



GEIST

FACT • FICTION • NORTH of AMERICA

NUMBER 105
SUMMER 2017
\$8.95

Wholesome Reading

HITLER'S TASTE TESTERS
JOHNSON AND THE BOYS
PURRING AND NOTHINGNESS





LES GRANDS PRIX
DU MAGAZINE
—
CANADIAN
MAGAZINE AWARDS

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On April 27, 2017 Canada's magazine industry honoured the best creators and brands of the past year at the launch of the Canadian Magazine Awards. Congratulations to all the winners from Magazines Canada and the Magazine Grands Prix sponsors. The awards will return in April 2018.

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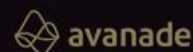
maggrandsprix.ca/awards

FÉLICITATIONS AUX LAURÉATS DE L'ÉDITION INAUGURALE DES GRANDS PRIX DU MAGAZINE

Le 27 avril 2017, l'industrie du magazine canadien rendait hommage aux meilleurs créateurs et marques de magazines de l'année à l'occasion du lancement des Prix du magazine canadien. Magazines Canada et les commanditaires des Grands prix du magazine offrent leurs félicitations à tous les lauréats. La prochaine édition des prix aura lieu en avril 2018.

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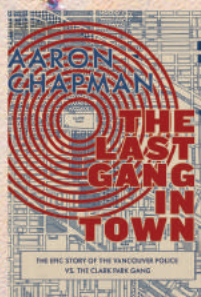


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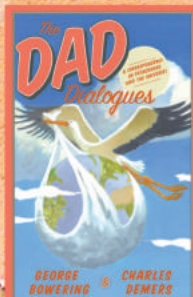


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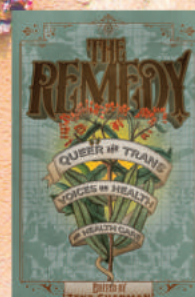


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GEIST

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COVER: The image on the cover is Please Enjoy Your Meal (2015), a 9"x7" paper collage by Lucie Bosquin, a collage artist from Montreal. See more of her work at luciebosquin.com and on page 31 of this issue.

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GEIST

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MISCELLANY

READERS WRITE

Hey, *Geist*. My Creative Writing 12 class cut up some back issues of your *Geist* in the Classroom donations. They had a great time and created some work with a comparatively unique "voice."

Thank you so much for this program. I use the magazines regularly.

—Jeffrey Nordstrom, Agassiz, BC

Some of the poems from Mr. Nordstrom's class appear in the Notes & Dispatches section on pages 9, 11 and 16. Geist in the Classroom provides instructors of secondary and post-secondary writing classes with free copies of Geist.

WRITE TO GEIST

✉ Thoughts, opinions, comments and queries are welcome and encouraged, and should be sent to:

The Editor, *Geist*
letters@geist.com
Snailmail:
#210 – 111 West Hastings St.
Vancouver BC V6B 1H4

Letters may be edited for clarity, brevity and decorum.



CONVERSIONS

Geist has partnered with the Early Modern Conversions Project at the Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas at McGill University. As part of the project we'll be publishing material on the subject of conversion: identity transformation, religious conversion, forced cultural conversion in residential schools, sexual conversions, for example.

Our first piece under this rubric is "Clowns, Cake and Canoes: This is Canada?" in which Lisa Bird-Wilson argues for the merit of changing our reading practices from reading to reading Indigenously (see it on page 64). For more info check out early-modernconversions.com.

CONTACT NO CONTACT

The Contact No Contact project is well underway! Randy Fred has been hard at work, gathering videos of personal contact stories from people around Nanaimo. *Geist* editors have also been soliciting written narratives from some of our favourite writers.

The Contact No Contact website is looking sharp and should be launched around the end of summer.

If you'd like to be updated when the website is up and running, sign up for the *Geist* weekly newsletter or visit geist.com, where we'll be posting stories and videos from the Contact No Contact project.

Geist contributing editor Michael Hayward with Olga Vila of Sweet Books ("llibres de segona mà"), in Girona, Catalonia, Spain.

PHOTO: JEAN KARLINSKI

EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE

Geist No. 105 has a special new feature: we've recently started an editorial residency program.

The idea is to invite writers, artists, editors, academics from groups who are traditionally underrepresented in the cultural sphere: Indigenous people, people of colour, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people from outside of major urban centres, people with low income, and others to collaborate with our editors in producing issues of *Geist*.

Our first editor-in-residence is Jordan Abel. Abel is a Nisga'a writer from BC. He is currently pursuing a doctorate at Simon Fraser University, where his research concentrates on the intersection between Digital Humanities and Indigenous Literary Studies. Abel's creative work has been anthologized in *Best Canadian Poetry* (Tightrope), *The Land We Are: Artists and Writers Unsettle the Politics of Reconciliation* (Arbeiter Ring), and *The New Concrete: Visual Poetry in the 21st Century* (Hayword). Abel is the author of *Un/inhabited*, *The Place of Scraps* (winner of the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize and finalist for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award) and *Injun*, winner of the 2017 Griffin Prize for poetry.

QUESTION PERIOD, PAGE 72, SOURCES

1. New Statesman; 2. TrendinTech; 3. Salon; 4. Salon; 5. The Walrus; 6. CBC; 7. Salon; 8. The Walrus; 9. Los Angeles Review of Books; 10. Toronto Star; 11. New Statesman; 12. Florida Today; 13. The Nation; 14. Salon; 15. Michael Winship, "There's a Smell of Treason in the Air": Things in Washington Start to Drip, Drip, Drip (Billmoyers.com); 16-18. 30 Questions for Pepsi About Its Protest Imagery-Inspired Soda Commercial (Slate); 19. Mya Frazier, What Would Jesus Disrupt? (Bloomberg); 20. Bloomberg; 21. Read President Trump's Interview With TIME on Truth and Falsehoods (Time); 22. Bloomberg; 23. Joshua Keating, Why Is Trump Bashing Canada All of a Sudden? (Slate); 24. CBC; 25. Mark Thompson, Huge List of 150 Compelling Headlines for Your Blog (Stayonsearch.com); 26. John Micklethwait, Is Justin Trudeau the Anti-Trump? (Bloomberg); 27. Chauncey DeVega, Philosopher Henry Giroux on the Culture of Cruelty and Donald Trump: America Is "a Democracy on Life Support — It Can't Breathe" (Salon); 28. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.), Hansard 166; 29. RM Vaughan, Who Makes Up the 1%? in the Arts, It's the Bureaucrats (CBC); 30. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP), Hansard 166; 31. The Atlantic.



ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE

Rob Kovitz is the founder of Treyf Books. His previous works include *Dead and Cold*, *According to Plan* and *The Sweets of Home*. He lives in Winnipeg.

Roni Simunovic is a writer and illustrator. They live in Vancouver and at ronisimunovic.com.

Sarah R. Champagne is a journalist who has worked in print and in radio. Her work focuses on in-depth individual stories, out of which emerge larger international themes, especially around migration. She received the R. James Travers Foreign Corresponding Fellowship in 2016. She lives in Montreal.

Michel Huneault is an award winning photographer whose work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Globe and Mail* and many other publications. He received the R. James Travers Foreign Corresponding Fellowship in 2016. He lives in Montreal.

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Dear Geist...

GEIST
FACT • FICTION • NORTH • AMERICA



I have been writing and rewriting a creative non-fiction story for about a year. How do I know when the story is ready to send out?

—Teetering, Gimli MB



Which is correct, 4:00, four o'clock or 1600 h?
—Floria, Windsor ON

Dear Geist,

In my fiction writing workshop, one person said I should write a lot more about the dad character. Another person said that the dad character is superfluous and I should delete him. Both of these writers are very astute. Help!



—Dave, Red Deer AB



Advice for the Lit Lorn

Are you a writer?

Do you have a writing question, conundrum, dispute, dilemma, quandary or pickle?

Geist offers free professional advice to writers of fiction, non-fiction and everything in between, straight from Mary Schendlinger (Senior Editor of *Geist* for 25 years) and *Geist* editorial staff.

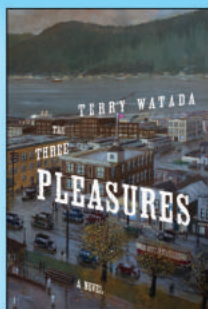
Send your question to advice@geist.com.

We will reply to all answerable questions, whether or not we post them.

geist.com/lit-lorn



3 FOR THE SUMMER READING LIST



THE THREE PLEASURES by Terry Watada

"Terry Watada's literary tour de force, *The Three Pleasures*, lifts the Japanese Canadian internment experience beyond passive victimization by giving life to a host of historical figures—heroes, villains and tragic characters—in a fascinating yet little-known resistance movement within the camps. An absolute page-turner and worthy read."

—Jim Wong-Chu, Director,
literASIAN Festival

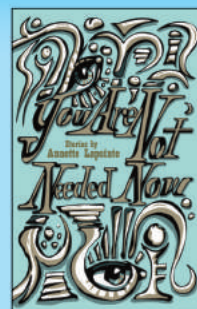
\$24 | 384 PGS. | 978-1-77214-095-8



LONG RIDE YELLOW by Martin West

Long Ride Yellow is the debut novel from two-time Journey Prize finalist Martin West. Nonni is a dominatrix who likes to play. She hates to pay. Her disdain for all that is conventional launches her on a journey of personal discovery: through the local swingers' scene, the world of clandestine S&M clubs, and finally onto the most dangerous diversion of her life.

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—LAWRENCE HILL

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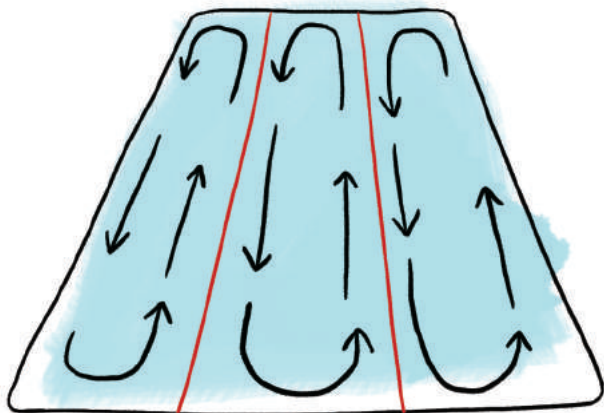
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Concussive

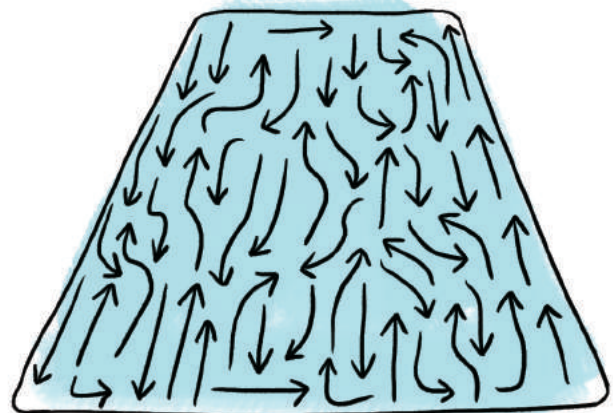
MICHAŁ KOZŁOWSKI

The task of imagining something not immediately present is exhausting

NON-CONCUSSIVE
MODE



CONCUSSIVE
MODE



Within a few hours of getting bonked on the head at the swimming pool I could feel the world becoming less stable, and then a few days later the sun began to shine too brightly and the sound of human voices, buses passing along the street, music on the radio all became too loud to bear.

The doctor at the walk-in clinic asked me to sit up straight on the examination table with my legs outstretched. He then turned my head and pushed me straight back. Then he shone a light into my eye. You've got a concussion, he said. A few days later, when I made the trek across town to visit my family doctor, he told me that he was no longer talking to anyone about long-term problems because he was getting out of family practice

altogether. And then he stormed out of the room.

I could feel the fogginess closing in, the feeling of losing contact with not only the world around me but the world within. The task of imagining or conjuring with something that was not immediately present became exhausting. But I did recognize this absence of thinking in the words and actions of people all around me. There were two kinds of deeds in the world: concussive and non-concussive.

Upon visiting Israel, the president of the USA told the prime minister, in front of the Israeli media, that he had just returned from the Middle East, where he'd had a good visit.



The prominent Toronto editor-in-chief of a liberal magazine quit his post, on account of having to censor himself too frequently.

Another Toronto editor proposed that the means to cultural understanding is to establish an appropriation writing prize—surely well intentioned, but one of the most stunning examples of concussive non-thinking that I'd encountered in my new concussive state.

These incidents occurred when I was in Toronto for the first annual Grand Prix Awards for magazine publishing, which my companion renamed the Awards for Grand Pricks. The *Geist* entry, a forty-five-year-long photography project documenting race relations in the most unhappy city in

Jesus and God passed my television in silence
 neon eyes bulging, silver-covered molars stuttering
 bags and blankets ricochet my noggin
 fat aunts storm the barricades
 flotsam and jetsam attract tornadoes?
 while I take the bus languorously after Granville Street
 spreading germs
 exhausted

The collage poem above and those on the next few pages are composed of words and phrases taken from recent issues of Geist, compiled by students from Agassiz Secondary, participants in the Geist in the Classroom program.

America, lost to a photo shoot featuring shoelaces—a painfully concussive decision by the judges.

In the same week, at the Canadian magazine publishing conference, I went to see an interview with Anna Maria Tremonti. As soon as she began to speak, a familiar unpleasant sensation began to settle over me, and it took me a few minutes to figure out that the only time I listen to Tremonti is at 8:45 a.m., when her show comes on CBC Radio and when I'm still lying in bed, which means I'm struggling to get out of bed because the concussion is in full effect.

At the Georgia O'Keeffe exhibit in the Art Gallery of Ontario, in front of *Calla Lilies on Red*, a man with puffy hair, wearing a boxy blazer and surely a concussion victim, said to his companion: I love all the layers here. With his cupped hand he traced the white petals along the folds of the lily. I see one thing, he went on, and when I look longer I see so much more. His companion, a woman in a black spaghetti-strap dress, said nothing, and the concussive

man continued to speak gibberish and stroke the outline of the lily. I wandered ahead, wondering if the world would have fewer concussions if it had been made in the image of the vulva rather than the penis.

A few days later, in Lester's Deli in Montreal, the store manager was locked into a phone conversation with someone who wanted Montreal smoked meat sandwiches for their party, but was low on cash. You can come down and get the supplies yourself, said the Lester's employee, and I can show you how to put the sandwiches together. Or we can have them delivered at whatever time you want but we won't have them assembled. Yes, yes, but it will take you several hours to put all the sandwiches together. Sure, you can get a team of friends to help you.

My sister told me about an article she had just read about another concussed writer, Ernest Hemingway, who by the end of his life was struggling

to write. The article suggested that the reason Hemingway suffered so much and finally killed himself was not because of bipolar disorder and alcoholism but rather the brain damage caused by nine concussions over the course of his life: shell blasts from two world wars, boxing, playing football, a car crash and two plane crashes.

My own concussion came about at the swimming pool, when a backstroker drifted into my lane and we smashed into each other, head to head. When I stood up in the pool, the woman who had crashed into me was lying on her back, and then she too stood up. She was in her late fifties, small, no more than a hundred and ten pounds. Oops, she said, I didn't see you. And then she flopped onto her back again and continued on her course, propelling herself unevenly through the water.



Michał Kozłowski is the publisher and editor-in-chief of Geist. Read more of his work at geist.com.

Wholesome Reading

ROBERT EVERETT-GREEN

She eschewed all forms of what is termed “sex writing”

The one book by Evelyn Everett-Green that I own is a tattered copy of *Lenore Annandale's Story*, first published in 1884 in London, England, by the Religious Tract Society. A leafy ornament runs down its wine-coloured spine, and an inscription inside the front cover reads: “Presented to Jim Davis for good attendance, Salvation Army Sunday School, 1915.” It was given to me early this year by a friend who thought I might not know that there had been another writer named Everett-Green. A coloured plate inside shows a young woman galloping side-saddle along a turbulent seashore.

Both the picture and the inscription tell you a lot about Evelyn Everett-Green, with whom I share a surname but no family connection.

Everett-Green wrote novels for young people, of a morally improving nature. Her books were also meant to entertain, with tales of wholesome adventure and romance, often set in heroic times or picturesque locations.

When I first heard about this other Everett-Green, several years ago, I read a few pages from one of her books as transcribed by Project Gutenberg. “Heigh-ho,” I said to myself, slapping my riding crop against my boot whilst signalling for more tiffin, “another long-forgotten provider of indigestible Victorian prose!”

I was wrong, though not about the prose. Recently I published a novel of my own, *In a Wide Country*, and discovered that my literary non-relative was not forgotten. Whenever I typed

my name and book title into a search engine—which I hardly ever did more than twice a day—my single title was swamped by results for hers, some of which lead to fans of her work, who flock to sites such as Goodreads, where her average rating is a respectable 3.93. To put that in context: the Goodreads average for James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is 3.73.

The other Everett-Green’s books are probably all out of print, but dozens are available via sites such as Gutenberg, or through printing on demand. *Dozens* is a small quantity when talking about her output, which is estimated to range between 300 and 350 novels over a fifty-year writing career. Even at the lower figure, that’s a new book every two months, for fifty years straight, and these were not short books. My copy of *Lenore Annandale's Story* runs to 383 pages.

Evelyn Everett-Green was born in 1856 and, like me, studied music. She planned to accompany her brother, whose name, like mine, was Robert, to a colonial post in India, but he died unexpectedly in 1876, and she remained in England. She lived with a female friend for forty-nine years, emigrating with her in 1911 to Madeira, where Evelyn died in 1932.

I like the idea that a staunch Methodist writing machine who published with the Religious Tract Society may have been a lesbian: it humanizes her. She lived undercover in another way, publishing many books under pseudonyms. Her favourite was Cecil Adair, whose stories were pitched more to an adult readership. The Cecil Adair novel *Gabriel's Garden* (1913) sold over 150,000 copies during Everett-Green’s lifetime, according to *The Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in English*.

Evelyn Everett-Green set many of her books in famous distant periods, and

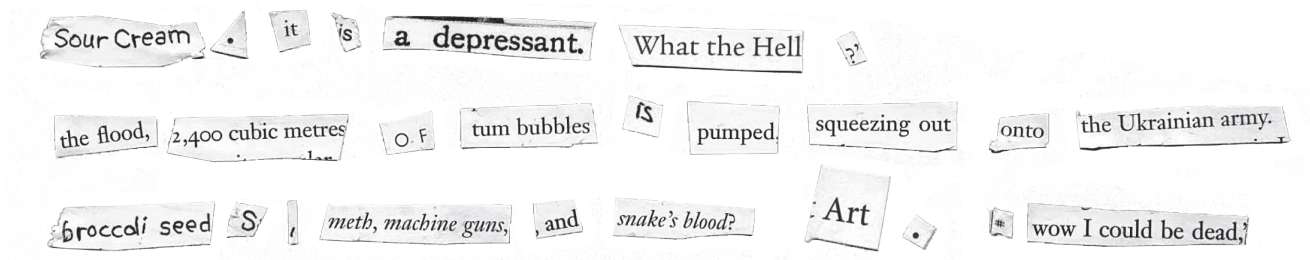
CANADA IN FOCUS

THE YEAR CANADIANS LOST THEIR MINDS AND FOUND THEIR COUNTRY
THE CENTENNIAL OF 1967
BY TOM HAWTHORN

MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH
PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES IN CANADA
BY ANDRÉ PICARD

TURNING PARLIAMENT INSIDE OUT
PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR REFORMING CANADA'S DEMOCRACY
EDITED BY MICHAEL CHONG, SCOTT SIMMS & KENNEDY STEWART

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gave them titles such as *A Story of the Days of the Gunpowder Plot*, *A Tale of the Days of Good Queen Bess* and (my favourite) *A Story of the Young Pioneers of Reformation at Oxford*. She was particularly keen on the fall of New France, and wrote at least five novels about it, one of which begins: “Humphrey Angell came swinging along through the silent aisles of the vast primeval forest, his gun in the hollow of his arm, a heavy bag of venison meat hanging from his shoulders. A strange, wild figure, in the midst of a strange, wild scene: his clothes, originally of some homespun cloth, now patched so freely with dressed deerskin as to leave little of the original material; moccasins on his feet, a beaver cap upon his head, his leather belt stuck round with hunting knives, and the pistol to be used at close quarters should any emergency arise.” There’s no evidence that Everett-Green did any swinging of her own through the silent aisles of the primeval forest.

She was quite successful in Canada, however, and, like me, wrote for the paper now known as the *Globe and Mail*. In 1903, the Saturday *Globe* serialized her novel, *A Fight for a Fortune*, which opens with the line: “What? Companion to the beautiful Miss Baskerville? What a life she will lead you!” It was the third Everett-Green novel published by the paper in as many years, but it had taken the *Globe* some time to come around to her mild brand of romance. “Life does not consist in following to a successful issue any single emotion of our nature; and those who, acquiring too readily the philosophy of the love

story, have sought to make its application theirs, have found this out to their sorrow, and too often to their destruction,” a *Globe* reviewer warned, about an Everett-Green novel in 1894. The number of *Globe* readers destroyed by *A Fight for a Fortune* may never be known.

An Australian reviewer in 1908 put the case for Everett-Green’s fiction this way: “She can always put before us a happy romance, full of sunshine, and with a breezy buoyancy which is well calculated to brush away the megrims from many a depressed soul.”

The megrim problem seems to have found other solutions by 1927. “Following a rather old-timey, leisurely style of writing, the story does not grip the interest of the reader,” a *Globe* reviewer wrote, about one of ten Cecil Adair novels that reached the paper’s book editor that year. “Wholesome reading, however, is provided for one who is not seeking excitement.” No one at the *Globe* seems to have realized that Cecil Adair was the same old-timey writer who had published three books in the paper years earlier, as Evelyn Everett-Green. The paper did note that Adair’s books had, “it is claimed, a combined circulation of half a million copies.”

Lately, whenever I glance at something by or about either of these writers, I find an eerie presentiment of my own novel. Adair’s *Silver Star-Dust*, according to a *Globe* review, is about “two children who were unconscious star-gazers as well as dreamers, and who had their appetites whetted by an old astronomer uncle.” That’s unsettlingly close to an incident in my book, in which a twelve-year-old boy wheedles an invitation to

lie on a blanket and look at the night sky with a girl he doesn’t dare approach otherwise, while her astronomer father sets up his camera to photograph a meteor shower.

“Cooped up within frowning walls, Corinne felt sometimes like a bird in a prison cage,” Everett-Green writes in *French and English: A Story of the Struggle in America*. I couldn’t ask for a more Victorian description of the Corinne of my own novel, whose preferred solution to problems is to flee her apartment and leave town, with her pre-teen son in tow.

If I keep looking, who knows what other century-old spoilers I might find? If Jorge Luis Borges were writing this dispatch, he would probably tell you that all of *In a Wide Country* can be found somewhere in the works of Evelyn Everett-Green and Cecil Adair. I imagine them taking turns at a beaten-down Underwood, unconsciously compiling a fractured version of my book.

A 1932 obituary of Evelyn Everett-Green, entitled “A Famous Woman Author,” quotes one of her publishers as saying: “She eschewed all forms of what is termed ‘sex writing,’ and always had a religious element in her books, and her heroines were of the Victorian type.” That sentence fills me with relief, because my novel does not eschew all forms of sex writing. Thank God for that—and the young lady is riding a horse while she does it.

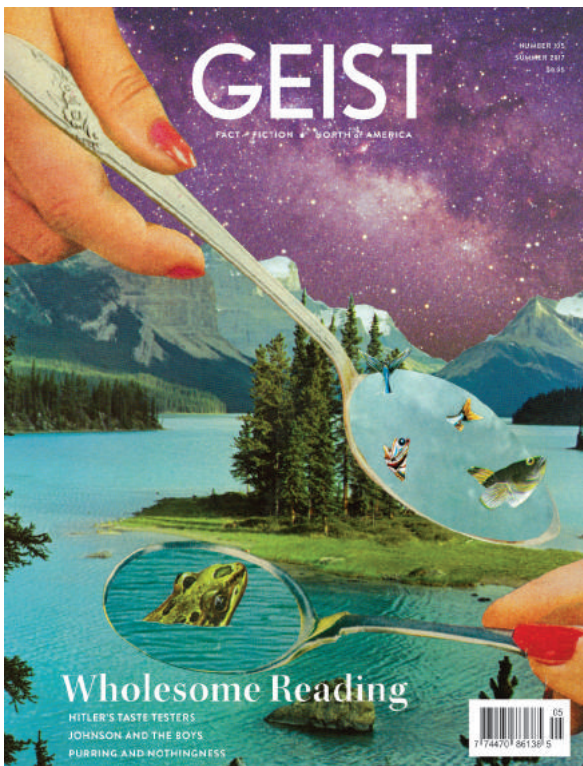
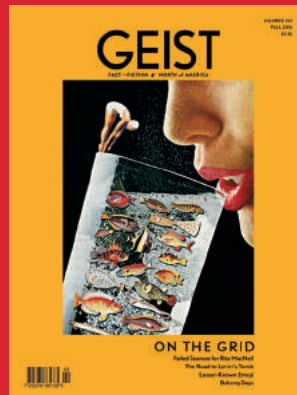
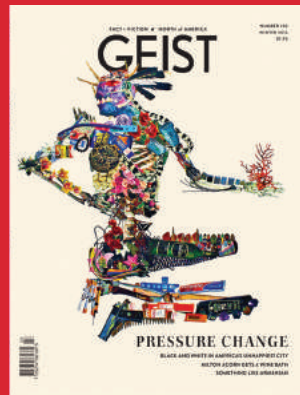
Robert Everett-Green writes for the Globe and Mail. He is the author of National Magazine Award-winning short fiction, and his novel In a Wide Country was published by Cormorant Books in 2017. He grew up in Alberta and lives in Montreal. Read more of his work at geist.com.

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FACT + FICTION  NORTH of AMERICA

Borderless

RANDY FRED

Randy reports on migrant workers, then and now

Are you tired yet of hearing the name “Trump”? He has sparked much controversy and much discussion. His talk of building a fence across the US–Mexican border is strange but brings to mind the long history of migration of First Nations workers on the BC coast and interior.

For Indigenous people, there is no absolute border. The political US–Canada border virtually splits every Indigenous nation along the line: British Columbia nations from the Nuu-chah-nulth on the west side of BC to the Kootenay on the east side all stretch beyond the 49th parallel in both directions. The Jay Treaty, signed November 19, 1794, by the United States and Great Britain, confirmed the right of “Indians” on both sides of the US–Canada border to cross the line for employment, education, investing and other purposes. This right was transferred to the US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, revised in 1965. Today, surprisingly, the “Indian” terms eliminating the border are honoured by the US but not by Canada. So it is no hassle for a Canadian First Nations person to work in the United States, but a huge hassle for an American Indian to work in Canada.

The fur trade changed the lifestyles of First Nations people all across western North America. By the time a trading post was established in Fort St. James in BC’s north, in 1806, the maritime harvest and trade of fur-bearing animals had been active from Alaska to Mexico for years. Several countries had ships all along the coast buying sea otter

and sealskin pelts, among other furs. First Nations hunters were recruited to head north to areas as far away as Alaska to harvest seals and sea otters with their specially designed canoes. Alaska was still owned by Russia in those days, so there was no concern about migrant workers.

This migration of First Nations people for economic reasons, along with contact with Europeans, affected the lifestyles and cultures of the Indigenous peoples. New styles of dress were adopted, as well as new kinds of food; and the capture of large quantities of wildlife for the enrichment of European traders put nature off balance. First Nations people were introduced to new forms of trade based on greed rather than need.

Large migrations of Indigenous people also took place well into the 1960s. Berry farmers, vegetable farmers, fruit orchardists and hops growers from Washington State hired BC Natives to pick their fruits and vegetables for commercial sale. These employers had to provide food and lodging for their pickers, so many individuals and whole families from BC moved to Washington State for entire summers and into the fall season to harvest the produce.

The Nez Perce tribe often moved from Washington State to Vernon, BC, to pick fruit and hops. This trek must have seemed straightforward for this group. In 1877, after refusing to leave their ancestral lands and relocate to a reservation in Idaho, the Nez Perce had attempted to reach Canada from Oregon and barely escaped

slaughter by the US Cavalry. They had nearly made it when Chief Joseph was forced to surrender, and the tribe was forcibly divided and relocated to various US states.

In the 1960s, when I was a youngster on the Tseshaht Reserve in Port Alberni, BC, a school bus went riding around picking up residents to move to Vachon Island and other Washington State farms to harvest produce, earning money for the summer and into the fall. I was too young to go along, and I was envious of my older brothers and sisters who got to go on such an adventure with our aunt. One of my brothers, a fun-loving teenager, told me it was more fun than work. I heard several stories about illegitimate children being conceived at berry farms. I also heard some scary stories about physical fights amongst pickers of different races.

The migration of BC and US workers in the agriculture and fur trades gave rise to an interchange of cultures among First Nations people, and contact with Europeans affected daily life. Fortunately, the fact that Canada and the US relied on each other’s workers for their economies did not generate a desire to build a wall between us.

Randy Fred is a Nuu-Chah-Nulth Elder. He is the founder of Theytus Books, the first Aboriginal-owned and operated book publishing house in Canada. He has worked in publishing and communications for forty years. Fred has won gold at the Canadian national blind lawn bowling championships five times. He lives in Nanaimo.





27,000 Cups of Tea

JOCELYN KUANG

Battenbergs and Victoria sponge at Buckingham Palace

When I was living in London a couple of years ago, I learned that every Canadian is entitled to attend a tea party at Buckingham Palace, hosted by the head of state, currently Queen Elizabeth II, once in their life. I made an application, and two weeks later an email from the Royal Events Coordinator at the High Commission of Canada arrived, saying that I had been accepted and that instructions would soon follow. A month later I received another email saying that my invitation and further instructions were ready to pick up at Canada House, down on Cockspur Street in Trafalgar Square.

The invitation was printed on thick off-white paper, embossed with the queen's insignia, ER (Elizabeth Regina), in gold letters. Accompanying the invitation were instructions for ordering a DVD of the tea party; a parking pass; instructions on how to get to the party by public transit, coach and car, including a warning about charges for driving in the Congestion Charge Zone; a



map of the Buckingham Palace garden, including walking distances between entrances; security guidance for guests saying that cameras and mobile telephones were forbidden; and a checklist for the day: each guest must bring personal identification and a Royal or Diplomatic Tea Tent Card (if applicable), and must not bring any hand luggage or anyone under eighteen years of age.

Gentlemen were instructed to wear a morning coat or lounge suit, and ladies to wear a day dress (trouser suits permitted providing they were of matching material and colour), gloves optional, and a hat or "substantial fascinator." I decided that I was going to wear my one formal dress and that I would find a "substantial fascinator" to match.

Since I had no idea what a "substantial fascinator" was, I searched online. According to the Internet, the fascinator is a lightweight ornamental piece of headwear made of feathers, flowers and ribbon, attached to a headband or clip, worn instead of a hat for formal occasions such as weddings or horse-racing events, or as an evening accessory. The fascinator in its present iteration became popular in

London in the 1990s as a way to wear formal headgear without ruining one's hairstyle. A substantial fascinator is simply a large fascinator.

A couple of days before the tea party I headed to Liberty, a well-known luxury department store in Oxford Circus, and marched over to the hat section. The hat racks were covered with driver caps, fedoras, wide-brimmed felt hats, decorative hair clips and head scarves, but no fascinators of any size. My next stop was Accessorize, a small accessory shop just down the street, jam-packed with glitter, fake diamonds and shiny purses; on the back wall hung a handful of fascinators, small and substantial.

I tried on the simplest fascinator, navy blue with a lace bow on top. It sat too high on my head. Then I tried on a huge fascinator. It had a white bow tie and white feathers; it was too big for my head. The next fascinator was less substantial, beige with light polka dots and a bow; I chose this smaller one because I thought it would be easier to manage as I moved through the crowds.

On the day of the tea party, I put on my dress, slid the fascinator onto my head and walked to the tube. Some of

the passengers were wearing baseball caps and toques (or beanies, as they are called in the UK); I was the only one wearing a fascinator. By the time I arrived at St. James's Park station and started walking to Buckingham Palace, women in dresses and fascinators and men in suits had increased in numbers. I met my friend Anna, who was my guest, in the queue outside Buckingham Palace. She was wearing a black mini fascinator with flowers on top and mesh that hung over her face; she had tucked the price tag inside so she could return it after the tea party.

At the gate the security guard demanded to see my invitation and two forms of ID before letting me through. In the garden, hundreds of people roamed and mingled, each woman in a fascinator or hat. A military brass band at one end of the garden played a Stevie Wonder medley, and when they were finished, another military brass band at the opposite end of the garden played that Adele song from the James Bond movie, and when they were finished, the first band played an old Bon Jovi classic, and they went on this way all afternoon, playing popular rock hits as well as "God Save the Queen."

Inside the white Royal Tea Tents, servers wearing black pants, aprons and white-collared shirts offered Anna and me Twinings Garden Party tea, iced coffee, apple juice and ice water. Food choices included three kinds of sandwich: free-range egg mayonnaise with watercress; gammon ham, tomato and whole-grain mustard; cucumber with fresh mint and black pepper. There were chicken and asparagus wraps with baby spinach, smoked-salmon bagels, black pepper and crème fraîche, lemon tarts, Dundee cake, coffee éclairs, strawberry tarts, Victoria sponge cake, raspberry shortbread, strawberry and cream Battenberg, chocolate and praline croustillant and fruit scones with blackcurrant jam and clotted cream. The official website of the British royal family claims that guests consume around 27,000 cups of tea, 20,000

sandwiches and 20,000 slices of cake at each garden party.

Anna and I got some tea with milk and a side of sandwiches—cucumber with fresh mint and black pepper—and scones with clotted cream, and headed over to the big pond and sat down.

Throughout the afternoon, guests in fascinators and hats mingled in the garden. There were small and large bows, stacked flowers, protruding feathers, netted mesh draped over faces. There were wide brims, curled brims, half curled and half flat brims, rounded crowns, square crowns. There were tall and short fascinators. There were fascinators that sat on top of and off to the side of the head.

At one point I looked over at the Royal Tea Tents and saw the Queen. She wore a yellow knee-length dress, matching rounded flat-top hat and black patent leather shoes; a small black bag hung from her arm. She mingled with other royal family members

for about an hour and then she began to head for the exit, at which point the crowd applauded. She kept her gaze fixed straight ahead, looking tired, perhaps even bored. Charles and Camilla, who was wearing a light blue hat, followed the Queen, looking around and smiling, just ahead of some fifteen men in top hats and tails, chatting among themselves.

When the royal family had vacated the grounds, a server came by with a silver tray of ice cream. I asked for vanilla, but there was none left, so I got strawberry instead. Anna had chocolate.

That evening we hung out in west London. We went to a pub and had a beer. We watched a gig in a small downstairs venue. I held my fascinator in my hand.

Jocelyn Kuang is now a writer. This is her first published piece. She lives in Vancouver.

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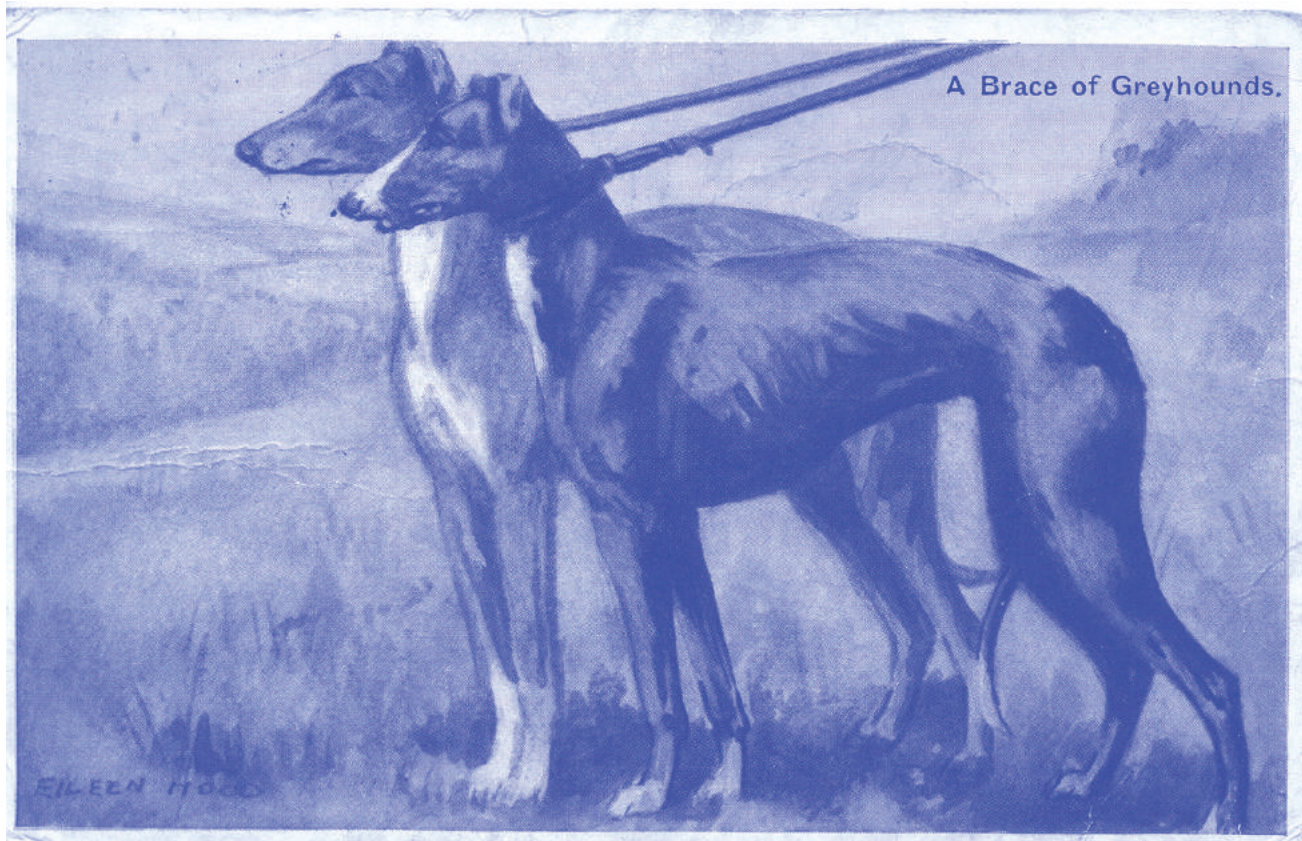
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Room
LITERATURE, ART, AND FEMINISM SINCE 1975

Hived Off

CHRISTINE NOVOSEL

Our woman in Glasgow reports on art school, apiary management, Brexit and being a junkyard dog



I'm wrapping up assessments for stage two of my program, which means I'm entering my third and final stage. All the constituent parts of my project are made, I just need to figure out how to assemble it all. I'm trying to make a filmic installation that you need to manoeuvre around and "read" to understand the whole story.

At the start of my course, I was working with "hard data": archival, historical and observed material. Now I'm writing my own narrative and extrapolating from reality. I ain't making a documentary!

The unc cosmopolitan, life on the fringes, gentrification, land use, spectatorship, money and the loneliness of urban life: instead of trying to explain or illustrate these abstract ideas, I've found

a thing (dog racing) that can stand in as a concrete example of them.

Even though my subject matter appears Britain-specific, it does come from my experience growing up in Abbotsford, BC, and coming of age in the hardcore punk scene (gag). In the industrial suburbs, if you want to have fun you have to make it your own way. When I moved to Vancouver I was appalled by the aggressive ways in which the city was trying to fabricate culture through urban planning. They don't trust people to make their own culture. One of the most important ideas in punk culture is that you are your own expert.

I'm the token graphic designer in my course so I've been busy creating

promo material for exhibitions and posters for bands. I don't identify with either art or design and I feel like I've got one foot in the door and the other foot out. I use my in-between position to avoid conflict and commitment. It'll catch up with me one day!

Outside of school, I found my outlet: beekeeping! I got involved with a local beekeeping society and am taking informal lessons on apiary management. I'm becoming a total fucking nerd, that person who shoehorns bee facts into every conversation. I like beekeeping because you need to think beyond your own life/daily schedule and be a steward to living things that can also fuck you up.

My teacher's hives are outside the city limits near the veterinary school. I visit once a week in my street clothes,

enter the supply shed and emerge wearing my Hazmat bee suit, ready for business. I love the sound of thousands of bees around you, it's meditative.

Beekeeping has also taught me I'm less of a city person than I thought. I like my solitude and isolation. I especially like being on the fringes of the city, minding my own business. I'm a bit of a junkyard dog.

Surprising results in the local elections: Conservatives won a ton of seats in Scotland, a first in recent history. I think it's because Brexit is scaring moderate people who are turned off by the

SNP's push for independence. It's an unstable time here in the UK. It feels like the dystopian hell-hole in *Children of Men*. If I do anything of substance during my time here, maybe it's my vote in the June general election.

Glasgow's been a great antidote to my life in Vancouver and a good choice for this point in my life. I can't imagine what it's like to grow up here, or be stuck here, for that matter. I have the incredible privilege of being mobile and I must remember that. Life here is hard. Not depressing, but everything is rough: the people, the food, the weather, the

humour, the economy, the outlook on the future. The beaches are covered in jagged pebbles and the water is fucking freezing. The Big Brother aspect of the UK brings me down: CCTV, rules, regulations, order and castes. I suppose that's what happens after thousands of years of social stratification and inequality.

I'm seeing Canada with a new perspective. I wouldn't have identified with being Canadian before I came here, but I definitely do now. I'm excited to return to Vancouver later this year and see what's next! I need to get a dog, guys. I hope you're all alive and well.



These are all woodcuts on paper and fabric. The picture hanging in the top right is a drawing. I'm sewing these banners that are inspired by football fan flags and union banners. The colourful things with numbers on them, on the table, are actual dog-racing jackets used in races. Not sure what I'm going to do with them.

Christine Novosel is a graphic artist from British Columbia. She lives in Glasgow.

FINDINGS



From Haddon Hall by Naomi Harris, a project in which she photographed the last remaining elderly residents at a rapidly gentrifying hotel in South Beach, Florida. Haddon Hall won the 2001 International Prize for Young Photojournalism from Agfa/Das Bildforum,

Doing the Right Thing

LEANNE BETASAMOSAKE SIMPSON

From This Accident of Being Lost. Published by House of Anansi in 2017. Simpson is a writer, scholar, musician and member of Alderville First Nation. She is the author of three previous books, including Islands of Decolonial Love.

There is a hierarchy of people gun owners hate: Indians, vegetarians, “people from the city,” and all political parties other than the Conservatives. My plan was to pretend I was a nurse of *i-talian* ancestry, but in the first five minutes of the firearms safety course, when we went around the classroom to share why we were here, I said in my most uncompromising voice it was so I

could exercise my treaty rights. Then I applied my best don’t-fuck-with-me face as the other students’ necks snapped around to see the Indian-squaw-lady in gun class.

The older instructor is a combination of Lawrence Welk and Red Fisher. He is a blue-blooded Harper Conservative and he knows guns like I know I-don’t-know-what [?] because frankly I don’t know any single thing

that well. He knows ballistics because he is an expert witness in the court system. He knows all the stupid mistakes you can possibly make with a firearm because he has been teaching this course for five hundred years. He knows how to hunt in a line like a white man because he is a living, breathing stereotype of the white man. He knows every gun on the market and how to repair or not



an honourable mention for the Yann Geffroy Award and was a finalist for the W. Eugene Smith Grant in Humanistic Photography. Harris divides her time between Los Angeles and Toronto.

repair them because he works at the gun store in Peterborough. He is Police Pistol Combat certified and Range Officer certified, and he is also a slug-gun specialist. His bio on the firearms training course website indicates his nickname is “Big Chief.”

I can see that I could learn something from him. He is all for “girls in gun class” because the “ladies” and kids are the future of the sport. The election is in full swing, but he is not going to talk politics, except he is by nature a Conservative election ad and this class, in the finished, poorly lit basement of his house, which he refers to as “the ranch,” is like every set the Conservatives use for their

ads. It’s impossible for him to not talk politics, so he keeps saying, “But this class isn’t about politics...” after he says, “There’s only one party that is interested in protecting your firearms rights.” Just so we’re clear. The only time he breaks from the Conservative platform is on climate change—it’s real, he sees it, and we have to fix it. “It’s reality. I’ve seen it with my own eyes. It’s no one’s fault.” He raises his voice when he says “no,” drops it when he says “one’s,” and then raises it again when he says “fault.” Then he stares at us. The tension in his face whispers to me what he’s afraid of: being misunderstood and having his right to hunt taken away by city people. And what

he is not afraid of: hurting me.

Big Chief leads with a story about him and his best friend, Rooster, hunting in a farmer’s field years ago. Rooster doesn’t check that he is shooting the correct target before he fires and kills one of the farmer’s hens. They do the right thing and knock on the farmer’s door and ’fess up. They do the right thing and go and buy another chicken from another farmer to replace the one they killed. But they buy a laying hen instead of a meat chicken, and that’s way more expensive, so they get burned. Big Chief wanted to give Rooster a “tune-up” for not knowing the difference between a laying hen and a meat

chicken, but he didn't. The moral of the story is that you have to respect the people whose land you are hunting on.

My territory is zero minutes from the sliding glass patio door hellhole I'm trapped in.

Sabe came with me even though I didn't ask him to. He was waiting for me in the parking lot when I parked my firefly of a rental car in between the Dodge Rams and the F150s with pink-like-only-white-men-are-truck-nuts hanging from their trailer hitches. I know Sabe doesn't want me to go in. He's going to try and tell me to wait until the course is offered on the rez or do it in the north or do it anywhere but here. He is trying to tell me this is unsafe. I tell him he is being classist. That these people are no more racist than the soccer parents or the profs at the university or the running club that limps by my house every evening in matching outfits and then ends up eating cupcakes at the local coffee roaster's. I tell him I know my way around this scene, that while on the surface this looks like *Deliverance*, rural people are actually more kind and considerate than white people from the city. They don't pretend they like or get Natives, and if I stay within the confines of firearms safety, the thing we have in common, it will go fine.

The younger instructor, Eric, is clean-cut like he is the front man of a Christian rock band, and I'm fascinated by him because he is a little bit scared of me but he is not letting that stop him. If there was an apocalypse and I was trapped with these people forever and I had to pick someone to fuck, I'd probably pick him but I'd have to be drunk. He is making eye contact, taking inventory of which jokes I laugh at, and trying to signal to me that he is an ally by bringing

up his recent hunting trip to Cree territory when he met "the Crees" and they didn't conform to his stereotypes, meaning they weren't drunk and dumb and shooting everything in sight. That's not why I'm fascinated by him. That's why he irritates me. He is fascinating to me because he is a bro-whisperer. He is skilled at the complexities of the bro-code and how to bro-talk around them, primarily because he is one, but he is also trying to manipulate them into a kinder, gentler patriarchy:

"If you know what you're doing and you practise, you don't have to brag."

"You're not a man if you can beat someone up that's smaller than you, like a girl or a kid."

"City slickers think you're a big, dumb, drunk, violent hick, don't play into their stereotype."

"I like a beer as much as the next guy, but don't drink and shoot. It's not cool, it's stupid."

He says it's ok if the Crees shoot sitting ducks on the water because bread costs ten dollars up there, and they are hunting for food and not for sport. Well thank god, no one wants to be a bad sport.

The younger one senses my suspicion. He wants me to recognize him as the good cop. I wonder why he thinks he can insult my intelligence like that.

I wonder if my classmates are buying this. I know I'm not.

Eric is explaining tags to us and I'm not really listening because I don't need tags. Big Chief butts in that you can't just get your girlfriend a gun licence and a moose tag and then take her along for blow jobs and cooking and use her moose tag. That's unethical. That's cheating the system. If she has a tag, she has to have a gun and be out on the hunt or it's illegal. He doesn't actually say "blow jobs"; he

says "hanky-panky," but everyone in the room knows he means blow jobs and fucking like hockey players. I smile as I imagine her blonde ponytail swing from side to side.

I write down "Johnson and the boys" in the margin of page twenty-seven of the RCMP's guide to firearms safety because I just learned it means "cock and balls."

I try not to feel humiliated, but humiliation is the only thing dripping from the heads of the eight bucks that are mounted on the wall of this fake-wood-panelled basement classroom.

Sabe is standing beside me with his fingers on my back vacuuming the shame out of me. "Settle down, Kwe," he whispers. I tell Sabe to stop touching me and then I immediately feel bad. I'm too stressed and armoured for touching. I know Sabe is trying to be nice to me but I'm angry and hurt and wounded.

I'm a bobcat that's been non-fatally shot with a .22 and I'm still being pursued. The last thing I want is a fucking massage.

Sabe should just wait at the edge of me. He should wait until I collapse and can't do this anymore. He should wait until they beat me. He needs to stay close to me even though I'm pushing him away. I hope he gets that. How could he not know this about me by now?

The instructor asks me to pick up the pump-action shotgun. Shotguns are the firearms of humiliation for the Mississaugas. They are the symbol of our defeat. Bison, Elk, Caribou, Moose... all gone or nearly gone from our territory. Our land is such a cesspool that we are only allowed to use slugs in shotguns to shoot deer, mostly in cornfields. The land is so destroyed by these white motherfuckers, there is simply not enough space left for the elegance of rifles. I

hate shotguns. I hate squeezing the trigger. I hate the sound. I hate the spray. I hate the kick in the teeth.

I pick up the twelve-gauge. I make sure the safety is on and point the fire-arm in the safest direction, which for me is a different direction than it is for everyone else. I pump the action three times to unload. I observe the chamber. I verify the feeding path. I examine the bore. Big Chief tells me to load two shells into it. I check to make sure the writing on the shells matches the writing on the side of the barrel. I load.

I am holding a loaded shotgun, face to face with the epitome of a white man. In the past twenty-five hours he has erased all of my people from our land. He has said “Indians” are only good for shooting cormorants. He has said “Indians” twenty-seven times in two days. And here I am, one of “their” women. The only thing he thinks I’m good for is what I’ve been marketed to him for: deviant fucking.

I look him in the eye in a way that makes him feel unsafe, and wrong. Threatened. Like he has met his match. I do not look away.

And then I fugitive-smile at him, hold my fake gun-school shotgun in the cradle position, and demonstrate how to safely get through the pretend piece of fence sitting in the middle of his basement.

In another forty-five minutes, Sabe and I will be on the road, putting some distance between us and the ranch. I’ll have the flimsy white sheet that says I passed and that I’m supposed to send to the RCMP in Miramichi City, the T-shirt I won for getting the highest mark in the class, and what is left of my dignity. Sabe has me, the bolt cutters, and the five pairs of testicles he’s removed from the trailer hitches in the parking lot, ready to be mounted on his basement wall. 🍌

The Montreal Book of the Dead

MARY DI MICHELE

From Bicycle Thieves. Published by ECW Press in 2017. Mary di Michele is the author of twelve books and has won numerous awards, including the Confederation Poets Prize and the Malahat Review’s Long Poem Prize. She lives in Montreal.

This morning I saw my father driving a red
Toyota wagon with Quebec plates, *je me*
souviens, turning the corner at Grand, heading

west. He didn’t see me, and I was surprised
to see him in the city without calling on me
even though, for the last three years, he has been

dead. It certainly looked like him, the chiselled
jaw, the Grecian formula hair, yes, my father
maybe twenty years ago, still in his prime, still

himself, or looking like himself. All
the immortality the Earth can offer
may be the kind we had before

we were even born, the living we did then,
we will continue to do through genes
we also share with Neanderthals.

My father drives on not knowing me.
The dead are not dead, perhaps
the dead are not even transformed. They are
everywhere, just not talking to us.
Don’t try listening for them in family photos,
if they are forever, they are forever

dumb with forgotten conversations when
every day is that August day in 1992. My father
in his white-striped polo shirt,

high in the boughs of a fig tree, gathering fruit
for my greed. I still see him in many places,
and in my hands, my Roman nose, and chiselled jaw.

*As a pear repeats itself, each time a little altered,
On every branch of a tree.¹ Our dead
have retired and moved off island.*

They are not gone, they have not passed on,
they are incommunicado. 🍌

3 TIMES YOUR MILLENNIAL LAW STUDENTS WEIRDED YOU OUT BY MISTAKE: That time I had to ask my student not to put me on Snapchat during class. MILLENNIALS ARE RUINING TRADITIONAL AUTOMOTIVE MARKETING: In the scramble to stay relevant to digital natives more interested in smartphones than cars, automakers must

¹ LINES FROM JANE HIRSCHFELD’S POEM “GREAT POWERS ONCE RAGED THROUGH YOUR BODY”

LIGHT+ITALIC REGULAR+ITALIC BOLD+ITALIC

Happy birthday
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Bonne fête
BONNE FÊTE

𐌺𐌳𐏀𐍄𐌹𐍆𐌰𐍇𐍃𐍅𐌹𐍂𐌸𐌿𐍇𐍋𐍅𐌶𐌴𐍃𐌽

A true font strong and free. Canada 150, a typeface that supports the characters of English, French and multiple Indigenous languages, has been created to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. "It doesn't look tough and imposing," Ray Larabie, designer of Canada 150, said of his creation.

Anti-Monument for an Alien Society

PETER UNWIN

From Searching for Petronius Totem. Published by Freehand Books in 2017. Unwin is the author of numerous books, including Life Without Death, which was shortlisted for the 2014 Trillium Book Award. He lives in Toronto.

Even before the fallout from Kamp Kan Lit had cooled, Petronius was deep into his next fiasco. *Road Book/Book Road*, as he called it, had been conceived from the beginning, with my help, as the greatest, most ambitious, and surely the most poorly organized multimedia event in the history of art. It was a project

that encompassed a nation. It was, in his words, “an Anti-Monument for an Alien Society,” and it began with Petronius firing off a strategically sent email in an attempt to hire, for no pay, sixteen thousand students or otherwise foolish people:

Wanted: Art Warriors needed to infuse blood into terminally ill patient. Must be

*willing to compose free-verse in boiling sun
while standing on shoulders of the Trans-
Canada Highway, fighting off bears,
engaging in drug and sexual practices of
choice. Opportunity to live off the land,
meet alienated, disenfranchised young
people, engage in semi-legal art terrorism,
and get tasered by the Mounties. Don't
just read the Book of Life, write the fucker.
Guaranteed no pay.*

His scheme was to convince sixteen thousand Canadians to take up positions on the Trans-Canada Highway at half kilometre intervals from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Tofino, British Columbia. Each of them would be required to hold up a single sign printed with a phrase or sentence from a manuscript titled *Road Book/Book Road*. Theoretically the driver/reader who started out in Water Street, St. John's, Newfoundland, and proceeded west across the country could read *Road Book/Book Road*, from start to finish, savouring the last sentence on the outskirts of Tofino, British Columbia, after having driven the entire length of the country.

On the surface—"the asphalt level," Petro called it—*Road Book/Book Road* resembled the typical family dynasty novel complete with alcoholism, incest and the anguished young son forced to become a brain surgeon by a cruel and ambitious father. In the end he escapes this fate with the help of a selfless hard-working mother etc., and manages to shed the demeaning scrubs of a brain surgeon and land a job as head dishwasher in a Thunder Bay burger joint where he writes concrete poetry in his spare time. The story spanned three generations and followed several characters down the road of their lives. The driver/reader could actually turn down a different highway corresponding to his or her interest in a particular character; if you became intrigued by Morty Coehlo, the haunted, cigarillo-smoking, guitar-strumming Buddhist womanizer

be prepared to take more risks. **MILLENNIAL MEN TRUST TRUMP ON FINANCE; WOMEN DON'T:** 55 percent of male respondents said they trust Trump financially and only 33 percent of women said they do. **THE BAFFLING REASON MANY MILLENNIALS DON'T EAT CEREAL:** Cereal isn't the only food suffering from a national trend

from Montreal who gets infected with the HIV virus while engaging in a blood-brother bond with a four-hundred-pound singing hermaphrodite from Branch, Newfoundland, you would take the southbound turnoff at Highway 400 and follow him, sign by sign, into a parking lot of an AIDS hospice off Jarvis Street in downtown Toronto. There beneath the flowering chestnut trees, you would, in theory at least, be presented with a free coffee and a doughnut by an eager volunteer holding up a sign.

Similarly, when Eunice Atwill abandons her five children and her half-written novel to start a new life as a sex-trade worker in a Whitehorse massage parlour, the reader/driver could simply hang a right at Winnipeg, head up north on the Alaska Highway, and pull into a strip mall on the outskirts of Whitehorse where, depending on whether the police had shut the place down or not, a forty-dollar sexual encounter could be had on a chiropractor's table above the pool hall at the corner of Sycamore and Wann.

In a clever touch Petronius had printed text on both sides of each sign. This way the driver heading east from Tofino read the opening sentence on one side of the sign, while the westbound reader read the final sentence on the other. It was conceptually brilliant and it was an organizational disaster of the highest order. By the time it was over thousands of confused young and not-so-young people were wandering about the sides of the Trans-Canada Highway; one went missing for seven days and was found near Temiskaming in the summer cottage of a widely shunned ex-National Hockey League player. Another was mauled by a bear while attempting to relieve herself in the bush. Still, of the estimated nine thousand art volunteers who actually showed up at various locations across

the country, only eleven were struck by a car or a truck, and only three of those seriously injured. Two others suffered concussion from falling bogus inukshuks.

Beyond these minor complications *Road Book/Book Road* was conceptually as perfect as a book could get. It was a book that didn't need a publisher or blurbs, or hacks, or flacks, or book clubs, or even Facebook, or Goodreads or Shitty Reads, or any reads at all. The reader was forced to get off the couch and physically move to enter into its pages. It was a book that involved the excited milling of strangers waving placards: people marching along roads and dashing into the forest to have sex. It required shitting and pissing in the woods. It involved getting bitten by blackflies, mayflies, horseflies, deer flies, shadflies, and even dog flies, and it involved the journey of thousands of miles. To read this book meant immersing yourself in a forest of symbols, of broken, passing images glimpsed out of the corner of the eye while travelling at high speed. To fathom this book you had to plunge headfirst into the country and to finish it you had to cross a continent, inhaling the smell of fish and gasoline, pine forest and wolf willow. It was a book whose audience was guaranteed. On the first day seven hundred thousand innocent people read at least a sentence or phrase from *Road Book/Book Road*, making Petronius, in his words, the greatest non-selling author of all time.

Unfortunately *Road Book/Book Road* was unleashed on a weekend that coincided with the worst heat wave to strike North America since the 1936 dustbowl. By seven in the morning it was 112 Fahrenheit in Pierre, South Dakota, and by noon the heat wave had crossed the border and was pushing 110 in Brandon, Manitoba, where the pavement of the Trans-Canada began

to rise in horizontal air phantoms and drift off into the ether.

Despite that, day one of *Road Book/Book Road* was not an unqualified failure. Nearly ten thousand Canadians stepped off buses, arrived on bicycles, or managed to get themselves to thirty-two different drop-off locations across the country to take part in the largest Fluxus-style art Happening ever.

On arrival at each location they received a bottle of water, a box of condoms, and a sign hand-painted front and back with a phrase from *Road Book/Book Road*. It is true that pages four through nine of Chapter One were inadvertently shipped to Revelstoke, British Columbia, where they jarringly completed an already complex and confusing section of the second-to-last chapter. These impromptu juxtapositions were part of the aesthetic challenge of the project, the lies, said Petro, from which truth is cobbled. So were moments when the sign carrier inadvertently turned around, and projected the wrong sentence at the oncoming traffic.

The first half of the first day was marked by a congenial swelling of young people as they attempted to space themselves across the country. Unsuspecting drivers encountered a bronze-coloured young man with a bandana tied around his forehead, stripped to his boxer shorts and waving a large white placard that read:

*...surfacing like beautiful losers from the depths
of her two solitudes,
Eunice Atwill inserted the last spike
into her alabaster arm and looked forward to what...*

Zippering by at 100 kph, the driver had just enough time to puzzle that enigmatic sign, when the next appeared:

...she increasingly thought of as her Klondike Days... 🍷

Love, Jane

JANE RULE

From A Queer Love Story: The Letters of Jane Rule and Rick Bébout, edited by Marilyn R. Schuster. Published by UBC Press in 2017. Jane Rule was a writer, teacher and activist. Schuster is the author of Passionate Communities: Reading Lesbian Resistance in Jane Rule's Fiction. The "Gerald" referred to in these letters is Gerald Hannon, author of "Men Loving Boys Loving Men."

March 31, 1992

Dear Rick:

The editor of the *Mills Quarterly* phoned to say they were doing a series of articles on minorities at Mills and wondered if I'd do one on lesbians. I'd just been reading a good article by Adrienne Rich in the *Radcliffe Quarterly* and wondering why the *Mills Quarterly* couldn't manage to be half as interesting. So, contrary to my vow of retirement, I said yes I would. As I remembered what it was like to be a lesbian at Mills in the '40s, I realized that the offense was being sexual at all, never mind what orientation. I remembered a ridiculous lecture given us by an embarrassed woman doctor who wanted us to save our virginity as a great gift to our husbands and the paper we were asked to write afterwards entitled "A Livable Sex Philosophy." And the jam I got into for being flippant in mine.

You have never talked specifically about how you intend to be looked after when you need it. What options do you have? Are they ones you feel all right about?

Helen is finally scheduled for the removal of one of her cataracts, and she's having enough trouble now to look forward to the operation.

Louise Hager and her friend Daphne were here last night for dinner. Louise is the one who pushed me around in a wheelchair at the literary festival connected with the gay games. She and Daphne are taking a lesbian cruise to Alaska in June, over 900 passengers on a large, luxury ship. I asked if

they had to dress for dinner. They confessed they were renting tuxedos. What a funny picture I had of 900 women all dressed like penguins every night for dinner. Sea travel was forever spoiled for me when I went back and forth to Europe in the early fifties on everything from a converted troop ship to the *Queens* [i.e., *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*] in steerage. The confinement in close quarters with hundreds of strangers of whatever sexual orientation is my idea of hell.

Do you realize I've managed to live 61 years? Helen is giving me a private dinner for ten at the Pink Geranium in May to avoid making it a birthday party.

Helen sends her love with mine. Jane

February 28, 1994

Dear Rick:

David is dead, and I feel peaceful about him, that he could die as quietly and privately as that. It's Terrell I feel distressed about, and, though you say you're good at the hospital stuff, I feel distressed for you, too, watching him suffer so many indignities of technology.

I don't think much about the public these letters may eventually have. Years and years ago I figured out that the only real privacy I had was in my head. That was when Helen found our first landlady in Vancouver going through our wastebaskets and reading anything she could find. Helen was outraged. I found myself feeling sorry for the woman that her life was so narrow she was looking for it in our wastebaskets.

The trip south, on the surface of it, was very successful. Mother is more rested and calm than she's been in years, busy seeing old friends and making new ones. Helen walked out each day, and I sat with Mother, having good talks.

The family dinner party of Saturday night was more successful than any reunion for years. It's quite obvious that Dad's sad silence in the last few years was more daunting than I'd realized. It made Mother talk nervously against it, driving everyone else into a passive torpor. Without his distress, she is content to sit at the head of the table resting her eyes on her happily conversing kin. In a circumstance where, in the recent past, people have kept sneaking looks at their watches and leaving as soon as was decently possible, nobody wanted to break the party up, and everyone said we must do it again soon. We talked a lot about Dad, easily, affectionately, our private sorrows kept private.

I am glad to have worked almost always at something that had meaning in itself, aside from the material rewards (or lack of them!), and I suppose a number of younger people want to talk to me because they see my life as an example of a life lived meaningfully. It would be folly to try to persuade them that a dozen books on the shelf are not meaningful. Of course they are, but it was the making of them, regardless of their value in the world, which mattered. Living a life sentence by sentence, learning that every one of them matters, is a fine rehearsal for retirement because you know so deeply that the quality of life is a matter of paying attention.

I'm glad you've been nominated for an award, glad to have you know that your community pays more attention than you realize. I'd be glad if you'd be willing to take part in the film. The growth of our friendship and correspondence is characteristic of how we both lead our lives, loved work

WEIRD: Is there anything more of a Privileged Millennial move than having an amazing job handed to you by your dad? STUDENT DEBT IS A BIGGER THREAT THAN NORTH KOREA, MILLENNIALS INSIST: Before writing off this result as another example of millennial self-centeredness, let's take a closer look at the ever-growing

Hitler's Taste Testers

CATRIONA WRIGHT

From Table Manners. Published by Signal Editions/Véhicule Press in 2017. Wright's poems have appeared in many publications. She won the 2014 LitPop Award from Matrix magazine. She lives in Toronto.

Me and fourteen other girls. After months, years, of sawdust
and ground acorn coffee, rancid margarine and biscuits
that required a chisel, it almost seemed a gift.

I am disgusted now to admit I was one of his yellow-feathered things,
but there it is. On that first day I shoved fresh vegetables into my mouth.
Asparagus sceptres ennobled with hollandaise, sweet roasted peppers, lettuce,

rice, rich clear broths. No meat or fish. He was a vegetarian
or pretended to be. It's difficult to describe the solemnity of seeing each meal
as your last. We cried with relief when our bowels moved bloodlessly.

But I was hardly a medieval court taster. I never even met him.
We were kept in a separate room, a forced sorority. Forbidden
from seeing our families, we slept on hard beds in a concrete bunker.

At night Anna and Irene analyzed lovers and brothers and other tyrants.
Marlene and Ruth debated belladonna versus arsenic versus hemlock.
Our cycles began to align. We laughed from time to time.

Ingrid did her best Lola-Lola, a blue angel falling
in love again while Ilse giggled, embarrassed, cheeks hot.
Ursula swept our hair into aristocratic knots and swirls.

I can't explain why all fifteen of us had to test his meals
or why we were all women. Helga thought him handsome, deferential
to our fragile bodies. Gertrud punched the wall until her bones went limp.

Equally important was that we be of upstanding German stock
as though we weren't just tasting his food, but digesting it too,
his outsourced intestines.

We were lab rabbits twitching in our cages. Karin wondered if our shared diet
made us more like him or he more like us. Hydrangeas with the same blue hue
dictated by acidic soil. I still can't eat Eintopf or Grießklößchensuppe.

Frieda concocted bold escapes. Eleonore recited verses
from the Book of Job. Lotte found her faith. Sonja lost hers.
We wrote each other's obituaries, full of lewd jokes and accolades.

It went on that way until one night when a soldier who was sweet
on me dragged me from bed and pushed me through an open mouth
in the fence. The Soviets got there soon after

and shot the other fourteen
while the newlyweds dined
on cyanide. 🍷

domestic threat posed by student loans. 8 MYTHS AND 5 TRUTHS ABOUT MILLENNIALS: Think America's largest generation is just a bunch of self-absorbed sex-crazed socialist slackers? MILLENNIAL MEN ARE BOLSTERING THE PLASTIC SURGERY INDUSTRY: Nose jobs and ear pinning are among the most common procedures.

making a community of friends, however far-flung.

Love, Jane

December 10, 1995

Dear Rick:

I'm very glad I wrote "Teaching Sexuality" when I did and that it can be recycled on the internet now. Though I don't always agree with Gerald, I think of him as one of the few who can keep us honest, insisting that we look at what really is, to avoid nothing, to think through to some sort of sense. The dishonesty, hypocrisy, and vindictiveness aimed at him now simply enrage me, and he's so damned vulnerable as a part-time instructor and a freelance writer.

You are absolutely right in saying that we have to take the definitions away from those simply out to rant and smear. What a bad name they give morality.

The only pleasure in it all is for you to be reunited with that fine bunch of people, older now, more experienced, working so well and quickly together. I wish my sideline weren't so far away so that all of you could hear me cheering. And what an incredible amount of work you've got through in so short a time. You must be exhausted.

The book for Little Sister's is being launched in Vancouver today. That dear bunch didn't even invite me, knowing that I might feel pressured to get into town for it. Instead they sent me a copy of the book and a bottle of single malt scotch. The royalties go to the Little Sister's Fund.

... Monday

I've now had a chance to reread "*The Body Politic* and Visions of Community." I do think it's a wonderful essay which should have a wide readership. A history of the paper becomes a history of ideas. We see where we've been and where we might be going. We see the recurring problems which may always be with us for each generation to grapple with in its

own context. We see the great dangers of both exclusion and silence. And through it all our great strength has been language through which we can express our growing understanding of ourselves and each other. That's why Gerald has been so important for us, his ancient mariner insistence that we stop and listen to where he's coming from no matter how delayed we may be upon our own business. That's why it is so important we find the ways to defend him now, not allow

the media to distort his position to convince the public that even a discussion of sexuality in children is child abuse. The fear and shame and moral outrage focused on him are the same weapons used on children in the name of protecting them from the evils of sexuality. The choice should not be between selling children into sexual slavery and keeping them in terrified ignorance of their bodies. We have to listen to ourselves long enough to know how to teach them to become



From Morton: A Cross-Country Rail Journey by David Collier. Collier is the award-winning author and artist of several graphic novels, including *Hamilton*

HARRY POTTER AND THE MILLENNIAL MIND: Harry Potter may be a literary fantasy but for many it is also a substitute religion in a secular era. MILLENNIALS, HERE'S HOW YOU CAN DRESS SMARTER AT WORK: The color blue is the color of trust and responsibility, while black is the color of authority and power. JERUSALEM



Illustrated *and* The Frank Ritza Papers. He lives in Hamilton, ON.

sexual adults, knowledgeable and responsible, and the only way we can accomplish that is to keep challenging those who would silence us.

It's interesting how often inclusion becomes the solution in your history, not always because a conscious decision is made. Sometimes it is an event like the protest against the bath raids which simply demonstrates that we are in it together. I feel a wonderful energy in your voice and a clarity of purpose.

Talking with a friend the other day on the ferry, I said I didn't really miss writing, only sometimes didn't know what to do with the habit of speculation about human motivation and emotion. Sometimes I think, too, I wrote through some of my own feelings which now I carry around with me as heavy, useless baggage, perhaps not having developed other more ordinary skills at living rather than writing through them. Perhaps sometimes I

simply escaped into writing, letting the intensity of that concentration shut out the troubles of the day. I'm certainly less good tempered than I used to be, but I suspect that is part of aging, patience wearing as inevitably thin as the skin does.

I'm sometimes nearly overcome with pity for Helen's poor frail flesh, the dozen times a day she nearly falls, the moments of confusion and failed memory which make staying with a conversation more and more difficult, her deafness adding to the difficulty. I'm not angry at Helen but angry at age about which I can do nothing. I've been angry since my father's death in ways that embarrass and shame me because I find it so hard to control and so irrational and unacceptable. I'm used to healthier angers I can put to use. How have I come to the age of applying for a pension without such basic skills as accepting with some grace what is inevitable? I'm relatively patient and stoical about my own physical failings. Why hasn't that taught me the same attitude for Helen? And that's not something you can muse with me about because Helen looks forward to your letters as much as I do. I sometimes suspect that what I can't endure is fear and mask it in impatience.

Winter is a harder time for distracting pleasures. No bodies at the pool to give my eye casual pleasure as I look out my study window, only the pool under its weight of winter leaves, and the last killing frost took the late blooms from the garden. There is an abundance and variety of berries, dark purple, bright red, white, to feed the winter birds and soon decorate our houses for the holidays. But the best thing about this time of year is that we are less than two weeks away from the shortest day, and even on Christmas day the hours of light will be lengthening toward spring.

Love, Jane

LAUNCHES MILLENNIALS DISCOUNT PACKAGE: The discount facilitates a 1+1 offer on selected Segway tours of Jerusalem's modern neighborhoods. MILLENNIALS ARE USING PUBLIC LIBRARIES MORE THAN ANY OTHER GENERATION: The question on the survey was explicitly about public libraries, as opposed to university

Cape Breton Book of Days

PAMELA NEWTON

From The Cape Breton Book of Days. Published by the University of Cape Breton Press in 1984. Newton is the author of three books, including The Book of Seasons: The Search for Our Rural Roots. She lives in Cape Breton, NS.

April 16, 1747

“Worst Spot on Globe”

Charles Knowles, British governor of Cape Breton from 1746–47, doesn’t like his posting at Louisbourg. In a letter to England, he writes “... in general I can only say it is the worst spot upon the Globe... for my part I have struggled hard to weather the winter, which I’ve done thank God, though was not above three times out of my room for 5 months.”

June 26, 1833

Pickle Patronage?

A local man is appointed to be chief inspector of pickled fish for Cape Breton County.

January 1, 1862

Source of Tension

Nine young men from Main-à-Dieu and Louisbourg join the crew of the American fishing vessel, “Hir Crue.” Local fishermen don’t like the American fishing fleet coming into the local ports and recruiting the young men to join their crews. In fact, local fishermen don’t care for Americans and Europeans fishing in their waters at all.

August 4, 1874

“Thicken With Flour”

Barrels of flour are released from a sinking ship off Cape Rouge this summer. Many Cheticamp residents rescue three or four barrels, but Martin Deveau finds thirty-eight barrels. During the storm, some of the other barrels break open and the flour spills out into the water, mixing with it and thickening it, so that the stormy seas are calmed.

December 9, 1886

The Strong Woman of Benacadie

It is said that Catherine Cameron MacInnis of Benacadie, daughter of “Big” John Cameron, is the strongest woman the area has ever known. She gains her reputation one market day. Without a team to haul goods two miles away to the boat, her husband Donald starts off carrying two large bags of oats on his shoulders. He is surprised to hear Catherine coming behind him through the woods with a carcass of pork on her shoulders.

February 24, 1896

You Think Celsius is Confusing

Changes in the Weather Code: Dense fog becomes chill; light fog becomes chilly. Dense haze becomes chip; light haze becomes chippy. Dense mist becomes crisp; light smoke becomes crispy. These words will be used instead of fog, haze or smoke.

April 13, 1907

First Class?

Residents of Sydney Mines complain about mail delivery from Sydney. Mail takes twenty-four hours to reach them from Sydney. A letter leaves Sydney early in the morning and reaches Florence by 9 o’clock. Sydney Mines is only about one and a half miles away, but the letters aren’t delivered until the following morning.

December 14, 1908

“Gem of Canada”

In a recent booklet, issued by the Department of the Interior, naturalist Prof. Macoun has written about Cape Breton in glowing terms. “I consider Cape Breton the gem of Canada. The climate is grand... never too hot, never too cold.”

August 22, 1930

Big Raid

Three booze joints are raided in the first seizure of liquor to be made at North Sydney since the New Act came into effect. All police can find at the Queen Hotel is an empty pitcher that smells of liquor.

libraries, so the fact that many millennials are still college-age is moot. MILLENNIALS KNOW HOW TO MAKE GREAT MONEY WITH THEIR PASSION: “Stop trying to be original,” says Goins. “All of the advancements in human history were the result of someone building on someone else’s work.” MILLENNIAL WOMEN ARE WORSE

November 1, 1932

Rats as Big as Deer

It is brought to the attention of council in Glace Bay that there are huge rodents “some as big as a buck deer” living in the covered drains at No. 11 and these are a danger to children. Council replies that the coal company is responsible for the maintenance of the drains.

March 12, 1950

Surprise!

Mrs. Effie Bennett of Upper Prince Street gets more than she bargained for when she purchased half a ton of coal from the Dominion Coal Co.’s depot on George Street. Getting up early this morning, before her eight children were up, to kindle the kitchen stove fire, she discovers a stick of dynamite in her load of coal.

February 6, 1951

North West Arm “Monster”

Rube Chislett of Upper North Sydney gets a surprise when he investigates a log floating just offshore. The log turns out to be a “sea horse” about seven feet long, which disappears as the ice forms in the harbour. 🐉



The Little Watchers (2016) by Lucie Bosquin. 13"x13", paper collage. Bosquin is a collage artist and furniture upholsterer. She lives in Montreal. See more of her work on the cover of this issue and at luciebosquin.com.

OFF THAN THEIR MOTHERS, STUDY SHOWS: Women’s stalled progress partly reflects growing inequality between women at the top and bottom of the economic ladder. 6 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MILLENNIAL MARKETING: Offer an experience—millennials love being a part of something. MILLENNIALS SEEK EMOTIONAL

Examining the Root of Cultural Appropriation

WHITNEY FRENCH

Originally published in Quill & Quire, May 15, 2017. Whitney French is curating a collection called Black Writing Matters for University of Regina Press. She lives in Toronto.

What cultural appropriation is: telling someone else's stories without consent

What cultural appropriation isn't: creating characters that are different than your cultural, ethnic background

What cultural appropriation is: extracting a narrative, story, history outside of its full context, often for capitalistic or political gain

What cultural appropriation isn't: censorship and/or the antithesis of free speech

What cultural appropriation is: dismantling any sense of authenticity a cultural narrative possesses

Our obsession with defining cultural appropriation, avoiding it, defending it, objecting to it, creates a narrative around cultural appropriation that ebbs and flows with popularity and context. It is certainly not a new topic in Canadian literature. There are comprehensive articles ("Working Through Cultural Appropriation" by Richard Fung) and books (*Frontiers* by M. NourbeSe Philip, *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation*, as well as many others) that outline the history of how cultural appropriation has impacted our collective psyche. There were the scandals of the Canada Council and the missteps of the Women's Press in the '90s, and now we have former *Write* editor Hal Niedzviecki's contribution. Our media outlets are invested in these racy stories that often emphasize "hurt feelings" as the Writers' Union of Canada apology addresses, but shies away from historical trauma and power imbalances. Is this the root of cultural appropriation?

What's worse, we as literary, well-read,

and "respectable" people living in the myth of post-racial multicultural Canada constantly find ourselves shocked when racism rears its head. Yet the glaring reality proves that racism is an inherent part of this country. Ask many a black, Indigenous person otherwise.

So what is cultural appropriation's opposite? To expand on the revelation that Richard Fung offered, the inverted twin of cultural appropriation is likely "cultural self-determination." The ability to tell one's own story without fear that it will be stolen, misused, misrepresented, distorted, or bastardized. To have the autonomy to share aspects of one's culture on one's own terms, through artistic expression, creative visioning, and literary aesthetic. Niedzviecki's charge that "cultural appropriation discourages writers... which is at least one reason why Canlit subject matter remains exhaustingly white and middle-class," erases all non-white voices in an instant. Niedzviecki isn't talking to me when he says "writers," nor is he speaking to other racialized writers like me who contribute toward Canadian literature. We're here in spite of the racist climate not because of it. Personally, I am entirely uninterested in policing what white people do. My investment of energy lies in the ways that artists of colour are creating spaces for themselves and committing to the craft of storytelling.

The sense of entitlement coupled with cultural appropriation eclipses the sacredness of being humble and asking. Abandoning consent is a symptom of capitalistic, patriarchal mindsets, and begs the question: What's the worst that can happen

when asking for permission? Oh right, someone may tell you no. For people in power who have privilege, this a difficult reality. Hearing no. Within this framework, infringing on the liberty of racialized community becomes integral in maintaining the stability of a white person's liberty. The freedom to take as one pleases, without regard.

The argument that cultural appropriation is moving toward censorship is a step in the wrong direction. We must be reminded that censorship is a government-imposed limit to hide certain truths, "a state function" as Fung states, one in which power again is at play; those whose culture are typically appropriated are often disenfranchised to begin with. There is very little truth found in cultural appropriation. Free speech that oppresses others is not freeing in the least.

What is lacking in much of this intergenerational conversation around cultural appropriation is dignity. The painful realization that these cultures that are borrowed, appreciated, and ultimately appropriated are cultures that have been historically severed, distorted, criminalized, ones in which people literally lost their lives to preserve. Hurt feelings hardly scratch the surface. Calls to fund an "appropriation prize" by media figures such as former *Maclean's* editor Ken Whyte and columnists Christie Blatchford and Andrew Coyne, is a call-out to actively strip the dignity of someone's personhood and the worst part is, I still have to sit here and write an article to explain why that is unacceptable. 🍌

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Multicultural Timbit

ANNHARTE

From Indigena Awry. Published by New Star Books in 2012. Marie Annharte Baker is a poet, essayist, playwright and winner of the 2015 Blue Metropolis First Peoples Literary Prize. She lives in Winnipeg.

Suspense at airport stopover. I walk back and forth to exercise. Cannot find a Timmies. Wonder what country I am in. Just Toronto. Then I see a star descending from the heavens via plane. He is a stellar presence in a First Nations universe. He's an actor so he gives me a tip on how to pretend to speak French by adopting a fake accent and drooping a lip à la Chrétien. Shrug often too. I am on the way to Quebec and must bust through the language barrier. I know the word "poutine" so I will not starve for sure.

The flight attendant on the plane does not give out a *Globe and Mail* to me. Did she figure out I was "anglais" and "autochuck"? To her, I might be part Métisse but do not speak Michif. If I spoke in hand signals, the message that I want a Tim Horton donut might be mistaken for a terrorist threat. She might think I was suggesting a hole in the fuselage. Les amis pourquoi enough. I must learn to speak more French right away. How would I ask for a timbit? Do Canadian frequent flyers get their frequent fast food? I am starving.

On deese planes there is no room. Dis plane is so small for the fat ass or is that gross derrière. On the other plane I actually removed my shoes. Now I will have to say Excusez moi but I won't be able to add a reason. My feet get hot before the rest of me gets turned on. I will have to get into a yoga posture to tie my running shoe. Sacré bleu.

Un peu too! Wow, I am speaking Français. My adviser said to say "un peu" a lot. It means "just tiny". Minuscule, right? It would not help me to always talk this way. What if I met a well hung savoir faire dude? I must use discretion.

Always I get the wing on the plane. Like at a turkey dinner, I get to savour the part that might be used for soup. Aha! Has dis turkey been basted for instance as I do not want to get pregnant accidentally, eh? Excusez moi. I was thinking too much in 75 Anglais and it might be rude to explain all dis anxiety in another language barely taught in high school.

This plane will take hours plus of butt crammed into a crevice called a seat. My cheeks are to be pressured all the trip so they will become multicoloured. Multiculture maybe. I want a snack and dream of flying on an Aboriginal run hairline. I would get a baloney sandwich as a food preference. Ask for it by name. Tube Steak, please.

Maybe I am starting to speak broken Michif? I am broke usually. Oui, my blood has been thinned not by the injected semen of a known or unknown donor. No turkey baster or Petri dish for me. My dad gave away sturdy sperm cells which travelled the rugged canal to my mother's womb to decide my fate. Now that was a dangerous trip. Birthing was a tight squeeze as I weighed 13 pounds.

Need to travel more in Canada so I do not cling to the memory of the nearest Timmies. I need to be a bit more comfortable multicultural when I do. 🍷

meaningful dialogue, we must prove why and how socialism would be disastrous. THIS IS HOW MILLENNIALS SHOP: Everyone talks about how millennials are changing the way shopping is done, but how true is that really?. THREE TIPS FOR MEETING MILLENNIALS WHERE THEY ARE: Get personal—but not in the traditional way. 🍷

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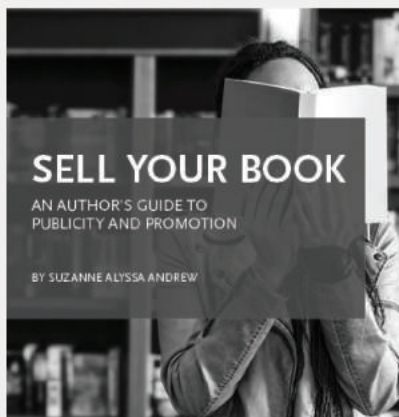
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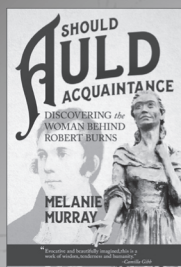
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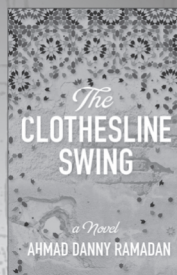
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Shack Stories

ANDREW BODEN

Second-year philosophy student, meet your new boss

Mr. Maillard scared me from the moment he stepped from his red Chevy pickup. He stood six inches shorter than me and weighed sixty pounds less, but exuded tough son-of-a-bitch like cologne. A lump of Copenhagen made a grave mound beneath his lower lip. His Hush Puppies looked hand-stitched from sun-dried meat. When he spoke, his lips hardly moved and his voice came out in the eerie monotone of a man who preferred hitting to talking. As for me, I preferred silent, studious reflection—*second-year philosophy student, meet your new boss*.

We stood in a patch of dry scrub the rest of the sawmill crew called the “staff parking lot.” A cool breeze brought a gas-scented mist from a small lake to the southwest, which I later learned Mr. Maillard treated every spring with a gallon of diesel to kill, among other things, mosquito larvae.

“Janice at student employment said you wanted me to start today.” I struggled to sound like Clint Eastwood with a Kootenay drawl, as if I belonged on a farm at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

“Oh yeah?” Mr. Maillard said. He lapsed into the type of silence that anticipates gunfire and stared at me, through me, deep into my spindly resolve. He must have liked what he saw, because he suddenly shouted, “Everybody, meet the new one!”

He introduced me to the Hawk brothers, Laird and Corey; Alan, an engineering student from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology; and Festus, whose real name I learned a month later was Brian.

My boss had evidently memorized at least part of my resumé, because he said, “Andrew here is a philosophy student at SFU.”

“Well, Alan can build something and Andrew can think about it,” Laird said and then hee-haw laughed and so did everyone else.

I was relieved I wouldn’t see Mr. Maillard more than once a day. He had a farm to run and he only came by on the odd coffee break to see how smoothly Laird was “dog fucking” his operation. He left Alan and me—the sawmill greenhorns—in the charge of Festus, who would be training us in the fine art of peeling and stacking, not two-by-fours as I had thought, but railway ties, which the CPR

would collect in August and haul away to coat with creosote. This was the only summer job I could get. The students of parents with connections had taken all the jobs that paid well, the ones with the unionized sawmills or the CPR or the City of Cranbrook maintenance crews. My pay? Eight dollars an hour plus sunburn.

“Light ties are maybe a hun’erd pounds,” Festus said as we walked past piles of fir and pine logs. He looked like an extra from *Guns Smoke*: ten-gallon hat, red checked work shirt, leather chaps to protect his legs from the chainsaw blade, a paunchy swagger, but without the six-guns to back it up. “Pitchy ones are near one-fifty. First one of them damn near kill’t me.”

The mill sat on a platform of thick, sun-bleached planks nailed down to a foundation of three-foot-diameter logs cut by Mr. Maillard’s father decades ago. A tin roof covered the huge saw blade and its operator; every other part of the mill was unprotected from the weather. A shack attached by a plywood bridge on the north side of the mill was the only outbuilding in sight. Laird went to an ancient diesel engine in the middle of the mill that looked as if it had been plundered from a grader or a Cat, and fired up the beast. Soot coughed from the exhaust pipe and the engine roared as it would for the rest of the day.

Festus gave us a fistful of earplugs. “Yer station is down here,” he shouted at Alan and me. We could only talk in shouts when the engine was roaring. My thoughts soon came in shouts, too, but mostly I thought of nothing, because my mind grew hoarse from yelling. The sound of that engine replaced the low hum of my consciousness.

Laird went behind the mill’s controls, a couple foot pedals and two long levers made from the handles of cant hooks, which sat about five feet in front of the six-foot-diameter saw blade. Festus had loaded the log deck behind Laird that morning, so our sawyer had a supply of fresh logs to cut. Corey stood opposite Laird on the other side of the saw blade and gave us a bored grimace—he’d worked here last summer and couldn’t find a better job, or life. The rest of us waited at the end of a series of raised metal rollers for the first railway tie, armed with our weapons: a metal blade at the end of a long stick for peeling bark, called a “spud,” and a short-handled axe.

The beast roared as the metal log carriage, which Laird controlled, rammed the first log into the whirling saw blade and left a long strip of bark-covered wood for Corey to throw into the back of an old dump truck parked beside the shack. The air grew thick with diesel and fresh-cut pine. Corey pulled the first gleaming tie off the carriage in less than two minutes and pushed it along the rollers toward us. It was exactly seven inches high by nine inches wide by eight and a half feet long and it reeked of pine tar. Festus let one end of the tie clunk to the floor, where it lodged against a piece of two-by-four that had been nailed there, so that the tie rested at a 45-degree angle with one end up on the rollers and the other on the deck of the mill. The beast roared again; the saw whined as Laird cut the next tie. Festus stripped the bark off each corner of the first tie and then lugged it six feet to the end of the mill, where he shouted that we should form a pile five ties high by five wide, which we'd later secure with metal strapping.

End of lesson.

He distracted himself from the terror of hair loss by conducting a “new experiment” on a cage of male squirrels he'd trapped

“Oh yeah!” Festus shouted. “Keep up!”

Festus showed Alan what to do at Corey's station and left me to peel and stack. Keep up? Ties arrived in front of me every couple minutes. I abandoned the heavy spud for the sleeker axe; I peeled and scraped; on the ties with tougher bark, I chipped off little ovals of bark and glanced at the two or three ties now backed up on the rollers. I lugged the ties; I piled them; I dropped one and then struggled to get my hands under it to heave it off the deck. The tough ones came from the logs that had been sitting in water. I lugged them in stutter steps and prayed I wouldn't drop one on my feet or, worse yet, off the end of the sawmill, because I would have to lift it back up six feet to the deck. I'd trained at the university gym three or four times a week, but the gym was only a feeble simulation of hard physical work. My lower back and wrists ached, but I had to keep up—not only to keep my job, but to show Mr. Maillard that a philosophy student with an affection for Heidegger's metaphysics could survive three months' hard labour.

Ten o'clock. Coffee break. A fifteen-minute reprieve from the constant roar of the beast, in the luxury of the shack. The shack was a hundred square feet decorated with seats torn out of old cars and a metal stand that Laird used to sharpen the saw blade at lunch. We ate and drank and

Corey chain-smoked. Alan and I stuck to nervous college-boy-in-a-blue-collar-wilderness silence, which left the other three to gab. Laird bugged Corey about his thinning mullet of dark brown hair.

“It's on account of my ex-girlfriend stealing my invention,” he said in an Idahoan drawl.

His invention was an electrical device he wore for an hour a day on his head to stimulate hair growth. Without it, he'd be bald again in a few weeks. He distracted himself from the terror of hair loss by conducting a “new experiment” on a cage of male squirrels he'd trapped. “I aim to create homosexual squirrels,” he said, with the sincerity of a physicist who hoped to find a new quantum particle in an atom smasher. Somehow, in the alfalfa fields of southeast British Columbia, he'd rediscovered the curiosity of a Victorian gentleman scientist. I marvelled that he called this a “new experiment,” because it implied there had been old experiments and I imagined a barn laboratory filled with cages of mice, crows and gophers; Corey in a lab coat about to flip the switch on a golem made from pine chips and steer manure; the Mel Brooks movie starring Gene Wilder as the eccentric Dr. Corey Hawk. Mostly I think Corey was just bored.

Unlike his older brother. Laird seemed content to cut ties for Mr. Maillard, work on his own farm and eventually retire there. He wore a wool cap, and a port wine stain covered the left half of his face. He was married (unlike Corey, who pined for a “bar maid” who left him with a rash) and had young children. Laird's wife packed him huge lunches, always with a thick slab of cake for dessert. It was the fuel that kept Laird constantly mocking Corey or Festus and sometimes even himself. He rented horses for himself and his wife in Radium one Sunday and noted that the horses cost him eleven dollars an hour. “That's what Maillard pays me: as much as a goddamn horse.”

“You're being rode,” said Corey.

After every break, Corey, Alan and I switched between three stations: we peeled and stacked ties or helped Laird turn or “cant” the ties on the log carriage after each cut, or we manned the “comfort station” on the other side of the saw blade and threw the light scraps of wood that came off the ties into the dump truck. The key, Laird told me when I first stood at the comfort station, was not to drop a piece of scrap onto the saw blade or else the whirling blade would shoot it into his face. Once, long ago, Mr. Maillard had dropped a two-by-four on the saw blade and it struck him between the eyes as he stood at the helm. Except no one noticed Mr. Maillard had been hit. He fell to the deck of the mill on his stomach, unconscious, and Festus, who drove by on the loader every few minutes, thought he was fixing the mill. “Ya know, repairin' the pulley belts,” Festus said. “Real slow like.”

Mr. Maillard stumbled to his feet twenty minutes later.

I don't know if he went right back to work or staggered home and lay on his couch or drank rye whisky for his good fortune; I like to think his wife drove him to the Cranbrook Hospital, that his farm could spare him for two hours. That even he had a chink in his armour.

At 4:30 p.m., Laird took the axe from my cramped hands and laid it on top of the planer mill. "Mill's going to sleep now," he said. "Rest up for tomorrow. Pray and eat Tylenol."

Alan gave me a ride to and from the mill in an old blue and white Ford Scout. He had graduated a year ahead of me in high school and, unlike most of his classmates, dressed in a jacket and tie as if he were in campaign mode for an election that never seemed to come. He wore acid-washed jeans at the mill and old pastel-coloured tuxedo shirts, and when I'd first met him, I thought he wouldn't last a day. I don't recall hardly a word passing between us, not because we didn't like each other, but because we were both conversational counterpunchers; we let others lead conversations and worked off their words. Sometimes we talked about the job, the antics of the Hawk brothers. Sometimes I cracked jokes and Alan laughed. Mostly, back at the mill, we let Festus and the Hawk brothers do the talking.

The best talk happened in the shack. Shack life: every break was a glimpse into a world I thought existed, but hadn't experienced. Laird told us Festus didn't drive a pickup as I imagined, but a rusting, silver grey Horizon. "There he was in his ten-gallon hat," Laird said, "all scrunched up behind the wheel of his little clown car in the Safeway parking lot—what you call it now?—'goin' for vittles.' My wife shops for groceries and you go for vittles. You

When he got too drunk to drive home, he sent the dogs back to his ranch in a taxi

shouldn't be drivin' anywhere." A few weeks earlier, Festus had fallen asleep at the wheel and rolled his car into a ponderosa pine. He didn't want to confess to his insurance company that he'd been in a single-vehicle accident, so he went to his taxidermist brother-in-law and took a handful of deer hair and stuffed into his grille. "Deer jumped in front of me," he told the insurance company. He'd escaped this accident only to have his licence suspended for a DUI, which he ignored so he could work. He'd also steered his marriage onto the rocks. He'd shot his wife's "yappy little dog" off a log and hid the body in his septic field. Until

spring thaw, when the septic field backed up and the repairman his wife called discovered the dog's corpse blocking a drainpipe. Strange how the body was filled with number ten buckshot, his wife said.

"Think I'll be taking my bedroll to Barrhead for a time," Festus said to us.

"Don't forget to take along some vittles," Laird laughed.

Mr. Maillard loved his dogs. When he got too drunk at the Byng Hotel to drive the twelve miles back home, he sent the dogs back to his ranch in a taxi so his wife could feed them. Laird brought his hound to work one day, and at lunch in the shack he wrote Sam across his dog's white skull with a felt marker and said, "My dog's name is Sam," and then hugged the poor animal and sniffled. "Every time I come here," Mr. Maillard said, as he stepped into the shack, "you guys are fuckin' the dog."

Shack life broke the robotic tedium that drove its victims, like Corey, to find relief in eccentric animal experiments. Every morning began the same way: I placed a gallon of water on the tie pile beside me, slathered on 40 SPF sunscreen and took up the axe. All day, I struggled to have any thoughts at all, other than the dull ache of today was like yesterday, tomorrow will be like today. My body moved on its own: drove the axe into the bark, ran the blade the length of the tie, parted wood from its remnant of skin. Perhaps a hundred times a day. Before tie mills, men hewed ties with five-pound broadaxes, and a good hewer could produce ten to fifteen ties a day. Some days when the saw whined a little too loud, I pined for the good old days of hand-hewn wood. But I couldn't imagine the minds of the old tie hewers were any less blank than mine—you can't philosophize wielding an axe. At the mill, a novel thought might visit once a day, but it vanished as soon as the next tie clunked against the mill deck. Even thoughts of self-care got lost in the flurry of sawdust. Once when I worked behind Laird as canter-man, a log rolled off Festus's loader and across the log deck, and rammed into my thigh. Maybe there was a bruise, maybe not; maybe if I hadn't looked up at the last moment, I would have been thrown in the path of the log carriage, maybe not. Back to the routine. Even the weather was identical. Clear blue skies, hot afternoons, Rocky Mountain peaks that changed too slowly to cause excitement or awe. The alfalfa changed colour in the fields, light green then tawny in a month or two. Everything dried up without constant irrigation.

I craved those shack stories. I craved the eccentricities work breaks let me see. I didn't even care when Laird poked me in an obvious tender spot: "So, Andrew, what're you going to do with that philosophy degree of yours?"

I couldn't see my life beyond graduation, so I said, "Law, maybe."

"Law? Corey, whatta we do with lawyers?"

"Drown 'em," said Corey. "Then burn the corpses in Maillard's slash pile."

"Couldn't you have just said 'kill 'em'?"

"Shakespeare didn't say how we should do it. Just do it."

Laird looked back at me, as if his brother's statement was too ridiculous to consider. "No, Andrew, I see you more as a cardigan-wearing gentleman lying around on a couch and snoring your way to a paycheck." He looked up thoughtfully at the ceiling. "Bet philosophers get calluses on their brains."

"Hazard of the profession," said Corey in a dead serious tone. "I keep the calluses on my hands soft with a pumice stone."

"You see a pumice stone around here?" Laird held up one of the long files he used to sharpen the saw blade. "You feel a little brain callus coming on, Andrew, you just let me

Goddamn fuckin' mill. It's in my dreams. I hear it at home. I hear it when I'm drunk. I'll hear it when I'm dead

know. We'll soften it right up."

I was too normal to remain in the shack spotlight for long. Corey chain-smoked, but as we only got paid once a month and he'd always run out of money, he spent the last few days of each month smoking the butts on the floor, which he lit with Mr. Maillard's acetylene torch.

"How are the squirrels doin'?" Festus asked.

"I caught 'em goin' at it last night," Corey said. "Another experimental success. Just gotta write it up in my notebook." I half-expected to open the September issue of *Nature* and read "On the Sexual Proclivities of Sciuridae in Rural Confinement" by Dr. Corey Hawk.

Several times a week at lunch, Corey, the man who hounded Mr. Maillard for a fresh box of earplugs so he wouldn't go deaf before his hair fell out, went into his Maverick and cranked up his tape deck and chain-smoked. The music was so loud I could hear Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" over the mill. What was important for Corey was that he couldn't hear the mill. "Goddamn mill," he said. "Goddamn fuckin' mill. It's in my dreams. I hear it at home when everything is quiet. I hear it when I'm drunk. I'll hear it when I'm dead."

By mid-June, I'd begun to dream of my return to university, of mental stimulation. At first university came to me as long columns of numbers, which I added in my head as I peeled ties, so my mind didn't leak out my ears as

sawdust. What I missed most of all was the books university put in front of me: old books authored by men and women long dead, their ideas resurrected before me for a few days, as if part of me had slipped back in time. I went to the local college library and took out Martin Heidegger's *What Is Philosophy?* and struggled with the first few impenetrable paragraphs. I focused on my future. Come September I'd move in with my girlfriend and I decided to build a futon frame rather than buy one of the cheaply made Ikea ones. I needed wood. I asked Mr. Maillard if I could buy some two-by-eight fir planks from him and he said his price was a case of Kokanee. Laird cut the planks for me and ran them through the planer and I stored them to dry at home by August, I hoped, when I'd start building the frame. Until then, shack stories kept me going, which I wrote about to my girlfriend in long letters.

One morning the Hawk brothers came to work smelling as if they'd bathed with a skunk. We wondered what had happened, because all morning we smelled them over the fresh-cut pine, fir and diesel. At break they explained that they'd trapped a skunk that had terrorized their chicken coop for the last week. They threw the trap and the skunk into their pond to drown. Except they'd made the trap, a cage, from wood and it floated instead of sinking, and so the skunk had sprayed them at will as they tried to shove the trap beneath the water with their tools of choice: hockey sticks.

Or there was the day Festus stayed up until 4:30 a.m. drinking with friends, slept for an hour and came to work to buck logs as he did every day, an hour before we arrived. He trudged around the landing like a zombie cowboy armed with a Stihl chainsaw. But our cowboy still had to drive the loader and feed logs onto the log deck for Laird to cut. By the 86°F heat of the afternoon, Festus fell asleep at the wheel of the loader as it sped across the landing toward Mr. Maillard's tank of diesel. The four of us stood on the mill deck in disbelief and then shock when he didn't wake up and we screamed at him to avoid the explosion, but he couldn't hear us over the mill or the loader. Just before the tank of diesel was a little rise and when the loader's front wheels struck it, Festus bounced about a foot off his seat as if a dream horse had bucked him. "I woke up," he said later, "and holy-yyy y shit if I didn't steer somethin' hard."

Twice a day we had to empty Mr. Maillard's old dump truck of wood scraps, bark and sawdust. The dump truck was an ancient, rusted thing and the air brakes only stopped the truck if you began pumping them to the floor thirty feet before your anticipated stop. Mr. Maillard dumped everything in great mounds beside his little lake, and judging by the charred ground, he'd burnt the piles as smoke offerings to the fickle gods of lumber prices. The rudimentary road to the lake was on a shallow slope and the first time I emptied the truck, I sped down to the lakeside, but misjudged how soon I had to begin pumping the brakes and finally stopped with the

front wheels immersed in water. Down below the blue-black depths of Mr. Maillard's lake was Laird's '72 Mustang. A couple winters ago, the two men had been falling timber and one afternoon of a little too much ennui, they were deciding whether they should cut more trees, or—"How far do you think your car would git across the lake, Laird?" Mr. Maillard asked. "I mean across the ice? You think it would make it to the other side?" A case of Kokanee was the wager. Laird parked his car facing the downhill slope to the lake and put a cinder block on the accelerator and sent the Mustang racing toward the icy lake. The car hit the ice at about forty miles an hour and spun into the centre, and then a large hole opened up beneath it and the cold water claimed it. "Guess I win," said Laird.

At the shack, as we finished lunch, Corey interrupted his brother's story. "Of course the ice was thin, doofus," he said. "The earth is heating up."

One morning, Mr. Maillard came to the mill and told us to shut it down. Alan and I thought we were about to be laid off, but no: Mr. Maillard drove us all up the paved road past his place, to a distant field he planned to seed with timothy. The field was a clearing, maybe the size of a football field, surrounded by ponderosa pines and tawny grasses and, in the distance on the north side, the vaulted peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Festus drove up in the dump truck from the mill and all that hot, dusty day the four of us followed whoever was driving the truck and picked rocks from the ground and threw them into the back of it. We ate lunch on the back of the dump truck. We ate in silence for the first time ever. Only one of Laird's occasional jibes at Festus or Corey broke the long lull in our conversation. But Laird's jibes seemed lame and forced. The stories that flowed so naturally in the shack couldn't come in the open air. They needed walls, a closed door and shade. They needed to be off to the side of the main action, like the shack was to the mill. "Fuck, it's dry here," said Corey. "Nothin'll grow."

Another day after work, Mr. Maillard asked Alan and me if we wouldn't mind working overtime in a field adjacent to the mill. Alan and I followed Mr. Maillard's tractor as it towed a flat-bed trailer. We picked up irrigation pipes from the soggy soil, which was knee-high with green alfalfa, and lay them on the trailer for deployment in another field. The mosquitoes bred here in the puddles. As soon as the field fell into shade, they began to bite and Mr. Maillard sprayed us with Off and maybe one in ten of these farm-hardened mosquitoes didn't attack. I didn't mind for long. The field was cool and ripe with loam and I could see every muted orange and violet layer of the Rockies to the north of us. I told Mr. Maillard how beautiful the view was and I guess I expected him to shake his head at such a "pussy remark," because I was surprised when he smiled and pushed the brim of his baseball cap back and said this is what it's all about, these little moments.

By early August, the alfalfa was light green, almost ready for the second cut. Our well of stories was dry and we ate in the shack in silence or listened to Laird file the teeth of the saw blade. We felt done. I'd finished coating my newly built futon frame with linseed oil a few days earlier and I'd arranged to have my things shipped to Vancouver on the Labour Day weekend. In mid-August, Festus moved the stacks of ties to the railway tracks near the confluence of the Wild Horse and Kootenay Rivers. CPR had left several rail cars on a side track into which we had to load the ties. Laird gave us short cant hooks and we waited in the creosote stink of the rail cars for Festus to dump the ties into them off the loader. Two of us hooked one end each of the ties and tossed them into a neat pile. The three months of peeling and stacking had made us strong and we flung the heavy ties as if they were pillows. A steel-rail bridge nearby

I half-expected to open the September issue of *Nature* and read "On the Sexual Proclivities of Sciuridae in Rural Confinement"

boomed in the afternoon heat. The willows and aspens bent with a cool breeze off the Kootenay River. By four o'clock, every tie we'd cut had been loaded into the rail cars ready to make their way to a creosote bath in a distant rail yard.

Mr. Maillard drove up in his Chevy and congratulated us. "I didn't think you dog fuckers would do it." There was bonus beer all around, new stories and old stories.

I'd never see any of these men again. In September, I returned to university with about half the money I needed for the year. I took a part-time job in the university library, where I shelved books at an unheard-of rate. My summer job had toughened me to physical work, I said to my new boss. I wouldn't find the comfortable rhythm of academic life for months. I couldn't concentrate for long on Descartes, Kant or Heidegger. I couldn't sit through *Last Year at Marienbad* at the university theatre. It was as if there was a shack in my head, where I retreated from the main action, because I kept hearing Laird mock my professors and fellow students. When I finished the fall semester that December, I opened my report card to a neat column of As and Bs. There were no celebratory beers, no stories—just letters on a paper sheet.

Andrew Boden's writing has been published in The Journey Prize Stories 22 (2010), the New Quarterly, Prairie Fire and Descant. He is also co-editor of the anthology Hidden Lives: Coming Out on Mental Illness (2012).

Unwrapping Diasporas

MICHEL HUNEULT & SARAH R. CHAMPAGNE



For thousands of immigrants and their families, the desire to break free from poverty or war materializes first in remittances. The routine act of sending a few dollars back home, carried out by millions of immigrants, amounts to more than three times the amount of official development assistance offered worldwide. Canada—with more than twenty percent of its population having been born abroad—sends more money per capita than any other country. In fact, if the 250 million migrants worldwide were to form a country today, its economy would be among the top twenty-five in the world.

For most of 2016, the photographer Michel Huneault and the journalist Sarah R. Champagne set out to document

this hidden force in global economics and development. The two interviewed families living thousands of kilometres away from one another in Canada, Mexico, Haiti, Turkey and Syria, and experimented with shooting 360-degree immersive videos—videos in which a view in every direction is recorded at the same time—that can be viewed on a tablet or VR helmet. Huneault and Champagne were intrigued by what happened when they unwrapped the film onto a flat surface. The resulting images, shown here, are reminiscent of classical tableaux and of the challenging distortions presented by world maps, representations of the spaces both physical and virtual that these families must traverse in order to maintain ties.



JILOTEPEC, MEXICO

The Rodriguez family on a Sunday, on their ranch. They receive money from Roberto, the eldest son of nine children. The sum is not extravagant. "Just to get ahead and put some ceramic tiles on our floor," says Sofia Alcantara, Roberto's mother. Migration shapes the landscape of some Mexican villages, resulting in the slow conversion of mud houses into concrete castles, empty most of the time.



LAVAL, QUEBEC

Seif Elhamoud points out the city of Montreal to his daughter Lys, from the shore of Des Prairies River in Laval. Elhamoud and his sister have become the lifeline for their brother Feras and his family, who fled the Syrian war. The family has come to the conclusion that peace is a luxury. After the shooting at a Quebec mosque in January 2017, Elhamoud said, "If even Canada is not safe, which country is left?"





BLAINVILLE, QUEBEC

Roberto Rodriguez works in a bathroom products warehouse. He first left Mexico for Canada when he was fourteen, twenty-five years ago. He still misses his family. "I can see them through the computer, but sometimes I would just like a pat on the back."



PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

The St-Vil family on a Sunday afternoon in the Tabarre neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince. “Having a visa, for anywhere, increases your social potential,” says Alex St-Vil. In his eyes, the strong interconnection with their family members abroad is just a way of reproducing the solidarity of the “lakou.” The lakou—once the courtyard of traditional houses where families shared meals and expenses—has morphed to become transnational.



MERSIN, TURKEY

Fediya, Rahaf, Feras and Ayham Elhamoud share a festive meal in their apartment. Their Syrian friends in Turkey and in Syria receive money through hawalas, an informal transfer system.





AFTER THE BLOOM

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— *Booklist*

For newly single mother Rita Takemitsu, the disappearance of her own elderly mom brings back a past her family had buried in the internment camps of the California desert.

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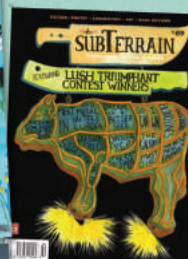
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Paradise

EVELYN LAU

Nobody belongs to us, except in memory.

—John Updike, “Grandparenting”
from *The Afterlife and Other Stories*

for WPK

1.

He calls daily from the suburban mall, the gas station,
the corner store. Sometimes he calls from home, while his wife
bakes muffins, watches TV in the living room.
You can almost hear her in the background—
water rushing into a sink, kettle set upon a stove.
Tinned laughter, a single gunshot.

He coughs, lowers his voice
to a whisper. This renders everything he says
seductive. Says he *doesn't love her*,
says *he will leave her*—
at twenty-four, you are a believer.

2.

He brings you flowers, short-lived irises
blazing like blue fire in his hands. Bent crocuses,
carnations. He kisses your closed
eyelids, at first nothing more.
He's shy, careful, his gaze slips to the side.
His hands nearly small as your own.

In the gilt mirror your twined bodies are skewed,
obscene. You shiver and look
away, but he continues to watch the reflection—
the dip of your head, his spread legs. You grip
his hands in bed, shut your eyes
against the breaking light.

3.

He nibbles his lower lip, fidgets like a child
in the principal's office when you dare ask.
*I can't just kick her out onto the street. She needs
time to move out, there's the paperwork, legalities...*
You drink until you believe, glass after slippery glass
of wine. The gem-bright confidence washes over you,
says yes. Mouse-grey hair at his pubis,
mole on his back, familiar as home.

You tick back and forth like a metronome—
one day he's leaving, the next he's not,
he flicks the switch. *I'm deceitful at the best of times!*
he boasts in bed, glinting with mischief. See,
it's not like he didn't tell you. It's not like
you were a child, a captive, incapable of choice.
You had a choice, damn you.

4.

When he calls to say he's left her, his voice
cuts in and out. He's calling as if from a distance—
someplace in the sky, from a shuttle poised
for a moon landing. Well, he hasn't *left* her—
he's just asked to spend the winter alone,
in his condo in the desert. She doesn't know
about you, you don't exist. Your hand shakes,
tips gleaming vodka over a glass of broken ice.
Not sure if this is winning or losing.

5.

This is where you stay with him, in Palm Springs—
a gated complex overlooking bougainvillea
and a golf course, cradled by chocolate mountains.
Outside the bedroom a sprinkler works
back and forth, clicking, whooshing,
painting the parched air. All night,
by the base of a palm tree, a floodlight flashes off
and on—like a disco ball through the slats
of shutters, a blade slicing back
and forth across the bed.

He takes you for dinner in restaurants
with Tiffany lamps, timber ceilings, velvet armchairs.
Reaches for your hand across the white tablecloth—
waiters, diners stare. You flinch, bite the inside
of your cheek, taste blood. He's old enough
to be your father—grandfather, maybe.

6.

You walk in the direction of the mountains,
dust blowing. The mountains seem an optical illusion—
close, then far, close again. You pass old men
and women wearing tennis shoes and tracksuits.
Lutheran churches, health spas, rundown houses
once belonging to fruit-pickers who worked
on long-vanished orchards. The air smells
of green jelly, cactus blooms.

Outside the pizza parlour, the drycleaner,
the nail salon, sunlight glares on asphalt.
In ice-cold malls, elevators glide up and down.
The avenue is lined with palm trees, gold stars
twinkle on the pavement. Bentleys and Rolls-Royces
slide down El Paseo Drive—
the faces of men and women inside,
white, well-preserved, seem full of hatred
when they look out their windows at the surrounding desert.

7.

He watches you enter the hot tub, he's always
watching you. Under the roiling water your thighs
are round as loaves, you have never liked the way you look.
He leans back, elbows on the rim of the tub. The sun
slides towards the mountains, the fringe of palm trees.
Yellow roses in their final bloom push through
the chain-link fence. You walk dripping to the pool,
swim back and forth across the deep end with your head
above water, each lap a different emotion—
I am happy, I am scared, I've become a stranger to myself.
Veins of light spasm in blue water.
You climb out, follow your wet footprints back
towards him. On a lawn chair, under an umbrella,
another old man stares at you. He must be ninety,
huge turquoise rings crusting each finger. Watching you,
his head shakes back and forth in an endless, admonishing,
No, no, no.

8.

One morning he takes you past the flock of windmills,
stubbly green hills. Past strip malls,
garment outlets, dozens of decrepit motels with
ambitious names—Aristocrat's Motel, King's Rest.
Two hours later, you are in LA, shrouded in smog.
The sky leaden, purple. You follow the boulevard
to the beach, where sunburnt homeless men sleep.
Diamond width of water, white band
of surf. You walk hand in hand along
the pier, he strokes your palm with his thumb.
You wander the boardwalk, where everything is for sale—
T-shirts, tattoos, your fortunes. The drive home
at rush hour takes twice as long, but he doesn't complain.
You touch the back of his neck, hot and creased
under your fingers. Is it enough? In a minute, twilight slips
into full night. The round red sun poised in the
side mirror slips down and now he is driving
in the dark.

9.

Christmas day dawns sultry, blue. You spend the afternoon
in bed together, eat turkey dinner
in a restaurant decorated with holly, painted angels,
silver stars. The waitress is in her forties,
face lined with misery. You're so happy
you start to laugh and laugh—
he leaves a good tip. You drive home
holding hands, along a boulevard lined
with palm trees wrapped in strings of light.
There are tears in your throat, behind your eyes
like sand. In bed, the round bone at his shoulder
seems tailored for your cupped palm. You can taste
the grit in your throat, the hot, waterless air.
Your body waterless, a thing torched by his tongue.

10.

After returning you to the pastel airport
with its miniature golf course and open-air terminals,
he will swim alone in the pool. Black, wet smell
of tar from the new roof on the complex.
The caretaker hacks the yellow rose bushes
with his garden shears—
they won't bloom for another year.
An ice cream truck passes, jangling
its manic tune. Wrapped in a towel, dripping,
he will read his wife's letters,
pleading with him to come home.

11.

A week later, he follows you home.

In your bed he looks like a wicked angel
fallen to earth. His shirts bright flags
in your closet, his books crowding yours
on the shelves. One afternoon, he calls
his eldest daughter: *How are you, honey?*
I'm calling from New York... Oh, I'll just be here
for a few days. Weather's terrible, though. Anyway,
just called to say hi. I love you too, sweetie.

But he's not in New York, he's in your apartment.
You watch tea bags seep into water, colour it sand.
Carry two mugs into the living room, watch him sip
and smile. *By the way, about that phone call—*
I could hardly tell her I was with you! Imagine the fireworks!
He laughs, the peals of his laughter hurt you
like blows.

12.

Again, he waits in the pink airport.
It's like slogging through mud, the distance
it takes to reach him across the tarmac. He looks old,
fragile—you feel the blaze of strangers' eyes
when he stumbles, squeezes you again and again.
I love you. The shadow of fear over your heart.

Then your luggage tumbles end over end
down the conveyor, and you walk along the salmon carpet,
past the car rental counter and the ticket agents,
into the desert. The sun casts violet shadows
under the movie-prop mountains, the air dry and light
as talc. You breathe it in, it's like arriving home.

13.

Mornings cluttered with the noise
of songbirds, neighbours' radios jangling awake.
Round leaves of eucalyptus brush the windows.
In dreams, he returns again and again to his wife—
yet when you wake, he's there.

Your clothes smell of bougainvillea, sprinkler-moistened
lawns and chlorine. When you close your eyes and sniff
your bare arm: palm trees, sunlight on a pool.
Sand blows through the cracks of his home, into
your mouth and nose and eyes. Red sand drifts
across the windowsill, the glass coffee table.
Your body is changing, syrup-coloured from
the sun, bisected by the bathing suit straps.
He sits on the sofa, pretends to read the paper,
watches you. There is such an expression
of happy astonishment on his face that you think,
Maybe. Maybe.

14.

Together you walk the main avenue of galleries, clothing boutiques,
restaurants and bookstores. Passing couples stare, it seems
with anger. Slowly you slide your hand out of his,
withdraw your fingers one by one until he is left holding
your thumb. The bright street of tourists stretches
far as purgatory. Now the light is apricot,
nearly dusk. Passing a McDonald's, he tugs you inside
for a diet Coke, past two teenage girls who flick their eyes
at him, you, whisper and giggle. The rest
of the way home, sparkly black coldness in your mouths,
a small distance between you.

15.

Dinnertime, his wife calls. *It's great to hear from you,*
he says, turning down the TV. Holding your breath,
you watch him, hands frozen in your lap. Outside, children chant
their games in the early evening. He listens, laughs often,
slaps his thigh. *Well, not too much, I've been going*
to movies, soaking in the hot tub...
He makes no mention of you, it's as if you've vanished
into air. At last he says, *Well, thank you for calling,*
I'm so glad you did. He replaces the receiver, doesn't
look at you, goes into the kitchen to peer into a pot
of simmering soup. The smell of burning fills your nostrils.

16.

He pours a bowl for himself,
sits on the opposite couch—
round silver spoon clanks against enamel.
He sips, chews, swallows. You look down at your lap,
nausea rising. He fetches a wedge of pie,
an ice cream bar for dessert—
fork scrapes against berries and pastry,
chocolate shell crunches between his teeth.
He looks at the screen, thinks about the call. Says,
half to himself, *I hope she'll move out soon. If she's
not gone by the time I'm back, I'll have to move in
with her, who knows what'll happen then.*

17.

Outside the sky is remote, both Dippers
in radiant place. A crescent moon lies on its back.
You walk past a basketball court to a playground,
lit and empty. Sit on a swing, rock back
and forth, back and forth. Cry until
you vomit in the grass.

He's on the concrete path outside his building
when you return, like a worried father
looking for his missing child. Says *no, no,
I'm not going back to her, is that what you thought?*
Presses your face to his chest, into
the earnest beating of his heart. *I love you.* Though you try,
you can't see anything but truth in his eyes.

18.

He's invited for a residency in Florida,
sends you a ticket. All night trains rattle
the windows of the A-frame on stilts.
In the drowsy mornings you eat oranges that drip
down your wrists, watch spiderwebs flutter in the rafters
from the air conditioning. The heat a thick silver blanket
beating down from the sky, covering everything—
flying cockroaches, palmetto fronds.

He drives past time-share condos, beachfront shacks,
houses with wraparound porches
and clipped lawns. The sun burns hot-metal
behind your eyelids, blazes through car windows,
strips the skin on your arms. He continues
over a causeway, past swamps where dead trees
reach skyward, bleached branches frozen
in supplication. Stops for meals in tiny pink
restaurants nestled by the side of the highway,
ceiling fans circling their cold arcs of air,
samplers stitched with scripture framed on the walls.

He swings the car into parking lots big as baseball
fields, American flags sweeping the sky. You buy
ice cream, bottled water, postcards. He takes photos
of you, hundreds of them—
loves the way you look.

19.

Nights in the A-frame you glance up
from a book to find him watching you,
eyes steady and full of thought in the lamplight.
He's about to say something important, presses
his lips against your ear, but nothing happens.
It's silent but for the trains shunting beyond
the moss-draped trees. On the warm air floats
the salt of the swamp, honey, the sky broken up
with stars. Daylight takes forever to come
and then it's there, spilling down his body,
washing out to the corners of the room.
When you open your eyes you see he's already
awake, he's been studying you for an hour.

20.

He walks up the path swinging a bag of oranges
fallen from the trees in radiant orbs. The road trip
continues—
along overpasses and turnpikes,
past stands selling hot, boiled peanuts,
Waffle Houses and Super 8s and then nothing
for miles but groves of citrus trees. At a rest stop,
looking at yourself in the sheet of metal
that serves as mirror, you think you could be anyone—
a runaway, an escaped convict,
someone with nothing to lose.

Along the water, mansions with swimming pools,
stained glass windows, cupolas. By the highway,
Chinese restaurants with Budweiser signs
in the windows, their owners in empty parking lots
gazing wistfully at traffic passing. He noses the car
down residential streets, past the Baptist church,
the cemetery, the “Open House” signs on singed lawns.
You imagine living together in a little house,
stars and stripes flying from the attic window,
a sagging porch where you drink iced tea
in the mosquito-thick evenings. *Maybe.*

21.

Halfway through the stay in the South, he walks
up to the A-frame with a coffee stain in the shape
of a heart on his shirt, a letter in his hands, *Read this.*
The letterhead is crisp, legal—
his wife’s lawyer, demanding two more years
in his house, a lump sum, monthly support.
What am I supposed to do, he mutters.
Wanders into the kitchen, peels an orange.
Citrus mists the air. A tropical storm

is forecast for the weekend.

He is in a black mood, stays in bed
all afternoon. The sky is low and muddy—
the branches of the slash pines, the grey trails
of dangling moss, drip with moisture.
He wakes with a groan, his mouth
out of shape with anger, twists away.

22.

The storm breaks. A blaze of lightning surges
across the sky, palmetto fronds thrash, drops of rain
plopping onto the pavement turn to torrents.
There is nothing to do in the A-frame house but look
at each other. Another letter from his wife:
*I never wanted to send a lawyer after you,
but friends tell me I have to look after myself.
I still love you, honey, I miss you so much...*

He holds the letter gently, like something of value.

I don’t want to hurt her. She needs me...

He stares down at the page, and when you touch
his shoulder he glances at you, confused, as if
he doesn’t know who you are. Flicks the TV on,
tugs a chair directly in front, stares deeply into
the dull screen. The rain on the slanted roof,
the twin skylights, is frighteningly loud—
like bad fortune demanding entry.

23.

You both pack your bags, leave the house on stilts,
drive. Silence, country music, laughter. You cross
a state line, and the billboards advertise papershell
pecans, onions so sweet they can be eaten whole
and raw, like apples, without tears. You pass hundreds
of pink houses with porches in the oldest town
in America. Choose inns with four-postered beds
behind French doors that overlook courtyards
where guests read newspapers, drink coffee
in the moss-heavy mornings. In the afternoons,
his face buried between your thighs, you cover
your face with your hands, wait for the absence
to overtake your body—

He pays for tours in carriages that ramble down
streets built from ships’ ballast, cobblestones
called calico for their patchy grey-and-gold
resemblance to cat fur. Photographs you
outside the iron gates of splendid homes
where you will never live. He holds your hand,
once grabs your arm on the sidewalk and shouts,
I can’t believe how happy I am! He has been
lost for the last hour, unable to find the main street
leading back to the hotel. *You see, if it was my wife,
she’d be stomping off yelling and cursing me...*

But in another hour he will be the irritable one,
as you turn down one wrong corner after another,
notes of jazz spiralling out of crowded bars.

24.

On the west coast, he closes up his condo in the desert
for another year. Loads clothes and papers
into the car, begins the long drive to the city
where you, and his wife, are waiting. The mountains
of the desert turn to sand, then the verdant belt.
He calls you from a motel one night, watching
rain crash onto the roof of his car in the lot.
We had some good times, didn't we?

It sounds as though he's saying goodbye.
He is driving home to his wife, her possessions in his car—
frilled cushions, earrings in the shapes
of sunflowers. It has rained here all winter
and everything is washed blue.
You wait for him in your apartment,
drink out of a glass shaped like a cactus.
Imagine his wife standing on the doorstep
of their house, her suffering for him, making
her freckles stand out like stars. He will see
as clearly as a man who has woken from a long,
fuddling dream: *this was the one, all along.*

25.

At last he arrives, a weary smiling
traveller, expecting a glad embrace—
but your mind is clear and bitter as the alcohol
you've been drinking for hours. He will *not*
make you a fool. You sip steadily, offer him nothing.
He has to go to the fridge, fetch a glass of water.
What was it like, seeing her again?

He says nothing, shrugs. Silence in the room
except for ice cubes cracking,
firing off like pistol shots. He glances away,
out the window at the perpetual rain. Gives
you an exasperated look, his face dark.
Whole oceans wash back and forth between you.

26.

It begins, the long nights when you lie awake
listening to the rhythms of his nocturnal breathing,
your eyes dry and hard as copper pennies.
His turned back blocks you out, a thick wall—
he could be anyone, a stranger who snuck in
during the night. When he reaches for you,
his movements are automatic, your response
the same. After, he watches the ceiling, blinking.

I dreamt you didn't love me anymore, you whisper.
That's silly, he says, that's only a dream.

The room is white, he is so close you cannot breathe.
When you raise yourself on one elbow to look
at him, he forces a smile to his face.

27.

He spends afternoons at your apartment, feet
in wet shoes propped on the sofa, eyes flickering
with a deep, darkening light. You say nothing
but there is a hot fist planted in the centre of your chest.
Maybe he blames you for the turn his life has taken—
his home occupied, chequing account empty.
All day he sits, stares out the window, sighs.
His forehead tight and lowered, face crumpled.

Sometimes he disappears for hours at a time—
errands, visits with friends, movies—
only later will you learn he's with his wife.
Now when you ask about her, his eyes shift to the side.
I haven't seen her, I told you, it's over between us.
You gulp gin out of the cactus glass, focus on the floor.
He raids your fridge, complains about the toaster,
talks with his mouth full. Your stomach churns—

28.

Nights you feel as if someone drowning
is holding you in his clutches, using your body
as a ladder to the sunlight and oxygen
wavering above the surface of water.
You try to breathe, refuse the urge to thrash
and scream. At last he releases you,
tumbles down into sleep, a place
he can't be reached. If only he would say something—

but it's been a lifetime of failed relationships
and he's tired. A lifetime of women he once loved,
that brief tumbling excitement—
then the silences, the tears for no reason,
no wound he could even see.

29.

On the phone he laughs, nervous.
Swirls diet Coke in his glass, crunches ice.
*Things are strange, aren't they? See, you're a young woman,
I'm an old man. I think I've been good for you, but now
I'd be happy if you found someone closer
to your own age. You say you don't want children,
but in your thirties...*

The conversation is moving so fast, his sensible words
piling one upon the other like stones around her.
*For me, it's simple. I'm deteriorating. In ten years
I could be a doddering fool who won't even recognize you.
Is that what you want? In five years, ten years,
fifteen years—it could be a stroke, a heart attack,
Alzheimer's. You'll need to put me in a home.*
His voice turns tight, furious. *Is that how you see
your future? Look, we've enjoyed each other,
but in my experience, nothing lasts. It's a thrill
at the beginning, but soon the boredom, the irritation,
it eats away at what was there. You know,*
he says, *I don't even think I know what love is.*

But he had *told* you.

30.

Why hadn't he told you it wouldn't last?
If you had known, you would have recorded everything—
the conversations, what you wore,
what you ate, the drowning of your senses.
The earth that cracked under the white-gold sun.

Every vanishing moment of happiness.

CODA

He returns to his wife. Over the years,
you hear snatches of news—
they buy a house in the country, live on an acre
of fruit trees, rose bushes. Their lives are small,
secluded, they belong to each other
and no one else. Christmas Eve, after many failed
treatments, she dies of cancer at home—
he's at her bedside with the home care aides.
Her loving husband, the obituary says.

Twenty years after the desert winter,
you are middle-aged, and he is dead.

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Purring and Nothingness

MARY SCHENDLINGER

Cats are just about the purest phenomenologists you could name

Since I picked up *At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being and Apricot Cocktails*, a history of modern existentialism by Sarah Bakewell (Knopf Canada), I have stopped reading it only under duress: to sleep, for example, and to pay the hydro bill. Now I'm Hoovering up the last few chapters at my daughter's apartment while she is away, and looking after Lulu, her tortie-tabby cat.

Lulu has been let outside, as she is every evening after dinner. From this apartment on the second floor, she skulks out along the breezeway, then dekes down to ground level via some secret passage near the stairs and hangs out in the shrubbery around the playground. About an hour later she returns, leaps up onto the kitchen window sill and peers in until someone sees her, opens the door and lets her in.

At some point about fifty pages from the end of the book, I realize that Lulu has been out for an hour and a half, maybe longer. Yikes! I step out on the breezeway, lean over the fence, and call down into the shrubbery, *Lulu-Lulu-Lulu!* No response.

Bakewell's book is a far cry from my last encounter with philosophy, at university in 1967, when I signed up for groovy ideas and staggered away with dreary abstractions. *Existentialist Café* is about human beings—smart ones, with ideas and ideals, with feelings and struggles and contradictions and a blind spot or two, and above all a burning conviction that

we must strive to make the world a better place. At the heart of the story are Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir and the writers, artists and philosophers they hung out with in Saint-Germain-des-Prés on the Left Bank of Paris in the 1930s and '40s. They forged modern existentialism, a way of thinking and acting that is still part of us.

The story starts in the early 1930s, when the French philosopher and political scientist Raymond Aron sat down in a Left Bank café with Sartre and Beauvoir. Over apricot cocktails he filled them in on phenomenology (from the Greek for “things as they appear”), a new way of thinking that was all the rage in Germany, particularly in the work of Edmund Husserl and his student Martin Heidegger. It had to do with the act of encountering a thing purely as it is, setting aside all knowledge, experience and judgment of it: in French, *epoché* (from the Greek for “suspension,” as in suspension of disbelief).

Still no Lulu at the window, so I go out and call her again. Little monkey! Testing my mettle? Payback for not letting her sleep on my keyboard when it is nice and warm—i.e., when I am using it? But cats are not vengeful, like humans. They don't hold grudges. They have a memory of sixteen hours max: when they pee on your duvet it's an act of anxiety, not retaliation. Or so the science says.

Sartre and Beauvoir were excited by these new ideas, so akin to their own, which grappled with existence, consciousness, knowledge and philosophy as applied to a meaningful and responsible life, to *doing something*. Sartre believed in existence (being), then essence: that is, you become what you make of yourself, every minute you are alive. Beauvoir's approach was more holistic, Bakewell writes, allowing for an emotional life and proposing that “free choice, biological, social and cultural factors meet and mingle to create a human being.” But the roots were the same: take responsibility, stay connected, thrive, act. We are more free than we think we are.

Which is important every minute, but the particular pressure on the existentialist café crowd in France, in the 1930s, included the rise of Fascism, a civil war in Spain that threatened to spread and great apprehension among people still recovering from World War I. In that context, questions of personal freedom and responsibility were questions of life and death.

Sartre spent a year studying in Germany and came back in 1934, all fired up. Immediately he began to fold phenomenology into the philosophy that was being hammered out among the artists, writers, journalists, students and other fellow travellers who read and wrote and debated with each other in the cafés (which were warmer than the cheap digs where they lived). He even got hold of some mescaline:

dreams and hallucinations were part of the matrix, and other intellectuals were reporting ecstatic adventures and insights. (But for Sartre, no stranger to mood-altering substances, it “threw up a hellish crew of snakes, fish, vultures, toads, beetles and crustaceans.”)

It occurs to me that cats are just about the purest phenomenologists you could name. Talk about putting aside all sensory and experiential baggage when encountering a thing! The cat sits by the front door, looking at it, waiting to be let out. Someone opens the door. It’s raining outside. The cat retreats and goes to sit by the back door, looking at it, waiting to be let out. Rain. Retreat. Seconds later, the cat sits and waits at the front door again, tabula rasa. Perhaps it’s a wonder Lulu ever finds her way home.

Which reminds me to try again to get her in. I walk out on the breezeway and deploy a method known to cat lovers everywhere: holding out her food dish and banging on it with a spoon. *Lulu-Lulu-Lulu! Puss-Puss-Puss-Puss-Puss!* Nothing.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland; France and the UK declared war on Germany; the Soviet Union invaded Poland. Then came the eight-month “Phoney War,” so-called because there were no big land attacks. (Let’s assume the 1.2 million Polish soldiers and civilians who were killed, wounded, taken prisoner or forced to flee did not experience it as one bit phoney.) German and Italian troops also occupied France, so the Paris existentialists were bashing out the meaning and responsibilities of being and freedom—you are free, you must use freedom responsibly, with freedom comes constant anxiety and even terror but you must act—at a time when they were not free. In the 1930s and ’40s this philosophy was wildly attractive to many people, particularly young ones. It also gave the Catholic Church and the Communist Party something to agree on: their hatred of

this dangerous talk of individual freedom. The Church put the existentialists’ writings on the official no-no list, and the French Marxists distanced themselves from Sartre, Beauvoir and company.

Could it be that Lulu is absent not because she is reluctant to give up her freedom but because the neighbour’s big scarred tomcat is patrolling the breezeway? If so, we are in the presence of what the existentialists called *contingency*. Freedom is not absolute—if it were, we would be paralyzed. Rather, freedom is exercised in the context of contingency: circumstances that are beyond our control, such as our bodies, the time and place and family we were born into, the Occupation. Or, in a different setting, a big scarred tomcat. So we act from situations as ethically as we can, keeping in mind that the line between true contingency and a spineless excuse can be fuzzy. I go out and patrol the breezeway, twice, but do not encounter a big scarred tomcat or Lulu or any cat. Other horrifying contingencies that might account for Lulu’s tardiness come to mind. I banish them.

The existentialists continued to expand and refine their ideas, with attention to the work of other philosophers: Martin Heidegger, who was preoccupied with the nature of being as an experiential rather than an intellectual function; Emmanuel Lévinas, for his notions of *il y a* (“there is”) and his almost Sartre-like articulation of a “heavy, solid, undifferentiated ‘being’ that weighs on you,” as Bakewell describes it; Raymond Aron, a rational humanist who had introduced Sartre and Beauvoir to phenomenology and who did not trust ideological orthodoxies; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a psychologist with a special interest in perception, who could not sign on to the “radical freedom [and] anguished responsibility” at the heart of the new existentialism; Albert Camus, the lonely, alienated writer whose options for responding to the meaninglessness of life came down to committing suicide,

taking a leap of faith (philosophical suicide, he said) or accepting the absurdity of it all and plodding on anyway.

Elements of all of these can be felt in the writings and biographies of the existentialists. They agreed that no neat, meaningful explanations were to be found. But suicide? No. Fight on, and interpret the chaos as real freedom. Life is bloody hard, but it is rich with meaning. And no “fate” either—it denies freedom.

Sartre was drafted into the French army in 1939. His eyesight was so poor that he was posted to a meteorological site rather than a battlefield. There he had enough free time to write articles, essays, books and long letters to Beauvoir, and to read the stacks of books she sent him. But in May, soon after the “real” war began, he was captured and placed in a POW camp. Bakewell reports that he did all right there. You wouldn’t think so, of this man who was so solitary, so unbending, so devoted to personal freedom. But in another way it was an affirmation: he still had his existential freedom (one does, no matter what), and talk about an unambiguous contingency! It may even have been a relief for this fellow who could never rest in his frantic quest for pure acts. In the camp he acted from his situation: he read Heidegger’s *Being and Time* and wrote notes for what grew into *Being and Nothingness*. His return to his former life—what now appeared to him as bourgeois society—was a bumpy one.

My situation—though not life-and-death, I hope—is that Lulu has been out far too long and if she does not return, my daughter’s heart will be broken and it will be my fault. I look at the kitchen window for the gazillionth time, hoping to see Lulu there. But I’m not always sure of what I see, partly because reflections from the indoor lamps and outdoor security lights produce ambiguous shapes in the glass, partly because I really want the vague

impressions out there to be Lulu, and partly because my vision isn't what it once was. Like Sartre I am exotropic (cock-eyed) and monocular (able to see with only one eye at a time, never both at once). Bakewell mentions that exotropia causes fatigue and difficulty concentrating. Will this happen to me? Is it happening already? Has Lulu come to the window several times, and did I obliviously lock eyebeams with her over and over until she finally gave up?

In the spirit of acting from situations, I consider leaving the front door open for Lulu. It's a warm evening, and new options must be pondered. But no. The reason she must petition us at the window is the fifty- to sixty-percent chance that she is carrying a bird or a rodent—stunned, not dead—in her jaws.

Now that she has been out far too long, Lulu's absence is massive, even more space-hogging than her considerable presence. It fills the apartment like smoke, or a loud noise. I can barely concentrate even on this wonderful book, in which Bakewell describes absence as more glaring and invasive than presence. Both Sartre and Beauvoir wrote about unnerving disappearances during the Occupation, when habitués of the neighbourhood whom you didn't know personally, but whose *presence* you knew, simply vanished. Sartre invoked a sprawling underground monster dragging people down; Beauvoir wrote: "It was, precisely, a nothingness."

The nothingness in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* is also an absence—of encumbrance. This is the absence that bestows absolute freedom: you are not the sum total of your own history and physical being; your very consciousness is not an ever-growing pile of baggage; you are *always* nothing: over and over, you are *free*. Free, that is, except for the fact that you must also take up 24/7 self-examination on the great responsibility of this freedom, and the perpetual angst that comes with it.

Not for cats, though. Lulu and every other cat I know inhabit this state all the time without a trace of discomfort, let alone agony. Some people interpret this insouciance as evidence that cats have no standards, or perhaps no memory, but we have more science now about animals' memory, responses to stress, souls. Cats have at least twelve distinct communication sounds—purr, meow and hiss, yes, but also yowl, spit, chirrup, shriek, caterwaul, snarl and so on. Also we know now what shamans and other magicians have known for millennia: animals are different from humans, so even the mechanisms of comparing them have to be different.

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre set out two realms of being: *pour-soi* (for itself) and *en-soi* (in itself). The *pour-soi* is the being to be had through consciousness and choice, available only to humans. The *en-soi* applies to everything else, animate or not: zucchini, paper clips, cats—anything that doesn't need to make decisions.

Really? I say Lulu does decide things. She chooses to go out, stay out, claw dried-up dirt-covered leaves out of the plant pot and eat them, jump on my lap and turn on the motor and go to sleep. And there is something deliberate in her approach to a high jump. To leap from the floor to the top of the fridge, for instance, she lowers her hindquarters and waggles her bum for a few seconds whilst eyeballing the destination—reckoning distance, speed and trajectory, surely—and then, in a nanosecond, the launch and the precise landing, not one millimetre off. Surely she has decided to travel to the top of the fridge, even if the mechanics of it are instinctive.

I wonder what Maurice Merleau-Ponty—"the most revolutionary thinker of them all," according to Bakewell—would say about feline volition. He was a philosopher and psychologist with a special interest in body and perception. In his view there was some give and take between *pour-soi* and *en-soi*,

and he disagreed fundamentally with Sartre on "existence, then essence." To him the real mystery of existence is our ability to achieve complicated tasks all the time, seemingly without effort. He believed that newborns arrive with essence and are learning from the get-go. By the time we can reason, imagine and remember—somewhere around age seven—our full essence, at least a beta version, is well in place. So, as Bakewell writes, "Phenomena come to us already shaped by the interpretations, meanings and expectations with which we are going to grasp them." By the time we're a few weeks old, if we are neurologically intact, we have well-functioning proprioception: a natural, unconscious perception of our own movements and spatial positions, managed by our internal sensory apparatus.

Cats are miracles of proprioception. Whether or not Lulu decides to leap onto the fridge, it is her proprioceptors that manage the trip. And those controls can be compromised. When Lulu comes home from the vet with a plastic cone on her head, you have to keep the windows shut or she'll fall out right away.

Time to call her again, more loudly and aggressively, down at ground level in case she's wandered off. I'd rather not, because the building is a quadrangle that becomes a giant upturned megaphone for any sound originating in the playground, and people are putting their children to bed. The last thing they need is a stranger prowling about in the dark, rattling a bag of cat treats and shouting, in falsetto, *Lulu-Lulu-Lulu! Puss-Puss-Puss! Come on, Lulu!* The existentialists are silent on the question of where good manners fit into the question of contingency. In *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947), though, Beauvoir writes that there is no absolute goodness; goodness comes from our decisions. So goodness, like freedom, can only exist in situations and is not always easily worked out. Is it okay, for instance, to speak the truth

if it hurts someone? Genuine freedom includes concern for the freedom of others. Like neighbours, say. Or cats.

In August 1944, France was liberated. Sartre, Beauvoir and company danced in the streets with everyone else, but they also called for *une littérature engagée* and threw themselves into the work of even more intense and copious rabble-rousing. The cafés were jammed. Saint-Germain-des-Prés was wild with activity: writing and publishing, music, theatre, political debates. By now, information on the massacres, gulags, concentration camps and other atrocities of the recent years had begun to filter through and demanded attention. And there were fresh hells: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, A-bombs exploded by the Soviet Union and the USA, the Cold War, McCarthyism, the Algerian Revolution, Mao's proclamation of the People's Republic of China and North Korea's invasion of South Korea, among others. To contain their prodigious output, Sartre, Beauvoir and their friends founded the rabble-rousing *Les Temps modernes*, a journal that is still on the case today.

Then the 1960s took hold, with urgent questions of personal freedom and political responsibility, from a new generation who were pushing back against the war in Southeast Asia and against racism, sexism, classism, colonialism and the rest. Sartre, Beauvoir and their colleagues once again become counterculture heroes and role models, at home and abroad.

That was my generation, and I read the account in *Existentialist Café* with memories of passionate conviction and a whiff of tear gas. Meanwhile, here and now, what am I going to do about Lulu? How worried should I be? I can't decide. Or, as Sartre and Beauvoir might say, I won't decide. Meanwhile, and possibly therefore, Lulu becomes somehow more authentic and I become less authentic. Unless these constraints are of my own making.

Am I more free than I feel right now? Has anyone ever met an inauthentic cat? Contingency and freedom entail angst without end, said the Paris existentialists: deal with it.

All right then, while I wait for Lulu I'll do a round-robin advice panel with the philosophers.

Raymond Aron, a Jewish man who saw what was coming, did one turn with the French army and then moved to England to work for Charles de Gaulle's Free French Forces. Good on him, but no cat-retrieving strategies here.

Martin Heidegger, outed as a member of the Nazi party, went through denazification and then brought forth a new approach: *letting-be*, allowing things to appear, a more mystical approach influenced by Taoism and Daoism. Hmm, maybe.

Emmanuel Lévinas changed his tune and put relationships at the heart of consciousness. The connection between *me* and *another* is "more fundamental than the self," he wrote; "more fundamental even than Being—and it brings an unavoidable ethical obligation." Suggesting that I must find Lulu even if I have to walk the streets of Vancouver until dawn.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty went on teaching, and he worked in resistance organizations with Sartre and Beauvoir, convinced that Soviet Communism was the answer. I know how that turned out, so I'll take a pass.

Albert Camus struggled valiantly in support of the Algerian revolution, but disagreed with Sartre and Beauvoir and even took a mean swipe at *The Second Sex*. Meanwhile, he stuck with absurdism, which is part and parcel of living with a cat every day, so not a strategy for tonight.

Jean-Paul Sartre grew more and more compulsive, rigid and unforgiving as he aged. Fuelled by cascading world events and his own convictions—and by a blend of amphetamines and painkillers called Corydrane, along with steady doses of alcohol and coffee, then downers to sleep—he

pumped out polemics and other works (including a 2,800-page biography of Flaubert) at a mad rate and declared it "bourgeois" to revise or even reread them. He dumped friends, and in 1964 wrote a list of them, with annotations, in his journal. I salute Sartre but there is no counsel here for Lulu and me.

Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex* in 1949 (five years after French women got the right to vote), to big praise and brisk sales. In it she made excellent use of Hegel's master/slave dialectic as a metaphor for other power imbalances. Sartre's summary: When opinions differ, ask how a situation looks in the eyes of the "least favoured"; that is, the most oppressed or disadvantaged. That is the version to adopt as the truth. Okay, this one has possibilities. Who is more oppressed, Lulu or me? For bare survival we are equal. Either of us can scrape by without the other: she has a fur coat, for example, and I have a mobile phone. So we can accept the widespread view that cats are callous tyrants reducing humans to pathetic minions who try and mostly fail to please them, or we can acknowledge how dependent and vulnerable domestic cats are and set about righting the power balance.

Oh dear, I nodded off for a minute. Must stay awake and get her inside. I pick up the treat bag again, open the door and *whoosh!*—Lulu zips inside and runs to the far end of the apartment and hides. In other words, she has prey. I look under the couch. Lulu's green-gold eyes burn back at me, and something rustles a bit.

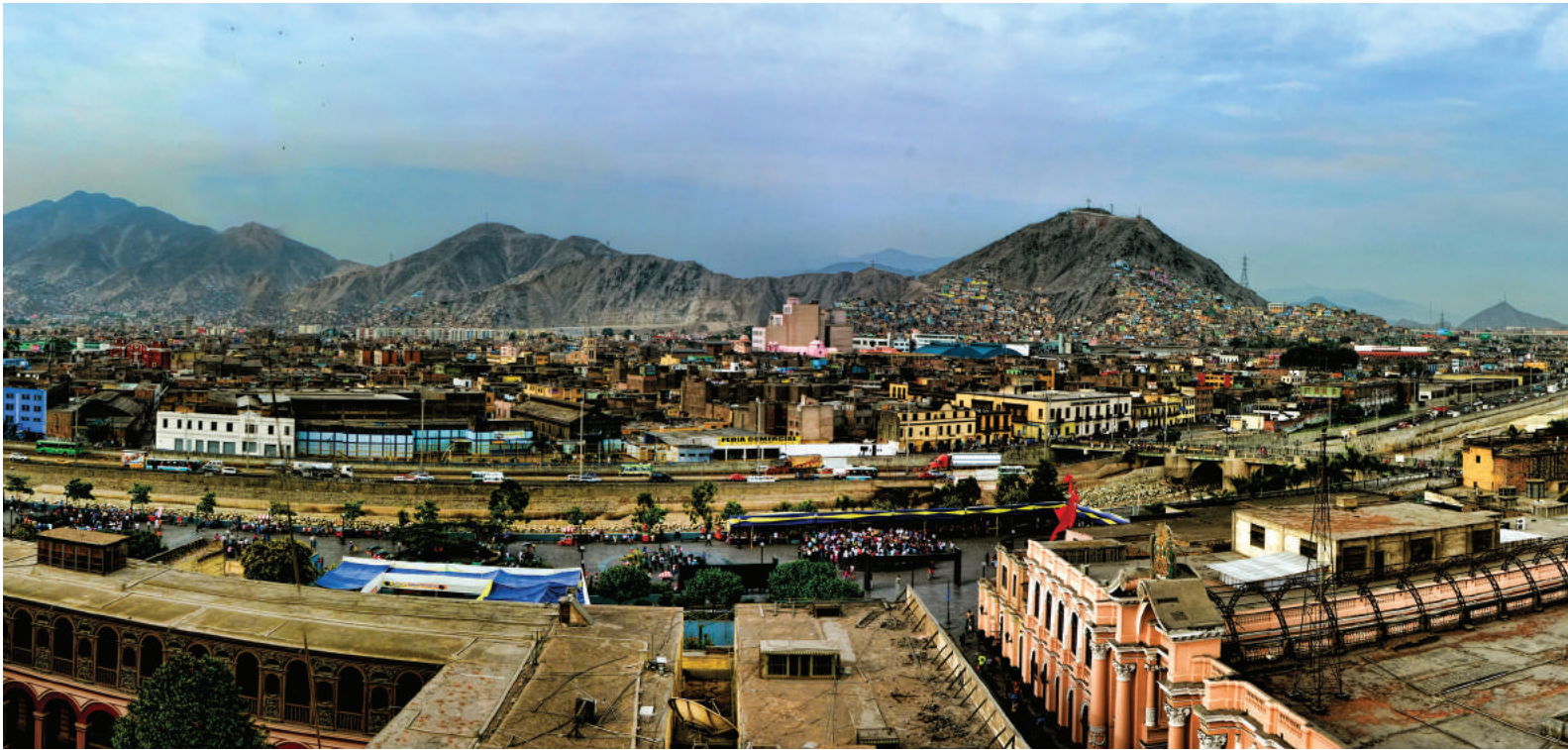
For this I do not need the existentialists or any other philosophers. "Welcome home, Lulu," I say. Then I stand up and go to fetch the broom.

Mary Schendlinger is a writer, editor, retired teacher of publishing and, as Eve Corbel, a maker of comics. She was Senior Editor of *Geist* for twenty-five years. She lives in Vancouver. Read more of her work at geist.com.

A City for All

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

The divisions in Lima, Peru, are pronounced; they are not unique



Detail from Panorama de Lima (2017) by Mariano Mantel. See more of his work at [flickr.com/mariano-mantel](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mariano-mantel/)

Peru was created to divide its citizens. In 1532, when Francisco Pizarro's Spanish conquistadors invaded and colonized the vast, populous Inca Empire, they spurned its mountain capital of Cuzco. The Spaniards built a new capital on the coast. The Spanish Empire's centralized administrative procedures decreed that Lima would govern all of Spanish-speaking South America. By ignoring Cuzco and beginning a new civilization on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, the Spanish crown in Madrid believed it was uniting

a continent; in the end, it divided a country. Coastal Peruvian society grew more racially mixed in the nineteenth century with the importation of enslaved Africans and Chinese indentured labourers, and in the twentieth century with the arrival of British and European business people. These newcomers, however, entered a society shaped by oppressive colonial legacies, divided between a coastal culture that was Spanish in its architecture, language and customs, and an indigenous culture in the Andes. Lima lacked any connection to

Inca civilization. The early twentieth-century Peruvian cultural theorist José Carlos Mariátegui wrote: "Lima has no roots in the indigenous past. Lima is the daughter of the conquest."

Lima today is a city of ten million people built in a desert that receives less than five millimetres of rain a year. The Spanish squares of the colonial centre are spacious and imposing, yet the capital is no longer oblivious to the country's large indigenous population. From the late 1960s onward, indigenous people came down from the mountains to seek employment

in the more vibrant economy of the coast. The narrator of Mario Vargas Llosa's novel *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (1977), returning to Lima after years in Europe, finds the city transformed by the "peasant migrations to the capital which in that decade doubled the population of Lima and caused the outbreak, on the hilltops, in the desert, on the garbage heaps, of that circle of neighbourhoods which became the arrival point for thousands and thousands of beings who had abandoned the provinces because of drought, difficult working conditions, lack of prospects, hunger." The brutal war between Maoist Shining Path guerrillas and the Peruvian Army, which raged in the Andes from 1980 until the late 1990s, accelerated the exodus from the mountains. In the wake of this influx, Lima remained a city in which two distinct cultures regarded each other with hostility: racism was the currency of daily interaction. Mark Malloch Brown, a political consultant for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who was sent to Peru to assist Vargas Llosa when he ran for president in 1990, wrote of his first days in Lima: "When I looked behind the venerable Castilian façade of Peru, I found overtones of white Rhodesia. Many members of the 'old elite' were relatively new settlers who had expected a European lifestyle—built, if necessary, on the backs of the Indians."

Lima's divisions are pronounced; they are not unique. Many cities in Latin America are surrounded by shantytowns that sprang up in the final decades of the twentieth century. The problems of poverty, exclusion, racism and gang violence persist. The twenty-first century has discovered that one of the keys to confronting these dilemmas is not to invest in the traditional Latin American remedies of gated communities and heavily armed security guards, but rather to connect people who fear each other via cheap, reliable transportation. In the last five years, some of Latin America's most troubled

cities have implemented innovative transportation systems. Lima is in the forefront of this movement. Not only has it built a subway, but, more importantly, it has created a system of long, articulated, high-speed buses, known as the Metropolitano. These buses travel on four dedicated lanes, speeding past cars stuck in traffic as they whisk people from privileged cliff-top neighbourhoods in the south through the colonial downtown to poorer neighbourhoods in the north. For anyone without a car, getting across Lima on public transit used to require joining a huge queue on an ancient avenue and squeezing into a small, overcrowded bus that spent hours stopping and starting as it inched across the city. The motto on the card passengers load up with credit to board the Metropolitano makes the aim of integration explicit: *Lima, una ciudad para todos* ("Lima, a city for all"). The Metropolitano's fare of roughly one Canadian dollar may exclude the poorest of the poor, but it attracts, and brings together in the same place, a far broader range of the population than any previous Peruvian transportation system.

The insight that social inclusion improves the economy is seeping into even the most hierarchical Latin American societies, displacing the notion that the poor are an obstacle to growth who must be kept out of sight. The city of Medellín, Colombia, once the world's drug trafficking capital and now an optimistic boom town, lies in a valley. The poor, perched in makeshift houses up the mountainside, look down on the centre; until recently, few could make the exhausting hike downhill and back up again every day to work. The Metrocable, a series of gondola lifts, having expanded from one line to five over the last dozen years, now carries 30,000 people a day to and from these marginalized areas, enabling those who live in the hills to work in the centre. Even in smaller countries with very conservative elites, change is evident. Two months

before my visit to Peru, I was in Guatemala City, one of our hemisphere's least attractive, most dangerous capitals. Here I rode the TransMetro, a new dedicated-lane bus system similar to, though smaller than, Lima's Metropolitano. With a fare of about fifteen cents Canadian, the TransMetro is accessible to all. In a country whose social divisions are among the harshest in the Americas, I was surprised to see municipal civil servants in suits and ties sitting or standing next to women who sold fruit in the street. The divisions that separate these people are not about to go away. Yet by crossing town in the same physical space, people from different social classes absorb the previously remote notion that this city belongs to all of them.

Stephen Henighan's most recent novels are *The Path of the Jaguar* and *Mr. Singh Among the Fugitives*. Read more of his work at geist.com and stephenhenighan.com. Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenighan.

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Reporting Lies

ALBERTO MANGUEL

The craft of untruth has been perfected

When strife invades a land,
Lies pile up like sand.
—German proverb, quoted by the
historian Marc Bloch

Our most pervasive inventions are often not what they seem. When the art of writing was invented more than five thousand years ago, not by poets but by accountants wishing to establish how many sheep or goats were bought or sold in a commercial transaction, it was not made explicit (and still isn't) that the art of reading had to be invented beforehand, so that the system of dots and squiggles meant to convey the message could be deciphered by the reader. Likewise, it was not evident that the power that writing bestowed on its users, of communicating experiences across space and time, entailed as well the power to tell lies.

An early example comes from Sumeria in the first half of the second millennium BCE, when the priests of the Temple of Shamash, in Sippar, set up a monument to commemorate the renovation of the temple and increased the royal stipend assigned to it. Instead of marking it with the correct date, they dated it in the reign of King Manishtushu of Akkadia (c. 2276–2261 BCE), thereby granting the temple a venerable antiquity that justified the increased stipend. The

inscription ends with this reassurance to the reader: “This not a lie but the strict truth.”

Innumerable other examples, from then to this day, show how the craft of untruth, in the apparent reporting of facts, has been perfected. No doubt oral communication is equally prone to lying, but somehow words set down in writing carry a stouter conviction than those same words spoken out loud. As Samuel Goldwyn so eloquently put it, “An oral contract is not worth the paper it's written on.”

Journalists—reporters, memorialists, historians—have long known how easy it is to report what in recent months has come to be known as “alternative facts.” The techniques are many, from the medieval recourse of “lying with the truth” to the use of selective sources of information and euphemisms such as “collateral damage.” Whatever we mean by the truth of an event can be distorted, coloured or changed entirely. When we read a piece of news, we have not so much to suspend disbelief as to place belief and trust in a certain reporter or newspaper that we deem reputable. This trust is all too often misplaced.

Until recently, in my vagabond life as a writer, I was fairly naïve about this danger. From time to time, in a review or a profile, a critic would give information about me and my work that

was not true, but I shrugged these off as honest errors or even private spite. But since I became director of the National Library of Argentina, a year ago, all this changed. The opposition newspapers in Argentina—those whose proprietors oppose the government that appointed me—began to publish articles by the library's ex-director and his allies accusing me of all sort of sins.

It was interesting to see how these attacks worked. For instance, the first exhibition we organized at the library was one on Jorge Luis Borges, Argentina's major writer and director of the library for many years. Because our library has only one (minor) Borges manuscript, I begged for and borrowed a number of others for the exhibition, among them the manuscript of “Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*,” lent by an American bookseller friend. In order to carry the manuscript with me from New York to Buenos Aires, we had to have it insured for half a million dollars, and the insurance company demanded, quite naturally, that armed guards accompany me from the airport to the library, where we could store it in the safe. Next day, *Página 12* (the main opposition paper) published a short report saying that the new director of the library had

arrived with armed guards and that “never since the military dictatorship” had such a show of weapons been seen in the National Library. There was no mention of the Borges manuscript and no journalist took the time to investigate the unusual “fact.” Borges has a story, “Emma Zunz,” about a woman who commits murder to avenge her father and then gives a false account of the events to exculpate herself. “Everyone believed her,” Borges concludes, “because essentially her story was true. False were only a few facts, the times and one or two names.”

I did not, however, expect to see this sort of reporting in Canada, “the true North strong and free.” And not in a paper so highly regarded as the *Globe and Mail*.

This is what happened. The *Globe and Mail* journalist Stephanie Nolen, recently appointed to the South America bureau, asked to interview me in Buenos Aires. Her reporting from Africa had been widely admired and I decided it might be safe to answer her questions. The resulting piece was anything but objective. Ms. Nolen certainly has a right to her tastes and political opinions, but I believe that as a journalist, she has an obligation to check her information carefully. The “alternative facts” she includes in her piece are many. She writes that the Library “cancelled most cultural activities,” something that can be easily disproved by visiting the National Library’s site (which is appearing in a new design): <https://bn.gov.ar/>. Anyone taking a few seconds to check will see that we have numerous ongoing exhibitions on a wide range of subjects, as well as a great number of lectures, workshops, concerts and films—many more than during the previous administration. Just in the first weeks of April, we invited Javier Cercas, Dany Laferrière, Alessandro Baricco and Nérida Piñón to have public conversations at the library, which they carried out to packed auditoriums. The library did stop hosting regular meetings of Carta

Abierta, a group of fervent Kirchnerista intellectuals who met to discuss government policies and excluded all opposing voices. But the library certainly did not favour an anti-leftist intelligentsia. Among the present and forthcoming exhibitions are one dedicated to the investigative journalist and fiction writer Rodolfo Walsh, murdered by the Junta that ruled the country in the seventies; another celebrating the anniversary of Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; another on the readings of Che; another on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution and its influence on the development of socialist ideas in Argentina.

The National Library of Argentina is increasing its contacts with other libraries in the region and around the world to better share our resources and to learn from one another. However, no mention is made in Ms. Nolen’s piece about the many agreements signed for joint events and shared digital material with, among many others, the National Library of Spain, National Library of Colombia, the British Library, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and, most important for me personally, the National Library of Canada, with whose help we are setting up a large exhibition in June for Canada’s 150th anniversary. Ms. Nolen’s depiction of the Library does a disservice to the entire library community that has welcomed our efforts for increased cooperation.

Distortion of facts is also apparent in her piece. When Ms. Nolen says that I “heaped public criticism on the previous library administration, which was run by a widely respected leftist intellectual,” she does not say that I had for almost a year carefully preserved silence, as much as I could, about the previous administration. I expressed reservations in a short piece I wrote for the *Literary Review* and (most unfortunately) in the interview with Ms. Nolen. It’s not at all the case that the previous director, Horacio

González, maintained what Ms. Nolen describes as “arch civility.” In fact he often slandered the new library administration and me in the press, and also to other library directors, publishing a letter signed by many academic friends of his, and writers such as J. M. Coetzee, to whom he lied in order to obtain his signature. The details of this affair were investigated by the French journalist Philippe Ries and can be read (in French) on the website of the Mediapart Agency: https://www.mediapart.fr/search?search_word=manguel.

Ms. Nolen judges that I “won few friends here” (Argentina). In fact, there has been a great deal of positive reporting in the Argentinian press, and Ms. Nolen appears not to have noticed the dozens of intellectuals from both political camps who have accepted my invitations to contribute to our work. She says that I am “viewed as naïve at best, vain and ambitious at worst, and with little to show for himself after his first stint in the library kitchen.” By whom, may I ask? Certainly (with the exceptions of Beatriz Sarlo and Martín Kohan, who have a right to their opinion) not by intellectuals I respect. I could have given Ms. Nolen names, had she only asked. And as to having “little to show,” Ms. Nolen might have asked to see the dossier on our activities at the library over the last year, or spoken to any of the 836 people working in the library today (a few may be critical, but the majority is certainly not) about what we have been doing in this institution for the past eleven months. This last I find astonishing: to research an article on the National Library of Argentina and not interview anyone on the staff except the present director, and then to privilege the narrative of the ex-director and his cohorts. Yes, I made a mistake when I spoke of nepotism and said that Mr. Gonzalez had employed his wife and daughter at the library: as Mr. Gonzalez himself points out, he had employed his daughter and *sister*. I apologize for this error.

Ms. Nolen is a journalist of long-standing and high reputation, and I was surprised that in this piece she was not more thorough in verifying her facts. Having sympathy for Mr. Gonzalez and his policies is one thing; accepting his words unchallenged in a political climate of vicious antagonism is quite another. It is simply unethical journalism.

Under the new administration, the library staff has been working tirelessly to complete the catalogue and facilitate access to our heritage through digitization and exhibits, and

I hope that more objective Canadians may have an opportunity to visit it, to use its wonderful resources and reading rooms, and attend its exciting slate of programs. However, Ms. Nolen reporting on Argentina risks skewing Canadians' understanding and appreciation of the Library and the country, to the detriment of everyone.

Journalism suffers from what psychologists call the "perseverance of memory," by which something learned through a convincing narrative is almost impossible to eradicate even if a mountain of facts disproving the

story appears. Carl Gustav Jung wrote that the world is psychically infected by two groups of people: politicians and journalists. I never imagined I would be witness to such vivid proof of his judgment.

Alberto Manguel is the award-winning author of hundreds of works, most recently (in English) Curiosity, All Men Are Liars and A History of Reading. He lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he serves as Director of the National Library. Read more of his work at alberto.manguel.com and geist.com.

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Clowns, Cake, Canoes: This Is Canada?

LISA BIRD-WILSON

Romantic notions that equate Indigenous peoples with nature are not going to cut it

Last fall I participated in two joint readings with the Nisga'a author Jordan Abel (*Injun*, Talonbooks, 2016). Hearing Jordan talk about his work and present it in his unique style, via digital mixer with the theatre lights turned low, was a fresh treat. In *Injun*, Jordan works from found text, taking lines of old Western novels containing the word *Injun* and using them, via random generating software, to create his poetry. It's a creative and unique approach.

Later in the year, I saw an article in the *Walrus* in which Jordan writes about rethinking his reading practices and about a friend mentioning the idea of "reading Indigenously." Jordan admits he doesn't know how to do it, this "reading Indigenously," or what it even really means, but one of his actions is to focus on reading works by Indigenous authors.

Jordan's suggestion of reading Indigenously stuck with me. Like Jordan, I haven't come to terms with all that reading Indigenously might entail, but for me a part of the practice means dissecting what I'm reading to identify both what's there, and—equally significant—what's missing. It occurs to me this might be described as decolonizing reading, where decolonizing is a verb and reading is both a noun and a verb. This kind of reading is not solely an Indigenous act—it's

required of us all.

Later, I stumbled across a review of Jane Urquhart's recent book *A Number of Things* (HarperCollins, 2016), described as a book about fifty things that are meant to symbolize the story of Canada and "speak to our collective experience as a nation." As an Indigenous person in Canada, I was instantly suspicious of that description. We'll see about that, I thought. I didn't quite know it yet, but I had just put on my "Indigenous reading" glasses. In that spirit, I picked up a copy of Urquhart's "150th birthday gift to Canada," undid the ribbon, tore away the pretty paper and found a book about fifty objects meant to represent Canada, including tractors, barns, lighthouses, canoes, books, a Mountie's turban and a train's cow-catcher, to name a few.

Around the same time, Nêhiyaw NDP Member of Parliament Romeo Saganash wrote a satiric letter to Justin Trudeau calling for a national canoe-and-paddle program. Saganash was responding to the Prime Minister's goofy remarks in Saskatchewan about Indigenous youth wanting places to put their canoes and paddles. Glittery and *Vogue* as the PM seemed only a short year ago, his words landed like a clump of lake-sodden weeds.

"Canoe," one of Urquhart's fifty things in *A Number of Things*, echoes

the PM's odd hang-up with canoes and Indigenous people. Urquhart states, "The canoe was the craft... as the aboriginal [sic] peoples of Canada knew and continue to know so well—that could take you to certain remote parts of the country." For Urquhart, the canoe, and Indigenous people by association, engender a dreamy psychological transformation, linked to nature, and juxtaposed with city "rules, timetables, and obedience."

A Number of Things includes often sentimental vignettes, historical and personal in nature, with the things themselves acting as jumping-off points. About five items out of fifty spark particular interest as I read through my Indigenous lens. The rope that hanged Louis Riel, "the [angry] rebel" "fuelled by a kind of glorious fury." A legging belonging to a Beothuk mother "on the cusp of extinction." Reductive and frustrating references to First Nations "tribes." Romantic notions equating us with nature. The problem is, in a country whose very foundation is based on extinguishing Indigenous title to the land in order to make room for European settlers, token representations of our romantic or imagined vanishing presence on this land are not going to cut it. Texts are as telling for what's said as what is not said. Through the reading, I'm vexed by what remains un-expressed,

who remains un-included, what experiences are un-reflected in this celebration of Canada.

Canada 150. It's happening now, it's happening all around us. There's so much history on this land that's not about Canada and the last 150 years, yet we find ourselves in the middle of a frenetic birthday party with balloons, streamers, fireworks, confetti, cake and clowns. Suddenly, roused from our frosting-induced stupor, we brush the cake crumbs from our lapel, turn to the clown next to us and ask: Why? Why are we in the middle of this party celebrating the tiny fraction of history that is settler history on these lands? Because time, the perception of time, is controlled and ordered by those who hold power. The context for presenting and understanding history (read: Canada 150) is a white Canadian context.

Urquhart's book reflects the privilege to structure time and tell official history. In such a telling, it's up to Aboriginal contexts, stories and experiences to fit into the order established by the dominant framework. As if Indigenous experience must be wedged into the story of Canada on this continent. As if it's not really Canada that fills the small space in the story. As if stories are linear. Embedded in Canada 150 are the workings of 150 years of unexamined power and authority.

Urquhart's "collective experience as a nation" renders Indigenous experiences, thoughts, languages and world views marginal. And yet, these are times of unprecedented attention to Indigenous issues, in great part sparked by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and buoyed by such actions as the federal inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and other emerging awareness and interest in Indigenous issues, not to mention the sheer unwillingness of Indigenous people to accept any longer our disenfranchisement from the national conversation. What

I see happening right now is a chance to change the way we think about the story of Canada. In this vein, I find Urquhart's book an out-of-shape aerobics-class participant in bad '90s spandex sweating to keep up but ultimately one or two Zumba steps behind the rest of us.

Reflected in Urquhart's vignettes are versions of Indigenous experiences acceptable to, or defined by, mainstream thinking, that reflect the power of the author to choose and the power of the publisher to choose. The question, during this time of unprecedented national efforts toward reconciliation, is: How do we critically analyze those choices, and perhaps come to a new understanding of how the choices were made and upon what foundation? This, I think, is what's involved in reading Indigenously.

In Urquhart's 39th entry, "Cree Basket," she writes with fondness about the Nêhiyaw poet Louise Bernice Halfe, former Poet Laureate of Saskatchewan, also known as Sky Dancer. Questioning, rethinking, resolving are at the heart of Halfe's latest work, *Burning in this Midnight Dream* (Coteau, 2016). If there is a story to be attended to, it's within the pages of her book, in the walk "backwards on footprints/ that walked forward/ for the story to be told." Halfe's poems belong in a story connected to hope for decolonization (all of us—you too, white Canada) and the current national conversation about truth and reconciliation. Each poem offers a gift of language, both Nêhiyaw and English, and deep resistance against the "seed of blindness."

Hope and the desire to reclaim "what I lost/ what is needed for the red road" weave through Halfe's collection. Following a series of gutting early poems reflecting the "truth" in truth and reconciliation—poems, I might add, that although less sanitized "go deeper but never fully plumb

the depths"—Halfe writes, "I want to know how I can bring beauty/ and drink the nectar of delight." Louise Halfe teaches, she leads the decolonizing efforts that are so painfully familiar to generations of Indigenous people: "We offer our tobacco, hang our prayer cloth/ take these small lessons/ and reclaim them as our own."

Both Urquhart's and Halfe's texts rely on personal and historical perspectives, but the polarization of the story of Canada, "our collective experience as a nation," is utterly glaring when the two texts are placed side by side. Halfe's X, "burned ink onto [her] skin for Treaty Six," represents the divergence that goes far beyond the two books. Urquhart's Treaty X ought to be no less visible, no less acutely felt than Halfe's, and yet it's as if Urquhart's Treaty X is written in invisible settler ink. Not burned onto her skin but more like an all-but-faded temporary tattoo. This is the settler privilege, to choose not to know, to choose not to participate mindfully and meaningfully in Treaty. The work ought not to be all ours. The tricky business of reading Indigenously, whatever that might fully mean, belongs to us all.

While I firmly believe your chances in Canadian Trivial Pursuit might be improved after reading *A Number of Things*, unfortunately your engagement with the most important political and cultural ideas of the moment won't be.

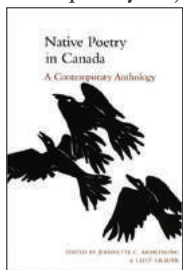
Lisa Bird-Wilson, a Cree-Metis writer from Saskatchewan, is the author of three books: The Red Files, a poetry collection (Nightwood Editions, 2016), Just Pretending, short stories (Coteau Books, 2013) and An Institute of Our Own: A History of the Gabriel Dumont Institute (Gabriel Dumont Publishing, 2011). Her shorter works have been published in periodicals including the Malahat Review, Grain, Prairie Fire, Dalhousie Review, kimiwan and Geist, and in anthologies including Best Canadian Essays. Bird-Wilson lives in Saskatoon, SK. Read her story "Blood Memory" at geist.com.

ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

INDIGENOUS POETRY WITHOUT BORDERS

As a Nisga'a writer, I'm often deeply invested in not only how other poets are tackling issues through poetry but also how Indigenous writers are navigating that same terrain. Reading poetry is necessary. Reading Indigenous writing is essential. I think these are more or less the starting points for my reading practice. Should I read poetry? Should I read Indigenous poetry? Should I read Canadian work? Should I read American work? And what does that mean anyway to choose to read a book based on an author's national identification? Don't Indigenous peoples prefer to identify through their Indigenous nation? And subsequently reject national, colonial



writing within the scope of Canada. For example, the **Native Poetry in Canada: A Contemporary Anthology**, edited by Jeannette Armstrong and Lally Grauer (Broadview Press, 2001), suggests that there is such a thing as Native Canadian writing, and editor Neal McLeod's anthology **Indigenous Poetics in Canada** (WLU Press, 2014) suggests something very similar. Even Tomson Highway's **From Oral to Written: A Celebration of Indigenous Literature in Canada, 1980–2010** (Talonbooks, 2017), seems to propose that there is a group of Indigenous Canadian authors. But who gets to decide this?

labels like American and/or Canadian and/or Australian? I've been thinking about this a lot recently. There are many that conceptualize Indigenous

Let's talk about Sarain Stump and Chrystos. Stump was born in Fremont, Wyoming, in 1945, moved to Alberta in 1964 and lived in Canada until his death in 1974. He wrote, published and exhibited his work extensively in Canada, and his writing is included in *Native Poetry in Canada*. In the book **There Is My People Sleeping**, Stump balances poetry with drawing. Each page is a diptych, asking the reader to navigate through word-image patterns that often contain both literal and metaphorical connections. *There Is My People Sleeping* is a beautiful and surprisingly minimal book that can apparently be labelled Canadian Indigenous writing despite the national plurality of Stump's history.

On the other hand, we have Chrystos, whose work is not included in *Native Poetry in Canada*. Chrystos is a two-spirit Menominee writer and also apparently an American. They were born in San Francisco and identify as living for a substantial time on Bainbridge Island in Washington State. The thing is that Chrystos published substantially in Canada. In fact, they produced four books with the Vancouver publisher Press Gang (1975–2002), including **Not Vanishing** (1988), *Dream On* (1991), *In Her I Am* (1993) and *Fire Power* (1995). Chrystos published more in Canada than they ever did in America. And yet their exclusion from *Native Poetry in Canada* might suggest that they are not part of the same grouping of Native Canadian writers.

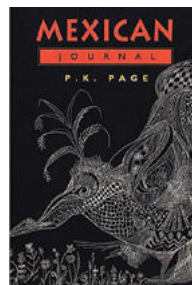
For a reader, both Stump and Chrystos offer incredibly powerful visions of the world as seen through the lens of Indigeneity. And I think both writers are absolutely invaluable.

What is of the utmost importance when reading Indigenous work is to read beyond our own national boundaries and/or to resist how those boundaries shape our reading practices. Even though Chrystos's work is incredible, I often wonder if Canadians overlook it just because it isn't "Canadian." And that, in my opinion, would be a loss.

—Jordan Abel

PAGE'S PAGES

The poet and artist P.K. Page wrote **Mexican Journal** (Porcupine's Quill) from 1960 to 1963, while posted in Mexico with her husband, Ambassador W. Arthur Irwin. I picked up this book thinking I'd have nothing to relate to within its pages, but I was mistaken: I couldn't put it back down. Then I read it again, and couldn't put it down the second time, either. Page recorded riveting accounts of both her public- and private-life activities. She candidly described her first impressions of various dignitaries who visited Mexico in the early '60s, including John and Jacqueline Kennedy: "Jackie got off



the plane looking like a twelve-year-old girl back from school and a bit shy... She is better looking in photos than in life and he is perhaps the reverse." Page

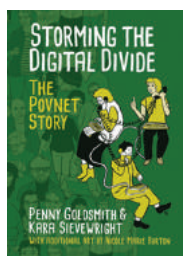
also met a number of artists, mystics and other notables, including the multi-talented Leonora Carrington (as far as I can fathom, not related to the British artist Dora Carrington). Page wrote of an early meeting with

her: “Have been helping in my spare moments with Leonora Carrington’s play. She wrote it when she was eighteen. I know little about it except that it is about a girl of eighteen who has been kept in her nursery all that time and who falls in love with her rocking horse. It is a tragedy.” Page had a rare talent for capturing someone’s essence with just a few sublime sentences. Besides the ability to portray her associates, and the spirit of the times, Page was adept at detailing states of mind. She sums up the despair of writer’s block with this entry: “Scraping the bottom of the barrel hurts when you’re the barrel.” And that is only Part One. In Part Two, Page writes extensively about the spiritual and mystic practices that she pursued during her stay in Mexico. It’s worth reading to encounter her distinct and, in some cases, transcendent observations.

—*Jill Mandrake*

ANTI-POVERTY CONNECTION

In 1997, when Internet connections were dial-up and most of us were just trying to figure out how the World Wide Web worked, a group of people had the foresight to see that the Internet could be a powerful tool for the anti-poverty movement. They created PovNet, a digital network that supports advocates in BC and across Canada. According to the book **Storming the Digital Divide: The PovNet Story** (Lazara), written by Penny Goldsmith and illustrated by Kara Sieviewright and Nicole Marie Burton, the first post to PovNet’s welfare discussion board was from an advocate in Terrace, BC, who wrote “Hello, hello! Is anybody out there? I’m all alone...” *Storming the Digital Divide* is a graphic essay collection that covers the history of PovNet and the anti-poverty movement in BC, plus stories from remote communities



such as Bella Coola and Haida Gwaii, where advocates use PovNet to help people with things like child custody disputes, housing problems, EI claims and appeals, and pension applications. PovNet continues to provide valuable resources to advocates who have made it their job to hunt for and interpret the information for their clients, but it can’t storm the digital divide all by itself. For this we need to increase access to the Internet for everyone, no matter where they live or how much money they have or don’t have. In our rush to embrace the newest technologies, it’s easy to leave people behind. This is an important little book and its comic-strip style of storytelling keeps readers engaged.

—*Patty Osborne*

BOOKSHOP OF THE HEART

Shakespeare and Company bookstore in Paris regularly makes it onto lists like The World’s Coolest Bookstores and The 20 Most Beautiful Bookstores in the World. Once, years ago, I lived above the shop for several weeks as a resident “tumbleweed,” sleeping on the floor in exchange for a couple of hours of chores a day. Chaos eddied into every corner of the shop: drawers crammed with sheaves of unsorted tumbleweed autobiographies (everyone who stayed was required to write a brief account of their life to date, and to read a book a day); sticky glasses left behind by George Whitman, the shop’s founder, who regularly offered homemade lemonade to passersby; once, while tidying behind a velvet-covered daybed, I found a flattened, desiccated mouse, enshrouded by dustballs. A new book tells the full story of this magical and amazing place. **Shakespeare and Company, Paris: A History of the Rag & Bone Shop of the Heart** (published by the shop) is a gorgeous thing, full of photographs that document the shop’s nearly seventy-year span (one photograph from 1984 shows George Whitman at age seventy, with his daughter

Sylvia, then three years old, riding on his shoulders). One of the most interesting chapters in the book covers the years of transition, when George was (reluctantly) passing the baton to Sylvia: the old, anarchic world rubbing shoulders with the new (the shop’s first cash register appeared—over George’s vehement objections—in 2002). At one point Sylvia recalls the winter of 2000, when she first considered moving back to Paris from London: “I was nineteen, and my father was in his eighties. I wanted to get to know him,



before I regretted it forever.” George Whitman passed away in December of 2011 at the age of ninety-eight, leaving daughter Sylvia to preside over the bookstore, which

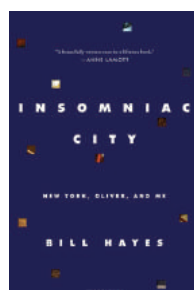
now includes a sidewalk-level café from which customers can gaze across the Seine toward Notre-Dame.

—*Michael Hayward*

BETTER LATE

A middle-aged man moves to a new city to restart his life, gets to know an old man named Oliver, and after only a few months realizes that he has fallen in love with both the new city and the old man. Not a remarkable story, unless that city is New York and Oliver is the neurologist and writer (played by Robin Williams in the movie *Awakenings*), Oliver Sacks. Each man is surprised by the other: Sacks has never been in a relationship before and has not come out as a gay man, and Hayes is not looking for love, let alone with a seventy-seven-year-old. Both Hayes and Sacks are insomniacs; Sacks’s solution is Xanax, but Hayes prefers to wander around New York at night taking photos and talking to strangers. Hayes writes about his ramblings and his life with Sacks in **Insomniac City: New York, Oliver, and Me** (Bloomsbury) and includes some of his photos.

My favourite sections of the book are short jottings from Hayes's journal that paint an intimate picture of a quirky, endlessly curious Sacks who still looks at things with childlike wonder and who often thinks about the elements in the periodic table. Hayes moves into an apartment a few floors above Sacks and the two share a quiet domestic life of cooking, reading poetry, looking things up in dictionaries, sharing bathwater (not at the same time) and drinking wine on the rooftop patio of their building. Even as he is dying of cancer, Sacks continues to write, and near the end he tells Hayes: "I love writing but it is really *thinking* I love—that rush of thoughts—new connections in the brain being made." It was a pleasure to read this simple



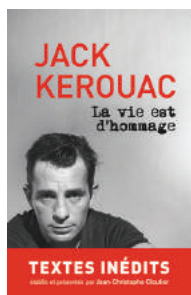
and beautiful love story, but later I realized that I had also been given a glimpse of what it would be like to be a man: to be able to walk around a city alone and at night, strike up conversations with crack addicts and other random dudes or explore a dark warehouse/artist's studio full of junk—all without being harassed or feeling (and being) unsafe.

—Patty Osborne

JACK KEROUAC, FRANCOPHONE

The success of Jack Kerouac's 1957 novel *On the Road* marked the start of the Beat era, his "spontaneous prose" style a striking departure from the formalities of previous generations of American writers. But not many people realize that Kerouac, that prototypically "all-American" writer, was born to Québécois parents, raised in the midst of an expatriate French-Canadian community in the mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts, and spoke only French until the age of

six, when he first began to learn English at school. Two new books focus on



some of Kerouac's first writing attempts in his native language. These include an early draft of *On the Road*, titled "Sur le chemin," written in 1952 in joul, a slangy, colloquial form of French, while Kerouac was living in Mexico City in the apartment of William S. Burroughs. An English translation of "Sur le chemin" is included in **The Unknown Kerouac: Rare, Unpublished & Newly Translated Writings** (Library of America), along with "The Night is My Woman," a translation (by Jean-Christophe Cloutier) of "La nuit est ma femme," which dates from 1951. Cloutier's introductory note in *The Unknown Kerouac* makes fascinating reading, shedding light on Kerouac's ambivalence about English and his attachment to the orality of his first language. As Kerouac himself put it in a letter in 1950, "All of my knowledge rests in my 'French-Canadianness' and nowhere else."

—Michael Hayward

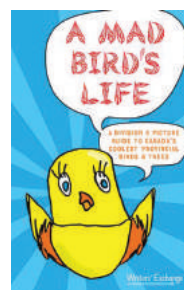
ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A THIRD-GRADER?

According to the copyright page of **A Mad Bird's Life: A Division 6 Picture Guide to Canada's Coolest Provincial Birds & Trees** (Writers' Exchange), "This book was created by Division 6, Mrs. Mehnert's grade 3 class, at Thunderbird Elementary in the winter of 2014." It's both illuminating and delightful to read how primary school children view our biosphere. In this chapbook, each student-writer focussed on a particular bird or tree and produced a page of illustrated

text about it. The chosen trees have a colourful array of names: Red Spruce, White Spruce, Black Spruce, Red Oak, White Birch and Eastern White Pine. A student called Joanna wrote this haiku-like tribute to the White Spruce:

*I'm a large tree with a narrow top
My needles go in a spiral around the twig
The needles smell really bad when they're young*

Curiously, the tree most written about was the Tamarack (as student Ivan wrote, "its name is an Algonquin word/for the wood used for snowshoes"). In the bird department, the two hottest items were the chickadee and the gyrfalcon. I imagine the chickadee is popular because its birdsong is



so pervasive. The gyrfalcon, meanwhile, is impressive because of its outright strength: it's been known to take down a grey heron. A student called Jason wrote a poetic tribute to the gyrfalcon, part of which goes like this:

*I'm the largest falcon in the world
I like to eat ptarmigan
I sometimes take baths in freezing water*

A Mad Bird's Life is one of a series of writing projects for inner-city kids, sponsored by The Writers' Exchange. To learn more, check out their website at vancouverWE.com.

—Jill Mandrake



OFF THE SHELF

In *A Brief History of Oversharing* (ECW Press), **Shawn Hitchins** claims that if his naked photos went viral, they'd create a new genre of pornography called pity porn. Dee gets sent to detention for touching Osei's perfectly shaped skull in *New Boy* by **Tracy Chevalier** (Knopf Canada). In *Dr. Edith Vane and the Hares of Crawley Hall* by **Suzette Mayr** (Coach House Books), Edith emails Coral to say, "You freak me out and my therapist says I should approach you with caution." Vengeful criminals once taped a bomb to the car of John F.C.B. Vance, known as Canada's Sherlock Holmes, according to *Blood, Sweat, and Fear* by **Eve Lazarus** (Arsenal Pulp Press). In *A Girl Walks Into a Book: What the Brontës Taught Me About Life, Love, and Women's Work* (Seal Press), **Miranda K. Pennington** asks Heathcliff what he planned to accomplish by spite-marrying his neighbour. **Kate Cayley** presents a partial list of people who have claimed to be *Christ* in *Other Houses* (Brick Books). In *#IndianLovePoems* (Signature Editions), **Tenille K. Campbell**'s one-night-stand falls asleep and she wonders: how the fuck do I get him out of here? Thunder rakes in like a Hell's Angels convoy in *I'd Write the Sea Like a Parlour Game* by **Alison Dyer** (Killick Press). **Jennifer Still**'s grandma swears we should chew everything, even words, in *Comma* (BookThug). **Eamon McGrath** slams five shots of vodka at a Polish bar and kisses everyone who brings him boiled potatoes and pickled herring in *Berlin-Warszawa Express* (ECW Press). Ezekiel Bradeau kills readers who don't like his books in *Readopolis* by **Bertrand Laverdure**, translated by **Oana Avasilichioaei** (BookThug). In *Thin Air of the Knowable* by **Wendy Donawa** (Brick Books), a poet explains the concept of Schrödinger's cat over wontons and tuna sandwiches. Lovers flicker bareback beneath the

full moon in *Escape from Wreck City* by **John Creary** (Anvil Press). Boxer broadcasts live from a wooden hut in an A&W parking lot in *Rock 'n' Radio: When DJs and Rock Music Ruled the Airwaves* by **Ian Howarth** (Véhicule Press). **Rodney DeCroo** wants to leap from his skull like a man trapped inside a burning skyscraper in *Next Door to the Butcher Shop* (Nightwood Editions). **Karen Von Hahn** worries that her mother will look like a bruised, puffy Star Trek alien after her facelift in *What Remains: Object Lessons in Love and Loss* (House of Anansi). An old lady tells her drug dealer to trade his do-rag for something more sophisticated—a fedora, perhaps—in *Getting Out of Hope* by **James Cadelli** (Conundrum Press). Sunday codes her dying father's thoughts and words into a powerful computer virus in *Malagash* by **Joey Comeau** (ECW Press). According to **Owen Beattie** and **John Geiger** in *Frozen in Time: The Fate of the Franklin Expedition* (Greystone Books), sailors ate fox entrails on a good day and sucked on their mittens on a bad day. **Andrew Struthers** says that kids smoke weed because of peer review, not peer pressure, in *The Sacred Herb / The Devil's Weed* (New Star Books). The dog pisses everywhere the paper hasn't been laid in *Bad Ideas* by **Michael V. Smith** (Nightwood Editions). **Linda Besner** leaves her pants in the camper of a famous nonconformist in *Feel Happier in 9 Seconds* (Coach House Books). Daniel sucks wind in the third round of a cage fight in *In the Cage* by **Kevin Hardcastle** (Biblioasis).

NOTED ELSEWHERE

Author Jennifer Nelson says *Common Place* by **Sarah Pinder** (Coach House Books) "will provide a moving (in both senses) playground for your thoughts"; RobmcLennan.blogspot.ca says the book provides a "slippery single-portrait that distorts just as it begins to come into view"; author Sue Sinclair says

it's a "friend of the abject landscape" and the *Globe and Mail* says that its "intersectionality makes it clear that some histories are a greater burden than others." Daniel Patterson on Goodreads says *Morton: A Cross-Country Rail Journey* by **David Collier** (Conundrum Press) was "overall an enjoyable read"; the *Globe and Mail* says each panel bulges with the strain of the layers of history it portrays; the *London Free Press* recommends reading it "if you're in a mood to think, really think, about your home and native land." *Quill & Quire* says that *Searching for Petronius Totem* by **Peter Unwin** (Freehand Books) is "a scabrous, gleefully offensive, high-energy ride across a landscape that looks oddly familiar, but is viewed at an oblique angle and through a purposefully distorted lens"; the *Silhouette* says that it's "unknown if someone outside of southern Ontario or Canada would find the novel funny." The *Canadian Jewish News* says *The Old World* by **Cary Fagan** (House of Anansi) is "a noble creative gesture that succeeds brilliantly from an artistic standpoint"; *Quill & Quire* says that "it's a solid idea for a collection"; Barbara on Goodreads says it's uniquely organized and that she enjoyed almost all of the stories. The *Westender* says *Encyclopedia of Lies* by **Christopher Gudgeon** (Anvil Press) "wastes no words"; *All Lit Up* says it "takes a heartbreaking and hilarious look into the lives, loves, sexual obsessions and delusions that inform a grand cast of off-kilter characters."

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Alberto Manguel** for winning the 2017 Formentor de las Letras Prize for his life's work on the history of libraries and literature; to **Terence Byrnes** for winning Gold in the 40th annual National Magazine Awards for his photo essay "South of Buck Creek," featured in *Geist* 103; and to **Richard Kelly Kemick** for winning Gold for fiction in the 40th annual National Magazine Awards.



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The GEIST Cryptic Crossword

Prepared by Meandricus

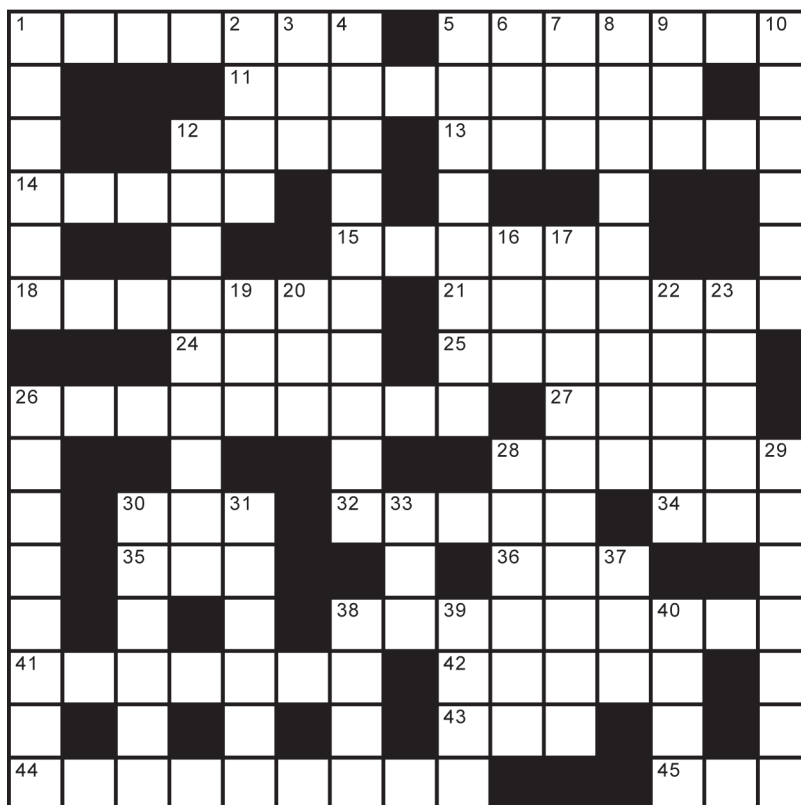
Send a copy of your completed puzzle,
along with your name and address, to:

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210-111 West Hastings St.
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1H4
Fax 604-677-6319

The winner will be selected at random from
correct solutions received and will be awarded
a one-year subscription to *Geist* or—if already
a subscriber—a *Geist* magnet. Good luck!

ACROSS

- 1 The Dutch saw a hanged man on the
hedge (2)
- 5 On the way they teased us by pulling a
fifth
- 11 Don't make a scene! Just wash up
everything in the poop areas (2)
- 12 Baby, check out the top flaps on that drip
- 13 The way yeasted bread works is super
- 14 She'll think about the red one tomorrow
- 15 Tick off the tee before the crone does
- 18 Earliest Newfie races still a target
- 21 Sounds like those runners were
making waves
- 24 Slip into this as it will be difficult to split
- 25 He can navigate while we drum up
business
- 26 At the driving range, mind the stair drop
and don't stumble on the way (2)
- 27 Let's get together at the line so we can
dish out a little
- 28 Those dirty dogs patted me
- 30 The rest of the laps were uneventful and
not quick (abbrev)
- 32 Sounds like one of them was stalking her
while the rest were singing
- 34 I didn't make this up: he'll advertise his
product at 11
- 35 Is it legal to include that company?
(abbrev)
- 36 This has not been the best 24 hours I've
spent before (abbrev)
- 38 My bookie dug that travel document
- 41 Did you collide with anyone at the event?
(2)
- 42 Adding actions is not the subject!
- 43 Workers at the gun factory started the



- play (abbrev)
- 44 With a few of these you could find one way
- 45 Sue's motor neurons reminded us of Lou's
(abbrev)

DOWN

- 1 The alternate way defeated them
- 2 Where most of us live
- 3 We can adjourn unless we have this
(abbrev)
- 4 Let the Satanist go there so we don't add
fuel to the fire (2)
- 5 Their season's in full swing so I trust the
traps are full
- 6 A percent of them have troubles (abbrev)
- 7 This year we're interested in relative
speed (abbrev)
- 8 At dinner did your brood enjoy the mixup
or did it agitate you too? (2)
- 9 All the sixths go on this line
- 10 Gamely she took a chance
- 12 On the 19th Mick couldn't work so he got
stuck on dark web links
- 16 Sounds like you also want more than one
- 17 According to Maggie's story, they run the
show
- 19 Hey Wiley, don't blow yourself up!
(abbrev)
- 20 In the beginning Hogtown was just a rock
on a hill
- 22 Chelsea stayed there when she got to

- California
- 23 Mark's smoking can be very abrasive
- 26 In the pride era some things are getting fixed
- 28 Think I'll take off until the explosion dies
down
- 29 Those Australians were looking for a
world of their own
- 30 I gave the mister a ring when I got to
Madrid
- 31 That looks good but isn't it the long way?
- 33 Sounds like the second one was a sheep
- 37 That receding wave was righteous
- 38 Sandy went to Mongolia
- 39 At 19 they survived tomboyhood
- 40 Use SOS, a bare-bones scrubber

The winners for Puzzle 104 were
Jim Lowe & Brian Goth

P	H	O		R	O	G	E	R		H	A	T	C	H
I		N		U		O		A	G	O		R	I	O
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C	R	I	M	E		I	A	N		E	S	K	E	R
C	A	M	E	L		L		Z	E	D		E	R	A
H		E	D	S		O	V	E	N			T	E	D
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O		C	H	I	C	K	E	N		L	I	T	T	L
E	Q	U	A	L		S		U		L	E	G	A	L
F		T	M	T		Z		M	U	L	T	I		F
F		W		S		O	R	B		E		F	T	C
E	B	O	O	K		N		E	N	D	S			U
C	A	R	B	I	N	E	E	R	S		O			P
T	A	K	E	N							F	A	B	L

Question Period

ROB KOVITZ

The End of Solitude: In a Hyperconnected World, Are We Losing the Art of Being Alone?

How Possible Is It to Live Inside a Volcano?

What's in Store at John Waters' Offbeat Summer Camp?

Feeling Oddly Kinky? Check Out These NSFW Videos of Terrible Japanese Sex Shows

Why Is Neanderthal Erotica So Hot?

Now Then, With Teeth or Without?

Where Should We Draw the Line for Genetically Modifying Children?

Can the Government Take Away My Indigenous Identity?

Who Can Represent Black Pain?

Who Is Melania? The Lessons of the First Lady's Selfies

From White Trash to the Whitelash: What Do White People Want?

What Would Jesus Do at a Church Gun Raffle?

What Would Jesus Do—About Donald Trump?

Is the Trump Administration Enabling Genocide in Yemen? And Will Americans Ever Pay Attention?

Is It Possible That All of These Events and Reports Are Completely Unrelated

and Nothing More Than an Entirely “Unhappy Coincidence?”

What Type of Role Does Pepsi Believe Cola Can Play in the Resistance?

Who Provided the Helicopter to Get That Guy on the Roof So He Could Play His Cello?

Wouldn't a Viola Be More Appropriate to Bring to a Public Protest?

How Do You Negotiate That, and Do That in Kind of a Biblical Way?

What Would Jesus Disrupt?

Hey Look, in the Meantime, I Guess, I Can't Be Doing So Badly, Because I'm President,

and You're Not. You Know. Say Hello to Everybody OK?

Is Justin Trudeau the Anti-Trump?

We're Going to Get Together and We're Going to Call Canada, and We're Going to Say, 'What Happened?'

Home Ownership in Canada: Should We Let That Dream Die?

How Secure Are Your _____? Could Your _____ be a _____? When is it Smarter to ____ or ____?

There Is a Suspicion That We Suffer From Secular Stagnation.

What Are the Ideas You've Got That Will Make Canada Outdo That?

Are You Ever Afraid? Do You Ever Say to Yourself, “My God, How Did We Get Here?”

Does the Member Think a Member of Parliament Should Have the Ability

to Get Off the Bus at Any Point He or She Desires?

How Do You Explain Experimentation to Someone Whose Job Is to

Maintain the Status Quo, to Keep the Money Safely Flowing Into Their Office?

Will the Prime Minister and Minister of Youth Present a Real Transition Plan

That Includes the Funding Needed for Prevention?

Are We Having Too Much Fun?



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Juliette Storr

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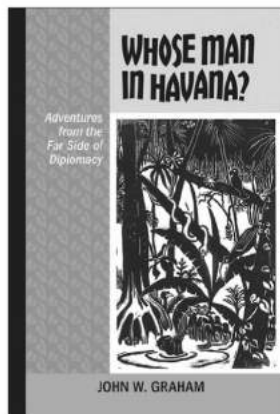
– Pamela Moultrie, University of the Bahamas

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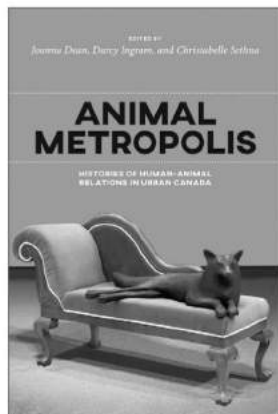
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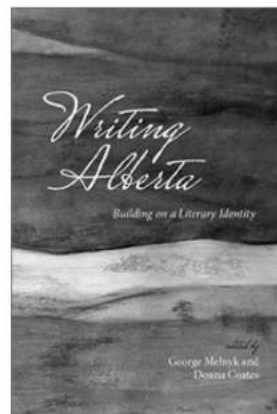
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