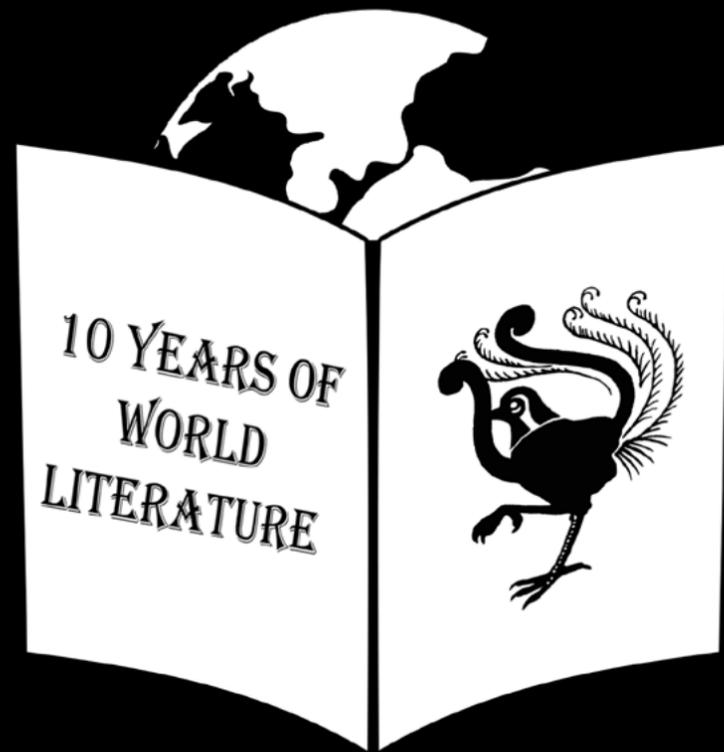


# LYRE MAGAZINE



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# LYRE MAGAZINE

Issue 8 | Questioning Memory and Nostalgia | Spring 2017

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“Owl” by Catherine Harasymiw



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## FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

As we comb the sands of time, recollecting those pieces of the past for a cohesive whole, the seashell husks of salt slick moments, whose writhing ligaments and shivering, prehensile proboscises once probed the obsidian crevices of beached beachcombers combing the sands of time, is it sad to say, sometimes, the romance ends in an empty bottle?

Memories and nostalgia inhabit us as much as we inhabit them. Be they the excavated artefacts that shatter a cultural narrative, suspect calls for a return to an ephemeral greatness, or intimations of past times with ones passed partners, the inception, decay, and recreation of memories and nostalgic structures remains as fascinating a question for the science of the scalpel, as for writers prying open these phenomena with their pens.

We would like to thank and congratulate all the contributors to this year's Lyre for their enthusiasm and dedication in seeing their work through from inspiration to publication. We would also like to thank our editorial board for their help soliciting and reviewing the large volume of submissions we received this year, as well as our lead poetry and fiction editors for consulting with us on some very difficult decisions.

Further thanks are due to our translation and associate design teams for their help expanding the capabilities of the Lyre, and for variously re/inventing their roles and responsibilities to meet their unique sets of challenges.

Finally, we would like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Melek Ortabasi, for her help parsing problems, keeping us on tracks, and making herself available at all stages of the publication process.

Alex Harasymiw and Iulia Sincaian  
Editors-in-Chief

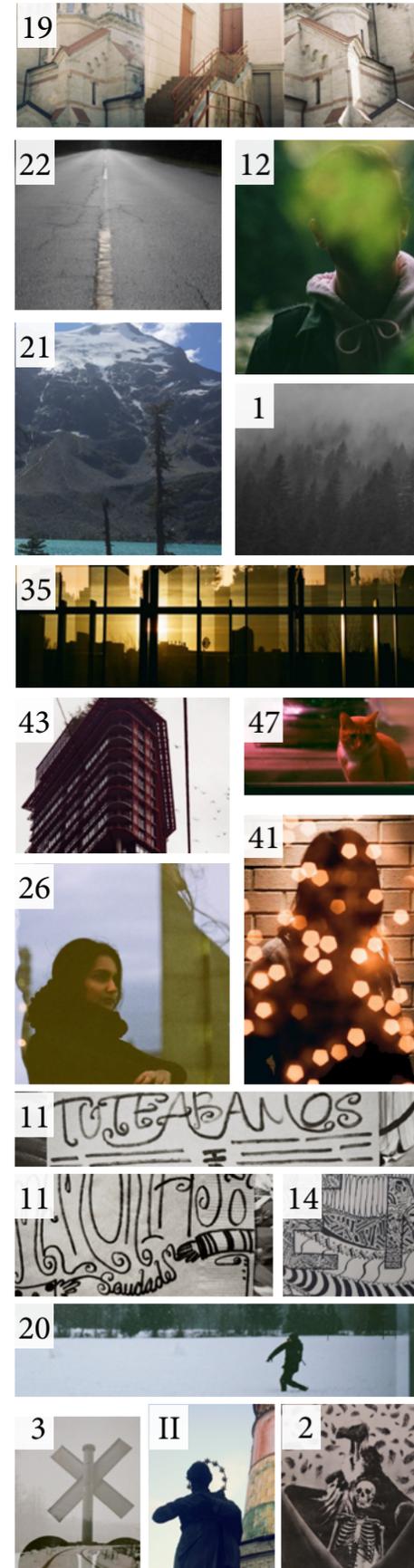
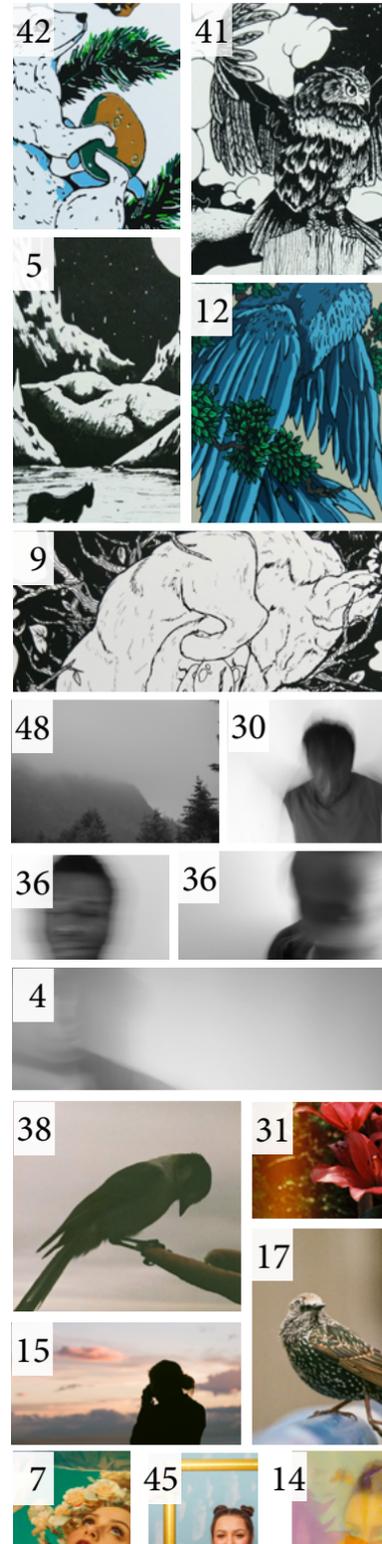


Melanie Hiepler | Český Krumlov

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George Paillé

## An Aromatic War Zone

Emny Moghrabi | Poetry

We used to stare at the night sky like it was the back kitchen window, whose sill with dust  
and chipped paint  
held plants often plucked and pruned so we could hold sharp fragrance until our fingers bled  
with green  
and stemmed.

We grew hedges in pots, dropping chopped leaves through curling tendrils and vines of ivy  
steam, marking the boundary between breakfast and dinner, while willows in casserole pans  
pushed at the oven door, breaking the glass and descending.

An aromatic tear gas war zone of screaming kettles  
of flurried snow beating at windows  
and stolen bread knives, slicing deeply should they slip  
(and they did)

Our skin rose, fell, bulged and bloomed with cuts and bruises,  
blisters, and the scars of hot oil  
mistaken for freckles or flecks of pepper,  
while we scraped sea salt from rocks on a more jagged shoreline

We rarely swept the tile, cracked and blushing from the borrowed cull of beets, who half cut  
and bleeding had ventured over the counter's edge.

## “Write About Me, I’m Dying of Boredom”

Hanna Chau | Poetry

So I gave you wings  
and sent you to South America  
to talk to the animals  
and question the Gods.

You fell in love (twice)  
visited Satan in his neighborhood  
and got high off  
her porcelain skin.

On the news, a scrawny reporter  
tells the world that a lonely man  
in his 20's died last night  
while the angels were asleep.

I wanted to warn you  
but my voice drowned in  
the whites of her eyes.

The person next door  
buys earplugs to block out  
the screams and moans and groans  
and she wants you to say  
"Make love" instead of "Fuck."

Either way, you fuck her  
over and over  
until Pleasure herself had to come  
to your door and with  
exhausted eyes  
demanded that you two give it a rest.

They say he died peacefully  
as if drifting into a deep sleep  
and he must've been dreaming  
of something real good,  
a secret smile stretched across  
his lifeless face.



Jessica Peatman | The Veil



Jeremy Pratt

## Ceasefire

N. Loth | Poetry

Damascus is dry  
 and a fighter  
 reeks of gas on the road  
  
 mercenaries' with the faces of wild things  
 maul over the city's ravaged soil  
 using big guns like missiles  
  
 electric wires dangle in the streets  
 torn furnaces split  
  
 and the dead lay sleeping under transparent  
 sheets  
 dreaming of a  
 paradise  
 unrealized.

## The Day My Heart Died

Jaiden Dembo | Poetry

There's a whisper of your cologne  
 On the crowded subway car  
 And I'm searching for you  
 In this sea of masked pretenders

When I pass by that café window  
 I can see us sitting in the booth  
 My heart in your hands  
 As you play a tune on its strings

Walking down these streets alone  
 I can feel you next to me  
 In the train station, the coffee shop, the library  
 Replaying the echoes of your laughter

No matter how many times it rains  
 This city can't be washed of my memories  
 As people layer the bricks with imprints of their souls  
 All that's left is your silhouette

I search for you in every man I meet  
 And when I catch your reflection  
 I turn my cheek  
 Because the stranger is a half-hearted copy

The double vision is twisting my mind  
 Where I can only live in the past  
 Even when I'm crawling into the future  
 Because I'm blind to the present

Ghosts always find a way to haunt you



Moe Marjani & Mayanga Ngulube

## Neighbourhood Laundry

Raphael Diangkinay | Poetry

A long string reaching across  
 brick and concrete buildings.  
 Tethering us together,  
 our laundry kept us bound  
 against the wind.  
 Like how we used to speak,  
 with tin can telephones,  
 door to door visits and  
 yelling through windows at windows.

In the transition,  
 they took down  
 the cobwebs of the city

Then came the busy laundromats,  
 the hypnotizing whirlpools  
 and pockets of change  
 that made us discreet.  
 Talking only over  
 silent whirring and soak cycles.

Now we barely speak,  
 marooned within our own homes  
 with a power wash and dryer  
 bundled in together with  
 the only shared experience left,  
 that of quiet folding.

# The Art of Forgetting

Jade Qiu | Poetry

1.  
Here is a picture:  
Astronomical light  
Lingering touches, too hesitant  
Gentleness that tastes of blood and steel
2.  
You're not too sure who spoke first  
But echoes reverberate en scene  
Bodies frozen in a tableau  
Of smiling faces with twinkles in their eyes  
And you turn, hoping no one sees the storm in yours  
"What" "It was just a joke" "You do remember jokes"  
You don't but learn quickly: cruelty is not the absence of laughter
3.  
Sunlight pours across the room  
Creeps into bed, plummeting like fists into your skin  
And you are transposed, forgetful, somewhere else  
With a sun that does not feel like a sun  
But the burning cottage of a nameless hill  
Where you are the smoke and fire and watcher all at once  
Gasoline and exhaustion pooling in the back of your mouth
4.  
There is a bench in a house with the light of your life  
And when he speaks he points  
To the illuminated center of your heart  
Words strung like constellations, aflame like moths  
'I' and 'love' and 'am, was, always will be'  
And in that moment you wished you remembered  
Wished it didn't feel like non-sequiturs,  
Idiosyncrasies violently thrust together



# Rescue of Sisyphus

Divyansh Srivastava | Poetry

I chanced upon, what seemed bizarre ;  
A land here never lay before ;  
I couldn't stall i had come so far ;  
I went about to grasp some more.  
A needle's was a roaring cry;  
Stillness was never so deafening ;  
To spot a soul i did so try ;  
I wished i stopped caring  
To where the petty eye could see;  
The land embraced the sky azure ;  
The stretch of earth terrified me;  
Was petrified, i couldn't be more sure;  
A tree stood out, a mammoth tree ;  
Its shade made be shiver;  
A perched dove looked down at me ;  
My eyes didn't flinch a sliver;  
She sat upon a twig so small;  
Spoke to me in a brittle tone;  
Up the tree she made me crawl;  
An ardent trier, i did not groan.  
I stretched so hard and reached so high;  
She seemed so close, a foot apart;  
But all i did was utter a sigh;  
For she had risen with a sudden start;  
She hopped around to a higher branch;  
I cursed her for luring me in;  
But toward her again did i march;  
To let go would be a sin.  
When apparated there a monkey of sorts;  
Offered me his only nut;  
Furiously i threw it back,i could not halt;  
I couldn't see that he was hurt.

There again i reached close;  
There again she hopped away;  
To be defeated was a bitter dose;  
So i leaped upon her as my last fray.  
For a moment in the mid-sky;  
It all seemed lost, all hopes ploughed;  
But my insolent mind was about to cry;  
For the worst was what happened now  
As the air served as a perfect ground;  
I discovered a blatant truth;  
From up there,the land around;  
Seemed so serene, so pure.  
A huge expanse of longitude;  
With trees as melon seeds;  
I was wrong before, this wasn't crude;  
It was the missing piece perfection needs.  
I shoved the bitterness down my throat;  
For i had chased what was never mine;  
I let myself fall in a mould;  
And ignored the bright sunshine  
And now whilst i plunged low;  
I cursed myself for not halting;  
For if i had just turned and looked;  
A beautiful world was awaiting.  
In the moment of sheer panic;  
A rope appeared from thin air;  
I tried to grab it like a manic,  
In a fit of misery and despair.  
There and then i thanked th'Almighty;  
Then looked up to Him to hail;  
Two eyes looked down back at me;  
The rope, it seemed, was the monkey's tail.

# Warm Bodies

Meagan Schlee-Bedard | Poetry

There's a certain warmth to a human body, that I guess is in all warm blooded creatures, but if we fucked every warm blooded creature. We'd be pretty screwed. I don't want to say it's loneliness that gets the better of us, or that we do things out of the sake of lust. We do. We know when there isn't another body there. We do weird things. We say weird things. We blame it on getting drunk. We weren't drunk. We get drunk. We listen to long songs. We screw ourselves over. Feeling feelings. Feels. Feelings. Felt, fought feeling. Peeling off clothes, bumping noses. Strangers. We watch movies of strangers. Kissing. Missing. Old lovers. Are we ever honest with ourselves? Boredom versus bliss. Ex's only call when there lonely. They won't call you the next day. This isn't a reunion. We wish. Self-medicate. We squish. Self-medicate. Self-medicate. We listen. To the swish-squash of windshield wipers going left and right. Left right. Drip, drip, drip, drop, drip, drip, drop. Downward we go. I'd rather not say it's out of loneliness, or that we do things out of the sake of lust. Rather fear. If we fucked every warm blooded creature. We'd be pretty screwed.

# Oak Wood Table

Meagan Schlee-Bedard | Poetry

I wore your size 11 black leather dress shoes every Christmas eve.  
I always wanted to fill your shoes; the archetype. The opa, the one who could call everyone back to the oak wood table.  
I remember our family quarrels like sparklers. Makes life more interesting.  
We were these small brief moments a vignette of a family.  
Remember when you guys left.  
I was still sitting at the oak wood table when  
parenting  
out of all things oma blamed mom for bad parenting  
like a weed telling a flower it didn't blossom properly  
I was still sitting at the oak wood table  
moving my fingers across the starches left  
behind  
from the good times, the times of way too much food and laughter like santa claus before  
Christmas eve rosy cheeks and light  
light  
as bright as roughs red nose.  
I am still sitting at the oak wood table wishing to wear your size 11 shoes  
Wishing my tiny feet could hold a foundation to a least start building a home.



Conor Cunningham

# North Star & Southern Cross

Chance Daldy | Poetry

Maple syrup and bacon ever absent at dawn  
sweet fried ham hanging loose, pancakes bask in coconut cream.

Papaya and grapefruit every morning

Sea-kissed toes poke out of thongs  
mate that's Strine for flip-flops.

Just leave them on the dock and dive in

Invoking better days, youth baked in the sun  
overexposed photos of days spent on a beach.

No negatives here

Haze of summers warm spider web blanket  
inhaling the spice of sundried seaweed.

The esoteric world of tidepools

Neighbouring islands gaze with wonderment  
peaking just above surface, emerging out of the sea.

Until the sky catches fire each evening

Incandescence bows its halo, giving way to a velvet room  
Oxford blue flag that was left outback.

She has some beauty stars though

Skin radiating with the last heat of the day, thoughts turn seaward  
blood crossing the pacific and anywhere Poseidon waves.

Wherever the good surf spots were

A Panthalassic identity connected by current  
I crash upon Point Roadknight and Bluewater Beach alike.

You always knew how the sets would break

Both halves split by hemispheres  
but bound by commonwealth.

You're one of us mate

Drift through dreamtime under the Southern Cross  
as the North Star guides my way.

Breathe in the cedar and eucalyptus

## Playdates

Abby Zaporteza | Poetry

Back in the day  
It was  
Bey-Blades  
Before baes.

## Playland

Felix Ruiz de la Orden | Poetry

We brought energy  
into the last days of our youth,  
where, underneath carnival lights,  
we made our last good memories.

Our screams pierced the air,  
with a solitude felt only by those  
too afraid to look down and see  
all the life that formed collectively  
through the sun, the earth and the rain  
in blades of grass that sprouted out  
of our bare toes as we ran  
towards the setting sun

together.

I could see the twinkle in your eye  
on the swings, where the wind pushed out a  
tear.

I held on desperately to the chains,  
the only things preventing a plummet

to my death.

There was a solemn nature behind your voice  
when you asked,

Do you think we'll be just as fun in ten years?

Popcorn and petting zoos  
we were all afraid to touch the lamb  
leading us lost on the trail,



Jeremy Pratt



Catherine Harasymiw

by the pond,  
baptized in the will to never be found.

Our screams echoed back  
shaking the pond water  
to a tremble, that matched the beats of our  
hearts,  
shattering our idealistic dreams of childhood.  
Watching the sky and talking nonsense  
I have longed for nothing else ever since  
The sounds of rides and background sunsets  
(beautiful would they be)  
but it is your voices and eyes I miss.

## The Death of Mary Jane Watson

Mary Olivia Harris | Poetry

I am so used to standing over unfilled graves,  
the smell of fresh-packed dirt and earth,  
the open holes that mirror and mock my loss.  
They are a gaping reminder that we are no more than man,  
filling me with such thoughts that course through me like a poison  
that the limp and lifeless thing they place within was once my bride.

For now they will ask me how she came to be there, my bride,  
The strangers they will ruminate on the meaning of her early grave.  
Those who know will whisper of the poison,  
in her veins, that took overtook her body like a plague upon the earth.  
They'll whisper "That's the one, who lost his wife, that man,"  
and friends will place their heavy hands and say, "We are so sorry for your loss."

But time will pass and people will forget the meaning of my loss,  
No historians would ever connect our names, me and my hopeless bride.  
We will join the ranks of many, the inevitable end of man,  
and my secret kept so close will go with me to the grave  
buried under layers of silt, an and into the earth,  
from me will seep the poison

From my veins. The coursing, rushing poison  
ripping through my veins, with every caress is lost  
like water sopped from the greedy earth  
and come to rest inside the fundamental care of my woeful bride,  
pulling her closer unto her youthful grave.  
And leaving me still toxic, a hollow shell of a man.

But what worth is such a man?  
Whose body and mind are so tainted by poisons?  
Real and unknown whose power is so grave.  
For I am at a loss.  
What is this life without my bride?  
What purpose could I serve upon this earth?

I contemplate to follow her, from this mournful earth,  
leaving behind this shell of an empty man  
and then once again we could become a husband and his bride.  
I ponder opening her coffin wide and kissing poison  
from her lips. Perhaps then the world would understand the meaning of my loss  
and stand above our open graves

and weep so heavily unto those graves, they too will poison the earth  
with tears, with mouths agape with loss,  
or words such as I. How could we lose a man so young? And what of his vernal bride?

# Jack and Jill [Till Korsakoff Finds Us]

Marina Tsougrianis | Poetry

You be Jack  
And I'll be Jill  
Bring your pail  
And we'll fill it with ale  
At the bar on top of the hill

We'll laugh and get drunk  
And get roaringly ill  
Then I'll slip with a thunk  
And we'll roll down the hill

With your hand in mine  
We'll be perfectly fine  
Then we'll sleep in the hay  
Till the noon of next day

And start over once more  
And end up on the floor

Start over once more  
Fall asleep on the shore

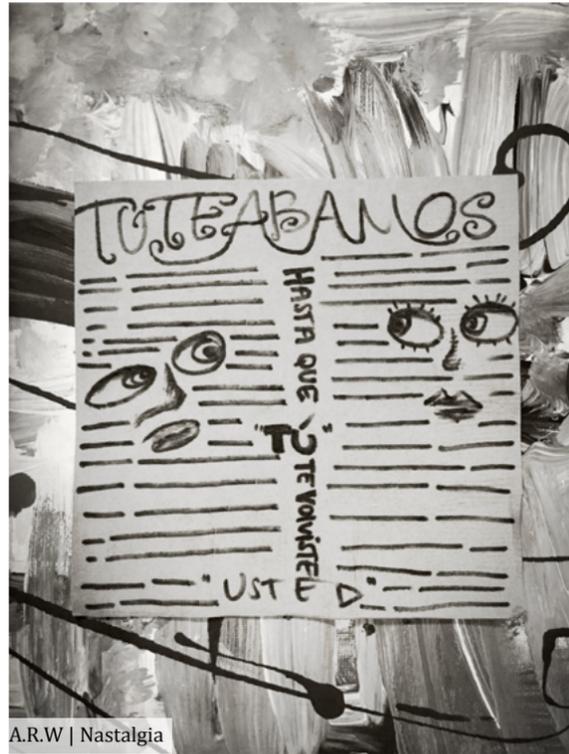
Again  
And again  
Till we're no longer friends  
And the empty pail bends  
And our lust becomes rust  
And our livers expire  
And we sink in the mire  
And Korsakoff<sup>1</sup> finds us

And soothes us

With stories of people

we never were

<sup>1</sup>Korsakoff's syndrome - A chronic memory disorder commonly caused by alcohol abuse; main symptoms include anterograde amnesia, retrograde amnesia, and confabulation (production of fabricated or distorted memories about oneself or the world without the conscious intention to deceive).



A.R.W | Nostalgia



A.R.W | Memoria

# Walter Freeman

Mary Olivia Harris | Poetry

I'm so alone, so filled with dread,  
With their vitriolic cocktail of bitter pills  
Silenced are the voices in my head,

I am broken, failed the test,  
Punished for sins I've not confessed,  
I'm so alone, so filled with dread,

White clothed demons two abreast  
Set through my body an instant chill,  
Silenced are the voices in my head,

They've prepped the needle pressed  
To my temples with such skill.  
I'm so alone so filled with dread,

Clever doctor, my brain they molest.  
Flick of the wrist, the devils drill  
Silenced are the voices in my head,

Silver pick, tip depressed

I'm so alone, so full of dread,  
Silenced are the voices in my head.



Catherine Harasymiw



Jeremy Pratt

# Glass Envelopes

Emny Moghrabi | Poetry

It is a cold anthem dying halfway off your lips  
the orchestra whose already feeble notes could not survive a journey across the ocean could not survive

It is ships piled with heaps of a Mother country's soil  
empty and cluttered with the ghosts of home and spilled dirt  
that leaves a murky trail of sludge and soldiers boots  
(not just the boots, in fact anything but the boots)

It is the washing of heavy boots to shore, heavy foot prints that leave scars  
they built down and down and down over lungs, in mines and caves, over hearts  
and they still never found the ancients whose graves put to shame so deeply these english pits.

It is a storming army of clumsy clay conquerors who move only with the rigidity of their origin  
they were not meant to be explorers  
Moving in time to Beethoven, deaf to the orchestra and imposing all the same.  
Mother did not raise us to venture further than the raspberry patch past the neighbour's house  
an english mine  
a resource that gave us bloody mouths and red hands speckled with fine seeds

The dogs are chasing bears from the sand cobblestone streets.  
The trees are starting to look like over-qualified bankers  
(a financial institution that provides its own paper)  
Obsidian barbers nick sea worn salt leather and they dress in their Sunday best  
(knowing God can't make it)  
despite the pagans and the weather, and their rapidly fading english crest

It is a stationary boredom sharp enough to cut the rope on the guillotine hanging over the infernal ocean  
in hopes that by the time everyone gets here this land will have been broken

It is a message in a bottle  
a pale refracted sand-worn envelope

# To Yield

Charles Michael Averin | Poetry

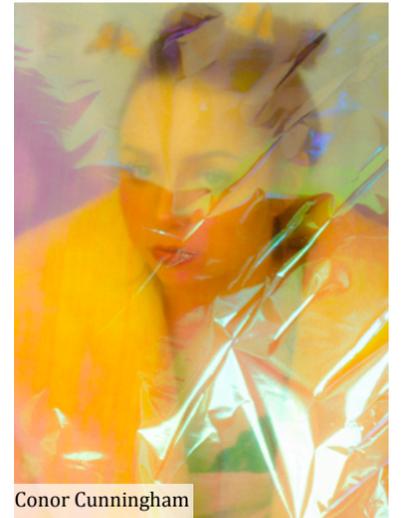
I look upon the streets and feel a void within my heart;  
They pass along with hand in hand, but we are far apart.

I recognize your darling front—and yet I find I've erred;  
Amid the bustling boulevard, my senses were impaired.

Deprived of you I'm short of breath; my eyes well up with tears;  
My ragged sobs remind me so, of days of yesteryear.

So many nights I've spent in search of that forsaken love;  
accursed be the ones who yield—a group I'm part thereof.

Yet having ceased my fruitless quest for loves I never found,  
By chance, I've found, to my chagrin, much loveliness abound.



Conor Cunningham

# Haikus with Masters

Daniel De Culla | Poetry

A lonely moor  
With Emily Brontë' air  
To so we deem.

I muse Robert Burns  
Wandering the Wood and field:  
The hapless fate mourns.

Come away, Yeats  
Peace sings into her breast  
To water and wild.

Charles Baudelaire  
Glimmering in the Windows  
Hope dead for aye.

I'm angry with me  
William Blake a poison tree  
Behind mine's foes.

It's still Poe.  
Here's the breath of God  
Sucking the unbroken.



Balsimran Kaur Gill

# I Killed The Spider

Meagan Schlee-Bedard | Poetry

(Fear)

I am a “child”.  
My mom keeps a beige baseball bat next to my bed,  
she said if anyone ever comes through your window at night—  
don’t look to see who’s there.  
Swing the bat.  
Watch them fall, two stories down.  
Dial 9-1-1.  
Say it was in self-defence.

I was never scared of the boogey man.  
Only the shadows in my room at night—  
they looked like bugs climbing on the walls.  
They were just waiting for the sandman to work  
his magic.

Spiders come for warmth underneath my Barbie duvet, they crawl like ice would melt, slowly,  
up my 6 year old legs.  
The sandman was a villain.

I learned to sleep with the light on.  
Right before I closed my eyes I felt each solid cold white wall, I felt around and under every taped on teen magazine poster; that I shouldn’t have even been reading yet.

At church I am told not to sleep with my light on.  
God is your light, trust him.  
I flipped the switch and each night I woke up with tears running down my face and the bat sitting next to my bed frame.

On the seventh night I wake up.  
My leg is itchy.  
I am in the dark.  
I reassure myself.  
They are only shadows.

My body is a tree with no wind.  
My arm branches out for my leg.  
Itch.  
Itch.  
I killed the spider.

(Findings)

The teenage boys in my neighbourhood wore old toques, worn out faded blue jeans, beige work boots, and inappropriate t-shirts. They were evicted.

They were scaring too many children.  
I wanted to pretend I wasn’t scared when they asked to join are snow ball fight.  
‘Are you a piece of chicken shit?’  
The worse swear word I knew deserved a snowball in the face.

There were rumours that they buried kids’ faces in the snow  
False  
There were also rumors that I still believe in god.  
False

My mom told me never to speak to them again.  
Never to speak.  
Even if I was spoken to.

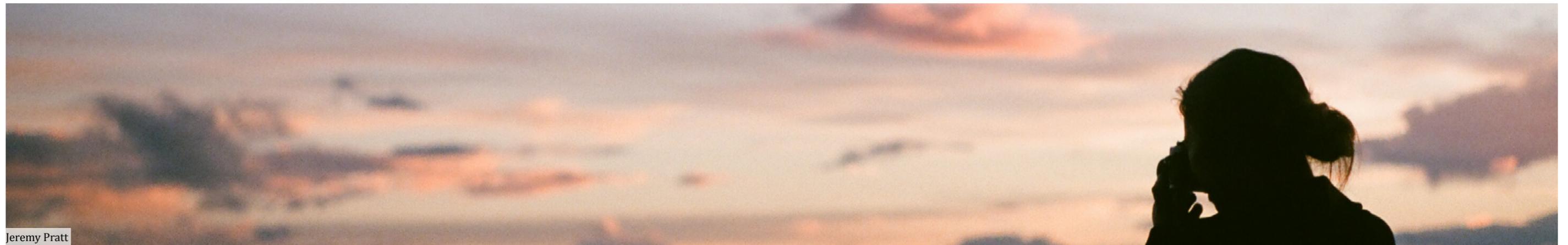
(Rebellion)

I am 12 years old.  
I walk down the side street of my sunshine and rainbow’s,  
small town, Port Coquitlam, River Place, neighbourhood.  
I smile at the boogey man smoking his cigarette.  
He asks me for a light.

In my blue jeans with the flowers on the pockets there is a white BIC lighter mocking me—  
you hate fire, it’s dangerous.  
I light it for him.  
He offers me a cigarette.

And pulls out a pack that reads “Belmonts” it’s mocking me—  
you hate cigarettes, they’re bad for you.  
I take one from him.  
Shove it in my pocket.

I walk down a block,  
and step on it.  
I go to my bed frame  
and throw the beige  
baseball bat from my window.  
Watch it fall two stories down.  
I killed the spider.



Jeremy Pratt

# The Hall

Matthew Inouye | Prose Poem

In The Hall grace and dread sit apace. And the latter is of great size and strength and holds the nape of the other in its heinous palm. It is a place of interminable polarity where the gallery is filled with the most splendid of portraits and the most grotesque of statues, but the statues are that of terror and defeat. They sit as they were in a perfect copy, and it is passion that calls them to sing, and fear that calls them to dance. The horrors fill The Hall while being courted by the good, as they try to quell their obsession with destruction. But it is no use for they have inhabited The Hall with their terror and feed on the flesh of the walls and on the bones of the battered furnishings. It is in The Great Hall where the horrors make peace, satisfying their perpetual greed for bliss. They are thieves of joy. They sing of their inception and of the great consternation they felt then, but they cannot leave, as The Hall is where they take refuge and the only realm of their existence. Without it they are but wisps of water in a cloud, or a whit of ore, inhabiting a space disproportionately minute compared to that which they do in The Hall. The graceful portraits are angels of virtue, but dare seek the destruction of the horrors, as their innumerable enemy renders them abject. So The Hall tenders asylum to the horrors, as it knows not what else to do. It is averse to their expulsion for they were conceived in The Hall's very antechamber, but yet loathes them for their insatiable consumption of the very walls in which gave them shelter and dressed them in such regal attire. The horrors remain heedless in their appetite and exhaust The Hall of its stock of peace by each sunset, and The Hall knows not what to do. The Hall must remain diligent in its up keeping, renewing the lacquer and repairing the carnage, but the finite nature of The Hall's survival causes it to tarry for its destruction by its own residents. It is a mournful end for a hall of such stature, however it can be evaded with great spirit and aid from an adjoining entity. It is only in these where The Hall can find solace and return the horrors to their preconceived stupor.



Jeremy Pratt

# CPR

Jaiden Dembo | Story Excerpt



The sun baked my skin like a dry riverbed and all I could think about was the day I drowned. My knuckles were white on the one hand gripping the steering wheel while the other rested on the stick shift. Rock snarled from the stereo to match the growling of the engine as the '65 Mustang devoured the highway. The wind knotted its fingers through my hair and pulled it back from my face but all I could feel were the waves pulling me under.

There were still nights when I would wake in a cold sweat as I was brought gasping for air to the surface of my nightmares. I would repeat to myself over and over again that it wasn't real, that it was only a dream. Except it wasn't a dream when my ex-lover pushed me off the edge of his yacht into the churning waters of the Pacific. His green eyes flashing with rage, his hand at my throat as he backed me into the railing. How he released his grip just to push me over the edge. There was no road in front of me, only the hate writhing in his face and knuckles white on the railing, knuckles white on the steering wheel. I clenched my jaw and tried to forget the feeling of falling into oblivion and slamming into the waves.

I had made it my life's pursuit to forget. It was my job to forget the warmth of his caress that turned to a heat that blistered my skin. It was my job to forget the way he'd cupped my cheek after he'd bruised it. There had been a time in my life when I'd loved that lawbreaking fool but I'd stopped the moment he caged me like an animal. Love disappeared when he whispered death threats like sweet nothings. I had not wanted to be the doomed queen of his drug kingdom and so he shackled me to his throne. The romanticized vision of danger shattered and I was left with cold fear nestling into my gut for warmth.

When he pushed me over the railing I hadn't even been able to take a breath. As I drove down the highway I breathed deeply and tasted the desert on my tongue. I was planning on spending the rest of my life as far away from water as I could. Mountains on the horizon and cedar trees ready to catch fire waited after the dull gold scrub brush that stretched for miles. No oceans, no lakes, no large bodies of water in sight.

That night when water filled my lungs I choked as I fought the waves pulling me under. Being tossed around in black waters I could catch glimpses of the stars but even then the North Star couldn't help me find direction. It was my extremities that went numb first and the sensation crept its way up my arms and legs and it was when it reached my chest that I stopped fighting. This was probably around the same time I stopped trying to cough the water from my lungs. I fought until the ocean beat me into submission and once I was disarmed a calm came over me, a moment of peace before I blacked out and accepted my less than ideal death.

Except death hadn't come for me yet because the next thing I knew I was puking up the brine and my throat was raw from the effort as I dragged oxygen into my deprived body. I was laying in a pool of my own blood, no, check that, it was just the ocean I'd brought with me. Solid ground was the second thing I registered, except I could still hear the waves crashing. I hadn't opened my eyes but the moment I did I was staring into a set of brown eyes warmer than the sun. He was leaning over me, his arms braced on either side and his face uncomfortably close to mine for a stranger. He closed his eyes and breathed a sigh of relief.

"I didn't know if you were going to come back," he said.

# Vacation

Hanna Chau | Short Story

Derek had a special place no one knew about. At night, when his parents were asleep, he'd crawl through the dusty and dark attic until he reached the farthest point, the place where light from an unseen source poured through and revealed the thousands of cardboard boxes, stacked on each other, some sealed and others half opened, its contents sprawled on the shiny floor.

Derek would walk by each box, peeking in, sometimes he would open them but most times he left them sealed up. Until one horrible afternoon. This particular day, he came home from soccer practice and heard his parents yelling, screaming at each other and his mother on the verge of tears; this happened quite often but Derek could tell this time it was different. This time they didn't even notice him come home and tell him to go outside and play for a bit like they usually do. He didn't know what else to do other than hide on the steps.

"You fucking bastard! Don't you lie to me. I saw you fucking her! It was our car."

"Don't you dare speak to me in that way. You're the only whore in this household so don't you fucking dare. And even if I did sleep with her, what would you do about it, huh? Tell your mother again?"

Tears. Hysterical crying. Almost choking. "You're a monster! Why are you even here? I'm done, I'm fucking done. I should've listened to my mother."

"What the fuck's that spose to mean?"

"I'm done, Richard! I'm taking Der with me and we're leaving tonight. Enough is enough!"

More crying and Derek can't listen anymore. He ran to his room and quietly shut the door – even so, he could hear everything. His mother's crying, crying, crying then suddenly two bangs, like someone slamming their body to a door, one hushed whisper, and then silence. White noise. Nothing.

Derek locked his door, climbed into bed, and gradually fell asleep.

Now he is awake and he listens very closely for his mother's usual loud snores but only the bare, empty silence responds. He creeps down the steps finding nobody there, so he approaches the window and notices their car is gone. So Derek decides to go to his secret place.

He crawls on all fours with tears streaming down his face (though he can't exactly figure out why), until he reaches the multitude of boxes. This time, Derek knows exactly what to do. He opens the first sealed box and finds a glimmering image of a grey cat. It looks almost real but when he tries to pet it, his hand goes right



Daria Mukhovina | Brightness Juxtaposed

*Under the pressure of a thousand atmospheres there was a sigh of deepest happiness. There was no weight, no direction, no responsibility.*

through. He moves on to the next unopened box. Inside, there is his dirty soccer uniform with the tag still on. No luck.

Derek searches and searches, going through memories of soccer games, birthdays, and visits with grandma until finally he finds what he is looking for. Derek feels the pain rising in his throat, the tears tickling his eyes before he even opens it.

He sees it before it is shown. Inside, there are his parents – his father standing on the opposite side of the kitchen island, his hands on his head and his face obscured. Then his mother. His poor, lovely mother lying on the ground on the opposite side, a pool of red dancing, shimmering right by her forehead. Instinctively, he touches her face and it goes right through.

Suddenly, Derek is on his feet. He grabs the box, shutting the folds back and brings it back with him to the house. At first, it is light as if there is nothing inside but as he drags it further down in front of him, into that crawl space, it becomes heavier and heavier, like thousands of tiny rocks or parts of a decaying body. It takes him hours until finally he opens the door to the attic and finds himself at home. He calls out to see if anyone is there but only the same, unnatural silence prevails. Derek goes into his parent's bedroom, empty, and grabs his father's baseball bat he knows he keeps in the closet. Derek is crying again, silently, but he is not sad, he's angry, raging, fuming, smashing the box over and over until it is just a flattened piece of cardboard he throws out the window.

While waiting for his parents to come home, Derek falls asleep on the couch.

"Wake up. Hey, wake up buddy." It's morning and his father's face is inches away from Derek's.

"Daddy?" His father smiles and pats him on the head gently. Derek feels strange and distorted, as if he is dreaming or had just woken up from one.

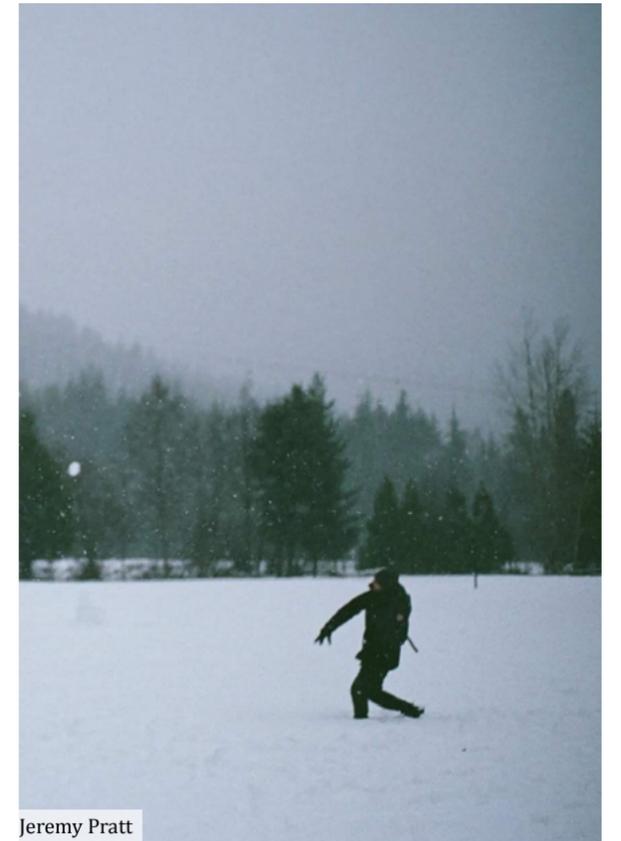
"Yeah, bud. Listen, how does a nice little vacation sound, huh? I know you've got soccer and school but you're such a good kid, you deserve a break."

Derek is still a little bit fuzzy and confused, but slowly nods his head in response. His father tells him he already packed their bags and all he needs to do is put on his shoes.

"Okay, Daddy. Where are we doing?"

"Who knows? Nebraska, New York, the Netherlands. And those are just the N's. We've a whole adventure ahead of us. Just you and me, bud."

Derek feels like he is forgetting something but can't figure out what. His father doesn't remind him, so there they go, the windows rolled down, the radio blasted up, a whole new life ahead. Just the two of them.



Jeremy Pratt

# Set in Stone

Brittany Barrell | Short Story

I used to love photography. Being able to take a single moment and freeze it in eternity. For that moment everything is alright, there is no change, no heartache, nothing but the simple happiness of a single moment. Right now I sit in my room, flipping through my old photo albums, dreaming of the past. I wonder at how innocent I used to be; at how blind.

I suppose most people would say that they changed as they grew older. That, like me, they can hardly recognize their past selves. Perhaps that is a normal thing. But right now it feels unnatural. Who is that girl in the photographs, laughing, as though the world couldn't come tumbling down at any moment? Who is that person, who looks just like me, but with expression of joy I can't imagine conjuring right now? How could that same person be the one sitting here right now, with all the sadness in my heart? How could that person be me?

The past changes as I look at these photos. It is not set in stone. It is impossible to freeze a moment. I gaze down at the photographs balanced on my lap, and a tear trickles down my cheek. Silently I begin to cry. The lines on the photographs begin to blur as I look at them. Their edges becoming less distinct and almost unrecognizable. Seen through a veil of tears, they are just shapes and colors, no longer the scene of a past life. Even with clear eyes though, I cannot conjure the past. The happiness of these moments has long since faded away. Those moments existed in the before, but the memories live in the after.

There is a point in time when the world seems to shift beneath your feet. A moment when everything changes. It can sneak up on you, just a normal inconspicuous moment, starting out in the usual fashion of an ordinary day. You may sit in class thinking of nothing, just waiting for the bell to ring and release you from the boredom, or maybe you sit at a nine to five job, going nowhere and doing nothing. You joke with your friends at lunch, or maybe you sit alone. You do the same thing every day; repeating the simple refrain of an ordinary existence. Even those moments of wild excitement; sneaking into a bar, or out to see a boyfriend late at night, surrounded by fleeting shadows and under a watchful moon. Your heart beating wildly in your chest as you race silently across your yard to meet him. Maybe you decide that just once in your life you'll do something crazy. Go skinny dipping, or attend that party despite your curfew. Even this is just another part of the ordinary weave. Everyone has moments like that, and while the excitement seems so grand at the time, like this old photograph in my hand, it too fades.

Then there is the after, the moment you realize everything has changed. That the homework, and parties, and stolen nights, don't really matter. They never did. It's a moment when the picture shatters in its gilded frame, and cracks form across that perfect moment. The camera captured it, froze it, but only in action, and changed irrevocably in every other way. I realize now, the past was never set in stone.

The moment that shattered my before and heralded my after, came when my sister died. More accurately; when I killed my sister. It feels so wrong to say those words, we were always so close. We would share everything; clothes, secrets, even a boyfriend once, though the cheater never realized the joke was on him. That was our downfall, because everything included my drugs.

I saw it as grand gesture at the time as I presented them to her. It was a new drug, stronger than anything we had ever tried before. High quality merchandise. I thought we could try it out together, take that next step as sisters. She wasn't as into it as me, I was the screw up of the family. It rather surprised me when she said yes, I hadn't expected her to. I didn't know the whole story though, that her longtime boyfriend had broken up with her, that she had just learned she was failing physics, or that on that day of all days was the worst possible day to have approached her with one of my wild ideas. There was so much I should have known.

I should have known that the drugs were tainted. That she, the innocent one, wouldn't know when to stop. I should have checked on the drug dealer, found out where they had come from. There was so much I should have known. I hadn't known though. I hadn't known that they would kill her. My fault. My fault. My fault.

The words repeat, a steady refrain inside my head. Bouncing across my skull with almost audible thuds. Her death was my fault.

I remove a picture of the two of us and begin to sob. We are laughing in it. Our chins tipped up and our hair flying back as we revel in some long forgotten joke. Okanogan Lake is behind us, the sun glistening on the water. We seem far too young in that picture. Far younger and more innocent than we had been in a long time. "I didn't know" I whisper to our younger selves. My voice cracks as I whisper it again. But no matter what I say, how many apologies I make, I can't escape the idea that all this is my fault.

My fault. My fault. My fault.

My body is shaking with the sobs now, my words almost unrecognizable. "I'm sorry" I cry to the empty room. "I'm so sorry." But my sister isn't here to comfort me anymore. I will never hear her tell me that 'it's alright, that no matter what, we are in this together.' If she were here she would tell me that 'she choose to take the drugs, to not blame myself.' But she is gone, and I do blame myself. I was the one who was supposed to die that night.

My fault. My fault. My fault.

Slowly my sobs subside; leaving me curled up on the floor and utterly drained. I look down at the photo clutched to my chest like a teddy bear. I stare at the picture, its wrinkled and tear stained. Fat drops have fallen to our faces and smudged the ink so you can no longer see our smiles.

I find it almost fitting, that this last artifact from the before has now joined the after. It matches the sadness I feel as I try to remember her. I fear that I won't be able to think of what we used to have without feeling this horrible ache in my chest. I fear I have lost you even in my memories.

Your gone. I feel this fact with every fiber of my being. My very molecules ache with the knowledge. My sister is gone and never coming back. I look at the photograph one more time before folding it up and slipping it into the back pocket of my jeans. I will keep the picture, if not the happy memory, it's all I have left now. The past is not set in stone; the future is; because no matter what comes next, I will never see you again.



George Paillé

# Open Hearts

Brigitte Malana | Short Story

Always stunning, always attractive, that's what she was and I couldn't say anything. Because it was true. It was all true and the truth was always glaring at me, mocking me, yet I still loved her anyways. I met her when I was five, when she held out her hand to me on the playground and said "Come." Even then, her voice had an edge to it that could not be replicated and her green eyes constantly flickered over to mine, captivating me as my breath caught. She was always there, she was always mine, until our world collapsed and she wasn't mine any longer. Because the person I was looking for no longer existed.

"Another scotch, please," I said commandingly, though not overly so, because I did not want to intimidate our waiter any further. He was already a bit fidgety with those beady brown eyes in that large head of his because like most men, he wasn't accustomed to serving a woman like me. A woman who ordered more scotch than a man. A woman who wore red to a restaurant with a black-and-white only dress code. A woman, who had, miraculously, grown from an ugly, skinny adolescent into a striking, lithe woman. The kind of woman men feared.

"By the way I really do love your dress, it's quite stunning," Tom said, trying to recapture my attention as I studied the drink menu intently, planning on ordering a third scotch later in the evening.

"Oh thanks, that's very sweet of you," I said coyly. I could see my bleached white teeth gleaming in the reflection of his glasses as I suggestively placed my hand on top of his, and I loved it. Although my meeting with Tom was supposed to be about the upcoming wedding, as I was its wedding planner and he was its caterer, I knew how this night would end because Tom and I had a history. A history of working together. A history of convenient lovemaking because we were both single, getting older and had not quite found the happiness we had always hoped for. But why would I want to think about my lonely, hollow life now? Why would I want to think about how my beautiful, polished exterior masked the grotesque loneliness I was incapable of overcoming? Tom and I would have fun tonight and I knew that after our dinner, our taxi would speed off, anxious to get us out of the backseat, and at the hotel, we would be wrapped in each other arms late into the night. Everything would be fantastic until we had to wake up to the crippling morning silence, the blinding sun and the debilitating hangovers that forced us to confront ourselves and all of our nasty truths in a way we were almost incapable of handling.

"Have you thought any more about the wedding, any details you might like to add?" asked Tom.

"No, I haven't. The couple is so fucking demanding and I can't wait for it to be over," I responded, with all the grace of a wedding planner who has spent years living vicariously through everyone else's happily ever afters.

"Well, let's toast to the upcoming wedding!" exclaimed Tom.

"Let's!" I stated as I smiled authentically for the first time in months.

# The Fear of Flying

Gabrielle McLaren | Short Story

He fidgets, like any four-year-old. Mama tugs on the ends of Michael's jacket to straighten it.

"You'll be good in the theater, won't you dear? Mr Barrie went to a lot of trouble to write his play," she said gravely, fussing with his buttons. Her finger taps his nose and Michael smiles.

"I hear that they've found a way to make Peter Pan fly, Ma!" Peter said giddily. "For real!"

"I hear that Peter is played by a girl!" John said. "Isn't that rubbish? I can't imagine Mr Barrie agreeing to that!"

"Girls are lighter for the harnesses, John," said George, who knew so much. "That's how they make Peter fly."

"No," Michael said. "They use pixie dust! Mr. Barrie said so!"

Mama laughed and pinched Michael's cheek. To him, Neverland has existed ever since the second star to the right and all the others were tacked onto the sky.

Michael spends his sixth birthday ill and in bed, voiceless. When he visits, Uncle Jim opens the door before knocking, ruffles Michael's hair and squats by his bed.

"I've missed you," he said. "Your mother seemed to think that you'd be too ill to see our play this Christmas."

Michael nodded. He coughed into his arm.

"Well, since you're my expert on slaying pirates and chasing Indians off of Lost Boy territory, I can't have that. And I told your mum I said, oh Mrs. Davies, I can't have that! Michael has to see the play, it's non-negotiable, unthinkable!"

Michael laughed because Uncle Jim waggled his finger and imitated himself with a funny voice.

"And your mum said 'Well Mr. Barrie, he is simply too sick!' And you know how we must listen to our mothers, don't you? But not to worry; we always keep a little something special on hand, in case we need some magic."

Michael mouths the words: "Pixie dust."

"Quite right!" Uncle Jim said gleefully.

There are so many people in Michael's room, at first he doesn't understand and just curls up in Uncle Jim's lap.

"This is the magic of the theater, you see," Uncle Jim said. "They've managed to bring our show to you."

Michael points frantically. There's Red Chief! Oh and Mrs. Darling, there she is, she looks as lovely as Michael's mum, though he can't think about it too much because he's spotted Wendy! He watches them install what's called the 'scenery', the Neverland of wood and paint made for people who can't see the real thing like Michael and Uncle Jim can. And then Peter arrives! Peter's a girl again, and that's always strange, but Michael can't be disappointed for too long because he's found Michael! Yes, Michael! The boy named after him, the real Michael. This year's Michael is a lot taller than he is, but Michael doesn't mind. One day he'll be even taller.

# Mayfield's Mayfield

Eli Hiebert | Story Excerpt



Mayfield fluffed the pillow that had for twelve years cradled the sleeping head of his wife. A soft orange lit up the room, flickering as the bulb struggled to sustain its dying light. In the near darkness he ran a steady hand over the left side of the quilt, smoothing out a place to lie what remained of Natalie who three nights ago left her ring on the bedside table.

From the closet he selected what had been his favorite of her undergarments and laid them on the bed. Next he found a simple lavender dress, which he laid flat on top of the lingerie.

On the pillow he arranged an assortment of multicolored barrettes, poking small holes into the off-white linen to keep them in place. From the shower and bathroom sink, and from several of Natalie's old hairbrushes, Mayfield gathered handfuls of her hair, which he then detangled while sitting on the toilet seat. Now he carefully placed these smoothed locks on the pillowcase, clasping them with the barrettes to keep them in place.

From the bedside table he picked up a necklace, a pair of earrings, and an imitationgold wedding ring. With due care he placed each piece of jewelry in the appropriate spot.

He walked into the bathroom and came out with a handful of make-up supplies. With the mascara he drew precise eyelash lines on the pillowcase. Next he applied a light smear of blue eye shadow just above the lashes, followed by a lipstick mouth. After finishing her off with a light dusting of face powder he stepped back to admire his wife's delicate beauty. They stared at each other for a few minutes until the light bulb finally gave up. In the darkness they made love.

Earlier that morning Mayfield was sitting at the kitchen table eating toast and going through his mail. He ignored his half eaten breakfast as he stared unblinking at the pages of an UltraMan catalogue, a clinic that had recently opened in town. The slogan written on the front of the catalogue had caught his attention. *It's Time to Improve Yourself.*

He turned the page and his eyes became full circles. "Ah!" he threw his head back and shouted. "Hair! My god, they sell hair! What an age to be alive in!" He stood up and started walking in circles, his wrists trembling as he mumbled to himself, "What an day, where a man can go out and simply buy back his hair!"

He stopped pacing and stood before a photograph hanging on the wall. "Natalie once loved my hair, you know," he said to the cat in the photo. "She used to feel it against her face." He scratched his scalp, eyes going blank. "One time she ran her hand through it and came away with a handful all tangled around her fingers," he snorted softly. "She never touched it again."

He broke away from the cat and returned to the table, continuing to ignore his toast as he studied the catalogue. He noted the cost of a hair transplant and flipped the page.

He squinted as he tried to make sense of the next headline. *What's good about the skin you're in?* His lip curled as he scanned the selection. There were durable skins, thick skins, smooth skins, and even feel-proof skins. He straightened up and analyzed his hands. He felt the flesh, scratched it, pinched it, flicked it, smelt it, rubbed it against his cheek.

"Dreadful," he said to nobody, and then continued reading.

Under the *Eyes* heading Mayfield squinted to make sense of the pictures, abandoning his toast altogether. He pushed the plate to the side and brought the catalogue closer towards him. There were eyes that changed color "according to one's mood." Some had variable aperture settings, which could be set to let in less light in bright situations and more light in the dark. At the bottom of the page he saw an especially interesting set of eyes. "Retina scanners," it read. "Compatible with any UltraMan memory card. Simply look, scan, and encode. Read books as fast as you can turn the pages." The sight of these eyes dropped bombs in his imagination. He flipped vigorously through the catalogue, searching for memory cards. He found them at the Cognitive Enhancements section, a section that elicited from Mayfield further wonder and appreciation for modern technology. "What a time to be alive," he said. "My, what an age!"

From a drawer Mayfield gathered a pen, a calculator, and a scrap of paper. He wrote down the

improvements that he wanted to buy, and beside each one he wrote the price. He punched the numbers into the calculator and then turned red. A few seconds of silence came next, followed by a sudden outburst of loud cursing, shattering ceramic, and flying toast.

Mayfield walked along a sidewalk that led into town. After picking up the pieces of his breakfast plate and his composure, he had decided to go to the UltraMan clinic after all. With his employment insurance check folded up in his pocket, combined with the majority of his savings, he could afford only the hair transplant. He had hoped that the improvement would give him the confidence and mental strength he needed to win his 4 wife back, or at least to get a job. With a job he would be able to pay for the other improvements, which, he was sure, would win Natalie back if the hair alone were to fail.

When he arrived at the UltraMan clinic Mayfield found himself standing in a three-dimensional catalogue. Large posters displaying a variety of improvements covered the walls of the waiting room. Slogans like "Invest in Yourself" and "Create the *You* You've Always Wanted" were scattered around here and there. He took in the room, swallowed, and got in line. Dangling his wrists from his forearms he licked his lips as he approached the counter.

"Next in line," the smooth voice of a well-built man penetrated Mayfield's ears and interrupted his wondering. He stepped forward and, mumbling to himself, held out the catalogue.

"How can I help you," asked the man at the desk. His t-shirt strained itself to cover the breadth of his chest and shoulders, and threatened to burst at the seams.

"I, uh —," Mayfield stuttered.

"You saw an improvement in the catalogue that you'd like to get installed?"

"Um, well yes, actually," he looked down at the counter. "Several. But, uh, due to costs, I'm only here for— I guess I'll just get the hair." He looked up and showed the man his teeth.

"Do you know about our financing program?"

"Eh, financing?"

"Would you like a sit-down?"

"Ok."

"You're number fifty-three, please have a seat."

Mayfield took his number and slouched uncomfortably in one of the waiting room's ergonomically designed chairs. While he waited he glanced around at his fellow inadequates, smiling to himself. From the table in front of him he picked up a copy of the UltraMan catalogue and browsed. He pretended he had retina scanners in his eyes and took photo-memories of each page. Then he pretended that he remembered exactly what was on each page, quietly reciting everything back to himself. He ran a finger through his lush, seductive hair. He saw Natalie and winked at her.

"Next up, fifty-three. Who's the lucky number fifty-three?" An unshaven man wearing a suit and holding a ceramic mug came into the waiting room, eyes peeled for his fifty-third customer of the day.

Number fifty-three stood up and the man with the suit stretched his smile even wider, for Mayfield carried the stench of steep profits.

"Hello good man," the suit extended his hand. "My name is Andreas and I am so thrilled to meet you." They shook hands. "Please follow me, the new and improved you is literally waiting around the corner."

Mayfield followed Andreas into an office with four bare silver walls. The salesman sat at his desk and Mayfield across from him.

"So you're interested in our financing options," said Andreas.

"Yes," said Mayfield. "I want some things that cost some money that I don't have."

"Nothing wrong with that. Are you employed?"

"Yes," said Mayfield. "But not currently. I'm... working on a few things."

"Sounds like you got a lot on your plate. What I can offer you is a financing program where you put zero down. Does that sound feasible?"

Mayfield's eyes watered and his lip quivered into a smile.

"Excellent," said Andreas. "The longest term I can offer you is ninety-six months. The interest on this

term is six point nine percent, but you make no payments for the first two months. These are our most affordable options.”

Mayfield’s face became vacant as he did calculations in his head.

After a few seconds Andreas clarified, “That means you can leave here today with all the improvements you want and not pay a thing until two months from now. Does that sound alright?”

Mayfield abandoned his calculations and flashed a smile. “Okay let’s do it.”

“Terrific,” said Andreas, getting to his feat. “If you’ll follow me to the drafting room.”

In the drafting room Mayfield sat at a desk across from the drafter, a man with sunken eyes and almost no lips. The two could hardly see each other over the several computer monitors between them. “I understand you are interested in a hair transplant,” said the drafter.

“Yes,” Mayfield responded.

“You’ve also indicated an interest in thick skin, retina scanners, and a memory chip. Is this correct?”

“Yes.”

“Why don’t we get you set up with the full cognitive enhancement package? Are you familiar with this?”

“No.”

“It’s basically just a discounted bundle of the retina scanners and the memory chip, along with a few other tweaks. You’ll love it, I’m sure. All of our clients love it. I’ll go ahead and add it to your file.”

“Uh, what are the other tweaks?” asked Mayfield.

“Oh, nothing serious,” replied the drafter, keeping his eyes on the monitors. “We throw in a couple extra adrenaline glands that make norepinephrine, a natural hormone that helps with awareness and quick thinking. This will keep your senses heightened and your wits sharp. You’ll be able to recall and process information faster. We also add an artificial energy source, something like a rechargeable battery, which periodically stimulates the brain with an electric current. This gives your cognition more stamina and allows you to function on less sleep and low food intake. Trust me when I say that everyone loves this enhancement package. I’ll even give it to you at half price. Should we begin? Do you have any questions? Are you ready to become a superior human?”

Mayfield was a few seconds in answering and when he did all he could do was nod.

“Great. I’ll just print out the contract and the waiver and we’ll get started right away.”

Mayfield signed his name six times and then followed the drafter down a hallway with flesh-colored walls and a bone-white floor. At the end of the hallway the word SUPERSURGERY was printed above a doorway. “Right this way,” said the drafter. “Please put your clothing in this bin here and have a seat. Your surgeons will be with you shortly.” He walked away and closed the door behind him.

Mayfield took off his clothes and approached a chair in the center of the room. The chair was made of red leather and had many joints where it could bend. Behind it was a 8 set of buttons and levers. He sat down and shivered, imagining Natalie’s look of approval.

A hissing noise filled the room, accompanied by a thick white fog that descended from the ceiling directly above him. Mayfield panicked and bit his tongue, drawing blood. After a moment he lost consciousness and closed his eyes for the last time.

\*Continued in full-text online

## 1968

.....  
Brett Nelson | Story Excerpt



It was a sunny day at least. The trees swayed with uncaring grace and if there was a lake, it would've been as smooth as Italian glass. It was in a church, but that was just ironic, and as if to agree, the building itself was falling apart. The fact that all four walls still stood was a testament of god himself, but his hands hands hadn't worked fast enough to hold the roof together, and so the timbers lay among the pews, hands clasped and heads bowed. They too were forgiven.

He must be down in Mexico, I thought. Mexico, where anarchy ran like a devastating drought. There were no rocks to crawl under, no trees to climb, and no shadows to blend with. And like the same ruthless path of evolution that brought forth the great hulking mass of a Kodiak, the things moving down there were learning to be bigger, badder, and more dangerous than the next. There is a drought in Mexico, because you can't water a plant with blood.

I was not wearing white, but at least it was sunny. Flecks of off-white paint clung with admiration to the walls, the fragmented roof, but as the wood dried in the sun, they could hold on no longer. I stopped breathing for a moment. I could hear them falling through the din of my own heart beating, noisy thing. The floor was dusted in a snow and I watched the flakes fall with startling grace among beams of light and the flutter of small moths. I walked slowly, resting my feet with caution. I looked behind me and around me in an unpredictable pattern and listened hard, always. I had glimpsed the metal cross from the overgrown dirt road, and found my feet hopping the ditch before I worked my way with care through the forest.

A church could have things, I thought. I was looking for a candle, some cloth, maybe a god. I remember approaching the door and thinking I should knock; an old habit of homes, but four walls meant an abode and lines of religious sanction had died with the car batteries and street lights. It was beautiful, walking up and in. Eyes blurred hazel, the green of moss and grass working its way through wooden cracks, glaring with white chipped paint and sunlight. I found two honey coloured candles the size of shot glasses beneath the first pew tucked in the far corner and covered with cobwebs. Only one had been lit and not for very long. I had no need for candles, and it made them all the more valuable. A beautiful worthy dowry. A gaudy satin table runner, stained with weather lay crumpled beside the candles. There should have been no cloth, it should have been scavenged years ago, I thought. That was when God found me. He must've pushed the man through the door, a messenger, ushered and called like me. He must've taken very quiet steps, this messenger, as he watched my back, watched me inspect the alter and blow away the paint-snow. I gently rubbed debris from the untouched candle and placed it amid a bright tangle of white sunlight. I stopped breathing for a moment. I wanted to see the creamy pale wax, opaque, glow as it would've when the power went off and this sect used it to illuminate faint words in a failing book, during the frail light of an evening ceremony.

The other candle, his brother, had this glory. A small crater worked below the charred wick, a trail of hardened wax running down the side. They must've crooned and pleaded, and god must've listened; they're not here now. A dark twin in contrast to the unlit glowing candle, I did not croon or plead, but god must've taken a guess. The man moving behind me stepped on a floorboard, no louder than the whisper of the trees; I froze nonetheless.

# Landscape With Refuse

Kate Sullivan | Short Story

For the first twenty years of my life, The Property was an example of West Coast picturesque marred by the highly visible presence of a white trash family—my own—that didn't know how to take care of its things. The house, like all mobile homes, had no foundation. It rested on strategically stacked cement blocks. There was an exposed gap between the bottom of the house and the ground that was too dark to see through without a flashlight. During the day, all that could be seen were shapes silhouetted against the other side. It wasn't until later in my life, after living in a variety of houses with basements, that references to things (vermin, stray cats, our cats, the weed whacker) being Under The House begun to seem strange in retrospect. Along with Dad's never-finished shed and the perpetually overfull laundry room, under the house was one of the places my parents would blame when they needed something and couldn't find it.

Under the house was a graveyard for defunct household objects. Both of my parents were appliance fatalists, though the mindset manifested differently. If something malfunctioned Dad would give up on it forever and refuse to entertain fancies of its recuperation while Mom would talk at length about all the things we could do to fix it but never take any of the necessary steps. My grandfather, who lived further up the property, would volunteer his services when something—the hot-water tank, or the abiding thorn in Dad's side, the pump—went wrong with the house's plumbing, but his repairs were band-aid measures strung together with duct tape and scrap pieces of wood. Despite their lack of faith in the longevity of our household technologies, my parents were loath to replace anything until they had to, so those unlucky devices were relegated to marshy purgatory under the house until someone saw fit to make a dump run.

The other fate that awaited our household detritus was to be cast on the Burn Pile, which was a stack of all of the even mildly flammable junk we accumulated that wouldn't fit in the garbage, the compost, or the household fireplace. At one point it stood around eight feet high and ten feet across; it was a monolith assembled out of broken cabinet doors and green wood Christmas trees that loomed at anyone who came up the driveway. The prospect of the burn pile's eventual burning was the source of much excitement for my sisters and I—we had a collective vision of a bonfire to put the rest of the church families to shame—but it was, like many of our parents' property improvement schemes, not to be. Dad had piled it all in the wrong spot. The burn pile was too close to the edge of the field, and after a few years the top of it reached only a few feet from the boughs of the trees next to it. As such, it was too dangerous to burn, and so it begun to compost peacefully. Near the end there were quite a few respectably sized bushes growing out of its depths. Not content to let nature triumph over human hubris, my parents brought the burn pile to an inglorious end via tow trailer.

The secluded location of the property was a factor in its state of perpetual deterioration. The bus stop was a little less than a kilometer away from our house, so each day after school I made my way up the gravel road by myself, often in the rain. We lived where street signage dissolved. Our road was not just ungazetted; it never existed anywhere except the whims of the Government of Canada. Neither maps nor the landscape would cough it up. According to Dad, it had been planned in my grandfather's day but never built. Presumably it would have been carved out of the forest around where our extremely long, bumpy driveway snaked up from the gravel road. Instead of a provincially issued street sign, we had a wooden one that my parents commissioned. Engraved and painted dogwood flowers blossomed around our street address and our family name.

Explaining our address issues to my friends' parents, including telling them that they couldn't use Google or a GPS for directions—an instruction they often ignored, to their peril—was only one problem the house's location presented. In middle through high school, a combination of magnanimity and pity led to many of my friends' parents inviting me to spend multiple evenings a week at their houses, usually driving me home after dinner. At the end of the half-hour drive I'd mumble something about how they could drop me off at the end of the driveway, a request that was met with mixed reactions. Sometimes they drove away as soon as I got out of the car, but more often they waited as I followed my own shadow, illuminated from behind by the

headlights, as I made my way up a driveway that was too long and thicketed to see the end of after dusk.

Worse was when they insisted, kindly, that they wouldn't make me walk all that way. This often happened in the winter, when these intrepid parents found themselves taking their Honda Accords through six-inch potholes of muddy water only to turn the last corner, past the burn pile, to reveal the stained plastic siding of an originally white single-wide trailer surrounded by gravel and brownish shrubs that were dead until the spring. I'd thank them for the ride while avoiding eye contact and trying to unfold my legs from the back seat, and then I was as good as running up the stairs to get through our front door, as if disappearing into the house was preferable to being seen next to it. I would close the door behind me and face the sight my Mom was confronted with, to her vocal displeasure, every time she came home: a collection of prefab shelves missing boards and leaning to the side like the Tower of Pisa, a piano missing some of the plastic ivory key covers, and countless books lying on the floor, collecting dust.

My move to Vancouver after high school and subsequent entrance into independent living has brought with it a love of decluttering. Despite (perhaps because) of that, my visits to the property for the past year have kindled an obsession with documenting the space and its items. My parents' separation and, more recently, my Dad's death has forced my family to take inventory. With the exception of certain childhood objects and some useful kitchenware, very little of the significant quantity of Stuff that was left behind for us to deal with was of any value, either monetary or nostalgic. All of the things that remained, under the house or inside of it, amounted to so much dross. That being said, I still have a fondness for the sight of dead vehicles enveloped by decades of plant growth: not out of environmentalist sentiment about the reclaiming of the earth, but because they signify a certain kind of dysfunctional rootedness that I suspect still informs my concept of home.



Moe Marjani & Mayanga Ngulube



## My Pretty Flower Friend

Marina Tsougrianis | Poetry

I'll put your memory on a pedestal  
Until we meet again  
I'll watch it grow and blossom  
My pretty flower friend  
I'll water you with hopes and dreams  
and shine on you with golden beams  
More beautiful and strong each day  
You'll grow til you can stand and sway  
I'll hold you ever carefully  
hum the music you once sang to me  
we'll sway in harmony  
at first a little nervously  
I'll dance around your roots  
plant kisses on your shoots

Growing and growing  
in the garden of my  
prefrontal cortex  
your vines crawl out  
cover every cell  
you taint every thought  
lovely and elusive  
forever in my DNA

Should we meet again someday?  
How often do two galaxies collide,  
move apart, then collide again?  
Never?

I think they either collide and become one,  
or one defeats the other...  
Did we even manage to collide once?  
Can two tectonic plates ever reach each other  
if a continent lies between them?  
How long until you return to me?  
How long until you reply to my letters?  
How long until you realize you forgot  
something?

How long until I realize nothing happened?  
How long until I can breathe easy again?  
How long until I forget your face?  
How long until your memory is erased?  
How long until your ivy arms  
reach out to choke my heart?  
Your leave had made me turn away  
but your leaves will spread  
to draw me in  
closer and closer  
You are the Venus fly trap  
I am the suicidal fly  
Take me  
Embrace me  
Destroy me

# Traditional Happiness

Hanna Chau | Short Story

The boys and girls lined up against the wall in order from youngest to oldest. The only words in the room were scrawled in blood-red ink on a banner stretching from one end of the wall to the opposite: The Annual Competition of Pain. Under the headline read miniscule words, Requirement of Pain must be physical or mental suffering imposed on the competitor. Competitor must be five to fourteen years old in order to compete. A bell rang. Shoes scuffed in nervous anticipation. The first two in line took ten steps toward the centre, in front of three judges. A member of the audience (one out of 3,006) flipped a coin. The first boy was to begin. He cleared his throat and said, “When I was five, I was raped by my father. He did this for the next eight years until I finally moved out to a shelter. There, I was continually verbally assaulted and had to beg for even a drop of water to drink.” The judges asked if he had any proof. The boy looked down. Shook his head. Then it was the girl, second in line, who was next. She did not speak at first, only pulled up her sleeves in order to reveal a galaxy of bruises up and down her arms. She twisted her elbow to present the cigarette burns embedded in its center. There was no visible white skin on her arms, only barely fading scars or bruises. Though she was prepared to speak, this was unnecessary. The judges had made their decision.

They blew the whistle and another audience member like a referee in a soccer game, pointed to the right side of the floor, towards the girl, deeming her the winner of this round. She had to get back at the end of the line.

The boy was forced into a dark room under the stairs of the oblivious audience. No one knew what happened to the losers, only that they were sent back home with even darker circles under their eyes. The next two people in line were both girls. Again, a coin was flipped and the girl with short hair was to go first. She said she was kidnapped at the age of six and forced to live in the basement feeding on her own hair follicles and a hamster’s decaying body. The judges asked for evidence and she presented a newspaper clipping with a face of young child resembling hers on the front. She also showed the red marks on her wrists where the chains were held.

The next girl was more nervous. She claimed each of her parents was shot in front of her by strangers on the street. Each at a different time. She said how when she closes her eyes at night, all she sees is red. How every stranger, ever human being looked like a monster with a gun in their pockets, their fingers held loosely on the trigger. She said how she wishes death would take her, but the government would not allow it. At this, the judges stopped her. The whistle blew. They decided it was a tie – both girls were to get back in the line, in different positions than before so they can face a new competitor.

It went on and on like this for hours. Stories of rape, abuse, neglect, suicide, insanity, depression, hatred and murder whispered on the stage while the audience (consisting mostly of adults) ate their burnt popcorn and took breaks for the bathroom. Clapping was not allowed until the end, when the judges have found their winner – the child bearing the most pain in the entire state. The prize was rumored to be a procedure that ostensibly removes any and every painful thought or experience the person had endured. It was said to have the power to make the most miserable into the most happy. Because is that not what every individual on Earth seeks? Happiness? Nobody knows if the procedure is true since nobody ever encountered a winner of this competition before.

The only real winner witnessed was from the first annual competition, back almost fifteen years ago. His name was Horace and he was a homeless man who lived under a bridge. When anyone came to visit or spy, they would only see a smile stretched from one end of his mouth to the other, as if it had been stitched on without his consent. He only spoke two lines of dialogue: “The birds! The birds! Make way for the birds!” and “Be happy. Be happy. They are always watching.”

# Ballade of the Prussian Icarus

Wolf Biermann | Translation by Melanie Hiepler

See there where Friedrichstrasse ends,  
and curving o’er the water bends:  
there hangs over the Spree  
the Weidendammerbrücke fair,  
where Prussia’s eagle proudly glares  
and I lean at the rail.

There stands the Prussian Icarus,  
with wings of grey and an iron look,  
his arms weighed down by his pride.  
He does not soar, nor does he fall,  
he’ll catch no wind, and give no call  
at the handrail over the Spree.

The wire’s barbs grow in our breast  
deep in our skin, in leg and chest;  
its poison grips our minds.  
Surrounded by this wire band,  
has ours become a lonesome land  
cut off by leaden waves?

There stands the Prussian Icarus,  
with wings of grey and an iron look,  
his arms weighed down by his pride.  
He does not soar, nor does he fall,  
he’ll catch no wind, and give no call  
at the handrail over the Spree.

And if you leave, you have to go.  
Some say they have no choice, you know,  
but flee our divided land.  
I’ll stay until I fall because  
that hated bird has deadly claws  
that drag me to my end.

Then I will be Prussia’s Icarus  
with iron wings and a captive look  
my shoulders will ache with deep pain.  
I’ll try to fly, but tumble down.  
Stir scare a wind, slump feebly down  
at the handrail over the Spree.

Da, wo die Friedrichstraße sacht  
Den Schritt über das Wasser macht  
da hängt über der Spree  
Die Weidenammerbrücke. Schön  
Kannst du da Preußens Adler sehn  
Wenn ich am Geländer steh

dann steht da der preßische Ikarus  
mit grauen Flügeln aus Eisenguß  
dem tun seine Arme so weh  
er flieg nicht weg – er stürzt nicht ab  
macht keinen Waind – und macht nicht schlapp  
am Geländer über der Spree

Der Stacheldraht wächst langsam ein  
Tief in die Haut, in Brust und Bein  
ins Hirn, in graue Zellen  
Umgürtet mit dem Drahtverband  
Ist unter Land ein Inselland  
Umbrandet von bleirnen Welln

da steht der preßische Ikarus  
mit grauen Flügeln aus Eisenguß  
dem tun seine Arme so weh  
er flieg nicht weg – und stürzt nicht ab  
macht keinen Wind – und macht nicht schlapp  
am Geländer über der Spree

Und wenn du wegwillst, mußt du gehn  
Ich habe schon viele abhaun sehn  
aus unserm halben Land  
Ich halt mich fest hier, bis mich kalt  
Dieser verhaßte Vogel krallt  
Und zerrt mich übern Rand

dann bin ich der preßische Ikarus  
mit grauen Flügeln aus Eisenguß  
dann tun meine Arme so weh  
dann flieg ich hoch – dann stürz ich ab  
mach bißchen Wind – dann mach ich schlapp  
am Geländer über der Spree



## A Two-Way Mirror

André Breton and Phillipe Soupault

Excerpted Translation by Dawson F. Campbell



Prisoners of water droplets, we are but perpetual animals. We run noiselessly through cities, no longer touched by enchanted posters. What good are these grand, fragile enthusiasms, these dried-up jumps-for-joy? We know nothing more than dead stars; we look at faces; we sigh with pleasure. Our mouths are drier than lost beaches; our eyes roam aimlessly, hopelessly. There's nothing but cafés where we gather to drink crisp drinks, diluted alcohols; and the tables are dustier than the pavement where our shadows fell—dead since yesterday.

Sometimes the wind surrounds us in its big cold hands, and attaches us to sun-carved trees. Each of us: we laugh, we sing, but none can feel their heartbeat. Fever abandons us.

The magnificent stations cast judgement no more: their long corridors are frightening. One must, then, suffocate again to live out this monotony of minutes, these centuries in limbo. Formerly we loved the suns of the year's end, the straight planes where our regard trickled like the spontaneity of childhood. There's nothing but reflections in these woods—populated by absurd animals and familiar plants.

The cities, which we no longer want to love, are dead. Look around you: there is but sky and a great vague terrain which we will end up loathing. We poke the tender stars inhibiting our dreams. There, we told ourselves, are prodigious valleys: horsemen, evermore lost in that Wild West—as tedious as a museum.

When great birds take flight, they takeoff without a cry—the streaked sky no longer echoes their call. They pass over lakes, over fertile marshes; their wings cut through the too-languorous clouds. We are no longer permitted to sit: instantly, laughter springs-up, and we are forced to cry-out our sins.

One day, whose colour we've forgotten, we discovered tranquil walls—stronger than a monument. We were there, and from our widening eyes escaped joyous tears. We announced: “The planets and the stars of the first magnitude are, to us, incomparable. What, then, is this power?—more terrible than air. Beautiful August nights, lovely marine twilight: we mock you! Bleach and the lines of our palms guide the world. The mental chemistry of our aspirations—stronger than these cries of agony and hoarse factory voices!” Yes: tonight—more beautiful than any other—we can cry. Women pass, and we offer our hand, we offer their smile like a bouquet. The cowardice of former days tightens us at the heart, and we turn our heads away from the jets of water which join the other nights.

Respected by none but the ungrateful dead.

Everything is where it should be, and nobody can speak: every sense was paralyzed, and the blind were more dignified than we.

They made us visit the manufacturers of cheap dreams; their stores filled with obscure tragedies. It was an extravagant cinema where each role was played by an old friend. They were out-of-sight, but we could always find them in that same place. They gave us rotten sweets while we recounted abstracts of happiness.

## Commune Présence

René Char | Translation by Dawson Campbell

Tu es pressé d'écrire  
 Comme si tu étais en retard sur la vie  
 S'il en est ainsi fais cortège à tes sources  
 Hâte-toi  
 Hâte-toi de transmettre  
 Ta part de merveilleux de rébellion de bienfaisance  
 Effectivement tu es en retard sur la vie  
 La vie inexprimable  
 La seule en fin de compte à laquelle tu acceptes de t'unir  
 Celle qui t'est refusée chaque jour par les êtres et par les choses  
 Dont tu obtiens péniblement de-ci de-là quelques fragments décharnés  
 Au bout de combats sans merci  
 Hors d'elle tout n'est qu'agonie soumise fin grossière  
 Si tu rencontres la mort durant ton labeur  
 Reçois-là comme la nuque en sueur trouve bon le mouchoir aride  
 En t'inclinant  
 Si tu veux rire  
 Offre ta soumission  
 Jamais tes armes  
 Tu as été créé pour des moments peu communs  
 Modifie-toi disparais sans regret  
 Au gré de la rigueur suave  
 Quartier suivant quartier la liquidation du  
 Sans interruption  
 Sans égarement

Essaime la poussière  
 Nul ne décèlera votre union.

If you yearn to write  
 Like life is passing you by  
 Eulogize your origins  
 Make haste  
 Hasten to convey  
 Your part of brilliance of rebellion of benevolence  
 For indeed you are behind in life  
 That ineffable life  
 To which in the end you accept to be united  
 To which each day you are denied by beings and things  
 Of which in this way or that you onerously obtain some emaciated fragments  
 After merciless struggles  
 Beyond this all is but passive agony gross demise  
 If you meet death whilst you toil  
 Take it there like the sweating nape welcomes the dry kerchief  
 Bowing  
 If you must laugh  
 Offer submission  
 Never arms  
 You were made for unusual moments  
 Alter yourself shamelessly fade-away  
 To satisfy that delicate rigour  
 Block by block the annihilation of the world proceeds  
 Sans interruption  
 Sans aberration



# A Journey of a Refugee

Najah Abdulwahed | Translation by Yaqeen Abdulzahra

Screams. Fire. Fire.  
Explosion... Gunshot..Gunshot.  
Destruction, destruction..blood. Blood.  
Tears..tears. Wailing, wailing..darkness.

Terror. Horror. Terror. Horror. Running in horror. Running...  
Running..and fear. Stones...shrapnel...blood. Screams.  
Child..woman..man..sheikh  
Pain..wailing..blood. Death..death..  
Running..and caution. Running. Running..and fear..

Sea. Sea..sea..  
Silence..warm death..  
Silence..night..cold..fear.  
Angels. Mercy.  
Breathing..breathing..life, life..  
Steps. Steps...  
Tears of laughter..  
Trees..  
Screams of joy..  
Fatigue..fatigue..comfortable fatigue..

Hurts...hurts not  
Night..but as day  
Cold. Steps..cold  
Warm. Faces.  
Children..women..men..Sheikhs..  
Steps. Many steps..  
And exhaustion...comfortable fatigue..

City, but not a city..  
Home, but not home..  
Night, but not night..  
Day, but not day..  
Tears not sad  
Smile not happy  
Place, no place..  
Airport? No airport.  
Only travellers and bags.  
And waiting..waiting..  
confusion..worry..fear..  
But warm embrace.

صراخ. نار. نار.

انفجار.. رصاص.. رصاص

حطام حطام..دم دم

دموع..دموع. عويل عويل.. ظلام  
..رعب..ترويع. رعب ترويع. ركض وركض. ركض

ركض و خوف. احجار..شضايا...دم.. صراخ

طفل..امراة.. رجل..شيخ

..وجع.. عويل.. دم. موت.. موت  
..ركض..وحذر. ركض.ركض..وخوف

..بحر. بحر.. بحر

..صمت.. موت دافي

صمت.. ليل.. برد.. خوف حاني

انفاس.. انفاس.. حياة حياة

..خطوات. خطوات

دموع ضاحكة

..اشجار

...صراخ افراح

..تعب..تعب... تعب مريح

وجع.. لا يوجع

ليل. لكنه كنهار

برد. خطوات.. برد

دافي..وجوه

..اطفال.. نساء.. شيوخ

..خطوات خطوات كثيرة

..و ارهاق تعب مريح

..مدينة ليست مدينة

..وطن ليس وطن

..ليل ليس ليل

..نهار ليس نهار

..دموع ليس حزن

..ابتسامة ليست سعادة

..مكان. ليس مكان

..هو اذن مطار.. ليس مطار

..هو كذلك لكن فقط مسافرين وحقائب فيه

..وانتظار.. انتظار

..حيرة.. قلق.. خوف

لكن الحزن دافي

# Behind the Curtain

Original and Translation by Amal Javed Abdullah

You walk to your reticent prayer area, a small partitioned space for you, separated from the rest of the deserted fourth floor with a flimsy curtain divider. You reach into your designer Louis Vuitton bag and fish out a silky piece of blue cloth, and carefully wrap it around your head. Your Muslim identity, which is unbeknownst to the colleagues you left behind, now encompasses your entire being.

You pull out a prayer mat. Deep maroon, decorated with an intricate gold outline of the Holy House. You stand. Your soft rouged lips round in the proclamation of the greatness of your Lord. Your almond eyes, painted with black eyeliner in the shape of a meticulous wing, lower themselves in humble reverence.

You pray. Each word which you carefully mouth weighs itself heavily upon you; its meaning a quintessence of everything you long to become. You remember the mercy of your Lord, the promises of His reward and recompense, His threat of punishment. You prolong the recitation, you prolong the peace you find in this concentration.

You bow. "Glory be to My Lord, the Most Great." سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ. You glorify, you glorify, you glorify. Then you glorify again, again, again. You continue to declare the praises of your Lord, because you realize you can never be sufficiently grateful for the bounties which He has granted you through His Glory.

You rise. "Allah has heard the one who has praised Him." ثَمَدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا، سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ. Therefore, I praise you a praise which is "abundant, excellent and blessed."

You prostrate. Your limbs slowly descend into *sujood* and as you surrender yourself to Him in the lowest position a human being can ever find themselves in, you say سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى, "Glory be to My Lord, the Most Elevated." You repeat your praises and you extend your prostration, unable to tear yourself from the bliss that you find before Him. You realize your place; no matter how high you go, this is where you belong.

Slowly, you bring yourself up, and you repeat. And though you hope to elongate your prayer as long as possible, it eventually ends. You sit for a few minutes in quiet contemplation, in remembrance of Allah. Then you get up, fold your prayer mat, unpin your *hijab* and put it back in the recesses of your bag. You leave behind your quiet sanctuary, behind the divider on the deserted fourth floor of the office building, and you walk to your next business meeting with the team. They have a lot to report to you, and luckily, you have energized yourself enough to last through it.



Jeremy Pratt

# Vive La Paix

Original and Translation by Amal Javed Abdullah

The boy placed his small hand in his father's large and sturdy one as they joined the crowd of men and women in kaleidoscopic colours walking from all directions across the parking lot to the entrance of the masjid. They moved side by side, smiling at one another and bidding each other the *salam*, the greeting of peace, tanned crinkles radiating in the corners of their eyes. Behind them, the sky steadily dimmed to a deep Egyptian blue and the sun blazed like a dull orange ember as it smouldered and prepared to die down for another night.

The boy stepped inside the *masjid* away from Quebec's bitter January cold, and, instantaneously, a spark of warmth filled him from the top of his head to the tips of his feet as if he had just gulped down a sweet steaming slug of hot chocolate. He inhaled deeply, and the fresh scent of lilac air freshener wafted into his nose. The soft incandescent light bulbs which flooded the vast and open hall, made the boy feel at home. The hall was filled with hustle and bustle as people flowed in to congregate for the evening prayer.

The boy slipped off his shoes, placed them on the racks, and treaded softly on the carpeted ground in his father's wake to the men's washroom to make *wudu*, ablution. The boy whispered, Bismillah, in the name of Allah, and slowly, mindfully, he washed his hands, rinsed his mouth, flushed his nose, wiped his face and both arms and over his head, cleaned his ears and washed his feet. As he finished, the boy recalled the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, "When a believer washes his face (in the course of *wudu*), every sin which he committed with his eyes, will be washed away from his face with water, or with the last drop of water; when he washes his hands, every sin which is committed by his hands will be effaced from his hands with the water, or with the last drop of water; and when he washes his feet, every sin his feet committed will be washed away with the water, or with the last drop of water; until he finally emerges cleansed of all his sins."

The boy and his father towelled themselves dry, and left the washroom to join the busy prayer space which bustled with conversation and laughter in waiting for the prayer to begin. A tall man in a navy blue sweatshirt with the name of Maurice Richard in stylized letters strode to the boy's father and called his name.

"Jamal, how are you doing?"

"*Alhumdulillah*," his father replied. All praises are due to Allah.

His father and the man engaged in a lively discussion about an oppressive new political policy. From what the boy understood, it was somewhere close by, but far enough to not affect them.

"It's alright; everything will be fine, insha'Allah. Whatever Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala has willed, will come to pass," His father assured the man. "Remember what His Messenger said: 'Know that if the entire nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not be able to benefit you except with what Allah had already decreed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not harm you except with what Allah had already decreed against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.'"

The boy listened as the conversation quickly changed to the subject of hockey, then of how difficult it is to raise children in an age of social media, then what the man should get his wife for their anniversary on Wednesday.

Suddenly, a holy hush fell over the room as the deep voice of the *muaddhin* emanated from the front of the room and he began to recite the *adhan*, the call to prayer.

"*Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar.*" Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest.

"*Ash-hadu Allah ilaha illAllah.*" I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah.

"*Ash-hadu anna Muhammad ar rasoolullah.*" I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

"*Hayy 'alal salah, hayy 'alal falah.*" Come to prayer, come to success.

"*Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar.*" Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest.

"*La ilaha illAllah*" There is no God but Allah.

The boy, along with the men and women in the masjid, quietly repeated each phrase after the

*muaddhin*. The rich, honey-smooth recitation left the already peaceful room with a feeling of tranquility and serenity. The boy knew how calming the effect of the call to prayer could be: it was custom to recite it into the ear of a newborn baby, and his mother often made him listen to it on YouTube when he felt anxious or hyper.

Calmly, the boy joined the congregation as it lined up in neat rows, foot to foot, shoulder to shoulder. They stood before God humbly, putting the day's woes and worries to the back of their head as they surrendered their minds to pray. The Imam began the prayer, and in unison, the worshippers folded their arms. They listened intently as, in a voice just as beautiful as that of the *muaddhin*, the Imam recited verses from the Quran. Then they bowed, prostrated, and rose again, moving together as one body.

Without warning, there was a loud, deafening crack at the back of the room and the Imam abruptly stopped his recitation. For a second, the room stood still. Then, a cacophonous chaos erupted, and the peace of the room shattered with shrill shouts and the same ear-splitting cracks. The congregation broke as the people began to scatter and blindly run in haphazard directions.

The boy could not move. Every inch of the boy's body prickled fear like he was stuffed in a congested coffin of cactuses, a fear unlike any other he had never felt before. He tried to find feeling in his body, and realized that his father had clasped his hand in his own again, but he wasn't moving either. Suddenly, he felt a forceful push on his back and a strong pull on the arm attached to his father's as someone shoved the two of them to the ground. It was the man his father had been talking to before the prayer.

"Say the *shahadah*," he yelled hoarsely above the clamour.

Down below, scenes of red and fallen bodies filled the boy's eyes. Loud shrieks and screeches rang in his ears until they were all that he could hear. A numb pain spread in his hand as someone heavily trampled it. The stench of sweat, blood, and his father's musk filled his nose. But however intense these sensations, his unclear brain didn't register them as it normally would. It felt cumbersome and bulky, as if it was a hefty load in his head, and he would only be able to think if he put it down. The boy closed his eyes and vaguely wondered if he would be able to get an idea from what the newspapers would write the next day.

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"*And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Rather, they are alive, but you perceive it not. And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.'* Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the guided." (2:154-157)

01/29/2017

# Bain Si

Original and Translation by Mary Olivia Harris

*A stóirín,*  
oh how you've grown!  
You cannot know my child how I have loved you.  
I held you in my arms when you were but a wisp of life.

Do you remember when we visited the coast?  
The year it rained every day,  
and then one night,  
when the clouds broke only for an hour,  
you took my hand and we walked along the shore.  
Just you and me in muggy darkness, bare feet squishing into  
sand, as fireflies swarmed and danced around our heads,  
and you dropped away, and ran palms cupped to catch them.  
And you laughed.  
That laugh that brought me through so many sorrows.

I have heard the hollow wail, of the woman of the barrow.  
My time has come to contemplate the gun.  
Do not weep sweet child. Do not sing *caoineadh*.  
I have seen the face of death, not withered hag  
but fairest maiden's love.  
With a mother's tenderness she will kiss my brow  
and wash my clothing in the sea and take my hand  
she and I together will swim amongst  
the blue abundance.

Do not cry my love.  
For me this is the end but you'll go on.  
But please, promise me this.  
When you hear the maiden cry you'll come,  
Not with fear or trepidation.  
But come to me my *cailín bán*, and we shall walk  
hand in hand  
amongst the hills of splendor.

## Key:

- \*A stóirín (ah-STOR-reen) "Oh little love"
- \*caoidneadh (kwee-neh) "lament"
- \* cailín bán (COLL-reen bawn) "Fair-Haired Girl"



Catherine Harasymiw



Jeremy Pratt



Catherine Harasymiw

*Catherine Harasymiw*

50/50

# The Intentional

Emny Moghrabi | Poetry

The breath that swept the lake fell on the shore with grace  
and I had watched with defiance in the fall, the  
branch that let go in August.

I am not myself, and they have shouted that before, a  
hundred times  
because you look away, you slip away and the next  
thing you know- you've been sleeping for years.  
I can't remember the last time I loved the ground I  
walked  
the gloves I wore  
the hands I held  
but I'm shouting

I'm still in love,      I'm    still    in    love

And I am.

Rising with the sun, I am watching the ground and  
trying to measure the oxygen in my mouth,  
tasting the branches that have run through the heart  
of the forest and found a home  
beneath the sparrows nest.

# I Was Afraid of the Dark

Emny Moghrabi | Short Story

I write with the footsteps of ghosts above my head, the floorboards creaking under the weight of their souls; I liked it better when I trembled with fear. It sounds like they're bowling with crumpled dish towels down the long narrow halls of my childhood house. It sounds like they're rearranging and berating the shelves, trying to put more life into the room. It sounds like they're getting out of bed and rubbing the sleep from their eyes, wondering why they still do this, even after they've died. I beg them to come downstairs, silently to myself, because they're ghosts- they must be able to hear me. I want them to crawl down the stairs, covered in blood, with uncut finger nails. I pretend they start to leak from the corners of my roof. I initiate a staring contest into the dark depths of my open closet and I make a face out of the clothes and odd ends. I pretend she stares back through a long curtain of dark hair, and I imagine she takes a pale step towards me. I don't know when they stopped trying, but I know that it's my fault.



# The High Tenors of Hallelujah

Emny Moghrabi | Short Story

She began to sing while she showered, and I knew things were going to get better. I heard a muffled tone and I thought she was crying again; again, I dashed up the stairs and into the bathroom to hold her, to separate her misery from the onslaught of unheated water, and as I pulled back the curtain she stopped. I saw her eyes light, and fill with warmth, with recognition. I know you. I faltered, and she pulled me into the shower by my jawline. Her dark hair fell in heavy panes around her face, body taunt with the cold. I felt the chill soak through my clothes, and I remember thinking she cannot be human, she cannot be human.

Now every morning the high tenor of “Hallelujah” speaks of a god, and warm spring winds. The tremble in her voice explains that she can't help falling in love with the cold stream of water, the river flowing, can't help washing away the night and raising the sun from its place just below the horizon. She could raise the dead and erase their flaws, whose lungs had been filled with toxins, whose minds had been filled with tar. She was sick too, though. Her hands and feet seemed to drag on the worst of days as they clung to the ground, pulling the grass up by its roots and pushing dirt into small heaping piles by her heels. I've never met such a gifted and terminal surgeon.

# First Date Nostalgia

Lisa Marguerite Bowler | Story Excerpt



Her hair was in perfect, tight curls close to her head—the natural raven black long faded to silver. She was dressed immaculately with her black slacks, white button up blouse and black cardigan. Her ears were adorned with a large cluster of shiny black beads and her left wrist was circled with the slim gold watch her late husband had given her for one of their anniversaries. Her arthritic hands sported sparkling diamond rings and her nails were painted a perfect coral pink. The age lines crossing her face enhanced her elegance while speaking of her years raising a passel of kids and spoiling her numerous grandchildren. Looking at her you would think she had planned an outing, going for lunch or tea with friends perhaps, but this was how she dressed every day regardless of her plans.

I tried to come and see her often, which was not nearly often enough, and we usually sat around and chatted or went out for lunch or dinner. That day we sat in the living room of her little two-bedroom condo, me on the love seat and her in the recliner she bought for herself. Like her, the condo was in perfect order with no dishes left in the galley kitchen sink, the bed made precisely with the frilly pillows she had sewn herself and drew the eye from the open bedroom doorway, and not a speck of dust could be found on any surface. The walls featured family portraits and school photos of her children and her children's children. The decor was a somewhat mismatched collection of collectables and furniture that formed a perfect reflection of her personality. A formal but comfortable atmosphere interspersed with knickknack gifts from her grandchildren (that were worth more in sentiment than in dollars), crystal vases, and custom made mirrors. It was a space filled with memories. Memories embedded in the items she kept from before her husband had died and the newer objects with memories she made after.

She had made sweet iced tea for us while I caught her up on the goings on in my life and after the short update we sat in companionable silence a moment while she looked at an old picture on the wall of her and her husband. The photo, in an intricate silver frame, had probably been taken before their children were born and she looked as elegant and put together in that picture as she did today.

“Did I ever tell you about our first date?”

# A Sorrow Blossom

Natasha Sheena Tar | Short Story

The sun dips lazily through the white sky like a candy cane stripe. It moves across a wispy desert landscape sprinkled with sculpted rocks and prickly shrubs. Mice and lizards flick and meander across the land, looking for scraps on the ancient kitchen floor. Alone, a saguaro cactus stands like a man awaiting a train. Pygmy Owl tells her friends that Cactus is pugnacious.

Night Lizard complains that Cactus snores.

Antelope Jackrabbit thinks its weird that Cactus is still into *The Backstreet Boys*.

Cactus lets these murmurs pass around him like the wind. He watches the desert stars go by night after night, tracking the different constellations. His elegant needles quiver with the rotation of the planet. They clink against each other, a small applause of "tick-tick-tick". He's 10 feet tall, small for his kind, and his rippled skin mimics the green of a dusty vintage vase. He remembers a time when there was a house nearby, when his flowers still bloomed. A girl of five, Naomi, would bring her little radio outside in the scorching heat and sit beneath Cactus. She'd ask what Cactus wanted to listen to first before overriding whatever he had decided on. Naomi would admire his flowers and move with his shadow as the hour changed.

The world had kept shuffling along and Naomi grew up and moved away with her family. Soon after, her house was demolished. Cactus, alone, lives a stationary existence amongst the locomotive fauna. Even the tumbleweeds get around more than he does.

Now the candy cane stripe of sunset falls into a vat of melted blueberries and chocolate. A skilled hand flicks powdered sugar over the concoction and Cactus nostalgically observes.

The evening before Naomi left, she stood by Cactus and stroked one of his spikes,

contemplating her future. Cactus could hear her thoughts as they fled and mingled in her head. He held them within his waterlogged interior and let them bubble. *Sweet Naomi, take me with you*, he pleaded. For the first time, she heard him. She got a high stool from her house, picked one of his flowers and pressed it between the pages of her favourite book. Naomi spent the whole night sitting under Cactus. They listened to a final song on her radio as the sun rose. It was like an orange creamsicle emerging from the depths of a freezer.

These days, men who drive trucks and women with low-cut shirts make love under Cactus. They bury their used condoms around him. Cactus closes off every part of himself and focuses on the flower, where it's cozy and safe, snug in Naomi's favourite book. In these moments, the train finally takes Cactus to his destination.



Thirteen years later.

Summer.

Vancouver.

Naomi massages the blisters and burns that speckle her fingers as she reads *The Secret Garden*. She sits on a cinder block in the shade of her workplace and muses, being a cook is a lot less glamorous than I thought it would be. At eighteen, she's surprised she got the line cook job. It was taxing work: seemingly endless shifts with no breaks in front of sweltering burners and ovens. All her co-workers were men in their thirties who made crude jokes, smoked pot and called her "little one". They had been complaining that it was hotter outside today than it was inside. Hot, but not as hot as Arizona was, Naomi thinks. She turns the page and a crinkled flower flutters to the ground. Naomi picks the saguaro cactus blossom up and twirls it between her fingers, remembering.

"You're still here?" Dimitri plops down on the cinderblock beside her. He's handsome, if you could look past the crappy haircut and his often sardonic personality that made him about as appealing as mud.

"Your shift ended fifteen minutes ago, FYI."

"Thanks, I wasn't aware," she replies dryly.

"What's that?" he asks, pointing at the flower.

"A daisydil."

"What?"

She leans over and whispers into Dimitri's ear, "Just between you and me, I'm not actually a line cook. I'm a very serious, very professional flower breeder. I created this one-of-a-kind hybrid and I'm gonna sell it on eBay to the highest bidder."

He pffts at this, shaking his head, "You're so weird."

"It's actually a saguaro cactus flower," Naomi says, handing it to him.

"A sorrow cactus?" he asks. "Man, that's depressing."

"No, it's pronounced 'suh-war-row'."

"Whatever, it looks pretty sad to me," Dimitri says, handing the wilted flower back.

Naomi rolls her eyes, but realizes that he's looking at her adoringly. He'd been doing that too frequently. It made her heart shuffle backwards into her spinal cord. She wasn't used to adoration or infatuation, not any of those sticky terms. Naomi often likened herself to the cactus that grew near her old house: solitary and proud. Recently, she'd started to doubt that comparison. She was lonely, really. For thirteen years, her life had been like waiting at a station for a train to take her a stop or two forward to something new.

These days, she felt like she would have to throw herself in front of the train in order to go anywhere. Dimitri pulls out his phone, "Pick a song. Wait, don't. I know what you like to listen to." He holds up his phone as the opening strains of *As Long As You Love Me* pour out.

Naomi smiles, "Please turn this Backstreet Boy garbage off before I vomit."

"Never."

They face each other and have a silent conversation. Naomi hadn't felt anything powerful since she was young, but maybe that's because all feelings are more intense in memory. Either way, she thinks it's time to end her emotional hiatus. Tucking the saguaro flower back between her book's pages, Naomi leans into Dimitri, throwing herself in front of the train.

## An Ode to Companionship

Charles Michael Averin | Poetry

Since fatefully finding a buddy for binding,  
Through whoring and warring and whorling and winding,  
I found it confusing, confounded in musing  
On how bruising his words were during his boozing.

Fleeing was fleeting, and while chilled by my cheating,  
It seemed maudlin and mawkish and marred by our meeting,  
Repeatedly meeting, remeeting and greeting,  
And our brutishly, balefully, each other treating.

We were impudent partners, imprudent and rude,  
We'd shamefully sullied and so scornfully skewed  
What we'd wishfully wanted, so flagrantly flaunted,  
So youthfully yearned and vaingloriously vaunted.

We remet once again, for one final first,  
Watching behind us the worst of the worst, we versed:  
"Whatever the weather, we'll weather together,  
From now until never, for now and forever."



Jeremy Pratt

## Brave Rain

Diana Drodzik | Poetry

The thud of the car brings me back to attention. It hit the rocky hillside as I was coming up the mountain road. My location now reflects my mental state; lost. Not enough answers, and my questions build a wall. In my isolation I still hold her name to my mouth. So many words were spoken, none I can really remember now. The gist of it being that we were once close but now too far away. I hold

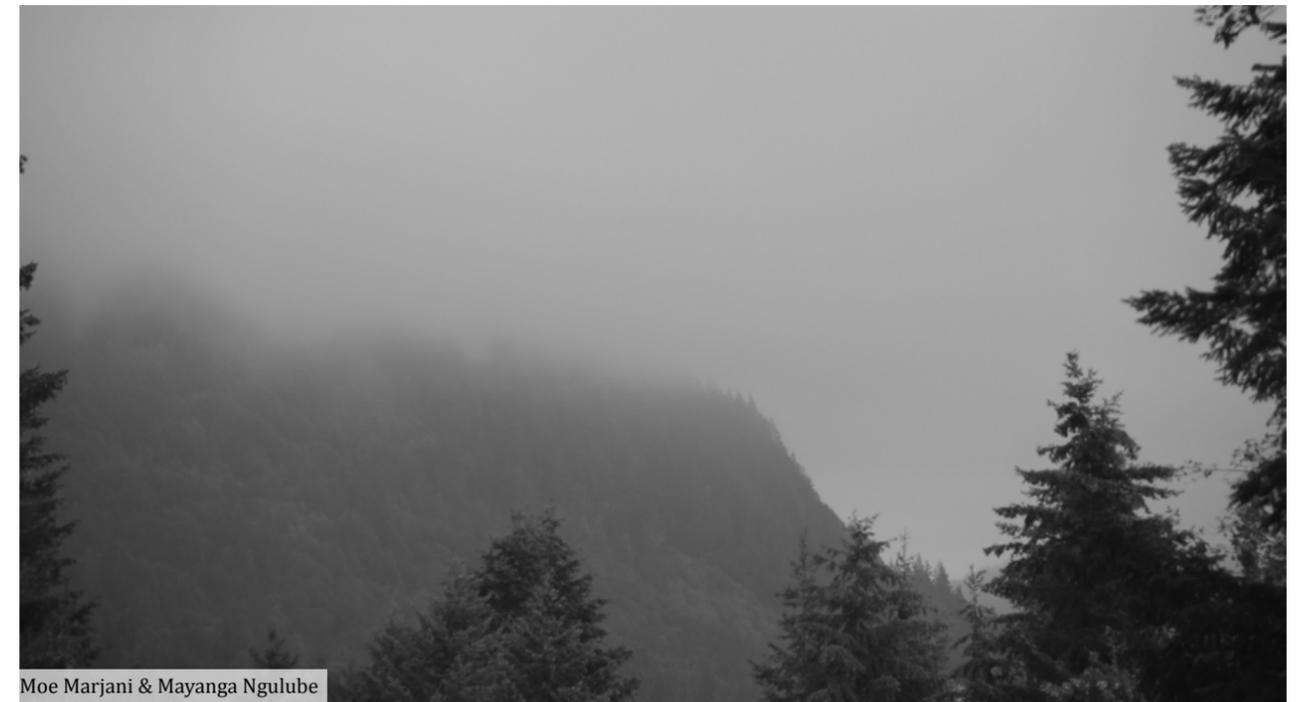
onto the steering wheel and try to estimate how far she is but fall in the cracks. I find myself questioning if we were even close or did the simplicity of a childish-mind find it easy to gift forever friends, bff, best friends medal like I would gift a hitch hiker a ride. In the dark, a girl grinned, her braces left little to blind with the reflection of the car lights. In her hands is a Sailor Moon Puzzle, she tries to flag me down with it.

Brace yourself, I say to myself,  
a fork meets ahead on the one lane road.

The right turn leads to a cliff but seems less painful than the left, a rocky path with no concrete road to promise me comfort.

The window wipers thrash against the rain, I try to guess which way is sane but find it hard to see with wet eyes.

We crash into the middle, picking neither.  
And it rained on.



Moe Marjani & Mayanga Ngulube



# Contributor Bios



**Abby Zaporteza** began writing poems and short stories as a child and has been writing ever since. Her work has been featured in high school publications, souvenir programmes, and most recently in SFU World Literature’s Lyre magazine. She also has an affinity for dad jokes, the performing arts, and spontaneous adventures.

**Amal Javed Abdullah** is a second-year arts student at SFU. She loves writing in all genres, except the kind which requires her to write autobiographically.

**A.R.W.** is a current SFU student majoring in World Literature. She enjoys creating art and learning new languages in her spare time as she hopes to continue traveling around the world and painting her surroundings.

**Balsimran Gill** has a passion for art and enjoys sharing it. She is a first-year student. Simran enjoys reading, baking, and biking with her younger sister. Simran is very excited to be part of this year’s Lyre Magazine edition.

**Brett Nelson** is a 21-year-old writer who grew up on Vancouver Island but now resides in Vancouver. He is a current student at Simon Fraser University pursuing a major in Communication and a minor in Publishing.

**Brittany Barrell** is eager to begin her second year at Simon Fraser University. She has a love for reading and writing and is excited to contribute to Lyre Magazine. For now, she will be reading way too much, and procrastinating over the writing she knows she should get done.

**Brigitte Malana** is a fourth year SFU student pursuing an International Studies Major and a French Minor. In addition, she has completed numerous World Literature courses and has served as President of the International Studies Student Association (ISSA). In the future, Brigitte hopes to attend law school, focusing on human rights.

Recently graduated from OCADU, **Catherine Harasymiw** received a degree in fine art, majoring in drawing and painting. Her artwork seeks to synthesize the elements of chance and accident with a meditative, methodical intentionality; the attempt to find patterns in these, often times bewildering, happenings that so compose our lives.

Raised on Bowen Island off the coast of West Vancouver, **Chance Daldy** had a childhood surrounded by the sea. With an Australian father and a Canadian mother of Italian and German descent, Chance’s identity straddles the Pacific, dipping toes in two similar yet culturally unique countries.

**Charles Michael Averin** is a bilingual furry poet, writer, and proofreader who takes great pride in his archaic vocabulary, poetic waxing, and verbose tendencies.

**Conor Cunningham** aka Mescondi is a 21-year-old photographer from Vancouver. Escaping the real world by creating his own, he captures images of reality as if they were scenes from a colourful, dystopian film. His models become characters to connect with, displaying a fragmented look into his mind and emotions.

**Daniel de Culla** is a writer, poet, and photographer. He’s member of the Spanish Writers Association, Earthly Writers International Caucus, Poets of the World, (IA) International Authors, Surrealism Art, and others. Director of Gallo Tricolor Review, and Robespierre Review, he has participated in many Festivals of Poetry and Theater.

An aspiring physicist, **Daria Mukhovina** finds great support in art that makes us long for what we never had, thus inspiring us to do things we never did.

**Dawson Campbell** is in his second year of studying French and World Literature. As a long-time reader, first-time translator, he has become intrigued by the challenge of forcing poets to speak his language. The poems he has translated for this edition of The Lyre focus on French Surrealism.

**Diana Drozdik** is stuck between two paths-just like in her poem: one path being research, the other being medicine. Currently, she is a 21-year-old 3rd year Science major at SFU and a regulated Pharmacy Technician. Despite her major, she likes to transform her emotions into dramatic poetry.

**Divyansh Srivastava** I am an undergrad engineering student at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, India. To me, poetry is the most powerful form of expression, and requires sensitization to one’s immediate surroundings. I like to write about the external and internal insecurities of the human mind as far as I can understand them.

**Eli Hiebert** is a world literature student at SFU and aims to graduate in December 2017.

Author of the blog TheDirtMouth.Com and EmlsAlive.Wordpress. Com, **Emny Moghrabi** is a fourth year English student at Simon Fraser University, with a focus on creative writing, rhetoric, and publishing. She hikes, she runs, but most of all, she reads. Having moved from Alberta to study in Vancouver, she is currently waiting for the next adventure.

The bulk of **Felix Ruiz de la Orden**’s creative work involves the merging of poetry with the abrasive and raw emotional medium of punk music, typically with careful attention made towards lyricism. He writes poetry, prose and is a primary song writer in two bands and one solo project.

**George Paillé** is a photographer who believes that if you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere

**N. Loth** is the author of “Ceasefire”.

**Gabrielle McLaren** studies history and world literature. She is a hot beverage enthusiast and enjoys mythology, classical literature, theater, science-fiction, pasta, and historical fiction.

**Hanna Chau** is a third(ish) year English major at SFU Burnaby. She enjoys reading anything that makes her feel uneasy on the very first page and works that focus on the banal nature of life. Her favorite hobby, next to writing, is taking three hour naps.

**Jade Qiu** is a nervous young human going into her fourth year of undergrad at SFU, majoring in sociology and anthropology. When she is not busy battling the hallowed halls of academia, she is baking a pie.

A fourth year world literature major and print and digital publishing minor with a passion for writing fiction prose, **Jaiden Dembo** dabbles in poetry and like to focus on short stories and longer prose pieces exploring themes of love and tragedy. Stylistically, she enjoys dark humour and creating an ethereal atmosphere.

**Jeremy Pratt** is a photographer in his free time, in between working as a summer camp counsellor and studying physics and astronomy at the University of British Columbia. Since starting film photography in September, he’s captured the streets of Vancouver, BC’s coast and forests, and university life on film.

**Jessica Peatman** is a visual art major who obtained a BFA from the University of the Fraser Valley in 2017. She is currently exploring printmaking techniques, but began her artistic practice with drawing and painting. Her work reflects a somber contemplation of life and memory.

**Kate Sullivan** grew up on Vancouver Island and has lived in East Vancouver for four years. Her current crea-tive writing projects include personal essays, plays, and text games. She completed her English Honours degree at SFU in 2017.

**Lisa Marguerite Bowler** is a third year English Department student at SFU with Denesuline, Irish, and English ancestry. Her mother ensured reading was a significant part of her childhood, which led to what has become an almost obsessive love of books and a passion for writing her own stories.

**Marina Tsougrianis** has recently completed her BA in Psychology at SFU. Her interest in psychology and mental illness, as well as her introspective nature, often inspire her work as a writer. She hopes to continue presenting these points of intersection where art and psychology have framed each other in her life.

**Mary Olivia Harris** is a fourth year student at Simon Fraser University majoring in English. Having experienced Amnesia as a brain injury survivor, she is particularly interested in exploring memory, both in her own works and the analysis of Literature. My name is **Matthew Inouye** and I am an English student at Simon Fraser University. I am 22 years old and from Vancouver, BC born and raised. Writing has always been a passion of mine and I am truly honoured to have my piece selected. Hope you enjoy!

My name is **Mayanga Ngulube**, I am an international student from Zambia, studying Economics and World Literature at SFU. I am passionate about music, politics and leaving a positive impact on the world. In my free time I enjoy cycling, reading books, meeting new people, meditating and listening to podcasts.

**Meagan Schlee-Bedard** is creative at heart. She accomplished an Interdisciplinary Sports Science diploma at Douglas College. When she is not trying to grasp the art of yoga and meditation, or climb mountains much taller than her, she is an avid but slow reader and a heartfelt writer.

**Melanie Hiepler** is a World Literature major at Simon Fraser University.

**Moe Marjani** is an undergraduate student majoring in English Literature. He is interested in Early Modern and Humanist literature, motorcycle culture, food, and creative writing. Moe also likes taking incoherent pictures, a unique style he developed on his own by using specific filters, shaky hands and subject movement.

**Najah Al-Nassrawi** is an Iraqi primary school teacher, a mother of four and a psychology major who had to flee Iraq, by herself, to escape abuse and a non-stop war. First, she sought refuge in Turkey, then made her way across the sea to Europe, where her feet, and a few trains, carried her to Norway.

**Natasha Sheena Tar** is hoping to major in English at SFU, start a crochet gang, and master the art of cooking great eggs. So far none of these things have happened, but maybe they will, one day.

**Raphael Diangkinay** is a writer from the Philippines, based in Vancouver. He has been published in a few select student publications such as Hasik and independently. He is currently working towards his BA in English at UBC and tries to make the best cups of coffee he can at home.

**Yaqeen Abdulzahra** is an Iraqi SFU scholarship holder, majoring in Biomedical Physiology. When she’s not immersed in Science, she sacrifices plates for art by printing ceramic drawings on them. Yaqeen translated her mother’s Arabic poem, A Journey of a Refugee, to spread awareness about the refugee crisis from a refugee perspective.