GEIST

FACT + FICTION NORTH of AMERICA

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WINTER 2017
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Life in the Anthropocene

Stumbling at the Starting Line
The Story of Dick und Jane
Candy Cap Magic

NEW TALONBOOKS

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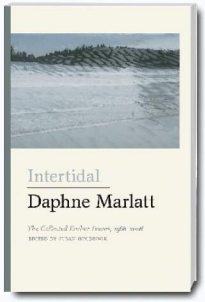

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DAPHNE MARLATT

edited by Susan Holbrook

An early member of the avant-garde TISH group, which turned Canadian poetry for the first time to a focus on language, Marlatt's career has spanned five decades and a range of formal styles and concerns. *Intertidal: The Collected Earlier Poems* offers Marlatt's perceptual and Vancouver-centric work of the 1970s, her feminist writing of the 1980s, and her later collaborative explorations of the environment. Intertidal collects a broad selection of this poet's groundbreaking work, including poetry from sixteen published collections and a number of previously unpublished or uncollected poems.

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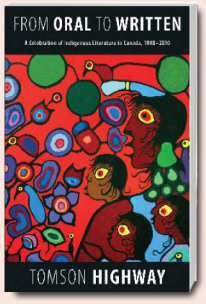

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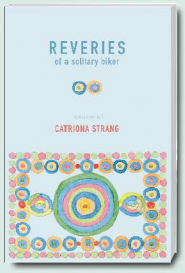

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MERCEDES ENG

Combining text from government questionnaires and reports, lyric poetry, and photography, *Prison Industrial Complex Explodes* examines the possibility of a privatized prison system in Canada leading up to then Prime Minister Harper's Conservative government passing the Anti-Terrorism Act, also known as Bill C-51.

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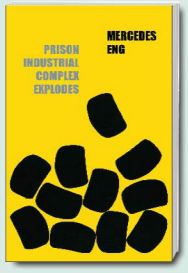
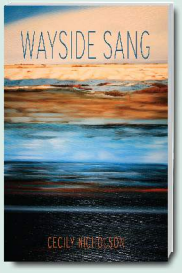


Reveries of a Solitary Biker

CATRIONA STRANG

After Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, translated as *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (or *A Solitary Walker*). Biking around Vancouver, Strang returned to several issues of lifelong interest, her own version of Rousseau's obsessions. *Reveries of a Solitary Biker* collects her poetic responses.

978-1-77201-180-7 · $16.95 · 88 pages · Poetry



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CECILY NICHOLSON

Wayside Sang concerns entwined migrations of Black-other diaspora coming to terms with fossil-fuel psyches in times of trauma and movement. This is a poetic account of economy travel on North American roadways, across the Peace and Ambassador bridges and through the Fleetway tunnel, above and beneath Great Lake rivers between nation states.

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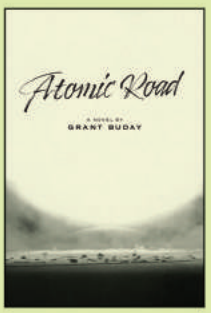

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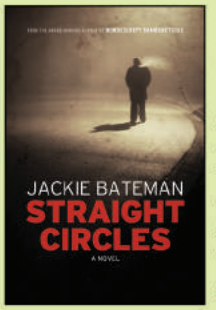

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FEATURES

GEIST

The eventual heat death of the universe will take care of all of this.

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FINER POINTS

In "Waiting Out the Big One" *(Geist* No. 105), Stephen Osborne refers to Commercial Street. Commercial *Street*? This is Vancouver we're talking about, right? This is the Stephen Osborne who's lived there, like, forever, right? It's Commercial *Drive*. Most people in the neighbourhood just call it "the Drive." I lived on the Drive in 1972, before it became trendy with left-wing activist-types, when it was just "the Italian district"—but it was referred to as the Drive back then too. My friend and former mother-in-law still lives a few blocks from the Drive on 3rd Avenue. My paternal grandparents moved to Vancouver in 1885 and 1886. I prefer people not be sloppy when referring to the city's famous places—especially people from a magazine that used to have, as one of its slogans, "totally unafraid of Canadian place-names."

—Anne Miles, Cyberspace

Dear Anne,
Thanks for your note and commitment to toponymical accuracy!

There is a spot, close to 18th Avenue and just before (whilst heading south) the Victoria Drive Diversion, where there is indeed a Commercial Street, just off of Commercial Drive. It's funny that you mention this, as several of our proofreaders spotted this thinking it was an error as well! Thank goodness for intrepid fact checkers and attentive readers!

Still unafraid of Canadian place-names,

—The Editors

Dear Editors,
I'm glad your proofreaders were alert (though wrong, like me). I'm surprised you haven't heard from more readers.

I checked a map and now I'm totally confused. I don't remember a Victoria Drive Diversion. I remember a Commercial Drive Diversion—a dead-end after the traffic from Commercial Drive gets funneled onto Victoria. But this map I'm consulting would put the "Commercial Div." (which I assume means "Commercial Diversion") between Georgia and Venables!? My map shows that, indeed, there is a Commercial Street, after the Victoria Div., that does not dead-end but goes on as far as 54th Avenue! Now, I might have thought the Commercial Diversion dead-ended a few blocks south of Broadway because it does not connect directly with Commercial Street, but I have a distinct memory of this stump of the Drive—south of Broadway, nowhere near Venables—being labelled "Commercial Diversion" on the street sign over forty years ago. So, either I'm going dotty or something's been renamed.

So, my apologies to Stephen Osborne, given that there is, indeed, a Commercial Street, in sight of the SkyTrain track, where he evidently lived in a leaky condo.

—Anne Miles

Artists in this Issue

Syd Danger is a graphic designer and illustrator who's not afraid to spill a little ink. She enjoys mixing traditional and digital mediums. She also puts *Geist* together.
Janieta Eyre is a photographer whose work has been shown widely, including in Italy, Germany, Spain, Iceland, Eastern Europe, Korea, the United States and Canada. She lives in Toronto.
David Leventi is an American photographer, recognized for his ability to capture architectural interiors. Leventi is best known for his acclaimed series OPERA, which has been exhibited internationally and appears on pp. 41–46.
Stephen Osborne was publisher of Geist for its first twenty-five years. He is the award winning writer of *Ice & Fire: Dispatches from the New World* and dozens of shorter works in anthologies and periodicals. Read more of his work at geist.com.

CRYPTIC TAXONOMIES

Some time ago, we received a note from our avid crossword solvers, Jim Lowe and Brian Goth, on the back of their puzzle solution. They were curious about the identity of Meandricus, the creator of the always-challenging, sometimes-frustrating *Geist* Cryptic Crossword. Meandricus is the pseudonym for our intrepid puzzle-maker, who is also a book designer, potter, teacher, volunteer, writer and lateral thinker.

The first *Geist* puzzles were prepared by Smilax, whose pseudonym was believed to be the name of a garden slug. *Geist* fact checkers recently discovered that Smilax is the name of a plant, not a slug. But there is a slug known as Milax upon which our original puzzler may have based his pseudonym. Meandricus, who took over as the *Geist* puzzler for issue 9 (April/May 1993), recalls trying to find an appropriate slug name as a pseudonym but since "Meandricus" refers to a fish, not a slug, some lateral thinking must have taken place, the details of which were left behind in the '90s.

—The Editors

Daniel Francis shakes a hand that's been in space.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Hearty congratulations go out to Daniel Francis, long-time columnist and friend of *Geist*, for being awarded the Pierre Berton Award, the Governor General's History Award for Popular Media. The prize recognizes exceptional achievement in books, film, television and new media and was presented at Rideau Hall by the Governor General (and former astronaut!), Julie Payette.

But wait, more congratulations are in order!

We'd also like to extend congratulations to Alberto Manguel, another long-time columnist and friend of *Geist*, who was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada in December. His ongoing work as an anthologist, writer, editor and translator is being recognized for its contribution to our knowledge and understanding of literature.

PHOTO: MCPL VINCENT CARBONNEAU, RIDEAU HALL, OSGG, 2017

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GEIST IN SPAIN

Laurie Tighe enjoys Geist *No.105 outside the Hotel Enfrente Arte, in Ronda, Spain. The photo was taken by Laurie's partner, Laurie Fawcett, who refers to himself as "the other Laurie."*

TWO OF A KIND

A very brief treatise on dualism on the campus of the University of British Columbia in November 2017, captured by Geist *contributor Julia Perroni.*

NEW EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE

We'd like to introduce our new editor-in-residence, Shannon Webb-Campbell. She is a mixed Mi'kmaq-settler poet, writer and critic. Her forthcoming book W*ho Took My Sister?* (BookThug, March 2018) explores Canada's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, decolonial poetics, trauma and the land, and will be transformed into a touring classical music performance for violin and piano. Her book *Still No Word* (Breakwater, 2015), was the recipient of Egale Canada's Out In Print Award. Shannon is a member of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation, and currently lives in Montreal. She will be our editor-in-residence for this issue and the next, *Geist* 108. Read some of the poems from *Who Took My Sister?* on page 48.

SILVER LININGS

Reading "Concussive" in *Geist* 106—in which the author, Michał Kozłowski, suffers a concussion while swimming—I was reminded of the late jazz pianist Dave Brubeck, who suffered a major neck injury in the early '50s diving into the surf in Hawaii. The story goes that the subsequent neck pain and nerve damage limited his dexterity, forcing him to adopt a more "blocky," slower style of piano playing. Of course, this became Brubeck's signature sound, and he went on to dazzle audiences all over the world with it for the rest of his career. Maybe a silver lining awaits Kozłowski too.

—Barry, Mississauga, ON

WRITE TO GEIST

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

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Snailmail:
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Letters may be edited for clarity, brevity and decorum.

Dear Geist...

GEIST
IDEAS + CULTURE + MADE IN CANADA

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.

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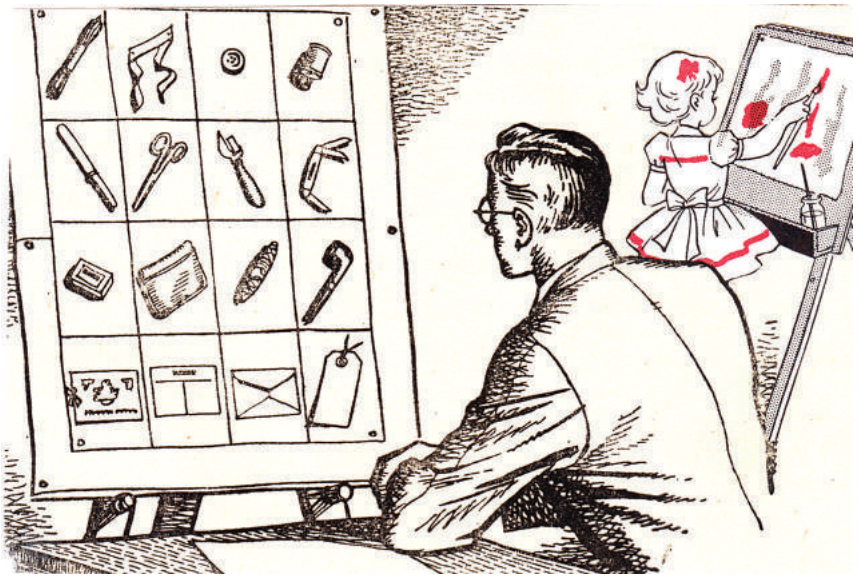


How to Unthink (In Two Movements)

JILL BOETTGER

An art gallery is no place for rational thought

ONE

"White is not a colour," my daughter whispers. "It's what's there when colour isn't." Sylvie is three years old, and we've just walked into *The Colour of My Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution in Art* at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Despite the exhibit's name, the room we've entered is almost entirely white and we stand looking at a black ink drawing: a large tangle of thin, curling lines. The word *Automatism* is printed on the wall beside the drawing, and a small card fastened beneath it explains that we're looking at an image of the mind drawn automatically. "Surrealists believed it was a higher form of behaviour," it reads, "a physical act with no conscious control."

Ben, my one-year-old son, looks at the image from his stroller and rhythmically taps my shin with his small boot, deep in the pleasure of sucking his thumb. If only I could be so animal, so sensory, I might recognize what I'm seeing. The ink markings reveal the subconscious impulse of the mark maker, but I perceive them with my conscious mind, try to make sense of something that transcends sense itself. It is a highly awkward effort and I feel inept, standing there on the threshold of consciousness in a room both quiet and crowded with equally studious adults. Then Sylvie tugs my arm. "I need to pee!" she says.

We find a bathroom, tucked behind a large projection screen suspended from the ceiling. A black and white surrealist film is showing on the screen and loud, upbeat music plays. A series of images appears: flowers, fingernails, swimming fish, geometrical shapes, dancing legs and painted eyes. Sylvie stops and watches the film, and then she begins to dance. Her arms move in a wave, she bends her knees and wiggles her hips and her curly hair is waving along with her.

In the adjacent room a collection of collaborative work is displayed. *Les Corpses Exquis*, it's called—the name of a game several artists played together. In the game, one person adds to an art object that is created by another artist but largely hidden from view. There is a drawing of a leg joined to a tap joined to a baby joined to a map. Another is simply a sequence of lines, resembling veins, drawn by many hands. With her dance, it's as though Sylvie is joining the game, adding to the collection of noises and gestures in the film. Her dancing amplifies the movement and the music, and brings something made ninety years ago into the room and into the present moment completely. When she finishes, she lifts the corner of the screen, making the projected images sway, amplifying the disorder. The adults watching the film frown. "We aren't allowed to touch it," I say, wondering how the artists themselves might have responded.

Surrealist artists rejected rational thought as a superior form of knowing and set out to transcribe the mind freely, to write and draw and paint dreams, to show the unconscious. It sounds like a return to the pre-rational experiences of the very young. Last night Sylvie awoke and sat up in bed, sweaty and screaming. Her eyes were open but she looked right through me, as though she occupied another dimension entirely. I called across the rift: "Sylvie, it's not real," I said. "You're all right." But she couldn't hear me. She thrashed in the bed while I sat helplessly beside her, stroking her arm. After a few minutes she shuddered, lay back down, closed her eyes and relaxed. In the morning she was

IMAGE: BOB MAY

cheerful and unharmed. When she sat up in bed a halo of curls sprung from her head like stray thoughts carelessly released. She looked at me and asked, "Mommy, are my kneecaps going to fall off? Are my shoulders going to come apart?" "No," I said, smoothing her chaotic curls as she climbed into my lap.

As we move through the rest of the exhibit, I attempt to contain the kids' desire to touch everything: Salvador Dali's *Lobster Telephone* and Joseph Cornell's shadow boxes, which the artist described as "a clearing house for dreams and visions. It is childhood regained." Cornell's favourite audience was children. He felt they best understood his work, yet displayed in a gallery, it is as if quarantined. On our way to the exit Sylvie makes a beeline for a large, brightly coloured painting of free-floating arms and legs in a desert landscape. She points to the painting and yells, "Look! Those arms and legs are cut off that body. *That's* funny!"

Of his series of paintings entitled *The Human Condition*, René Magritte wrote, "This is how we see the world, we see it outside ourselves and yet the only representation we have of it is inside us." In Sylvie's dreams, her body fell apart. *It's not real*, I said. But now we've found a painting of displaced human limbs and she is overjoyed.

In a few months she will wake from another fitful sleep and say, "I dreamed there were no fingernails on my fingers. It was a disaster to me. Tonight I'm going to dream that I have brown straight hair and brown eyes and I'm grown up and I'll go swimming in the ocean." Something will shift. She'll wish her dream life could abide the reason of her waking life. The surrealist revolution in art inspired a return to the *un*knowing of childhood. And yet, as they grow, children try to make sense of the world around them. They *want* to know.

TWO

When I walk into an art gallery I experience the same awe and unease I feel when I walk into a church. The gallery feels like a place of reverence, worship and sobriety. But unlike the church, art galleries aren't participatory—something transcendent has already happened, and we enter as spectators, after the fact. Sometimes the objects we observe move us. Sometimes their strangeness makes us question our own assumptions. And sometimes they seem nothing more than the posturing of someone searching for meaning, asking our patience.

Inside the Walter Phillips Gallery at the Banff Centre, my kids and I watch *Innovation Porthole*, a two-minute film that plays in a continuous loop as part of an exhibit titled *Things You Can't Unthink*. We watch a woman sitting on an office chair, holding a power drill fastened with a hole saw. "What is that thing?" Ben asks. "I have no idea," Sylvie says. They are six and eight: young enough to succumb to delight, but old enough to reason. We watch the woman in the film drill into a cubicle divider, creating a hole large enough to reach her hand through and extract a cheese Danish from the other side. "She's gonna get sawdust in it! She's gonna eat sawdust!" Ben says, laughing. "Ben, stop, we have to be serious," Sylvie says.

I open the booklet in my hand to "Some Thoughts on Unthinking," an introduction by the curator. "The very nature of unthinking is to stop a thought in its tracks—to put something out of mind . . . to consider an object anew," I read. "A thing you can't unthink . . . is a wholesale re-organization of our pre-existing knowledge."

Now the woman in the film drills a hole in the back of a black helmet. She puts the helmet on, pulls her ponytail through the new hole and rides the wheeled office chair down a plywood ramp. "I think it's weird," Ben says. "Why is she using a chair and not a bike?" "Because she's being silly," Sylvie says. "The first time we watched it, it didn't make sense. But the eighth time I understood why she spun around the pylons. It's like how dreams can change. One thing becomes another thing."

The kids break through the pretense that we're there as witnesses only, and relieve me of experiencing the exhibit entirely in my head. Their worship is raucous and inquisitive, immediate, impatient and complete. Being in the world in their company gives me access to something beyond myself—a transcendence both religion and art offer.

After watching *Innovation Porthole* for the twelfth time, Ben gets up from the gallery floor, stretches and runs into the next room. "No running in the gallery," I call. He stops and looks at me, dismayed. "I thought this was a place of silliness!" he says. In this room a 16' x 20' grid of mirrored tiles is fastened to the floor. In the centre of the grid there is a sculpted papier-mâché semi-sphere wrapped in gold spray-painted aluminum foil. Rows and rows of light bulbs are fastened to the sphere and illuminated. *What is this?* "The sun!" Ben exclaims. Brass ornaments, glass domes and criss-crossed archways made of wire or plaster are also installed throughout the grid. In the centre of each there is a small semi-sphere, of a different size, colour and material than the others. Sylvie says, "They look like planets or cages. Because there's a mirror on the ground, they look whole."

I look at the installation for what feels like a long time. Sylvie's right: the reflection of the halved objects—some crafted, some found, some repurposed—creates the appearance of whole bodies suspended in space, surrounding the sun. And yet, I know that the wholeness is an illusion. Ben takes my hand, and together we observe the small cosmos. "This would be a great place to pray to the Gods," he says.

Jill Boettger writes stories and poems in Calgary, where she lives with her family. She teaches writing and literature at Mount Royal University. Read more of her work at geist.com.

Foreign

JULIA PERRONI

Our guide was short enough to lose in a crowd but loud enough to follow

In our first three days of five in Berlin, my friend and I saw four museums, mostly related to the history of other places, and we ate Vietnamese food and took a day trip to Hamburg. We didn't learn much about the place we were actually in, except just enough local pedestrian's etiquette to not get hit by cars.

On our fourth day in the city, we decided against another day trip, this time to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp (I decided it would be too much for me) and went on a walking tour instead. The tour had come strongly recommended by the manager of our hostel and several of the other guests, and we were excited to see the city's monuments. We walked the twenty minutes from our hostel to the Brandenburg Gate, just in time to miss the two o'clock tour, so got lunch instead. My friend pointed out that there were many old German men faintly resembling my grandfather. I didn't believe her, and then as we walked from the restaurant to the tour's muster point, I did no fewer than three double-takes caused by vague lookalikes.

Our tour guide was an American woman who was short enough to lose in a crowd but loud enough that we could follow her. My friend and I may have been the youngest people in the group, which consisted of fifteen or twenty mostly white, mostly North American English-speaking tourists. Our guide gave us the whole history of Berlin, pre-German unification to the present, in less than ten minutes. Then she took us one block south, to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. We paused on the north side. The guide talked about the Memorial a little, but I only heard that she was going to let us walk through it for ourselves before she discussed it in any detail. Instead I looked out at it: its stark, pale pillars of grey, rising in irregular waves, and its dark pathways that dipped into shadow like trails to the Underworld. The guide set the group free, and I chose a path.

At 4:30 in the afternoon, the June heat was stifling, and walking down into the cool concrete corridors of the Memorial felt like walking into the sea. Among the stelae I drowned in memory. The echoes of other voices were the whispers of the past, and I was alone among them, even with my friend not far behind me. I felt the hands of my ancestors on my shoulders in the weight of the chill breeze that drifted between the pillars. I didn't linger.

We walked out of the Memorial and back into the sunshine. Our tour group had gathered again in the shade of a tree, and my friend and I rejoined them. Once everyone was back together, the guide told us about the Memorial: that it had been completed in 2004, that its architect had refused to explain what he meant it to symbolize, though maybe it was intended to resemble a graveyard (which it does, I guess), and that it had been an expensive project for the city, and controversial. She told us that this was the largest Holocaust memorial in Berlin. She said that there was a museum underground at one edge of the Memorial, and my friend and I exchanged a look that promised a visit the next day. Then she asked, "Do you think that this is worth the 27 million Euros of taxpayer money spent to build it?"

I said, "Yes, of course it is."

The guide looked at me. I realized that everyone else was looking at me as well. The guide said, sounding genuinely surprised, "Wow, that's the fastest I've ever had anyone answer that question. Usually people look around the group and try to gauge what everyone else thinks before anyone answers."

I said, "Oh," and crossed my arms. I hadn't realized that her question had been rhetorical.

The guide went on to discuss the controversy a little more. I listened to her talk, and when we moved on I leaned over and said to my friend, "I didn't know that that was a rhetorical question."

My friend said, "Yeah, that seemed a bit weird."

The rest of the tour consisted of, in order: my friend and I striking up a brief conversation with an older couple from Saskatchewan; a visit to an unremarkable apartment building that sits over the place where Hitler committed suicide, where there is no monument and no plaque; the last remaining piece of Nazi architecture in Berlin; a dismal slab of crumbling grey concrete that was once part of the (in)famous Berlin Wall; Checkpoint Charlie; a Starbucks; and the Square of Enlightenment, which includes Humboldt University, the Berlin Opera House, St. Hedwig's Cathedral and a memorial to the Nazi book burnings.

At the end of the tour, our guide told us that if every country apologized the way Germany—and particularly Berlin—has, the world would be a better place. I didn't ask if universal good was worth more or less than 27 million Euros.

Julia Perroni is a student at the University of British Columbia. Her short story "Fair" was published in Langara College's W49 *magazine in 2015. She lives in Vancouver.*

Eldorado Motor Hotel, 1978. *J. McColl*

July, '77

JILL MANDRAKE

Afternoon in the beer parlour

today you will try to be more observant
you enter a pub and think it's called OPEN
they feature Kokanee and pickled eggs, on ice
this sun-drenched hour, their kitchen smells
like rancid butter, the song on the radio
is "Just A Song Before I Go"
you don't believe it now, but one day
you'll sing "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing"

in that pub, after every sick joke
you say, and mean it, "is that true?"
you stick a gum-wad under your seat as you sit
with your current heartthrob, stuck for words
in the corner, a voice from tomorrow
says, "in forty years, you'll still be around"

Jill Mandrake has published a young adult novel, The Dodgem Derby *(New Orphic Press, 2012), and is in the musical band Sister DJ and the Hired Hands. Listen at sisterdjband.bandcamp.com.*

Breakfast in Datça

JEFF SHUCARD

A machine without instructions

It's a balmy June morning in Datça, until quite recently a popular holiday destination on the beautiful Aegean coast of Turkey. My friend Doug and I are waiting for our breakfast on the spacious patio of a seaside hotel, gazing out across the bay to the mountainous profile of Rhodes in the distance. We are both weary from another late night of performing in local music clubs and badly in need of that first life-restoring cup of coffee. At our age there is a considerable price to pay for staggering in at dawn, but we would not trade this experience for the world.

Our waiter is a young man named Ahmet. He doesn't speak a word of English so we get to practise our basic Turkish with him. We come equipped with our mini English-Turkish dictionaries and he patiently indulges us as we stumble through the rigours of Turkish grammar. We ask him about himself, where he's from, about his family, his interests, his dreams. He tells us his parents have a small farm; he hopes to get a job in the Mercedes factory and start a family of his own. He's a sweet kid and one morning brings us a jar of honey, a gift from his mother. We are humbled by this and ask him to give his mother big hugs and kisses from us. We look up *hug* and *kiss* in the dictionary. Our pronunciation stumps him at first, but then he gets it and laughs.

Every morning of our two-week stay here, Ahmet takes our order of coffee and the traditional Turkish breakfast plate for two, and every morning he never quite gets it right. There is always something he forgets to bring us. One morning it's the milk for the coffee; the next, the salt and pepper; the next, spoons or napkins. After the first few days of this routine, we began making bets on what he will forget next. Doug is good at this. He's already up twenty lira on me but I'm determined to even the score.

It's not as though Ahmet has much to keep straight these days. As improbable as it may seem in a country with a 2.5 billion-dollar-a-year tourism industry, we are the hotel's only guests—and, as far as we can tell, the only foreign visitors on the entire peninsula—perhaps the entire country. Such is the disastrous state of tourism in the new authoritarian Turkey. After the terrorist bombing of Atatürk airport in 2016, the failed military coup and the subsequent imprisonment of thousands of journalists, humanitarians, teachers, intellectuals and artists as enemies of the state, any traveller who follows the news is staying away—except Doug and me. The entire Turkish tourist trade, it would appear, is down to just us two and our very modest budget.

It is surreal being the sole visitors to this paradise, sitting here in the sweep of empty rooms, tables, deserted beaches, cafés. Perhaps we too should have heeded all the warnings and stayed home. But we are not tourists and we are not here just for a good

time: we are here to play music with our friends, to be with them, no matter how bad (or good) things are. Even if there are risks involved, we have no second thoughts about our decision.

Where is Ahmet? He is nowhere in sight. Hopefully, he's in the kitchen preparing our coffees. I know better than to make any negative assumptions about his intelligence. His inability to get our breakfast order right, much like everything else in an authoritarian regime, is more about what I call "pretending," the inauthentic behaviour of people coerced into becoming something they are not. With the creation of the republic in 1922, Atatürk demanded of Turks to *modernize* overnight, to erase the eight thousand or so years of Assyrian, Hittite, Lycian, Lydian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman history of these Anatolian shores from their consciousness and become one with the democratic industrialized West. What an audacious undertaking! Now the current autocrat is ordering them to tear all that down and return to an equally inauthentic fantasy of nationalism based, ostensibly, on archaic concepts of chastity and austere Islamic values—megalomania feeds only itself.

In between these two mandates was eighty-some years of fitful growth, confusion, a prolonged cultural amnesia and almost no one getting anything right at any level of endeavour: Atatürk's Turkey was a machine for which its operators were given no instruction manual. The past autocrat built and filled hotels; the present one has now successfully emptied them. Somewhere in the future, I feel, a new vocabulary must be found, one in which all citizens will be allowed and encouraged to find their own way of being, of remembering and of creating lives that are truly their own.

As we await our coffee amidst the dozens of empty tables and lounge chairs, we decide which missing breakfast items we will bet on this morning. Doug goes with the napkins and I choose the salt and pepper. We wish each other good luck.

A lone figure appears on the patio. It's Mert, the hotel manager, stopping by to say hello. Of course, he has little to do these days. It must be stressful for him, for everyone in the trade.

"What's going to happen?" Doug asks him.

"We don't know," he replies with a shrug. "Wait, as always. This is Turkey. We are always waiting."

"For a future?" I say.

"Yes, a future would be nice," he smiles. "Unfortunately, *future* is not a luxury we have in this part of the world."

Ah. Now, here comes Ahmet carrying a large tray. We applaud his arrival. Ahmet sets the tray down and places the various dishes of feta, tomatoes, olives, sliced cucumber on the table before us. Everything he lays out on the table is fresh, from local farms and orchards. Our jar of his mother's honey is already there.

We monitor the table. This is the fun part of the process, trying to determine what is missing, to see who has won today's bet. Finally, Ahmet is finished. He stands back and offers us a smile. We look it all over. Ha! Where are the salt and pepper shakers? I think I've won for a change!

"Do you see what I see?" I ask Doug, self-satisfied.

"I'm afraid I do," he concedes.

"Problem var mi?" Is everything okay, Ahmet asks in Turkish.

"Mukemmel," we say. Perfect. "Thanks Ahmet, just lovely."

Ahmet thanks us again and leaves us to our meal. The bread, the traditional lavas, is piping hot, right out of the oven. I break off a piece and spread some of the delicious honey over it. The best things endure.

Jeff Shucard was born in Paterson, New Jersey. He attended the Minneapolis School of Art and Franconia College. After a decade of foreign travel, he settled in Vancouver for twenty years and worked in education and music. Now he lives in Nanaimo, BC. Read more of his work at geist.com.

Candy Cap Magic

JOCELYN KUANG

Sniff, sip, pass

One evening I went for drinks at the Fairmont Pacific Rim in Vancouver with a few friends. The restaurant in the hotel, Botanist, had opened a few months earlier. The dining room was full so we sat in the Champagne Lounge, the waiting area. Everything in the lounge—chairs, cushions and curtains draped over the walls—was a light pink colour.

One of my friends used to work at Botanist and insisted we try two cocktails called What the Flower and Candy Cap Magic. She said "the quality of product was excellent." "Product" meaning food and drinks. She told us restaurants in hotels offer complimentary food and drink as a way to make up for any slip-ups, or when a guest knows the staff. The hotels make money so it's not a problem for the restaurants to do so; a few friends had told me that restaurants in hotels tend to break even.

My friend who has worked at both fine-dining establishments in hotels and in stand-alone restaurants said the staff at the latter want to meet the needs of the guests before there are any slip-ups that result in complimentary food and drink. "There isn't a drive to meet and exceed the expectations of the guests," she said about her job at the hotel restaurant. My friend said she left the hotel restaurant to go back to working in a stand-alone restaurant. An outsider like myself wouldn't and didn't notice a lack of drive at either kind of restaurant; they both provide excellent service and "product."

The friend sitting next to me told us one of his VIP guests once wanted chopsticks to use for his meal and there were no chopsticks available or around at the restaurant, so my friend had to arrange for chopsticks to be brought over from another restaurant nearby.

Our waiter, dressed head to toe in black, walked over with our cocktails, two glasses of What the Flower and a third, gin-based cocktail in a sizable glass, and placed them on cloth coasters. Shortly afterwards, he came back with a glass lantern about a foot tall. He cupped the bottom with one hand and held the handle at the top with the other. As he lowered the drink onto the table, fog from dry ice seeped out from the bottom of the glass lantern.

The lantern took up most of our tiny table. Inside, the Candy Cap Magic cocktail sat on a bed of dirt and moss that didn't look real. The waiter reached for the latch and opened the lantern, and more fog oozed out. The

waiter said something about the mushrooms in the cocktail being hard to find and something about infused rye.

My friend lifted the glass, sniffed and sipped the drink, then passed it to the next person. Across from me my friends sniffed and sipped. They exchanged words and glances and passed the drink to me. I mimicked the drinking protocol they had established: sniff, sip, pass.

When we had all had a sip, the waiter was still talking about the drink. I didn't have the slightest clue what he'd said. A glance around the table showed none of my friends were listening either. I looked at him and nodded my head to show I heard him talking. He carried on telling us about the dirt, moss and fog being part of re-creating the environment where the mushrooms could be found. After a couple minutes he completed his explanation of the drink, nodded his head slightly, said "Enjoy," and left.

"The flavour lingers for a while," said a friend.

"You can really taste the maple," said another friend.

"The product is excellent," said the friend who used to work there, and told us this was one of three "experiential cocktails" from the menu.

Where was the mushroom?

I went to the bathroom as we got ready to leave. When I returned, the friend who used to work at Botanist, and who knew the head chef, told me she'd paid for our bill and we were getting complimentary food. So we sat back down and ordered another round of drinks.

When the food arrived, one of the waiters said he would bring over cutlery. A few minutes later, a waitress walked by and asked if we needed cutlery, and we said someone told us they were bringing it over. After a few more minutes, we decided to eat with our hands.

The waiter who had promised us cutlery came over to check in on us. My friend teased him about the cutlery, or rather the lack of cutlery. We finished our drinks and requested the bill. The waiter told us not to worry, we didn't get cutlery so the last round was on them.

A week went by and I still had "experiential cocktail" on my mind: was this an industry term? Was there a whole genre of "experiential cocktails?" What made an "experiential cocktail" an "experiential cocktail"?

An "experiential cocktail" is one that is based on experience—from creation to consumption, the presentation, the story—it all contributes to the drinker's experience of the cocktail. There is no checklist for what an "experiential cocktail" is, other than: does it provide an experience?

I asked a few friends who work at restaurants whether they had heard this term before, and they said they hadn't. One who worked in a fine-dining restaurant told me they had similar extravagant cocktails that take twenty minutes to make, but she had not heard of "experiential cocktails." She told me the staff had to describe their menu to guests as a "journey" and say things like "Our menu takes you on a journey through the Canadian Rockies. It tells a story of Western Canada," and so on.

I found out more online about Candy Cap Magic: on the menu it fell in a category called "From the Cocktail Lab" and cost $28. A photo on the website showed the cocktail in the glass lantern with a branch, moss and a cluster of white mushrooms.

About a week later, I was once again having drinks with one of the friends who had shared the "experiential cocktail." I mentioned that it was odd the waiter went on and on about the mushrooms in Candy Cap Magic but that I hadn't been able to taste any mushrooms. He gave me a confused look, "Candy cap is the mushroom," he said. "It's supposed to taste like maple."

Jocelyn Kuang is the operations manager at Geist. *She lives in Vancouver.*

Wakaranai

HANAKO MASUTANI

When I asked Otosan how I was to survive without Japanese, he told me not to worry

When I was seven I was certain my dad was crueller than everyone else's. For one, I wasn't allowed to call him Dad. He went by Otosan, which was old-school, imperial, even in Japan, where everyone called their father Papa. Two, he didn't believe in celebrating birthdays. He thought that I should drop the idea of a Cinderella-themed party and meditate instead. The heaviest cruelty, though, was that Otosan was sending me to Japanese School. This was no extracurricular language class. No, Japanese School was run by the far-distant Japanese School Board, the Monbusho—the name had Mafioso overtones. Japanese School was an outpost, a place to cram the Japanese curriculum into Japanese natives living abroad, one torturous Saturday at a time.

I was not a Japanese native. My parents, my brother and I lived in a small, un-updated Victorian house in Point Grey. We kids played He-Man and watched Tom and Jerry. At the dinner table we ate Yorkshire puddings, chip butty, egg and soldiers, and spoke my mother's tongue: a self-deprecating British English. My ticket into Japanese school was Otosan himself, who taught grade 3. When I asked him how I was going to survive without Japanese, he told me not to worry. All I had to say was *wakaranai*.

"Wakaranai," I repeated. He assured me it could be said in every circumstance.

"To anything?"

"Yes."

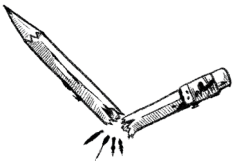
What a magical word! I thought, and I felt a little less afraid.

My first Saturday morning I climbed down out of my top bunk and allowed my mom to brush my knotty, half-blood hair into curving pigtails. I left the house feeling important, armed with Otosan in his suit. And with something else, too: the magic word.

Japanese School didn't look like Queen Elizabeth Elementary, my regular school. Absent were the colourful alphabet banners and soft carpets where we did show-and-tell. I was given a seat in the first row. Around me the walls were bare, mint-green cinderblocks. Switch our desks out for gurneys and the place could have been a morgue. A middle-aged woman with fat curls stood at the front, wearing a skirt suit and tie. Koike Sensei—our grade 3 teacher. I guessed that at home her kids called her Okasan, rather than Mama.

She said my name. A flow of Japanese words followed. The class turned to appraise me. I smiled into the pause. Was I meant to speak? "Wakaranai," I said. Koike Sensei didn't exactly smile, but she acknowledged my response as appropriate and turned the class's attention away from me to the board. It works. I celebrated silently. It really works.

Throughout my first long, desk-confined day everything I received was entirely in Japanese. Worksheets, quizzes, maps. I had taught myself to read early, staying up during my nap times to read Frog and Toad. Not being able to understand the symbols in front of me was as foreign as the chatter and faces of my new classmates. They must have math class, I comforted myself. I would recognize the numbers. But when math period came, Koike Sensei passed out a quiz with double- and triple-digit numbers linked by dots and lines. It may as well have been Japanese to me.



At this point in my childhood I was still deeply invested in magic. Over the previous summer I'd hidden behind our cottage and repeatedly jumped off a rock, secretly hoping I'd fly. How amazed my family would be when I took to the air from the power of pure belief! In this same vein, I spent the remainder of my first day at Japanese School believing I would suddenly understand Japanese. Just before the dismissal bell, however, that hope quickly bled out. I had my work returned to me. I'd got zero out of ten, zero out of twenty, zero out of thirty-five. I gave a shuddering sigh, careful to reserve my tears for a friendlier place.

Otosan was unfazed by my zeros. He brought me to the kitchen table after dinner on Sunday to start on my Japanese School homework. It landed on the table with a thud. A pile of black and white photocopies, enough to deliver a week's worth of the Japanese curriculum. I took one look at the pile and began to cry. Otosan looked out the window at my brother and his friends frolicking in our backyard apple tree. He really was the world's most heartless dad.

Otosan had to drag me down from my bunkbed on Saturday mornings. By the ankles. I clasped my Raggedy Ann curtains to make the job harder. Strangely, our new, antagonistic dynamic did not stop me from seeing Otosan as my saviour when I encountered him at school. If I saw him in the hallways, I sprang out of the stairwell where I hid during break times and ran toward him, grabbing his legs, his waist, any part I could reach, before he shook me off like I was a berserk squirrel. Japanese people do not hug.

Meanwhile, back at Queen E., I was getting my first taste of academic glory. Regular schoolwork became a breeze.

Like walking on land after walking through water. Like running freely after participating in a three-legged race. It was the inverse of Japanese School—ten out of ten, twenty out of twenty, thirty-five out of thirty-five. I wanted to laugh at the readers our teacher had set up, covers facing the room, in a little wooden display case. Read in my own language? Take 3 away from 7? Please! It was child's play.

One day, late in the school year, I wrote a short composition in Japanese. How short, I can't recall. Nor can I tell you how this was accomplished. Otosan admits he may have had a hand in it. I wrote something along the lines that when I was at Japanese School I was happy to see my dad in the halls. This piece of writing made it into the school newspaper.

The day after the paper came out but before I knew I was a published author, a group of my classmates cornered me in the stairwell. They may have asked me why I'd written it or how, or why I thought I deserved the honour. I didn't understand what they wanted. Backed up against the cinderblocks, all I could say was wakaranai. My year of using the word had led me to believe wakaranai meant, "I don't understand what you're saying" and/or "I don't understand Japanese." That day, the native Japanese grade 2s took their questioning to a place they'd never gone before. Maybe they were jealous. Maybe they finally understood that it wasn't shyness, but rather that I had no Japanese beyond wakaranai. They asked me what my name was, how old I was, if I was a boy or a girl, if I had two heads. I don't understand, I said. I don't understand, I don't understand. They laughed. It was in the forge of this humiliation, as I repeated my only Japanese word, that I realized wakaranai encompassed also, "I don't know." It indicated all levels and kinds of ignorance. The details of my ridiculousness came into focus. I didn't even know if I was a boy or girl! But hold on, did I just understand that jab? Yes. Yes, I did. Magic, after all, in this unlikely, uncomfortable place. I was understanding Japanese.

Over a decade later, during my time in university, I enrolled myself in Japanese language classes. Thanks to my time in Japanese School, my pronunciation was good enough to disguise me as the real thing, a Japanese native. A happy exchange to a prestigious Japanese university followed, complete with a life in Kyoto, a gorgeous Japanese boyfriend, and conversations with my wise, monolingual grandmother.

But back in the summer of '86, before I could become one of Otosan's grade 3 students, my parents sold our home in Point Grey and we moved to a Gulf Island. We left because someone other than me had also had a bad year. I didn't know it then, but Otosan had been unable to make progress on his thesis and my parents' marriage had nearly dissolved. Otosan ultimately dropped out of his master's program. He would be the only son of his professor father not to follow in his father's footsteps. Wakaranai had applied to me more than I knew.

In moving to the country, my father moved away from the heavy expectations he'd put on himself, and he lifted them from me as well. He bought me a pony, and although he'd never held a tool before, he built my pony's barn. I danced around Otosan, shouting out how it should look, as he measured the foundation, nodding. We watched it rise, a castle of pale new cedar, a home we imagined and built together.

Hanako Masutani's fiction and poetry has appeared in publications such as Grain, *the* New Quarterly *and* Arc Poetry *Magazine. She is working on her first novel for teens.*

From Places, Paths and Pauses *by Marlene Creates. Published by Goose Lane in 2017. In keeping with the cliché about the proclivity of northern nations to have large numbers of words for snow, the Newfoundland names for the types of ice shown here are, clockwise from top left: raftered, pancake, brickle, clinkerbells, lolly, nish, ballicattered and slack. These photographs were taken in Newfoundland*

Crystal

GILLIAN WIGMORE

From Glory. *Published by Invisible Publishing in 2017. Gillian Wigmore is the author of three books of poems and a novella. Her work has been published in magazines, shortlisted for prizes and anthologized. She lives in Prince George, BC.*

Glory said, "Be careful what you wish for, sweetheart," and I wanted to slug her. Course we'd had a couple of drinks by then and I'd just finished telling her she could fuck right off. There was this undertow feeling all winter and spring, and I hated how it pulled at us. Everything we did, even if it was good, was strained with this tugging from below—Glory bitching about how we never got any good gigs, how we were stale, how it was better in Vancouver and all we had to do was go. I ignored her. I teased her and changed the subject. I hid the car keys and bought her strings off the Internet so she never had to go into the city and buy them and maybe be tempted by the Greyhound station right near the music store and the one-shot, one-hundred-bucks-to-the-coast, overnight and you wake up at Terminal and Main. No. I pulled just as hard as that undertow to keep us in Fort St. James because here we are famous, and here what we have is good enough: people want to hear us sing, pay us to do so, people keep us in drinks, take us to parties, and drive us home when the fun is over. Who knew what would happen if we went to Vancouver? Where would we live? Who would know about us? We'd have to start all over and we aren't in our twenties anymore. Here we can gather a crowd just by showing up. There we'd be nobodies. And two nobodies can turn into nothing pretty damn fast.

Glory said, "Play, damn you. I can't wait all night."

I lay down my card. "Uno."

"Fuck you," she said, and threw in




between 2011 and 2014. Her work is held in numerous public collections, and in 2014 she won the Grand Jury Award at the Yosemite Film Festival. She lives in Newfoundland.

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her hand. We were hardly awake at this point. Even Uno was too much. Glory got us more beers and I tried to relight the candles on the table. I couldn't work the safety on the lighter.

"Here, give it to me."

She took it and lit it in one try. I cracked my beer and took a drink. It didn't taste near as sweet as the first sip I'd had after our set at the pub, but by that point it didn't matter. I'd had about eight more waiting for her to get home, wondering how she'd do it since I took her car. She'd made it eventually, drunker even than I was, and I didn't ask her how. The candles flickered against the plastic sheeting on the windows. We were out on Southside, at Glory's little hideaway. It felt like no one could find us out there, even though everyone knew where it was, but they didn't come if they weren't invited.

"How come you don't have parties out here?"

She lit her smoke. Dragged. Blew out smoke rings. She shrugged. "Don't want to mess it up. Don't want to clean up after. Don't care to share it."

I knew there was more to it. This was her mom's old property. Glory and Anton built the hut after their mom died, and when Glory had that split with her dad and never talked to him again, she started staying out here. It smelled like beeswax and blankets.

We always did our songwriting here. Couldn't do it at my parents' place in town—my brother took that over after Mom and Dad left, and now Richard lived there with his bitchy wife and their friends. No place for me. I was living at the St. James apartments in a room facing the lake. Only had a bed and a fridge and a bathroom, but I didn't need more. I had my banjo. I had Glory's place and Glory. Or I did, up until she started in about leaving.

She lay back on the pillows and the mess of blankets we had out on the floor. I got down there, too, and found it was much better than trying to stay in my chair at the table. I brought my beer down and pulled the blankets over me. Glory stared at the smoke she exhaled, watching it curl its way up to the rafters and disappear in the shadows. I watched her breathe in and out. I knew every mood, every flaw, every curve and corner of her goddamn mind, and she was planning on leaving. She'd made it plain.

"You think we could rent a place cheap somewhere not on the Downtown Eastside?" She breathed in. "I mean, there's gotta be apartments, or even basements, that don't cost a million bucks. All kinds of people live in Vancouver, like really poor people, so there's gotta be cheaper places." We were stoned, too, so her thoughts meandered. "I bet we could walk to the beach. See the seagulls."

"We got seagulls here. At the dump."

She snorted. "Not dump gulls, ocean gulls. We could watch the boats, Crystal. We could feed the whales."

"What in hell do you feed a whale? Jesus. You want to feed it bread crumbs, like a duck?" I laughed.

"Pop Rocks. I wonder what would happen if you fed a whale Pop Rocks?"

"That's just cruel. Don't you remember what happened when we gave Tiny Pop Rocks? And he's a human. He cried. A whale would probably inflate or something. Christ, can you imagine?"

It struck us and we were off. We lay there laughing and crying even though it was all leaking under, everything we could count on, draining away because Glory wanted to leave. We laughed until the candles guttered.

I butted out her cigarette when she fell asleep with it still burning in her hand, then I covered her with a blanket. To me, she still looked like my skinned-kneed, dirty-faced little cousin, her black hair all wild on the pillow. She still looked nine to my ten, even if we were old ladies now, thirty-four and thirty-five, still in our hometown, still singing to the same drunks and assholes as we did when we were nineteen and twenty. She slept and all the drinking and the late nights fell away and she was perfect: long lashes resting on her cheeks, the line gone from between her eyebrows, her hands still for once, resting under the weight of all her silver rings.

Leonard Cohen Goes to a Parent Teacher Meeting

BOB WAKULICH

From Channeling the Masters. *Published by Big Pond Rumours in 2017. Bob Wakulich's short stories, poems and commentaries have appeared in numerous magazines throughout North America and Europe. He lives in Cranbrook, BC.*

I've managed to recover
from having the glistening wings of my independence
plucked out by the vagaries of parenthood

and grown accustomed
to the prospect of spit-up stains
appearing on most of my preferred items of attire

and come to terms
with the obvious drawbacks of having my bed
declared an all-night monster-free zone

and yielded to the pressure
of ensuring that I dutifully purchase
whatever it is that the other parents already have

and learned to embrace the anguish
of teenaged sons and daughters who would rather
have a limb deep-fried than be seen with me in public

but I have to draw the line
at being recruited to hawk chocolate-covered almonds
in order to buy the school new basketballs

This can't be why I would have refused
to fight in Viet Nam

OVERUSED WORD ALERT ▶ *"impact"*

THE ARRIVAL OF THE IMPACT PRODUCER: I predict that this will be the year when, for the first time, a journalism organization will fill the position of an *impact producer*. TRUMP'S RESPONSE TO 11-MINUTE TWITTER DELETION?

From Animals with Sharpies *by Michael Dumontier & Neil Farber. Published by Drawn & Quarterly in 2013. Michael Dumontier & Neil Farber are contemporary artists whose works have been exhibited in New York, London and Paris. They live in Winnipeg.*

Nothing Like It Was

MARK WAGSTAFF

From Attack of the Lonely Hearts, *winner of the 39th Annual 3-Day Novel Writing Contest. Published by Anvil Press in 2017. Wagstaff's work has been published in journals and anthologies in the US and UK. His story "Some Secret Place" won the 2013 William Van Wert Fiction Award.*

Since the day Frank got this pitch, everyone's told him the place is dead. If not dead, dying. If not dying, then nothing like it was in the sixties, the thirties, when Hamilton's old lady lived here, whatever whatever. People always say St. Marks, East 7th, Alphabet City, it's over. Same people who never imagined a world where choosing from a hundred flavors of coffee would be a human right. Yep, thinks Frank, packing his stand at the end of the day, all in all he done right, trading his soul into the coffee game.

The stand packs down to minimal space. He dismantles everything non-fixed. Unhooks the syrup bottles, stows cardboard cups in his small truck. Frank has the leathery look of outdoor life and a physique from doughnuts.

In the corner of his eyeline, an odd-looking woman bobs around, making puppyish faces. It's been a tough day, Frank's getting old and long ago lost any need for politeness. "Sling it lady, I got pasta fazool and a younger woman waiting."

AN 'IMPACT' TWEET: It was an absence that lasted just 11 minutes, but it got everyone's attention. IMPACT WRESTLING BOUND FOR GLORY: STAR BOBBY LASHLEY TALKS TRUMP: Lashley is now an Impact Wrestling star who will appear at the company's Bound for Glory pay-per-view Sunday. TRUMP'S PROGRESS REPORT: HIS IMPACT SO FAR

Dodging around him, Margaret starts closing the lids of boxes he hasn't even finished with yet. She unhitches a bottle of almond syrup. "I was just wondering."

"Lady, if you got troubles there's numbers you call. I had enough bums dicking me out. I been rushed solid twelve hours."

"Yeah," Margaret perks up, "that's what I wanted to ask you about."

Stock still, Frank gives her a heavy look.

"I already said to you. No."

He keeps loading his truck while Margaret buzzes at him, a perky, pesky gnat.

"You built so much goodwill here. I could help out."

Abruptly, he turns at her.

"And what? What exactly do you know about this game?"

"I like coffee."

There's that grin.

"You like coffee?"

"I helped in a soup shelter last Christmas. Recent experience, huh?"

He slams the tailgate, letting its echo hang the length of East 7th. "This is not a hobby. Takes skill. Dedication. Money. You got money?"

Just a little, her warm face cracks.

"I got my settlement."

"Layoff?"

"Divorce. Though I got laid off too. He went to Canada."

"Your ex?"

"My boss. He's a fugitive from justice. My ex went to Phoenix. Found that out when I got served the restraining order." A new bargaining chip presents itself. "I work cheap."

"How about free. I pitch at five. You heard of five in the morning?"

"Oh sure, I do a lot of my crying then."

"Let's not bring it to work, huh?"

"Thank you so much. You won't regret it." As Margaret reaches to shake his hand, she drops the bottle of almond syrup. It shatters on the sidewalk, splashing their legs.

Frank regards the broken glass, the sugary gunge setting hard on his pants. "You change jobs often?"

"Oh look." Margaret points, delighted. "Licking your shoe. Is that a squirrel or a rat?"

AND WHAT TO WATCH FOR NEXT YEAR: This is arguably the strangest presidency in America's 241-year history. THE ONE THING YOU CAN DO TO HAVE MORE IMPACT TODAY: If you're looking to have more impact, get away from your inbox and make the time for thinking and doing. LOCAL ECONOMIST TALKS IMPACT OF SENATE TAX BILL:

BIZARRE COMPETITIONS

Richard Happer

A selection of World Championships from Bizarre Competitions. *Published by Firefly in 2016.*

Bee Wearing
Black Pudding Throwing
Bog Snorkelling
Cheese Rolling
Clog Cobbing
Extreme Ironing
Ferret-Legging
Gurning
Kaninhop
Octopush
Outhouse Racing
Shin Kicking
Welly Wanging
Worm Charming

Empty Condolences

JOEY COMEAU

From Malagash. *Published by ECW Press in 2017. Joey Comeau is the author of four novels and the webcomic* A Softer World. *He lives in Halifax, NS.*

While my mother and brother are on their morning walk, my father and I go through the obituaries. We take turns reading them out loud. The language is so boring and repetitive. You see the exact same phrases so many times. Words that were clearly meant to be respectful and traditional come across as formulaic and stupid. "So-and-so will be sorely missed" might be true, but it also sounds like your loved ones copied your obituary word for word from someone who died yesterday.

"They might as well just write, 'This is an obituary,'" my dad says.

"This is an obituary," I say. "These are the words you put in an obituary. Thank you for taking the time to read my obituary."

There is nothing about actual people in any of these memorial postings. There are no mistakes, no great regrets, no broken promises, no stupidities. There are no triumphs. No shining moments of pride, no redemption, no happiness. The language is identical for everyone, filled in with the applicable figures. Age. Number of children. Facts. It's like reading out loud from a database and trying to imagine a real human being from just the numbers.

You could actually write a computer program to generate these, and nobody would ever know the difference. An eighty-nine-year-old woman, survived by a husband, three children, and four grandkids? No problem.

```
my @entire_human_life = ('89', 'F', 'Stroke', 'husband', '3', '4');
```

"Goddamn it," my dad says today. He points to a name. It is a short obituary. Even more clichés than usual. After a long battle with cancer, passed away in his sleep, surrounded by loved ones, etc. Aggressively standard. The kind of obituary that we love to make fun of.

"Surrounded by nameless loved ones," I say, but my father's smile is gone.

"I went to high school with him," he says. "We were best friends." My father rereads the obituary. "Long battle with cancer," he says. "Ugh." He tosses the newspaper onto his side table in disgust, and just like that our game is over.

"I meant to call him," my dad says.

I don't know what to say. I don't want to say "I'm sorry" or any other empty condolences. We spend every morning making fun of all that. But it seems like I should say something. I guess that's where clichés come from, isn't it? Too many people say something just so they can say something. Because they feel like they should. But when there's really nothing to say, anything will sound empty. My father is sad about an old friendship he lost. That's something worth being sad about. So I'm quiet. We sit in silence, and my father looks out the window.

Eventually, though, he remembers that I'm here. He turns back to smile at me. He picks up the obituaries again.

"Okay, who's next?" he says.

"We don't have to."

"Don't be stupid," he says. "Of course we have to. This is research for when you write my obituary. Who else could I trust with this? Sunday, I am counting on you to not let anyone say that I died surrounded by nameless loved ones. Or that I lost my courageous battle with cancer."

"I'll tell people you won," I promise him.

"Exactly!" He laughs. I love it when my father laughs. "You tell people that. The cancer is dead. I did what needed to be done. I'm a hero."

The Senate narrowly passed Republicans' tax reform bill early Saturday morning following a marathon voting session overnight. NO MORE 'MY DOG ATE IT' EXCUSES. WHERE ARE THE BREXIT IMPACT REPORTS?: David Davis knew he had a choice to make. MONTREAL IMPACT'S BLERIM DZEMAILI HELPS SWITZERLAND CLINCH WORLD CUP

Omsk and You Shall Receive

JILL SEXSMITH

From "A Box Full of Wildebeest," first published in Somewhere a Long and Happy Life Probably Awaits You. *Published by ARP Books, Winnipeg. Jill Sexsmith's work has appeared in anthologies and magazines. She won the Writers' Union of Canada short prose competition.*

In a sleeper car on the Trans-Siberian someone knocks on my door. When I open it, the attendant smiles and puts a banana to her ear. I follow her to another compartment. She points to the phone then turns her back as if I'm about to get undressed.

"What if I were dying? What if I were really dying?" my mother asks.

"Are you?" The train rumbles beneath my feet and I brace myself.

"I could be."

"Well, if you were really dying, I'd come home and take care of you."

"I'm going to die alone tits-up in a ditch somewhere."

"Are you dying?" The wind howls through windows that never seem to close properly.

"I just have eczema right now but it's very itchy. Should I meet you?"

"It's freezing in Siberia. It will only make your skin worse."

When I get off the train in Omsk, my mother is standing there in short sleeves, arms outstretched. I'm not sure if it is an invitation to embrace or if she just wants to show me her rash.

"Didn't you bring a proper jacket?" I ask.

"Are you concerned? Are you showing concern for me?"

"Did you come to Siberia without a winter jacket?"

"I wanted to feel what Dostoyevsky felt."

"We're not doing hard labour in a gulag. Have you even read Dostoyevsky?"

"No, but I have a collector's copy of *The Brothers Karamazov*."

My mother is shaking so I give her my coat and we go looking for proper clothes. I try to use her for a windbreak but she says, "It's your trip. You lead the way. Just pretend like I'm not here."

By dim street light, we move toward the shops. There is an eerie beauty here, sad snow that makes a peculiar moaning sound as we walk. The city's streets are unusually wide. Wind gathers speed and goes unchecked. There are rules and no rules. We are blown along. All of the buildings here are oversized to make people feel small and nervous. Every one of them feels full of secrets. Ever since I arrived in this country, I have felt imaginary crosshairs trained on me, as if some KGB spy on a rooftop were going to take me out.

"Honestly, you're so paranoid," my mother says.

At the clothing store we both buy Russian hats and sable fun-fur coats. My own jacket doesn't stand up to Siberia cold. Without looking at me, the storekeeper inspects my roubles with a magnifying glass. When she turns away, I take the coats and hats and quickly walk out.

"Now what?" my mother asks.

We take shelter in a doorway. I grab my map titled Bird's Eye View of Omsk (pictures made from a plane) and we march around the city in our matching hats and coats. I read my brochures as we go. "In spring and summer city is filled with beautiful gardens and flovers."

"Flovers," my mother says. "I guess they'd be frozen flovers now."

"Yes, I guess they would." I pull my hat down and brace against a wind so cold it splits my bones.

In the hotel, we sit on our beds and stare at each other, cold and exhausted, still wearing our hats and coats. "How do people live here?" I ask.

"You're omsking the wrong person."

LIFE IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Gregory Betts

Found poetry posted to Facebook on July 7, 2017. Text was found in a contract Betts was about to sign. Gregory Betts has written seven books of poetry, including Boycott. *He is the author* of Avant-Garde Canadian Literature: The Early Manifestations *(University of Toronto Press). He lives in St. Catharines, ON.*

Time shall be and remain of the essence.
The masculine shall include the feminine
and the neuter and the singular shall include the plural
and vice-versa, unless the context
otherwise requires.

SPOT: Neither Canada nor the United States will take part in World Cup 2018. IMPACT PLAYERS TRY BEING CHRISTMAS ELVES, SHOULDN'T QUIT THEIR DAY JOBS: There is, it turns out, limited overlap between the skills of soccer players and Christmas elves. THE INTEL PROCESSOR FLAW AND ITS IMPACT ON EMBEDDED DEVELOPERS:

Rika and Norbert Ruebsaat, Edmonton, 1952

Loud, Unpleasant Noises

NORBERT RUEBSAAT

From In Other Words. *Published by AUL Press in 2017. Norbert Ruebsaat holds an MA from SFU and taught Media and Communication at SFU and other universities. His work has appeared in several issues of* Geist. *He is retired from teaching and now lives in New Denver, BC.*

I went into Grade One in Edmonton in September 1952 at Spruce Avenue Elementary, Room 6. The school was a few blocks from our home at Mr. Curry's and I learned while walking there what "blocks" were. Streets back home followed radial patterns and the grid structure of our Edmonton "subdivision" struck me as another one of these plots or challenges or possible traps that Canada was throwing at me to see if I could survive and maybe be heroic. My mother took me to school on the first day and when she told me to pay attention so I'd be able to walk home on my own I slid into what I had come to know as "immigrant boy zone."

THE WAY TO SCHOOL (SCHULWEG)

Your mother takes your hand and you move among the squares and rectangles the sun lays down between the houses. You look at your feet walking in a straight line.

The school is like the Royal Alex. A tall red building made of bricks. The school where your grandfather teaches back home is red brick too, and it is behind your grandparents' house: you walk through their garden, open the gate, and are on the school ground. You think of your grandfather as you walk on the Edmonton schoolgrounds.

FRAU UNDAYZONE

In the classroom called Grade One the tall lady standing at the front of the room and smiling at you is called Frau Undayzone. Your mother explains: you will stay here with Frau Undayzone, and I will go home. The tall lady smiles and looks down at you. Her voice is warm. You don't know what she is saying.

Frau Undayzone puts her hand on your shoulder and leads you to one of the desks. You sit. Your mother and Frau Undayzone talk and Frau Undayzone smiles and nods, and then your mother walks to the door. You watch the distance between you and her fill with empty space. Frau Undayzone looks at you and smiles and nods again. She has a kind face.

Your mother's gone.

CLASSROOM

The children sit in rows made by their desks. They look in one direction. At the end of that direction is a blackboard. Frau Undayzone turns often and draws letters on it with her chalk. It makes a tapping sound when she starts and finishes her words. Back home pupils carry small blackboards in their Ranzen, little backpacks.

TALKING

Frau Undayzone says something and the children put up their hands. Frau Undayzone points to one of them and nods and the children put down their hands and the child she pointed to

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Intel has a problem with its processors, and from what we've found out, embedded applications could suffer a "Meltdown." HORRIGAN: IN LIFE AS IN BASEBALL, EVERYONE NEEDS AN IMPACT BAT: What I need is an impact bat. One to call my own. VANEK HAVING BIGGER IMPACT THAN EXPECTED FOR CANUCKS: There is far more to

says something.

You wonder if you should put up your hand. Yes, you should. You put up your hand like the other children do when Frau Undayzone talks again. She smiles and says your name in a strange way. She nods again and looks at you and you don't know what to do after this. Silence. The children turn around in their desks and look at you.

MISSIS ANDERSON

She's not Frau Undayzone, she's Missis Anderson. Your mother said it wrong. The children say her name in the right way. You listen and whisper it to yourself.

Missis Anderson looks at you and says your name with its Canadian sound. You want to put up your hand for Missis Anderson. But you don't.

THE NOISE

The noise is inside your head. Other children make it with their mouths and you become noise. You sound like an animal. You listen for Missis Anderson's calm kind tones to come.

THE BELL

On the playground the children crowd around. They call out to you but you can't hear them. You're in a glass bell of noise. The children press their faces against it and their noses and lips flatten.

They move their lips like fish.

THE SOUND

The sound starts in your stomach, then pushes against your chest. It lives up there. It sits quietly with you at your desk.

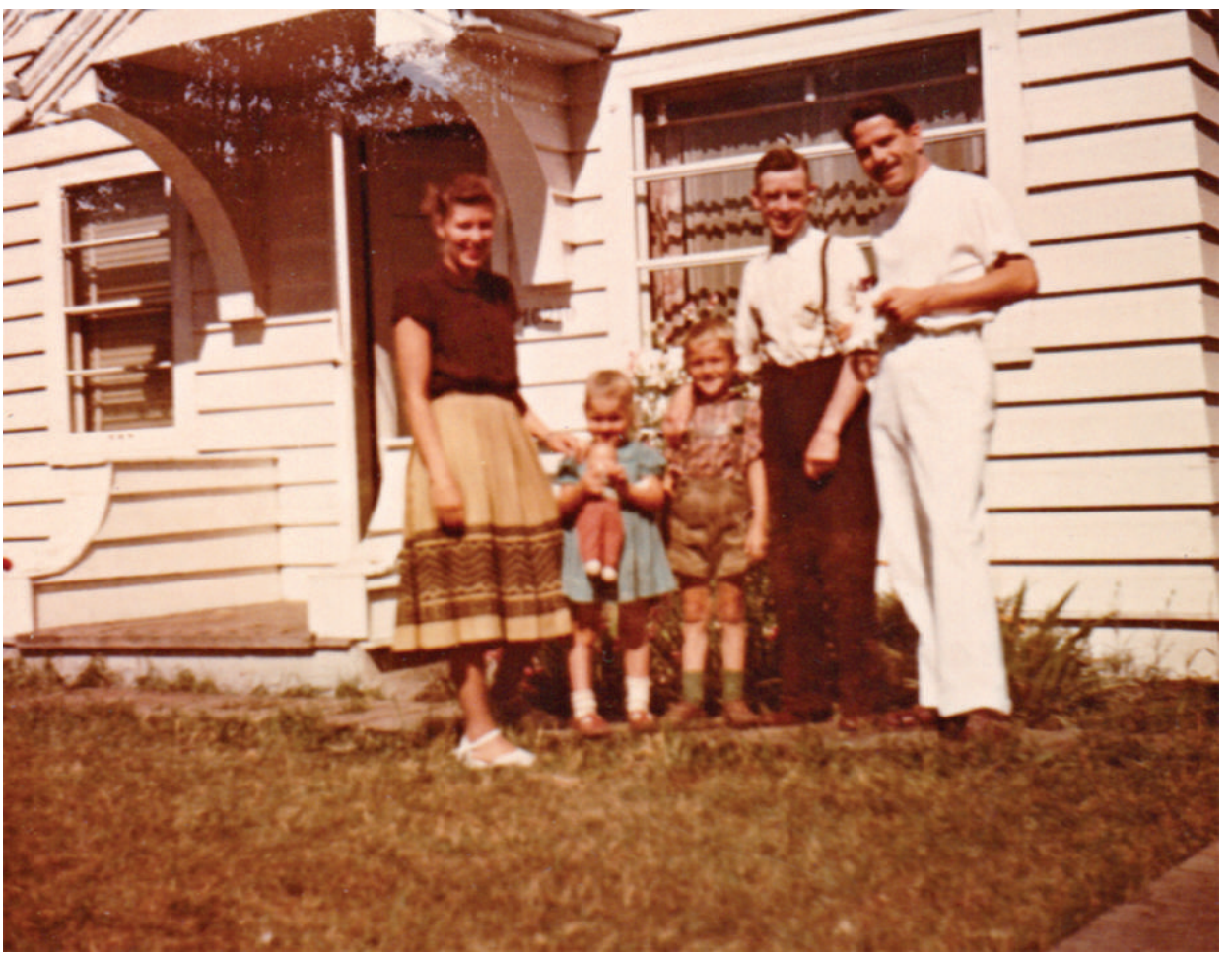
The sound goes push push push. You let it out. It doesn't sound like itself. Wolves are running out of your chest.

…ich…bin…(nothing).

Missis Anderson makes a sad confused face.

MISSIS ANDERSON

You're crying. Missis Anderson presses you against her chest. Her great bosoms are soft and you want to live in them. You're sobbing; she sobs with you. The children are quiet and



Edmonton, 1952

Thomas Vanek than we expected. Even his passport is more complex and impressive than we knew. **ONTARIO DRIVERS WORRIED ABOUT LEGAL POT'S IMPACT ON ROAD SAFETY, CAA SURVEY FINDS:** Nearly half of drivers who are also marijuana users told a survey they drive better, drive about the same or don't know if cannabis impacts

look. She rocks you and herself, this kind, strong Canadian lady. Your first.

Suddenly you're afraid. You push Missis Anderson away and run crying to the back of the classroom. There, in the door with a milky glass window you saw your mother. Then you saw your grandmother, behind her, then your aunts, and your grandfather. They waved at you through the milky glass.

You push the classroom door open and run out. In the hall you see your grandmother's and grandfather's backs walking to the school's main door. They open it, walk out, and the door closes behind them.

You rush to the door, open it, run down the cement stairs with their fat stone banisters. The vast empty schoolyard is silent. It grins. Missis Anderson calls you from the open school door. Her voice sounds like a ship horn.

DICK UND JANE

Dick and Jane are these two children. They are like my sister and me. Pretend we are Dick and Jane.

I take out the book. This is how we must behave, I say to my sister. I speak to her in English because this is the language I think we should speak about this place. It is important that children speak the right language for the country they are in.

Dick looks up.

I look up.

Jane looks up.

I get my sister to look up. She doesn't understand at first. She thinks it is a game. She giggles. But then she does it.

Dick and Jane look up. We stand there, our two chins raised to the sky, like real Canadian children. This is how brothers and sisters behave in Canada. It says so right in this book.

See Spot jump.

We don't have a dog, so we use one of my sister's dolls. Jump Dolly, jump. We push and shove, throw her in the air, pretending it is Spot. But it isn't Spot. That doll is still way too European.

See Spot, question mark.

I am learning this English language and reading. Reading about it in its own language. You learn how to come here by looking at the words.

Mother and father. Sound them out. They don't sound exactly like they look.

Father is sounded "o," not "a," and mother has an "u" sound, not an "o." This is how the English words can fool you. Their sounds don't go right into their letters like that. They go into other letters.

See muther and fother, I read. See Norbert read.

Norbert is reading a book. It is about a snowman who melts. He walks all the way from winter into summer, where he doesn't belong, and so he melts. All that's left of him is his red scarf and his carrot nose. A handful of coals that used to be his vest buttons lie in a puddle of water.

Poor poor snowman.

He went from the place of winter into the place of summer and that's why he melted. That's the lesson of the story. You shouldn't go into places where your body doesn't belong.

The story about the snowman is in the second part of Norbert's *Dick and Jane Reader*. Reader. The Reader is both a book and a person. It is the person reading the book and it is also the book itself. Every child in school has a Reader, the same one, but they are all different readers. They are not the same child. You don't become the same child till you get to the end of the book where you become the Reader. You meet him and try to become him.

I was "reading ahead" in the story about the snowman. I don't know how I got there. We, the class, were still "on" Dick and Jane, but I, Norbert, was reading ahead to another place.

It is a very dangerous thing to go into books like that when you are alone and it is not your own language.

I read and read, and Norbert read and read. His mother sometimes didn't understand the words anymore he was using at home. He was "ahead" of her in English (was he?) and going away into another language. He was leaving his mother. Don't read so much, she said. You'll get bad eyes.

My European language is for talking, and this English language is for reading. This is the secret language I have at home. Norbert is practicing his "silent (English) reading" so his mother won't know what his thoughts are. He thinks the letters are hands reaching out of the book to lead him away.

In school, of course, it is the other way around. Here the loud language, the screamed language—the children yelling at him for not understanding them when they talk—is English, and the silent one, the one nobody has ever heard, is his own. He speaks it to himself secretly.

See Norbert reading a book in his own language. He opens the lid to listen. The letters writhe and wrestle on the page. They are black foreign shapes that won't let their sounds out to him. The book won't speak to him because its letters don't want to come to this place, Canada.

European letters go to European places, and Canadian letters go to Canadian places. Words don't want to go where they don't belong. They stop talking.

See Norbert think.

Does he think in his own or another language?

Books are thoughts. That is the story of them. They think you when you are thinking them. They read you back. You just open the lid and listen. It is wonderful to imagine that a story can give your own thoughts back to you

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their ability behind the wheel. WIDESPREAD IMPACT CAUSED BY LEVEL 3 BGP ROUTE LEAK: As long as we have humans configuring routers, mistakes will take place. TORONTO BRACES FOR IMPACT OF DRIVERLESS CAR REVOLUTION: A plunge in city parking revenues when vehicles drop passengers and simply roll away. RACIST

packed in a box.

Norbert looks at the pictures in his Dick and Jane Reader. Dick's father (fother) wears a blue suit and has a hat on. Dick's mother (muther) wears her frilly checked dress and her smile and her bobbed curly hair. She doesn't look at all like Norbert's muther. These people don't look like parents.

They're book parents. They're the parents of words. Mother and Father are there to take care of the words so they don't get too lonely. So they don't run away.

Poor poor words. Here, you can hold their hands.

See them.

Dick and Jane looked.

In school, the hero of this story opens the lid of his book to read "out loud" to the class, but it is still a secret. The language won't talk for him. It knows he's not really the Reader and that his clothes, his sounds, his thinking are still in another country. Even the teacher can see he's imagining somewhere else.

Words pretend. See the book read.

The boy is reading ahead in his Reader about the snowman and the melting to find out how the Reader imagines it. What is the truth about this story?

For instance, the teacher has told him not to read ahead to the snowman story until the whole class is "there." You're not to go to places before the rest of your class. There is something there you're not allowed to know.

He tries the story on his sister. Here, he says, you be the snowman, and I'll be the sun, melting you. Slowly I come up over the mountains. You don't know how dangerous I am at first, I'm warm and friendly, and then suddenly—zap—I melt you.

Okay, we're going to do it now, okay?

I have to tell you something about this boy's sister. She never believes his stories. Even though he's two years "ahead" of her in life, she won't do what he tells her.

She changes language. She thinks he's making this up. She'll walk not into summer, but right into fall, and on into next winter, for instance. Or she'll change countries just like that, walking on water.

She doesn't understand that you have to speak the correct words for where your body is. She thinks books are something to eat.

So Norbert never found out if the story about the snowman and the melting, about summer and winter and Canadian and European places was true. Or whether it was just a story made up to fool immigrant children who don't know.

He doesn't know if when you go to live with words of another country you lose your body. It melts.

The Dick and Jane stories never talked about these kinds of scary things. Those children never had to go out into the world to another country to meet the Reader. They just stayed home with their muther and fother. And Spot. And Puff. And Baby Sally.

See them.

September 25, 2011

SINA QUEYRAS

From My Ariel. *Published by Coach House Books in 2017. Sina Queyras is an award-winning author for her poetry collections,* MxT *and* Lemon Hound. *Her collection* Expressway *was nominated for a Governor General's Award. She lives in Montreal.*

The babies are becoming more stylish.
They kick and turn like synchronized swimmers.
Sam is calmer, more in control of his body, his preference for patterns is already apparent.
Naomi flails through the day as if someone has dropped her on a snowboard: up go her arms, wide goes her mouth, her feet, in their checked Vans socks, bent back, touching her diapered bottom.
She screams. Often. Sudden and sharp. So loud she startles herself. Sometimes at the breast, she looks, she looks again and screams.
What is she seeing down there? At five she will begin to demand a snowboard, but I don't know this now.
I am developing signs of strain. I am easily frustrated. I am full of responses, actions, that are no longer relevant.
A bomb has gone off in the middle of my world. Can no one see how half of my face is torn off? How my mind is shattered?
I feel for Naomi, shooting down a mountain without much warning.
She wants to be 'on the body' at all times. Wants to be feeding, or nibbling, or hanging out at the breast.
What's next? Who will I be? My life is an aimless pasture between two expressways.
It will be a lifetime before I am able to change lanes.

BLACKLASH DIDN'T IMPACT HUGE BOX OFFICE WEEKEND FOR 'THOR: RAGNAROK': Welp. They were wrong. Really wrong. IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMANS "POTENTIALLY IRREVERSIBLE": Climate change is hurting people's health more than previously thought, a team of 63 doctors, scientists, and public health officials

A collage postcard made by Young Seo. As part of a school pen pal project, Young Seo sent this postcard to her pen pal, Jocelyn Kuang. Young Seo is fourteen years old and lives in Busan, South Korea.

Pay the Pollero

MARTHA BÁTIZ

From Plaza Requiem. *Published by Exile Editions in 2017. Bátiz's work has appeared in newspapers and magazines in Spain, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Peru, Ireland, England, the United States and Canada. She lives in Richmond Hill, ON.*

Andrés had just turned sixteen, still too young to just leave. But it was hard to make him understand. Half of the men in our town was already gone. Andrés and Pepe thought it'd be easy to do the same. "If we don't make it on our first try, then on the second one for sure we'll not fail, Mah. Just imagine how great things are going to be!" And he almost made me dizzy talking about all the things we would do. What we would buy with them American dollars he was going to earn? It wasn't that I didn't wanta have a huge TV—anyone wants a huge TV, right? And everything else. But I still said no. He must wait until he was older. Oh, but he was stubborn! Wanted to leave right away.

For a few days we didn't talk about nothing. I hadn't seen him so sad ever since the day we buried his father. "And how we going to pay the *pollero* to take you across the border, son?" I asked him one morning. It was still dark outside. His eyes lit up and pointed at the exhausted land outside our window. That's why I say maybe what happened was my fault, 'cause I sent him to school and then I got hurt, and he had to take over the field, and just then came the drought. Everything piled up.

After days and days of bugging me, I finally said yes. I told him I'd had it. He could stop being so annoying. I'd sell my little patch of land so he could go. He jumped up and down with joy, hugged me, and promised he'd work very hard to earn back them American dollars. He promised he'd buy me a much better house. And because I had always wished for a cow, he even promised me a cow, even though with this hand of mine I wouldn't ever be able to milk her. Pepe, Andrés, and a nephew of Don Manuel's called El Bizco for his crossed eyes (but he was actually

wrote in a report. LAUNCH OF SPECIAL INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ON HEALTH IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: The initiative has 4 main goals. WHAT THE CLIMATE REPORT SAYS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL WARMING: The same, only worse. PHILANTHROPY AND THE IMPACT REVOLUTION:

quite clever), decided to make the journey together.

I sold my land and my house but was allowed to stay there until Andrés made it to the other side. Then I would move somewhere else. I used to pray a lot back then. Ever since Andrés got in him this idea of leaving, all I did was pray. And on the morning they actually left, me and Don Manuel took the three boys all the way to the altar to give them our blessing. We gave them their backpacks stuffed with tortillas, chiles, apples and bottled water. Andrés took what little money I put together for him. I did everything the way I was supposed to. And after I saw the bus disappear I was worried sick. Don Manuel said that for the first time in his life he was glad his wife was dead, 'cause she woulda never let Pepe go. She woulda never been able to stand the fear and anguish that was piercing his stomach, he said. I cursed Andrés' father the entire day. If he wasn't dead, our life would've stayed the same, and he would've never left. And if someone had been forced to leave it would've been him, the father of Andrés, not my son. And that woulda been easier. Or less hard.

In the end Andrés, Pepe, and El Bizco managed to get across but they was caught by the Border Patrol. When they phoned Don Manuel they told him that la migra had sent them back. "Deported" was the word, I remember. Now I know what it means, and how much it stings. But back then I didn't really get it, except for the money I had paid and lost.

I remember them boys all frustrated and angry 'cause they walked a lot and they were about to reach the highway where they was going to be picked up. I wanted Andrés to return. I would find a way to buy back my place, and pretend this never happened. Andrés wouldn't hear of it.

From The Faraway Nearby. *Published by Black Dog Publishing and Ryerson Image Centre in 2017. Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Richard M. Nixon meet on the Canada–US border on the Moses-Saunders Power Dam on the St. Lawrence River in 1969. Unknown photographer for United Press International.*

He said they knew the way now. They knew exactly where to turn around so that the same thing didn't happen again. And they was going to risk it one more time, the three of them alone. Just not to regret not giving it another try. Stubborn as a mule, like always.

Before hanging up he told me the heat was fierce. Those were his words exactly. That's how he said it: "Mah, the heat is fierce here." He didn't say anything about the rest: how they was chased down and beaten up when they got caught. El Bizco told me all about that later. I stare now at the guy sitting here with a bandage 'round his head and wonder if my Andrés looked like him. Or maybe even worse.

Less than a week later, the phone rang again. It was already getting dark and Don Manuel picked up right away. There we was, me and his other sons, huddled together waiting for news. As soon as we saw the expression on his face we knew something was very wrong.

"They failed," he said as he hung up. The only one who was okay was El Bizco. He'd been the one to call. They got lost in the desert. Pepe was in the hospital. They was going to send him back home once he was doing better.

"What about Andrés?"

Philanthropy has reached an "impact tipping point" and none too soon. HOW THE SHUTDOWN WILL IMPACT NATIONAL PARKS: Visitors to national parks across the United States will see the impact of the government shutdown. RISING INTEREST RATES COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT ONTARIO'S ECONOMY: Rising interest rates

Waxy

CAMILLA GRUDOVA

From The Doll's Alphabet. *Published by Coach House Books in 2017. Camilla Grudova has a degree in Art History and German from McGill University. Her work has been published in the* White Review *and* Granta. *She lives in Toronto, ON.*

My new bedroom was an old kitchen. One wall was taken up by dozens of small cupboards and drawers, a fridge, a black stove, and a little brown sink with a beige hose hanging out of it like a child's leg. The landlord told me the fridge and stove didn't work, but they were good for storing clothes and other things. I could use the fridge as a wardrobe, she said.

It was on the fourth floor of a fat house covered in green tarpaper, and shared a hall and bathroom with another room, where a couple lived. Neither of our rooms had doors, only door frames. All the windows looking out onto the street were covered in dirty sheets, giving the impression from the outside that the house was nothing more than an empty shell with a giant's patchwork blanket hanging on the other side.

Along with the fridge and stove, my room had a table, a stack of flimsy chairs, and a couch, which I was to use as a bed.

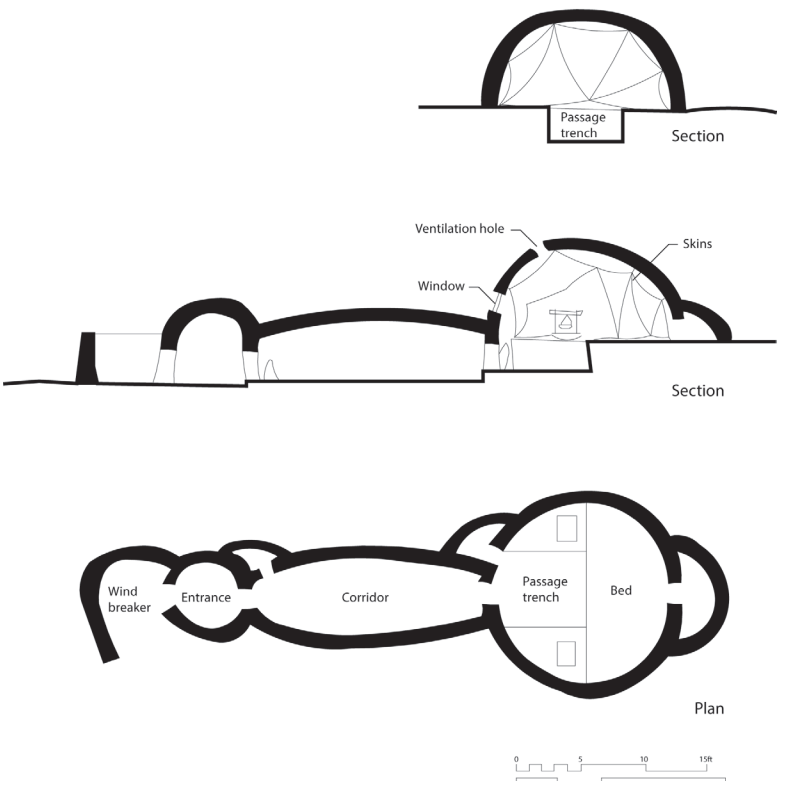
The kitchen cupboards were painted green and the walls were papered a reddish brown, with water spots and black mould here and there that reminded me of tinned meat that has been opened and forgotten. The sink water only ran cold.

I was very relieved. As soon as I moved in, I removed the sheet covering my small window, and washed the glass with vinegar.

A few days before, a girl from my Factory said she was leaving her place, since her Man had done well on an Exam and she could afford to move, and she told me I could take it. I was desperate to find a place and another Man, but when I went to look it was no more than a curtained-off section of a gloomy room shared with two other couples. One of the Men had brown teeth and kept licking his upper lip and leering at me as I was shown around the room. All four of them shared one filthy hotplate, and the windows were covered in long, thick, mouldy purple curtains. Damp Philosophy Books were stacked everywhere. In one corner there was a mountainous pile of empty tins, like a doll's house for vermin. The curled, hanging metal lids reminded me of the Man's protruding tongue.

There is nothing worse than being taken advantage of by someone else's Man. It's always considered the woman's fault. I knew I wouldn't be safe there. I was very fortunate to find the kitchen room through an advertisement posted in a café.

I had my own kerosene lamp, hotplate, toaster, tin bathtub, and kettle, all of which Rollo let me keep because



A cross-section of an igloo. From A Place in Mind, *by Avi Friedman. Published by Véhicule Press in 2016. Friedman is the recipient of numerous awards including the Manning Innovation Award and the World Habitat Award, and he is the author of eighteen books. He lives in Montreal.*

could have a "significant" impact on Ontario's economy as the already ballooning household debt is projected to continue to grow. COULD DAVOS MEETINGS IMPACT THE PRICE OF ETHEREUM?: Like other cryptocurrencies, ethereum has been on a wild ride over the past few months. HELPING FARMED ANIMALS: HIGH-IMPACT RESCUE:

he assumed the next woman he lived with would have them too.

It was exciting to have a fridge in the room, even though it didn't work. When I opened it, it smelled like sour milk. I found a very withered fruit in one of its drawers, so wrinkled it almost looked like it had a face. I kept it on the windowsill as a kind of artistic curiosity until I realized it probably wasn't fruit but something much darker. I buried it in the small backyard of the house early one morning before any of the other lodgers were up.

The couple in the other room were named Pauline and Stuart. Pauline worked in a Factory sewing ladies' intimates. She brought home samples for herself and spent a lot of time modelling them in the bathroom, where the mirror was. Mirrors were extremely expensive, we were lucky to have one, but Pauline was such a bathroom hog I had to buy a chamber pot for my room. She was anorexic and so the lingerie just hung off her in a sad way. She kept the bathroom door open when examining herself in the mirror, I suppose she wanted Stuart to pass by and see her.

She rarely flushed the toilet after she used it. She left small dark pellets in the bowl, like rabbits' droppings.

I wasn't frightened of Stuart because he seemed very preoccupied with himself.

He spent his time at home pacing their room, with a Philosophy Book under his arm, smoking his pipe and listening to records by Wagner and Tchaikovsky. He tried to look like he was deep in thought, but I was sure the only thing on his mind was his next tinned meat sandwich. He had a meaty smell about him. Often my hotplate wouldn't work on account of Stuart hogging all the electricity for his records. I ruined a lot of eggs that way, and had to drink my coffee powder mixed with cold water.

Stuart wore a red quilted nightrobe with rolled-up corduroy trousers underneath, and velvet smoking slippers with a slight heel, and his red-blonde hair stuck up unbrushed and very dry. When he went out, to an Exam, or to buy tobacco and records, he changed his robe for an unwashed Oxford shirt and a green sweater with leather elbow patches.

He never brought much Exam money home. Often he returned slightly drunk, as it was a common custom for Men to go for a drink after one

From Saigon Calling, *by Marcelino Truong. Published by Arsenal Pulp Press in 2017. Truong is an illustrator and painter from the Philippines. An excerpt from his*

Late last year, an infant elephant in the state of Kerala in India fell into a well as the baby's herd moved to cross a river. PIZZA HUT 'NOT SEEING ANY IMPACT' FROM NFL PROTESTS ON PIZZA SALES: While Papa John's was quick to blame the NFL for lackluster sales at its pizza restaurant during the third quarter, Pizza Hut is singing a different

previous book, Such a Lovely Little War, *the story of the Viet Nam war told through the eyes of a young boy, appeared in* Geist *103. He lives in Paris.*

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of their Exams, but I think Stuart pretended to be more drunk than he was so that Pauline would think he'd won a big Exam prize and spent it all on drink. Sometimes I don't even think he went to a bar—I couldn't smell any alcohol on him—but just walked around till evening before coming home.

'Next Time, Don't Spend Your Prize Money On Drink,' Pauline would say in a very loud, but not yelling, voice, as if speaking to a half-deaf person she wasn't cross at.

If one's Man did not do well on Exams, it was considered the woman's fault for not providing a nurturing enough environment in which they could excel.

I was jealous of Pauline's underthings. I didn't have anything I could bring home from my Factory, besides bits of sewing machine, but you couldn't do anything with them unless you had an iron frame, which was too large to pocket. It was my job to paint the name of the sewing machine company onto the frame, in gold paint: nightingale.

When I first got the job, I felt bored and cruel painting nightingale on all the machines. They looked like frightened black cats, and would all have the exact same name. I thought it would be so lovely to give one a name like dancey or veronica, but of course I would be fired. It didn't take long for it to feel like the only word I knew how to write was nightingale.

In Pauline and Stuart's room, I could see women's underthings hanging everywhere in abundance like cobwebs, insects, and flowers, but Pauline did not offer to give me any. Their room was papered muddy green. The most important thing they owned, besides a bed, a wardrobe, and Stuart's desk—all matching brown—was a gramophone, which loomed over everything else like a grand rotting flower.

I didn't have any nice underthings; perhaps Rollo wouldn't have left me if I'd had some. He and I parted ways after he won a large Exam prize. He wanted to find a nicer place to live and a prettier girl to take care of him. I wasn't too upset, I had prepared for something like this to happen, and I was proud he finally did so well on a big Exam.

When I first started dating him, I took him to the cinema. It was very expensive but I wanted to show Rollo I would not only take care of him but also show him a marvellous time. The film was called *A Virtuous Woman*. I didn't remember any of it, only the way the

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tune. MACDONALD'S COMMUNITY IMPACT: MILLENNIALS AREN'T LOVING IT: Millennials' divergent attitudes toward Mickey D's local impact may be nutrition-related. INTEL DOES ITS BEST TO TAMP DOWN IMPACT OF SPECTRE AND MELTDOWN IN EARNINGS CALL: Intel CEO Brian Krzanich was delighted to report that Intel

title was written in big letters on a black background. Whenever I closed my eyes, I saw the word NIGHTINGALE floating in black, like a film that was just beginning.

During the short time when I did not have a Man, I bought myself a grey trench coat, some plastic flowers, a pair of red rubber sandals, a tweed skirt with a few fixable moth holes and a third pair of dungarees, which I needed for work.

I felt good, but it was frowned upon to be Manless. I knew people would become suspicious of me if I went without one for too long. The way to meet Men was to go to a café, order a coffee, and wait for a Man to talk to you. They often went, in groups, to cafés to study. The cafés had wooden booths and stools, and the floors and walls were all tiled. In the cheaper cafés the tiles were filthy and cracked; in more expensive ones they smelled strongly of bleach. The first question a Man always asked was what type of Factory you worked in. Ideal were the ones that disfigured a woman the least and paid the most.

Pauline's job was better than mine; she could've found a better Man than Stuart, though perhaps not because her anorexia was unappealing. Men really liked women to have breasts for them to fondle when they were nervous.

My hands were rather ruined from the chemicals in the paint I used at work. I thought about wearing gloves to the café, but that would've been deceitful, and if part of you that is normally shown is conspicuously covered, the Men know it is hiding some sort of disfigurement. I didn't want them to imagine my hands were worse than they actually were. I was lucky not to have a disfigured face, though I did have a nasty cough sometimes.

What's in a Name

MOEZ SURANI

From عملية Operación Operation Opération 作业 Операция. *Published by BookThug in 2016. Moez Surani is a poet and artist. He is the author of three poetry collections. He lives in Toronto.*

During World War Two, Winston Churchill wrote a memo with directives for how to name British military operations:

> I. Operations in which large numbers of men may lose their lives ought not to be described by code words which imply a boastful or overconfident sentiment… or, conversely, which are calculated to invest the plan with an air of despondency…
>
> II. They ought not to be names of a frivolous character… They should not be ordinary words often used in other connections… Names of living people—Ministers and Commanders—should be avoided. … After all, the world is wide, and intelligent thought will readily supply an unlimited number of well-sounding names which do not suggest the character of the operation or disparage it in any way and do not enable some widow or mother to say that her son was killed in an operation called "Bunnyhug" or "Ballyhoo."
>
> III. Proper names are good in this field. The heroes of antiquity, figures from Greek and Roman mythology, the constellations and stars, famous racehorses, names of British and American war heroes, could be used, provided they fall within the rules above.

These rules are still observable today. Most of the names, even those American ones that were generated automatically but altered and approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have dignity, an inspirational loft, a sense of worthiness and tend toward the heroic.

had a record year in the company's quarterly earnings call with analysts yesterday. THREE WAYS BLOCKCHAIN WILL DISRUPT TRADITIONAL BUSINESS AND IMPACT MARKETING IN 2018: Forbes Agency Council PR, media strategy, creative & advertising execs share trends & tips. Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

From War of the Blink *by Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas. Published by Locarno Press in 2017. Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas is the creator of Haida Manga, a hybrid art form that combines classic Haida design and storytelling with Asian manga. He is an award-winning visual contemporary artist and author. Visit him at mny.ca.*

Arty Bollocks

A selection of artist statements from artybollocks.com, a website that automatically generates artist statements, certificates and tweets.

SENSE OF FAILING

My work explores the relationship between the Military-Industrial Complex and skateboard ethics. With influences as diverse as Derrida and Roy Lichtenstein, new synergies are created from both simple and complex discourse. Ever since I was a child I have been fascinated by the theoretical limits of the zeitgeist. What starts out as triumph soon becomes debased into a carnival of lust, leaving only a sense of failing and the unlikelihood of a new order. As shifting replicas become reconfigured through frantic and diverse practice, the viewer is left with an insight into the darkness of our world.

EPITAPH FOR HOPE

My work explores the relationship between Jungian archetypes and vegetarian ethics. With influences as diverse as Nietzsche and John Lennon, new combinations are generated from both simple and complex discourse. Ever since I was a student I have been fascinated by the ephemeral nature of the human condition. What starts out as hope soon becomes manipulated into a carnival of power, leaving only a sense of unreality and the chance of a new understanding. As intermittent phenomena become transformed through studious and critical practice, the viewer is left with an epitaph for the possibilities of our world.

CARNIVAL OF FUTILITY

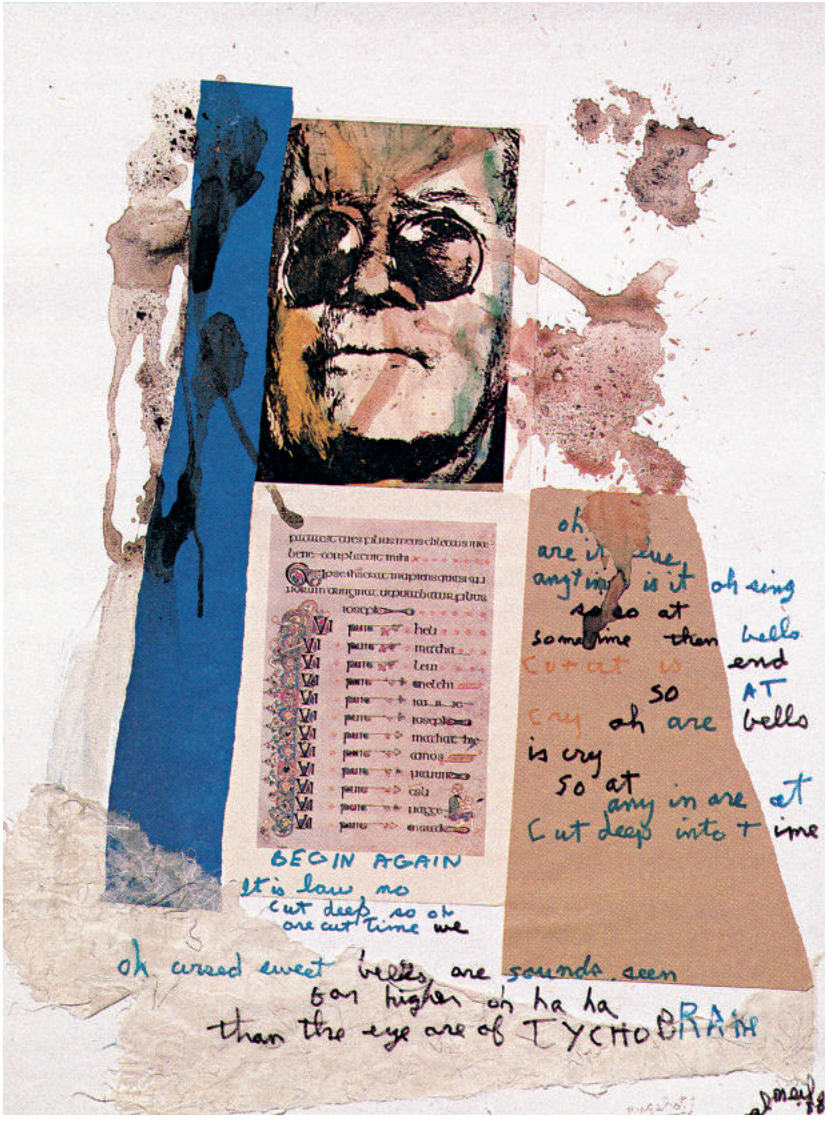
My work explores the relationship between the Military-Industrial Complex and midlife subcultures. With influences as diverse as Kierkegaard and Andy Warhol, new combinations are synthesized from both orderly and random dialogues. Ever since I was a student I have been fascinated by the essential unreality of the human condition. What starts out as vision soon becomes debased into a carnival of futility, leaving only a sense of failing and the unlikelihood of a new order. As momentary phenomena become transformed through emergent and academic practice, the viewer is left with a clue to the limits of our era.

BITCOIN: BRACE FOR (TAX) IMPACT: As bitcoin continues its rollercoaster ride, taxpayers need to brace themselves for heightened scrutiny of their declarations in relation to cryptocurrency gains. A NOVEL APPROACH COULD HELP MANAGE THE IMPACT OF INVASIVE SPECIES: Other scoring systems measure environmental impact.

In Memoriam Al Neil

STEPHEN OSBORNE

Al Neil was a musician who co-founded the famous Cellar Jazz Club in Vancouver. He was also a visual and performance artist and poet. He died in November 2017. This piece first appeared in Geist *No. 57 with the title "Evictions."*



From Origins, *an adjunct publication to the exhibit* Origins: Celtic Series. *Western Front, 1989.*

When Malcolm Lowry's shack on the beach at Dollarton, BC, burned to the ground in 1944, he and his wife Marjorie were able to save the manuscript of only one of the novels that he was working on at the time. A few months later the same manuscript had to be rescued again when the house that friends found for them in Oakville, Ontario, also burned to the ground. The Lowrys returned to Dollarton, which had been an idyllic home for them for about five years, and rebuilt the shack on the beach; Lowry finished his novel before the end of the year. (When it appeared in print as *Under the Volcano*, it sold, according to Lowry, precisely two copies in Canada.) And

now the Lowrys, along with the other squatters along the beach, mostly fishermen and loggers and their families, had to prepare to be evicted from their home to make way for a public park named for a family of tugboat operators. Lowry wrote eloquently in several short stories ("The Forest Path to the Spring" is perhaps the best known) against the processes of eviction and land development that were wiping out the tiny community that he and his wife had come to love. The village of Dollarton, which is about twenty miles northeast of Vancouver, had been named for the owner of a fleet of steamships known for the dollar signs painted on their funnels. Lowry renamed it Eridanus (for a river said by Virgil to be beloved of poets in the underworld), and he called Vancouver Enochvilleport (Enoch was one of the sons of Cain); Lowry was a child of Empire, and therefore confident in claiming occupation by mapping the Old World onto the New, rather than by looking at the land itself and its local namers, or even its original namers, whose descendants, members of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, were sequestered on an allotment bordering Lowry's beach (and mentioned in passing in his stories as "the Reserve"), and whose eviction from that beach several decades earlier had failed to lodge in his imagination.

Some years later, and many years ago, in 1971, when I went to Dollarton to have a look at Malcolm Lowry country, a couple of hundred squatters in Vancouver were living in a shantytown at the mouth of Stanley Park (the eviction notices and the bulldozers arrived a year later); that spring the Queen had come to town to eat dinner with the navy on Deadman's Island, which lies at the centre of history in Vancouver, a site of serial evictions of the living and the dead, the dislodgement of a First Nations village and at least one shantytown put to the torch by order of the sheriff's office. In 1971 I was trying to keep company with a woman whose enraged and dangerous husband had made it impossible for us to pass an afternoon together anywhere in safety, when the idea came to me of escaping for a day to Dollarton to look for signs of Malcolm Lowry's shanty. We set out on a blustery day in the rain in a decrepit Chevrolet borrowed from a friend who warned me not let the engine cut out, and we drove into the forested country along Dollarton Highway and tried not to be nervous when blue Volkswagens appeared on the road (the husband, I was told, was driving around in a blue Volkswagen with a loaded rifle in the back seat). We had entered a long, deserted stretch of highway when the rain began to sluice fiercely down onto the windshield and a gnomish figure appeared at the side of the road draped in a voluminous hooded poncho; as we drew near, a hand emerged from within its folds as if in supplication, and I pulled over with a toe on the brake and heel on the gas, and the gnomish figure—I want to say ancient gnomish figure, for there was something of another age about the androgynous creature now scuttling up to the car—opened the back door and fell into the seat in a heap. I let out the clutch and we jerked onto the road and our passenger let out a whoop and a chuckle, and when I looked into the rear-view there was a little man in the back seat holding up a bottle of Scotch whiskey. Wouldn't you say it's time for a drink, he said, and he passed the bottle up and we sipped and drove on in the rain, and he talked on about the pleasantness of the occasion, and I recall that he sang something as well, and chanted to himself perhaps more than to us. We began to climb a long hill and the rain let up, and near the crest of the hill, where there was no sign of habitation, he said that here was where he lived, and as soon as we came to a halt the engine in the Chevrolet sputtered and died. We helped him unload the shopping bags that he had been carrying under the poncho and we saw that he was not as old as we had thought he was: he was probably younger than my father. He lived down, down through the woods, he said, and then he waited while I tried and failed to get the Chevrolet going, and he said that we should come along with him and visit, and he led us into the forest and down a narrow path to the sea.

The path down to the beach lay under a canopy of enormous cedar trees, some of which had been decorated with bits of junk, and near the shoreline, which was rocky and covered in pebbles, more bits of junk had been piled up here and there: twisted and rusted pieces of metal, hubcaps, doorknobs, wooden slats, kitchen utensils, broken glass, miscellaneous stuff stuck into frames and propped up on boulders. He lived on an old barge that looked as if it had washed up on the beach long ago. We followed him up a ramp and onto the deck, and into a ramshackle shady room filled with more miscellaneous junk, and books and papers and a couple of big masks on the walls, and a guitar or perhaps two guitars,

and flutes and a tambourine. I remembered having seen a notice in an art gallery, or perhaps it was a review, and I asked if he might be the artist that I was thinking of, and he said yes he probably was that person, whose name was Al Neil: I had seen a mask or perhaps a collage in a gallery somewhere, and I knew that he was a jazz musician of renown, but I don't remember now how I knew that. He brought out the whiskey and some water and we sat in wicker chairs and looked out over the inlet to the far shore, where the Shell Oil refinery that Lowry had put into his stories lay in sunlight, for the clouds were breaking up and the rain had stopped. He said that Malcolm Lowry had lived just down the beach a little farther east. There was nothing that way but stony beach and grassy foreshore. You don't need to go over there, he said. It was cool and dark on the barge and there was a wood stove in the room and some kind of sink, and I don't remember if there was water or if we had to go to a pump somewhere to get water. We drank more whiskey and then we drank some beer that came from the inner recesses of the shack, and Al Neil played something on one of the guitars and then he performed a couple of numbers with the tambourine and the shaker, and then he sat down at a piano that we had not noticed tucked away in the gloom and banged out a few chords. We passed an hour, two hours, hidden away from the world in this strange, perfect refuge. Eventually we said goodbye and made our way back through the fierce outdoor gallery of *objets de refuse*, along the path through the tall trees to the car, which started up with no problem, and we drove on to Dollarton and turned around without having to get out to look for Malcolm Lowry's place because now we knew everything we would ever need to know about Eridanus. We drove back into Enochvilleport and weeks passed and then we never saw each other again.

Nine years later in the spring, Al Neil appeared in my publishing office, wrapped in a green poncho and dripping water onto the floor. He had no recollection of me. He had a manuscript in a plastic bag under the poncho. When I read the first sentence—"I was good with guns in the second World War, and not bad with the neat little Sten machine gun"—I knew that I wanted to publish it. It was a collection of memoirs, glimpses of a life illuminated by flashes of the war that he had gone to when he was eighteen years old and weighed 125 pounds. "On the beachhead in Normandy I picked off a big Luger pistol from a dead German soldier lying in a ditch and strapped it around my waist. I ripped off his boots too. They were niftier than mine." In 1944, the year that Lowry's shack burned down at Dollarton, Al Neil had stormed off a landing barge during the Normandy invasion, "into the predawn darkness, the sky for miles up and down the beach lit up with flares and thousands of rounds of flak from the anti-aircraft batteries, the gunners shooting like madmen at anything in the sky that moved"; eventually he was billetted in Nijmegen, Holland, where he learned to ride around drunk on a big Norton motorcycle as he waited with the 2nd Division for the crossing of the Rhine and the Battle of Arnhem, and the final dislodgement of the Nazi occupation. He was a big jazz man even then, bemused by Mary of Arnhem, the propaganda broadcaster beaming outdated swing music at the Allies from behind Nazi lines while he was reading *Downbeat* magazine and following the careers of Parker, Monk, Christian and Mingus in Harlem, where the bebop revolution was under way. In "The Forest Path to the Spring," Lowry's protagonist is a jazz man living in a shack by the sea at Eridanus, dreaming of Bix Beiderbecke, who predates even Mary of Arnhem, as he struggles to recover to a life; in Holland Al Neil was endeavouring to find a life: "I lost my virginity in Holland in 1944, I can't remember where or anything about it"; he remembers Rotterdam "and the wartime hookers in the bombed out rubble of the city, grinding and churning, touching and touching and sighing in the fleshpots." In Nijmegen that winter he entertained children with Bach and boogie woogie on the piano. He describes a photograph taken on St. Nicholas Day, December 5, 1944, in the children's hospital: "there in the back row, is what appears to be a silly, naïve juvenile. That's me, folks."

Last year I saw a review of Al Neil's work, and gathered that he still lives part of the year on the barge on the beach near Dollarton. He seems to have eluded eviction all these years; perhaps he has even eluded other processes of history. Malcolm Lowry is remembered today in the chronology of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation as a "famous author forced out of his paradise" fifty years ago on the beach that is still unceded territory, and which is also named Whey-ah-Wichen: Facing the Wind.

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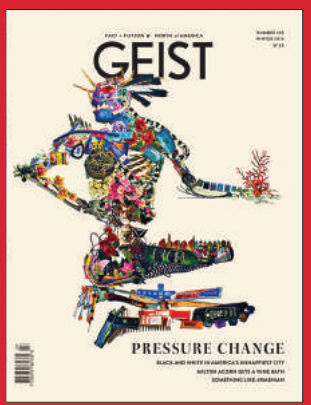

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SHORT STORY

Nibelung

DEVON CODE

Promises made, promises dodged

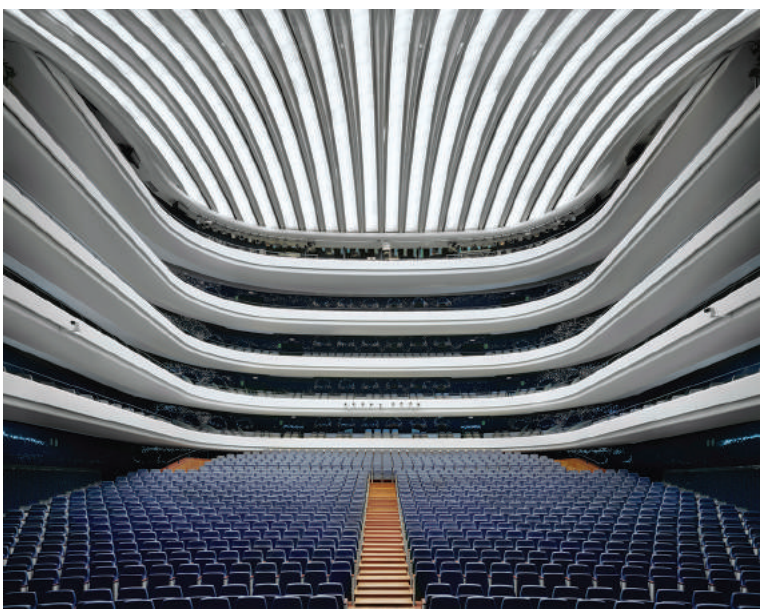
They had decided that during their honeymoon in southern Germany they would attend a performance of Richard Wagner's opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The full opera cycle was to be performed over the course of four consecutive nights at the regional theatre. The first night, a performance of about two and a half hours, proved to be a great disappointment. They'd purchased tickets for the least expensive seats, which were in the balcony, only to discover that an immense chandelier obstructed their view of the English surtitles so that they could not follow the libretto, neither of them having any knowledge of German. By the time they returned to their hotel, they were exhausted by the night of opera and the day of sightseeing that had preceded it. Reluctant to sleep, they sat up in bed drinking Bavarian pilsner from cans, reflecting on the tedium of the incomprehensible performance, debating whether

PHOTOS: DAVID LEVENTI

they would be able to endure the epic cycle in its entirety. Since they were together, she said, they were obliged to follow through with the commitment they had made, for the money that would be wasted on the unused tickets would be twice as great as that wasted if either one of them had planned to go alone. On the other hand, he countered, the frustration that would result from attending the remaining three nights of opera would be twofold the frustration felt were either one of them to attend the cycle alone. For this reason, he thought it doubly sensible to cut their losses. After all, he said, it had been his idea to go in the first place—for he'd thought an opera about a ring would be of interest to his wife, who was a jeweller by trade—and he was willing to admit he'd made a terrible mistake before their suffering was unnecessarily prolonged.

He recalled then, sitting up in bed next to his wife in the hotel room in southern Germany, a story she'd once told him about the apprenticeship she'd completed shortly after they'd first met. A few weeks into their courtship, she'd travelled to a remote town in the Colorado Rockies, where she apprenticed under a jeweller of international renown. She'd agreed to apprentice for a period of six months, discovering upon her arrival that the tasks expected of her were mundane and of little instructive value, her love of the trade to which she aspired tested by the drudgery of the work. Her one consolation was that the weekends were her own to do with as she pleased. She spent them hiking in the mountains, eager to explore a part of the world she'd never seen before and would likely not have occasion to return to again. She missed more and more the young man she would eventually marry, the growing familiarity of her new life only serving to emphasize his absence.

They debated whether they would be able to endure Der Ring des Nibelungen *in its entirety*



The drifter spoke of the first time he'd been in the dilapidated mining settlement more than forty years earlier

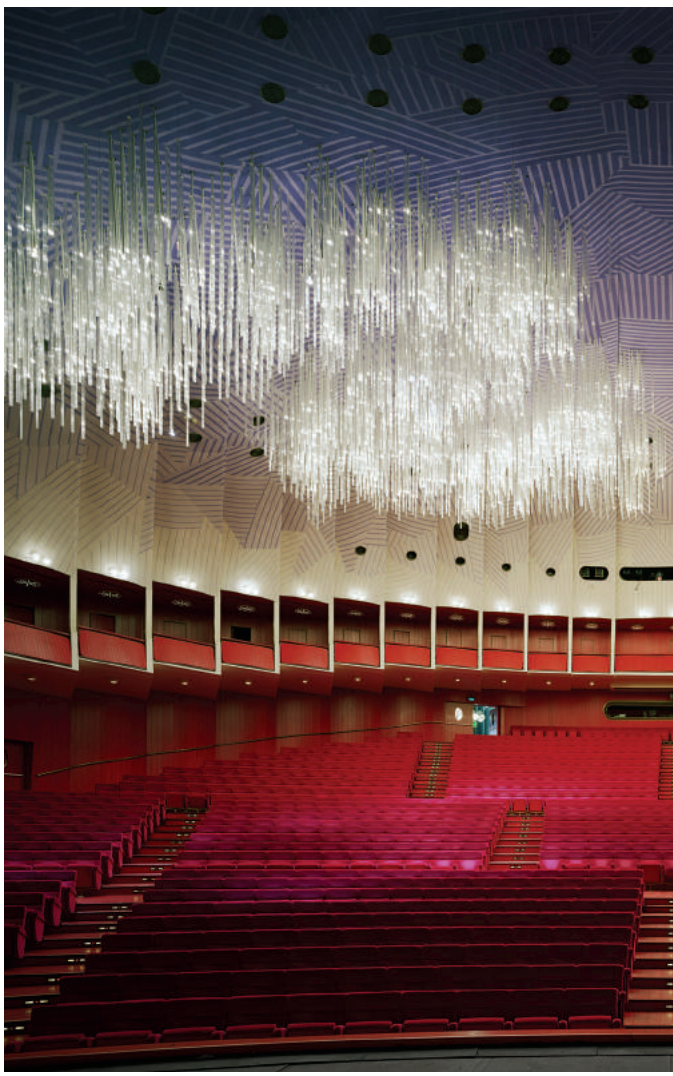
One weekend, in an attempt to break out of her routine, she travelled by bus to a nearby town, a mining settlement long past its prime. She was taken with its melancholic beauty, the dilapidated grandeur of the nineteenth-century buildings in its centre, the simple wooden houses and abandoned trailers along its outskirts. She spent the day taking photographs and that evening she ventured to the town's saloon. She sat at the bar, not far from a man who looked to be in his seventies who was speaking to the bartender. The man was bearded and wore a leather vest and blue jeans. His long white hair was tied back in a ponytail. She learned he was a drifter who'd travelled the world, working odd jobs, staying in one place as long as he pleased, moving on when he wanted a change, which was often, living for more than fifty years without obligation or attachment. The drifter spoke of the first time he'd been in that region, more than forty years before. At that time, he'd nearly fallen in love with a woman who lived in the town where he was working as a labourer. She'd waitressed in a diner where he took his meals. The service there, in his opinion, was better than the food, which was poor even by his standards. One evening as he settled his bill, the waitress told him that her shift was over and that he should buy her a drink. Impressed by her forwardness, he agreed. In the bar that night, he discovered how much she enjoyed the country and western records that played on the jukebox. He'd never paid much attention to music before, but from then on he made sure to have change in his pocket to feed into the gleaming machine so he could play her favourite songs. He'd take her out several times a week. She began to hint at them having a life together, knowing full well how he'd lived before they'd met. Though her suggestions were casual, it soon became clear that she was serious. He was surprised by his own interest in the possibility of their shared future. He'd been happier, he realized, those last few months than he'd been in years. He knew he'd have to make a decision soon or else it would be made for him.

One evening, after they'd said goodnight and kissed goodbye, he returned to the rooming house where he was staying. That evening, before going to sleep, he wrote a letter to the waitress in which he stated that he might like to marry her, but that such a decision required further thought. He'd be gone by the time she read the letter, and he might return in several months and ask her to marry him or he might

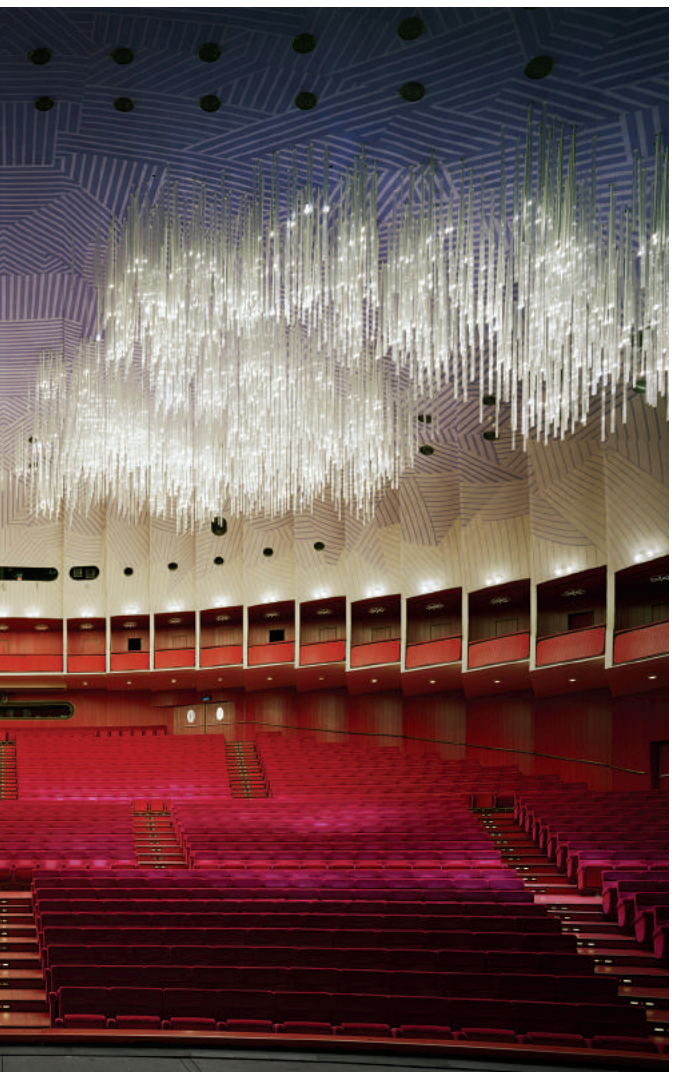
not. If he returned and she would have him, then she could be confident he'd thought things through and his commitment would be unwavering.

He rose before dawn the next morning and made his way through town, the weight of his pack heavy on his shoulders. As he passed by the diner he slipped the letter beneath the door. When he reached the edge of town, he stood by the side of the road and soon after was picked up by a travelling salesman. The salesman spoke with equal enthusiasm of his abiding love for his wife and children and of the opportunities for sexual adventure his line of work afforded him. After they'd travelled thirty miles, the drifter asked to be let out by a creek. The drifter made his way along the bank of the creek, following the directions that had been given to him by a stranger he'd encountered several days before. It had been the night of the drifter's twenty-seventh birthday. He hadn't observed a birthday since he'd left his childhood home but his waitress had prodded him for the date, insisting on a celebration. After they shared a meal at the diner, she presented him with an elaborately wrapped package and he removed the paper to discover a battery-operated AM radio. She was very glad, she told him, that he shared her love of country and western music. He did his best to make his expression of gratitude seem genuine. After he'd walked her home, he'd returned to the bar alone, the radio, still in its box, tucked beneath his arm, his head filled with thoughts of a settled life and the obligations it would entail. Sitting at the bar, he overheard the stranger speaking to the bartender. The stranger was short, stooped and haggard. He described a creek-side cave outside of town, claiming that as a younger man he'd lived there and panned for gold. He'd had some luck, but not enough to make it worth his while and eventually he'd given up and taken a job in town. The drifter asked him if he thought there was still gold to be had in the creek, and the stranger turned and looked at him as if he hadn't understood. Then the drifter ordered a beer for the stranger and the stranger drank it and said there likely was, but not enough to justify the trouble it would take to find. The drifter asked the stranger if he could remember the precise location of the cave. The stranger said he couldn't. Then the drifter ordered the stranger a double whiskey, and the stranger, after he downed the drink, described the location of the cave in precise detail. When the stranger finished, he again advised the drifter that the venture was foolhardy, and the drifter assured him he'd no intention of trying to strike it rich. The stranger said he didn't believe him, but that it made no difference to him, that sooner or later he'd learn which hopes were best pursued and which ones best left behind.

After he left the bar that night, the drifter lay on his bunk and reflected on the conversation. What he'd told the stranger had been true. He was not concerned with wealth for its own sake, but the thought of marriage had led him to thinking of a ring. He was more attached to the notion of self-reliance than the average man and approached the prospect of marriage with great caution. If he were to be bound by a promise and a ring, then both the promise and the ring, he decided, would be of his own making. He would attempt to pan the gold himself that would be cast into his fiancée's ring. He didn't consider this idea to be romantic so much as practical, a way of testing the strength of his conviction.



If he were bound to a promise and a ring, both would be of his own making



And so he'd come to the creek and followed it as it wound through the wilderness until he came upon a cave. He'd packed a pan for panning gold and as much dried food as he could carry, as well as the tools and provisions he'd need to live off the land for a few months, intending to fish in the creek and set snares to catch hare. His sole concession to comfort was the radio the waitress had given him for his birthday. That afternoon he started panning, a skill he'd learned from his grandfather as a child but had never put to use. He spent the days in the months that followed in much the same way. He'd fish and gather firewood and check his snares, spend the rest of the daylight hours swishing his pan in search of golden dust and nuggets. In the evenings he'd sit by the fire and listen to the radio. The reception was limited to a single frequency, a country and western station originating some fifty miles to the south. The station seemed to play exclusively the songs of love and heartache that his waitress was so fond of, songs he'd become well acquainted with during their courtship. He came increasingly to feel that the desires expressed in these songs were not the same as his, though after several weeks of living in the cave he still couldn't say for sure what it was he wanted most of all. He'd brought one extra set of batteries, and when the first gave out, he limited himself to just a few songs a night. This rationing came easily, for he'd grown tired of hearing the same songs repeated endlessly, songs he'd never cared for to begin with. If a song was introduced he couldn't stand to hear again, which happened often, he'd switch the radio off and try a few minutes later, hoping to catch one he disliked less than the others, eventually avoiding the music altogether in favour of the DJ's mindless prattle in between.

When the second set of batteries died, the drifter did not miss the radio at all. The peace he felt then surprised him, his evenings spent sitting and staring into the flames, or else lying with his eyes closed, listening to the crackle of the fire until he fell asleep. He felt at home in the cave and he grew reluctant to return to town though he'd long since gone through his store of dried goods and hadn't caught a fish or hare for days. One morning he saw his gaunt and bearded reflection on the surface of the frigid water, his features nearly unrecognizable. He became conscious of the dull ache in his abdomen, the sensations of hunger and deprivation having become so familiar as to be almost comforting, companions that clung to him even in his dreams. Recollections of the meals served to him by the waitress in the diner came to him, taunting him, and he acknowledged it was time to face what could no longer be ignored. The next morning, his nearly empty pack on his shoulders, he made his way along the creek back to the road, where he stood for several hours before a trucker eventually stopped to pick him up. When the drifter rebuffed the trucker's attempts at conversation, the trucker turned on the truck's AM radio instead, the pedal steel twang of heartache filling the confines of the cab.

In town the drifter learned that the gold he'd panned was worth very little, less than half of what he would've saved working in town in that time. There was barely enough for the casting of a single ring. He considered this for only a moment before he decided to sell the gold. Without stopping to glance in the window, he walked past the diner where the waitress worked and made his way to the most expensive restaurant in town. Assessing the condition of his hygiene, the maître d' refused him entry until the drifter showed the contents of

his wallet and pressed a folded bill into his hand. The maître d' directed him to the service entrance, ushered him to a small table in the storeroom where the waiters took their meals. The drifter ate very well, smiling and raising his whiskey glass at the cooks. It occurred to him he must seem half-crazed, for he'd barely spoken for months and had seldom bathed. Upon finishing his meal, he went directly to the bus depot, spending the rest of his money on a ticket for the next bus out of town, not caring what direction it was headed or how far it was bound. The most important thing, he'd decided, was that he leave before he changed his mind, for his time away had made plain to him what he'd suspected all along.

When, some forty-five years later, the apprentice jeweller seated at the Colorado bar asked the drifter why he hadn't stopped at the diner to say goodbye, he said he'd feared the clarity he'd found in solitude would vanish as soon as he laid eyes upon the woman he'd grown to love, that once he saw her smile again and heard her voice he would be powerless to leave and it would be as if the ring that never came to be had been on her finger all along.

When the young man, newly married to the jeweller, sat in the hotel bed in southern Germany next to his wife and recalled this story, he could not help but relate it to the context of their own fledgling marriage. The ring his wife wore on her left hand was an heirloom that once belonged to her great aunt, who'd never married and had died alone. His wife seemed unconcerned with the history of the ring, her commitment to him steadfast beyond romantic whims. He knew she'd still be wearing the ring while he wore his, as together they sat behind the chandelier in the balcony of the regional theatre and endured three more nights of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, the two of them having purchased tickets for the entire opera cycle in advance.

Devon Code is the author of Involuntary Bliss, *a novel, and* In A Mist, *a collection of short fiction. He lives in Peterborough, ON.*

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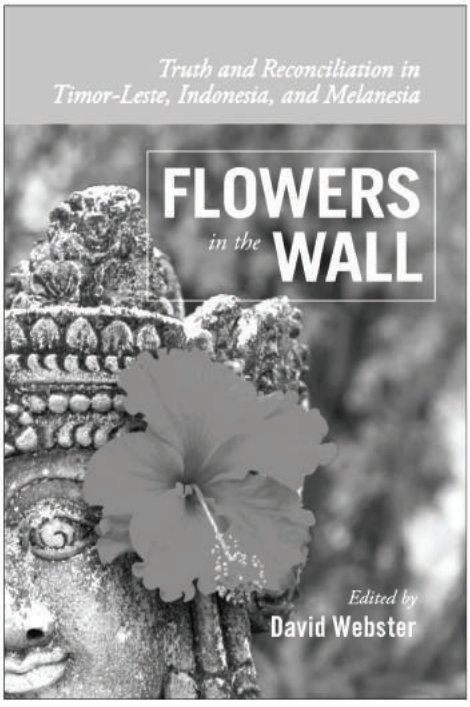
DISCOVERING TRUTH



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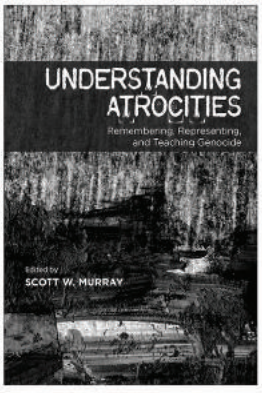

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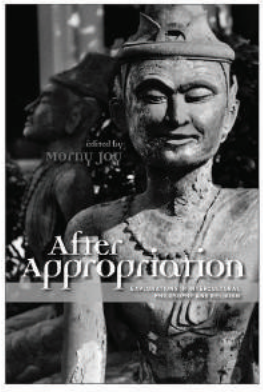

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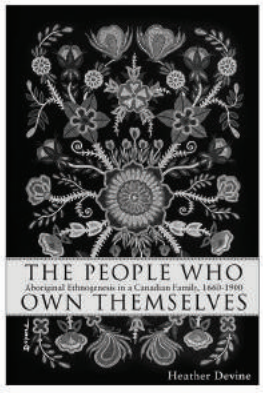

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Who Took My Sister?

SHANNON WEBB-CAMPBELL

On Cowie Hill Redux
For Loretta Saunders

spirit long bound for Labrador

my mangled remains—
weeks later a search party found

you continued westward

somewhere outside of Salisbury
my body off shoulder of the Trans-Canada
New Brunswick before dumping
drove the legal limit en route to
stole a bank card, filled a gas tank

into the trunk of my car
you heaved a hockey bag

became myself an Aboriginal statistic
a file on a laptop
our Missing and Murdered Women

I left behind my unfinished thesis
where every floor fell
closer to hell

zipped it up, dragged it down the hall
shoved my body into a duffle bag
pressed the corners of my lips
tucked plastic behind my ears
you wrapped my face in cling wrap

My brain bounced

beginning—
My belly, my baby
you slammed my head on the floor

I tore every sack
three different grocery bags
you try to suffocate me
we stumble into dining room
esophagus up
you pull at my hair

arching back I fight forward
you grab throat steal breath
come up from behind couch
hundreds for a short term sublet
murdered over rent money
I am a pale-skinned blue-eyed Inuk

Amber Tuccaro's Last Phone Call

"I want to go into the city,
are we?" she questioned the stranger
"Where do these roads go?"
"To 50th Street," spoke the man
"Are you sure?" said her voice
just beyond road signs of Nisku

sky the colour of grey carpet at Motel Nisku
"yo, we're not going into the city—"

"I want to go to the city,
better not take me anywhere I don't want to go."

in a phone call recorded outside of Nisku
brother on the line in a jail full of strangers
knew his Cree sister was with a stranger

a man is a man is a man is a man

"we're taking back roads," said a husky voice
"where you want to go"
"north of Beaumont, outside the city"

she called from a motel in Nisku
a pit stop on her way to the city
before hitching a ride
with a husky voice

not like Amber to listen to a man
on a stretch of road outside the city
Mom told her to keep from strangers
heard fear in her voice

her baby never made the city—

Do you know this man's voice?

found her body outside of Nisku, a farm owned by strangers.

Left with audio of a man,

and Amber's voice

God's Lake Narrows
For Leah Anderson

first light dances over
a remote Cree reserve

reached only by air in summer

an ice-made winter road

dry all four seasons

Leah walked out the front door
a fifteen-year-old
who hauls sewage in pails
men's skates slung over her shoulder

sang out to Aunt Myra—
aunt and mother—
her own mother
devoured by addiction
her own father
murdered when she was six

with her promise to keep curfew

her sisters knew she'd be home
before the stars got too bright

she swerved towards timberline
no one saw her at the hockey rink

enter Manitoba's thin light

snowmobile tracks carved banks

covered up boots and bones
what was found
near the water treatment plant

her body beaten so badly
it looked mauled by wild dogs

Leah's slaughter: unsolved

though on that January weekend
the only road in, and the only road

out was closed.

Shannon Webb-Campbell is a mixed Indigenous-settler poet, writer and critic. She is a member of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation, and currently lives in Montreal.

MEMOIR

Hot Pulse

J. JILL ROBINSON

I am sorry I caused you pain. But I thought it was okay.

Clearing the trails of our property on Galiano Island each year is my way to reconnect with the land. On the first day I do not allow myself to carry my clippers as I walk the paths on our property, traverse the body of the land. Up and down, across and around the perimeter of the sloped five acres near the bottom of Mount Galiano, I make note of what wants my attention this year. Our property is bordered at the top by Lord Road and slopes gradually downward to where it ends at Morgan Road, as though Morgan Road were a river and the property ended at its lapping edges instead of at a ditch and dusty gravel.

At first the walking is, for me, like being naked with someone you haven't been naked with for a long time but recognize in your being and like very well. It's a pervasive, cellular remembering, both body and being. I want to remember the land in the same way. And as one who likes the pathetic fallacy, I like to hope the land remembers me, too.

The first day's walk is also a process of assessment, seeing how much growth has occurred over the winter and spring to impede the trails—how much new salal and Oregon grape is poking through; how many fern fronds now drape over the paths, how many trees; how many loose branches blown off in the winter storms have fallen on them and cluttered the way; how many tenacious little broom have sprouted. I began a decade ago with an aggressive spirit, an annihilating drive to make the edges of the property clear to me. The property was only newly mine. It had originally been purchased by my husband Steven and two female friends, one of them his lover, before I came along. After my mother died, I bought the two women out and stopped feeling like a visitor, stopped feeling I had to ask for permission before I undertook the smallest of changes, and how delicious was my new-found power. I bought a small handsaw. I bought clippers.

The first paths I made required a strong push through natural obstacles, from intimidating deadfall to six-foot banks of blackberry vines, five-foot-high salal, swaths of stinging nettles, nests of mason bees. I roughed in the paths with my saw and clippers and then went back to fine-tune. I was up to the task. In those early days I was angry with some of my oldest friends, and with my sisters, and with my mother even though she was dead, and sometimes even with my decrepit old father for not being how he used to be, for not being coherent, for being drunk, for becoming frail and vague and wandering further and further away from me as he drew closer and closer to ninety. I took out my anger and frustration on the tough little trees and plants and prickles and deadfall. I pulled and dragged dead trees and branches to one side; I made huge piles of brush with the intention of burning them someday and that instead settled and became habitat for forest creatures. On subsequent passes on the roughed-in paths I bent and crouched and snipped through salal with pruning shears, sawed and yanked seedling fir and maples and broom with a redirected desire for vengeance fuelled by anger that often verged on hate. For people's failure to understand me, love me, listen to me when they should. Each in their own way did not show they loved me in a way I could recognize and for that I hated them severally or as one disappointing mass of humanity.

Today was the second day of trail work. Yesterday I worked from the cabin up the new trail to the outhouse—the shortcut my son Emmett discovered last year. The trail has been nicely cleared now except for the rotting log lodged across the path, which we have to clamber over each time we pass. We leave a saw there

and Emmett and Steven sometimes apply a few strokes on the trunk when they go by. Eventually one of them will saw right through.

Today I wasn't thinking about family as I cleared a path higher up; I was thinking about my childhood friend Diana. The path was in pretty good shape—some prickly blackberry vines working their way here and there, and the odd fern, and an hour's work of salal clipping and tossing. Only three or four small broom to tug out by the roots and toss. I was thinking about whether Diana would read my letter, my last attempt to connect. And if she read it, how she would respond in her head, for I am quite sure she won't respond on paper. Just as I am sure she will not come to Galiano to celebrate my sister Cathy's fiftieth birthday. Diana feels, I suppose, humiliated. I'm guessing her daughters read my story and that's what triggered all this.

I am sorry I caused you pain, I say in my head as I clip. *But.* I pause. *But I thought it was okay*. I really did. I had sent her the story when it was first published in a literary journal, and then later I wrote and told her it had won a prize, and she said, "Great! Great!" So, I assumed that she had read it and was fine with its content. (Never assume, the wisdom has it, and now I concur. But it's hard not to assume when you have almost nothing to go on and have to make guesses, educated and not, with what little insight or knowledge you have.) Not so, it turned out, when the story appeared in my book and she must actually have read it. Or one of her daughters did. Diana lopped contact with me completely off. But this year, a year later, I thought I'd make one last pitch and so I wrote Diana a letter on two sides of a piece of lined foolscap. In the letter I said that I hoped she would reconsider, that I never meant to cause her pain and I was sorry that I did, even inadvertently. I asked her if she is a person who forgives (thinking of her re-embraced Catholicism), and if she is, could she forgive me? Or under what conditions could she forgive me? And I asked if there were any circumstances under which she would agree to come to Galiano—setting my jaw I said that I would agree to any conditions. I would promise not to write about her ever again. I would promise not to bring up the subject of my having written about her ever again. But because my sister Cathy has non-Hodgkin lymphoma and who knows if she will even be here next summer, won't you please agree to come for her sake?

Silence. More silence.

Fucking silence, I think as I clip clip clip. What if Diana hasn't in fact read any of my books? What if only her daughters have read them, and so Diana doesn't know about the other stories I've written with a character very much like her in them? Then I, too, am wounded! That my oldest, and once dearest friend did not read my work and then pretended she had! Well. Clip clip. Off with her head.

They used raw logs chosen from my slash piles, building a kind of blind to hide behind while holding secret meetings

Up near the outhouse yesterday Steven helped our eight-year-old son Emmett begin a fort, without nails or rope, without scraps of plywood and discarded lengths of 2x4s. They used raw logs chosen from my slash piles, which they stacked and cribbed, building a kind of blind to hide behind while holding secret meetings that may or may not transpire. Their building site is situated on a lesser-used path and I walk by it only occasionally. It is near the spot where I found the first small stand of Indian pipe two years ago. Indian pipe. Corpse plant. Blooms after a few days of rain. Can grow in dense forest. Difficult to propagate. Parasitic, waxy white, without chlorophyll.

The site is also near the two piles of potting soil that are all that remain of the marijuana plants Steven found when he made a visit to the land and discovered two thriving plants in big black polymer pots. He called the RCMP, who came and took the plants away, the distinctive leaves and stalks hanging out the trunk as the officer went back down the driveway with the evidence. "But why did you call the cops?" I asked, incredulous, thinking that I clearly didn't know him all that well yet. "I had no idea you were *that* straight." In return he looked at me the same way. "Why *wouldn't* I call the police?"

On our way out to Galiano from Saskatoon this summer we visited Dad at the George Derby Centre in Burnaby where he now lives, having been booted out of the well-appointed suite in a White Rock facility for excessive

drinking. Dad is pretty out of it now. It's hard to be mad at him, this feeble, eighty-eight-year-old man. What's the point? Though I can still manage sometimes. But not this year, not this time, for he wasn't too far out of it to be very pleased with Emmett's piano playing. Most of the residents at George Derby are veterans, and Emmett sat in their midst and played "Marche Militaire" from his Royal Conservatory repertoire list, and they loved it, tapping their hands or feet, nodding their heads. Dad turned to one old guy and said, "And you—you're more than eighty—can you do that? Can you? Imagine! Eight years old!" I admit I basked in this smelly old ray of a compliment, in the praise not for me, but for my son, which is perhaps better.

We guided Dad off the secure floor and downstairs to what is known as the mall and stopped to watch two old guys playing a game of pool. When they finished and wandered off, Emmett and Steven had a game while Dad and I watched. But Dad wasn't very much interested and he became more and more apprehensive, anxious, leaned over to me again and again and suggested that we should go back now, that he did not want to miss the bus for the outing. "Where are you going, Dad?" I asked. "On a picnic!" he exclaimed, agitated now. "We are going on a picnic!" There was no bus; there was no picnic. I tried to cajole him. "Don't worry, Dad. We have plenty of time." But my reassurances were not enough. We abandoned the pool table and took Dad back upstairs, helped him find his room. I kissed him goodbye and we left.

On the other side of the secure door I felt the huge tension I always feel when I visit my father dissipate, tension I never seem to know has moved into me and taken over until my dutiful daughter role has been played and I am safely out of there again. Safely? Why is "safely" the right word? What threat could he possibly pose to me now? What threat did he ever pose, my gentleman father? He's a far cry from gentleman now.

On our way down the elevator Emmett said, "It's too smelly here."

"Is it?" Steven said.

"When you get old I won't put you in a place that's so smelly," Emmett continued.

"Thank you," I said. "I'll look forward to that."

PHOTO: J. JILL ROBINSON

When I sit quietly and unobtrusively in the covered porch of our cabin, creatures come out of hiding. Right now there are two robins on the clothesline Steven put up last year. Three others tweet on the grassy ground. Rufous-sided towhee rustle in the salal: when I first heard them I thought they were mice or rats. Rain would be good, for this parching landscape, but the tourist in me relishes the sunshine and the swimming. We have been to the beach every day but one so far in the month we have been here.

Last week I went on my own to the beach at Matthews Point, where only the diehards go because the way down is so very steep and coming back up nearly kills you. I came upon a naked couple making out: that beach can appear to be a good place to make love naked in the hot sand, the likelihood being that no one else will come along. Except the giant ferries, that is, plying the strait. This couple may have thought that, but I did come along, and before I flushed with embarrassment I remembered, I knew again the feel of the warm sand against my naked back, my legs up, the cum slipping onto the sand and I remembered the gorgeous feel of sun-hot skin against sun-hot skin and the hot pulse of sated desire. Their heads turned and they looked at me. I was some nondescript middle-aged woman snooping on them. Some dipstick tourist. I turned and walked in the opposite direction along the beach until surely they must be done, surely they must be at least partially draped with a towel or clothed, my embarrassment pulsing along with the water's rhythmic in out pulse. Whoosh. Whoosh.

Steven has been busy since we arrived, has cleared the completely clogged eavestroughs, which were filled to the brim with pine needles and other detritus fallen from the one remaining giant fir outside the cabin. Emmett wanted to climb up the ladder and help but we wouldn't let him, afraid he would fall. I told Steven the job wasn't Emmett's anyway, it was his, that it was penance. He agreed to perform the task, but he didn't ask what the penance was for so I told him anyway: for building this cabin too close to that lone magnificent tree that drops its hundreds of cones and thousands of needles and twigs and small branches onto the roof and into the eavestroughs. The oldest tree on the property, the only tree of its size left by the loggers who trashed this place before selling it as "partially cleared." Every year, instead of having his liver plucked out by birds or having to roll a boulder up a hill, I tell him, Steven is doomed to cleaning out the burgeoning eavestroughs.

A family of snakes lived at the base of the giant fir until last summer when Emmett, then seven, built his first fort there with triangular pieces of scrap plywood and several lengths of used 2x4s he found under the cabin. I gave him a hammer and nails of various sizes and he occupied himself for hours, banged his vision together with plenty of nails and installed the resulting "fort" against the huge tree with more nails still. The snakes must not have liked the noise and activity and they left.

The fort isn't there anymore either. It was, as my mother would have said, an eyesore, and I removed it at the end of last summer before we left. I timed it so that Emmett didn't see me. Sometimes I learn from my mistakes. Once, after tolerating it for several months and asking him to take it down, I dismantled a huge Lego structure he had made that was so big it made passage into his little room impossible, and though I felt bad, necessity drove me forward. He has never forgiven me for taking it down. He stood in the doorway to his room in shocked disbelief.

"Where is my Lego?" he said.

"Em," I said.

"Mum! Where is it?"

That was the first time in our history he was truly angry with me, betrayed by me, his mother, whom he had always trusted completely. He branded me with his eyes. I felt horrible, I couldn't undo what I had done even if I wanted to. Which I didn't.

How badly I have wanted the snakes to come back, to come home, but they haven't. The other day I saw a whole family of snakes basking on a sun-dappled trail not far from our place and I wondered if by chance they were related to the snakes that had been scared off, "our" snakes, and if they were, I wondered if they could be encouraged to come back to their abandoned nest at the base of the tree. But how to encourage snakes?

J. Jill Robinson is the author of the novel More in Anger, *available through Dundurn Press, and four collections of short stories. "Hot Pulse" is excerpted from a work-in-progress, "The Hot Pulse of Sated Desire." She divides her time between Banff and Galiano Island, BC.*

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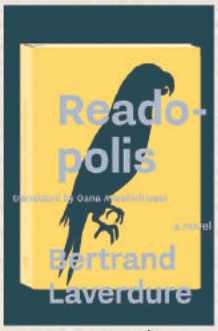

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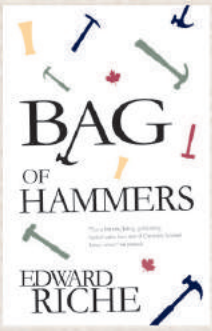

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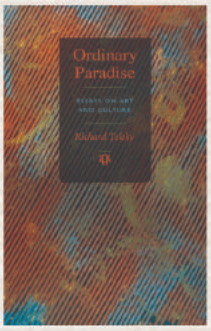

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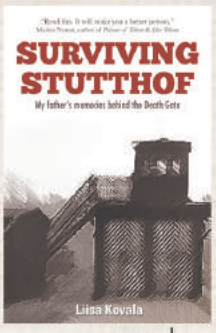

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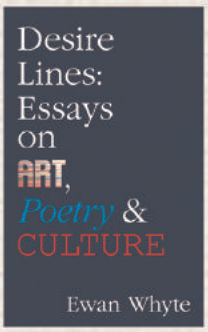

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BOOKS TO STAY HOME ABOUT

FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE **LITERARY PRESS GROUP**

Once and Future Prairie

LISA BIRD-WILSON

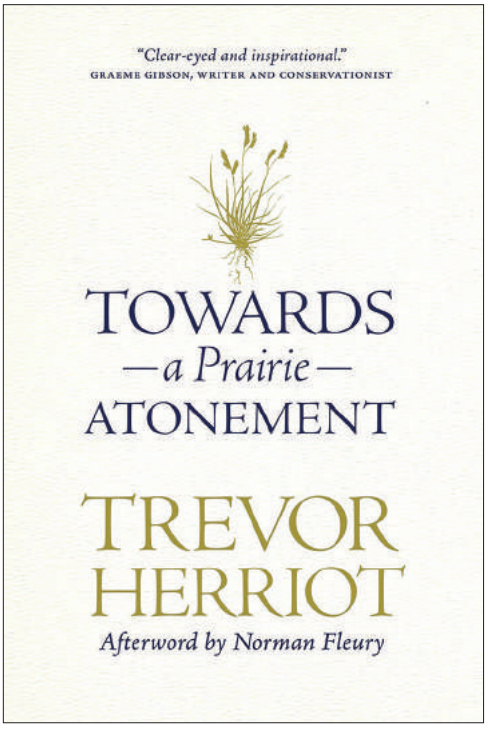
Stumbling at the starting line of reconiliation

Many years ago I attended a seemingly endless series of meetings between provincial government bureaucrats and various representatives from Indigenous organizations. Several meetings in, a woman representing a First Nation organization made a statement deploring all the meetings and the little-to-no progress being made. She had begun to see the meetings as a form of collaboration, she said. And collaboration, while it could mean working together toward a beneficial end, also carries another meaning—to collaborate with the enemy, to be a traitor.

I've never forgotten her bold suggestion that perhaps our participation amounted to collaborating with the enemy. But what to do about it? As the dominant group, the government officials we were working with held the power to decide to even bother to meet with us. They could just as easily exclude and ignore us—which has been the historical Indigenous experience.

Fast forward to the current climate, where the impact of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and 94 Calls to Action is almost tangible. The concept of co-operative collaboration takes on a certain new urgency. It's tied to reconciliation. There's always a risk to Indigenous people in collaborating. We risk the criticism of our communities for being co-opted, for being too close with the oppressor, for not attending to our own communities. For being a traitor.

Collaboration is exactly the place where reconciliation gets dicey. But again, our power, a.k.a. our collective voice, while growing thanks to social media, is still relatively quiet. With the exception of a few Indigenous ones, most publishing houses, theatre companies, galleries, record labels and the like are majority-controlled by the dominant who have been weaned at the breast of colonial structures and systems. We're still vulnerable to their decisions about whose voices get heard, whose stories are important enough to be published, produced and portrayed. In this structure we expend a lot of energy fighting for space. Sometimes we collaborate because it's what we have to do in order to be heard.



In *Towards a Prairie Atonement* (University of Regina Press, 2016), Trevor Herriot links his examination of the endangerment of the prairie grasslands and the cancellation of the Community Pastures program by the federal government to the eviction of the Métis of Ste. Madeleine during the creation of the community pastures in the late 1930s. While the frame of Herriot's book is the vulnerability of the prairie grasslands, the core of the book is Métis history. Herriot came to know the specific story of the St. Madeleine Métis through Michif Elder Norman Fleury.

The Métis, persecuted after both the 1869–70 Red River Resistance and the 1885 Riel Resistance, fled or changed their identities for cultural safety. Many went north, some south; some joined the Ste. Madeleine Métis on the grasslands remnant at the border of the new province of Manitoba and what would later become Saskatchewan. The Ste. Madeleine Métis made their homes on sandy soil rejected by settler farmers. The land the Métis settled was seen as "leftover land."

In the late 1930s, the prairie grasslands community pasture project came about because of the drought of the Dirty Thirties Dust Bowl and the erosion of prairie soil on so much land converted to agricultural use. The federal government intervened with soil and water conservation measures to return cropland to grass cover. The establishment of the community pastures, operated by the federal agriculture ministry, provided local farmers with affordable grazing. As a result,

the Métis of Ste. Madeleine, located within the newly designated community pasture, were forced from their community. Families were intimidated, their houses burned, dogs shot. Few received compensation. Most lost everything.

Herriot is correct when he asserts that the tragedy of the settlement of the prairies by farmers was "in not including Indigenous people…That exclusion hurt all of us." The exclusion, he says, amounts to a great loss; to me, this is where a great sadness settles. What survives, says Herriot, is a certain amount of hope. Herriot sees his new understanding of the history of the prairie grasslands, and the Métis roots on that land, as an act of reconciliation, a step toward atonement.

Herriot opened my eyes to some alarming statistics: "80 per cent of the natural cover on the prairies has been scraped away"; "Only 3.5 per cent of the native grassland in Canada's Prairie Ecozone has any form of protection." While the federal government has been loath to provide Indigenous peoples and lands the protections they deserve, it has also pulled away from protecting the vulnerable ecosystem of the prairies by cancelling the community pastures program in 2008.

The Ste. Madeleine grounds are located within the Spy Hill-Ellice Community Pasture. Remnants of the Métis community, encircled by poplars, mark the space. The cemetery provides a reminder of the generations of Métis who have called Ste. Madeleine home. Picnic tables, grills and a bus converted into a camper indicate the site's current function as an annual gathering place for the Métis. A place to return to but one that can never truly be reclaimed.

At its core, Herriot's book is a Métis story. His good intentions, heartfelt sentiment and sincere efforts to realign his settler perspective run parallel to the Métis voices that have been telling our own stories for a very long time. As I read Herriot's beautiful writing and polished style, I'm reminded of his usual audience. For the most part, it's not Métis people well versed in the history, background and colonial violence the Métis have endured—the people who have had no choice but to know this history. The book is for a different audience, one that may or may not be aware, but whose members nevertheless live the legacy and privilege as beneficiaries of colonial theft and violence. The elegant writing in *Towards a Prairie Atonement* showcases the Trevor Herriot his readers and fans love so well. And with this book he has brought them a new story. A Métis story.

There's a certain unacknowledged, invisible privilege wrapped up in Herriot's being able to choose to tell and garner attention for Métis stories when the Métis telling the stories for ages have been largely overlooked or ignored by mainstream publishing houses, literary recognition and settler audiences.

Herriot's book won two Saskatchewan Book Awards—a publishing award and the City of Regina Book Award. If not for the Métis story within Herriot's book, heavy with tales of Cuthbert Grant and Red River history, along with the Ste. Madeleine story, there would be no book. I question why Norman Fleury is only included in the afterword. This may seem like a small complaint on the surface, but in the larger current narrative of appropriation and silencing of Indigenous voices, why not a book written by Trevor Herriot with Norman Fleury? After all, it's the meeting with Fleury, the consultation with a Ste. Madeleine Michif Elder, that gives Herriot's book its legitimacy. The fact of this collaboration is what saves the book from potential accusations of appropriation. Herriot leans on the fact that he writes "with the guidance of an Elder who has…the knowledge and right to share the story."

Surely Herriot and his publisher are sensitive to this potential pitfall, as Herriot is careful to firmly place his endeavour in the realm of reconciliation and atonement. Quoting third-hand an unnamed Elder, Herriot includes the Elder's definition of reconciliation: "reconciliation means sharing what we have with one another and not taking from one another." So much has already been taken from the Métis.

Norman Fleury, for his part, expresses some of his conflicted thoughts about participating in the book with Herriot. "Trevor Herriot said that he hoped some small good thing might come of his efforts in travelling to Ste. Madeleine. I hope and think it has in this small book. But… to be honest there were times when I was made uneasy by his questions and by what Trevor wanted from me." It's clear that, while not articulated as such, collaboration dually defined as co-operative or traitorous remains complicated.

Like it or not, it seems collaboration is tied up in reconciliation, which, according to TRC former chair Murray Sinclair, we haven't even yet begun to do in earnest. "We're stumbling at the starting line of reconciliation," Sinclair said in a recent interview on CBC radio *As It Happens*. "There's no question of that. We haven't even started the race yet. There's a long way to go." Maybe for now, some small good thing, as Norman Fleury says, is all we can hope for.

Lisa Bird-Wilson, a Cree-Métis 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, *the* 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.*

Confidence Woman

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

The woman who called herself Tatiana Aarons gave me an address that led to a vacant lot

In the late afternoon of Saturday, April 23, 2005, I was reading a novel on the edge of the Praça do Comércio in Lisbon, Portugal. A petite woman in her late twenties, with long dark hair, emerged from a side street to the west of the square. She approached me with a breezy manner and, in a South African accent, asked me what I was reading. I had been in Lisbon for three weeks, preparing for a research trip to Angola. I was on my own, and was immersed in the history and literature of Portuguese-speaking southern Africa. Introducing herself as Tatiana Aarons, my new acquaintance told me that her South African parents had taken her into exile in Mozambique during the apartheid years. When I showed her the Angolan novel I was reading, she added that she had also lived in Lubango, Angola, which, I knew, had been a refuge for white leftists during that period. I felt myself projected into the world of Jewish South African Communists described in Nadine Gordimer's novels *Burger's Daughter* and *A Sport of Nature*.

"We should keep in touch," Tatiana said. In my agenda, which was open at that day's date, she wrote her addresses and phone numbers in Mozambique and South Africa. She added a third address: that of a backpacker hotel near the Rossio, Lisbon's central square. As it grew dark, Tatiana and I walked toward the city centre. A graduate student in psychology in Johannesburg, she had come to Lisbon for a conference. Air France—"Air Chance!" she laughed—had lost her luggage, which included her credit card. While waiting for her suitcase to arrive, she had run out of cash. "Could you lend me 60 Euros to get to the airport?" She scribbled her room number on a card from the backpacker hotel. I could find her there later and she would repay me.

Erudite, and with a clownish sense of humour, Tatiana was charming company. Yet I couldn't help but spot inconsistencies in her story. She wove such an effortless tale that I hated myself for picking holes in it. I knew that a 45 bus from the Rossio would take her to the airport for less than 2 Euros. We chatted at the bus stop. As the bus approached, I pulled out my wallet. Tatiana's ebullient expression vanished. I extended a 10-Euro note as my compliment for a good story. She

PHOTO: JAMES MASON-HUDSON

leapt for the money, ripping it from my hand. I saw a feral desperation in her clenched teeth. She scampered up the steps and stood holding a pole, staring back at me, as the bus pulled away.

I wanted to believe Tatiana. The next morning I asked for her at the hotel. She had never stayed there. A year later, in Maputo, Mozambique, I looked for the address she had given me, and found that Avenida 24 de Julho, 543, led me to a vacant lot on the city's main thoroughfare. Even as I reminded myself that the side streets from which she had emerged were riddled with drug dens, I marvelled at the detail with which Tatiana had prepared her story.

I was not alone.

Between 2005 and 2011, the woman who called herself Tatiana Aarons duped thousands of visitors to Lisbon. I must have been one of her first marks. She later refined her story, ironing out the inconsistencies. The pose of being a psychology student separated from her credit card remained, as did the jokes about Air France. She switched political ideologies, telling later victims that her parents had been landowners in colonial Mozambique who had fled to South Africa after the 1975 revolution. No longer picking up travellers, usually single men, close to the city's druggy areas, she patrolled the stately, treed Avenida da Liberdade, which runs from the Rossio to Eduardo VII Park and hosts some of Portugal's most expensive boutiques. Receptionists in budget hotels near the park reported that on some occasions two or three guests a day told them that a South African friend was coming to the front desk to return the 60 Euros (or more) they had lent her. Everyone Tatiana scammed became fascinated by her.

In 2009 Tatiana scammed Tom Struyf, a Belgian actor. Struyf, who said she was the best actor he had seen, later returned to Lisbon to research Tatiana's career. Struyf's one-man show, *The Tatiana Aarons Experience*, charts his path from idealization of Tatiana to confronting the reality of her motivations. She asked her victims for 60 Euros, Struyf learned, because that was the street price of two doses of heroin.

Tatiana's scams occurred in a Portugal that had shaken off its hangover from the fascist Salazar-Caetano dictatorship (1932–1974) and the loss of its African and Asian colonies. After 2002, when the war in Angola ended, converting Portugal's biggest former African colony into an economic dynamo, Lisbon swarmed with Angolan, Mozambican and Cape Verdean singers, writers, actors. The city's sense of itself as being on the edge of Africa was the backdrop to Tatiana's stories. This relationship soured after 2008, when the economy crashed, young Portuguese emigrated, rich Angolans bought the boutiques on Avenida da Liberdade, the African artists either left town or redefined themselves as "Black Portuguese" and, to save the economy, the city was opened to a mass tourism that overwhelmed its most traditional neighbourhoods. Today, when tourists, each armed with an iPhone, stroll Avenida da Liberdade in guided groups, it is unlikely that Tatiana would flourish. Already, in the final months of her career, her victims were beginning to commiserate with each other on Facebook.

Miraculously, Tatiana appears to have outlived her heroin addiction. Tom Struyf reports that in 2011, after giving birth to a child, she went into rehab. In 2014, in Johannesburg, I made it as far as Tatiana's district of Sandton. I decided not to look up the address she had given me. As much as I hoped she had survived, I knew that all I would find was a vacant lot.

Stephen Henighan's short story collection, Blue River and Red Earth *(Cormorant Books), and his translation of the Angolan writer Ondjaki's novel,* Transparent City *(Biblioasis), will both be published in early 2018. Read more of his work at geist.com and stephenhenighan.com. Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenighan.*

Eating Peas with Honey

ALBERTO MANGUEL

More or less lucid, more or less outspoken, we are creatures of language

Reconstrucción del muelle del Arenal tras la riada de 1926

Sometime in the thirteenth century, somewhere in the first book of his vast *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas noted that the limitations of human law are such that virtuous acts cannot be demanded of a citizen except in a very superficial way, and that to insist on intrinsic conditions of virtue is beyond the power of civilian rulers. According to Aquinas, society functions according to its founding legislation and, while it can demand a certain virtuous social conduct from its citizens, and must punish them in case of them disobeying this demand, it cannot oblige them to be virtuous, in any profound sense of the word. Within the defining walls of our society, we relate to one another constrained by rules and regulations, but no rule and no regulation can make us more generous, more merciful, more friendly, more helpful. Such virtues depend on other things.

Society, like everything else created by human beings, is a product of the imagination, the material realization of something that comes into conceptual being as a possible solution to the question of how to live together. We imagine the world in order to experience it in the mind before we experience it in the flesh; we imagine a system of communal living before we set up governments and define frontiers. These activities are in constant fluctuation: at the same time that we build what we have imagined, we imagine alterations to those buildings that in turn must be re-imagined. If a government, for instance, imposes censorship on what we read, we lobby for a law that will

IMAGE: AGUSTÍN RECHE MORA

grant us the right to free speech. If free speech is abused, for instance in order to incite racial or sexist violence, we put forward regulations that refine the meaning of "free speech." If those regulations are used to curtail criticism of government policies, we find means of debating the fair use of such regulations. And so on. We exist as a society in the tension between obligations and choice, between limitations and rights, between what we must do and what we can do and can't do.

In French there is a word, *imaginaire*, that defines the vocabulary of images, symbols and dreams through which a person, or a group of people, reads the world. Laws and notions of freedom, mythological and literary imagery, memories of migrations and settlements through space and time, symbols and emblems, make up the patchwork of our *imaginaires*, but in order for these to serve as constructive elements, they require a verbal translation, from imaginative and material shards into verbal fragments. This translation (because it is a translation, the act of carrying something from one place to another) lies at the very commencement of every one of our enterprises. More or less lucid, more or less outspoken, we are creatures of language, reading animals that mirror in our perceived kaleidoscopic identities, whatever our belief, the opening injunction of the Gospel of John. In all our beginnings are words. I have said "in all our beginnings." But in fact, our many plurals are ultimately singular. What is it then that drives us from the fortress of our self to seek the company and conversation of other beings who roam about in the strange world we live in? Why do we have societies at all?

Plato invented the myth about the original humans having a double nature that was later divided in two by the gods, a myth that explains up to a point our search: we are wistfully looking for our lost half. And yet, embraces and debates, assemblies and contact sports are never enough to break through our conviction of individuality. Our bodies are like burkas shielding us from the rest of humankind, and there is no need for the hermit Simeon Stylites to climb to the top of a column in a desert in order to find himself isolated from his fellows. We are condemned to singularity.

And yet, we constantly try to come together to join forces, to find ways of being with one another. Every new technology offers a new hope of reunion. Cave murals gathered our ancestors to discuss collective mammoth hunts, clay tablets and papyrus rolls allowed their descendants to converse about building cities and moving armies with the distant and the dead. Gutenberg's printing press created the illusion that we are not unique, and that in the reading community every copy of the Quixote is the same as every other copy—a trick that has never quite convinced most readers, who believe that their individual copy in which they read a book for the first time is as singular as the Phoenix.

Even the singularities of our convoluted histories become communal. Huddled all together in front of our television sets, my generation witnessed Armstrong's first step in outer space; huddled all together in front of a computer screen, my children's generation witnessed the discovery of the Higgs particle in the remarkable documentary *Particle Fever*. Not content with being part of that countless contemplative crowd, we have dreamt up electronic devices that create and collect imaginary friends to whom we confide our most dangerous secrets and for whom we post our most intimate portraits.

The consequence of this anxiety to overcome our individual feelings of isolation is that at no moment of day or night are we inaccessible. We have made ourselves available to others in our sleep, at mealtimes, during travel, on the toilet, while making love when the tremor of pleasure is confused with the pulsing of our iPhone. We have reinvented the all-seeing eye of God. The silent friendship of the moon is no longer ours, as it was for Virgil, and we have dismissed the sessions of sweet silent thought that Shakespeare enjoyed. Only through old acquaintances popping up on the Web do we now summon remembrance of things past. Lovers can no longer be forever absent, or friends long gone: at the flick of a finger we can reach them, and they can reach us. We suffer from the contrary of agoraphobia: we fear not being surrounded by crowds. We have become haunted by a constant presence: everyone is always there.

I find this a disquieting thought.

The search for others—to play with, to text, to email, to phone, to Skype—establishes our own identities. We are, or we become who we are, because someone acknowledges our presence. The motto of the electronic age is Bishop Berkeley's, who in the eighteenth century famously declared: "To be is to be perceived."

But this search, like all human endeavours, has its limits. The fifth edition of the DSM (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*) published in 2013 by the American Psychiatric Association, lists Internet Gaming Disorder as a pathology that leads to "clinical significant impairment or distress." What Petrarch would have called melancholy, and Goethe's Dr. Faust "the withering of the heart," the DSM calls depression associated to withdrawal (when the technology breaks down) and a sense of unfulfillment (when it fails to deliver). The end result is the same.

However hard we try, all our efforts to be with others, to be understood and recognized by others—fully, absolutely, happily—ultimately fail. "We live together, we act on, and react to, one another," wrote Aldous Huxley in *The Doors of Perception*, "but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves. The martyrs go hand in hand into the arena; they are crucified alone.

Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude." The crowds of friends promised by Facebook, the multitudes of correspondents wanting to link across cyberspace, the merchants of promise that offer fortunes in foreign lands, partners in virtual orgies, penis and breast enlargements, sweeter dreams and better lives, cannot remedy the essential melancholy about which Plato imagined his story.

But perhaps we simply *imagine* that we are alone. Perhaps we feel alone because we know that, however hard we try, we can't transmit our thoughts and ideas to convey their full meaning, we don't make ourselves understood clearly and exactly. Words fail us. Always, on every occasion, words fail us. Every time we conclude "You know what I'm saying," every time we ask "Don't you see what I mean?" we are acknowledging the failure of language to communicate.

This failure is compounded by the instruments we use to convey our language. We are creatures of words, and we have imagined tools and methods that allow us to use them in what we believe are more efficient ways. But these methods and tools in turn alter our perceptions, set limits on what we can read and write, change the very nature of our memory and thought.

As a kid, I learned by heart this ancient poem:

I eat my peas with honey
I've done so all my life.
They taste a little funny
But it keeps them on my knife.

Depending on the occasion, one technology is better suited than another, and, like peas eaten with a knife, not every text is best served by the latest gadget. Like successive human generations, generations of technological inventions learn from one another, not only forward but backward, not only from new procedures but also from proven ways. Vast mercantile machineries and a complex advertising apparatus compel us to discard what is still practical and embrace what may prove superfluous at best and destructive at worst. We, all of us, have to be careful when making choices and remember the very useful question asked in Roman law: *Qui bono?* Whom does this benefit? No technology is innocent, and we must have the intelligence to recognize its vices and virtues, and insist on our right to choose.

Aquinas's observation—that the limitations of human law are such that virtuous acts cannot be demanded of a citizen—applies above all to this last dogmatic condition. The language of the law (incontrovertible by definition, though subject to change within its own parameters) is essentially totalitarian: it demands blind submission, to be recognized absolutely, as an act of faith. The law (the verbal construct we call "the law") claims for itself both majesty and rigour, and does not allow ignorance as an excuse for disobedience. Under such circumstances, the letter of the law can dictate a certain virtuous social behaviour—"virtue," "social" and "behaviour" being terms defined by the law itself, in a Humpty-Dumptyish attitude of sovereignty. What the law cannot do is shape or nurture in the citizen a condition of intrinsic virtue. Such understanding of who we are (and what we might be at our best and worst) can, however, be learned by considering the creative uncertainty of language itself. In this ever-fluid linguistic realm (which is, of course, that of literature), citizens as readers redeem their verbal heritage and create out of the open-ended stories, essays and poems of the universal library, and in spite of language's intrinsic weakness, their own ethical and moral experience.

We give ourselves names in order to recognize that we are here, upon this stage. We name the world and the things in it to be able to apprehend them in flight, to catch them in webs made of words. To know that we are, we must pronounce the sounds "I am," echoing the monstrous definition of the god who confronted Moses in the burning bush saying "I am what I am"—since even the godhead must define itself through words. In societies of the book, we do this through books. Literature is a long and laborious way of conjugating the verb "to be." A microphotography of the compact bone structure of the human femur reveals what appears to the innocent eye as a pile of old books, their pages yellowed and worn: symbolically, the image implies that we carry, in our very marrow, the universal library, that we are literally made of words.

This suggests that we inhabit language but that we are also inhabited by language, engaged in a dialogue in which those who utter words and those who decipher words become almost indistinguishable in an endless process of mutual elucidation and reconstruction, making gestures that denote drowning but are understood as waving, and gestures that denote waving but are understood as drowning. And sometimes, if we are careful and lucky, what we mean to say and what we are seen to say will coincide. For Aquinas, this search, this ongoing attempt at understanding, was the quality that, outside social laws, elicited from our experience of the world what he called "the education of virtue."

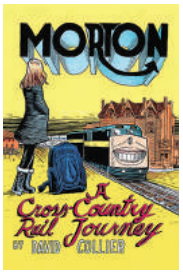
Alberto Manguel is the award-winning author of hundreds of works, most recently (in English) Curiosity, All Men Are Liars *and* A History of Reading. *He lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he serves as director of the National Library. Read more of his work at alberto.manguel.com and geist.com.*

ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

TRAINS OF THOUGHT

David Collier's graphic memoir **Morton: A Cross-Country Rail Journey** (Conundrum, excerpted in *Geist* 105) is based upon a Collier family vacation by train. As he explains in a speech balloon, the trip came about thanks to a VIA Rail promotion that offered "Free, unlimited travel… during July for members of the Regular Armed Forces, the Reserves, Department of National Defence employees and Veterans." Collier, an Armed Forces veteran, planned a complex trip for himself, his wife and their teenage son: Hamilton to Montreal (through Belleville, Kingston, Brockville), to Quebec City; on to Lac Saint-Jean and then Toronto. From there (via the transcontinental "Canadian") to Winnipeg, where they headed north (via the "Hudson Bay") to Churchill. Back to Winnipeg, then on to Saskatoon before returning home. They squeezed in a side trip to Brandon, to track down the family of John Morton, Collier's boyhood friend, who'd just passed away. In Saskatoon they made a pilgrimage to the home Collier had lived in when just starting out as cartoonist—"Years' worth of crosshatching!"—only to discover that the house had been torn down. *Morton* is an eclectic, anecdotal meander through geography and through history, both national and personal. It's a lot of fun.



—Michael Hayward

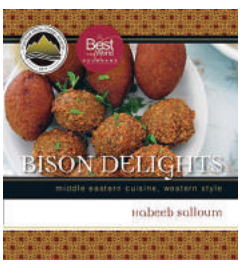
SMALL VICTORIES

In "Skin Like Almonds," a quiet, contemplative story about midway through **You Can't Stay Here,** Jasmina Odor's collection of short fiction (Thistledown Press), the narrator remarks, "We hadn't quit trying to make things happen, but we saw clearly that there was a disconnect between what we strived for and what came for us." This line is at the heart of the whole collection, populated by Croatian immigrants living in Canada and those who have stayed in their country. In "Ninety-Nine Percent of It," a couple lives a confined life in a condo next to the freeway, each always unsure of how the other is feeling, both plagued by their doubts. They pass time in their cold apartment, never getting around to fixing the heat. In "The Time of the Apricots," another couple sprints through the streets of Toronto until they are too exhausted to continue, their earlier argument now moot. When the characters do exercise agency, their victories are small, defiant and satisfying. In the title story, a young mother orders her visiting in-laws out of her home, saying, "You know what, I'm sorry, keep your coats on, you can't stay here." Odor's characters are affected by serendipitous circumstances and make strange, non-sequitur decisions. They mishear, ignore, speak over and most often misunderstand each other, thickening narratives that are both dreamlike and grounded in the banal. These are stories of home, of loss, of love—and of the slippery surrealism that permeates everyday life.

—Jasmine Sealy

SPEED BUMPS

A friend copied me this headline in the Winter *Quill & Quire*: "Older writers aren't letting speed bumps of age prevent them from producing meaningful work"—which he labelled "idiotic." And so it is. But then you read the article. I was expecting to encounter a few writers in their late sixties—but these are definitely speed-bump survivors. I had no idea that ninety-seven-year-old Eric Koch is still with us, author of *Otto & Daria: A Wartime Journey through No Man's Land*. I published his *Good Night, Little Spy* in 1979. I remember very little about the book, a spy story, satiric, set in Africa; of all things, I named my cat after one of the minor characters in the book. A friend of mine is suffering miserably from Ménière's disease so I had to note of another author: "Parley, in fact, can't hear the ensuing phone call, so she suggests her usual workaround: reporters send questions to her publicist, who hand-delivers them to Parley's Regina retirement home so she can reply on a typewriter. She can't use a computer because she has Ménière's disease, an inner-ear disorder, so scrolling gives her 'debilitating dizziness.'" And what about this for "only in Canadian letters": "[Habeeb] Salloum's just published an updated version of his winsome **Arab Cooking on a Prairie Homestead**, a mixture of history, recipes and reminiscences of growing up in a Syrian immigrant family in Depression-era Saskatchewan," published by University of Regina Press, no less. Looking up the book on Amazon I see that he is also the author of **Bison Delights** (University of Regina Press): "The Middle East and the Prairie West meet—deliciously—in this cookbook of over 100 bison recipes developed by Canada's foremost expert in Arab cuisine."



—Thad McIlroy

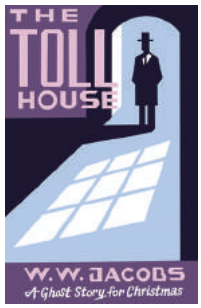
EEUUWW

Hubbub: Filth, Noise & Stench in England, 1500–1770, by Emily Cockayne (Yale University Press), is rich with lore, if not a book to read while you're eating dinner. One passage from each of eight chapters with icky titles like "Itchy" and "Grotty" will give you a whiff (sorry) of this intriguing roundup of revulsion. *Ugly*: "[Collapsed] noses were not the only facial casualties of syphilis: teeth would also decay as the disease progressed, especially if treatment were sought in mercury pills." *Itchy*: "Wash your hands often, your feet seldom, and your head never." *Mouldy*: Advice from the author of *The Art of Cooking* (1747): "Save potted birds which smell so bad that no body [can] bear the Smell for the Rankness of the Butter" by "dunking the birds in boiling water for thirty seconds, and then merely retopping with new butter." *Noisy*: The "sounds of servants, workmen, the poor, hawkers, drinkers and men who fought each other with cudgels." *Grotty*: "Lax care [of privies] could cause stenches and fetid pollution, penetrating damp and the contamination of water supplies." *Busy*: Thanks to the "hazards and dangers created by the traffic, the free-ranging animals or the clutter of street and market furniture… the body was jostled, shaken, jolted, shoved, twisted and tumbled by obstacles on the road—to the side, underfoot and from above." *Dirty*: "A dunghill was a stinking morass of human and animal waste, rotten timber, friable plaster, rubble, carcasses, cinders and ashes, broken glass and crockery, clay pipes, spent bedding, feathers, straw, weeds, eel skins, fish heads, peelings, husks, stalks and cores, in various states of decay." *Gloomy*: "Homes were heated by burning timber and coal, generating soot, dust and billowing clouds of smoke… The stench coming from brick kilns was 'exactly like carrion, to such a degree as to excite nausea'." Ugh! Three hundred years on, what disgusting facts of our city life will be gathered up for others to read in queasy disbelief?

—Mary Schendlinger

HAUNTING ENCORE

About a year ago (in *Geist* 103) I reviewed a series of Christmas ghost stories, illustrated by Seth and published by Biblioasis, a literary press in Windsor, Ontario. Now Biblioasis brings us three new titles: **The Empty House** (1906) by Algernon Blackwood, **The Toll House** (1909) by W.W. Jacobs and **How Fear Departed the Long Gallery** (1911) by E.F. Benson. Once again, these well-chosen chillers are suitable for either reading aloud or carrying about in your pocket to peruse during idle moments. Possibly by coincidence, all



three tales have a haunted house as their setting. All are equally creepy, but *How Fear Departed the Long Gallery* is, in my opinion, the most enduring. It's a story that likely had a big influence on Stephen King—I'd say *The Shining* has shades of Benson's "long gallery" within it, especially the segment with the ghostly twins. Meanwhile, *The Empty House* and *The Toll House* have curiously similar themes: both have protagonists who reluctantly agree to spend the night in a haunted locale, and both describe in fine detail the meandering, musty halls of abandoned English mansions. Seth has provided shadowy and nightmarish graphics to augment these three ghost stories. It's a toss-up as to which illustration is the most effective, but I'm inclined to say *The Toll House* cover is the one that stays in your psyche the longest. It features the entrance to a hall, where a figure stands—a figure that might be human, or might be a bit of ectoplasm. These booklets are excellent additions to the Haunted Bookshelf series of Biblioasis. I have a feeling that within a few years, they'll all be considered collectors' items.

—Jill Mandrake

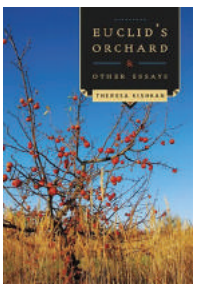
SHIPWRECKED LILY

A few months ago, I saw the premiere of Shipwrecked Comedy's newest project, a short film called **The Case of the Gilded Lily**, in Toronto. It was part of the Buffer Festival, Canada's first YouTube film festival, which has evolved over its five-year life to be a creator-focussed event celebrating quality web content. Shipwrecked Comedy is a team of four Los Angeles-based creators producing high-quality historical literary web content on tiny, often Kickstarted, budgets. Their previous web series, *Edgar Allan Poe's Murder Mystery Dinner Party*, was a hilarious *Clue*-style escapade featuring a cast of favourite literary figures—Charlotte Brontë, Ernest Hemingway and Oscar Wilde—trying to solve the murders of their dinner companions. *Poe Party* premiered in its entirety at the 2016 Buffer Festival, and went on to garner 250,000 views on YouTube and multiple award nominations, including Best Indie Series at the 2017 Streamys. *The Case of the Gilded Lily* (directed by William Joseph Stribling) is a classic noir mystery set in Old Hollywood: detective Ford Phillips (Sean Persaud) teams up with ace reporter Fig Wineshine (Sinead Persaud) to solve the blackmail case of starlet Wilhelmina Vanderjetski (Sarah Grace Hart). Along the way, Fig and Ford must navigate shifty Hollywood producers, demanding film stars and an incompetent rival detective to catch the crook literally red-handed. Punchy dialogue abounds, and Joey Richter steals the show as sleuth Dash Gunfire. Shipwrecked's signature meta style is in full force with many quips that break the fourth wall, such as the film's original musical number "Change of Scene" overlaying all the scene changes. The top-notch cast features some favourite YouTube comedy faces, including the aforementioned Joey Richter, Mary Kate Wiles of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* fame and Joanna Sotomura, another Pemberley Digital alumna. It was a delight to watch *Gilded Lily* at the historic Elgin Theatre, where the audience's laughs and gasps created an experience that can't be replicated in the solitude of one's own bedroom. *The Case of the Gilded Lily* is smart and funny and it made me feel things; it is a prime example of web content that legitimizes YouTube as a home of high-quality entertainment. You can stream it free on YouTube as of February 2018.

—Kelsea O'Connor

THE MATHEMATICS OF FAMILY

The Sunshine Coast writer Theresa Kishkan has remarkable range. She's written lovely lyric poetry, as well as novels and novellas. Her most recent book, **Euclid's Orchard & Other Essays** (Mother Tongue), is a collection of personal essays that recall two of Kishkan's previous collections: *Phantom Limb* (2007) and—still one of my favourites—*Red Laredo Boots* (1996). The essays in *Euclid's Orchard* explore the half-hidden narratives that accumulate over the many generations (and the many lifetimes) of a family. In "Herakleitos on the Yalakom," Kishkan tries to gain a better understanding of her late father, a complicated man who loved to fish, but who found it easier to criticize than to praise: "I remember only your temper, your irritation at being asked for something, the bitter words about ingratitude." In "Poignant Mountain," Kishkan revisits the Fraser Valley community where her family lived for a time during her childhood, recalling "summer mornings, [when] sunlight poured through the open loft doors, where hay bales were thrown from the wagon." The book's title essay is a celebration of the ways a family can sometimes enrich itself in unexpected ways, as members of each generation discover and express their own particular passions: "It never occurred to me that other vocabularies would enter our lexicon and that I would comprehend fewer and fewer of the codes my children used to navigate their way through the world." Embracing diversity can lead to beauty: a patchwork quilt from many fabrics.



—Michael Hayward

ORWELL RECOLLECTIONS

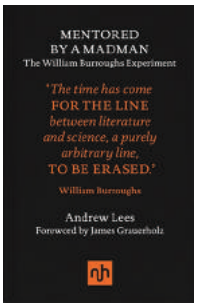
The Orwell Tapes, compiled by Stephen Wadhams (Locarno Press), is necessary reading for George Orwell fans. The book consists of taped remembrances by friends and family, most of whom knew him as Eric Blair, before his name change and subsequent fame. These interviews were originally broadcast in 1983 on CBC Radio, as part of its *Ideas* series. I came across several details in *The Orwell Tapes* that were new to me. For example, when Orwell was a student at Eton, one of his instructors was Aldous Huxley, who taught there briefly during World War I (when there was a shortage of teachers). It's interesting to ponder how the author of *Brave New World* might have influenced the author of *1984*. Orwell's classmate Sir Steven Runciman has said, "I don't think you can compare *Brave New World* to *1984*, but

I've often wondered if Aldous had any effect on Eric's later writing; just the sheer writing." Orwell's friends often had rather droll reactions to his passionate social and political views. Shortly after his return to England from Burma, his best friend was Dennis Collings, who is quoted as saying, "Actually, I think [Orwell] just wanted to see change. Even if he was in heaven he'd want to change the order of the angels." A later quote shows how discouraged he was when a number of editors—including T.S. Eliot—rejected *Down and Out in Paris and London.* His friend Mabel Fierz had said, "He was very disappointed. He said, 'I can't get it published, so throw it away… Keep the paper clips, at least they are valuable'." What a lesson in endurance, and what a relief that Fierz encouraged him to keep trying. The best reason for reading Stephen Wadhams's compilation is that all these reminiscences have the effect of capturing the vividness of Orwell's character once again.

—Jill Mandrake

SWEET SPOT

Notting Hill Editions (nottinghill-editions.com) publishes a steady stream of essays in lovely, compact volumes, on topics that almost always hit my sweet spot. Recently there's been **Smoke**, more of a fable than an essay, on the cultural implications of smoking, written by the late John Berger and beautifully illustrated by the Turkish artist Selçuk Demirel: "Once upon a time, men, women and (secretly) children smoked." Then there's **Nairn's Paris**, which brings back into print Ian Nairn's opinionated guide to Paris, first published in 1968. Not surprisingly, some details are out of date (meals in Paris at 15 shillings, including wine?)—but Nairn's sentences still gleam: Père-Lachaise Cemetery described as "a generalized serial vision of melancholy, clop-clopping along the chestnut avenues stuffed with mausolea"; Place des Vosges as "a formal effect stranded like a whale in the bustling Marais." One of Notting Hill's more eccentric recent offerings is **Mentored by a Madman: The William Burroughs Experiment** by Andrew Lees, "one of the world's leading neurologists," who writes about the influence on his medical career of the Beat writer (and notorious former heroin addict) William S. Burroughs. In *Mentored*, Lees describes his repeated attempts to find a treatment for Parkinson's disease, testing various drugs, at different dosages, on rats and (occasionally) on himself; shades of Burroughs's notorious Dr. Benway! "The purpose of my self-experimentation



was to determine whether deprenil, in contrast to the first wave of non-selective monoamine oxidase inhibitors, could be taken safely with tyramine-rich foodstuff like Gorgonzola cheese, pickled herrings, chocolate, Chianti wines, pulses and Marmite." Warning: do *not* attempt this at home!

—Michael Hayward

WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND

A weekend man, we are told in the early pages of **The Weekend Man**, Richard B. Wright's 1970 novel (Perennial), "is a person who has abandoned the present in favour of the past or the future. He is really more interested in what happened to him twenty years ago or in what is going to happen to him next week than he is in what is happening to him today." Wright's 2001 novel *Clara Callan* won the trifecta: the Giller Prize, the Trillium Book Award and the Governor General's Award. This is his first novel, drawn from his time as a sales rep for the then prestigious publisher Macmillan Company of Canada. Wright's fictional Macmillan is called Westchester House, located in "a long low cement block building on Britannia Road" in a Toronto suburb called Union Place, which surely is Don Mills. A key subplot is whether the publisher will be sold to the American conglomerate Universal Electronics Corporation (UEC), shades of RCA's acquisition of Random House in 1965, part of the vertical integration strategies then popular amongst multinational media companies. Wright's fictional self is Wes Wakeham, working at Westches-

ter as a sales rep of college textbooks. Wes is a weekend man, he tells us, "by all accounts… a likeable fellow. Most people I meet take to me and, without saying as much, let it be known that I am A-Okay." As he seldom has an opinion

on anything, he easily avoids arguments, except with his wife, from whom he is separated. The book shows its age in a graceful way. Suburban & sexist, its characters smoke and drink more than they actually publish or sell books. Kind of *Mad Men*-ish, but set in the early modern days of Canadian publishing, Toronto flavour. If you were there or (for some obscure reason) wish you had been, *The Weekend Man* is a fine aide-mémoire.

—Thad McIlroy

OLD COBBLERS

I've been waiting impatiently for the final volume of Karl Ove Knausgaard's six-volume novel/memoir, *My Struggle*, to appear in its English translation, so I perked up when **Autumn** (Knopf), a new book from Knausgaard, was announced. True, the reviews had been harsh—the *Guardian* called it "the most colossal load of old cobblers"—but I tried to stay hopeful. *Autumn* is written as a series of short essays addressed to Knausgaard's then-unborn daughter, telling her of the wonders that await her in the world: apples, wasps, plastic bags and frogs; blood, piss, vomit and jellyfish; flies, lice, labia and war. Twenty wonders per month, for September, October and November. I was doing okay until I hit the first wonder of November, "Tin Cans," which includes a rhapsodic description of canned peas: "small, round, dark green peas lying there in their transparent, slightly viscous brine." The fatal blow was this: "They taste so much better and richer than pale frozen peas, the taste seems darker somehow, and is perfect as an accompaniment to fish fingers." I immediately lost all respect for Knausgaard. For how can you trust the prose of someone who dines on fish fingers, and who prefers canned peas to frozen?

—Michael Hayward

STALKING THE ELUSIVE TARKOVSKY

Geoff Dyer has somehow carved out a career that permits him to write about anything he damn well wants. His latest, **Zona** (Canongate), is "a book about a film about a journey to a Room." The film is *Stalker* (1979), from the Russia director Andrei Tarkovsky; the Room is the destination of the journey depicted in *Stalker*: a mysterious chamber "rumored to fulfill one's most deeply held desires," located at the heart of the forbidden, Chernobyl-like Zone (hence the title, *Zona*). To navigate through the Zone, and reach the Room, you need a guide: a Stalker. Watching Tarkovsky's *Stalker* for the first time is a cinematic rite of passage, which can leave viewers with more unanswered questions than they started with. Is it a religious allegory? A parable about the Soviet Gulag? What does the Stalker figure represent? And the mysterious Room? *Stalker* demands repeated viewings; at 160 minutes, this is no small feat. Still, its fans are legion. *Zona* is Dyer's attempt to understand and explain his fascination with *Stalker*. The book, written as a "take by take" guided journey though Tarkovsky's film, is interwoven with Dyer's commentary and conjectures. Digressive footnotes ebb and flow from the bottom of the page like tides. *Zona* is a literary version of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, the cult TV series in which three figures (shown in silhouette at the bottom of the screen) kibitzed while watching science-fiction B films. At one point Dyer asks, rhetorically, "Do you think I would be spending my time summarizing the action of a film almost devoid of action… if I was capable of writing anything else?" His obsession is contagious, and those who want to take a crack at *Stalker* now have a sumptuous Blu-ray edition from Criterion: a new 2K digital restoration of the film, with an assortment of bonus materials (including an interview with Dyer himself).

—Michael Hayward

REACHING OUT

Collectors of logo pens (also known as corporate or promotional pens) are on the lookout these days for the new "Reach Out" pen, nicknamed by the cognoscenti as the **Suicide Pen**. The model that arrived on my desk is a simple click-ball, orange with a black barrel, slightly textured for easy grip in the left or right hand, the usual cheap plastic, and inside, the usual cheap refill. What gives this pen its unique charm is the phone number imprinted in black over the bright orange body: 1-800-SUICIDE. An immediate question: how is the suicide pen distributed? Is there a plan? Logo pens are usually purchased in bulk for widespread distribution. What market is such a pen designed to reach? I have been carrying this pen around for a week, trying to feel it out. I assume that if I am moved to self-murder I will reach out for help, advice, encouragement, etc., via the 800-number (which I have not yet called, even for investigative purposes). Another possibility, of course, is purely epistolary: with the Suicide Pen in my pocket, I am always well equipped for when the time comes, or for any time at all, to write my last farewell. But how did I get my own Suicide Pen? Why am I the only person I know who has one? A last question: what happens if I crush it between my teeth?

— Mandelbrot

OFF THE SHELF

In *Beforelife* (ECW Press) by **Randal Graham** people whisper "He can *kill* you." Brianna Wu receives hostile messages in *In Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump* (Verso Books) by **David Neiwert**. In *Rage* (Thistledown Press) by **John Mavin**, Walter's car swerves into Kevin. Clint shoots Mr. Twoshoes in the foot in *Noah's Raven: A Chilcotin Saga* (Three Ocean Press) by **Bruce Fraser**. Paul punches a prostitute in *Sitting Shiva on Minto Avenue, by Toots* (New Star Books) by **Erín Mouré**. In *What Can You Do* (Biblioasis) by **Cynthia Flood**, a molester on the run steals Kit Kats. Margaret concocts a Kit Kat Frappuccino in *Attack of the Lonely Hearts* (Anvil Press) by **Mark Wagstaff**. David drools at the smell of cooked meat and vegetables in *Concentration Camps of Canada* (Friesen Press) by **Baron Alexander Deschauer and Lucky Deschauer**. In the poem "Poudre d'or" in *Après Satie* (Brick Books) by **Dean Steadman**, a man can't see his toes because his belly is too large. Figgy eats a lot and never gains weight, writes **John Lott** from VICE Sports in a collection of *Best Canadian Sports Writing* (ECW Press) edited by **Stacey May Fowles & Pasha Malla**. In *Ragged Lake* (ECW Press) by **Ron Corbett**, the Canadian Special Forces stumble across a hidden hospital. Benjie's mother keeps a big secret in *My True and Complete Adventures as a Wannabe Voyageur* (NeWest Press) by **Phyllis Rudin**. **Lee Maracle** tells us theft goes hand in hand with appropriation in *My Conversations with Canadians* (BookThug). Steve complains about the British monarchy in **Mariam Pirbhai**'s *Outside People and Other Stories* (Inanna). Sam gets two extra oranges instead of change in **Jan Wong**'s *Apron Strings* (Goose Lane Editions). In *The Doll's Alphabet* (Coach House Books) by **Camilla Grudova**, a boy's fingers turn into sardines. In *Neapolitan Chronicles* by **Anna Maria Ortese**, Aunt Nunzia comes back in tears with coffee beans. According to **John Gilmore** in *Anarchy Explained to My Father* (New Star Books), translated by **Francis Dupuis-Déri and Thomas Déri**, anarchists advocate children be free. In *In The Shadows* (Véhicule Press) by **Sheila Kindellan-Sheehan,** Damiano endangers the investigation. Grover's premonition saves him from the implosion in *Accidental Eden* (Caitlin Press) by **Douglas L. Hamilton and Darlene Kay Olesko**. The kids yell, "Maybe he's drowned!" in *Tale of a Boon's Wife* (Second Story Press) by **Fartumo Kusow**. Ian panics meeting a girl in *You Are Among Monsters* (Palimpsest Press) by **Jon R. Flieger**. In *You Are Not Needed Now* (Anvil Press) by **Annette Lapointe**, Krista's date watches her get a tattoo. Sarah and Clayton stare in silence in *In the Cage* (Biblioasis) by **Kevin Hardcastle**. Gavin pretends to drink vodka to fit in, in *A Handbook for Beautiful People* (Inanna) by **Jennifer Spruit**. **Deborah Parker and Mark Parker** say "sychophancy is everywhere" in *Sucking Up* (University of Virginia Press). Nasreen greets people with a kiss on the cheek in *An Extraordinary Destiny* (Brindle & Glass) by **Shekhar Paleja**. **Adam Rutherford** is mistaken for another Dr. Adam Rutherford in *A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived* (The Experiment). In *Branches Over Ripples* (Gaspereau Press) by **Brian Bartlett** the smell of weed disappears as soon as it's written about.

NOTED ELSEWHERE

Open Book says *Glory* by **Gillian Wigmore** (Invisible Publishing) is a "strange tale of dangerous women, a man-eating lake, and the irresistible attraction of the forbidden"; the characters are "alive," says Sally Makin on *Goodreads*, "they are flawed, likeable, disillusioned and disagreeable"; "the strength of characters began to reshape the original concept of the novel," says the *Prince George Citizen*; *All Lit Up* says the novel "draws heat from a dynamic, primeval wildness"; *Quill & Quire* says "the finale tries too hard." The *Star* says *Malagash* by **Joey Comeau** (ECW Press) "clamps down on the quirkiness"; Von Fictionophile on *Amazon* says it's "a simple, beautifully written, heart-wrenching read"; the *Coast* says the prose is "tranquil" and "lyrical"; *Kirkus Review* says the writing is "blunt" and "slightly truncated"; Debbie on *Goodreads* writes "this is a weird one"; the *Globe & Mail* says, "There are no glittery pyrotechnics, no experimental rabbit holes to fall into." The *Kootenay Arts E-Bulletin* says *In Other Words: A German Canadian Story* by **Norbert Ruebsaat** (AUL) "takes us from echoes of the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm to a child's life in the Canadian West"; Jim Mitchell writes on *Amazon*, "I wouldn't let the 'German-ness' of the cover or author mislead you—it's really very, very Canadian." *Midwest Book Review* says **John Paskievich**'s *The North End Revisited* (University of Manitoba Press) "is a world of babas in babuskhas and onion-dome churches"; it reminds "the reader of a familiar, though faded, time and place" says the *Manitoban*.

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Leanne Betasamosake Simpson** for being a finalist for the 2017 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for her book *This Accident of Being Lost* (House of Anansi Press); to **Ivan Coyote**, whose memoir *Tomboy Survival Guide* (Arsenal Pulp Press) was a finalist for the 2017 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction; to **Lily Gontard and Mark Kelly** for being longlisted for the 2018 George Ryga Award and for receiving the Yukon Heritage Award for *Beyond Mile Zero: The Vanishing Alaska Highway Lodge Community* (Harbour Publishing).

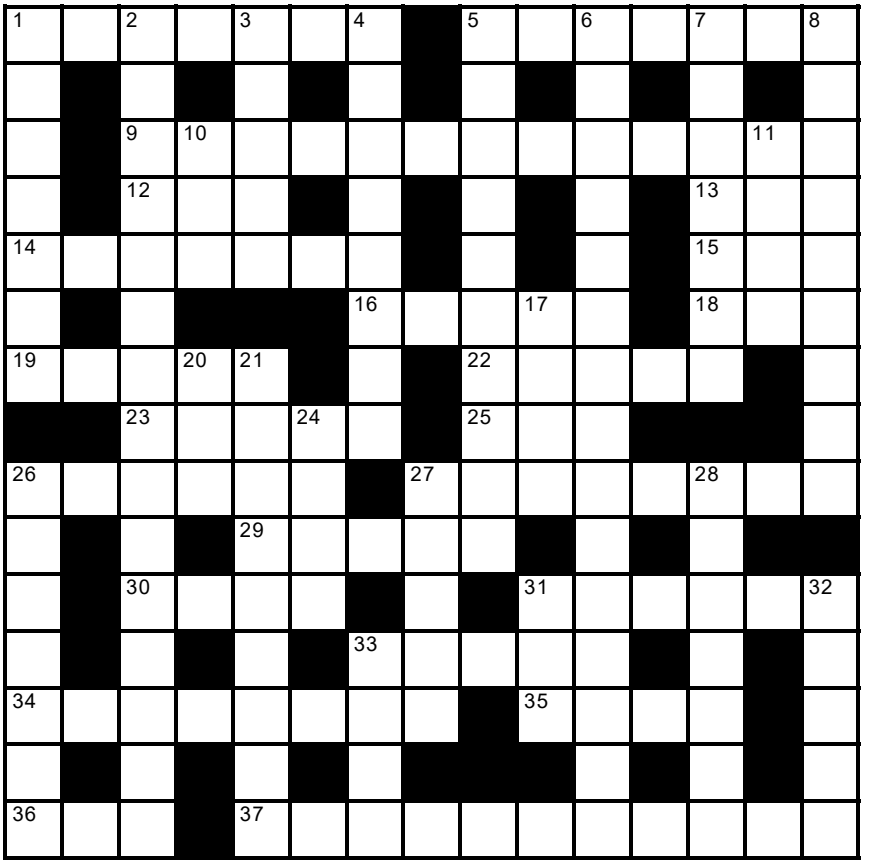
The GEIST Cryptic Crossword

Prepared by Meandricus

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

Puzzle #107 GEIST
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 Ooh la la, Bubbles! It must be spring!
5 They tapped into a lot of containers so they could increase their liquid assets
9 Despite all these angry wars, Ross liked to drink on his skinny little lawn. Too bad about the quicksilver! (2)
12 In 2001 he told us that hunting in Saskatchewan is foolproof
13 When he turns around, that heavyweight is SO negative
14 It's clearly Canadian to capture it in plastic and then sell it
15 When the people encountered kiwis, their troubles began
16 Relax on the divan while I bring you something delicious to eat
18 In Britain, newcomers often think first, talk next (abbrev)
19 The talker won but then he got mixed up with that stomach bug (abbrev)
22 They think Wavy Gravy is pretty saucy on the water
23 On grass, he often veers to the right before completely disappearing
25 Don't close your creation system until you're free to start (abbrev)
26 Is there a chance that Francis called me on his cell when he finished his world tour?
27 I fired up Barbie and she got rid of her sins
29 Once he was finished being reborn, he was perfect!
30 Are there any remedies that will make the world feel better?
31 There were too many of them to fit in the Chevy and visit the piers
33 Sounds like they were planted before the Queen's grab
34 Even a frayed shirt cuff exhausted him
35 In New Zealand, I drink rum and cut down tall trees
36 I am saucy in Spanish but I've also been to China
37 For hipsters the trendiest is barely tolerated

DOWN

1 Straighten the top bale and then we'll be able to drink
2 Why did the GOP archivist fry all those parts and who made all their wrongs public? (3)
3 Molly has 3 plastic bottles and Johnny has two. What's the total? (2)
4 We've set aside a few special places for you, but you'll have to drink only the best wine!
5 When we saw the tabby undo a crucial knot we had to loosen up and chat about it (2)
6 We made a few bucks on the Riviera when we put the queen on the schooner (4)
7 It's crazy that queens spend so much time at the back
8 Is it corny to wait 'til it drops before drinking it?
10 Frank was in the pack when Jimmy killed a dirty one
11 Amazing! One of those reversibles really impresses them
17 Neither Pierre nor I liked that pessimistic movie
20 At the shore, waves go over and around
21 As I lie dazed, his perfection seemed excellent
24 God forgive her for those mistakes
26 When they feel drained, they always elect losers
27 After the job, the road crew got along better
28 She had diamonds but he had six squares, plus they need a cold drink (2)
31 In Alberta they are devoted to a rigid unit (abbrev)
32 My agent put his phone in his shoe when he got in the car
33 They're not hereditary but most are men in suits (abbrev)

There was no winner for Puzzle 106.

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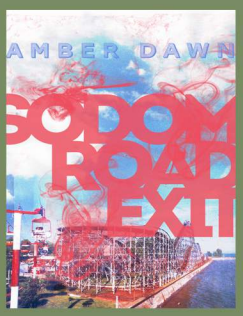
M	O	U	N	T	I	E	■	M	■	F	L	A	M	B	E
A	D	D	S	T	O	■	■	B	■	E	S	T	■	■	H
R	E	G	I	O	N	A	L	I	S	M	■	I	M	P	I
E	■	E	■	■	■	R	■	A	I	M	■	O	R	A	L
S	E	S	Q	U	I	C	E	N	T	E	N	N	I	A	L

NEW BOOKS FROM THE ARSENAL

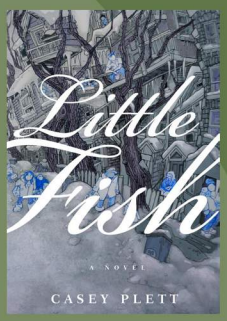


SODOM ROAD EXIT
Amber Dawn

"An extraordinary, strange, and deeply human novel about the often futile search for redemption, healing, and the ways in which we survive." —Jen Sookfong Lee, author of *The Conjoined*

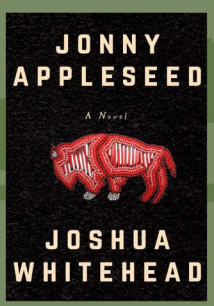
THE PLAGUE
Kevin Chong

"A nuanced study of human nature under biological siege, and a terrific riff on the Camus classic." —Eden Robinson, author of *Son of a Trickster*



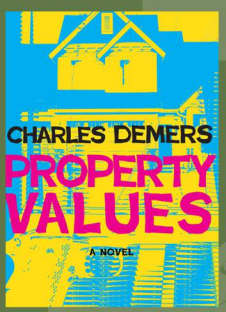
LITTLE FISH
Casey Plett

"Fearless and messy and oozing with love, *Little Fish* is a devastating book that I don't ever want to be without." —Zoey Leigh Peterson, author of *Next Year, For Sure*



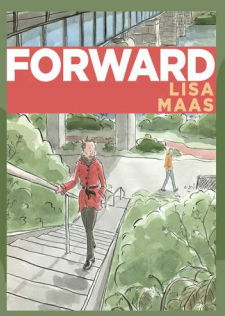
JONNY APPLESEED
Joshua Whitehead

A tour-de-force debut novel about a Two-Spirit Indigiqueer young man and proud NDN glitter princess who must reckon with his past when he returns home to his reserve.



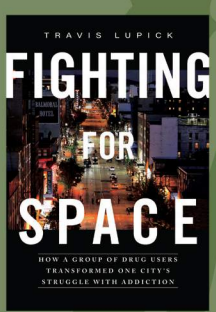
PROPERTY VALUES
Charles Demers

A wildly funny crime novel set in Vancouver, about the desperate lengths a man will go to in order to own a home.



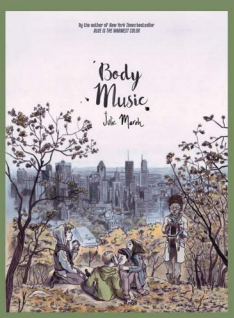
FORWARD: A Graphic Novel
Lisa Maas

"A moving depiction of grief and loss, but one that also includes sweet moments of sexual desire, joy, and laughter, which bubble up even in the most painful of times." —Sarah Leavitt, author of *Tangles*



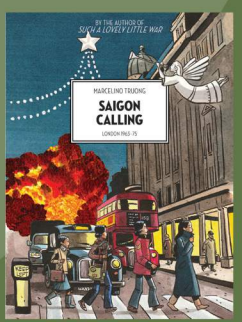
FIGHTING FOR SPACE
Travis Lupick

Now in its second printing. "Travis Lupick's fascinating book should help inform a more rational understanding of addictions treatment and drug policies everywhere." —Dr. Gabor Maté



BODY MUSIC
Julie Maroh

Now in its second printing. "Julie Maroh returns with a pulsing heat in this new graphic novel about romantic encounters that push and break boundaries." —*Vulture.com*



SAIGON CALLING
Marcelino Truong

A graphic memoir about the Vietnam war and London during the swinging 60s. "A complex, finely judged and utterly riveting memoir." —*The Guardian* ("Best Graphic Novels of the Year")

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