

# The Mitre 2004

*Past and Pending*

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# The Mitre 2004:

*Past and Pending*



Introduction and Acknowledgements	3
Shannon McCarthy, <i>Confessional</i>	6
D.G. Jones, <i>ways and ways</i>	11
Paul Dutton, <i>Shakespeare's Sonnets</i>	12
Daniel J. Christensen, <i>The Dragoons' Luncheon</i>	14
Rebekka King, <i>English Student (2)</i>	23
<i>There is a Moment in the Sky</i>	24
<i>Viewers Like You</i>	25
<i>Father</i>	27
Erin Somerville, <i>Breaking the Surface</i>	29
<i>Emily</i>	36
Jenn Kang, <i>Gelatin in the Closet</i>	36
Eileen McCammon, <i>Homage</i>	37
<i>Back to Back, Tears</i>	38, 39
Sally Bourque, <i>The Weight of Death</i>	41
Stephanie Bolster, <i>Hunger</i>	49
<i>What I Saw, I Saw Again</i>	50
<i>Calendar</i>	50
<i>Vacation</i>	51
Felix Maranda-Castonguay, <i>The Wife of Golgotha</i>	52
Marjorie Bruhmuller, <i>Sleep is a Woman</i>	58
<i>If, Mountains Making Snow Angels</i>	59, 60
William Enos, <i>Hold On</i>	61
Brett Wilmot, <i>God is Dead</i>	74
<i>The Lawyer's Graveyard</i>	75
Seven Ross Smith, from <i>fluttersong: adagio for the pressured surround</i>	76
Coplen Rose <i>A Cabin in Northern Ontario</i>	81
Dr. Noni Howard, <i>Mayfly</i>	82
Sarah Dowling, <i>suites: the island year</i>	84
<i>Photographs throughout by Marina Scott-Wickens.</i> <i>Cover art by Jennifer Medwid.</i>	

## *Introduction and Acknowledgments: Past and Pending*

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

What I had not taken into account in this vision was that not everyone who submitted would address translation and chronology in the sense that I had imagined. But address it they did, often from a deeply personal position. Many of the works in this issue concern parents and origins, their narrative voices reexamining the past, picking up the dropped threads that led them to the present, and tracing them painstakingly through all their tangled knots. The difficulty of moving through time is reflected in many works through their disjunctive chronology, their linguistic and formal innovation. Of course, the passage of time is addressed directly in several of the works. Others only suggest it, like Marina Scott-Wickens's photographs, in which the rich play of light against dark suggests a rare antique, while the modern items in the images reveal the slick presence of the contemporary.

In receiving all of these submissions, I learned an important lesson about editing: that one ought not bother imagining the finished product prior to receiving any of the submissions from which it will be made. I retained my theme, but altered the original concept, and for reasons of cost and relevance, decided not to include any of the archival material. The works included are all very strong and can stand on their own. Together, these dissimilar pieces suggest a dialogue with the past, and speak from a position that acknowledges the difficulty of relating to that past. They articulate the ambivalent nature of the motion across time, as if to suggest that in the porous barrier to the present, something important might have been caught and filtered out. But I leave you to your own interpretation.

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

- Sarah Dowling

## *Confessional* Shannon McCarthy

Diary,

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

Ahh, the question segment of the journal, I always end up here eventually. This is my nucleus, a gaggle of nerves and questions. That's what I like about advice, the earnestness, someone looking wide-eyed, waiting, desperate to accept any shred of reason, of objectivity. The funny thing about advice, whether dolling it out like too much mashed potatoes, or sopping it up like wet



School was blue carpet and heavy backpacks and dirty kilts and floors that broke off into versions of wings and halls and cork boards slammed with pamphlets that I'd never read but always knew in shining glimpses running by. Each area had its merits; a closet that I hid in, skipping mass where my coconspirator passed gas and we ran with laughing, screaming tears from the flatulent bomb, heaving with the humor of another good story. The amateur sounds formed the music wing where trombones pumped spit and penciled notes had smiley faces when they were supposed to be solid. The common rooms were all well-worn couches with hair elastics and crunching chip bags stuffed between their cushions. There was always a lecture being given by one knowing student of what was here or there and we all listened intently yet gave off the air of busy indifference because we, of course, knew everything there was to know already.

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

Diary,

I feel like I'm entering into the center of things. There is an airy freedom to being on the outside, safe and untouchable and floating freely from consequence. But there is also an exciting tangibility to making decisions for yourself and carving out your own dramas. I carve with a knife whose twirling glimpse the victim catches only at the last instance, the point where control has been lost for good. That sounds much scarier than my bite really is. I only like to think of myself as a minx, the femme fatale, but

I'm much too shy and unsure for that sort of business. This has never, however, saved my prospects. It is more a fumbling towards an unmarked goal, situations lost to their insufficient haziness. For me to see what I do to people would take it being done to me. This never happens because no one gets close enough. That implies arrogance and maybe it is, but somewhere along the way I learned the trick of keeping people off my distant shores. Picture: weighty cargo ships lie in wait, heaping with goods that only need to be unloaded. They have crossed an entire ocean with good weather and timid winds and now look with the anxiousness produced at being so close to the journey's end point, where they might finally rest a while. There is no wharf or storehouse or helpful workers waiting to roll up their shirtsleeves and pitch in. There is no bustling civilization or culture or even some lady in a hat running errands absentmindedly with a to-do list crushed in her hands. But there are craggy rocks and the waves crash up against them and slither down again, waiting to make more headway next time.

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

been tossed back into that proverbial ocean. for more and more I think that I feel very little at all for others and the doors of friendships have been slammed haphazardly because I couldn't be bothered to suffer in anyone else's room but my own.

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

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

## *ways and ways*

D.G. Jones

ways and ways: the daisies  
take over the garden

sometimes to breathe is, well,  
a fortune

young, to be touched!  
or, touch is a trouble

age is to sleep with the rain

*bel amour*, naming  
the baby she changes

d's daughter, divorcing,  
has fallen in love!

the daisy chain

the whole book of knots!

the new fence: the garden already composes  
plumblin/arabesque

## Shakespeare's Sonnets

Paul Dutton

shake shake shake shake shake

shake the darling buds of May

shake hands to torture me

shake against the cold

that looks on tempests and is never shaken

if you were by my unkindness shaken

shake shake shake shake shake

-pear -pear -pear -pear -pear -pear -pear peer

doth homage to his new-appearing

as interest of the dead which now appear

and says in him thy fair appearance

The other as your bounty doth appear

On your broad main doth wilfully appear

I love not less, though less the show appear

Look in your glass, and there appears

No, nor neither he nor his compeers

-pear -pear -pear -pear -pear -pear -pear peer

Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare

Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare Shakespeare

son son son son son son son son

you know / You had a father: let your son

And when a woman woos, what woman's son

Speak of the spring and foison

Yet then my judgement knew no reason

But thence I learn and find the lesson

true / Drugs poison

but despised straight, / Past reason

son son son son son son son son

net net net

Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth

Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth

Or captain jewels in the carcanet

net net net

sonnets sonnets sonnets sonnets sonnets sonnets

sonnets sonnets

## The Dragoons' Luncheon

Daniel J. Christensen

Epigraph -

*To the people of Baghdad Vilayet:*

*In the name of my King, and in the name of the peoples over whom he rules, I address you as follows -*

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

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

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

### The Dragoons' Luncheon

A small black raptor broke from his meal and eyed the column of dragoons coming down the road. Bits of fur hung from his mouth as he sized up the foreigners in khaki coats, the horses kicking up dust with their sharp-shoed hooves striking the earth. Smoke from the ovens down the road near where the bird had found his lunch swirled in the dust, and he could see that the smell of baking bread had caught the soldiers' attention. Above the rows of homes and shops lining the road a turbab was blowing. Warm wind blew fine dust into the air, leaving the horses and men sluggish, sticky in the clammy hotness. The feasting bird, too, imagined finer weather for dining out-of-doors. Private Naj









- *It better be quick.* He looked at Sheik Alfaq's aid and then at the Sheik himself. *It better be bloody quick. We're on a schedule.*

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

### *English Student (2)*

Rebekka King

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

### *There is a Moment in the Sky*

Rebekka King

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

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

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

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

"We are all familiar things"  
he'd say,  
"they have served them up  
on the dinner plates of the nation."

## *Viewers Like You*

Rebekka King

Uncle Leroy is waiting  
2 pm,  
Saturday afternoon

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

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

in across the floor bouncing back across Clarice  
cascading

through the wisps of her hair which have  
unmistakenly fallen free.

With a step to the side he pulls Clarice close to him  
extends his arms and shoots her spinning away  
like a circus act out of a cannon:  
the song explodes.

Clarice explodes.

and Uncle Leroy—

pauses to ash the Marlboro  
on the faded panel floors.

As the bass quickens and the sax shrills

Leroy is suspended:

its 1935 all over again  
the cats are hep and Leroy's a whiskey stick at  
the flying circus  
focussed on the prowl.

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

*Father*  
Rebekka King

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

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

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

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



*Marina Scott-Wickens*

## *Breaking the Surface*

Erin Somerville

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

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

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

I left early this morning when the sun was still low enough to allow mist to gather in hollows in the ground. I grabbed keys, coat and scarf and left staring into nothing for a winding highway and ferryboat ride. I expected to find her somewhere along the road, thumb out for a lift, chin lifted defiantly. The car passed nothing but blurred trees. I thought she was just ahead of me in line for ferry food, sneaking a Nanaimo Bar. The woman turned and her face was old and angry. So when the boat docked I head-

ed down a road well remembered, one that I had never driven, to a hidden stretch of shore where she must be hiding.

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

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

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

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

I can hear the sizzle of the sun strong on the stones and of the moisture leaving our bodies. The displacement of space opens deafening beside me as she rises and her voice sits warm inside my ear, dripping out as the feet push murmuring into the water. I





her and her back arches, undulating to accommodate its pressure. She has caught the sea in her net and drags it outward.

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

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

*Emily*  
Erin Somerville

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

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

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

*Gelatin in the Closet*  
Jenn Kang

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

## *Homage*

Eileen McCammon

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

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

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

an homage of broken hearts

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

## *Back to Back*

Eileen McCammon

back to back  
smelly green pine between us  
and sadness sometimes  
or thick cream plaster  
and so much love

in the dirty grass  
with magic plastic toys i craved

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

in the hard blue van  
that our parents sometimes lived in

our spaceship

curls, hammers, sisters, blood  
shackle us together  
trains, calm, chaos, years,  
rip us into

brother

and

sister

cassettes and basketballs in the mini van of our youth  
tears and secrets and punches  
the punishment of unavoidable love

words, inspiration, time  
more tears in the mountains  
filled up with big years and ready to  
grow

as close as two continents can be  
we will never lose this adventure

### *Tears*

Eileen McCammon

tears crumble down your corpse  
secrets infused  
like i exhale

*when we've had too much*

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

*i saw invisible alligators swimming*

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

*there was so much blood*

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

but you don't  
you love more love Love LOVE

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

*children with fathers*



*Marina Scott-Wickens*

## *The Weight of Death*

Sally Bourque

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

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

his lower right hip and red human filth seeped through his thin white shirt. The daisy backed away in horror and finally the music was silenced. Fear fell upon the crowd and whispers sleuthed about the air.

"Who is it?"

"I saw him here last week ..."

"He bought me a drink once ..."

"What is this ...?"

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

Events were set in motion on Tuesday the 19th when Vender awoke, made herself a cup of coffee that tasted sour and discovered a bloated worm from the cherry tree at the bottom of her cup. Disgusted, she flushed the offensive bug down the septic tank and obsessed about its foulness all day at work. At home that night her neighbour Stan invited her over for drinks on the verandah. Stan had moved in two days ago from somewhere out West



short with surprise, powered down the chain saw, and confronted Vender with a smiling, confused

"Howdy."

Vender glared at him.

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

"Yours?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"What time is it Stan?"

"Well, I left about a half an hour ago, so I'd say about one pm, give or take a little." Vender felt panicked, she had missed

work ... where? At Niki's? No, that was where she used to work ... At the newspaper, of course!

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

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

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

Vender rose on Friday the 23rd to the soft drone of music spilling from her kitchen. She had finally had a decent sleep and felt rested and assured. She was wearing cotton pajamas and her hair was still bobbing in short curls from the day before. She found her radio playing in the kitchen and, confused, turned it off. A few moments later something crashed in the dining room; Vender's stomach clenched in fear. Assuming the worst, she grabbed a steak knife from the wall and crept around the mahogany island toward the door. Something hit her from behind and she reeled back and swung the knife. A man fell to his knees



Inside, the bar was still in chaos. A perimeter had been cleared around the body of a young girl in red leather pants and a black wraparound shirt.

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

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

### *Hunger*

Stephanie Bolster

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

### *What I Saw, I Saw Again*

Stephanie Bolster

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

### *Calendar*

Stephanie Bolster

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

*Vacation*  
Stephanie Bolster

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

*The Wife of Golgotha*  
Felix Maranda-Castonguay

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

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

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

She had started dozing soon after they left the hotel and she was sound asleep when they hit the traffic. She had a strange

dream, part of which she had dreamed before a great many times. She could still hear the unassailable voice of a veiled man calling to her. "Come to me, Annabel Lee." She had heard the voice hundreds of times before in her sleep but could not associate it with any real voice she had heard before.

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

"Well," she said, "let's go and have a look then."

"Don't forget your hat," was his answer as he handed her the yellow straw hat.

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

"So, you like it here?"

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

"What makes it so different?"

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

"Yeah, it's quite true. The very peoples who fill this country are so unlike each other. Some are rich, and exploit the poor,

some live in the past and others think only of the future. It's like in everything else."

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

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

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

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

Some time later, as they were walking along the Alley of the Dead, they were stopped by one of the innumerable salespersons trying to get the tourists to buy their stuff. As Emiliano was busy bargaining the price of an Onyx black sphere as a present for Annabel Lee, she seized the opportunity to walk away. She started to hear a low buzz coming from everywhere and nowhere at once. Not knowing where she should go, she directed her steps toward the highest structure in the ancient city: the pyramid dedicated to the Sun-God. As she got to the foundation of the impressive edifice, she was overwhelmed by the greatest feeling of awe



chaos, sheer pain. There was now nothing else for her but the deafening voice in her mind; her body was on fire. Emiliano was now catching up to her. he was running, his arms outstretched toward her. As she climbed the last step, she felt her whole being collapsing; she reached for the hand of salvation, and as she touched it, all her pain vanished. For an instant, her whole went through an ecstasy of blissful joy; comfort and relief beyond measure flooded her body and mind. As she felt she would crumble down the red-hot stones, she heard the cry of a fantastic bird coming down to her and powerful claws seized her by the shoulders and took her away from the ground. She felt no pain.

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

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

## *Sleep is a Woman*

Marjorie Bruhmuller

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

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

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

*If ...*

Marjorie Bruhmuller

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

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

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

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

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

*Mountains Making Snow Angels*

Marjorie Bruhmuller

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

Monolithic children  
making angels in the snow.  
Spreading arms, legs  
smiling up, tongues out  
laughs of steam  
rising all around them.



Marina Scott-Wickens

## *Hold On*

William Enos

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

Smoothing out his worn burgundy golf shirt, tucking and untucking it, Garrett combed his wispy white hair into place. Adjusting his belt, bringing it over his paunch, Garrett pondered his reflection. He noticed how high his pants were, almost above

his belly button, and dropped them down. Tugging at his paunch, he frowned. The memory of his once proud, imposing physique made him long for his younger days. He puffed up his chest, trying to broaden the sagging shoulders. His shirt hung off him as if it were still on a hanger. He leaned back a little, and tried a smile, which faded before it had even had a chance to become a grin. Garrett was going to see his wife today, so he tried to look his best, but deep down he knew it didn't matter. He sighed and leaned against the counter, tucked, untucked, he knew he was only pretending to care. He turned from the mirror and crept down the stairs, gripping the railing with both hands.

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

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

*They pulled into the campus parking lot, and Tracy sang along to the blaring radio as Garrett hunted for a spot. As he glided through the rows of cars, there were several appreciative honks and a rousing holler from a bunch of younger students who were tossing a baseball around on the lawn. Tracy smiled hopefully at Garrett, but watched his face fall as they pulled into a spot by the young students. Tracy gently patted his knee in reas-*









"You should, Garrett. it'll keep you going ... ummm. keep you busy, I mean."

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

"Oh, did it cost much?"

"No, not much."

"How has the weather been? I don't get outside very often in the winter."

"It's good, no snow yet, but real cold."

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

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

"We don't have to if you don't want to, Garrett ..."

"No, no, I do ... of course I do."

She invited him into the little hollow she had made in the blankets with a tender kiss. His lips remained still for a moment, then they responded. She watched his eyes as he entered her. He was staring at her bedside night-stand. Tracy reached over silently and knocked the photo frame face down. He was only half hard

and she could feel where it bent a little. She thrust her hips desperately at him, trying to call his member to life, gripping him tightly with her walls. He began to thrust rhythmically into her, his motion calm. Tracy moaned and Garrett exhaled, pouring the air from his lungs. Tracy felt her body warm all over, and she smiled. Garrett looked down at her with apprehension. She watched his thin white arms trembling as he held himself over her, she grabbed his elbows, steadying him, enabling him to continue his disheartened thrusting.

Tracy's face fell as Garrett withdrew from her. He began to dress at the foot of the cot. She felt greedy. She had come twice, and Garrett had withdrawn without finishing. He stared down as he buckled his belt. Tracy got up and hugged him. "Garrett, you were wonderful, honey." Tracy said, nibbling at his ear, trying to build him up. He sighed and pulled his shirt on. She helped him get it over his head. "I think you were closer this time, Garrett. it's getting better. Well, that's not what I mean, it's always good for me, but I think you're getting closer, maybe next time. I want you to enjoy this as much as I do, honey."

"I do enjoy it Tracy," he lied.

"Really?" she said, her eyes sparkling.

"It's always nice to see you. I look forward to it all week. It keeps me going."

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

"Yes, see you again next week."

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

Garrett pondered it for a moment.

"I love her to death."

*Tracy slumped into Garrett's reading chair. She sighed. Her chest hurt. She heard Garrett whimpering like a wounded animal in the next room. Her tears flowed, dripping steadily. There were*

*bags beginning under her eyes. Garrett called his son's name, slurring as the tranquilizers took hold. She could hear the drool seeping from the corner of his mouth. She hoped he would sleep soon, she hoped it would ease the pain.*

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

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

## *God is Dead*

Brett Wilmot

Dusk,  
is the avenue—  
that last jaunt before the needle  
pierces the eye and sight turns to sand  
in churning through 'till the next time  
around.

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

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

Wear away all paths with your  
empty feet – don't wallow,  
you'll just hold up the line,  
and Death'll get backed-up  
beyond the grace of that fanatic  
EX-LAX what's his name.

Doesn't matter,  
you all come out the same  
tortured mass in the end—  
fester in your pile until a missed  
step sends you through that done road  
for one more time on the  
rollercoaster of you're gonna die.

So – want another ride?

## *The Lawyer's Graveyard*

Brett Wilmot

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

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

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

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

Father and i. uncommon collaboration.

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

uncomfortable corm. this anger.

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

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

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

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

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

what reason for the stone?

the lake a gray-blue dish rimmed green and gold and topped with  
huge bulbous clouds. heaven-torch. or mounds of orange gelati.





## *A Cabin in Northern Ontario*

Coplen Rose

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

I like to call your humbled shelter home.

## *Mayfly*

Dr. Noni Howard

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

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

All 86,400 seconds are experienced  
as living  
except for the last few

which are alarming  
and unresolved

their desperate attempts  
at flight because somewhere  
someone said  
life is sweet

## II

my feet  
 on their humming wings  
 oozing and crackling at the same time  
 leave rain prints across the grass

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

## III

in the wet light  
 i bend and enter  
 your dreamless body

a slow descent  
 into the flightless drama  
 we all dream of

and the release  
 unexpected  
 and a miracle

a second / of recorded /  
 time

*suites: the island year*

Sarah Dowling

1) island

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

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

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

hands drift  
 as surf around the shore  
 in widening, deliberate  
 circles.

2) season of the island: snow

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

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

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

the season of the silent,  
of this island.

3) spring: tenderly rinsed them clean

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

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

the slough part of me  
juices scareful.  
fibres converge and stretch across,  
filtering between the  
curvature of us.



## 6) appendix: the mirror

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

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

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

Stephanie Bolster

Sally Bourque

Marjorie Bruhmuller

Daniel J. Christensen

■ ■ ■ Dowling

Paul Dutton

William Enos

Dr. Noni Howard

D.G. Jones

Jenn Kang

Rebekka King

Félix Maranda-Castonguay

Eileen McCammon

Shannon McCarthy

Jennifer Medwid

Coplen Rose

Marina Scott-Wickens

Steven Ross Smith

Erin Somerville

Brett Wilmot