

A large crowd of diverse people, drawn in a sketchy, hand-drawn style, surrounds a central white circle. The people are depicted in various poses and expressions, some looking towards the center, others looking away. The background is a solid blue color. The central white circle contains the text "The Mitre 2011" in a handwritten, cursive font.

# The Mitre 2011

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# *The Mitre*

2011  
118<sup>th</sup> edition



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**NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY**  
**CONSULTATION SUR PLACE**



*Poetry*

Amy Cunningham **Untitled** 73  
Julia Rohan **Beautiful Dream** 30  
Sarah Hardy **Buddha** 6  
J. Coplen Rose **Canoe Lake July 9, 1917** 31  
J. Coplen Rose **Remnants of Mowat** 9  
Christine Bolduc **Conquête** 37  
Christine Bolduc **Vent du Nord** 55  
Prof. Barbara Hunting **Crossing Borders** 39  
Christopher Carmichael **December** 60  
Christopher Carmichael **The Perfume That You Sometimes Wear** 72  
Brooke Chouinard **Don't Mind Me, I'm Just a Tree** 9  
Allison Goff **Fuck Me Once, Fuck Me Twice** 90  
Eleanor Gang **How to Ease a Broken Heart** 74  
Janan Chan **I am Janan** 43  
Amanda McAlpine **Winter Gift** 10  
Frank Willdig **To K.** 82  
Frank Willdig **Under Arcturus** 29  
Kathleen Mulawka **Untitled** 61  
Caitlin Barter **Voices Through the Day** 67  
Denise St. Pierre **The Wonder King** 61  
Krissy Mitchell **Carnal Pleasure** 75  
Krissy Mitchell **Incurable Humaness** 62  
K. King **Window Sill** 42  
K. King **Forgive Me** 95  
Tyler Wilson **Call my Name** 76  
Elyssa Bouabid **Ghetto Solider** 100  
Prof. Shawn Malley **Anger Needs a New Home** 83  
Dr. Noni Howard **Please Come Down and see Daddy** 105  
Frank Harding **State of Grace** 65  
Carol Dignam **Precious Daughter** 101

*Prose*

Sarah Hardy **Fire** 102  
Sair Korb **The Oath** 68  
Melshean Boardman **My Grandmother's Birthday** 11  
Eleanor Gang **In the Darkness of Night, All Birds are Blackbirds** 58  
AR DR **La Fille** 92  
Lara Henerson **Roger at the Drive-In** 7  
Tucker McDougall **A Highway Story** 18  
Prof. Shawn Malley **Press Release** 59

Prof. Shawn Malley **Scars** 56  
Elyse Gagne **Play it Cool, Romeo** 96  
Kristy Benz **The First Christmas** 32  
John Partington **General's Pointe** 45  
Adam Young **Why Records Still Exist Today** 25  
Elizabeth Robichaud **Babies at Prom** 74  
Elle Anhorn **The Celandine** 77  
Robert Tracey **Dirty Nails** 51  
Amy Daoust **The Unconscious Reflection** 84

*Visual Art*

Mel Hattie **Cover Art**  
Mel Hattie **Fall Flood** 66  
Mel Hattie **Dogs, Beers and Ukes** 67  
Alyson Briggs **Untitled** 29  
Alyson Briggs **Untitled** 44  
Elle Anhorn **Amsterdam** 17  
Elle Anhorn **Road Kill** 89  
Ashley Dickie **Kaleidoscope Eyes** 95  
Ashley Rohr **Pumpkin** 7  
Annis Karpenko **Blue Rain** 28  
Annis Karpenko **Secret Path** 114  
Annis Karpenko **We're Not in Kansas Anymore** 5  
Christopher Palmer **BU Only Richer- Gaiters** 41  
Sonia Z. Palik **Little Chickadee** 24  
Sonia Z. Palik **Venice After Day** 54  
Lynsey Hachey **It's Not You** 73  
Lyssa Paquette **Untitled** 71  
Pierre Quinn **Untitled** 10  
Daniel Taggart-Hodge **Rush Comics** 109  
Daniel Taggart-Hodge **Reeds** 4  
Daniel Taggart-Hodge **Old Man** 54  
Barbara Cvenic **Sacred South Korea** 60  
Barbara Cvenic **The Artist's Workshop** 94  
Ingrid Hardy **Unicorn** 38  
Ingrid Hardy **Unicorn** 56  
David Fox **Beach** 32  
Lindsay MacLeod **Speak Up** 83  
Ellen Jefferies **Bodyscan** 36  
Dayna Lowe **Lost** 17  
Karine Dingle **Cherubim** 64  
Adam Young **Brooklyn Cherry Blossoms** 108



### *Graduates' Art Show*

Graduates' Statements **Traces** 110

Alison Jones, Rebecca Estrada, Etienne Bolze

#### **Coordinators**

Sarah Boucher **Guest Curator**

Mel Hattie **Layout Designer**



*Reeds*

*By: Daniel Taggart-Hodge*

### *Editor's Word*

Thanks!

There would be no Mitre if it weren't for the diligent work and immense patience of the following: Shawn Malley, Anabel Collin, Annis Karpenko, the SRC, and the Printing Center. Thanks also to Mel Hattie, the impeccable designer behind the cover art. I would also like to thank the many friends who helped with the layout and final touches. Finally, of course, to our faithful readers, and to those artists still fighting the good fight: Thank you!

*Elyse Gagné*

*Editor*

*2011*



*We're Not in Kansas Anymore*

*By: Annis Karpenko*

*-Chapter One-  
Hazy Memories*

*Buddha*

*By: Sarah Hardy*

Nine months of hospital visits  
Of trips back and forth from Hull Royal.  
The tests and scans  
The unmade plans  
The fears; the confusion; the pain

A new haircut - just like your mother always said  
She would never let you have  
Too far gone in history now  
For her voice to carry any weight.  
And I spent my childhood lost,  
Never knowing what she wanted to say

The nurses say I am your like  
- I've never had that said before  
My sister's youthful face was yours,  
But we've become the same since we've grown older  
And both less and more like you

You tumbled in a blaze of glory  
A clash of knights and swords -  
Like the one in the hospital light  
That you told me was watching over you

We scattered your ashes in that muddy field  
That we walked through together for years  
You said you didn't want to be kept  
On the mantle piece.

I can't hear your voice in my head anymore  
Or see you without that bruise on your face  
Now all I've got are a few photographs  
And some fading memories



*Pumpkin*

*By: Ashley Rohr*

*Roger at the Drive-In*

*By: Lara Henerson*

"Okay Gina, I'll be right back."

"Don't take too long, Roger!"

"Got it!" I get out of my car and shut the door. I don't mind missing the coming attractions. Honestly, I'd be fine with missing the whole movie, 'cause I'm sort of embarrassed to be seen at a chick-flick, but I promised Gina I'd come, so here I am.

I inch my way between the closely parked cars towards the concession stand, noting the ridiculous number of teenage girls present. Why did I agree to this again? Gina's fun but what if people start thinking we're an item? That would be a major cock-blocker. Sometimes I think it would easier if I was attracted to her, but I'm just...not. I wish I could tell her to do something with her hair or get contacts or something, but I can't 'cause I'm not a dick.

I get in line at the concession stand. What size popcorn did she want again? I could just grab us a large to share...No, bad idea. It'll look like a date. Better get two smalls.

"Can I help you?" Shit! Natalie! I totally forgot she worked here.



"Oh, hey." Even in her stupid striped uniform and name-tag she's a major babe. She's got honey-coloured curls hanging out from under her cap, and the perfect red lips of a retro pin-up girl.

"Hey. So, can I help you?" Dammit, I forgot what I wanted...Think fast!

"You're in my sociology class." She looks confused. She's got no clue who I am.

"Oh yeah, hey..."

"Roger."

"Right, Roger."

"You're uh... Natalie, right?" As if I don't know.

Nice one.

"Yeah... it's on the name-tag." You fucking loser.

"Just making sure it's accurate." She giggles. Yes! She thinks I'm funny. Roger you stud. Don't screw this one up.

A grumpy old man behind me is tapping his foot like he has to pee. Impatient Jackass. "Right, two small popcorns." She turns around and starts scooping popcorn. "Listen, Natalie. How would you feel about hanging out sometime? Like to study, obviously." She pauses, her back still turned. Fuck, I said too much. Idiot! She turns, still smiling. Does that mean-

"Sure, that sounds nice." FUCK YES! I am unstoppable!

"Cool, so d'you have a number?" She gives it to me.

"I'll see you soon."

"Definitely." And she's serving the grumpy old guy. I turn to head back to the car, triumphant, and notice Gina standing right there. I'm in a fucking great mood but I can tell something's off.

"Hey Gene, how long have you been here?" Her lip starts to tremble. It must be bad; Gina's not the crying type.

"It doesn't matter," she says in a choked voice, and before I can even speak she turns away and disappears into the maze of parked cars. And then I get it. I am such a dickhead.

## *Remnants of Mowat*

*By: J. Coplen Rose*

it was all here once, he says to the boys  
horses, people, commerce- a whole city

the boys shift their weight awkwardly  
trying to see something else  
something beyond the shattered concrete slab  
the deserted log chute  
a rusted honey pail

they look at the man, trying to see what he sees  
yet he knows they never will  
the man cannot explain to the children  
how a whole city disappears beneath a forest

he just hopes that they believe he saw it.

## *Don't Mind Me, I'm Just a Tree*

*By: Brooke Chouinard*

You may see the carvings etched in my body as dashes of  
romantic hope,  
of futures planned,  
of memories shared,  
but although this heart of rough, auburn passion will  
remain as long as I do,  
the truth behind these painful markings is a blink of an  
eye.

I bleed sticky blood for a glimpse – on a whim that you  
may last.

Where you once shared a deep seeded lust,  
all that remains is a dissolving memory.

Forget, decay, compost,  
with hope that I will fuel the next great love.

*Winter Gift*  
*By Amanda McAlpine*

Snow falls, engulfs all sound.  
Blanket of white. Muted soundtrack of life.  
I stand in the silent winter gift. Fears vanish.  
Life is still. Life is quiet.  
Eyes closed, I know it can't last forever.  
Soft snow: nature's way of giving back. I know that I am loved.  
A white blanket to keep me warm and safe, despite the chilliness.  
A sharp blow of cold wind swipes across my red cheeks. I am alive.  
Beauty thrown in my face by a world filled with gentle wonders.  
Hoping the day will never end. Hoping time won't run out...  
Hoping the darkening sky won't end the pure bliss.  
Ignore the pain in my toes. Disregard my numb fingertips.  
Always believing in a way back to the first snowflake.

*Untitled*  
*By: Pierre Quinn*



*My Grandmother's Birthday*  
*By: Melshean Boardman*

It's been three weeks since the dried-out leaves were blown off the maple trees. They line the dirt drive all the way to our house. When I was little the driveway frightened me, especially in the autumn. The faded shades of the foliage always seemed so inhospitable, so dead. I'm older now, and not scared of the long shadows those trees make in the late afternoon. I don't forget the way I used to feel, though, and I don't forget the stories my mother used to tell me about that season.

One October on the way into town my mother took a detour. It's only a fifteen-minute drive but at that age I guess it seems longer. She wanted to show us Weird Willy's Grave. My mother grew up in same house I grew up in too, and she swears that she knew Weird Willy in high school. From the backseat, I asked her what he was when she knew him.

"He was weird," my mother said. She drove us up a hill, and then sun was shining right into the car windshield. "He looked sad. He seemed frightened of the other students. Weird Willy was the one who sat closest to the door in class."

It was in November – my mother told me they were in Grade Eleven – that they found him hanged in his parents' barn. His folks were so ashamed of it that people had to take him down for them and bury him out in someone else's field. From the car, my mother pointed to a leafless ash tree standing alone in a forgotten alfalfa field. Weird Willy was buried beneath it, she told us. I don't know why my mother thought an eight year old girl would want to visit Weird Willy's Grave. It actually scared us shitless. She told us that after he died, sometimes his ghost would leave presents for people he used to know. Like Wendy Allen woke up one autumn morning and found three dead squirrels on her doorstep. He used to like her, my mother said. I asked her, did he ever leave a present for you? And my mother didn't answer.

My mother swears that it's on nights like this that Weird Willy comes out to visit. The kind of night when a harsh wind blows off the lake onto our property and

snatches up leaves piled carefully by my father and carries them high up into the air. We can hear the wind in the kitchen. It whistles through the storm windows upstairs in my brother's room, and makes the bedroom doors slam. My mother ignores it most of the time, but sometimes glances upwards as though the doors are just a neighbor with heavy footsteps. It's raining too, slashing wet against the windows.

My grandmother and I are sitting around the kitchen table. The ceiling lamp dangles above us and flickers just so, as she fiddles with the radio. My grandmother calls to my mother.

"Can you fix it?" She points a brittle finger at the frequency dial.

My mother looks at me from across the room, and wipes at flyaway hair with an oven mitt.

"Maybe you can help your grandmother please? I'm a little busy." And she bends over the oven to check the roast.

My brother is practicing his trombone upstairs. He's in concert band at school. Every day he brings that thing home. He has to bring it on the bus, so no one sits with him. There's never any room. Sometimes his friends come over and they try to improvise like they're jazz musicians. My brother's trombone playing is starting to drown out the wind.

I lean across the table and turn the dial back and forth.

"Hey, Grandma," I say. "I think I found a good station... Canadian Brass." My grandmother also leans forward, straining to hear the brass band play. Upstairs my brother is playing "When the Saints Come Marching In."

Her face lights up in delight.

"I love this song! Dorothy, are you listening?! We used to sing this in Sunday school."

My grandmother taps her finger against the table and hums along with my brother's practicing. My mother is standing by the window, watching the storm in the dark outside. I don't think she heard my grandmother, which is good because she doesn't think we should trick her like that. And she doesn't like it when my grandmother gets her name mixed up.

Since my grandmother is quiet again, I get up and see my mother at the window. She's pulled the curtains back

and has her face up close to the pane. The crease in between her eyebrows is especially deep.

"Are you looking for Dad?" I ask her.

"The roast will be ready soon." She looks at me, and even though her face isn't bothered I know she is. There have been storms before, and sometimes when my father is out on the lake.

"He always brings the ferry back in, Mum."

She sighs.

"Rochester is a long way. Can you see the white caps on those waves?"

One time when we were little my father took us out on his ferry. It was a clear summer day. I wore a purple ball cap with white polka dots, and my brother wore a white ball cap with purple polka dots. My mother stood by as we held hands and gazed at the lake through the railing. She snapped some photographs. I had been taking a gymnastics class. As my brother waddled away with my mother close behind, I decided to try out my new moves on the rails. I can't exactly remember this happening in much detail, but I do remember my father's hands grabbing me around the waist so hard I had bruises for three weeks. We stayed in the ferry's cabin on the way back, and my mother cried the whole trip.

My mother's eyes are worried now like I imagine they were worried then. I suggest that she radio my father on his ferry. She looks back at my grandmother who is at the kitchen table. She is still listening to my brother's trombone practicing, eyelids shut, humming and tapping along to the beat. He's warming down with a few lazy scales, and then the music stops. My grandmother's eyes fly wide open.

"Dorothy," she says. "Can you fix this thing please? It stopped working again."

My mother tells us that dinner is nearly ready, and could she and I go upstairs to bring my brother down.

"When you come downstairs," she says, "I'll have got it working again."

I pick up my cue, and help my grandmother out of her chair. Her sharp, painted nails dig into my forearm. I can't grab her too tight. My grandmother's skin is like tissue paper. I can even see everything underneath, like when we used it to trace in elementary school. So she holds on to



me, and we take slow steps to the stairs. We rest both feet on each step as we go up. My steps always creak louder than hers. I remind my grandmother to hold the banister carefully.

Upstairs my brother is packing up his trombone. He looks up when he hears us in the hallway and he grins widely.

"I didn't know you were here already, Grandma!" he says. "Happy birthday!"

My grandmother frowns.

"It's not my birthday," she says. "That's next month."

We can hear the storm again now that the music has stopped. The house used to have a tin roof, and it amplified any rain that fell. I was so happy the day the roofers finally came and gave us shingles. The sound used to frighten me so much. The shingles don't muffle that wind, though, and the rain is still pounding the windowpanes. Thunder rolls in from the lake. For a moment, we watch the trees sway back and forth, illuminated by the glow of our house.

My grandmother isn't frightened by the storm. She gets confused a lot about people she meets, or where she is, or what the date is, but she doesn't forget what thunder is. Before my grandfather died she was a grand dame, and not ever frightened by thunderstorms. The power goes out, and she holds out her spotted hands for us to hold.

"Don't be scared, darlings. It's just nature," she whispers. "We're safe."

I like it when my old grandmother comes back.

My brother whispers to me, "Is Dad back yet?"

I tell him he isn't. We walk even more slowly now, down the darkened flight of stairs. I hold my free hand out in front of me in case furniture is in front of us. My grandmother squeezes our hands tight.

In the kitchen my mother's lit some candles, and the large hurricane lamp in the centre of the table. The dark corners of the kitchen glow softly now. The roast is finished, and is wrapped in tin foil on the stove. My mother is by the window again, watching for signals from the lake.

"Did you radio Dad?" I ask. She nods.

"Will Ian be here tonight?" my grandmother asks. She clasps her hands to her heart with delight.

My brother helps her take a seat near the warmth of the stove. He adjusts a brooch she wears on her blouse. In

the candlelight, the small dark jewels inlaid in twisted, old brass sparkle slowly.

"Grandpa can't be here tonight, Grandma. Dad'll be here soon, though. He wouldn't miss your seventy-fifth birthday for the world."

"Am I really seventy-five?" she wonders aloud. "I don't feel a day over forty!"

My mother joins us at the table.

"It would be a shame to let this all get cold," she suggests. "Salad, anyone?"

It was a good salad. My mother always makes them hearty, with nuts and fruit and small bits of cheese with the right kind of lettuce, never too soft and never too bitter. My grandmother frowns as she picked at the leaf on her plate.

"I had the most horrible dream last night," she says.

My brother looks at her and asks her to share her dream. He keeps a dream journal beside his bed. Once he told me that he's certain there's someone out there who dreams the same dreams he has every night.

"It was so unnerving. Let me tell you," my grandmother is saying. "I was walking hand-in-hand with Ian through that field near the schoolhouse. It was chilly and sunny, and the wind was blowing my hair into my face. I wasn't wearing gloves. I don't remember why we were there. Nobody was around, not even the farm hands. I think they were at church."

From across the table I see that my mother looks worried again. It's the face she makes when my grandmother's memory makes her sad.

"We were walking so quickly through that field. The leaves and dry grass crunched under our feet. Ian put his hat on my head so my hair would stay out of my eyes." My grandmother pauses, and then leans forward towards my mother. She whispers.

"Are the children expecting Ian to arrive soon? I get the feeling he's tied up at work."

I place my hand on top of hers. My brother asks her what happened next in her dream. She speaks in a clear voice.

"He opened the door to the barn and I stepped in. It smelled of horses. I can still smell it now, oh my. And then he puts his arm out in front of me, and you look up and see

the silhouette of... there he is. Swinging from the rafters by his neck. And you think... dear God!"

My grandmother begins to cry at the kitchen table. It's the worst dream she's had. Her frail shoulders shake as she wipes tears off her cheeks. My mother pushes her chair back, not minding that it scrapes the hardwood floors. She suggests we get on with my grandmother's birthday dinner. My brother takes our plates away, even though my grandmother hasn't finished her salad.

"Who was it, Grandma?" I ask her. "Who was in the barn?"

She sighs and looks into my eyes. The candlelight throws strange shadows across her face. Her eyelids look dark.

"It was Willy Baxter," she says. "I found him."

"In your dream?"

"No," says my grandmother. "On my birthday."

My mother returns with our dinner plates. The roast steams. I can't tell how rare it is in the low candle glow. She bends down and kisses my grandmother's cheek.

"Dear Janet," she says. "Forget about Willy."

We eat dinner. My father hasn't come home from work yet. My brother suggests that we wait for him on the porch, and save the cake for later.

Our dog thumps his tail on the floor as we enter the whitewashed inside of the porch. It's much colder in here, but at least the storm has settled. The rain is just a steady shower now, and the wind has slowed. My grandmother settles into her old wicker rocking chair in the far corner of the porch. I put the hurricane lamp on the floor, and then I squeeze between my brother and the faded coral cushions on our loveseat. He always makes sure his share of the loveseat is fair. The mirror on the whitewashed wall behind us reflects the light of the lamp. My mother is a silhouette by the warped glass of the windows. She keeps watch for my father's truck driving up the dirt drive. My grandmother complains against the cold.

"Dorothy," she says to my mother. "Bring me my blanket."

My mother nods to my brother, and he runs out to find a blanket for my grandmother's legs. Our dog lifts his head up and looks at the screen door. A steady crunching sound

has caught his ear over the hum of the dying storm. I watch too as two headlights move slowly up our drive.



*Lost*

*By: Dayna Lowe*



*Amsterdam*

*By: Elle Anhorn*



*A Highway Story (an excerpt)*

*By: Tucker McDougall*

Charlie: 19

Jack: 19

Leah: 50

Ralph: 65

Cary: 20

Melissa: 19

*Charlie and Jack are seated against the curb of a roadside restaurant and gas station. A sign nearby reads, "Welcome to the Ottawa Area, Canada's Capital Region". They wear dirty clothes and heavy backpacks. They are taking it in turns to stand and try flagging down a ride. A wallet lies unnoticed nearby.*

Charlie: (direct address) Have you ever seen the Rolling Stones? I bet you never hitch hiked across a whole country to see them though right? I have. A buddy of mine and I used to hitch hike around a lot actually. We'd both read *On the Road* and, like everyone else who read that book, we decided that we were gonna be beatniks, just like our reluctant king. Problem was, we weren't very good beatniks. Jack, my friend, was never the most patient guy and I thought the voluntary poverty of it all grated on him a bit more than it did on me.

*Jack unfreezes.*

Jack: Damn, there goes another one!

Charlie: You've got to smile at them man, nobody's gonna pick you up if you stand there glaring.

Jack: I'd glare at them less if they picked us up.

*Another car shoots by.*

Jack: Thanks for nothing! I hope you crash!

Charlie: Ah relax man. Here, sit down and let me take a turn.

Jack: No, I got this. (at the cars) Pick us up! We're not serial killers! We're nice!

*Charlie notices the wallet. He discovers it is full of money.*

Charlie: Woah...dude, look at this.

Jack: Completely harmless, wouldn't hurt a fly! Oh, you suck!

Charlie: Jack!

Jack: What?

Charlie: There's got to be at least two hundred bucks in here.

Jack: Haha! Things are looking up. Let's go in and grab some dinner.

Charlie: You just ate man.

Jack: I think they make ribs in there. I haven't had ribs in forever.

Charlie: Besides this isn't ours, dude, I bet they've got a lost and found in there.

Jack: Charlie, you may be better than me at flagging down cars...

Charlie: Thank you.

Jack: ...But you clearly have no idea how to handle good fortune. After all, didn't a very wise man once say "finders keepers"?

Charlie: I think that was you.

Jack: Exactly. Now, come on, it's cold out here anyway.



Charlie: *(direct address)* Jack and I had met in high school and had become friends mostly because we'd had the longest hair of all the guys around and needed some mutual defense, but we'd gotten pretty close over the years. I'd long learned that you couldn't actually stop him once he was set on a course of action, but you could sort of ricochet him, change his direction a bit.

*Enter Leah. She wears jeans, boots and a shirt which reads "Your Generation Sucks!"*

Charlie: Hold it, hold it, hold it. Who is that?

Jack: Should we be insulted by that shirt?

Charlie: I don't know dude.

Jack: I think I'm insulted by that shirt. I don't suck.

Charlie: That is exactly the kind of thing I can see you wearing when you're older.

Jack: Thanks.

Charlie: How's your sweet talk? Maybe we can get her to give us a ride.

Jack: With my sunny demeanor and your boyish charm, how can she say no?

Charlie: Just... just don't say anything stupid ok? Excuse me?

Leah: Yeah?

*Actors freeze except for Charlie, who turns to the audience.*

Charlie: *(direct address)* Now, what you've got to understand is that Jack and me...we hadn't really done this before and had set out on a larger trip that maybe we ought to have chosen as our first try. We wanted to make it from

Ottawa to Edmonton but the kicker is we also wanted to do it in time to catch the Stones playing their show. Who knows when their next tour would be? We were pretty sure Keith Richards was immortal but the rest of the guys might not last as long.

*Action recommences.*

Charlie: Hi, my name is Charlie and this is my friend Jack. We're trying to get to Edmonton to see the Stones and -

Jack: We're not criminals, I promise. I've only got a couple of felonies, but nothing violent. Auto theft, mainly.

Charlie: Jack....damn it. He's kidding ma'am. Warped sense of humor. Please, ignore him.

Leah: It's alright, I don't mind. I've only been out a few years myself.

Charlie: ...Out of...prison?

Leah: Yeah, I did some time awhile back for...well, it's not important. Will you pitch for gas money?

Charlie: Uh...

Jack: You were in prison? What for?

*Charlie cringes.*

Charlie: *(to nobody in particular)* Why? Why do you have to ask?

Leah: Oh nothing major. I used to pick up people now and again, give 'em drugged drinks, take their money and leave them in ditches beside the road. Maybe rough 'em up a little, just for kicks. But then I accidentally tried it on an off duty cop and...yeah.

Jack: Charlie?

Charlie: Yeah Jack?

Jack: Should we -

Leah: Of course, I'd never do that to you boys, it only ever worked on young, naive hitch hikers who've not figured out how the road works yet. You two don't qualify right? I'm sure you've done this a million times before. Cars this way, come on. You boys thirsty?

*She begins to walk off, pauses and waits for them to follow. There is a long pause. She eventually cracks.*

Leah: I'm kidding! Christ, I can't believe you kids bought that!

Jack: I can't believe it either. I make jokes like that. That's what I do.

Leah: I'm sorry, I'm sorry I couldn't help it. Of course you can have a ride. I can take you as far as Winnipeg, that's where I'm headed.

Charlie: That'd be great, thank you umm...?

Leah: Hmm? Oh, sorry, Leah. You boys are going to have to pitch for gas money though. Still want in?

Jack: Money? Do we look like we have ... *(Charlie gives him a meaningful stare)* Ohhh. Alright. Yeah, we'll chip in.

Leah: Well that's great then. I don't know why you boys don't take a bus, nobody picks up hitchhikers anymore.

Jack and Charlie: We've noticed.

Leah: I'm just gonna go fill up and then we'll roll out. You know, it'll be nice to have some company. Hope you kids don't mind my music though, driving ain't the same without it.

*Leah exits in the direction of the gas station singing the chorus of Led Zeppelin's "Ramble On" under her breath.*

Charlie: That was...weird but I guess we've got lucky. And we can actually chip in it with all that cash.

Jack: I'm still not drinking anything she gives me.

Charlie: Ah, relax man, I like her.

Jack: And this is why you will die first.

Charlie: Yeah, yeah. You need to watch less TV, man.

*Leah re-enters, a little flustered.*

Leah: Bad news boys, I'm afraid our deal is gonna have to change. I'll give you a lift but if you want it, you're gonna have to pay the whole tank.

Jack: What?

Charlie: Why?

Leah: I got over to the pump and, before I could start, realized that I can't find my wallet! Can't find the damn thing anywhere and the clerks around here don't like it when you fill up and vanish without paying. I'm pretty sure they're all armed.

Charlie: You lost a wallet?

Leah: Yeah, I've never been a purse woman. I can't even recall when I last had it.

Charlie: Well, we've -

Jack: Don't -

*Charlie looks at him and then continues.*

Charlie: ...found a wallet back there on the curb. Had about two hundred bucks in it. Jack, you still got that?

Jack: ...Yeah.

Charlie: Give the nice woman her money, Jack.

Jack: Sighs. Alright.

Leah: This is it! How the hell did it get over there? Doesn't matter I guess. Thank you!

Charlie: Glad to help.

Jack: Uh yeah, me too.

Leah: Well, I can't really ask you boys for money now. Consider the ride my thanks for not keeping the wallet. No charge for you two. Still, complain about the music and I'm kicking you out.

*They exit in the direction of the car. Lights fall to the sounds of squealing tires and Led Zeppelin's "Ramble On". Blackout.*



*Little Chickadee*

*By: Sonia Z. Palik*

## *Decca Motown RCA: Why Records Still Exist Today.*

*By: Adam Young*

Of all the sorts of trendy mediums for music that come and go, like the tape cassette, the Compact Disk, and with such a silly name it must be mentioned, the 8-Track, none of these have managed to survive near as long as records. Though records have come in and out of resurgence after the creation of its predecessor, the CD, they are still produced today and used in a number of ways, from the quiet pensive old couple putting on a record for a relaxing evening, to the pumping loud remixes coming from dance club speakers. From the phonograph, to the stereo, to the turntable, the record has managed to endure over 100 years of other trends in playing music to remain well loved, underrated, and one of the most profoundly interesting inventions ever created. It has changed its physical composition time and time again through these years, yet still manages to convey an era of nostalgia that today's society can only hope to ever bring back to life.

As humans we love to revisit memories. We love the idea of something we had in the past, something that appeared pristine and perfect, all in looking back. Perhaps our love of reminiscing of when 'times were so much simpler' is what keeps the record alive today. Perhaps this is the reason why there is still a small, though still existent, market for records in every single city centre with at least one vinyl/CD exchange shop. And perhaps this is why turntables are still sold today in specialty electronic stores. There is still a market for reminiscing, just like any antique store or vintage clothing shop in downtown Montreal or any other "metropole" provides. As a child my family had for a time that traditional object that eventually makes its way into any household: the large heavy wooden stereo. Modern CD players certainly don't require a two person lifting effort to get the system in the house. Old stereos, or phonographs, gramophones, and the bunch, provide a centerpiece in any nostalgic living room. They are a crucial thing in keeping our memories of the past alive, or at least the enjoyable ones.

And then there is the music that we come to expect from a record. The scratch start of the needle with the few seconds at the beginning of the machine about to start a



song, the indescribable echoing sound that each record plays because of the reliance on an odd little needle. This curious piece follows the finite grooves of the vinyl to produce a number of instruments playing at once, all in going round and round until it can no longer do so. No matter how untouched, newly produced, or modern a record may be, the sound still remains distinct to the medium, no matter what is being played. The imperfection of the sound reminds me that the first performances of any song were never perfect, nor do I think music should ever sound truly perfect. Perfection is simply artificial, and cannot be attained by any human. As much as Avril Lavigne can hide her truly lacklustre singing voice in a synthesizer, the sound that any record, no matter how well produced, will never produce the bizarre perfection that a CD or most mp3s in the digital age give off. The sound and feeling of a human work is engrained in every little groove of the recording itself.

One of my favourite things about record exploring is it forces me to learn about other genres, and the whole wealth of the musical repertoire that humans have explored, developed, created, and often forgotten. While out vinyl shopping a glance at the cover is most important in trying something new and mysterious. It is truly a joy of records to be able to try a piece of music on a whim again. Today the CD market attempts to entice consumers with the album cover, yet the CD itself comes at a high cost. It just seems like people were less greedy back then, though perhaps I'm romanticizing the past again in saying that. I might, for instance, purchase a classical album that has a neat abstract artwork of a portrait of one of the classical composers with great shapes and colours exploding across the cover. Having been enticed by the cover, taking records home from a variety of genres has allowed me to wholly explore music. In this crusade, my list of music I enjoy widens, and my scepticism towards some styles completely erased. One of the best surprises to come from this was "Judy Collin's Greatest Hits," still a masterpiece that I listen to as often as my new album of Marina and the Diamonds. It reminds me that music, as Bugs Bunny put it so eloquently, is really "the universal language." Records have helped me restore myself to the musical roots of the entire world, one vinyl at a time. Should CD stores have the

same categories and diversity as 'yester-year', gone would be these new small sections of World, Jazz, and Easy Listening. Instead, these timeless genres would be restored to their rightful prominence in our culture, unrepresented by the modern HMV. They truly deserve a return.

I began a love of vinyl when I was 12 or so, when the large wood panelled stereo from my grandparent's house entered my own. The records in the inner shelving were probably there untouched for years, including "The Best of Don Williams," and "German Polka Volume 5." Exploring these music mysteries started a lifelong love for musical diversity that I still hold dear today. Though the needle was broken in the old stereo, the mystery of what these records held inside was revealed a few years later, when by luck, I stumbled across an old turntable of my own. From there, I went through musical history, from the classical songs I was learning on the piano from hundreds of years ago, to the last recordings of dreadful 80's music. Eventually I delved into the modern world of music on CD's today and realized that there was more to "Pop" music than my mother's Enrique Iglesias and Great Big Sea albums. I still have a 45 of Cathy Carr's "First Anniversary", which I still play on my birthday every year, the day I came out to my parents at 16. "You're so Canadian!" exclaims my good friend as she comes to tea each week with Anne Murray in the background on my turntable. It hasn't changed much I suppose from when I first started listening to Nana Mouskouri and Roger Whittaker.

Just as phonograph records were an introduction to "freeing music to anyone and anywhere," so to does vinyl remain with me today. As I go along life studying and amusing myself with a number of musical genres, I still treat myself with a stop to the Salvation Army. You can't beat some of the best recorded music of the 21<sup>st</sup> century at a quarter an album. Having a duality of living in Quebec and my "life" in Saskatchewan, I treat myself to new records when in both places. My French improves today with my love of Gilles Vigneault, and Jacques Brel, though old Jacques doesn't have the Quebecois accent which I do so love and wish to develop. There is simply no other activity that requires one to make a timed jump onto the floor in order to skip a part of a record that is stuck, as is

the case with my favourite ABBA and Perry Como Albums. I'll always be happy to do it so long as it allows my musical appetite to not be limited to the works of David Guetta and Taio Cruz. Oftentimes, it just doesn't get any better than the original.



*Blue Rain*

*By: Annis Karpenko*

## *-Chapter Two- Mother and Earth*



*Untitled*

*By: Alyson Briggs*

### *Under Arcturus*

*By: Frank Willdig*

You, orange-eyed Polyphemus,  
Following me across the night sky.  
And though I move  
Across a black and seamless landscape,  
With miles to go  
Before I lie,  
You are faithful in your attentions,  
Though you are soon to die;  
Into the urban light, we move  
Home to me, death to you.



*Beautiful Dream*

*By: Julia Rohan*

I'm dreaming of a river and an old birch-bark canoe  
Paddles split the surface and water drops like jewels  
Trees that line the shore all standing straight and tall  
Somewhere in the distance a whip-poor-will's call

CHORUS:

Don't wake me up from this beautiful dream  
Let me sleep on forever  
I don't want to let go of this beautiful scene  
When we were still together

Aurora Borealis shimmering in the night  
Cosy in our cabin, tea by firelight  
A chorus of coyotes singing hallelu  
Sunbeams in the morning dancing on the dew

CHORUS

Don't wake me up from this beautiful dream  
Let me sleep on forever  
I don't want to let go of this beautiful scene  
When we were still together

BRIDGE:

Reality seems cruel: slamming doors and screeching tires  
just make me remember how far away you are.

CHORUS

Don't wake me up from this beautiful dream  
Let me sleep on forever  
I don't want to let go of this beautiful scene  
When we were still together, when we were still together.

*Canoe Lake July 9, 1917*

*By: J. Coplen Rose*

i think of the day as though i were there-

two shadows standing along the shore of the lake  
sipping tea and gazing out at the opalescent dawn  
i feel their fear, their cold sweat  
as they spot the upturned canoe

on this day the water is black  
the lake wreathed in a grey shroud of fog  
nothing moves, nothing murmurs  
no sign more ominous than an upturned canoe

in the early light of dawn they see its keel  
an olive coloured strip  
a single green toothpick  
in a pool of molasses

they do not run  
no quick movements  
at first neither man knows what to do  
where to look

they will both later remark that the lake had a glassy  
countenance  
the same vacant look as the eyes of the body  
they will pull from the water  
7 days from this moment





*Beach*

*By: David Fox*

*The First Christmas*

*By: Kristy Benz*

It was the hour before dawn on Christmas Eve. The city seemed to wake up more slowly than usual, blinking its fluorescent eyes behind icy window panes. On the third floor of a grim-faced apartment building one such light came into being.

The first murmurings of wakefulness broke the stillness. A kettle whistled, dishes clinked. Then, the measured clip of high heels on hardwood echoed throughout. They were followed by a deliberate step, a rustle of fabric, soft whispering. A moment passed, and a door opened into the hallway.

Cecelia sat at her breakfast table in the dark, listening. At the sound of the footsteps she rose and crept forward, her slippers shuffling across the floor. She reached her door and pressed her eye to the peep-hole.

Across the hallway a young woman hovered in the doorway, shrugging into a red coat. A tall man stood just inside the threshold, eyes like velvet watching her face. The

woman finished with her last button and angled her mouth towards him. He pressed a finger to her lips. She lingered for just a moment, then turned and clipped down the hall.

The man watched her receding figure before retreating into his apartment and closing the door.

Cecelia kept her eye to the peep-hole, looking out at the now-empty hallway. She wondered if, across that hall, the man was leaning against his door. She imagined him putting that finger to his lips.

She left her post and waded through the gloom to the living room window. Crystals of ice had accumulated in the corners and even from a few inches away the glass radiated cold. Cecelia tugged her dressing gown closer.

Melancholy light was beginning to filter through a dim expanse of clouds, but it was obvious that even when the day dawned it wouldn't realize its full brightness.

Cecelia peered out at the street below. It seemed very far away. By the light of a lamp-post she was able to make out the woman in the red coat emerging from the building. The young woman took a few brisk steps, then stopped at the curb just like she did every morning, and turned her head back towards the apartment. Cecelia watched her, knowing that the woman's eyes were going straight through her, to the apartment across the hall.

She returned to her breakfast table. A half-eaten piece of toast and a cold cup of coffee greeted her. The clock on the mantle read eight o'clock. The mail wouldn't come for another two hours. She wasn't expecting anything, but she might as well check. It was Christmas Eve, after all.

Cecelia gathered the dishes and succumbed to her usual chores, which she performed with practiced monotony. Two hours crept by.

Finally the second hand reached the desired hour. Cecelia tightened the cinch on her dressing gown and slipped the mail key into her pocket. The trip to the lobby was a short one but it left her tired. Her fingers shook as she tried to insert the key into the mailbox and a thrill of anticipation accosted her veins. The latch clicked open with the sound of a question. Nothing. Cecelia closed the metal door. She hadn't been expecting anything.

Back in her apartment Cecelia tried to read but her eyes felt heavy. She tried knitting but her fingers ached.

She tried just sitting but then everything seemed to ache. Finally she drifted into an uneasy sleep.

Forlorn dream-images were just beginning to take over her mind when the door buzzer sounded. Cecelia jolted awake. The buzzer cawed once more.

She rose as quickly as her limbs would allow. An old radio sat next to the couch. She fumbled with the buttons and managed to insert an old CD of Christmas carols. The first few bars of "Silent Night" filled the air. Once more a dim fluttering rushed through her stomach. She shuffled over to the intercom and pressed the button.

"Yes?"

"Mrs. Hargrave?"

"Yes, hello. Who is this?"

"I have your grocery delivery, ma'am."

"Oh. Of course. Yes. Come right up." Cecelia pressed the button and waited.

Soon a young man arrived carrying several bags of groceries.

"Just on the counter, please." Cecelia watched as he put down the groceries. The crisp outside air clung to his red cheeks. He smelled of expectant snow.

"I was just about to put the kettle on when you rang," Cecelia said. "Would you like a cup of hot chocolate?"

"Thank you, but I have to get to my other deliveries."

"Ah, yes. You must have a busy day today."

"Very."

Cecelia handed over a cheque. The young man turned to leave.

"How about a Christmas orange? For the road."

"Thank you," he said, taking the orange she offered him. "It's supposed to bring you good luck if you peel them all in one piece."

"I didn't know that."

"Well, thank you again. Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas." With a click of the latch he was gone.

Cecelia began to put the groceries away. She faded into the slow, mechanical movements and let her mind rest. At last all that was left of the groceries was a fat

chicken, wrapped tight in plastic. Why had she ordered it? She opened the freezer and stuffed the carcass inside.

Outside the sun was already dipping towards the horizon under woolen clouds. A drifting snow began to fall.

Cecelia poured a can of soup into a bowl and warmed it in the microwave. She put a handful of soda crackers on a tray and shuffled over to the table. The Christmas CD ended just as she was sitting down to her meal. The heavy tick of the clock returned to mock her.

Cecelia ate in silence. She watched the wall and felt as though it watched her back. Neither had anything to say. She wished it were time for bed already. Winter days took you off guard like that. They imposed their darkness on you and then expected you to go on as though nothing was missing.

She had placed a basket of Christmas oranges on the table and now she picked one out, removing its frail paper wrapping. The orange felt plump and real in her hand. She dug her nails into the skin and began to peel. But her fingers soon seized up and the delicate peel fell away in several pieces. Cecelia set it beside her and tried another. Once again she couldn't complete the task. She tried with another orange, and then another, until her fingers were shaking. She placed her elbows on the table and let her head fall into her hands. The tangy smell of the oranges rose around her, releasing a thousand Christmas memories.

Suddenly the sound of a pair of high heels echoed down the hallway like bells. Cecelia glanced up and blinked back a few tears. She rose from the table and for the second time that day took her place at the peep-hole.

The woman in the red coat opened the door across the hall. The room she looked in on had changed since that morning. At the far end of the apartment a small table basked in soft candlelight, laid out with Christmas dinner for two.

The man appeared from within, holding two glasses of wine. He offered one to her.

"Merry Christmas."

The door swung shut as the young woman moved forward to embrace him.

Cecelia pulled back from the door. The last vestiges of daylight had disappeared and once more she was in

darkness. She flicked on a lamp and picked up one last orange. With patient fingers she caressed the peel and coaxed it off in one long, dangling strip.

Later, Cecelia lay in bed, waiting for sleep to overtake her. She listened to the wails of passion which reverberated from the apartment across the hall. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day. Tomorrow there would be one more minute of daylight than today. She waited for tomorrow.

*Bodyscan*

*By: Ellen Jefferies*



*Conquête*

*By: Christine Bolduc*

Nous traverserons des fleuves débridés  
Qui ne cherchent qu'à emporter les cœurs  
Au large d'une mer morte,  
Cimetière des âmes  
Où paradent des corps dépouillés

Nous boirons à des sources d'oubli  
Qui jamais n'apaisent la soif  
Des chercheurs d'or  
Et pourtant  
La volonté dans les mains  
L'amour dans les veines  
Et la candeur dans les yeux  
Aurons raison de l'oubli  
Aurons raison des voleurs de mémoire

Nous irons cueillir les mots désormais vides  
Et pendus aux portes des villes sans âme  
Nous les bénirons et  
Nous les remplirons comme des coupes  
De l'eau de vie qui fait chanter les femmes  
Et qui fait aimer les hommes  
Pour qu'ainsi nos langues parlent  
Le langage de l'aube

Nous irons conquérir à nouveau  
Notre ardeur  
Notre foi  
Notre fierté d'être homme  
Qui nous furent arrachés  
Dans les rues de la banalité  
Sur les boulevards de l'ignorance  
Avide du sang des glorieux

Aux portes de fer des murailles sans nom  
Gardées par les plus vils despotes  
Nous assaillerons notre cité perdue  
Notre île aux trésors  
Notre patrie tant aimée



Notre terre sacrée

Toi qui cherche  
Toi qui veux te souvenir  
Toi qui pleure la douleur de la terre  
Toi dont les mains sont grandes  
Et infatigables  
Toi dont la tête cherche sans répit  
Un baume à la souffrance du monde  
Toi dont chaque jour est une lutte  
Toi qui aime et qui espère  
Viens  
Je te tend la main  
Frère



*Unicorn*

*By: Ingrid Hardy*

*Crossing Borders*

*By: Barbara Hunting*

I cross borders of learning everyday in my classroom  
This summer I crossed some international borders in order  
to keep learning  
I am a communicator; I cross many borders, I have many  
abilities, people assume  
I am a feminist sociologist, I where many hats, costumes—  
whatever the moment may be  
I love the classroom; I love connecting the classroom to the  
real world  
Those interconnections spark “the aha moments” the light  
bulb moments of learning  
I live for those moments—those moments of crossing  
borders into new territory.....  
My work is intergenerational; getting people together,  
talking—it is work and play  
I research HIV/AIDS and the grandmothers and grand  
daughter struggle in Africa.  
Crossing the borders of life—that’s what my sister did this  
week; her heart stopped  
It’s been a week and the doctors haven’t found any real  
reason why her heart stopped  
I am thankful that my brother-in-law didn’t fall asleep first  
that night; he is a superhero!  
Crossing borders; my sister lives on Vancouver Island; I  
live in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, We play scrabble  
on facebook nearly everyday; talking to her yesterday was a  
great joy! I’m not ready to loose my sister; we’ve recently  
discovered so many commonalities.  
She is going to be a bionic woman now; with an ICD to  
jump start her heart—  
WOW, that’s science!!! She is crossing borders to a brave  
new world.  
I am in the business of learning—yes it is a business now!  
We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.  
She is a retail manager; we both deal with people—and  
people are fascinating.....  
I crossed many borders this summer to explore Malawi,  
Africa

I fell in love with the people in Malawi, Africa—**people** are important in Malawi;  
 by our western standards, they have so little; yet they have so much; they have each other. They do battle with HIV/AIDS on a daily basis—they are crossing the border of living, Many loose loved ones because they don't understand—AIDS is a daily struggle for many; many who haven't learned to read—school fees are charged—so they cannot cross that border to learning.....

I learned to explain my research and help people understand what it is I do in life.

Crossing borders; I broke down many assumptions this summer; I learned;

Those around me learned as well—some are still filtering their experience.

I have begun the journey of piecing it together—others are afraid; afraid they don't have enough knowledge to cross borders—for me, it's about letting go; about letting the learning find me—it will; if you let it.....cross borders; take the next step

My work and play keep me busy; I thrive on crossing the borders of life

I learned about a new culture this summer; I reconnected to a simple way of life

I crossed the border of appreciation, I appreciated each day of my journey—from sunrise to sunset—Many people in the village did not understand why we were there—they cannot cross borders—Malawi contains their people—I talked to a woman who wanted to travel with her husband—she has applied for a travel visa twice and has been refused twice; Malawi contains their people—Malawi is the warm heart of Africa—people are its resource; you are always welcome there. I crossed that border and will again—

I need to keep learning about the borders of learning, living, and life. I did not cross these borders alone; find the like-minded people—struggle together; that is part of the process; Life is a process, struggle to understand it and enjoy it; I do everyday.



*BU, Only Rjcher - Gaiters*  
*By: Christopher Palmer*

*Window Sill*

*By: K. King*

What is a window sill?

Is it simply a ledge,  
rudely jutting out from  
a window?  
Or is it purposefully placed  
to support the little trinkets  
that I refuse to cast away?

Is it a ridge whereon I can  
precariously stand and look  
down into a deep abyss of  
nothing?  
Or is it a stepping stone into  
another reality?

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

Why does a window even need  
a sill?

Is it simply a support for  
your weak, cancer consumed  
body?  
Or does a barren sill remind  
you of a bereft womb,  
an empty house?

*I am Janan*

*By: Janan Chan, (age 13)*

I am Janan.

I am a dark brown haired, Chinese, 13 year old MAN, made  
in Hong Kong.

Born December 23, 1996, Christmas Eve Eve.  
Live with my **PhD** mom, visit dad in Hong Kong during  
summer.

I LOVE ART. I LOVE ART. I LOVE ART. I LOVE ART.  
TIMES INFINITY.

I love the way anything can be considered as art, even a  
bunch of soup cans or a box, especially pop and modern  
art.

Even making art that goes against the cultural norm can be  
considered art.

I can honestly say I love school, hanging out with friends,  
making art, and strangely even learning. I love it after  
rearranging a huge algebraic equation, and everything is  
organized and then the answer becomes so clear. But  
sometimes it's weird when I get good marks, because I  
hate being the guy who brags about good marks, but I  
always love the attention.

I sometimes wonder if there's a kid from the past thinking  
of today, making our present, his future. And I wonder if  
a kid from the future will think back to now, making our  
present, his past. Meaning, we are the past, present, and  
future.

Sometimes I feel that maybe my life is a TV show and  
everything is scripted, but I'm the only real actor, and  
billions of people are watching me struggle through the  
drama of "everyday" life, like the "Truman show". Spooky  
stuff...

And one of my favourite quotes is by Herman Melville who  
once said "It's better to fail in originality, than to succeed  
in imitation"

I hate films that convince women, that they can only be  
accepted, if they're skinny, white, pumped with plastic,  
and have to be treated as garbage by men.

Unfortunately, still being young, I have already been  
convinced by media that I will grow up and live the  
"dream." Owning a mansion, in France, with my sports



cars and lots of money. But I doubt that would happen, because I seem self-sabotaging, like when everything is going great, I somehow mess it up. So maybe, I'll grow up and want to get a PhD so badly, that I go insane and become paranoid schizophrenia like John Fobes Nash. Or maybe the future is too much to worry about, and I should just let fate work its magic.

My favourite foods include, sushi, ribs, Chinese food (and real Chinese food like the stuff from Hong Kong, not the crap from "Mandarin") and salmon.

For a kid my age, surprisingly, my favourite drink is water. I think my only fear is things that might happen, and I can do nothing about it. Like going insane, and not being able to do anything.

I can't call myself a Christian, but my mom is and brings me to church, but lets me decide for myself. But I know somewhere down the road there's gonna be some big tragedy that turns my whole life around, but until then,

I'm just a fresh slate.

I am Janan.

The past, present and future.



*Untitled*

*By: Alyson Briggs*

## *General's Pointe*

*By: John Partington*

"What are you waiting for, Bennett? Hurry up and climb through the window!" barked Tristan entering the kitchen.

"He's coming down the stairs. We need to leave."

"Geez, I'm trying, just give me a second, my foot is caught."

"Let me help, I'll give you a push". Tristan grabbed his brother's foot and lifted it through the open window above their kitchen sink. The slanted counter was full of rotting, dirty dishes. He lifted himself from the peeling linoleum floor and placed his hands on the windowsill. He jumped through. His foot hit a bottle of Jack Daniels inching its way off the side. His father bellowed behind, the clicking of his oversized brown boots molested his ears. The boys bolted through the backyard, kicking up orange dust clouds at their feet. Bennett led the way, passing the rusty Ford at the edge of the property. They curved to the left and followed their dirt path into the tall grass that grew behind the yard.

"Free again!" joked Bennett catching his breath. "Let's run down to the river. I want to climb the maple trees by the clearing. I'll race you! First one there gets to be the general."

Tristan turned back toward the house. He stood upright, fists clenched. His brow stiffened.

"I don't want to play your stupid army games anymore. He almost got us this time. It's not funny."

"Aw come on! I want to play. I know you do too". Bennett waved his arms in protest. The oversized sleeves of his sweater flailed wildly. "Just because you are turning twelve doesn't mean you can't climb the maple trees and watch the river like we always do."

Tristan paused, relaxing his shoulders. He ripped a blade of grass from its stalk and smiled. "Fine. Only for a little bit. First one there is the general. Go!"

The brothers raced through the brush to the forest edge. Bennett ran forward and was engulfed by the foliage.

"Wait," Tristan yelled looking up. The maple trees had just begun to lose their leaves. Layers of red and orange formed a canopy over him separating land from sky, Tristan from his father. The forest floor was firm. Tree trunks stood strong and silent completing the entrance.

"What are you doing?" Bennett replied through the trees. "This is a race, there's no stopping." Tristan grinned and ran ahead. In a flat space between two old trees stumps, Bennett sat upon a grey boulder fixed in the ground. Green moss grew around his feet. With his hands behind his back, he looked down confused. "Why did you stop?" he said "I hate it when you let me win. Its no fun."

"I think we should go to Aunt Jeanne's now. What if he comes after us this time? You know we can't stay with him for much longer."

"I know," he replied. "We will have to go somewhere else. But why are you scared? He never follows us. You always tell me that. Let's play." Bennett looked upward trying to hide a smile.

"I really think we should cut back to Aunt Jeanne's."

"Just let me do one thing, okay?"

"What's that?"

"This!" Bennett threw a handful of moss at Tristan's face. He bounced off the boulder and ran deeper into the forest laughing.

"You come back here!" he screamed trying to wipe the fragments of mud and undergrowth from his eyes. He sprang forward after him. The chase began. The boys maneuvered through the dense forest like white tailed deer, traversing frosting rocks, dodging sap bleeding tree trunks, and under bare branches. Tristan imagined himself transforming into a wolf chasing the frantic deer. He was herding his prey into the clearing where he could easily catch it. He heard the flow of the river to the right not far away.

Bennett had already climbed the biggest maple tree that marked the opening to the river. "I'm the general again!" he yelled down to his brother from the second branch. "I command you to climb up here with me."

Tristan stood facing the tree. "I want to sit at our spot by the curve of the river. Come down. I need to wash my face, I can barely see."

"Fine. Go ahead over. I'm coming" he replied scaling the trunk.

The rocks that cut into the bend of the river were enormous. Their jagged edges fit perfectly into one another, making a ridge that over looked the racing water.

A small string of pebbled beach extended from either side of the formation. The boys had named it General's Pointe. Leaning over the edge, Tristan splashed cold water on his face and padded his cheeks with his navy t-shirt.

"The general is now at General Pointe," Bennett announced sitting beside his brother. "Let's take a break. I'm tired." They sat together, kneecaps just touching, and watched the water in silence.

The river flowed the entire length of the small town. Collecting speed from the rolling foothills of the east, it flowed along the edge of the forest. Bending westward at General's Pointe, the water headed to the town centre and cut Main Street in half with the Bingham Bridge. The flows in front of them were rapids. Boulders pushed down the river had come to rest directly across from General's Pointe. White water harassed the visible tips of the rocks, projecting its way around to the bend.

"This is our place Bennett. You know that right?" Tristan said staring at the gushing white water. His arms were crossed and rested on his knees. "Yeah," he replied. His neck was twisted, looking off at the pebble beach by the turn.

"Bennett!" he demanded elbowing him in the side.

"What? I think I see something on the beach. It's like a white piece of stone. Maybe it's a shark bone? Or a whole skeleton?"

"Shark's only live in salt water," Tristan thought to himself. He chuckled.

"What? What's funny? Tell me," demanded Bennett frustrated. The gusting river wind rustled the fraying hood of his black sweater.

"It's nothing, lets go check it out."

The brothers cascaded down the side of the ridge. A series of pastel grey boulders made a ladder to the pebble beach. Bennett jumped from one stone to another, Tristan following behind him. The pebbles were glistening with a thin coat of water. Grains of sand filled the between spaces completing the collage at their feet. Bennett galloped ahead making sand pits in his wake.

"I think it's a piece of an old dinner plate," he said crouching.

"Let me see it," Tristan replied joining him.



Bennett gently picked up the plate from between two pebbles and rested it on his palms. The porcelain fragment was triangular in shape, almost filling his hand. The white china finish was all but eroded away, revealing rough and speckled ceramic. The edges were smooth and stained an aged pale brown as if steeped in tea for decades. Small depressions filled with grime littered the upper corner.

"This looks really old. It must be an antique or something" Tristan said entranced. "Turn it over, what's on the back?" Half a symbol was stamped in midnight blue ink. A unicorn with a golden harness reared violently, anchored to a coat of arms topped with a heart and crown. Black veins flowed away from the crest through the white china, mapping a darkened mosaic of time. A curving banner attached all the elements at the bottom.

"R. Cochran & Company. Glasgow. 1877" mouthed Bennett. "That must be the maker right? Oh my god! This is from the 1800's! It's an ancient artifact. Like in Egypt." He rose with excitement. "We've found a piece of history!"

"It's probably just a plate. Glasgow is a city in Scotland. That's in Europe. But how did it get here? Who did it belong to?"

Tristan stood. The warmth of the sun faltered as it touched the horizon.

"Maybe it belonged to a Scottish prince, who lived in a stone castle with a drawbridge. He ate drumsticks off it. And drank wine from a golden goblet" Bennett said, his eyes lighting up. He imagined the lines of the original periwinkle ink forming on the plate, drawing the castle walls and central tower as he spoke. "And he had to slay the evil water monster with his mighty sword to save the princess."

"Do you mean the Loch Ness Monster?" said Tristan, his forehead wrinkling.

"Yeah that's it! And the prince had a brother who helped him on all his missions. Together they fought green trolls and learned magic from a powerful sorcerer and his faeries. Maybe he killed all the monsters in the rolling hills and came here to find more."

"That's all make believe. Old stories like that didn't really happen. Let's head back to the rocks, we need to get going." He zipped up his brown jacket and started walking away, hands in the pockets of his faded jeans.

"I see something in the water, Tristan. Look, it's coming toward us."

Ten feet from the beach, a black oval shape moved toward the shoreline. A silver circle at the front of the mass caught the failing light. Working against the current, a steady length of ripples flowed behind it. Bennett stood transfixed on the pebbles, the piece of plate still in his hand.

"What? I don't see anything. It's probably just a piece of driftwood. Come on, we need to go," Tristan yelled turning around.

"Drift wood can't swim against the river, stupid. Look! It's getting closer, not floating away."

Cracking branches roared by the maple tree that marked the clearing.

"What was that?" Tristan said uneasily. He moved to his brother's side.

Bushes and shrubs rustled at the forest edge. Twigs snapped and something slammed closed. The black shape immediately submerged with a loud splash.

"It's the monster! Run!" Bennett screamed.

Tristan grabbed Bennett's hand and ran for the rocks. The black shape surfaced and seemed to follow them as they ran. The color drained from Tristan's face. His heart began to work in overdrive, his breath accelerating uncontrollably. With every pulse he felt the dark mass getting closer and closer. The being was now at the white rapids. Reaching for the last rock to the ridge, Bennett opened his hand and dropped the plate. It shattered into pieces, rejoining the pebbles. Sprinting to the clearing, Tristan pulled his brother back into the forest.

"Can it walk on land?" Bennett questioned in mid stride.

"It doesn't matter" he gasped. His face was drenched in sweat, the whites of his eyes enlarged. "Keep running."

The chase resumed. The boys stampeded further into the forest, running from the darkness that stalked them. Night had fallen. Looking up through the canopy of shadow, Tristan saw the dim light of the moon. It illuminated only fragments of the path. The forest surrounding General's Pointe was black like the shape in the water. The trees now belonged to the grey owls gazing down at them. The forest floor was still firm, but felt cool and unfamiliar. Thinking they had covered enough distance, Tristan stopped



running. Bennett's palms were sweaty and shaking in his hands.

"We need to hide. Maybe that thing will give up if it can't find us."

They stood facing each other. Bennett was silent, a vacant look on his face. Tristan scanned the area. They had never traveled this far into the forest before. His brother pointed to the left. Nestled at the base of two intertwining trees, a shedding lilac bush stood holding on to the last of its purple flowers.

"There. We can squeeze under the branches," said Bennett. Then he heard it. A rhythmic clunking of metal on metal sounding at every step. Tristan knew this sound. He cringed.

"Hide. Now!" he said, trying to keep his voice down.

The brothers lunged for the lilac bush, slithering underneath the cover of its branches. Fallen flowers lay strewn on the ground below them. The dim rays of moonlight gently kissed the tips of the curling petals. The clicking moved closer to their hiding place. Tristan held his breath; Bennett covered his mouth with his hands. For a second it seemed to move further away, heading back in the direction it came from. A tear fell from Bennett's closed eyes. He shivered in silence. The sound started again, this time twice as fast as before.

"He's running," Tristan thought. "He's seen us."

The hexagonal bruises on Tristan's rib cage began to throb. The clicking of a zipper handle on its track of teeth stopped. Bennett opened his eyes. A golden hexagonal ring stared back at him. An oversized brown boot stood inches from his hands.

### *Dirty Nails (a monologue)*

*By: Robert Tracey*

*Light's up on a man, mid 20's, alone on stage. He is sitting on a chair, or a black box, near the audience. The man is looking intently at his fingernails.*

My mother hates long fingernails.

"There's nothing worse on a man than long, dirty nails".

And the dirt that builds up underneath; the dirty black stuff from God-knows-where.

"Makes you look like a steele."

she'd say. She cut them herself 'til I was seven. Picking and prodding at everything.

Scrubbing them, peeling back the, what are they called?

The little skin bits that go over the nail

at the bit that meets the rest of your fingers.

"Mom" I'd say. "Mom, jeez, would ya give it up."

But she'd keep up, scrubbin' and pluckin' and trimming those stupid, y'know, those stupid hangnails. And they'd sting something fierce but you just had to clench your teeth and bear it all 'til she'd frig off.

Thank God she don't bother anymore. Even so, if I'd been away for a while, every time I come back home:

*(Standing up, looking SL)*

"Hey mom!"

*(Turning in the opposite direction, he becomes the mother. He hugs the air)*

"Ohhhh..."

*(Releases the hug, grabs his own hand and raises it to his face)*

"Look at those fingers! You'd think you were a steele!"

*(Sitting back down)*

And she'd keep at it, relentlessly.

"Have you cut your nails yet?"

*(Sighs)*

"Have you cut your nails yet?"

*(Groans)*

"Have you cut your nails yet?"

"No mom! Don't worry about it. Jeez."

*(Pause)*

But I never do mind much, 'cause she's, well, my mother y'know. And... well...

*(Leaning in)*

To tell you the truth.... I love dirty fingernails.

Okay, bare with me now, 'cause I know it sounds ridiculous. But you gotta know, see, that it's in my genetic make-up, there's no fighting it. I come from a long line of dirty, uncut fingernails. It's my dad's fault.

Let me try and explain...

Christmas eve, 1993. I was four, and we'd just moved into our new apartment. My mother was working as a secretary for a local junior high school, and my sister, who turned... 12, I guess... that year, was just getting into her "bratty" phase. My dad wasn't home. He was still at work.

It's the oldest home movie we have. It's my youngest memory, as far as I can tell. Mom had her brand new video camera on the whole night. And my dad is nowhere to be seen. Now, this is Christmas eve! We're sitting around the living room waiting for him to get home, so we can open some presents. But he ain't there. Then the camera turns towards the door. You hear that uncanny...

*(He stomps his feet twice)*

...My dad knockin' the snow off his boots. In he walks. He looks exhausted. He's got on these big blue overalls, and he's carrying this big metal thermos. I run over to him.

*(Standing up, he runs to the lip of the stage. Looking up at his father.)*

"Hey dad, guess what. We're going to open presents."

He looks down at me and smiles, quiet.

"Hey dad, guess what. I know what sissy got me. It's a Ninja turtle."

He puts his hand on the top of my head, rustles my hair.

"And you turn it into a fire truck, dad."

He's still smiling, and he pulls away his hand. He says something softly... "That's good", or something. But he's just too quiet, or tired, or something.

And then he walks over to the sink. And he'd always do this. He rolls back his sleeves, turns the water on, and washes his hands. And the dirt would just wash off, so much of it. Then you'd see all these calluses and cuts, and these massive swollen fingers, just hidden beneath it all, y'know.

*(Smiling)*

"Bill! Bill!" Mom calls out. "Look at the camera, Bill!"

He turns, and he dries off his hands. And then he picks me up and walks over... kisses my mother right on the lips.

*(Sitting back down)*

Until he retired, my dad would wake up at 5 am, six days a week. He worked 14 hour shifts. Sometimes, he'd work longer, doing other people's work too. He never took a sick day in his entire life.

*(Holding his palms out to the audience)*

So when I look at my hands and I see all the dirt, all my cuts and scrapes, I compare them to my father's. They're never as much, but I'm proud of how much black stuff's under these nails.

It's about working hard, y'know, and doing what you got to.

*-Chapter Three-  
Lips of the Night*



*Venice After Day  
By: Sonia Z. Palik*



*Old Man  
By: Daniel Taggart-Hodge*

*Vent Du Nord  
By: Christine Bolduc*

Souffle souffle vent du nord  
 Souffle souffle les flans de la terre  
 Endors l'effervescence de la vie de ton haleine glacée  
 Que tombe le silence sur nos villes de neige  
 Pour qu'ainsi j'entende cette voix  
 Accrochée à tes ailes bleues  
 Comme l'espoir à nos rêves innocents  
 Cette voix chaude et bienveillante  
 Des mères de nos mères  
 Écho des temps oubliés  
 Où la terre exaltait un langage connu des hommes  
 Où les bergers,  
 sur les milliers de sommets du monde,  
 s'endormaient au son des cantiques des étoiles  
 Où les femmes sans honte  
 chantaient haut et fort  
 la gloire des déesses aux cent visages.  
 Souffle souffle vent du nord  
 Souffle souffle nos routes enneigées  
 Endors les nymphes dans leur prison de glace  
 Que ta berceuse enivrante  
 Murmure aux sylphes gracieuses  
 Qu'il n'est pas encore temps,  
 non  
 Pas encore le temps d'étirer ses ailes d'azur  
 Et de venir m'enivrer de leur voix cristallines  
 L'heure est au silence  
 Pur silence  
 Comme le bleu du ciel sous le soleil d'hiver  
 Chut...l'entendez-vous?  
 L'entendez-vous cette voix du silence  
 Qui vous cherche dans chaque petit cristal de neige  
 Dans chacune de vos longues nuits de solitude  
 Ouvrons nos cœurs rouillés  
 Et nous sera révélé le secret longuement gardé de nos aïeuls  
 Tendons nos mains rêches  
 Et nous sera donné la clé qui ouvre la porte des étoiles  
 Ainsi le ciel sera enfin libre  
 Libre d'enfanter sur la terre ses rêves dorés  
 D'ici là...chut...écouter la voix du silence.





*Unicorn*

*By: Ingrid Hardy*

*Scars*

*By: Prof. Shawn Malley*

He never removed his shirt. Elemental forces conspired to this end. The August sun beat down up him as he labored in the ripening grain; spring breezes caressed the borders of his winter-stifled flesh; cool spring water coaxed him as he bathed. Not even the jealous night shared his secret, the shame etched into his back.

He lived alone but he was far from solitary. For his hidden affliction assured him continuous company. Everyone wanted to be near him, to touch and to rend the veil of sadness that haunts souls admired for gifts unsought. Many seekers brought many balms for his unseen pain,

but, still, the thin barrier to that hidden knowledge remained.

In love, where questions and flattery and sympathy failed, hands searched. Longing fingers probed, yearning for traces of pain, for the scores of imagined suffering left upon this sad and beautiful man. Their disappointment only fueled their desire for the privilege of this great secret, for mastery.

The women from the village gathered at Giaco's to compare their intimacies. A band of broken souls ranged against a barrier of white cloth. Of the group, Mariana the washerwoman achieved no small measure of notoriety as the one closest to his secret. On dark afternoons she whet their appetite with clues divined from small bundles left for her outside his door.

And the women of the village were watched by Giaco's daughter, Isabella, who served them coffee.

One dark afternoon he came into the cafe, shouldering a sack of flour. The village women shot cold glances when Isabella led him into the back room.

And in this room, with its heavy gray light and thick odor of coffee, he turned to her. She looked up, hands clasped before her. "I know everything," she said, drawing close.

She produced a small curved blade from her apron pocket and said: "Now turn around and take off your shirt." He obeyed in an instant.

*In the Darkness of Night, All Birds are Blackbirds*

*By: Eleanor Gang*

No moon illuminated the garden, the only sources of light were the pinpoints of fireflies, flashing for their mates, or the decoys that made meals of would-be suitors, and the eyes of the cat as it stalked through the underbrush in search of its own nocturnal nosh.

Louise sat on the porch swing and pulled her shawl closer around her shoulders. The sun had set hours ago, bathing the yard in pinks and yellows, then slowly colours had faded and the sky had gone from blue to mauve to silver to black. There were fireflies in the woods and fireflies up above; the former winking on and off, the latter twinkling in their constant constellations.

It's getting chilly, thought Louise. I should go inside, turn on a light, wash up the dinner dishes, start on my mending. Still she sat. The cat materialized in front of her and rubbed its dew-laden fur against her shins. She reached down and scratched behind its ears. It dropped something at her feet and she could barely see the offering of a mouse, its neck broken.

"I've had my supper, Puss," Louise said. "You eat it." Puss picked up the small limp body and carried it to a far corner of the porch to consume it. Louise looked away, even though the darkness hid the carnage.

She gazed up at the stars and felt small and helpless and lonely. Once George would have sat here with her, pointing out the constellations, telling her stories about Orion chasing the Pleiades, or Pegasus throwing off Bellerophon as he attempted to storm Olympus. He would have pointed out the Summer Triangle, the Eagle's Eye. She looked for the red star that was Antares but couldn't find it. She looked for George among the pinpoints of light, but he wasn't there either.

Oh, George, she thought. You weren't supposed to go without me. We made a deal.

The cat finished its meal and came and sat next to its mistress, delicately washing paws and whiskers. Who would have thought such a fastidious, affectionate creature could dispatch small woodland creatures so efficiently and cold-bloodedly? A little Grim Reaper.

At home, does the gatherer of souls take off his robe, hang his scythe on a nail, put on a woolen sweater and sit on a rocker by the fire, then put his feet up and relax from a hard day of reaping? Does his wife bring him hot cider like I used to bring George? Does he have a cat? Louise reached down to scratch Puss again and was rewarded by a lick from its rough pink tongue.

"I'm going in, Puss," she said, "it's cold. Are you coming?" She got off the porch swing, which creaked under the shift in weight and for a moment she thought George was beside her in the darkness. No. It was just darkness. From the apple tree a night bird sang. A blackbird, for all she could see.

*Press Release: Hitler's Jaw Opens Today*

*By: Shawn Malley*

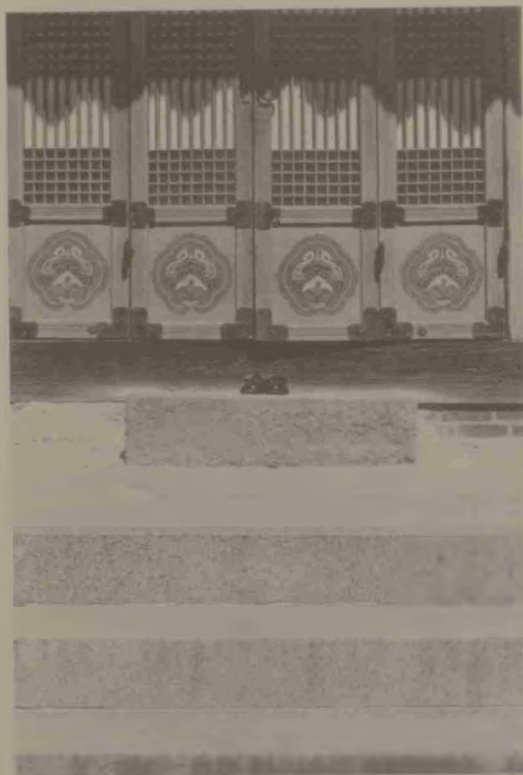
The mortal remains of Adolf Hitler are now on public display at the Hermitage Museum in Moscow.

Consisting of several skull fragments and a portion of a lower jawbone, the relics were reputedly spirited away to Moscow in a cigar box after having been salvaged by Russian soldiers from a makeshift crematorium in the Chancellery garden in the spring of 1945. They have remained in an underground vault beneath KGB headquarters ever since.

Refurbished by forensic dentists to its original state after six decades of KGB neglect and hard Russian winters, the jaw, which retains several teeth and sturdy gold bridge work, is certainly the most valuable piece in the collection. Museum curator Yuri Menshikov remarks that the artifact survives as "a testament to both the crude dental practices of the war era, and to the painful battle with tooth decay

that plagued the dictator his entire adult life." But the bridge, he adds, "was made to last."

Hitler's jaw will be joined next month by King Tutankhamen's funerary mask, which is currently on the second leg of its two-year tour of Eastern Europe.



*Sacred South  
Korea  
By: Barbara  
Cvenic*

*December*

*By: Christopher Carmichael*

Perhaps when bundled  
the cold is staved  
but we know it's just a jest,  
for of the ways to infiltrate  
Cold's fingers know the best.

*The Wonder King  
By: Denise St. Pierre*

He exists as gestures, quips, and silent moments in  
between, during which  
he regains his bearings.  
His empty gaze pesters for meaning.  
He is a quiet smile that finds me across the room.  
An unanswered question. Pause. Pause. An enthusiastic  
reply.  
From this, I've constructed a facsimile of love,  
which I paint onto the bare, stretched canvas  
of his effervescent presence.  
He incites the proverbial  
leap  
of my heart from my chest, into my throat.  
I am regarded, yet remain untouched.  
He exists within an impenetrable ring; I cannot enter.  
He is an inkblot.  
Eventually, he will fade from the chronicle of my memory,  
but leave a stain, a reminder of this cheap imitation.  
This posture of love.

*Untitled  
By: Kathleen Mulawka*

Striding fast, with silent laughs and hollow eyes that seek  
the reality of a searching sole, forsaken, too scared to speak.  
A shake in the night to away and find, your heart has  
skipped a beat  
you're closing the curtain; stammering and uncertain if  
that will help you sleep.  
Scribbled and splattered, the pages are tattered from the  
spirit that escapes your eyes:  
It's an old trick mistaken to stick, your fears from your life  
and your lies.  
So these thoughts in your mind that unravel and wind to  
puzzles that weave a thick web,  
leave the answers you seek, to appear distant and weak for  
the insanity that's consumed your head.



*Incurable Humanness*

*By: Krissy Mitchell*

Beat me until I cannot breathe  
    until my screams cease to exist  
    remind me why tears still exist  
some say it's a gift  
others a curse

my opinion?  
    this is life  
        my life  
        unchangeable

look into the mirror, if i did  
    sunken eyes far beyond help of coloured  
concealment

would Nosferatu not cringe at my pale  
    eyes the colour of desensitized  
        deep black holes  
        i used to fall

into every now and again

EMPTY...  
    but for when she fills my cup  
        the maker of my unreality

soft as clay she moulds my dreams  
    unsoftly spoken

Imprudent  
Malicious

Violent of taste

my cup becomes unpalatable  
    the insomniac mind stretching beyond the edges of  
darkness

finally I fall

Asleep...

Before me lies a door  
A summer door stained blue  
A door that she would scold him  
For the constant slam he let

Behind me her voice resonates  
She whispers in my ear  
It flows across the threshold  
Softly bringing chilll

    A step back      stumble  
        gasp  
    I glance but do not want to see  
There is but one reflection staring back at me

You do not exist I plead  
Another voice inside my head

The softly spoken ghost  
Demands I don't pretend

The summer door turns ugly  
The glass begins to crack

SLAMMING SLAMMING SLAMMING  
The dead behind my back  
And with the smell of lilies  
The voice shrieks in my ear  
see my little one

Can't you

hears?

You're the only one who

Blind my ears, deafen my eyes

I'm not alone in this  
Choose some other troubled mind  
For I do not possess...

But then I was mistaken  
Something was misplaced  
I finally saw her reasoning  
For the slamming in my face

Above the beating hearts, you see,  
The hearts that beated just for me  
A story lies within

A wooden desk  
A secret drawer  
A letter left unread

He thought I had forgotten...  
But the only forgotten  
are the dead

the night I met my lover's mother



*Cherubim*  
By: Karine Dingle

*State of Grace*  
By: Frank Harding

This is what is left - a broken whistle  
made like a clay idol, souvenir of Peru  
and other days, before she lost all and everything.  
There is a book! But it's last year's horoscope for Libra.  
She's a Gemini. The television hisses and flares French  
infomercials and incomprehensible soaps and finally  
snow as she drifts in and out of sleep.

I see her every Tuesday, a little ritual after taking my  
medicine  
She waits all week for this, and if I don't appear she calls to  
weep  
and berate me and, and as the week comes round again,  
implore. She is my friend  
though I can hardly recognize her now. Speak to her and  
it's like speaking aloud  
in an immense lightless hall. You can feel the emptiness,  
hear the void. Her eyes  
look past me, as though the angel of tomorrow stood at my  
back.

Her Johnny's gone, with their daughter, remarried and  
living well,  
his health returned. He's done with the juice, with the junk  
and blow,  
holding his father's job at Cascades, the union card and  
dental plan, the SUV  
and pretty wife. Grace kept the parrot and dog but both are  
now long gone, sacrificed  
to the coke bugs burrowing invisibly beneath her skin, shed  
with their mites and nematodes.  
Sometimes there is a new boyfriend snoring noisily in the  
other room.

Thus I came to sit one day across the burned and cracked  
formica waiting for coffee  
and listening to the litany of persecutions - witches stealing  
her urine, a plot to install cameras in her eyes for the

training of police-cadets, the hidden microphones, when there came stirrings, coughs, a toilet flush. The latest rubbed-out looking lover wandered into the kitchen, mumbled and poured the last of the coffee into a grubby-looking cup. She said  
 "This is Gaetan. He's my new boyfriend..."

and he spat out in fast crude French: "I'm not your damn boyfriend. I've got a wife at home!"

I gaped. Grace crumpled like tissue in a rainstorm. Her face twisted and the sobs came. Gaetan's face contorted with disgust, his eyes cold stone. "Calvaire!" he swore, and pulled on clothes crumpled on the floor. I could smell his teeth from across the room. I stared at him and he stared back, pulled on his boots, stood and clomped out the door - slammed it hard and stomped down the stairs.

Grace wept. I sat beside her chair and put my arm around her shoulder. Utterly inadequate sympathy but she did not notice. I dared not look at the approaching day with its pitiless winter sun. It was the broken whistle on the sill that did my staring blankly back at the sky, older than both of us, far from its home. I let her go and picked it up, brushed off the dust, put it to my lips and almost blew it.



*Fall Flood*  
 By: Mel  
 Hattie

## *Voices Through the Day*

By: Caitlin Barter

In the darkest of the night, I wander helplessly  
 In hopes of hearing your voice

One

Last

Time.

Is it selfish for me to want you back from the heavens?

To have you near, to keep me brave, nothing to fear?

This gluttony I have for you, to keep your last moments mine.

My unhealthy obsession.

Why can't I break these ties?

Invisible but strong, you hold me here.

You keep me from floating, from disappearing.

Like the honesty in my tears, I wouldn't have it any other way.

All that is missing is your voice.

Your soft whispers to carry me through the day.

You memories are enough to band my arms.



*Dogs, Beers and Uk'es- Summer 2010*

By: Mel Hattie



-Chapter Four-  
*A Drawer in my Dresser*

*The Oath*

By: Sair Korb

He pulled up to a squat white house and walked through the empty door frame, careful not to catch the sleeve of his suit on loose nails. He walked down the unlit hall and inhaled the familiar odours of urine and garbage. Looking down he noticed his leather dress shoe sink into the remnants of a pumpkin. He was feeling his way when his cell phone vibrated with a call. He ignored it. Faint groans of pleasure and pain reached his ears as he crept deeper into the dank, reeking house. He walked through an open door with the words 'The Man' spray painted across its plywood surface. 'The Man' was supposed to have the best stuff. A skinny black woman appeared out of the darkness. She wore an old, children's t-shirt and underwear.

"What's your name, baby?"

"Uh... it's Michael. Are you 'The Man'?"

"I can be anyone you want, baby. What can I do for you?" she asked, beckoning him with the crook of her finger and lazy brown eyes that were sunk deep into the recesses of her cheekbones. She was made of angles, her hips and ribs jutted out from her under stretched skin. A slow smile spread across her chapped, bloody lips revealing a row of yellowed teeth.

"Fuck off bitch, he ain't interested in you!" said a voice from the far corner of the room. "I know what you're here for. You want some grit. Right?" 'The Man', Michael realized with relief and anticipation. He was obscured from view by a small fire in a barrel to Michael's left.

"Here for some crack, eh?" asked 'The Man.' He stood up and slouched towards the barrel cast in eerie shadow by the flickering light across his hollowed face.

"I just got a new batch made up yesterday, real good koolaid, getcha feelin' right again."

"How much for 5 grams?"

"Big spender eh? It's gonna be 800 bucks."

Michael reached into his breast pocket and pulled out the walled his wife had given him on their first anniversary. He extracted eight 100 dollar bills and passed them over the fire. His greedy eyes watched 'The Man' pull out a small baggie filled with little white rocks. Michael grabbed the baggie and retreated to a dark corner. He pulled the lighter and tiny glass pipe from his pocket, checked that the steel wool was still in the tip and then held it to his lips. With delicate fingers he extracted one of the smallest rocks from the baggie and transferred it onto the steel wool. The lighter flared and the wool glowed red. He began to inhale the vapours that curled up the pipe, inviting them into his body like old friends. He inhaled again, listening to the crackle of water pockets in the rock explode. Then he slid down the wall and waited. He could feel the drugs start to take effect. They crawled under his skin and coursed through his veins until they hit his brain. Then there was only bliss. He felt euphoric, like he could do anything. He could run to the moon and back, or better yet, he could build the spaceship that would take them beyond the moon. He would fix his miserable life, and the lives of all the miserable people around him. If someone asked where he was two weeks from now, he knew they would learn that he had accomplished all his goals in life and was living happily and comfortably somewhere warm and safe. Michael's cell phone vibrated against his thigh, it irritated his skin, but he was above it. He reached into his pocket, read his eldest daughter's name on the caller ID and pushed the ignore button. He texted: **"Sorry sweetheart. In a mtng. Call u soon."**

\* \* \*

He couldn't remember how long he had been there. The darkness was his warm consort, it embraced him like no one else could. He sat hour after hour enjoying the easy company of crack. He would wait for the crushing depression to attack, then banish it with a farewell smile as he inhaled again and again until his lips cracked open from the heat of the pipe.

Michael realized he needed to urinate but he had no idea where he should go to do that. 'The Man' was still there, sitting in the corner where he had remained since Michael

had come in. He walked towards him and 'the Man' perked up, expecting to sell again.

"Hey, I need to use the washroom."

"You do whatcha gotta do man, ain't nobody gonna stop you."

Michael peered into the darkness until he spotted the skeletal woman where she leaned against the wall.

"Do you know where the washroom is?" he asked, walking towards her.

"Course I do, it's my house isn't it?" she pushed herself away from the wall and walked down the hall. The first door on the right revealed a putrid room. She smiled, her paper thin skin pulled taut across her cheekbones and indicated that this was where he could do his business.

Michael left the door open hoping that a little light would filter into the darkness of the bathroom and help him find his way. The toilet was filled to the brim. Someone had removed the top of the tank and placed it on the seat, possibly to discourage others from overflowing the toilet bowl, possibly to facilitate doing coke lines from the floor. The bathtub was filled with cans and a reeking brown liquid that leaked down from the ceiling. Michael recoiled for a moment, but knew he would need a hit soon and settled on the mouldy, fissured sink. He turned to see the woman gazing at him through heavy lidded eyes.

"Good choice," she said, before she turned and disappeared back down the hall.

Michael reached into his pocket to check how much money he had left. He remembered buying from 'the Man' at least five times since he had first entered. He wasn't sure if he had enough money left for another gram. His hand curled around something solid, he pulled it out and stared at the object in his palm. He had forgotten about his cell phone and felt a deep, spreading dread when he saw the red light blinking. He flipped the phone open. There were several missed calls from his home and many worried text messages from his wife and children. He texted his daughter, "**Don't worry. I'm fine.**" Almost reflexively the phone began to vibrate. The caller ID read **H O M E**. Michael's spirits plummeted; he knew he had to answer. "Hello?"

"Michael? Where are you? Are you okay?" over the line came the tearful voice of his wife and questions from his children.

"Where is he? Is Dad ok? When's he coming home?"

"I'm fine love. Don't worry, I'm fine." He said.

"Where are you? We haven't slept in two days! You promised Michael..."

"I know. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I wish I could leave but I just can't," he said, his voice echoed his utter despair. This conversation was killing him.

"Yes you can Michael, just stay on the phone with me and walk out the door. Can you see the door? Just stay on the phone, talk to me, and walk out the door. Go to a hotel until you can drive and then come home and we'll figure this out ok?"

Michael looked at the phone in his palm and whispered "I'm so sorry," before he gently closed it and turned back down the hall towards oblivion.

*Untitled*  
*By: Lyssa*  
*Paquette*



*The Perfume that you Sometimes Wear*  
*By: Christopher Carmichael*

The perfume that you sometimes wear  
is that neighbour  
who lives not right next to you  
but one house next to that house.  
That neighbour who strolls by  
and interrupts your otherwise  
magnificently idle Tuesday  
with strange suggestions  
to go midnight bowling  
with that other guy  
from half way  
across town  
who you met that one time last month  
but didn't really like  
because he had a bump  
on his nose  
and a bump  
on the nose  
is just enough sometimes.

Just enough.

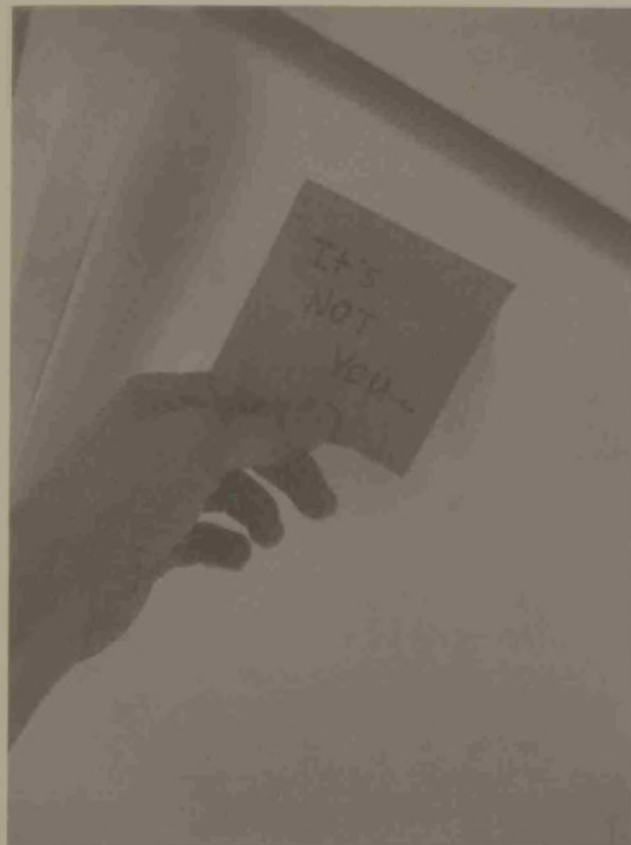
What disturbs me the most is that it isn't the  
democratically appointed  
features of your face, the  
faltering cleft  
of your chin, or your forehead's want of  
moral prominence  
that draws me to you.

It doesn't have anything to do with you at all.

Truth be told,  
I don't even like you.

I don't.  
Even.  
Like you.

But I really like your perfume.



*It's Not You*

*By: Lynsey Hachey*

*Untitled*

*By: Amy Cunningham*

She glanced into his house:  
A tangible replica of him.  
An unwelcoming abode  
For an unwelcoming person.  
Their furniture would clash:  
That was her excuse.



*How to Ease a Broken Heart*

*By: Eleanor Gang*

I lean against a mountain facing east,  
cool rock at my back,  
morning sun in my eyes,  
and sink into the schist,  
feel myself enveloped in layer  
after layer of ancient ocean floor,  
until I am part of the mountain itself  
and can feel no more.

*Babies at Prom*

*By: Elizabeth Robichaud*

"Where r u?"

The words blink on the screen in between your tears. You raise your arms to type back, but the fingers won't unfurl from the fists at your sides. The taffeta crinkles and beads clank against the tiles and grout. You're thankful that you did your chores this week and actually gave the bathroom floor a proper mop. (Not the half-ass job you usually do.) The bobby pins are pressing into your skull but you don't care.

Maria texts you again and then Nick send you a Facebook message. Kaitlen leaves a voicemail and there are still the seven unanswered text messages. You don't want to know what he's doing. He always shows up on time. The tile feels cool against your cheek. The tears are hot as they roll down your neck and settle into the satin of your strapless bra.

This had been planned for weeks. It was perfect. He was perfect.

The cell phone that was an early graduation present lights up and makes discordant sounds as it vibrates across the floor. You crane your head to see the caller ID. You sit up and lean against the vanity clutching the phone in your

hands as if it was a lifeline thrown to you from a sinking ship. One missed call. He doesn't leave a message.

The pink and blue cardboard box that was ripped open with shaky hands taunts you from its place atop the trash can. Fear is cursing through your body. The odds that you disprove the suspicion are just as high as being wrong.

*Carnal Pleasure*

*By: Krissy Mitchell*

He tells me of my beauty  
while stripping off my clothes  
His soft, supple hands run smooth  
against my cracked, cold crevices

tenderly he washes my hair  
tucking away the stray strands  
behind my ears

He teases me, tweezes me,  
dries my sopping locks  
all the while wearing a top hat  
lined with exquisite red silk  
keeping rhythm with an old pair of  
clickity- clackity tap shoes  
so many generations passed down

his final touches leave me breathless  
smooth powder for the face  
rouge for the cheek bones

He takes me under  
the undertaker

and whispers  
wishes  
"if only..."

## *Call My Name*

By: Tyler Wilson

(Verse 1)

Have a look at me know  
I am lost and cant be found  
Thought all I needed was someone

cry your eyes out one more time  
in the quiet of your room  
don't you save them for me now

(pre-chorus)

when all i wanted was a change  
call my name

(Verse 2)

not sure where I'm goin'  
can't stop my mind from wandering  
When all I want is to fall asleep

Clear the shock from you face  
Cause I can hear the tears fall like rain  
truth is I just can't feel a thing

(pre-chorus)

(Chorus)

Call my name  
call my name  
call my name  
call my name

(bridge)

Just finish what you've started  
Cause your killing all of me  
3 months has been a nightmare  
I found it so hard to breathe  
All I wanted was a change  
Call my name  
Call my name  
call my name  
call my name

(Outro)

When all I wanted,  
When all I wanted was a change

## *The Celandine*

By: Elle Anhorn

Sometimes the thing people hate most about themselves is something they feel they cannot change. Something permanent. When there is a piece of your self that you cannot erase, it makes you feel powerless – at least that was how Grace felt. When someone – anyone – touched her, it was like she wasn't even herself anymore. If she could control it, things would be different. She would never jump out of her skin on purpose. No, it was as if she was a car and every time someone touched her, her body would grab the steering wheel and stop listening to directions. Afterwards, she'd snap back and have to explain. So many idiotic 'sorry's – they dripped out of her mouth and down her chin, grey and lame and inadequate. The word left a bitter taste. It made her want to lick her lips in an effort to get all the dumb off her face. At least the feeling of saliva on her cracked mouth was a comfort. Everyone loved to speculate, but Grace had never understood. Why was there anything wrong with her at all? It was more a preference than anything else. Besides, she knew what no one else did. She knew that no matter why it was, it just was. It had been that way for a long time and it wasn't going to change just because someone put a name to it.

*The whole point is that I don't want to touch you because the only thing that I can control is me and myself and if I touch you then I'm interacting with a variable that I cannot control.*

*But it's not like I'm a crazy germaphobe or something. Grace could eat a candy that had fallen on the floor. She could pick out the pieces of food that got caught in the kitchen sink. It wasn't about cleanliness, it was about space.*

*Besides, there is absolutely nothing more disgusting than a person.*

But recently she'd realized that when she told herself it was a choice, she was maybe not telling the truth. Because she couldn't control it. This filled her with a panic even worse than the feeling of other peoples' skin. In desperation Grace began to look around - but everywhere

she looked all she saw were people she didn't want to go anywhere near. And then, suddenly, she'd known. And it was all because of the words.

It was as if he'd been out of focus, like a blurry picture, and then with the words he'd suddenly snapped into the foreground, clear and crisp. The words sounded easy and clean in her ears, and they told her that he could be good enough to be the one.

It started with the daffodils. It had been a Tuesday: His hands on the tissue-thin pages and his dark blue voice reciting the lines to the class. How could she never have noticed before? The words were like nothing she'd ever heard, or bothered to listen to. They were pretty and soft, and yet they somehow fit with how deep and low he spoke. And what she liked most about the phrases was how they seemed so carefully chosen.

This - this was unassuming. It sounded like thoughts - like maybe it wasn't even meant for anyone else. He wasn't pretentious and he wasn't trying to impress someone. He was just one guy. He was just as lonely as anyone else.

So the daffodils were the beginning. She folded down the page in the textbook and that day she must have read and reread the poem twelve times before the school day even ended.

*And then my heart with pleasure fills / And dances with the daffodils.*

*And then my heart with pleasure fills / And dances with the daffodils.*

*And then my heart with pleasure fills / And dances with the daffodils.*

But the real turning point was the Celandine. That was when Grace had realized just how important he, and not just Wordsworth himself, was going to be for her. Because he could have chosen to read any one of those poems that day - and he chose *To The Small Celandine*. Because he knew how special it was.

Why was he there at all if not for this? He wasn't even a real teacher at Huntsville. He was only there because Mrs. Duffy was on maternity leave until January. Grace could recognize fate when it was staring right at her.

*Pansies, Lilies, Kingcups, Daisies, / Let them live upon their praises;*

*Long as there's a sun that sets / Primroses will have their glory;*

*Long as there are Violets, / They will have a place in story:*

*There's a flower that shall be mine, / 'Tis the little Celandine.*

The words were clear glass beads clicking together. They were smooth and polished, and even under the yellow-green glow of the fluorescents overhead they were beautiful. The light shone through their centre and turned everything iridescent and rainbow. Everything was perfect. She looked up from the page she was following from and began to watch his mouth form each syllable. His teeth were as white and clean as the words.

The celandine. Wordsworth had written three whole poems on it. He'd loved that flower most, it seemed. Because it was smart. And not a show-off. Because it didn't always get the recognition it deserved.

*Blithe of heart, from week to week / Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;*

*While the patient Primrose sits / Like a Beggar in the cold, Thou, a Flower of wiser wits, / Slipp'st into thy sheltered hold*

*Bright as any of the train / When ye all are out again.*  
It was the words that made her decide that she wanted to be normal.

3: 11pm. Grace's last class of the day - English 12. The definition of last minute. But then again, this way she could go home right after.

She sat at the back, by the window. From her position, Grace could feel the cold air at her back even though the windows were not open. As if the freezing air could travel through the glass, squeezing past the windowpane molecules, darting around to avoid the fingerprint smudges. She sat bouncing her left leg under the desk, watching him at the front of room 204.

Her forehead was sweating despite the chill from outside. Her underarms were wet as well, and she rested her elbows on the desktop and cradled her head in her hands to keep the damp off her shirt. She studied his movements.



The clock hit the quarter hour and the bell went off, a shrill scream that sent the students flailing for their bags. Grace took her time gathering her papers and pens together. She wanted to be the only one in the room with him.

"Mr. Sunder? ...I... I just wanted to thank-you. For being such a good teacher this semester."

Mr. Sunder smiled, crinkling the skin around his olive-green eyes. "Why thank-you Grace, I really appreciate that. And thank-you for being such a good student!"

"Thanks... You're welcome." A pause.

He was looking at her in the eyes. She wanted more. "Any special plans for Christmas?"

"Oh... Nope, not a whole lot, my sister is going to be visiting. You?"

"Not a lot... Family and stuff." Her teeth felt fuzzy, and she licked at her flaking lips.

"That sounds like fun!" The eyes again. A pause. "Well. Goodbye, Grace."

He smiled again and so she did the same, although her mouth felt dry as it stretched across her teeth.

Mr. Sunder looked away and began collecting his things.

*No, no, do it, do it, don't be stupid, do it don't be a baby.*

"And...."

He looked up. "Yes?"

*Do it.* She sucked in a throatful of air and raised her right arm out in front of her, quickly wiping her palm on her skirt as she went. She held it formally, tensing her fingers so that he wouldn't see her shake. "Thanks again. Good luck... and Merry Christmas."

He grinned. Placing the folders he was holding back on the desk, he raised his right arm and grasped her hand with his, shaking it gently but firmly in a quick down up down.

"Merry Christmas, Grace".

She squeezed his fingers with hers and braced herself.

Skin on skin. The feeling was strange and unfamiliar. She waited for her body to react, but nothing happened. His hands were soft and warm. She could feel fine hairs on his knuckles. She blinked, going down the mental checklist. *Stomach? Face? Arms? Mouth?* Nothing. She felt the blood pulsing through the veins on the back of his hand. *Nothing?*

She let go. Still nothing. She realized she'd stopped breathing, and slowly let out the air she'd been holding in.

*No. Unbelievable!* She could barely stifle her joy. With a smile, she turned for the door, leaving in a flurry of steps so light her sneakers didn't make a sound. Her eyes were wide-open, eyebrows arched involuntarily in surprise. *It had worked, it worked, with him it worked and I'm all right - I'm actually okay!*

She was about two steps outside the classroom when it hit - the reaction that she'd been expecting. The one she knew - it was back. It had merely been delayed.

Sinking stone to the bottom of the sand pit of her stomach lining. *Oh.*

Now it returned with new force, like an opinion proven right. Her skin erupted into high spitting flames and sharp pricks of needles covered her arms. She hurried towards the end of the hall and to the door of the girl's bathroom with her arms hugging her body, shallow breathing burning face exit. Her stomach flipped violently and thick hot bile rose in her throat. She swallowed it down. It hurt. She ran inside and closed the door, coming face to face with the full-length mirror hanging on the inside. She was a sight to behold - red and sweaty and crying eyeliner tears. Her black tights felt loose underneath her skirt, and with a forceful yank she pulled at the waistband. Her hair had fallen out of the morning's careful braid. Grace ran her fingers through her bangs, pulling wet strands up off of her damp forehead. Hot tears stung her eyes and tangled her eyelashes, and she stumbled to the first stall on the right and sat down on the toilet. Squeezing her eyes shut, Grace gulped down another mouthful of bitter phlegm and rested her head in her hands.

*To K*

*By: Frank Willdig*

Time is cruel, my love,  
the weary days glide seamlessly  
into sleepless nights,  
silent and indifferent to the cares  
of flawed and mortal flesh.

Days, too soon, become years,  
and youth ebbs into age.  
In endless tides bearing  
down on distant shores,  
time moves ever-onward  
without a backward glance.

The great burdens are borne,  
my love,  
by love;  
you carry them because  
of who you are,  
daughter, sister, wife, and mother  
because your heart is great,  
your presence gentle and kind,  
you shelter all who are close,  
who go through life with you  
and love you because you love.

Time is cruel, my love,  
and though the body fails  
and the senses decline,  
love remains  
treasured in the eternity  
between heartbeats.

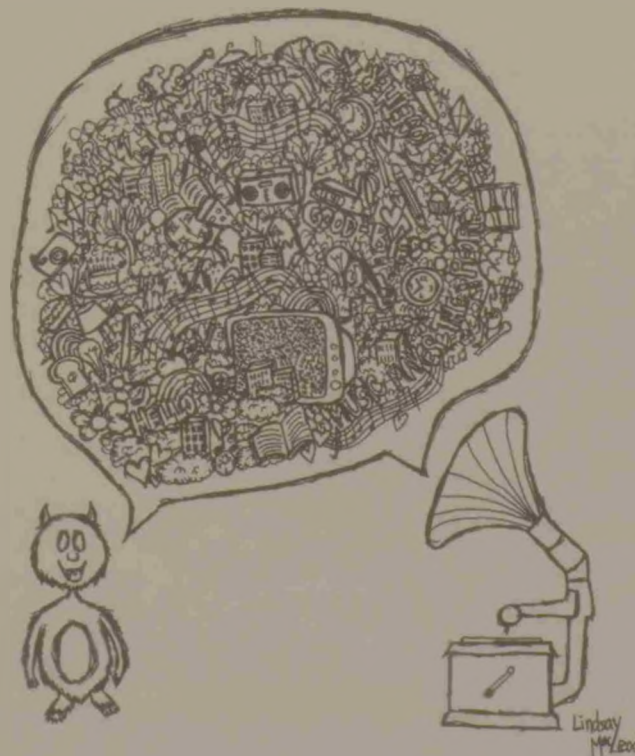
*-Chapter Five-  
The Brutality of Reality*

*Anger Needs a New Home*

*By: Shawn Malley*

anger needs a new home  
like men need guns and old cans

grief needs a new home  
like old men need grandsons



*Speak Up*

*By: Lindsey MacLeod*



## *The Unconscious Reflection*

*By: Amy Daoust*

A white grit was crusted around the edge of the knob and the smell of curdled milk molested her senses. She grimaced as his hand shoved her face deeper into his groin. Her eyes were sealed shut and her mind went blank. It didn't matter how hard she tried to escape, the thrusts within her chapped lips always cemented her in reality. Droplets of sweat trickled their way down through his mane of hair and onto the tip of her nose. He yanked on her soft curls letting go a deep grunt. Her pale face jerked upwards as he smiled down smearing the warm discharge across her face. Lying naked across the stained rug, she watched his boots stager out of the room. Most of the girls she lived with hated this moment. They said it was in these moments that they felt their souls dying; felt they were losing touch with everything they left behind. Katia lived for those few minutes on the floor. They never lasted very long but they gave her a chance to breath, to think without fear. She never thought of home or asked herself the question 'what if'. Sometimes she would think of nothing and in those flashes of nothingness, she felt whole. She couldn't explain it to the other girls but it didn't matter. Those moments belonged to her, they carried her through tomorrow.

"Get off the fucking floor, cunt! What do you think you are a fucking princess?"

Her raw knees skidded across the floor as he dragged her limp body out of the bedroom.

"Sorry." She found herself fixating on a pair of hands griping the bottom of the banister.

"Look at me you slut! When you finish up, you get out of the fucking room and wait for me by the stairs." One finger had been scratched raw and she could see the pink flesh from up above.

"Let's go Katia, move your fucking ass." His fingers were laboured, she could feel the calluses on the back of her neck as he shoved her down the stairs. She cast her eyes down never taking her focus off the finger.

When she first got to the house fear electrified every inch of her body. Being fifteen made her invisible. The old adage that dreams do come true gave her the

strength to chase those dreams all the way to America. They could have told her anything and she would have gone. Growing up everyone always told her she was beautiful.

"Katia, you should be a model, make some money from that beautiful gift of yours."

Every girl in Romania wanted to work for an agency. But, Romanian modelling careers usually ended in Eastern Europe and Katia wanted something bigger, something more than that. The American agency that came to her small town agreed to sign her; they got her passport and visa ready, booked the plane tickets and set her up with a small apartment in Manhattan. The story was the same for all the girls she lived with. They had done it in Russia, Belarus, Croatia, Slovakia and the Ukraine. They had all been lied to and now were indebted to them. Their flesh and dignity was the only currency available.

The brownstone was part of a residential area with families on both sides. The laughter sounded like a soft melody from the basement window and their giggles brought brightness to the dingy room. Once she had been beaten unconscious for lifting the curtain, the laughter was the only natural light they had. The basement was cramped with 8 sets of bunk beds, a tarnished table and a faded mustard couch. She would always wake up in cold sweats and often wondered if it was because of the dampness or from the dreams she could never remember. The girl that bunked beneath her had caught pneumonia and was taken away to see a doctor but never came back. She felt guilty for being happy when the girl left, but her wailing had kept her up at night and her screams for redemption always went unanswered. Taking the screw she kept under the barren mattress she marked another line in the ceiling above her bed. Feeling overwhelmed by all the blades of grass on her canvas, she shut her eyes and thought of the mutilated finger.

"Get up! It's time to work ladies! Cover the bruises, we have an extra special client today!"

The girls hovered around the mirror reaching for tubes of cover up and red lipstick. She caught Alyona's eyes examining her in the mirror.

"Katia, I think it's an extra special day for you." Her eyes were charcoal and her coarse black hair was



pinned up in a bouffant speckled with crusted hairspray. Katia had always thought that Alyona had been one of them before but could never understand how she had lived long enough to become a Madame. Alyona barked at them to hurry up and following her command they walked in a single file up the stairs and waited in the entrance room for the client. The strobe lights flickered in Katia's eyes as the door facing them was opened. Clutched within his manicured hand was the maimed finger. She glanced upwards and their eyes locked. They were quiet eyes but not timid. They reminded her of the shiny darkness found on a beetle's wing. There was something in her eyes that seemed familiar.

"I'll take this one too. I'll pay for her separate and take another girl in the line"

"You can't take that one. She's not part of the group" she shoved the girls' shoulder "If you want in... you're not getting a percentage with me. He pays you what he pays you."

Alyona had broken their contact and she wondered why the girl with the dark eyes was nodding. They never saw them very often but they knew that the girls that disappeared behind the door with the flashing lights also got leave through the front door. Katia watched his shiny shoes paraded up and down the line. She held her breath until he stopped at the end of the row, choosing between the blonde commodities in their sex catalogue.

"This sweet little thing will do just fine. What time shall I have them back by?"

"She can leave right from the studio,"- she pointed towards the girl with the bold eyes.

"She only dances for us. Are you coming back to finish the rest of your shift?"- The girl with the hard eyes shook her head no and nervously picked at her scabby finger.

Alyona always told the basement girls that they were special and that the upstairs girls were just dancers that weren't worth anything, "Just a little extra money for the boss on the side". Katia thought of the hard eyes and crimson finger as she sketched on the back of an empty cigarette pack. She wondered if the girl knew that they were always down here, that they never got to leave, that they were objects of commerce. She scratched out the distorted drawing and looked around the bedroom. The

girls were all asleep and the blonde still hadn't come home. The small mirror on the end of the table looked at her and she looked back at it. Her finger touched the split in her lip and she noticed the same redness from the girls' finger in the cracked corners of her own nail beds. It was the same nervous itch.

That night Katia didn't sleep. The echoing image within the mirror spiralled around in her mind. It was as if her hands had been trying to tell her something but their secret was one she couldn't yet understand. The thuds from Alyona's footsteps broke her reflection and she hurried with the other girls into line formation.

"Ladies... not need to rush for me"

"Just thought I'd bring you a little movie to watch down here on the computer. A little Blondie production you could call it," she said winking at Katia.

She set the laptop down next to the small mirror on the table, opened the browser and pressed play.

The gag in her mouth had leather straps on both sides that were tied to the back of her neck. In the middle of both her cheeks were bolts securing two more leather bands that adjoined in between her eyebrows making a triangle shape. The leather strap then swept up her forehead and into the air where it was knotted onto a beam in the ceiling. With her hands bound behind her back she kicked at the men with the studded leather vests. Katia cringed as one of the men clubbed her in the face and watched the trickles of blood saturate her champagne hair. The blond hung there motionless while the men attached the straps to her ankles. Ripping open her legs, they hung her back side up and tied the bands to two opposite poles. She looked like the dead flies that hung from the sticky yellow tape above the kitchen window. The camera lost its focus and within the backdrop Katia could see her raven eyes. She was sitting on an empty crate fiddling with the tips of her hair. Katia stopped and looked down to find her own hands doing the very same thing. She looked back to the screen and felt an emptiness she had never felt before. As if feeling Katia's trance, her eyes darted upwards and beamed right into the center of the lens. It was a silent discourse expressed within the language of eyes. A story without an ending, a conversation without a cause but Katia couldn't hear yet, she was blind.

The moon was bright and its luminous glow shined through the veiled window outlining her silhouette against the darkness. She hadn't known that Katia was awake but still she muffled her helpless cries. In the haze of the dim light, Katia could see the open wounds beneath her honey hair. She whimpered as her fingers cascaded down her back, stopping at each scab to touch the pain she would never forget.

"Are you alright?" Katia whispered

"I'm fine... I thought you were asleep, sorry."

"Can't really sleep, we watched you guys."

"Oh...."

"Who was the girl from upstairs? The one you left with, the one with the dark eyes."

"I don't know!"

"She never spoke to you?"

"No." She sighs "Katia, just leave me alone".

Her screams eventually stopped but Katia sat awake thinking of the girl with the hard eyes. It was like she was chasing after a rainbow, but rainbows were just an illusion to the naked eye. She wondered if the other girls had noticed her on the crate blurred within the image on the screen. *Had they felt the same emptiness? Had they thought the same thoughts? Was it envy? Was it hate? Was it the nothingness of nothing?* It was like she was searching for an answer to a question that could never be answered. All she knew was that that girl meant something, but it wasn't a memory or a dream, it was something else.

The room was different from the others in the house. Katia had never been assigned to it before but felt a sort of triumph knowing she had been the first in her group to see it. Sheets of glass covered the ceiling and she watched him undress through the reflection in the mirror. She noticed the gold band on his finger as he unbuckled his belt. Spitting into his hand, he dug his fingers deep inside of her as she let go a manufactured moan. The smell of whiskey and stale cigarettes accosted her senses and the warmth from his breath lingered on the nap of her neck. He drove deeper and deeper, his thrusts becoming a rhythmic sway. Her eyes bolted open, feeling an electric throb spread itself throughout every inch of her being. She spasmed in a frenzy, trying with all her strength to stop the

convulsions. The heat spread itself to her cheeks and she shut her eyes trying to conceal her pleasure. Her panting becoming heavier and heavier as the ripples of ecstasy surged throughout her body. The sensations erupted and her eyes shot open. Smiling down at her from up above were the dark eyes. She stared back at her and followed her eyes down to her own hand. Shaking violently they began to tell their secret. Under her cracked nail beds was the same raw finger. All the numbness that consumed her soul began to crack. The memories and dreams that had been buried deep within her began to flood her mind. She had detached herself from her own being, had lost herself within the illusion of freedom. Had denied herself the only power she still maintained, but those black eyes had brought it back to her. She had showed her a true reflection, a power within the soul, a freedom from within, liberation within entrapment.



*Road Kill*

*By: Elle Anhorn*

*Fuck Me Once, Fuck Me Twice*  
*By: Allison Goff*

It doesn't happen often  
That I feel this way.  
I'm comfortable behind my wall,  
Passing through, observing,  
Not really here to stay.

Your charming smile,  
Your floppy ears,  
You get to me.  
I find myself blushing,  
Heart racing,  
When you come near.  
Notice me.  
Please notice me.

Love, you're the one that I want.  
chip  
I love to hear you laugh,  
I love that your nose crinkles that way.  
chip  
But even more, I just want to talk to you.  
chip  
I dole it out, and you give it back.  
You're clever, not like the others.  
chip  
We get on so well.  
Why do you think I sat by you tonight?  
I want to be near you, love.  
chip  
How can't you see it?

How can't you understand it?

You, love, are the one that I want.  
chip

It's what I've wanted.  
It's what I want.  
And there, you said it.

But that's all you did,  
You said it.  
As easily as you gave it, you took it away.  
My Bridget moment — gone.  
You took what I try to keep un-broken, and broke it.

So I'll build the wall up again.  
Become bitter.  
Hard.  
Skeptical of words.

Another chance will come around.  
Sure.  
Still I think of you  
(In a sad kind of way).  
How can't I?  
Because there you are,  
Saying words you don't mean  
In a memory I want to keep living.

And then, through a hazy daze I see him.  
He's been there before.  
In an unfocused room, he's clear.  
But I feel small,  
Insignificant,  
Vulnerable.  
He's so sweet.  
chip  
But still, I'm doubtful.  
Still hurt.  
He's still sweet.  
chip  
It's what I need.  
It's what I want.  
We start to talk.

Him and me.  
chip  
He makes me smile,  
chip  
He makes me laugh.  
chip  
And I feel a little less hurt.



So tell me you want me.  
Say that you want me.  
Please. Want me.

Don't tell me you want me  
But that you want her more.

So I'll build that wall up again.  
Higher this time.  
Because I'm distrustful and broken.  
Hurt and alone.

Maybe you, the *right* you, will try again sometime.

*La Fille*

*By: AR DR*

Enter into a small apartment. There is a door leading to an unlit kitchen on the left, a vanity set facing the front wall and the front door to the right. The walls are papered with deep red velvet shades, furniture that of a cheap boudoir, a pink scarf loosely cast over the overhanging light.

There is a single red shoe on the floor, an ashtray on the table, and a faint smell of stale perfume in the air. A slim girl emerges from her small apartment bathroom. Her eyes are smoky and smudged, and the faint stain of lipstick is around her mouth. She is wrapped in a loose pink towel and steam billows around her. She is toweling her hair. She ducks into her closet to the left, dropping her towel and letting the open door hiding her naked form as she rummages for clothes. She comes out in a tightly fit slightly askew organza party dress, a faded pink with sequins on the bodice. She tugs at the skirt, pulls it into position.

She is unsteady on her feet and stumbles slightly, leaning on her vanity. She falls into a velvet-upholstered chair, her entire body slumps over like a limp doll. Her wet hair curtains her face and she gropes for a tortoiseshell-handled brush, which she finds and begins to untangle her hair. She brushes for a few minutes and flips it over, letting

her neck arch back, inhaling deeply as she does. She finds pins, sweeps up her hair and tightens it into place, lets strands fall where they may. She swivels in her chair, faces the vanity mirror head on. She sways slightly as she does, and smiles at an inner thought, an amusing flutter of an idea.

She reaches into the vanity drawers, pulls out tubes and bottles and scatters them like dice on the tabletop. She opens and applies them, covers her face as methodically and precisely as she can. She slumps forward often, rocks back and forth but her hand never falters. Fully decorated, she languidly lunges at her perfume, an expensive brand imported from Paris. A gift, she thinks. This one was a gift. She squeezes the tasseled ball, and the smell of freesia and possibly tuberose blooms into the air. The bottle drops from her hand, an involuntary loss and it bounces on the floor but does not shatter. She turns her attention to the drawers, groping the contents with her trembling fingers. She brings out a bottle, no elegance in this one, and deposits its contents. She lines up each tablet, methodically, militarily on the edge of the table and by the end they lay like a lethal string of pearls. She adjusts them, positions them perfectly.

She kneels to the ground, her open painted mouth lined up to the first, and she flicks them like bullets into her mouth, moving down the line. They taste of chalk, of medicinal hospital hall ways. Sixteen perfect tablets, smearing the inside of her cheeks, melting on her tongue. She stands, walks to the kitchen, and opens the fridge. Left over champagne, the rim smudged with another girl's lipstick, an alien shade, and she grabs it and swigs, feels the tablets swim down her throat. Stumbles back into the living room, falls to the couch. Her hand slips limply off the couch, the other rests above her head, a romantic pose. She wants her lipstick, wants to adjust and perfect it, and then crush it into her mouth. The sequins on the bodice refract on the ceiling, and she watches them twinkle in the pink pale light. She reaches behind her head, feels blindly for the record player, finds the needle and jerks on an Artie Shaw tune. "I'm drowning in elegance" she thinks, and this strikes her as funny so she laughs. Her laugh is like a bark, and the sound of it scares her a little but that seems funny

so she giggles at herself.

She can taste the crab she had for dinner, the chocolate torte with ripe raspberries and whipped cream, fresh cream, for dessert and more champagne, always more and more and then she's laughing again. She feels suddenly hungry, but there's nothing in the fridge, and she coldly realizes that the last time she went to the grocery store was the last time she would ever go to a grocery store and this grips her with such a icy panic that she shoots straight up and the full weight of what she's done hits her and she can't breathe. She runs to the door, falls at it and scrambles to turn the knob, to get into the hall and slam on the doors, pound on them pleading screaming, crying, feeling the tablets suck her down into a darkness she never truly wanted, feeling them rise up from her toes to swallow her whole and she's pounding and pounding and screaming and nothing will work, and she can't run but something grabs her, and she screams.

Something is pulling her out of the hall into a place she's never been before, where the walls are blue, and she's on a couch but it isn't hers and someone hands her a glass of water but her eyes won't focus and the water slips and now she's cold, her dress is cold and wet and she feels a darkness that chills her spine and moves her body until she can't remember anymore.



*The Artist's Workshop*  
By: Barbara Cvenic

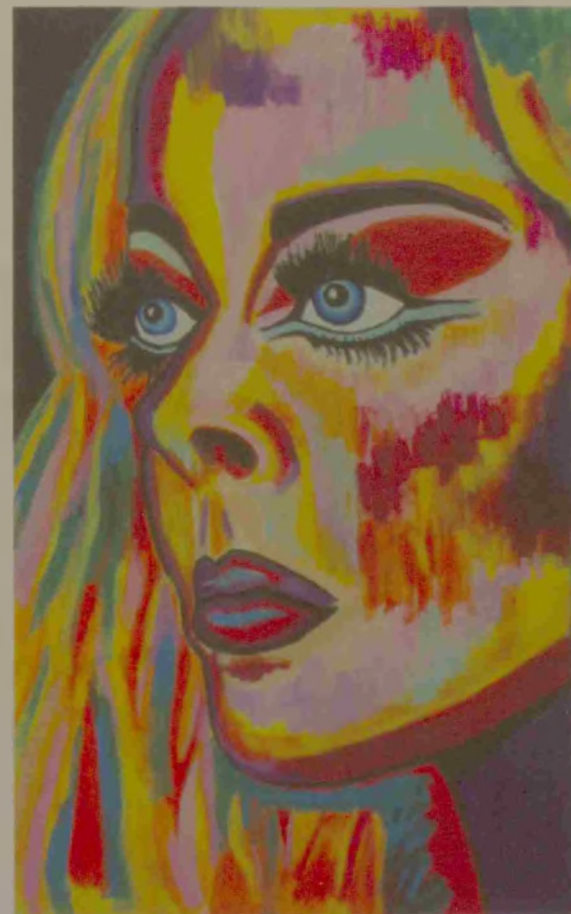
*Forgive Me*  
By: K. King

I have thrown your soccer cleats  
in the trash,  
after taking a pair of scissors  
to them,  
and burning them with my lighter.

I know you probably needed them  
for your big game this afternoon—

Forgive me.  
It was either  
them,  
or you.

*Kaleidoscope*  
*Eyes*  
By: Ashley Dickie





*Play it cool, Romeo*

*By: Elyse Gagne*

The first time I ever wanted to rape a girl was at a high school dance. She wouldn't let me touch her ass, even though everyone around us was sucking face. We're dancing to some stupid Backstreet Boys ballad and all I can see in my head is throwing her in the girls' change room and teaching her not to insult me like that again.

I ignored it, and have tried to every day since. But I'm thinking now, staring into the window of a 2001 Honda Civic, that I might just wanna try it. The girl inside has got to be drunk or stoned or fucking dead already- which could be useful I guess- because I've been standing here for 10 minutes and she hasn't moved. At all. There's drool hanging off her lips. She *almost* looks like a whore: pretty shape, exhausted face, long legs- hell, she's even in the little school girl uniform, except hers actually goes the length it's supposed to. Well, whoever you are, girl in H2BT X3J expiry Dec 10, you're mine now. And I'd like to indulge.

\*

By the time I get back from dumping her car on the other end of town, license plates removed and all the doors, handles, seats, etc wiped down, she's started to come to. I can tell by her muffled sobs. *Play it cool, Romeo*. Hang my coat on the rack, put the keys in the dish, even check my smile in the hall mirror first. Then I sort through my mail: hydro bill, Salvation Army donation letter, my copy of *National Geographic* has once again arrived late. I'll have to place an angry phone call. Put on a pot of boiling water for potatoes, use the pisser, get some condoms out of the top drawer of my dresser. Don't want her to think I'm in a rush.

I left her chained to the bed in the basement, spread eagled, gagged, fully clothed. Just had one little peek. By now the room is pitch black and all I can hear is her drippy nose, sucking in heavy breaths while she whimpers through the wad in her mouth. *Hmm. I like that; 'wad in her mouth'.*

When the light comes on and she sees me, her screams get louder and I get hard as a rock. Her eyes are red as her bleeding lips and her round face is even puffier

than before. Her entire body is convulsing. She can't control the spasms in her legs. The little skirt is shaking over her legs- it looks almost orgasmic. Now she can see me, see with her bulging, teary eyes *my* bulging. She looks away, I grab her face. *Just watch me, baby.*

I'm trying to get myself protected but her whole body is shaking like a fucking seizure and all my life's dreams and ambitions and desires are about to come a head- *pun!*- and I cut through her little panties- she's too young to be wearing those, little slut- it's like climbing on to a giant vibrator, she's spazzing so fucking much. She's bawling and screaming and thrusting like she likes it and choking but I have to stop our frenzy so that we don't peter out early.

"Shh, shh," I croon and stroke her face. She's going to pass out; she can't breathe. "Go ahead and scream, baby, nobody can hear us, it's OK. It's OK." I pull out her gag and the octave goes up; all those words, those predictable *no's* and *stop's* and the most beautiful guttural sounds of animal language are blasted like a concerto in my face and I can't hold myself back any longer.

\*

Shit. Fuck. What a high. What a rush. Jesus Lord, my eternal saviour, how did you make such a glorious damned cunt? These have been the two most fulfilling, heavenly weeks of my life. Her mom's all over the news, crying for her baby, and I get a sort of satisfaction knowing only Cadbury and I know what's going on.

I was spoon feeding her and she wouldn't tell me her name. I said "Baby, you taste better than chocolate." And that's how I thought to call her Cadbury. Now I know her real name is Jennifer Sylvia Bates, she's 16 and attends- attended- St. Paul Catholic High School. Lucky me, she was passed out in her mom's car because she'd just had her wisdom teeth removed. She's prettier than the photo they use in the posters. They even held a vigil at her church. Another holy fucking virgin de-flowered. I don't play the news too loud, it's bound to make Cadbury cry, and it pisses me off when I'm already tired from a hard day's work. *I didn't ask for your feelings.*

She still screams when I touch her. Resistant little thing. It's like she's trying to give me what I like. Too bad, her voice went raw after that first night and it hasn't been



quite as fast ever since. But she's gotten bolder too; the first day she pissed herself because she didn't ask to go to the bathroom. I even close the door most of the way to give her privacy. Now, she thinks she can reason with me. She doesn't get that I killed her awhile ago.

\*

My Caddy puts her hand on my thigh while we watch TV. Normalcy has settled in, but it still gives us both the tingles. She looks at me timidly- a look of desire- and I let her jack me off while we watch the news. She has faded from it entirely. Her 15 minutes of fame are long over, have been replaced with another suicide bombing in Palestine, a college in our area needing funding, a lead in a 7/11 robbery. She doesn't process a damn thing she sees. It's all bullshit anyway.

The ads flash by as she's rubbing me off- Listerine, Tim Horton's, Zellers, Molson Export. *Shit*. They've found her mother's car. She stops, stares at the little blue civic all banged up on the back of a tow truck.

"Is that-?" She's waking up.

"No." The doorbell. *Shit*. Who the fuck is it at the dinner hour? She rises immediately, tiptoes to the basement. *Good girl*. It's the Jehovas. How many fucking times do I have to tell them to piss off? I throw open the door, and a face, twisted in a horrific smile of religious ecstasy, greets me.

"Hello Mr. Reed," starts the young woman. They always send the same one to my house. She's like bait. Baiting me. "I'm Sarah. You might remember me, I came by here about six months ago and we talked about giving your life to Christ."

"Yea. Right. Thank you, *Sarah*, but I'm very content at the moment with my current pagan religion." I start to close the door.

"Wait! Mr. Reed- I just brought you some pamphlets."

"I already have them."

"No, these ones are new. I thought you might like them." *Pushy little bitch*: she's got one foot in the door. I wonder what her thighs are like under that skirt. She saving herself for marriage? "It's never too late, Mr. Reed, to let go of your sin and come into Christ."

*If only you knew what I've done, little one.*

I open the door a little more so that she can step in out of the cold. There are goose bumps on the exposed part of her throat. Already she looks nervous; like her pastor or whatever hasn't prepared her for the off chance that someone might actually want to listen to her scripted spiel. I offer her a seat and exit with the excuse of getting coffee beans. *D'you want to help me with this one, Caddy, baby?*

"Caddy? Caddy?" I flick the lights, open the washroom, check in the closet. "Caddy? Come out now, Caddy or I swear I'll-" Open window. With a chair pushed up underneath it.

*Holy Christ Fuck! She's gone.* I bolt back upstairs. "Fuck! Fucking little slut!"

"Mr. Reed!" She's standing up, coat in her arms, horrified. It's like hearing me curse is a blow to her innocent little head.

"You! Fucking hell, you with your goddamn bullshit! My baby's gone, fucking little bitch!" She tries to make a break for it but I catch her by the throat. "Sarah. Sarah, Sarah, Sarah, Sarah, Sarah."

"Let me go!"

"Sarah, Sarah. Tsk tsk. Poor girl. You came to teach me about Jesus, didn't you?"

"Ow! Please! Mr. Reed, stop! Ow!"

There can only be hours before the cops are at my door. Cadbury will run. She'll hide. She'll find a person, a store, a payphone. She still remembers. A few more months, she wouldn't have run. I could've made her want to stay. I could have shut her up.

*Well, Sarah, I'm gonna teach you about hell.*

## *Ghetto Soldier*

By: Elyssa Bouabid

I wish I could reverse my family's curse  
but i can never go back cause i know i'm trapped  
suicide bomber with my life strapped  
i'm damaged almost about to vanish  
i'm ready to blow even though i still need to grow  
killing for peace, i'm destroying these streets  
the one's where i've dreamed and seen  
you and me tryin to believe we can achieve  
but we were brought up on the block  
for our clocks to go tic tock  
with killers no soul hustlers no goal.

Ghetto soldier release and reload.

I know how it is to stand up fucked up  
in a society made up with conspiracy  
where you and me are slaves to be  
non willingly just follow their holy story  
cause apparently its the way to stability  
but we only keep fighting constantly  
deeply within ourselves and mentally  
wondering how does our life end so tragically  
cant forget i'm labeled a threat to society.

I was told by murdering I was crushing the earth  
but killing monkeys to conquer the world was worse  
I die alone on my own not for the throne  
cant go home cause all was a lie  
when they told me pray to the sky  
but all i can see was my momma cry  
was God to shy to reply?

I can never return all my pictures are burned  
i'm only a human my faith is ruined  
wish i could succeed society to survive  
but only when i bleed i know i'm alive.

Ghetto soldier release and explode.

## *Precious Daughter*

By: Carol Dignam

Oh daughter precious daughter, when you first came to be  
My past was still threatening to inundate me  
I was afraid to pass on the hurt I could not free  
So I held you in my arms,  
protectively....

*Oh mother loving mother, you hold me much too close  
I have to keep my distance lest your fears drown us both  
The tide is turning mother, let me go out to sea  
You know I'm a good swimmer, you taught that to me, taught  
that to me....*

Oh daughter precious daughter, you're wiser than your years  
Could it be that my love is tainted by my fears?  
I know that one day you must answer the call of the tide  
But time remains to swim together side... by... side...

*Oh mother loving mother, I know your love is deep  
But love is not ownership, and I'm not yours to keep  
Draw in that love and let it wash away your fear and pain  
Then together we can swim in the sacred and mundane, sacred  
and mundane ...*

Swim girl swim, for the storm is close behind  
Together we will make it, through the seaweed and the brine  
Though the waves may toss us forever to and fro  
Our harmonies will attune us to... the blessed flow...

Keep breathing just keep breathing as the circle turns around  
One minute we are swimming, the next we're washed aground  
The ocean will draw us out, and draw us in again  
But our love for each other will always remain... always remain

\*\*\*\*

The ocean will draw us out, and draw us in again  
But our love for each other will always remain... always remain....



*Fire*  
*By: Sarah Hardy*

The news reports had been flooding in with stories of the wildfires. They had been started on purpose, they said; people had been caught on film running away from the blazes as they took hold. The droughts hadn't made the situation any better. The land was parched; the forests dry as straw and just as flammable. The fires were spreading rapidly, aided by hurricane winds and dense undergrowth. There were planes flying overhead dropping gallons of water on the fires and ahead of the flames in an attempt to stop the spread of devastation. They had been trying it for days without any luck, but they seemed to have an unending well of hope to keep them going.

The government had started evacuating people from their homes to prevent fatalities. You could almost smell the fear over the stink of smoke and burning as people packed as much as they could and abandoned their homes. The government was telling people not to be alarmed; that they had the fires under control and that they would be out soon. Nobody believed them though, they never do. The supermarkets were packed with people buying water and food, though why is beyond me. If they had to leave their homes, they wouldn't be able to take it all with them. I suppose they were going on the theory of 'better safe than sorry'; that they would have supplies stock-piled for when the shops stopped getting food delivered and the unprepared people starved. It's every man for himself when faced with your collective mortality.

The first fatalities were reported this morning, a family of four driving away from their home having been told to evacuate only hours before. The only evidence was a burned out shell of a car and the charred remains of human bones. The press was all over it; nothing like a disaster and dead children to boost viewing numbers. Somehow the TV news teams had managed to get their hands on photos of the family, relishing in splashing the happy faces all over the world. Nobodies being glorified and immortalized on the world's stage because of their death. Only celebrities, victims and criminals get that

honour. Can't say I'm desperate for it myself, I never did see the point in celebrity.

The fires are spreading. The winds have changed directions and the sun still beats down through the smoke, drying up all the water they spent so much time and money dropping there. Their efforts have been futile. The fires are moving away from small-town country to busy metropolis. It'll be harder to evacuate people from there. It'll be too expensive to repair all the damage after the flames have moved on. The government is still telling people not to panic but nobody believes for a moment that they have it under control. The planes have increased their number of passes over. More water is being dropped by the hour.

The death toll is clicking up, an isolated village was surrounded by flames during the night, and nobody has been able to find out if they're still alive. The fires had melted the communications wires, and the thick smoke blocks satellites from getting a clear view or an uninterrupted signal. The country is on tenterhooks. The whole world wants to know if the villagers survived, even though most of them didn't even know the place existed until this morning.

It has to be said; natural disasters do bring people together, even if it is only out of morbid curiosity and a sense of relief that it isn't them. Religious-types are praying for the lives and souls of people they don't know or care about. They seem to be taking it the hardest; everyone else is condemning them for their faith in such a 'cruel deity'.

Looking out of my window I can see the orange flickering glow of the fires. I haven't had a clear shot of the sky in over a week, but this is my first sign that the flames are coming this way. I don't suppose I'll leave though, when the time comes to evacuate. I think I'll stay home and crack open a bottle of something. If I'm going to die on fire, I'd rather do it in the comfort of my own home than desperately running away like a coward. Humanity always seems so against facing its own mortality but relishes it in others. I never was one for running away.

I can hear the roar of fires now, over the constant chattering of news readers on the TV. Usual programming has been cancelled in light of there being so much more interesting stuff happening on the news. I turn the volume up in an attempt to block out the sound of death, but talk is



inconsistent and death is continuous and inevitable. The woman on the news at the moment is telling some sob story about a kid who died 'before his time' because of smoke inhalation. I never understood how death could come before your time. Surely if you're dead then it was your time. It's just people thinking that only old age should kill you. Or better yet that people should live forever.

It's raining now, and the drumming of rain builds the flaming inferno up to a crescendo of pounding noise. The raindrops fall black with soot and make the earth look like it's sinking into a tar pit. Maybe it isn't fire and rain making that noise at all. Maybe it's the echoes of sinking dinosaurs crying out in warning.

The tips of the trees at the bottom of my garden are catching light now. Sparks of orange singeing the ends before bursting into flames at the thicker bits of wood; the skeletons of leaves silhouetted against the fire for a split second before they, too, are engulfed. The sky looks bruised and brooding as the dense smoke rolls angrily overhead. The garden looks to be sinking into the pits of hell; fire and raining black acid. The dull roaring has steadily built into a raging battle of drums and destruction that overpowers everything else.

I suppose any places not touched by the fires will be flooded with all this rain, but it's hard to imagine that this fire has left any place untouched. If I were a religious man, I might say that God was mightily displeased with the world, but I'm not. I never did believe in something I couldn't see, and I don't like the idea that someone else is in control of my life; I prefer to walk to the beat of my own drum rather than the same drum as everyone else.

I lie back in my bed with a cold drink in my hand, gazing out of the window at my own personal apocalypse. The curling flames resemble demons, forming and reforming into grotesque images of death and torture. The pounding rain has been getting quieter as the beasts draw closer, and by now the heartbeat of the earth is little more than a whisper under the might of destruction.

The smoke is seeping through the windows and under the doors. I can almost imagine my room filled with waterfalls of light if the sun could only break through the cloying smoke in the sky. Heat radiates through the glass and condensation runs down the pane like raindrops or

tears. All I can smell is the smoke and all I feel is heat. The cold drink soothes my itching throat as it slips down but does nothing for the itching in my lungs. I wonder if drowning would be a better way to die; whether filling my lungs with soothing liquid would ease the itching that has lasted for days.

The wall around the window is bubbling and hissing as it melts; it's making a mess of my carpet but I suppose there's little to be done now. All there is to be heard is the roar of flames and the wheezing of my breathing; the power went out earlier so the incessant chatter of reporters has finally been silenced. Funny how the only thing to stop them is the ending of the world.

*Please Come Down and See Daddy*  
*By: Dr. Noni Howard*

A true story for JAN DERICK

'Please come down and see Daddy'  
my mothers' aching voice  
careens up the second floor stairway.

A long week since the black wreath  
was placed on the front door.

i had been called out at the classroom;  
on the other side of it was "AUNT IRIS".  
"You have to go home" was all she said  
jamming the parking break.

the grounds were covered in dark cars  
and darker men.  
they swilled around the front door  
and one of them put up a black wreath.  
i didn't know what it meant.  
"AUNT IRIS," formidable and huge  
Pushed the men away with her hips.

inside a lot of people moving around  
and standing in little circles and on the chairs.  
i was led to the foot of the carved banister

and told to go up to mother.

\* \* \*

. . . . . Her eyes were pulled out, face drawn  
and frigid.

i saw the containers of smelling salts  
on the hardwood floor.

i drifted into the moment with  
“where’s Daddy?” and she crushed me to herself.

\* \* \*

after she told me  
i didn’t know what to think. think i  
didn’t.  
the window ledge of dark eyes  
gave me the BigBang of NO  
in my ten year old mind.

\* \* \*

people coming to the house all day now.  
A long line of fur coats outside in the snow  
to see him.  
“When will it end?” i asked my mother  
who only wept.

Noise and laughter and the smell of gin  
and sweet cigar smoker drifted up to my room.  
A big party was going on downstairs.  
Overwhelming flowers i put pillows  
Under my door.

\* \* \*

Nighttime and it was all quiet.

“Please come down and see Daddy”  
my mother’s voice echoes in my room.

Late, late as possible as i can stay up

i want to try it.

i open up and carefully look in all directions  
Very heart of quiet now i hear the maid’s snore  
down the passageway. Wind/furnace puffing  
slowly i sneak creak the wood has waxy buildup  
on my hands  
each board sounds like crashing stars  
as i shift my weight on hands wiggle  
head first i crawl down to the pit.

i stop to catch my breath. i notice i haven’t  
been breathing. The carpet of the first floor  
landing is in my grasp.

\* \* \*

The entrance to the drawing rooms were almost  
closed by a wall of lilies dripping  
their juices on the carpet.  
i stand up and put one foot  
in front of the other.

\* \* \*

A huge silver casket appeared  
at the end of vines and blooms  
in this house hot fantasy.

He is lying in the sarcophagus  
in his blue suit.  
the flag of our country is draped to cover  
one end. The flags of other countries surround  
his quiet face.

Mother said:  
“Daddy has this smile on his face;  
i wish you could see it.”

he’s not smiling. he’s not anything.  
he’s wearing the red tie he liked.  
he’s NOT Daddy!!

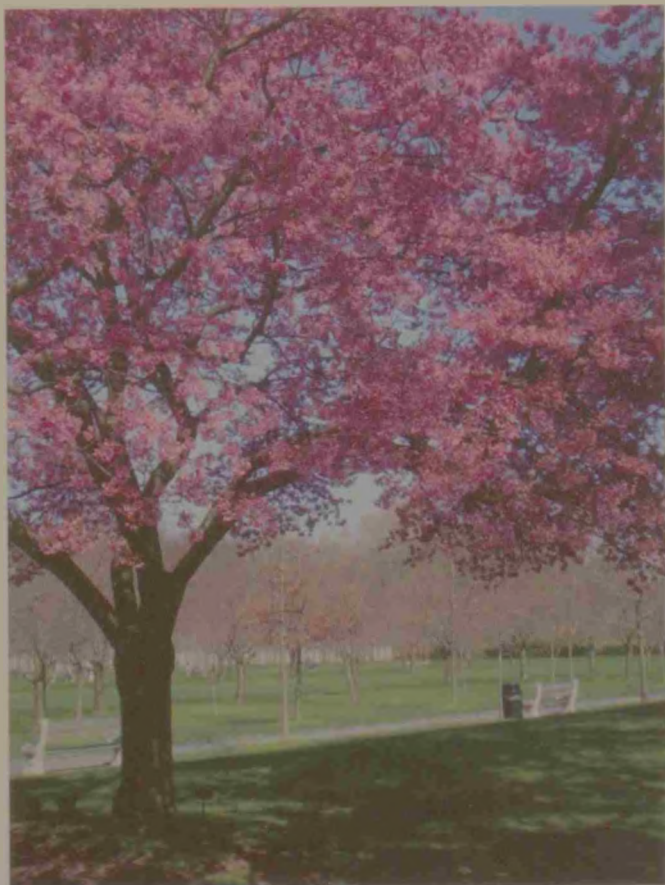


\* \* \*

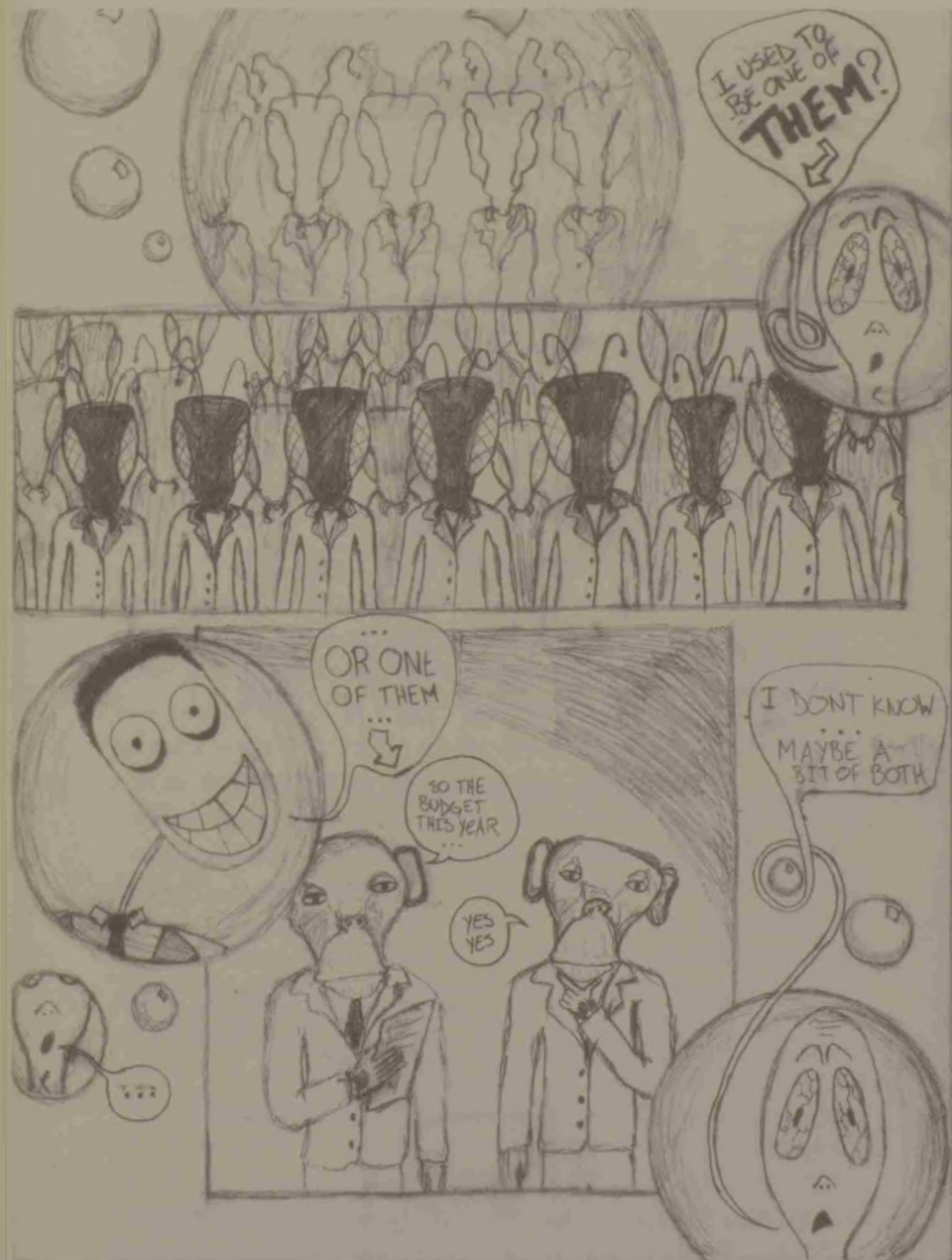
five years later  
i allowed myself to write  
about what i knew  
and what i saw.

my first poem  
was for you,

Daddy.



*Brooklyn Cherry Blossoms*  
By: Adam Young



*Rush Comics (an excerpt)*  
By: Daniel Taggart-Hodge



*-Chapter Six-  
Graduates' Art Show*

# TRACES

Bishop's Fine Arts  
Graduating Student Exhibition

April 6th - 10th, 2011

GALERIE D'art   
FOREMAN

FOREMAN ART GALLERY OF BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY

Guest Curator: Sarah Boucher

Featured Artists: Kye Barker in  
collaboration with Mel Hattie, Marilyne  
Bisaillon, David Fox, Jonathan Hebert, Alaina  
Kelsey, Dayna Lowe, Regine Neumann, Aya Sato,  
Chantal Simard, Laura Smith, Nicholas  
Whitehead and Kevin Donelle  
Coordinators : Alison Jones, Rebecca Estrada,  
Etienne Bolze

*I feel as though I am constantly bombarded by  
inspiration in my life, but I am especially  
fascinated with urban centres and landscapes. I  
love the feeling of walking down a city street and  
taking in all of the different aspects associated  
with it; the cracks in the concrete, the buildings,  
and the even the street lights. Many of the artists*

*that inspire me are among my close friends, their  
work constantly gives me ideas and  
encouragement to continue creating.  
- David Fox*

*I have been painting and making art since I was a child.  
There are a lot of artists in my family on the side of my  
mother, who comes from the Netherlands. My grandfather  
taught me how to paint when I was young and I continued  
through high school and university. My inspiration comes  
from the people around me who I love. My most recent  
project revolved around a series of portraits of my family.  
The paintings were in different styles ranging from  
impressionistic to abstract so I could explore the medium of  
paint. I am inspired by books I read, discussions I have,  
and places I dream of. Art is a way to materialize the  
essentials of my heart that I find difficult to express in any  
other way. I especially enjoy expression through collage.  
Bits and pieces of moments that make up our memory is the  
theme I will be working on for the grad show. This memory  
can be both personal and collective, conscious or  
unconscious. Collaging allows me to work both figuratively  
and abstractly, exploring and finding trends of imagery  
that reflect my interests.*

*- Laura Smith*

*Art is a passion for me. It's not  
necessarily logic, or process but a  
love of creativity; Art is a part of  
me. The colours, mediums and  
spontaneity of my work are not in haste  
or for lack of involvement or planning,  
they're with intent of self discovery.  
Every stroke of the brush, line of the  
pencil reflects something bigger than  
just a mark on a piece of paper. It's  
me and my love of art, life and  
everything I do.*

*- Alaina Kelsey*

*I find the inspiration of my artworks within my relationship with society and human interactions. I seek to give a form to the sensations that I obtain through my exposure to the surrounding society and communications with other people. Thus, many of my works, whether figurative or abstract, tend to be conceptual.*

*This might have to do with the fact that I am exposed to the culture that is very dissimilar from my own. Living abroad certainly opened up my mind and allowed myself to be sensitive to social, cultural, and racial issues.*

- Aya Sato

How I view my art and art in general is that it is protean. To me it is constantly changing and growing, and personally I find that art is about this. I work predominately drawing, painting, photography, and sometimes music, all of which are tradition mediums. However, when working I feel the experience, and it is important where place it comes from. My influence is rooted probably in surrealism, dada, outsider art and lower forms of art, for example, comics, and cartoons. Over all, art is something that allow me to have a feeling of transforming and growing.

- Nicholas Whitehead

when my lola (grandma) passed away, i was lucky enough to be surrounded by her husband, (grand/)daughters and (grand/)sons. we all stayed together in one house with my auntie. at the end of the hallway, a kind of shrine was created to honour my lola. i remember seeing my auntie, placing part of the meal we were about to eat near the shrine, so that my lola could enjoy the meal with us. seeing her do this, alta(/e)red the way i had thought of memory. it was then that i knew the difference between the loss of life and the loss of memory. i create art so that i can always remember.

- kai barker

Life is a constant state of change. This concept is often applied in my creative method. My art is influenced by a synthesis of personal feelings and experiences. These emotional responses, drawn, painted or printed, are often mixed with an undertone of humor. Through an exploration of the female form I aim to construct allusive and beautiful creatures. Their thoughts are left unknown, but fragments of their identities are illustrated through aspects of metamorphosis and disfigurement. However, like these ladies, my art is also conditioned to flux. My photography takes on a lighter tone. It is an account of the people and places I come into contact with, and what I find captivating. Through a mode of curious expression I am continuously exploring new ideas and methods in order to better both my art and self as a creative being.

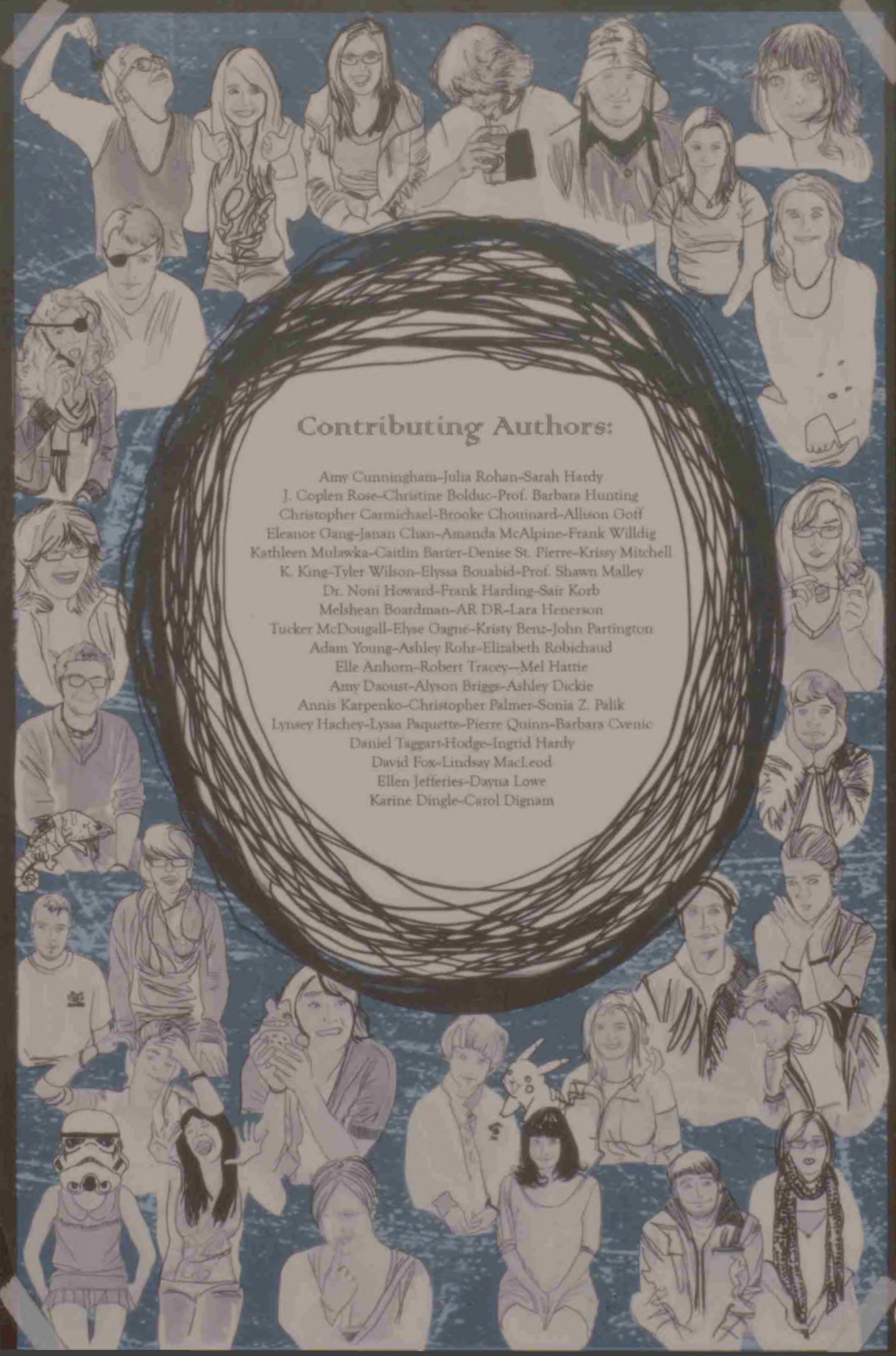
- Dayna Lowe



*Secret Path*  
*By: Annis Karpenko*

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY  
CONSULTATION SUR PLACE





## Contributing Authors:

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David Fox-Lindsay MacLeod  
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