dialectal interaction...
Why can't I get any homosexual action?
Historiography and deconstruction.
Why won't his penis function?
Shut up about bi & trifurcation
Hurry, let's initiate our fornication.
Babbling about Lacan's symbolic order.
Doesn't he know sucking cock is no disorder?
And tonight, all these references to Kant
Just let me slip my hands down his pants.
But at last, I must content myself
By swallowing only our discourse.

My 25th Birthday

Adam Carlson

There's a powerful rumble reverberating through my lower body. I feel like I'm swimming through ice. I know it's only a matter of seconds before the burning mass of biological matter that's expanding in my guts breaches the sphinctoral dam and gushes into my expensive underwear. I think about that as I stumble forwards...how warm and soft and intrauterine it would feel to just relax and ride the semi-solid wave...shitting myself would be so comfortable in this harsh arctic wind, now that everything's turns against me.
It's my twenty-fifth birthday.
The day I lost all control of my bladder.
The day I became an old man.

I dove into the dark moist air of my house and swam towards the bathroom. I felt like I had a fuzzy, heated force field around my body. When I touched the door I wasn't really touching it: it just melted away from me. I quickly melted my pants off and flowed into the spongy seat...I don't know how many pounds per square inch of pressure was inside of me waiting for that damn bleeder valve to open...
I shit so hard that the toilet flushed itself.

I remember a story that this guy we stayed with in Berkley told us about the first time he got stoned in Hawaii. He said he'd took a shit that lasted for two hours. All the while he could feel his organs being squeezed out into the bowl in a bloody mass of wasted humanity. He was so terrified to face what he'd lost that he opened the door while still sitting down, leaped out of the stall, and started *running*—running out of the bathroom, out of the restaurant—amazed at how fast he could sprint with his pants still down around his ankles—finally he was outside and down the street. He turned expecting to see a trail of

entrails, gallons of gore...

—Nothing—

"What happened next?"

He said he was pissed he hadn't wiped his ass.

As I sat there repeating the Hawaiian horror, I noticed that there were new shocks coursing through my numbed body. "Uh-oh..."

My cousin from Fort Erie used to drink cough syrup to get high too. He told me that one time when he was really fucked on DM he was shitting his guts out when he had to throw up. He slid off the toilet and barfed into the awful depths...done, he got back to finishing his shit, but the thick horrible stench of the evil melange assured that he would be alternating between kneeling and sitting for quite awhile... I *really* didn't want to go through that. No. I don't think I could handle that.

Even in my stupor I figured out a plan, I had to. The downstairs bathroom in my house is small and the sink is pretty close to the toilet..."It is close, but is it within barfing distance? Could I *do* that?"

Whether or not I could have gotten away with that disgusting twisted contingency I still don't know. I bit my lip and clenched my fists against my eyes—praying, screaming, for *some kind of balance!* After cleaning myself up, I slunk up the stairs, drifting through the ether to my room.

You know those dreams you used to have as a kid where you really gotta pee, and you finally do and it feels soooo good...and then you wake up, and:

Ugh, that morning had gotten off to a bad start. "Happy Birthday! You're twenty-five! It's all downhill starting...Now!" I couldn't believe my bladder had broken down—like when the head gasket on my van split the week after the warranty expired. "Maybe your dirty sheets are the result of some freak isolated incident...you're not *that* old for *Christ sake!*"

I spent the afternoon drinking in my room, smoking smokes, reading *Adam Bede*. My girlfriend had left an almost full bag of new ketchup Doritos on my floor, "mmmm, maybe this isn't so bad after all." Downstairs, I found out that my loving roommates were planning to

make a nice dinner tonight. A big ass roasted chicken, garlic mashed potatoes, these vegetable things—beans I think—I felt good. I walked down to the drugstore to get the night's supplies. Two big bottles of sweet, sweet syrup. I studied the boxes to see which had the most dextromethorphan. There was one that had 30 mg per teaspoon. "Oh, but it's a time release formula—don't want that, we'll be high for days." I settled for 20 mg. Now for the comedown cure—a box of New-Citrin DM to ease us into slippery sleep.

For the record, the pharmacist didn't bat an eye. They never do. One time me and my brother had been drinking all night and on the way home from watching the new Star Wars, we decided to get legally high. We drove to the 24 hour Shopper's Drug Mart and I stumbled in smelling like a skunk and reeking of homemade wine. "Can I help you?"

"Uhh, yeah, I was wondering which one of these syrups has the most DM in it?"

"Oh, well let's see...This one has less syrup, but there's much more DM, it's the strongest one we've got, a little goes a long way."

"Great, give me two."

When I got home the Saturday Simpsons were on and my household agreed we would go together to the Loft. I cracked my fifth or so beer. Francois came over and dinner was served. We get along real well in my house, but we rarely do anything as a family. Now we were all drinking together up in Nick's palace, and I must admit my heart was full of warm feelings.

After several pitchers and several hours of floating through the sea of first-year flesh, we left the Loft to go to Oliver's. Jen and Vinny were a little wary of the next course in the big birthday meal. It seemed that it was just me and Oliver and Francois that were gonna partake—that's fine, two bottles divided perfectly three ways. In B.C. they mix their Robitussin with Coke: "RoboCokes." I happen to be a Diet Coke fan myself so that's what I used. *The shot of syrup really foams up a lot when you mix carbonation in.* Sticky purple suds coated the sides of the glasses and our fingers. It's so sweet it's almost gross, but I find that the Diet Coke really takes the edge off.

the however many fucking feet of guts there are in a human corpse. And to top off every agonizingly slow thrust was a seismic fart. Oh the humanity!

As the sun came up, I was feeling a lot better. I wasn't being torn apart so viciously anymore, and as I crept up the stairs I realized I was no longer swimming. Now I was wearing a fluffy spacesuit that kept me from coming in too close contact with the planet I was returning to, the planet I love so dearly with all its gravity and atmosphere. When I woke up I almost felt like a human being again. Looking in the mirror I saw that my face was a healthy blood-red, complemented by little sweaty welts that took a week to go away. Thoughts flowed back into my mind: "I wonder if I'll ever be able to face my roommates again? Will they be pissed that I kept them up all night with gastrointestinal nightmares? Had Oliver had the same awful symptoms? Probably not, he's a few months to go before *he* turns twenty-five. What about Francois...Oh my God! Francois! He *drove* home last night!" Dread flowed in as I pictured his car lying twisted at the bottom of the Massawippi. "Oh no, I've just killed one of my good bros." I was scared to call his place. I wondered what the consequences were for accidentally murdering a fellow student, the smartest kid in the whole school! Oliver couldn't muster the courage to call either. But after a week or so Francois rang saying he was okay. "Phew!"

I've had gray hair since I was nineteen, and here I am now, a quarter of a century old, a fortieth of a millennium. Abandoned by God and slowly dying a pathetic, incontinent death. Perhaps I've been guilty of hubris, I thought my birthday would be a special occasion. But, don't worry, I've learned my lesson. No matter what you do, no matter *how innocent you are*, the evil genius that rules the universe is gonna fuck you in the end.

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