The Mitre 2004:
Past and Pending
Introduction and Acknowledgements:
Past and Pending

When I started working on this year’s Mitre, I knew that I didn’t want to create an anthological journal. I didn’t want to produce a volume of collected works. Instead, I wanted the 111th edition of the Mitre to represent not only the best of student writing and visual art at Bishop’s, but also to reflect our capacity for critical thought. I chose the theme “Translation and Chronology” because I was interested in the way in which things change as they move across barriers, particularly barriers of time and language. I was interested in works suggesting a dialogue between the original and the end product, pieces that problematized that relation. I wanted to place works by current students alongside works that had appeared in the Mitre years ago, and I wanted this contextual placement to draw out the changes in the student body over the years, to speak to our varying concerns, and our broad similarities. I wanted the Mitre to suggest the motion of the school across time, and to display a self-reflexive examination of that movement.

What I had not taken into account in this vision was that not everyone who submitted would address translation and chronology in the sense that I had imagined. But address it they did, often from a deeply personal position. Many of the works in this issue concern parents and origins, their narrative voices reexamining the past, picking up the dropped threads that led them to the present and tracing them painstakingly through all their tangled knots. The difficulty of moving through time is reflected in many works through their disjunctive chronology, their linguistic and formal innovation. Of course, the passage of time is addressed directly in several of the works. Others only suggest it, like Marina Scott-Wickens’s photographs, in which the rich play of light against dark suggests a rare antique, while the modern items in the images reveal the slick presence of the contemporary.
In receiving all of these submissions, I learned an important lesson about editing: that one ought not bother imagining the finished product prior to receiving any of the submissions from which it will be made. I retained my theme, but altered the original concept, and for reasons of cost and relevance, decided not to include any of the archival material. The works included are all very strong and can stand on their own. Together, these dissimilar pieces suggest a dialogue with the past, and speak from a position that acknowledges the difficulty of relating to that past. They articulate the ambivalent nature of the motion across time, as if to suggest that in the porous barrier to the present, something important might have been caught and filtered out. But I leave you to your own interpretation.

Although in name I am the sole editor of this publication, it could not have been produced without the help of many people. I am particularly grateful to Stephanie Bolster, Paul Dutton, Dr. Noni Howard, D.G. Jones, and Steven Ross Smith, five professional writers of high renown who very generously agreed to contribute to the Mitre. Much of the work that they submitted was previously unpublished, so it is a great honour for the Mitre, and indeed for the school, that their work will first appear here. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Elise Frketich for her advice and assistance, and Tim Doherty for his invaluable instruction in layout and typography. I also extend, on behalf of all the authors and artists, my very heartfelt thanks to the SRC, the Humanities Department, the Dean of Student Affairs, and the Inglit club for their financial contributions.

-Sarah Dowling

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**Confessional**

Shannon McCarthy

I want to live meticulously, like a ransom note constructed of letters clipped from magazines, one letter after the next, close but not touching. Placing one thing after another and another, easily, fluidly, and in the end it all means something if only a looming threat. I want breakfast to be grapefruits, although I only let them rot in the fridge. Sometimes I think I might not even like coffee. I just like that it's bad for me while being portable like a cigarette or a diet coke. I want to wake up and pound out my frustration on a treadmill. I've heard that's possible although exercise has always seemed an angering restraint. A testament to the deflated state of my lungs; a reminder that I should have started long ago to be healthy, the mountain grows and the hordes look down on me from the summit. I want to inspire pride not confirmation. I want to stop saying "I", there are others, doing this thing, having pain and problems, why am I so consumed with my own life? It's not even interesting. I could make it interesting if I were brave, yes bravery, another thing to add to the grocery list. Bravery is confidence and confidence is feigned. This should be easy, it's all bullshit and blindness. I remember a quote from Oscar Wilde, it was on the cover of that old journal. "Life is too important to be taken seriously", is that profound? Or is it all really about exercise and the right amount of sleep?

Ahh. the question segment of the journal, I always end up here eventually. This is my nucleus, a gaggle of nerves and questions. That's what I like about advice, the earnestness, someone looking wide-eyed, waiting, desperate to accept any shred of reason, of objectivity. The funny thing about advice, whether dolling it out like too much mashed potatoes, or sopping it up like wet
bread, is its total alienation from objectivity. It is the soap box of the ego, a final spin with past experience, finally useful, with which you spackle the hole that long ago it left in your soul. Advice is regurgitated experience solidified as if it were never really eaten at all; like you never even choked it down to begin with. But you did and you’re here now as its end product, making it pretty in your mind, constantly modifying it so you won’t have to start all over again. I want to live meticulously, just one thing after another.

Diary.

Today I bought a fuzzy plastic poppy and I wondered how you can remember something you’ll never understand. I feel guilty saying this but buying it made me feel accomplished, like I was part of proper society, just like sending out Valentine’s cards or going to a Christmas cocktail party with lollipops for my friends. But a poppy doesn’t represent something that you wear for a day until it’s tarnished and then fold into a cherry red pair of lips. Flanders fields were swamps of death. The smell of them was as void as our plastic renditions.

Remembrance Day was a prolonged assembly in high school. They showed clips of the emaciated victims of the Holocaust and some little girl in a kilt and knee socks nervously recited “In Flanders Fields” and no one clapped because it was supposed to be very solemn. And it was, we were affected but couldn’t know why, and stood rigid in the rows upon rows of our homeroom classes, trying to absorb the seriousness of what was behind us.

When I was very small I spoke often of my past life. I dreamed of it and tasted its fear and woke screaming in the night to the solace of my mother’s voice as she stood over me, angelic in her white nightie with the tiny yellow flowers on it. I dreamed of swamps and pools of murky water and soldiers all drowning, inches from the surface, touching it with frantic hands, trying to grab the air then all sinking slowly. Their aching green bodies stopped, from fury to defeat and limp finally, heads bowed toward the bottom. Then they began to diminish while floating sediment took hold of their form, and then dissipated completely into the miles of green darkness below. There was no end to those pools, they stretched on to eternity and everywhere were thousands of men drowning, going on forever like two enormous mirrors in a showdown.

Having said this I must confess I know very little if nothing about war. Real fear has been sanctioned to dreams and I no longer believe in the theory of reincarnation. I said I was a pilot and remember remembering the plane crashing into that lake of green. I remember remembering the radio screaming static cries and the smashing of my hands on panels of foreign buttons. I remember remembering being German. Curiously I have never learned to drive and shudder at the thought of roller coasters. But that’s neither here nor there.

Diary.

There is a pang between my shoulders drawing upward through the bones around my neck. The tentacles of stress shoot down in stinging columns, tailbone cupped by acid tendrils. I remember leaping over roots protruding from the ground, the sun-soaked forest cloaked and calmed in dusty twilight. I could make it to the hall in seconds, bounding from A to B to B to A and back again. I had that forest memorized as one would the route from the front door to the door of their bedroom. The fat roots were like spring boards suspended on the spindly ones underneath. The bridge was half way and you could hear it echo on the stream in two gross thumps, flinging the pine needles and dust in the air from the seams of the boards to be caught in the light of a lingering beam. But we never stopped to notice because it was the business of ten times a day. It got so that it was no longer necessary to look down as I submitted my lithe kid body to the tremendous freedom of running flight. There was a wet bathing suit crying streams of lake water on my shoulder and the echo of a distant whistle and splashing giggles in the swimming area jumped off the shores. Camp was fun.
School was blue carpet and heavy backpacks and dirty kilts and floors that broke off into versions of wings and halls and cork boards slammed with pamphlets that I'd never read but always knew in shining glimpses running by. Each area had its merits; a closet that I hid in, skipping mass where my coconspirator passed gas and we ran with laughing, screaming tears from the flatulent bomb, heaving with the humor of another good story. The amateur sounds formed the music wing where trombones pumped spit and penciled notes had smiley faces when they were supposed to be solid. The common rooms were all well-worn couches with hair elastics and crunching chip bags stuffed between their cushions. There was always a lecture being given by one knowing student of what was here or there and we all listened intently yet gave off the air of busy indifference because we, of course, knew everything there was to know already.

I cannot think any more because today is a day like any other and one thing invariably follows the next, and we slow as time quickens and tighten the reigns of control when it gallops off into distant horizons. I could chase it but where would I end up but an empty field, spinning and spinning around, wondering what I had even been looking for to begin with. I could lie down in that field and while the grasses itched my legs I could look up and feel small next to the domed sky and not worry about all the supposedly important things. When I die I'll be forgotten and my solace will be the running, flinging, screaming submissions to the world that I made, unknowingly.

Diary,

I feel like I'm entering into the center of things. There is an airy freedom to being on the outside, safe and untouchable and floating freely from consequence. But there is also an exciting tangibility to making decisions for yourself and carving out your own dramas. I carve with a knife whose twirling glimpse the victim catches only at the last instance, the point where control has been lost for good. That sounds much scarier than my bite really is. I only like to think of myself as a minx, the femme fatale, but I'm much too shy and unsure for that sort of business. This has never, however, saved my prospects. It is more a fumbling towards an unmarked goal, situations lost to their insufficient haziness. For me to see what I do to people would take it being done to me. This never happens because no one gets close enough. That implies arrogance and maybe it is, but somewhere along the way I learned the trick of keeping people off my distant shores. Picture: weighty cargo ships lie in wait, heaping with goods that only need to be unloaded. They have crossed an entire ocean with good weather and timid winds and now look with the anxiousness produced at being so close to the journey's end point, where they might finally rest a while. There is no wharf or storehouse or helpful workers waiting to roll up their shirtsleeves and pitch in. There is no bustling civilization or culture or even some lady in a hat running errands absentmindedly with a to-do list crushed in her hands. But there are craggy rocks and the waves crash up against them and slither down again, waiting to make more headway next time.

The grey skies sit on the world like your older brother holding you inside a wooden chest for the sheer thrill of being mean. It is a primitive world you've landed in and it doesn't presume to know anything about outside rules and doesn't care and has no apparent use for the cargo, even though the people living there hastily ordered it for themselves. I don't know how my innards ever got this way. It was not from lack of love or connection. Quite the opposite, maybe, for I remember going off alone with the only objective of being found and coddled and apologized to. This was even quipped into a game of girls shouting alter me when they refused to let me join their societies; as I tore off, my head theatrically bent toward the ground, the sulking heaves of my chest feigning tears from behind. It began as a simple game of wanting everyone's attention. Eventually though, I began to revel in the escape itself and then to the aloneness. A fantasy about me turned into a premature and thoughtless reality, for the coddling could be achieved inwardly and I was far better at it than anyone else I fantasized could be. Even guilt has somewhere
been tossed back into that proverbial ocean, for more and more I think that I feel very little at all for others and the doors of friendships have been slammed haphazardly because I couldn’t be bothered to suffer in anyone else’s room but my own.

A few years ago I took to warning a friend about the dangers of wanting to get close to me. He was a nice guy, Steve, and when I told him that I had slept with the third party of four otherwise happy group he threw up. over eggs and coffee on a Saturday morning, under the biting cold glow of my earnest sensitivity. Neither of us had learned anything from what the other had said and we casually went along with what was inevitably going to happen and watched amazed as it all crashed and burned around us: too much rubble to even imagine rebuilding what was once between us.

Although who I happen to think I am is only one opinion, I am usually wrong, and often told I’m wrong from those who venture they know me back and front, this is not the first omission I’ve made of the inkling that I’m not a very good person, not even in this series of diaries, and I can’t imagine why I’m spouting it all out to you. It’s as if I want you to care but I want to make it impossible in the same breath. But no one ever listens, they can’t believe that I would be that way because there are so many bad people and so many of them take no pains to hide it. So with the renewed feeling that I have made some unsightly error in my own judgment, I’ll venture in from the safety of that borderless country and maybe wield a blunter instrument.

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ways and ways
D.G. Jones

ways and ways: the daisies
take over the garden

sometimes to breathe is, well.
a fortune

young, to be touched!

or, touch is a trouble

age is to sleep with the rain

bel amour, naming
the baby she changes

d’s daughter, divorcing.
has fallen in love!

the daisy chain

the whole book of knots!

the new fence: the garden already composes
plumbline/arabesque
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Shakespeare’s Sonnets
Paul Dutton

shake shake shake shake shake
shake the darling buds of May
shake hands to torture me
shake against the cold
that looks on tempests and is never shaken
if you were by my unkindness shaken
shake shake shake shake shake
-pear -pear -pear -pear -pear -pear peer
doth homage to his new-appearing
as interest of the dead which now appear
and says in him thy fair appearance
The other as your bounty doth appear
On your broad main doth wilfully appear
I love not less, though less the show appear
Look in your glass, and there appears
No, nor neither he nor his compeers
-pear -pear -pear -pear -pear -pear -pear peer
Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare
Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare
son son son son son son son son
you know / You had a father: let your son
And when a woman woos, what woman's son
Speak of the spring and poison
Yet then my judgement knew no reason
But thence I learn and find the lesson
true / Drugs poison
but despised straight, / Past reason
son son son son son son son son
net net net
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth
Or captain jewels in the carcanet
net net net
sonnets sonnets sonnets sonnets sonnets sonnets

The Dragoons’ Luncheon
Daniel J. Christensen

Epigraph -
To the people of Baghdad Vilayet:
In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over
whom he rules, I address you as follows -

Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the
enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to
complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies
do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies,
but as liberators ... 

From the proclamation issued to the inhabitants of Baghdad on
March 19, 1917, by

Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Maude, shortly after the occupation
of the city by British forces.

The Dragoons’ Luncheon
A small black raptor broke from his meal and eyed the column of dragoons coming down the road. Bits of fur hung from
his mouth as he sized up the foreigners in khaki coats, the horses
kicking up dust with their sharp-shoed hooves striking the earth.
Smoke from the ovens down the road near where the bird had
found his lunch swirled in the dust, and he could see that the
smell of baking bread had caught the soldiers’ attention. Above
the rows of homes and shops lining the road a turbab was blowing. Warm wind blew fine dust into the air, leaving the horses and
men sluggish, sticky in the clammy hotness. The feasting bird,
too, imagined finer weather for dining out-of-doors. Private Naj
Sangha, accustomed to various forms of heat, asked the officer-riding at his left how he thought one of the Arab escorts would fare in the bitter damp of an English winter.

- How? He should perish, I suspect.
- Indeed, sir. I am told they are very wet.

Second Lieutenant Edward Brown was in no mood for Private Sangha's casual chitchat. He was hot and hungry. Wind and weather as such did not typically bring about hunger, but he had not eaten since early morning when they were still some distance from the Vilayet.

- Private, inform the Sheik that the men are hungry. Are you hungry?
- Yes please sir. Quite hungry.

Private Sangha heeled his horse to the front of the parade where the dragoon's escort, Sheik Aflaq, was sitting comfortably astride his horse. His head was wrapped in a cloth to protect him from the warm blizzard of dust.

- Excuse me please. Mr. Sheik, sir?

The Sheik did not turn to face the young man. His mount eyed Private Sangha's horse without moving. A flick of an ear to catch the Private's words, and then quickly replaced it, slick against his head. The Sheik appeared to be engaged in deep thought, or wrapped a little too tightly in his head cloth.

- Mr. Sheik? Private Sangha belted this to ensure reception.

The Sheik turned his head, lifted his hand to loosen his scarf, and then displayed it to Private Sangha as if to say, "wait." He then turned to his rear and used the same hand to signal the man riding directly behind him. The man trotted his horse up between the Sheik and private Sangha. He spoke briefly with the Sheik and the turned to the Private.

- I am the Sheik's translator. The Sheik wishes to inform Lieutenant Brown that he wishes to break in order to eat. There is a place not far from here that will accommodate the entire dragoon.

- Of course, sir. I will inform him immediately.

Private Sangha's stomach had begun by now to grumble. Talk of a meal had incited his hunger, which military service had taught him - for the most part - to master.

The dragoon continued down the palm-lined road for some two miles, until they came to the massive gilded gates of a dusty-grey compound, where a few of the Arabs halted their horses and dismounted. Sheik Aflaq's translator, who seemed also to be the Sheik's personal aid, left his horse and spoke through the gate. The gate swung open and the parade rode into a grand courtyard. Two dozen or so young men dressed in white smocks and little black fez caps were waiting inside the gate. The dragoons were instructed by the translator to turn their mounts over to the young boys, who were stable hands. The horses would be washed, fed, and rubbed down. Second Lieutenant Brown spoke briefly with the aid before calling the men to attention.

- Lunch will be served promptly. Until then, there is a bath house to your rear where you may clean up.

Private Sangha admired the colourful mosaics of blue and orange and red on the walls and pillars of the courtyard. Clear water spurted from fountains into pools lined with lush potted plants. Most noticeably though, the courtyard was well protected from the foul turbab blowing outside. Old men playing backgammon sat at tables with large urns of tea steaming beside them.

Second Lieutenant Brown and the Sheik were greeted by another Sheik, Jassim, who led them inside his residence for private audience and, doubtless, a slightly better lunch than anyone else would enjoy. Some of the soldiers went to bathe directly, while some spread out around the pools to wait their turn. Some children had appeared to investigate the commotion caused by the arrival of the dragoon. They measured the strange-looking men with curious eyes. A few, the children had noted, had extraordinarily pale complexions and pink cheeks. Others had rich brown skin and coloured scarves wrapped into peaks on their heads; these bearded men carried daggers in holsters.

Private Sangha drifted into sleep to the soothing sound of fountain droplets breaking the water's surface. It brought to mind
a favourite spot from memory, a waterfall near his hometown. One of the more mischievous of the curious children had a handful of cereal which he had been feeding to small birds. He began rolling the kernels as near as he could to Private Sangha, the other children urging him and watching in silent amazement. When the boy threw a larger handful, a great fluttering of wings descended on the sleeping Private. In an instant he was torn away from his beloved waterfall and found himself beneath a moving mass of chirping feathers and quite unable to determine whether he had woken, or was in a new, strange dream. The small flock turned and fled from the rising man, each a little shaken by the discovery of the other. The eruption of children’s laughter reminded Private Sangha of where he was. He rose, picked up his things, and headed toward the bath house.

Inside the baths the mixed yammering of Punjabi and Arabic could be heard through the wafting steam. Turbans and uniforms hung on the wall near the entrance. He placed his belongings along with the others and sank into a large steaming soup of men, the water beige from their silty bodies.

The men were talking with great excitement inside the bath house. They had not anticipated a bath any time soon when they woke in the morning. A few discussed the prospect of lunch:

- Oh, I do hope we eat soon. And what, I wonder? A soldier was stroking his long black beard in anticipation as he spoke.

- We will, we will. Relax and enjoy this, first, said another.

An Arab sitting near the soldiers in the bath spoke English to the two soldiers discussing their lunch.

- You will eat fish. Masgouf - river fish.

The two soldiers, surprised by the man’s spoken English, took a moment to reply.

- Fish! Yes please, fish.

Private Sangha watched the two hungry soldiers pry the man for details of the meal. But he was not interested in giving them.

- Roasted fish. Now - relax, quiet. Fish soon.

Private Sangha closed his eyes and thought of how much he would like the fish. Roasted fish. he thought. how lovely. He finished bathing, then carefully dressed and collected his sack and other belongings. It felt good to have had a bath. Outside he greeted another, younger soldier who had just come out of the bath house.

- Bal, they will surely have to give the bath house a bath after we have finished here!

Bal smiled and pointed to the trays of food being brought out of a doorway by young men in white smocks. They had set out mats and more urns with tea. Bowls and cups were being set out on the mats close to larger bowls of food. Bal and Private Sangha sat down on a mat near the edge of a pool where they were joined by some of their dragoon and other Arab men. The soldiers leered at the food hungrily. The boys in smocks poured out tea into the men’s cups and told them to eat. The white-fleshed Masgouf was delicious and fell apart in Private Sangha’s mouth easily. He had never eaten fish like this - blackened with spices on the outside from the coals on which it had been roasted, but tender and flaky inside. All the men enjoyed their food, saying little save for either “pass more,” or “yes please." Some fresh salad was brought out to accompany the fish and the men devoured it quickly.

Private Sangha finished his plate and pushed it away. The man to his left, who he recognized as the English-speaking Arab from the baths, asked him if he had enjoyed his meal.

- Yes. sir. Very much. Private Sangha sipped from his cup of tea, looking very pleased at the husky, weathered Arab.

- I’m glad. So. friend. what are you doing here?

- Sheik Alfaq has brought us here.

- Yes, of course, the man frowned. But what are you doing here in Baghdad? Why have you come here with your cannons and horses? You carry a knife at your side - for what?

Private Sangha sipped his tea again, and laid a hand over his kirpan.

- I am a warrior. We come to Baghdad to drive out your enemy, the Turks. We come to liberate you from these foreigners who have taken advantage of you for so long.
The dragoon had learned the purpose of their mission long before arriving at the Vilayet. Private Sangha thought he had carried himself well so far and hoped that his words convinced the inquisitive man. The man, looking flustered, pursued a more thorough response:

- Ahhh, I see. So, you have come to drive out the Turks. Who is to say the British will be better than the Turks? The Turks are Muslim, for one, and you - you are Christian?
- No, I am not a Christian, sir. My king is Christian. The Turks have made war on him, so we come to liberate your people in his name.

The man, still unconvinced, thought about this for a while. He sipped his tea and eyed Private Sangha, who by now was growing very weary of this interrogation. He looked toward Bal, who pretended not to be listening. The man continued.

- We do not want a new King. But you do seem like a nice boy. Do you like Baghdad?

Private Sangha remembered the long ride through endless sands on the dragoon’s approach to the Vilayet. He thought of the dusty turbab blowing outside the gates.

- Yes, he lied.
- Good. Me, the man said, pointing a finger at his chest. I am Mohammad. What is your title?
- I am Private Naj Sangha of the King's 132nd Dragoons. He was relieved by Mohammad's change of tone and the absence of the furrowed knot that had been his forehead.

The boys who had presented the food now brought out hookahs on stands and packages of jellied tobacco. Mohammad called one of the boys over who prepared a pipe for him. He stoked a hookah with coal and then loaded the large brass bowl with a scoop of tobacco. Muhammad drew deeply from a long, decorated hose. He held the hose at length out to Private Sangha, who shook his head. He tried to be polite.

- No, thank you, Mohammad.

Mohammad exhaled a massive cloud of thick light-grey smoke which smelled of ripe apples and plums. The sweet cloud made its way by Private Sangha's nose, which drew a small amount of smoke inward in order to sample it secretly. Private Sangha sneezed.

- Ha! You do not like smoke? Mohammad laughed at Private Sangha, who felt guilty for being tempted by the seductive cloud.
- I do not smoke.
- Too bad - it's good for you, you know?
- I did not.

Mohammad poured some tea into Private Sangha's cup, and then his own. The two men were relaxed and were now at ease. Second Lieutenant Brown had appeared at the other side of the courtyard with the two Sheiks. They sat at a table with a grand hookah at its centre. Private Sangha noticed that Lieutenant Brown was now wearing a red and white Kaffiyeh on his head.

Mohammad kept smoking, his eyes opening and closing slowly, intermittently, like a cat drifting into sleep. This motion made Private Sangha sleepy, and he felt his eyes becoming heavy too. Mohammad, not wanting to lull the Private into sleep, spoke to him.

- So, Private, where is your cavalry going today? Mohammad spoke quietly.
- I don't know. He was now reclined onto his elbows, his chin leant forward onto his chest.

Mohammad pulled from the pipe, thick smoke encircling his head.

- You came from the South. Probably you will cross the river nearby and continue North, no?
- Perhaps. I don't know.

Private Sangha wondered where they were going. He wondered when he might see his waterfall again. He imagined that there were no waterfalls in this land, and perhaps Mohammad had never seen one.

- Mohammad - have you seen a waterfall? His speech was slow and casual, and Mohammad looked puzzled.
- A what? Mohammad replied with his head turned. He was distracted.
Raised voices could be heard by the gate of the compound. A guard was yelling at someone outside. Private Sangha carefully answered:

- *A waterfall, A river that falls down.*

The commotion had grown and a number of the men were now yelling through the gate. Many men with rifles joined those just inside the gate. The Sheiks' aids could be seen consulting with the Sheiks and Second Lieutenant Brown. Mohammad and Private Sangha both gave their full attention to the developing spectacle. Private Sangha saw Sheik Alfaq and his aid approach the gates, which swung open hastily. A few men, still yelling, entered the compound, barking back and forth with the Sheik's aid and another Officer. The old men who had been playing board games had risen and were making their way slowly toward the front. The children who had been watching the soldiers curiously were being shooed away by the boys in white smocks. Private Sangha thought he saw some of the men by the gate pointing in his direction. They pointed to the bath house and then again to the area by the pool where he was seated.

- *I wonder what all this is?* Private Sangha told himself.

He turned to Mohammad, who was gone. Smoke from the hookah drifted steadily into the air where the man had been seated.

Suddenly there were four Arab men armed with pistols standing around Private Sangha, Bal, and the others seated near them. One of the men, missing most of his teeth and scowling fiercely at the seated men, spoke to them. He focused on Private Sangha.

- *I do not speak Arab, sorry.* said the Private, always gracious.

The toothless man raised his heavy voice and hurled loud, guttural, utterly foreign phrases at Private Sangha. He pointed to the pipe, still wafting, that Mohammad had been smoking.

Private Sangha froze on the mat, shocked by the sudden presence of armed men and alien shouting. His food in his stomach turned as the toothless man screamed directly into Private Sangha's face. His eyes cut through the young Private's chest. When he failed to respond, the man turned to Bal, shaking his pistol in the air.

- *I don't know, sir. Please!* Bal tried to steady his voice, which was shaking.

He looked into the man's dark brown eyes. He was afraid, and not very sure what to tell his interrogator, when Second Lieutenant Brown appeared and put his hand on the flailing pistol, lowering it to the toothless man's waist. The Lieutenant addressed the Privates spread about the mat on the hard floor, calling them to attention. Private Sangha and Bal leapt up and faced their commander, stiff as boards.

- *Men, where is the Arab who was sitting there, at that pipe?* The men all responded similarly with dumbfounded looks and shrugged shoulders. Second Lieutenant Brown looked at Bal and Private Sangha:

- *Privates - these men claim you were speaking with a spy. Where is the man you dined with today?* Second Lieutenant Brown used a calm, fatherly tone, and then waited patiently as the two young Privates explained how a man named Mohammad had been there one moment, and then disappeared during the confusion at the gate.

- *He is disappeared. Sir. He is gone - quite suddenly.* Bal stared straight ahead, trying to calm himself.

- *He offered some of his pipe. He was asking why we were here. He asked where we were going. We told him that we knew nothing.* Private Sangha was shaking.

Second Lieutenant Brown took his shoulder and said:

- *Okay, Private Sangha, I believe you men. You are good soldiers. But you and the rest of the people at this mat must accompany these policemen. They want to ask you some questions. It won't take long.* Second Lieutenant Brown pointed to the other privates and Arabs who had been seated around the hookah and the urns of tea. He looked at the policemen, their pistols now tucked away into sashes bound to their waists.
- It better be quick. He looked at Sheik Alfaq’s aid and then at the Sheik himself. It better be bloody quick. We’re on a schedule.

On the edge of the compound wall, a raptor, a piece of Masgouf in his beak, eyed the Privates and Arabs in the courtyard being led inside by the policemen. Private Sangha caught a glimpse of the bird as it swallowed down the fish and lifted a wing to preen its underarm. And in a short breath he vanished, a flutter of black whisked into the dusty air by a strong gust from the turbab.

**English Student (2)**
Rebekka King

I have seen you standing
between curiosity and disbelief,
forever entwined in the skyline.
I have filled the lines
of your book
with old men
and their unrequited dreams.
This is the gift I have given you
behind the drawn curtains
we’ve added the word Inc.
to the end of your name
creating something prestigious
yet inventive.
And I’m experimenting with colour therapy
horses for example,
shy away from the colour yellow
we all
shy away from the madness.

**There is a Moment in the Sky**
Rebekka King

There is a moment in the sky
when all the colours on the window sill
are watching you,
waiting for you to tell the truth.

In a million silent tones
she spoke of what she saw
and everyone stood up to hear
(as though they’d seen it here before)
a waltzing mirth.

Through your window she is telling us:
about the panes in the glass
and how out from the dingy churches
all of the townspeople squint as they leave
and the sun hits their eyes
and have forgotten how light hits the eyes
and really want to say
and really want to say
like overexposed film and
the lines which blur in the Christmas centre piece
we are all familiar things

I used to dream that Humphrey Bogart
was drinking Chardonnay in my room
and I, amid the creamy swirls
could see the future of the world

“We are all familiar things”
he’d say.
“They have served them up
on the dinner plates of the nation.”
Uncle Leroy is waiting
2 pm.
Saturday afternoon

two minutes to he rises
and slowly pivots across the room,
reaches for the radio dial
and lighting a fine Marlboro in the other
he shouts
"you smells like apples baby"
to aunt Clarice
and no one in particular.
Tweed trousers transformed into polyester zoot-suit
Clarice's house coat to a citrus taffeta frock
dangling with pear beads around her ears
and pearls
like snakes around her hips
he exhales the smoke into her cold-cream covered face
and thinks to himself
it takes one cool cat to convert just any Saturday afternoon.

Ever so slightly
He begins to sway his hips
and Clarice's follow his,
despite the plastic screws placed there seven months prior
after a trip up the stairs.
The licorice stick starts bleating the song's beat
he's got no eyes
then big eyes
and flowing rhythms
tumble out of them

in across the floor bouncing back across Clarice cascading
through the wisps of her hair which have unmistakly fallen free.
With a step to the side he pulls Clarice close to him
extends his arms and shoots her spinning away like a circus act out of a cannon:
the song explodes.
Clarice explodes.

and Uncle Leroy-
pauses to ash the Marlboro
on the faded panel floors.
As the bass quickens and the sax shrills
Leroy is suspended:
its 1935 all over again
the cats are hep and Leroy's a whiskey stick at the flying circus focussed on the prowl.

A Saturday afternoon with public radio, brought to us
by listeners like you.
Father
Rebekka King

I wanted to grow down
yesterday as
We two
in the driveway
sit in his car in the rain
and for the umpteenth time
in my life
he explains the gages
“never let it fall in the red”

later while driving
we pass the fishers in the swamp
and the same obese woman
who’s been there all week
leaning against the rain-soaked railing
on the highway
like some giant pillar
in my Easter holiday

I ask him about Mudpout
which can only be caught
in swamps and ditches
in April, at 4am
“we’d light a big bonfire
and drink till dawn”
he explains.
Mudpout are served
fried in black pepper and butter
and despite my insistence
they
don’t taste like mud

Somewhere along the line
I gained my father’s trust
became his confidant
I grew up
or he did
we two
in the rain.

Marina Scott-Wickens
Breaking the Surface
Erin Somerville

When I first try to remember there is only the smell of sun-baked flesh. First I taste its salty heat in the back of my throat, then rest my cheek on the warm thigh. The skin against my face moves loose over the sinewy muscle. I am so close I see just a haze of glazed skin mottled with chocolate freckles. A hand reaches out and cradles my jaw, brushing back damp hairs from my lips. Then my eyes widen.

I see a knee fall to ankle bone, spread to tendons of feet and finish in five lacquered toenails. They wiggle cherry and a face drops down to meet my own. “We had better get in this water before it floats away Miss,” the wide teeth say as they kiss my forehead. “I’m not going to sit here another minute.” It is all legs again and hot salt freckles and then she is standing sun-backed above me, stamped black contours and hurling my eyes. I strain to see and she disintegrates.

This takes effort, this remembering of parts, and the pieces are not enough. I am on the beach, on the same round stones that held our spreading towels, trying to gel back my mother. I came to the place where she took up the most space, where I thought every branch and rock would have somehow snagged her essence. But the spreading greyness is barren and I am alone with the slow suck pull back of waves pushing flat round pebbles and a horizon draining ashen into the distance.

I left early this morning when the sun was still low enough to allow mist to gather in hollows in the ground. I grabbed keys, coat and scarf and left staring into nothing for a winding highway and ferryboat ride. I expected to find her somewhere along the road, thumb out for a lift, chin lifted defiantly. The car passed nothing but blurred trees. I thought she was just ahead of me in line for ferry food, sneaking a Nanaimo Bar. The woman turned and her face was old and angry. So when the boat docked I headed down a road well remembered, one that I had never driven, to a hidden stretch of shore where she must be hiding.

It has been two months since she was suddenly no longer there, the end she warned my father and I about for years, telling us we would be sorry. It would not bother me to feel guilty, to find tears on my face at odd moments, or to lie sleepless and night, haunted by her musty floral scent and clanging bracelets. Instead I feel hollow and cold. Her face in photographs is a stranger. Her features mock me from my own reflection in the mirror.

I have placed her in my mind and locked her there, sacred and frozen, trapped in after-school snacks and sewing machines. She is safe there, safe from her insomnia and misbehaviour. from the moments when she chose to be something other than a mother. She cannot scream. I cannot either.

I am alone on the beach, punished into blankness. A memory screen flashes scratched greying filmstrips, jerking and gyrating indeterminate before my eyes. There must be something more than this. Of all the places where we were together this was the one with the most space. Here we did not infringe on each other, or feel the need to mark our territory. We simply were. Surely I can exhale her whole into this ocean. It alone is big enough. I can let her free and we can both finally breathe.

The wind pulls my face into hollows and flushes colour into my sallow skin. I try to look up and away, to open the images by searching for blue but the sky is yawning above me and flattens my body. Pushed, I lean into the only splintering log that has stayed true to the landscape, too immense to have been moved by waves like the others. The still windows of the closed-up cabins glare high behind me and wink their secrets. They remember what I cannot, did not think to hold to myself just in case. I close my eyes to their knowledge and listen.

I can hear the sizzle of the sun strong on the stones and of the moisture leaving our bodies. The displacement of space opens deafening beside me as she rises and her voice sits warm inside my ear, dripping out as the feet push murmuring into the water. I
hear the tunneling slurp of waves as legs enter. There are deliberate splashes and then a frenzy of droplets, each parting the surface of water for her body. Her movements echo soundless, become wave rhythms. I hear my breath rush into my mouth to be held until her breath breaks and the clean laugh rises up circling, bubbles I cannot break. I wait straining for one to come closer and the sound shatters into mute static. I shake my head and the noise slips into the wind.

She deserves this, the way I do not know her here, except that I want to choose what I remember and all that I want to remember is the swimming times, when we were flawless together. I can see her in kitchens and behind ironing boards and in a succession of white beds where her gaze followed me, envious, glaring. I see snatches of her, eyebrow, underarm, shin, but her body does not come together, the experience slide into focus. I hear her words of warning, her raised voice I told you so’s. But I cannot hear her sigh under the sun, content, my own chest trying to rise in time with her. “You can tell everything about someone by the way they swim, Frances. Never marry anyone who is a bad swimmer, honey. I promise you’ll regret it.” I see her dive into a glowing pool, a perfect jackknife, but the swimming she did in those fours walls only shallows her reality.

The winter beach might be the problem. It is a day she would have loved for its wildness, would have gone traipsing off down the beach gumbooted and scarfed, alone and laughing, leaving me to canned soup and waiting. I feel no such affinity for its winds. To call up summer irreverence requires pulling warmth from the inside out. Instead I feel chilled femurs inside damp jeans. Forcing it, I unlace shoes and pull off socks from feet that jar on the pebbles. I walk with each sole placed exactly down toward the water. The jeans are rolled to just under the knees and my feet cringe and wait for a wave to meet them. I wade, creeping, moving southward down the shore, my feet numbing until I can no longer feel the cold. Then the slides start to play.

One: Earlobe. An empty piercing and a small scar from the hole to her jaw where I tore it open, an innocent hand reaching up from a crib. It took three small stitches. A tiny brown hair twists in front.
Damn her.

It is stupid that I am even trying to do this. She does not warrant the honour of this memory, of being beautiful and resolute, goddess. She was only my mother, only imperfect, only mouth and breasts, intestines, womb, liver. Whoever said that you owe this person anything, unrequested giver of life? It is just that in those teasing moments of complacency, where there is sun only on mother and daughter together on a beach, you believe you have a right to her, that because she possessed you once you can possess her. I am fighting for nothing.

It is just this: she was water. And we ran together and we stopped did we swim did we turn around was it cold did she call me to her did she love? Was I precious not only at five but seven and thirteen too? I do not know if or when or how we did this, the swimming, the prone on the stones soaking up sky together, the speaking in short words, unnecessary.

When I scream “MOTHER” it tastes sour. I cannot see her yet but I can taste her resentment in my voice. I cannot understand that for her nine months of inhabitation was time enough, that she longed to tear us apart and be wholly herself again. There must have been more than just a temporary bond of flesh that yolk us together. If I cannot remember then I have no claim on her. I have no right to call her my own.

How is it possible that I do not know the person whose flesh I spilt, lived in, destroyed? Her body I wear now is not enough to hold her, unfamiliar still despite the fact that I once loved it.
touched it everywhere with small hands seeking the origins of each unruly limb. She has slipped away defying me. eluding the arms of the thing she made of her pieces, her leftovers, what she had remaining to give. I refuse to be segmented, to be someone’s unwanted parts. Still, I am unraveling without her strong thread. She stitched me together at night, slipping into my room at night to do the mending, pulling me back together in the glow of my night light. Now I am cut out laid up belly up on this insipid beach that never had her anyway she had it she had me she can have me back again.

I am open before her and she is exorcised, scraped out of my shell that will contain her no longer. “TAKE IT BACK” my strewn limbs screech in chorus. “You are not mine you are your own and we cannot possess each other we are sky and water we are meeting in the distance we will never meet we are horizon over under wet dry up down wide blue tossed. The wind loves us both.”

And the eyes are in the body. The void sucks back and I am naked I am in a striped string bikini I am conscious of my stomach I am in my one piece the suits are red orange yellow green blue I am grounded in my body I am in a pink two piece divided by a light still baby tummy protruding roundly and the sun is round too, bright on the turquoise water that reflects the sky. Our towels are matching. Warmed we are baking and her suit is purple polka dots. We both have ruffles. Her sunglasses are white, oversized. Mine are pink to go with my bathing suit and she is proud of them I know because she helped me pick them out. Tasteful. I like hers as well. She smiles at me and her whole face crinkles, sunlit. The square white teeth are bared and my tiny pearls are too, two pairs of lips pulled tight with lipstick or not. I am so close I can see her downy cheek fuzz.

Her hand reaches out and bridges the space between our towels. It pats my shoulder, enveloping it. and then she rolls over and is up, one motion of sliding molecules, uniting upwards into a single tower of skin. Her legs unfold her, propelling her towards the water, cascading seaward like the beach itself. She slopes, inclining. I am content to watch her move, an object transforming into ocean, at once the rocks and then the air and the scuttling crabs, soaring seagull. She fingers the air with her feathers, preening. She has gathered the whole landscape into herself. I do not resent this. She deserves it because she is bigger than all of us, has secret powers of naming and knowing, of creating life from peanut butter and jelly crust. We do not envy her because she has called us into being, shaped the ground and made herself unique from it. We are merely residual.

She pauses rubytoed at the edge. Then her head spins and her shoulders twist, accommodating. The eyes meet mine and I am created in her image. I run little leg stumbling towards her and we stand apart and wordless, entering into each other and pulling away, in and out in and out and in. The water is cold delicious and we have gone in backwards, falling tits up once our thighs are under, because it does not shock so much that way, when you don’t see it coming. Her mouth and eyes widen in mock surprise and she sticks her feet out, showing off how easily she floats there. We tip our heads back, and swill the water with our hair.

Then my ankle is grabbed from under, strong fingers encircling the bone but before I can scream she is dragging me into the blackness. When we are deep the the fingers pry my eyes open. I forget the tight sickness in my lungs and see what she is showing me. The shifting yellow sun trapped at the bottom moves over the grey pebbles. They gabble to one another while fibrous algae slinks writhing to the pulse of waves. The floor is shifting below us, under our shadows and our motion, and we are all pulsing heartbeats. I break the surface, shuddering and guttering for breath.

My mother is still under. I watch her flashing arms disappear and come back, fragmenting each new section of sea until it shimmers. I let her go a slippery fish squirming in my hands but now she is actually swimming silky more than fish. Not a mermaid or a seal but a current of water, a unity of refractions sliding through the bluest part, the greenest part. The ocean enters
her and her back arches, undulating to accommodate its pressure. She has caught the sea in her net and drags it outward.

On the beach, on the grey beach, the cold beach the winking winter cabin beach. I know I have found her swimming. The sun meets my eye at level, cool light. The pieces of landscape are dissolving around me and she is in them, remembered. I can hear her voice behind me in front of me calling me siren into the water and I turn and her head turns and the wind drives straightly past, silent. The noiseless wind and the lowering sun are her breath and her heart she is sinking into the horizon striding running standing motionless above and below me and I am not with her waves trees body the birds are circling for something the air has chilled I am being pulled in too. I stop the wave, I close them in and hold them tightly, full and greedy. I open the door and they rush out. I have her no longer. Alone and empty I look to see her there beside me saying nothing and I smile with one corner of my mouth and wait.

She stands. She gathers up her flesh from the round stones and stretches it up legs around hips and over shoulders. Her arms pull through it like a sweater and she reaches up to grasp the sun. The sun sits on her shoulders and they are cut by the black tank suit elastic straps as she turns to face the water. As she turns I can see the suit elastic trace her skin at its hollows, lashing out an X on her back. The sun follows her strides and then ankles are in knees are under and watching I can feel the salt sting and the light makes her hair crackle as she looks back. Then her waist is in and she is in and I am swimming with her and she is swimming alone and she is swallowed under and we are eaten and covered by water. Singing seaweed we are not looking back our eyes are green and we are green and our arms break the surface, twin herons arcing for the sky.

Emily
Erin Somerville

She takes the turnip away from me and in the winter window light twists it in her nail bitten hands fingering the waxy skin

our hands together
work to pull the knife I wedged deep in the tough wooden table

the mauled white and purple peel falls in tiny chunks on the shaky wooden table

Gelatin in the Closet
Jenn Kang

Forbidden memories. slowly ground to dust by the winds of time, The bitter death in our just desserts. A world full of deception, trickery, and powdery white lies.
Homage
Eileen McCammon

my slap smooth tongue
flirts with white linen oceans
cut deep with lust-caves

flaunting chaos and wide eyes
i wear the badge of love
on time’s cheek

i will hurl my promise back to the womb i escaped
the extension of my fault to others
is the resurface of blood in the pool
my past follows me to bed

an homage of broken hearts

lay in my bold secret
swallow the sweat off my lip
string barbed wire through my heart
and bury it in the basement of regret

Back to Back
Eileen McCammon

back to back
smelly green pine between us
and sadness sometimes

or thick cream plaster
and so much love

in the dirty grass
with magic plastic toys i craved

on the brown streaked couch
with scary books i couldn’t read

in the hard blue van
that our parents sometimes lived in
our spaceship

curls, hammers, sisters, blood
shackle us together

trains, calm, chaos, years,
rip us into
brother
and
sister

cassettes and basketballs in the mini van of our youth
tears and secrets and punches
the punishment of unavoidable love
words, inspiration, time
more tears in the mountains
filled up with big years and ready to
grow

as close as two continents can be

we will never lose this adventure

Tears
Eileen McCammon

tears crumble down your corpse
secrets infused
like i exhale

when we've had too much

the castle that surrounded your heart
was raised and ready
you even had a moat

i saw invisible alligators swimming

the walls failed to save you
when they thieved your heart
you were left like ancient ruins

there was so much blood

how you must hate them
how you must hate me and everyone

but you don't
you love more love Love LOVE

there is a grief leaking out of you
salty and intangible to the rest of the

children with fathers
On Friday March 23rd, Vender went to The Hard Proof. On that fateful night she was in her element. She was wearing red, leg-grabbing leather pants and a low cut, black, chic shirt with slashes of transparent netting sensuously caressing her flat stomach. She was young, sexy and alive with the confusion and problems of youth. She had carefully made her hair look dangerous, lacing with with silk ribbons and twisting bits around glass chopsticks. Her face was a landscape of pale skin and shadows, dark eyeliner and Rose-Balm lips. Vender looked like a wraith, a dangerous being from beyond the grave, and that was also how she felt. She always dressed up when she went to clubs. She always danced for most of the night, losing herself to the erotic motions of the crowd and the heart-pounding beat of the music. She felt the rhythm surge through her, creep along her skin, lubricate her motions. It was not really about the dancing, it wasn’t even about the costume and the masks, it was always about the abyss, the spiritual transcendence through repetition and motion into a state where the universe met eternity and time and became the first light of dawn.

On the night that Vender was supposed to have dinner with Stan somebody died on the dance floor. His blood shot across the mass of bodies and his dying groan was lost in the pounding music. When his corpse hit the floor nobody could see the look of pain on his face. A sluggish pool of blood was beginning to collect beneath his pale chest. The music went on but the dancers stopped. Vender gazed at the body and felt the little claws of death scratching at her toes, urging her to move back with the rest of the crowd. She could feel the slick of sweat on her back and smell the hot spotlights on her skin. Somebody screamed and Vender shifted uncomfortably. A daisy in pink shoes knelt beside the body and tragically rolled him over to reveal the death-blow. His skin had been separated from the upper left armpit down to his lower right hip and red human filth seeped through his thin white shirt. The daisy backed away in horror and finally the music was silenced. Fear fell upon the crowd and whispers sleuthed about the air.

“Who is it?”
“T saw him here last week...”
“He bought me a drink once...”
“What is this...?”

Vender closed her eyes and clenched her hands. Girls began to wail as they discovered splatters of the stain upon their clothes and some of the younger men removed their soiled shirts. Somebody in charge stood up on the bar and announced that the police were on their way and nobody was permitted to leave. Vender suddenly felt cold, as though her blood was slowly being replaced with a chilled liquid. She shivered and, hugging herself, moved awkwardly away from the crowd. She felt like she might be dying herself, and wondered briefly if she was the murderer, or if she had always been dead in some way up until now. She sat down away from the dance floor and watched the crowd, wishing she had her jacket. It was then that Emily sat down across from her. She was holding a hatchet in her right hand, but Vender didn’t notice it. Vender was mesmerized by the other girl’s eyes. She had never noticed before, but Emily’s eyes were unusual. Vender wondered if such eyes put a spell on anyone they saw. She wondered how you slept at night with such eyes. The police began to arrive and it was some time before the chaos was settled down. Vender stretched her arms out over the table and rested her head on the inviting surface. She made herself comfortable and vaguely felt the pressure of her eyelids shutting.

Events were set in motion on Tuesday the 19th when Vender awoke, made herself a cup of coffee that tasted sour and discovered a bloated worm from the cherry tree at the bottom of her cup. Disgusted, she flushed the offensive bug down the septic tank and obsesses about its foulness all day at work. At home that night her neighbour Stan invited her over for drinks on the verandah. Stan had moved in two days ago from somewhere out West.
and was making a fresh start with his 21-year-old daughter Emily. Emily was emotionally fragile since the untimely death of her mother, and Stan expressed his doubts and worries to Vender that night. Vender was sympathetic toward Stan and kept his company long past the time when the moon first rose. She eventually went home and went to sleep, her dreams fated to be haunted by the police car she was thinking about just as she closed her eyes.

Vender awoke the next morning feeling unrested. She had been troubled by nightmares that had caused her to wake frequently in a cold sweat, or sometimes thrash violently at invisible assailants. Despite her weary body she remembered the worm from the day before and chose to have cereal instead of coffee for breakfast. Her bones ached as though she had been doing hard labour and her head felt foggy with sleepiness. Her thoughts, while she ate, began to drift toward the cherry tree in front of her house. She had always meant to do something about it. It looked striking, sitting in the middle of her neatly trimmed yard, and the local children would often come to harvest the cherries for their parents, but she had always hated disgusting infestation that it attracted. Myriads of fat, lazy, gelatinous worms found their way into her house because of that stupid tree. She abhorred the filth and germs of these parasites, and as she finished her cereal she impulsively made a phone call. There was a note stuck in her screen door that read:

Took over an hour to saw through that piece of lumber.
You owe me one! How about dinner?
I'll call you. - Stan.

Vender smiled, she was pleased that Stan had invited her to dinner. He had an appealing body and a decent mind; the type that women hope for when they’re still young, pretty and think that men are placed on earth to serve. He was sensitive but also a policeman with an admirable history. As promised, he called later that night and they arranged to have dinner at her house around six pm the following evening. Vender watched “Interview With The Vampire” that night, her favourite love story, and fell asleep before Louis found his daughter. That night she dreamt that she was a waitress downtown and that she was married to Stan. Stan had just been released from prison but was really innocent all along. She woke up the next day feeling even more tired, and this time she made herself some coffee.

On the day of the first dinner date Vender was late for work because her septic tank backed up and she spent all morning trying to get a plumber to come and fix it before the situation got worse. Consequently, she couldn’t get away from the office until almost ten after six, and when she got home Stan was nowhere to be seen. She tried calling, but the operator said that the number had been temporarily disconnected. Around seven she decided to go over in person and see if something was wrong. The windows were dark, the car was gone, and there was no answer at the door. Puzzled, Vender returned home, micro-waved some Theatre-style popcorn and waited by the phone, watching late night movies on channel 34. Around three am Vender drifted off to sleep, only to be woken the next morning by the appalling sound of heavy machinery late the next day.

The incessant rumbling of engine and metal against wood accosted Vender’s ears, causing her to jerk awake and tilt her head to listen. Her mind was cluttered with sleep, but soon she concluded that the sound was very close, perhaps even as close as her own front yard. Angrily, she stumbled out of her afghan, made her way to the doorway and found herself squinting against the noonday sun. There was a good-looking, topless man wearing blue overalls in her yard, wielding a chain saw against her mother’s cherry tree. Something about the scene made Vender feel very dizzy for a moment, but soon she recovered herself and blamed the lapse on dazzling light in her eyes. Composing herself and gathering her anger into place, Vender yelled at the top of her lungs to get the man’s attention. She waved her hands helplessly as he lowered his death machine to strike again. She had to run in her sock feet across the wet grass and fling herself dramatically between the menace and her tree. The man stopped
short with surprise, powered down the chain saw, and confronted Vender with a smiling, confused

“Howdy.”

Vender glared at him.

“What do you think you’re doing?” she accused. “Whose property do you think this is?” The man raised his eyes skeptically and suggested,

“Yours?”

“You’re damn right it’s mine, so what are you doing defiling it? My mother planted this cherry tree!” The man stepped back, scratched his head, looked up toward the sky, then back to Vender.

“Is this some kind of joke, Vender?” She couldn’t believe her ears. Who was this topless man, why did he know her name, and what was his problem with her cherry tree?

“Have you been following me or something?” She was beginning to find something about him vaguely familiar. The man’s jaw dropped, closed, and then dropped again. Eventually, he managed.

“Vender, we’re neighbours. You called me three days ago and asked me to cut down this tree because you said that you gagged at the taste of cherries and resented the children who came and messed up your lawn ... Are you feeling okay? You look a little pale. Maybe you should go to the doctor.” Vender shook her head.

“I don’t remem ... no wait ...” She hesitated before continuing, “I dreamt about you ... Your name is Stan, right?” The man looked uneasy but his face seemed to relax a bit.

“Yes, I moved in next door a few weeks ago with my wife Emily.” Vender’s head was beginning to hurt. She noticed the position of the sun for the second time that day and her eyes grew wide with realization.

“What time is it Stan?”

“Well, I left about a half an hour ago, so I’d say about one pm, give or take a little.” Vender felt panicked, she had missed work ... where? At Niki’s? No, that was where she used to work ... At the newspaper, of course!

“Shit!” She cursed and began to run back toward the house. Before entering she whirled to face Stan across the lawn. She didn’t remember asking Stan to cut down her cherry tree, not really anyway, so either he was losing his mind or she was. It was too hard to think when she was suddenly so concerned about losing her job ... She started making something up.

“I’m sorry Stan,” she began, “I forgot that I asked you to do this ... and I’ve changed my mind about the cherry tree ... I’m late for work, so I’ll drop by later, okay?” He waved an okay and leaned over to gather his things. Vender turned her back to him and rushed to the phone. She had to think of something believable. She was sick, she was suffering from amnesia, no maybe something a little safer ... a death in the family!

“Yes,” she told the secretary, “He was so young; my sister is really upset, so I don’t think I’ll be able to get in all day. Tell Dan that I’m really apologetic about not calling sooner, it’s just been such a shock and ... yes, thank you, I will ... okay, bye bye.” Vender hung up the phone with a sigh of relief. She would probably regret having invented a brother in law some day. but for the moment she was content, and had bought herself some time. She changed her clothes and made some more coffee. The rest of the day was uneventful. Vender took some sleeping pills in the late afternoon. They were weak, but helpful nonetheless. She fell asleep to the music of Final Jeopardy.

Vender rose on Friday the 23rd to the soft drone of music spilling from her kitchen. She had finally had a decent sleep and felt rested and assured. She was wearing cotton pajamas and her hair was still bobbing in short curls from the day before. She found her radio playing in the kitchen and, confused, turned it off. A few moments later something crashed in the dining room; Vender’s stomach clenched in fear. Assuming the worst, she grabbed a steak knife from the wall and crept around the mahogany island toward the door. Something hit her from behind and she reeled back and swung the knife. A man fell to his knees
and cried out, the knife protruding from his arm at a 45 degree angle. Vender grabbed a rolling pin and slammed it against his head and he collapsed to the floor. Frightened, she checked for a pulse and found that he was still alive. She was torn between relief and the urge to hit him again. His face, she noticed, seemed familiar, like she had seen him on TV or at the doctor’s office. Her hands shook slightly as she paced the kitchen, trying to figure out what to do next. She shrieked when the phone rang. After a moment’s recovery she answered to hear a woman’s voice.

“Hi Vender, it’s me, Emily.” Vender resented her lighthearted voice.

“What do you want?” she demanded.

“Oh, I’m sorry, Vender, did I wake you up? Dad said I shouldn’t call until at least past noon, since we know you have trouble sleeping, but he wanted me to call and tell you that he’s gone to pick up some special items for the dinner tonight and not to worry if he’s a little late ... When are you coming over anyway?” Vender felt very unsure about the situation.

“Somebody’s broken in,” she blurted out, then lost her nerve. Emily gasped and exclaimed.

“Oh my God, are you okay? Have you called the police? I should come over.”

“No,” Vender said anxiously, “No, I’m fine, just ... In fact nothing’s been taken, everything is really okay here. I’ll just wait for Stan to get home.”

“Are you sure? You can’t wait for Dad. he’ll be gone hours. I’m coming down, hold on.”

“No ...” Vender cried, but the line was dead. Emily was on her way. Vender waited on the doorstep and allowed herself to be hugged when the younger woman arrived.

“You must feel so violated. Are you sure nothing’s been taken? How did they get in?”

“I’m not sure.” Vender tried hesitantly. “I don’t feel so well, can we go over to your place? I don’t feel safe.”

“Of course,” Emily’s forehead wrinkled with concern and she took Vender’s arm to lead her across the lawn. They brewed some chamomile tea and, to take Vender’s mind off the traumatizing experience. Emily revealed her ruined plans to go to the Hard Proof club with some girlfriends that night. “But Dad’s been so excited about this special dinner all week. I couldn’t hurt his feelings by not going.”

Stan didn’t show up when he was supposed to and the hours of dark began to accumulate. When he finally made it back he had a trunk load of unusual groceries and a bounce in his step, but Emily and Vender were gone. There was a note explaining that they had gone out to have a few drinks and did not expect to be back until late. Stan was disappointed, but he understood why they did not wait. He was about three hours late and it was long past supper time. He put the groceries in storage for tomorrow, crawled into bed, and went to sleep. He was woken up almost an hour later by the ringing of his cell phone.

There had been a murder at The Hard Proof and all units were being called to the scene. Stan raced through the house looking for Vender and Emily, but neither was back yet so he assumed the worst. Forgetting about his badge, he rushed to his car, hoping that Emily had not been at that bar, hoping that she was unharmed. When he arrived. Emily was being led away from the parking lot in handcuffs. Stan left his car running and rushed over, and demanded to know why his daughter had been arrested.

“We have reason to suspect,” Phil stammered, “that she may have been involved in the murder that took place tonight.”

“What? That’s ridiculous! Let her go. Where’s Vender, honey?” His mind was buzzing with confusion. Emily turned her eyes on him and did not answer. Her eyes bored into his soul, they were accusing, deep, inviting ... unusual. Phil coughed uncomfortably and mumbled.

“I’m sorry Stan. I have to take her in,” then quickly added. “She’ll be in good hands though, don’t worry, I’ll make sure she’s okay.” Stan watched helplessly as Emily was guided into the squad car. At least she was safe, he thought, and went in search of Vender.
Inside, the bar was still in chaos. A perimeter had been cleared around the body of a young girl in red leather pants and a black wraparound shirt.

"Vender!" Stan whispered and knelt beside the body. Her hands were cold and her body held the weight of death. A tear escaped Stan’s eye as he touched face with the back of his hand. Her skin was drained of colour and her stomach revealed a gory mess. Someone placed a consoling hand on Stan’s shoulder and said.

"Vender, wake up ..." and then she slowly opened her eyes.

Hunger
Stephanie Bolster

The lake is the lake -
even when immersed in it. The colour
of some flowers makes me salivate.
How not to be it
and let it be? Such effort
the body crumbles. To be small
enough to be nothing
but an eye; to be vast, everything.
Those plum blossoms
I reached for as a child still,
again, make me open my mouth.

What I Saw, I Saw Again
Stephanie Bolster

In the photo, the sheen on the flank of the pygmy hippo mimics apple, the convex rendered window that means this thing is curved and I saw this. No one was there inside the room, I’d crossed plastic tassels to get in. The animal was that. Didn’t flinch at my flash. It stood in profile, as in a photograph taken in a continental zoo I’d seen on a book jacket. Such a form made for us to look at, is what I thought.

Calendar
Stephanie Bolster

The month opens. Fish gather on the calendar
to a clot of red and gold in rain. Fishbacks flash
in marbled trees, reflected. Nothing ever happened
until the first drop fell, and the moss, startled
waved its small heads. No, nothing until the lens.
Sight turns the world into jewelry and this day,
because the calendar has turned, pivots on the tip
of its skate and begins the brighter half of 8.
Vacation
Stephanie Bolster

A week ago we were there. Now we’re here.
But there’s still a there, going on as usual.
The waiter at the Olive Tree Cafe still glances
at the monitor to see if anyone’s shown up
out on the terrace. He wouldn’t think to think
we think of him. The grizzly repeats its circuit.
In the Met, Vermeer’s girl looks over her shoulder
as she does on the banner near Times Square.
Several hundred years ago, a real girl
might have looked like that. Or maybe not.
We could go back there, but not back then.

The Wife of Golgotha
Félix Maranda-Castonguay

On the day that she died, Annabel Lee woke up and went
straight into the shower for what had become her morning ritual.
She washed her body thoroughly in that small hotel room in the
middle of Mexico City. She remained there a long time, rubbing
her thighs meticulously, and when she finally came out, the man
on the bed was still fast asleep. She put her wedding ring back on
and took out a cigarette from the pack lying on the table. She was
rummaging in her purse trying to find matches when the man
awoke in silence. Finding her matches, she struggled with trem­
bling fingers to light the cigarette and she went to sit by the win­
dow. She sat there for some time, puffing smoke and observing
the light clouds drifting in the morning sky.

The man was still lying tranquilly in bed: he was staring at
her while she was smoking at the edge of the window, looking
outside. She was only wearing a pale blue towel tied round her
chest, which exposed the pallor of her skin; her thin legs, skinny
arms and hands were as white as the wall beside her. Her face was
even paler, her dark eyes contrasted sharply with the transparen­
cy of her visage. When she had finished smoking, she threw the
butt of her cigarette by the open window and, without glancing
even once at the man, went to fetch a dress in her drawer.

Before his eyes, she dressed herself, thinking of what she had
planned to do that day: he would take her to see the famous pyr­
amids of Teotihucan, the one place she wanted to see the most in
the world. As she was slowly passing her dress over her snowy
skin, a colourful blue dress with red flowers on it, he got out of
bed and started dressing up too. She did not feel the need to put
on anything else.

She had started dozing soon after they left the hotel and she
was sound asleep when they hit the traffic. She had a strange
dream, part of which she had dreamed before a great many times. She could still hear the unassailable voice of a veiled man calling to her. “Come to me, Annabel Lee.” She had heard the voice hundreds of times before in her sleep but could not associate it with any real voice she had heard before.

“We’re there,” said Emiliano to wake her up as the little car stood motionless in the car park of the famous pyramids. Her white hand was trembling slightly as she extended it toward the door handle.

“Well,” she said, “let’s go and have a look then.”

“Don’t forget your hat.” was his answer as he handed her the yellow straw hat.

After they had put their hats on and carefully locked the car behind them, they walked for some minutes down the long line of cars neatly parked under the sun’s rays descending from the clear blue sky. In the city, the weather had not been so insufferable because it was encircled by mountains that hung up rain clouds over the megalopolis. They would often erupt in fantastic storms at the end of the afternoon, frequently cutting off the electricity to whole neighborhoods. Annabel Lee, when she abandoned the dusty green Beetle behind her to follow Emiliano, found it was not the same outside the basin of the capital. In Teotihucan, that day, the sun met no resistance. As they walked silently toward the entrance, words suddenly stumbled out of Emiliano’s preoccupied mind.

“So, you like it here?”

“Yes,” she said. After a pause, she added, “the landscape is wonderful. It’s all so different from home here.”

“What makes it so different?”

“Everything. The mountains. The air. The sun. And the people and their language. And the plants too. I’ve never seen such trees, and cactuses: there are so many of them; all is so diverse here.”

“Yeah, it’s quite true. The very peoples who fill this country are so unlike each other. Some are rich, and exploit the poor, some live in the past and others think only of the future. It’s like in everything else.”

He kept talking for a while but when he realized she was gone again he soon stopped. Her thoughts wandered at the trees, the birds, the sky. Then she thought of what had brought her there. Percy. He had vanished more than two years ago now. His presence was still so vivid in her memory that she could not spend one day, one hour, without thinking about him. A year before, during her treatment, every single moment she spent was filled with thoughts of him. They had not known what to do with her. They had ended up suggesting a prolonged journey far from home to revive her spirits.

It had all started with the explosion. She and Percy were working in the hospital in Halifax at the time; it had been blown up in the disaster. He had died; she remembered the eternity she had spent in the dark and in the cold before they dug her out. Since then she had spent all her time in her native Acadia. She had not been able to work or do anything else for a year and a half because of her high fever attacks. But now all that was history, she was there, in the sun.

As they passed the entrance, a shadow passed over Annabel Lee’s face, blinking the sun. Looking up, she saw a great bird hovering high in the sky above her. She asked Emiliano what kind of bird it was.

“A great Condor, my dear. It is a giant relative of vultures. He is the king of the Andes.”

Some time later, as they were walking along the Alley of the Dead, they were stopped by one of the innumerable salespersons trying to get the tourists to buy their stuff. As Emiliano was busy bargaining the price of an Onyx black sphere as a present for Annabel Lee, she seized the opportunity to walk away. She started to hear a low buzz coming from everywhere and nowhere at once. Not knowing where she should go, she directed her steps toward the highest structure in the ancient city: the pyramid dedicated to the Sun-God. As she got to the foundation of the impressive edifice, she was overwhelmed by the greatest feeling of awe.
she had ever experienced. This massive man-made stone-hill was there, just before her, towering in the middle of the sacred city. It was calling for her. She could hear it, the voice, faintly at first, but then, as she began climbing the innumerable steps, it became clearer and clearer to her. She was so absorbed by this irresistible call that the idea of turning back didn’t even cross her mind.

One by one, she was escalating the steps of the giant monument that was all that was left of an age and a people long gone. Perspiration soon made her whole body wet and drops of sweat fell across her face from under her pale straw hat. The faces of the people around her were blurred. They were all there to present offerings and thanks to the gods. The ruined city had been the place of a cult. It still was. The Sun-God gave his energy to the faithful disciples. She had a gift too. Slowly, she was getting closer to the miraculous summit. Slowly, she was getting away from the ground, from Emiliano.

As for him, he was now heatedly engaged in a conversation about the ill effects of inflation over the people. Unleashing all of his fury against the corruption of the politicians, of the police, of the very system that they were a part of, he soon forgot all about Annabel. There was a small crowd assembling around him as he now turned his speech to the defense of the peasants and described how the Revolution had left them as bad as they were before, or even worse. He continued for some time, encouraged by the hurrahs of the throng and the heat of the sun. After some time, though, he turned around to look for Annabel Lee, and she was gone. Immediately deserting his audience, he ran like a madman in search of her.

She had arrived at the platform marking the halfway to the top; she was covered with sweat. The appalling call of the god was summoning her with increasing force from the top. She let down her handbag. She could vaguely see, now, a dark figure standing at the top, waiting for her, beckoning almost. She took off her hat and blue dress in a very slow motion. She looked on her left, beyond the faceless creepers surrounding her, the moon pyramid was there, not as high, she was almost at the level of its altar. Her attendants stood in silence, motionless, in awe before the apparition of a goddess. As she looked down, she could hear another voice, very weak, as that of a child, imploring her to come back down. But the unbearable voice of the great Sun-God soon crushed it: drums were now beating loudly; their echo came from everywhere at once, piercing her to the bones. She felt a shadow passing over her in an instant. Raising her gaze, she caught a glimpse of the majestic Condor as it approached, gliding lower before it sunk back in the rays of the sun.

Emiliano, who had been frenetically looking for her all this time, finally caught sight of her. He blinked at her sight, and immediately her darted toward the stairs and rushed to the top, making his way among the crowd of tourists with violence. In her moment of contemplation, she caught a glimpse of a figure at the bottom, a form whose coldness she could already feel from her soaring height. It started climbing towards her.

Ceremoniously turning her back to it and facing the top, she started climbing again, her eyes half-closed in the blinding sunlight. She felt her skin absorbing the heat from the air, the rays of the sun were beating on it with all their might. She thought she would burn alive before arriving to her saviour. The drums would soon crack her skull open; and the thundering voice was absorbing all her thoughts. The shadow at the summit had its eye fixed on her, unmoved. Her wet skin was shining under the distressing sunlight. She was still climbing, slowly; her bloodshot eyes dilated to the extreme and seemed ready to jump from their sockets.

Emiliano, although he was familiar with an oppressive sunlight as this, was not used to the heights of Mexico City, where the air is much more rare than in the beaches of the southeast. Completely soaked in sweat, he was out of breath before he could reach the platform and had to slacken his pace to catch up with his beloved.

Annabel was now but a few steps from the top and she could clearly see the black silhouette that was reverently waiting at the top, a woman, stretching the shadow of her hand toward her. She felt her temples booming at the sound of the drums; her head was
chaos, sheer pain. There was now nothing else for her but the
deeffening voice in her mind; her body was on fire. Emiliano was
now catching up to her. he was running, his arms outstretched
toward her. As she climbed the last step, she felt her whole being
collapsing; she reached for the hand of salvation, and as she
touched it, all her pain vanished. For an instant, her whole went
through an ecstasy of blissful joy; comfort and relief beyond
measure flooded her body and mind. As she felt she would crumble
down the red-hot stones, she heard the cry of a fantastic bird
coming down to her and powerful claws seized her by the
shoulders and took her away from the ground. She felt no pain.

Her pursuer reached the top as she left it, all tension leaving
her. At last. Annabel Lee felt life slipping from her as she was
borne away by the powerful wings of the Condor into the sky.
She felt no longer, transported into the cool world of nonexis-
tence, serene. The last thing that slipped from her lifeless body
was her ring, which fell quietly on the stones of the altar.

Emiliano stood at the top of the pyramid, his hand still
stretched toward Annabel Lee. He could not believe what he saw,
as the giant Condor was taking her away in the skies. He heard
the ring fall. When she was far beyond his reach, he knelt by the
altar, looked intensely at the tiny disc of gold, then at the tiny dot
formed by Annabel and the Condor. When he could not see them
any more, he stood up among the crowd that had now come up to
witness the unbelievable, walked back to the rows of neatly
parked cars and left the pyramids, back in the same old and dusty
green Beetle that had brought them there, alone.

Sleep is a Woman
Marjorie Bruhmuller

Sleep, in this tanned air
smells like sweet-grass
lit with a single match
A snaking smoke-curl
lifting everything
slowly, back to the gods
smudging black and white to
pale dreams.

A wisp of perfume lingers
A cozy blanket of stars
Hung up for a souvenir of day’s shadows.

Sleep cradles a shifting conscience
soluble wisdom.
carries our innocence
like a new-born colt
out of the forest
into the sun.
If...
Marjorie Bruhmuller

If your mother chanted
like a sick pig over an open fire, boiling bones
gnawing skin to leather, while
you slept -- squeezed into a pocket of her musty robe ...

If at five you speared your first fish
skinned, gutted, and threaded
its gills on to a stick, to smoke over powdery coals, to eat
when winter whined over your earth-born hut. braced
against the rocks and shrubs ...

If your father's fierce voice had
trundled you up under his arm, onto a round
tub of a boat, in harsh wind and cold rain
to a continent where natives did not speak your tongue
and feared to trade for food
so you slaughtered the wretches at the shore -
Those first drunken steps without the sea
in a world so distant
that your legs had bandied above the boil for
so many miserable days, you could no longer
remember your mother's face ...

If you did return to the thin greenness of spring
with a meagre bounty to feed those
who had not perished on the ice. and could nurture
yourself to adulthood, carry and wield a sword
fight your way on board ships that sailed your horizon
to pilfer whiskey, scavenge all that you could
for your family ...

If you bartered boldly, and swung bravely enough
to keep your teeth and lungs
until old bones tripped you into the grave
would you not be grateful to your God?

Mountains Making Snow Angels
Marjorie Bruhmuller

Snow began
where the fields left off.
Mountains, lying belly up
letting white stars fill their palms
each crevice
softer with the silence.

Monolithic children
making angels in the snow.
Spreading arms, legs
smiling up, tongues out
laughs of steam
rising all around them.
Garrett rose slowly from his bed, feeling his joints creak. He stood, stretching upwards, reaching for the ceiling, but gave up before his arms were fully extended. He sighed, his deflated paunch wrinkling as he exhaled. He pinched at and patted his stomach as he staggered to the bathroom. Urine flowed from him and echoed in the toilet, which was strange because he always peed with the door open now. He imagined Tracy urinating loo, in plain view of the world, and he felt a kind of kinship with her. He shook himself off and flushed the toilet. The water swirled around in a whisper of yellow and disappeared, gurgling and choking as it went.

Smoothing out his worn burgundy golf shirt, tucking and untucking it, Garrett combed his wispy white hair into place. Adjusting his belt, bringing it over his paunch, Garrett pondered his reflection. He noticed how high his pants were, almost above his belly button, and dropped them down. Tugging at his paunch, he frowned. The memory of his once proud, imposing physique made him long for his younger days. He puffed up his chest, trying to broaden the sagging shoulders. His shirt hung off him as if it were still on a hanger. He leaned back a little, and tried a smile, which faded before it had even had a chance to become a grin. Garrett was going to see his wife today, so he tried to look his best, but deep down he knew it didn’t matter. He sized and leaned against the counter, tucked, untucked, he knew he was only pretending to care. He turned from the mirror and crept down the stairs, gripping the railing with both hands.

The intoxicating smell of sunlight was in the air. Garrett and Tracy filled their lungs with it as they walked hand in hand, enjoying the newness of early April. Their skipping rope arms swung back and forth between them, and the sun’s rays, scarily brilliant, bounced back from their watches. Graduation was just around the corner, and both of them were excited that their four long years were over. The warmth of the sun enveloped Garrett’s burly chest, and he squeezed Tracy’s small dry hand with his large soft one.

Garrett gunned the eight cylinder engine of his 1987 Ford Mustang and tore out of the parking lot. Though they had only been dating for six months, Garrett knew she was nervous when he drove. He slowed down and drifted into the right lane, settling in with the flow of traffic. Tracy squeezed his knee and eased back into her seat, gazing out the window.

They pulled into the campus parking lot, and Tracy sang along to the blaring radio as Garrett hunted for a spot. As he glided through the rows of cars, there were several appreciative honks and a rousing holler from a bunch of younger students who were tossing a baseball around on the lawn. Tracy smiled hopefully at Garrett, but watched his face fall as they pulled into a spot by the young students. Tracy gently patted his knee in reas-
urance, but she could tell it was too late. He opened his door and unfolded his six foot two inch frame, spilling languidly out of the car. Tracy closed her door with a slam and quickly walked around the car to grab his arm. She turned and glared at the "The Mets didn’t beat us, Buckner did!" bumper sticker. She had meant to tear it off last time. It did this to him every time! Tracy felt her eyes well up with hot tears. She bit her lip. As they walked by the baseball players, she pulled Garrett’s left hand from his pocket and draped his large, muscular arm around her shoulders. One of the young guys turned to them, “Hey man, right on! Buckner fuckin' sucks balls!” The other players began to holler too, but Tracy cut them off. “We’ll be back this year though, right guys? Go Sox Go!” she said, sparkling a bright smile at them, praying that Garrett’s hope wasn’t being squashed. The baseball players roared in agreement with Tracy. “This is our year for sure!” exclaimed a skinny kid in a Red Sox cap. “Say goodbye to the curse!” shouted another kid. They all cheered, and Garrett flashed a crooked smile, removing his right hand from his pocket and giving a thumbs-up. Tracy hugged him, delighted.

Garrett delicately lifted the papers that littered his desk, searching for his car keys. He sifted through the papers twice before he finally found them. Making his way to the front door, he bent over to tie his shoes. He pulled the right one on and gently tugged the laces. With a faint snap, the shoelace broke in his right hand. Groaning, sighing, Garrett straightened up. His back hurt. He slipped off his shoe and searched for another pair. He found a pair of cracked leather running shoes, looked at them plaintively for a moment, and then wedged them on.

Garrett bounded in the door, hiding the roses behind his back. Tracy was curled up on the couch, watching “Days of Our Lives.” He snuck up behind her and kissed her bare neck. She gasped and turned around to face him. “You scared me half to death!” She slapped his chest playfully, feigning anger. He chuckled, and handed her the flowers. “Oh Garrett, they’re love-

Tracy hummed quietly to herself, as she tried on another dress. She spun in front of the mirror again and again, looking at herself from every possible angle. Garrett was right, it had been a while since they had been out. At least since they’d got the results, and that was nearly a month ago. Although the news had been hard for her to take. Garrett had taken it even harder when they were informed that they couldn’t have children. He had cried right there in front of the doctor. She had been terribly upset as well, but it was watching Garrett limp through life for the next few weeks that was unbearable for her. They couldn’t bury the past, but they could at least forget about it for one evening. Tracy twirled again, and tried out a few dance steps in her high heels.

Garrett carried her to bed and laid her down. They stared into each other’s eyes as she unbuttoned his shirt. They he pulled her to him in a gentle embrace, and devoured her supple breasts. It had been a long time since they had made love, maybe even a month. The news had disrupted their love life in a devastating fashion, but Garrett was raining kisses down on her now, as if to make up for lost time. He grunted as he entered her, slowly pressing his full weight onto her. She bit her lip and whimpered as he began to thrust. She clawed at his back and lovingly kissed his neck. They writhed there together, the bedside lamp casting moving shadows on the walls. Tracy grabbed his head and forced her greedy tongue into his mouth, her passion overflowing. She gasped and opened her eyes wide as Garrett pressed into her. He felt so big, bigger than he had ever been before. Was it because of the waiting? She looked up at him, moaning “Oh God, I feel so full.”
Garrett worked open the door of his rusty old Mustang. He didn’t drive it much anymore, but he didn’t feel like moving the sedan out of the garage. He steeped in and slipped his key into the ignition. The motor coughed and coughed before finally heaving to life. He let it idle for a while, listening to it complain with rusty creaks and metallic pings. He tried to let the clutch out slowly, but first gear was always a little touchy. He felt the car jerk forward, stalling. He started it up again, eased it out into the street, and accelerated tenderly.

Garrett snatched the last of the albums from Tracy’s grasp and tossed them into the box of tapes.

“Tracy, no lifting! I can carry them by myself,” Garrett scolded gently.

“Garrett! For chris-” He caught her eyes, raising his eyebrow at her like a question mark.

“For crying out loud, I can lift a few records.”

“You know you aren’t supposed to lift anything heavy. Let me do it.”

“But Garrett, I want to help. I feel useless when all I do is sit here all day,” Tracy pouted.

“Here Trace, read this,” he said, tossing her “Baby and Child Care” from his pile of books.

“Oh Garrett, I hate to read books like that.”

“Me too, Trace,” he said, grunting as he hoisted the box. He turned towards the garage. The sweat rolled down his back, staining his grey shirt.

Tracy waited until Garrett had left for the garage, and put Garrett’s book face down on the sofa, opened to the second page. She reached under the cushion and pulled out her Harlequin, turning zealously to her page marker. Out in the garage, Garrett deposited the box of tapes beside the television and stretched, rubbing his back. At least the garage was cool, a break from the heat and humidity. He ran his hand along his Mustang, then flicked away the grey-brown dust that had collected on his fingers. He peered through the blurred rear window at the infant car seat. Cracking a smile, Garrett shook his head and trotted back to the house.

Garrett hesitated, then hit the play button and grimaced at the first violin straining by itself. This was not Guns n’ Roses, not even close. How was he supposed to listen to this stuff all summer? He glanced over at Tracy, sitting there pensively, munching her peanuts and dropping the shells into a bowl at her side.

“I guess we’ll get used to it eventually,” Garrett said, his brow knotted.

“Mmmmmhhhhmmmm,” Tracy murmured, still reading.

“It’ll be tough, but it’s a small price to pay I suppose, right Trace?” She nodded, gazing far off, missing the bowl with her peanut shell. Garrett came over and kissed her on the forehead.

Garrett rolled along gingerly in the right lane, trying to merge with the heavy traffic. He saw a space opening up and touched the gas, drifting forward. The car beside him quickly filled the space, and Garrett had to come to a complete stop. He looked beyond his weary face in the read view mirror, and saw the snaking line of cars behind him; total gridlock. Except for the left lane, it was moving somewhat, but even that movement was almost imperceptible. He turned on the radio, which pounded through the scratchy speakers at high volume. Garrett turned it down to an acceptable level. He knew the song well; Foghat, one of Tracy’s favourites. But he ignored the enticing wail of the guitar licks. He turned the turner a little and heard the eerie scrapings of a violin playing through the front speakers. Garrett twisted the dial shut. He had been intent on finding a traffic report just moments ago, but now, he didn’t even want to hear a voice.

Bobby wheeled out his red mountain bike, trying to minimize the clickety-click of the gears as he walked by Garrett’s car. Garrett slid out from under his mustang, wiping off his oil-smeared hands. “Where are you going, Bobby?” Garrett asked,
squinting a little as the apple pie sun came out and warmed the crunch leaves on the front lawn.

"I'm going biking with my friends, Dad."

"Where are you going with your friends?"

"Around ..."

"Where is around, Bobby?"

Bobby shifted on the bike seat, his feet not quite touching the ground at the same time. "You know, around ... I don't know exactly where, we're just going for a bike ride, it's not like the town is so big we'll get lost, Dad."

Garrett stared at him, perplexed by this ten-year-old sarcasm. They stood, frozen in the warm sun together.

Garrett and Bobby both jerked their heads around to the sudden squeal of Tim and Chris skidding their bikes on the leaf-littered sidewalk. Garrett frowned and crossed his lumberjack arms. He marched over to the screen door and yelled inside, "Trace, can you grab Bobby's sweater?" Garrett turned back to Bobby and his friends.

"So, Tim, Chris, where are you boys off to today?"

"Just going for a bike ride, Mr. Winston," they answered simultaneously, in their best "talking to an adult" voices. Just then Tracy opened the door and tiptoed over to them. "Trace, can you grab Bobby's sweater?" Garrett turned back to Bobby and his friends.

"So, Tim, Chris, where are you boys off to today?"

"Just going for a bike ride, Mr. Winston," they answered simultaneously, in their best "talking to an adult" voices. Just then Tracy opened the door and tiptoed over to them. Garrett took the sweater from her and slipped it over Bobby's outstretched arms.

"Where are you going, sweetie?" Tracy purred as she kissed Bobby's forehead. Bobby's cheeks flared up like overripe peaches. "Ummm, we're just going to the park by the falls, Mom." But he looked at Garrett as he said it. Garrett nodded.

"Ok honey, remember not to go too close to the falls."

"Ok Mom, I won't."

Garrett ruffled Bobby's thin blonde hair and grinned sheepishly. "Have a good time, kiddo, but be careful." He wanted to kiss Bobby on the forehead too, but resisted his urge. He draped his arm over Tracy's shoulders and smiled as he watched Bobby ride away.

Bobby laughed out loud as the wind whipped by his ears. Saturday! Glorious Saturday! He watched the red and gold carpet of leaves stir up and dance as their bikes' serpent tires slashed at autumn's beauty. Suddenly, the hush of scurrying leaves was cut short by a lion's roar and Bobby turned to see Garrett's Mustang pull up. Garrett leapt from his car, flinging the door open with such force that the hinges groaned. He grabbed Bobby's bike helmet and trotted over.

"Awww, Dad!" Bobby whined.

"Bobby, you know the rules. You have to wear a bike helmet." Garrett placed it on Bobby's head. Tim and Chris were starting to circle back. Garrett clipped the clasp shut under Bobby's chin and affectionately patted his cheek.

"I'm sorry, Bobby, but we've got to take care of that brain of yours."

"I know Dad. I know," Bobby looked up at Garrett with pleading eyes.

"Sorry kiddo, but you know how your mother is," Garrett said in a loud, clear voice, smiling apologetically. He slipped a ten into Bobby's moist palm as his friends pulled up.

"Get yourselves a Coke on me guys, and have fun."

Tim and Chris smiled, and Bobby grinned with grateful eyes. Garrett playfully nudged Bobby's left shoulder with a punch and started back to his car, feeling the warm sun across his broad back.

Garrett tossed off his oil-splotched shirt, its snowy whiteness ruined. The blonde fur on his chest glistened with sweat. Tracy, sitting cross-legged on the couch, glanced up from her book. Her ravenous gaze and autumn's gift of an October Indian summer conspired together, and soon Tracy and Garrett were twisted there on the couch.
They lay there, holding each other, enjoying the warm aftermath of their lovemaking. The air felt cool against their skin now. The air was crisp and the sun had stolen away behind a wall of clouds. The chirping birds seemed eerily absent, as if they had migrated just moments ago. The siren's wail pierced the stillness of the afternoon, loud, even in the distance. Garrett rose from the couch, staring at Tracy with wide, urgent eyes.

Garrett tore through the crowd, with Tracy right behind him. Breaking through, he rushed, stumbling, to the stretcher that bore his son's still body.

"Bobby! Bobby!" Garrett implored hoarsely. "Bobby! Can you hear me?" Garrett leaned his trembling head on Bobby's chest, awkwardly trying to hold his son in his arms, but the stretcher would not allow it. Garrett settled for planting a kiss on Bobby's bandaged forehead as two paramedics pulled him away.

He turned in a trance, staring with empty eyes at Bobby's cracked eggshell helmet, noticing where it had bled red yolk all over the pavement. He saw the leaves curled up at the edges, gasping in the horror, already half drowned in the sticky, drying rust. Garrett's world swirled around him, the colours running as his vision blurred. Tracy braced herself for his weight and held him to her as he sank to his knees. Her own tears came now and they sobbed as people around them coughed and turned away, dispersing without a word.

Rust chips littered the ground as Garrett opened his door and poured out of his Mustang. He saw himself reflected in the red paint, which was flaking where the rust was. He closed the door, but had to push his bony hip against it to close it properly. He walked out towards the looming grey edifice, his hands stuffed in his pockets. The wind swirled, stinging his cheeks. They sky was a cloudless uniform grey.

"Empty your pockets," the guard rasped from her glass enclosure. He did as he was told.

"All clear!" BUZZZZZ.

Garrett stepped through the steel door, which clanged shut behind him, snapping at his heels. The metallic echo rang in Garrett's ears. A gavel pounding ... Tock-tock-tock! ... How do you find? ... Guilty-ilty-ilty ... women shrieked ... the awed gasp of the courtroom ... the rustling of jurors filing out ... briefcases snapping shut. Case closed.

"Mr. Winston? Mr. Winston?" She waved a hand in front of his blank eyes. He looked up, turning his head lethargically. "Oh, I'm sorry, I must have spaced out there," Garrett said in a whispered monotone. "Follow me." He followed her down the hall, feeling the fading yellow lights that lined the ceiling on his clammy skin. "You have an hour."

Tracy came in to check on the IVs. She unhooked the empty, shrunken bag and replaced it with a full one, just the way the nurse had shown her. Garrett walked by the room, glancing in ever so briefly as his wife stood over their son, doing what he could not. He went into his room and sat down at the edge of the bed. Tracy started a soft, low humming, serenading her comatose son. She hoped that maybe he could hear it. At least she maintained that that was why she hummed as she worked. In the other room, Garrett sobbed, bent in two, his head in his hands. Tracy's humming got louder.

Garrett looked at her orange suit. He sat down beside her, his legs glued together, his back straight. His lips quivered, trying to fake a smile for Tracy. She patted his knee.

"How was your week, Garrett?"

"It was good. Very quiet."

"Anything exciting on the news these days?"

"I haven't been watching TV much."
“You should, Garrett, it’ll keep you going ... ummm. keep you busy, I mean.”

“Oh, the repairman showed up the other day for the hot water tank. Tuesday, I think it was.”

“Oh, did it cost much?”

“No, not much.”

“How has the weather been? I don’t get outside very often in the winter.”

“It’s good, no snow yet, but real cold.”

Tracy marveled at his physique. His hair was only greying a little, his stomach was still lean and firm, and his shoulders and chest were as bold as ever. She stared at him. His posture wasn’t always as good. Sometimes he stooped, and he always seemed to move slowly, but his body was still holding up after all that had happened. His eyes were always shiny though, like they were sweating. They never seemed to look at anything either. His eyes perplexed her when they were so close, she was used to seeing them through glass. She bit her lip. The glass partitioned phone calls were not so overwhelming. Sometimes the calls were good, encouraging for her. But the conjugal visits always left her with a weak feeling in her stomach. She wondered if it was the same for Garrett.

Garrett removed his shirt carefully, sucking in his stomach as he did. Tracy was looking at him, her head tilted a little to one side. He slowly took off his belt, which the guards had let him keep because they knew he wasn’t a threat.

“We don’t have to if you don’t want to, Garrett ...”

“No, no, I do ... of course I do.”

She invited him into the little hollow she had made in the blankets with a tender kiss. His lips remained still for a moment. Then they responded. She watched his eyes as he entered her. He was staring at her bedside night-stand. Tracy reached over silently and knocked the photo frame face down. He could feel where it bent a little. She thrust her hips desperately at him, trying to call his member to life, gripping him tightly with her walls. He began to thrust rhythmically into her. His motion calm. Tracy moaned and Garrett exhaled, pouring the air from his lungs. Tracy felt her body warm all over, and she smiled. Garrett looked down at her with apprehension. She watched his thin white arms trembling as he held himself over her, she grabbed his elbows, steadying him, enabling him to continue his disheartened thrusting.

Tracy’s face fell as Garrett withdrew from her. He began to dress at the foot of the cot. She felt greedy. She had come twice, and Garrett had withdrawn without finishing. He stared down as he buckled his belt. Tracy got up and hugged him. “Garrett, you were wonderful, honey.” Tracy said, nibbling at his ear, trying to build him up. “It’s always nice to see you. I look forward to it all week. It’s good for me, but I think you’re getting closer, maybe next time. I want you to enjoy this as much as I do, honey.”

“I do enjoy it Tracy,” he lied.

“Really?” she said, her eyes sparkling.

“It’s always nice to see you. I look forward to it all week. It keeps me going.”

“See you again next week. Mr. Winston,” the guard at the gate said, tipping her cap.

“Yes. see you again next week.”

“You know, you’re the only husband who comes every week to visit his wife, you must have such strong feelings for her.”

Garrett pondered it for a moment.

“I love her to death.”

Tracy slumped into Garrett’s reading chair. She sighed. Her chest hurt. She heard Garrett whimpering like a wounded animal in the next room. Her tears flowed, dripping steadily. There were
bags beginning under her eyes. Garrett called his son’s name, slurring as the tranquilizers took hold. She could hear the drool seeping from the corner of his mouth. She hoped he would sleep soon, she hoped it would ease the pain.

Tracy felt her stomach grumble. “I must have skipped breakfast or lunch.” she thought to herself. She sat there, trying not to look at her son lying beside her. Garrett’s sobs echoed through the whole house. She felt her stomach eating itself, shrinking. Suddenly, Garrett began to shriek. He shrieked over and over again. Tracy shuddered, wracked with hurting.

Tracy’s arms began to tremble, weakening as she pressed the pillow hard on Bobby’s face. His face grew red, her chest was on fire. When she was sure, she stood up and tried on a deep breath. She noticed that Garrett had stopped. The tranquilizers must have worked. But then she heard a guttural heave from Garrett and a telltale splash. She closed the door to Bobby’s room behind her and walked in to check on Garrett. His arms were shaking in desperation as he struggled to hold his numbed body over the bucket. Tracy came over and held him. She smelled his vomit as it surged from him; first his lunch, then his milky-smelling bile. She rubbed his back as he brought up nothing, dry heaving wretchedly. And even though there was nothing left, nothing at all, she still held him up.

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**God is Dead**

**Brett Wilmot**

Dusk.

is the avenue—

that last jaunt before the needle
pierces the eye and sight turns to sand
in churning through ’till the next time around.

That ghastly slide from one life,
to the next,
when too far gone
becomes don’t bother a yawn:
Just die—

and come back again.
like yesterday, and
the rest of all my
roads down through
futures past and futures forward.

Wear away all paths with your
empty feet – don’t wallow,
you’ll just hold up the line,
and Death’ll get backed-up
beyond the grace of that fanatic

EX-LAX what’s his name.

Doesn’t matter,
you all come out the same
tortured mass in the end—

fester in your pile until a missed
step sends you through that done road
for one more time on the
rollercoaster of you’re gonna die.

So – want another ride?
The Lawyer's Graveyard
Brett Wilmot

Footprints ahead of me,
Gaudy soot behind-
And flowing closer.

Along through the spiral morass,
   Reaching around the bend with
   Ridges ever-growing off
   The beaten flavour of the day.

To go nowhere,
But to another twisting road.
Where merry-go-rounds dance
Upon themselves in sweet sweet
Glowing flow

Facing page:
fluttertongue 4:
adagio for the pressured surround
(excerpted)
Steven Ross Smith

Father and i. uncommon collaboration.

He is on a rope and knows no way of getting off.

uncomfortable corn. this anger.

Wah talks of father's power. kids riddled with fatherblood, awed by fatherpower that, in them (us), takes root.

time is a power-shifter. beware of absolutes. their tendency to fall.

life force forked to death by lymph glands. (our) bodies, the tool for this energy. utilil for language. plague.

torturers are trained in the arts of the hood, submarino, the field telephone and pou de arara, to name just a few.

and as the toll takes itself and His-self and (your)self. to tool fails and words move on.

what reason for the stone?

the lake a gray-blue dish rimmed green and gold and topped with huge bulbous clouds. heaven-torch. or mounds of orange gelati.
neoprene. belly-bloating. I'm trolling the lake called sealey.

the spin, these days, of words.

no evidence in sight, but a reason to believe in fish.

a novice finning the edge.

the accordion was the instrument Pauline Oliveros took up at age ten or eleven.

who invented this? a front-kicking, back-drifting tube I'm seated in. sealed. self-propelled. unreeling line. to fool the fish. or to imagine fish near the caddis flies where the bank drops off.

in another place, the world seemed to be a sidewalk.

clicking reel. who's fooled? lured.

body is a tempted tongue slipping easily toward aspen shimmer. toward the middle of the lake, its wind-blast and hard waves.

piercing fear. knee-joint ligament a snapping rubber band.

between sunrise and sunset I am only wound and mud.

the lake a huge jaw biting my knee.

newspaper report of an Iraqi soldier dangling in a net hung from a fork-lift. blasting wind that fights my return to the narrow hills.

tourist in the pressured surround. strange water walking surface bug.

(my) filter. (my) failure.

hatchings may be finished for the season. what kind of bug to imitate at the end of the line.

at the end of (my) time?

fish are canny or too lazy to agitate the hook.

over there, sunlight impales on a rampike. blackened five years in a forest inferno. charred spikes. ankle-brushed now with gold and auburn bush.

thunderrumble. I'm green and tawny. green and calling on auto-hypnosis to calm. green with sudden fear I won't get back.

photosynthesis provides the basic energy source for all organisms.

three guys. hundreds of trout. hundreds of reasons to believe in fish.
pain made intense by panic. torch flickers. imagine the burning
hills.

whole worlds aflame.

barking above. snow geese. a white escape toward the gather of
darkening clouds.

gelati melted and slumped in the bowl.

i’ve made it to the reed-bed, skirting the shore. assured. calmer
now.

house of mud and sticks. peer for the hidden entrance. no bucky
rodents surface to defend. no encounter with the wild. but the
wind.

“reason to believe”. Tim Hardin sang this beautifully in ’67 or ’68.
at a cafe on yorkville when i was young and he was alive. he was
jumpy and junked and disjunctive.

burning the soles of the feet. burning of the sex organs.

the vibrato of reeds.

nary a fish-jump here. memories rise and get away. can’t go back.
a long way to the dock. safe in a belly-boat, but lightning could
strike.

colours vanish in the duskening.

311. Wah, Fred. Various writings featuring his father. including:
Diamond Grill, NeWest Press. Edmonton, 1996 and

328. Balga, Lucian (tr. Codrescu, Andrei), from Psalm, as

330. Unattributed, as reported in The Globe & Mail - Photos
 alleged to show torture of Iraqi PoWs. May 31, 2003.

347. Yorkville Avenue, Toronto. Then a hippie and youth hang
out, already going trendy. Tim Hardin 1941-1980, died too
young.
A Cabin in Northern Ontario  
Coplen Rose

You stagnant, smelling shit hole,  
your wood so rotten  
the lowest of termites won't touch its tethered grains.  
Your single-paned windows  
show the weathered fate  
of better days gone by.  
In your walls, only mice dare live,  
taunting your foolish inhabitants.  
Soft paw prints on startled sandpaper faces.  
Your great wood table, long and dark,  
cut from the finest of neighbourly timbers.  
That which once carried provisions for adventure,  
now drags sickened piles of rotting meat.  
Decaying heaps of reddened flesh,  
melting in the bronzed beams of warm solemn sunlight.  
Many men have fallen prey to your charm,  
consequential victims of a harsh rustic ideal.  
Such deceptiveness,  
as hidden within a simple reality.  
Here,  
in you,  
a summer was once born,  
only to be killed, before it could scarcely breathe.  
On better days,  

I like to call your humbled shelter home.

Mayfly  
Dr. Noni Howard

it's twenty-four hours or so  
to live  
and it is/  
the mayflies dying  
on the front yard

sputtering and flapping  
finally running out of breath  
their wings of paper  
in the fading light.

All 86,400 seconds are experienced  
as living  
except for the last few  
which are alarming  
and unresolved  
their desperate attempts  
at flight because somewhere  
someone said  
life is sweet
my feet
on their humming wings
oozing and crackling at the same time
leave rain prints across the grass

in the space of my foot
not there
silence and the hint
of a tiny arm thrown up
the last battle
and for what

in the wet light
i bend and enter
your dreamless body

a slow descent
into the flightless drama
we all dream of

and the release
unexpected
and a miracle

a second / of recorded /
time

suites: the island year
Sarah Dowling

1) island

sluicing water around calves,
I land,
a vessel full,
evoking round,
the uncontained sea.
a woodshed dock.
the briny water
barnacled, rocking.

progression forward, leaning
upward. toward
land
I
walk
holding taut skin
of drumtight stomach,
belly beset
the boat drags behind.

lap waves, the shifting planks,
salt.
we dock, we
land. marooned on
red sand. and rotted weedy rings.

hands drift
as surf around the shore
in widening, deliberate
circles.
2) season of the island: snow

a touch, tampering with the borders.
the shrouded, fallen, the
buried, the darkened white
the marks of deepened trudging, the
prints, the stillness,
beuine pallor.

the masked, hidden part.
new, covered over in
the muscles.
silken, slumberous.
a seed inside.
the rich white fat of animals,
glosses in my narrowness.

white crusts coat my lips and can’t seem
to mark the banked and drifted edges of speech
and dark outside is separated from the flesh-veiled
interior night only by thin skin.
a porous border.

the season of the silent,
of this island.

3) spring: tenderly rinsed them clean

the bell-curved mount and
wet island winds,
foliage, damp slipping of greens.
foam, seaweed, growth.
drool, an emanation
tears of sap shed
on the rips.
trees mined for succulent juices
and here you are,
drinking at the fountain.

the cool of shaded patches and the brightness of water
sun reflecting a drilled gap,
a mirror of internal
flowing.
as open water pours
beneath
a grate,
a pipe, a myriad, a bodily
mess.

the slough part of me
juices scareful.
fibres converge and stretch across,
filtering between the
curvature of us.
4) beach glass: summer

mason jars hold
her mother’s face
in water,
filled with stones.
pebbles moss,
covering opaline features
in a soft, feathered obscurity.

out
on the patio there is
thigh refracted through glass-topped table
in rubbed cotton, stripes curving round.
the thin-worn leg.
the functioning of slender fingers.
ingenuous talk.
and then confusion.
muddled deficiency leaps.

toward the inside.
the whole tongue
lightly dressed, bent.
unspeakable.
fingerprint screen traces the glass filament
of a barrier
along outer veins.

5) falling away

the lake, and we’re lost.
circling, crossing
over ditches,
her ditches
deep in the red dearth
of leaving,
of golds.

beneath the canopy breeze
there’s aspen,
peeled bark to reveal
pink inner skin.
sinking teeth into chalky tree flesh
to make words.
blooded words imprint shapes.
toothsome.
the taste of writing under the dermis.

and pushing aside the blood.
the last gasp, sudden departure unweighs the boat.
the vessel borders a strict and windless calm.
we leave this island.
cicatrix measures the bay edges, calves
in the wave lapping. push off
this red shore.
6) appendix: the mirror

a hidden page of this tome,
under words, the white space
obvious
between each letter.
And the careful stroke of black marks
forms only her body
where I am the floating,
size of a finger,
hidden underneath,
in a snapshot
of youth.

red leather voice
weaving through belly flesh.
rhythms of water trickling thickly.
laughing unanticipated.
moving.
and I share in this,
not seeing where
she moves to.