GEIST

FACT + FICTION NORTH of AMERICA

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FALL 2019
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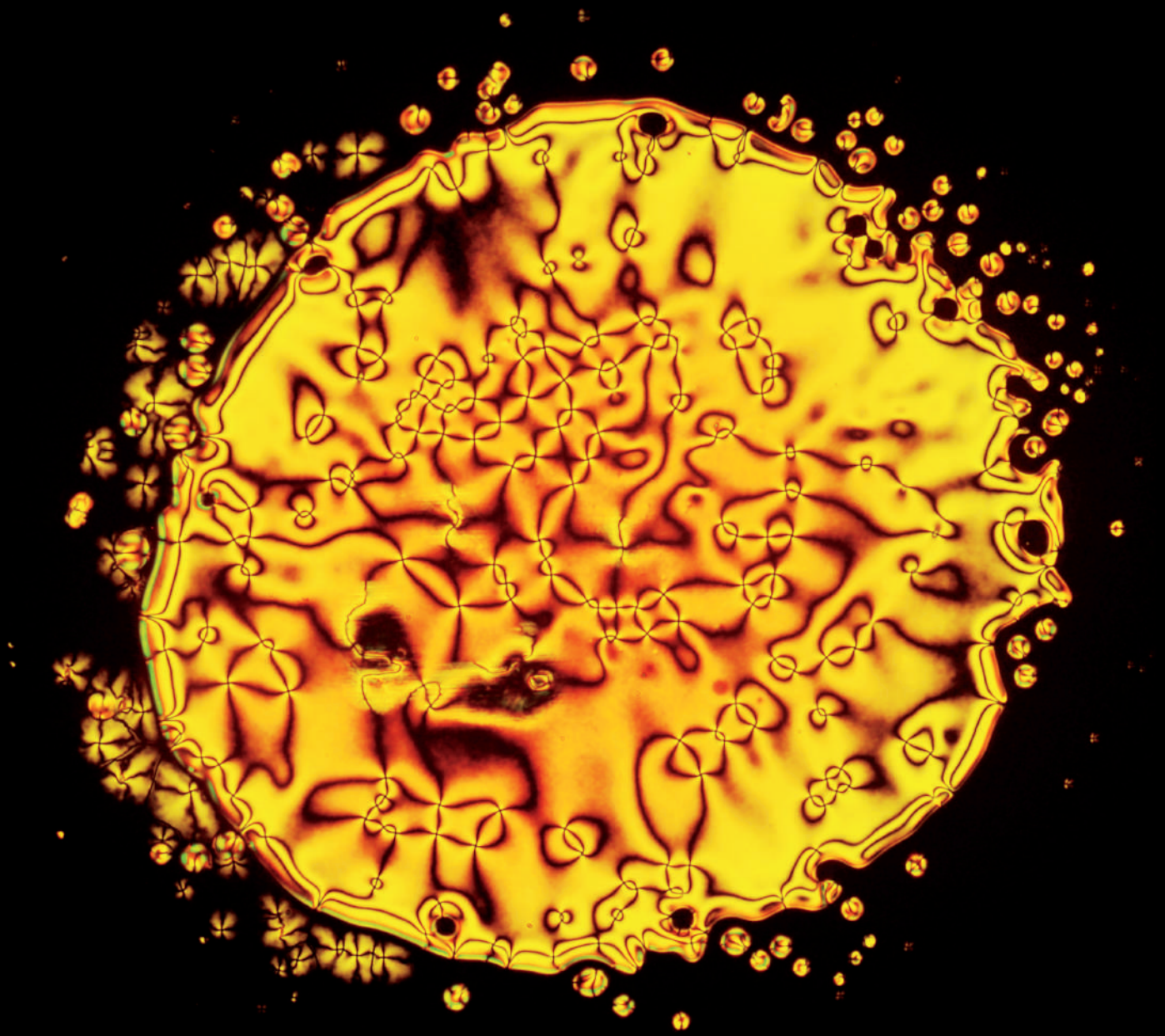
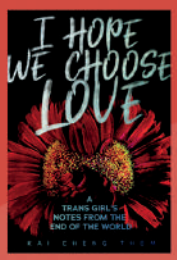


SURFACE TENSION

The tweets of Yoko Ono / Love Galore
Last Laughs / Lucid Dreams, Happy Prisoners

WORDS, NOT WEAPONS

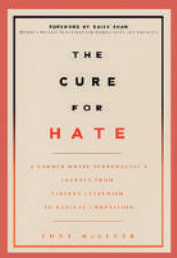


I HOPE WE CHOOSE LOVE
Kai Cheng Thom

Provocative essays on culture, community, and personal politics by the acclaimed poet and essayist. "We are so damn lucky to have this book." —Alicia Elliott

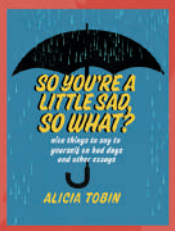
HUSTLING VERSE
Amber Dawn & Justin Ducharme, eds.

An extraordinary anthology of sex workers' poetry from around the world. "This collection is nothing short of groundbreaking." —*Ms. Magazine*



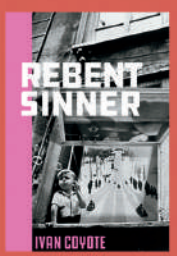
THE CURE FOR HATE
Tony McAleer

A powerful and deeply personal book about how the author left the white supremacy movement and dedicated his life to helping others do the same.



SO YOU'RE A LITTLE SAD, SO WHAT?
Alicia Tobin

Comedic essays on Velcro shoes, urban wildlife, toxic boyfriends, and more. "The world needs more Tobin!" —Will Ferguson



REBENT SINNER
Ivan Coyote

The latest by award-winning storyteller Ivan Coyote, who takes on the patriarchy and the political with regard to trans experience.

VANCOUVER AFTER DARK
Aaron Chapman

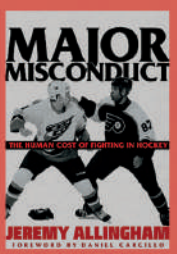
A rollicking full-colour history of Vancouver's greatest nightclubs, by the award-winning author of *Liquor, Lust and the Law* and *Live at the Commodore.*

THE BLUE ROAD
Wayde Compton & April dela Noche Milne

A beautiful YA graphic novel about a young girl looking for a place to belong. "A touching allegory of the unexpected and burdensome trials of migration." —*Kirkus Reviews*

SWIMMING IN DARKNESS
Lucas Harari

A thrilling, noirish graphic novel set deep within the Swiss Alps. "Eerily unsettling and completely mesmerising." —Warren Ellis



MAJOR MISCONDUCT
Jeremy Allingham

A sobering yet crucial analysis of fighting in hockey, and its devastating consequences. "A compelling read from first word to last." —Dr. Gabor Maté

THERE HAS TO BE A KNIFE
Adnan Khan

A brilliant, urgently told novel on the intimate and cultural expectations placed on brown men. "A nuanced look at how trauma and masculinity converge in relationships." —*NOW*

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FACT + FICTION NORTH of AMERICA
PHOTO: JOHN PASKIEVICH

FLIGHTS

The photographs presented here were recently donated, along with letters, documents and family records, to the Vancouver Holocaust Educational Centre by Ilona Mermelstein, an eighty-two-year-old Hungarian Jewish child survivor of the Holocaust. They were taken by Ilona's father, Daniel Kiss, who was in the plane as it burst into flames and who was the last to escape after landing, the wings falling off as he leaped to the ground.

When she donated these photos, Ilona told of how Daniel was conscripted into the Hungarian Air Force in 1943 and worked as a mechanic. On the day these photos were taken, he and several other Hungarian men were ordered to pull a target tug, a training exercise during which an airplane pulls a target—a bright orange piece of fabric, for example—attached to the plane by several hundred feet of steel rope for artillery and aircraft carriers to fire at from the ground. Daniel's plane was hit by artillery fire during the training exercise and caught fire. The airplane had been outfitted with one too few parachutes, and the men on board decided that rather than leaving any one of them behind, they would all stay with the plane as it hurtled toward the ground.

After the incident Daniel Kiss wrote a letter to his family: "Recently I almost died a bit! Would you have felt sorry for me? One of our engines caught fire and only the Good God kept us afloat above and let us get to the airfield. By the time we landed and jumped out of the machine, it was totally engulfed by fire. Thank god, all of us survived somehow and we were saved from almost certain death—we were not even scratched—but the machine burned down completely. I will send some photos home."

The following year, the Hungarian Army handed over its Jewish conscripts to the German Army. Daniel Kiss was sent to a labour camp, where he worked as a mechanic repairing German aircraft engines in the tunnels and bunkers underneath the Dreher Brewery in Budapest. One night, Daniel's supervisor allowed him and the other men in his group to return home to get a change of civilian clothes; the reason for this is unknown. Daniel's family home was not far from Budapest and he somehow found a motorcycle to ride the hour to get there. Ilona remembers that night: her father appeared at the house around midnight, fetched his clothes, kissed his family, and slipped back out to return to the labour camp.

As the Soviet Army approached Budapest in the fall of 1944 and the production line was being moved back to Germany (the Jewish Hungarian labourers in tow), the change of clothes allowed Daniel to blend in with civilians taking refuge in the tunnel system, where Daniel stayed until the Soviet Army liberated Hungary in January 1945. After World War Two Daniel Kiss and his family settled in Budapest, where Daniel worked as head engineer at agricultural collectives; he died in 1959. Ilona Mermelstein moved from Hungary to Vancouver in 1990 to be closer to her sister.

The full collection can be seen at https://collections.vhec.org/Detail/collections/729.

—Michał Kozłowski

Special thanks to Ilona Mermelstein, Aaron Csaplanos (Ilona's grandson) and Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre staff for support on this piece.

GEIST

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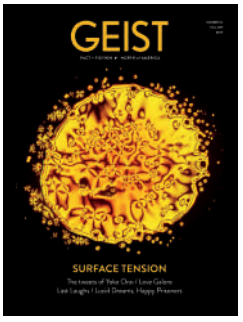
FEATURES

GEIST

It pretty much writes itself



COVER: Inside an LCD (liquid crystal display) is a thin layer of a cloudy liquid. This is a liquid crystal and is the "LC" in LCD. Liquid crystals are ordered fluids that have unique optical properties that make them useful in display devices. The image on the cover is of a liquid crystal from an LCD display. See more images like these on pages 8 and 9.

GEIST

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POULTRYGEIST

Dear Guyst,
My friend Ken Bosch suggested you may want to feature chickens in an upcoming issue and call it the Poultry-Geist Issue. Sounded like a scarier-than-normal, even paranormal, idea to me, but based on what I've seen in your magazine in the past, you folks seem to have little or no fear.

Cheers from the Shuswap (or as we locals call it, the footwear exchange),

—Bernd Hermanski

POETRYGEIST

A disgruntled reader wrote in to inform us that the articles in *Geist* are not very informative and that "the poems don't rhyme so there is no flow to them." *Geist* editors have been vigilantly waging war against information-driven editorial (and its brother, data-driven editorial, and its drunk uncle, the infographic) for nearly three decades now, and they intend to carry on until the cows come home. Informative writing (and its relatives) is the source of the most boring "important" and "educational" writing that plagues the pages and webpages of too many publications these days—informative writing is the natural enemy of narrative (and its identical twin, storytelling), which is the source of any feeling, connection, excitement, life on the page.

As for poetry that doesn't rhyme—our records show that this complaint has been launched against *Geist* poetry in the past. To which we say: you can lead a poet to the well, but you can't make him bite the bullet.

OPPOSITIONAL GEIST

As we prepare the *Geist* archive to be shipped off to Simon Fraser University Special Collections, the ghosts of literary events past are coming out of the woodworks. Here's an excerpt from a report from a *Geist* volunteer at the 1996 Word on the Street Festival in Toronto:

Later, a big guy asked me about *Geist*.

"Oh, it's very funny," I smiled. His mouth turned down and he lay the mag back on the pile.

"I hate humour!" he said.

"Oh, but it's serious too, it's a lot of things," I added stupidly, and he picked it back up.

"Is this a Nazi magazine?" asked a short mustached man wearing a baby blue bomber jacket with black trim.

"Oh no," I said. "It's alternative, oppositional, left-wing."

"Right-wing, left-wing," he muttered. "I don't know what I am. If you're racist, are you right-wing?"

I nodded yes, afraid of where this was going.

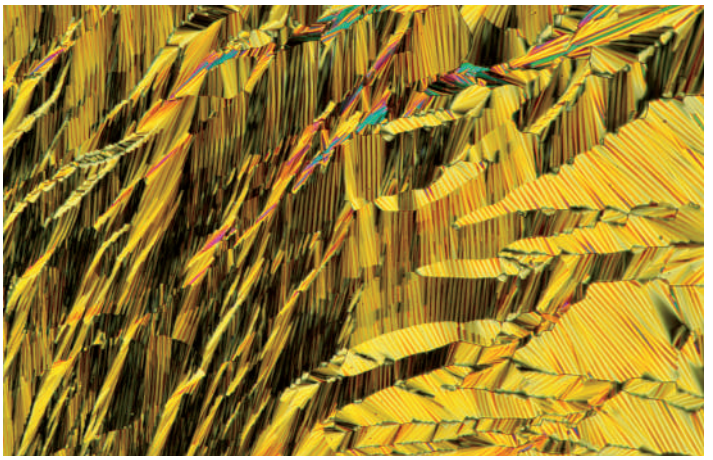
"And if you're bohemian, you're left wing?"

Who is this guy, I wondered.

"And if you're a racist bohemian?" He wandered away shaking his head.

Love, Jane

George Thomas Taylor. See more of his photographs on pages 18 and 19.



Compressed liquid crystal by Vance Williams

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE

Brandon Blommaert is an artist and animator who works in film, gif and still image. His animated films have screened at festivals in Australia, Europe and North America. He has worked with the *New York Times*, Google Creative Labs, Redbull Music Academy, the National Film Board. He lives in Montreal.

Brian Campbell is a poet, singer-songwriter and photographer. He is the author of several collections of poetry, including *Shimmer Report* (Ekstasis Editions, 2015) and P*assenger Flight* (Signature Editions, 2009), and a book of photography, *Remnants of Autumn* (Sky of Ink Press, 2016). He lives in Montreal and at briancampbell.ca.

Vance Williams is an Associate Professor in the Chemistry Department at Simon Fraser University, where he studies how molecules become materials. He uses polarized optical microscopy to help understand the underlying ordering of molecules within crystals and liquid crystals.

The images appearing on pages 8 and 9 were created by Vance Williams using polarized microscopy, a technique that allows scientists to evaluate the three-dimensional structures of certain kinds of specimens, such as crystals.

Page 8 shows an image of caffeine crystals that have been mathematically manipulated; the original microscopy image was hyperbolically tiled using free online software (malinc.se) to get the pattern you see in the image.

Page 9 features crystals of atropine viewed by polarized microscopy. Atropine occurs naturally in belladonna (deadly nightshade). It is used as a heart medication, and makes the heart race! The ability of atropine to enlarge pupils was exploited for cosmetic purposes in antiquity and is still used today in medical treatments.

WRITE TO GEIST

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

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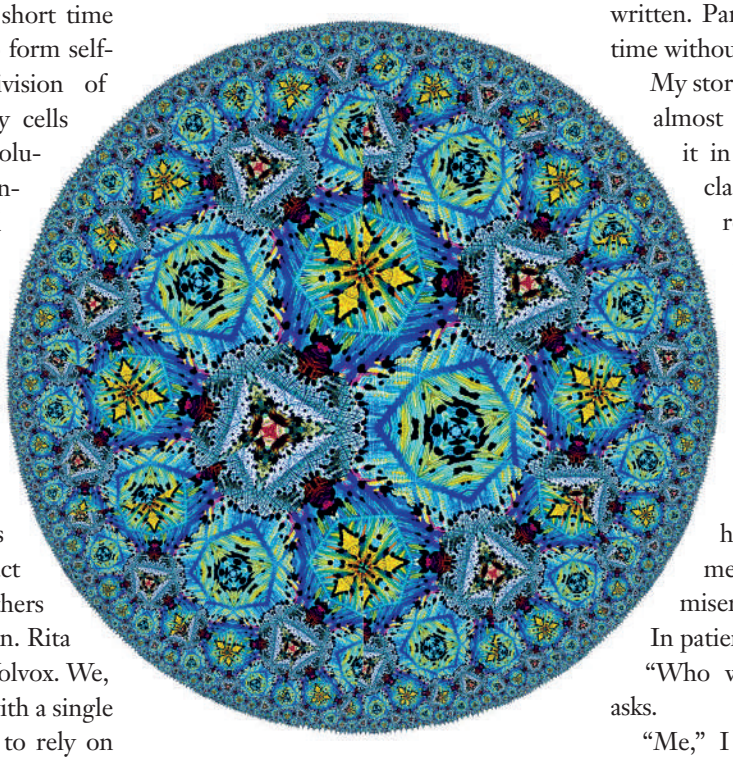
Room for More

MARGARET NOWACZYK

Untold and unheard, stories fester

On the first day of the narrative medicine workshop at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University, the instructor, Dr. Rita Charon, introduces us to the idea of Volvox, a species of green algae that developed over thirty-five million years—a relatively short time in evolution—the ability to form self-contained colonies. A division of labour between the colony cells essentially mirrored the evolution of multicellular organisms. At first, single-celled creatures did everything themselves—grew, propelled across the waters they lived in, reproduced. But, in time, some gave up the ability to reproduce and began to secrete the goo that surrounded the colony, while others developed their cilia to enact movement, leaving still others to specialize in reproduction. Rita compares our group to a Volvox. We, too, will become a colony with a single unifying purpose, learning to rely on each other.

Rita has developed the concept of narrative medicine, a novel approach to medical care centred on the patient's story as opposed to the patient's condition. A professor of internal medicine and a scholar of Henry James, for years she was known at the Columbia University medical school as the "crazy book-lady" who told anybody who would listen about how reading literature bettered the practice of medicine. The study of narrative texts, both written and spoken, refines a doctor's ability to hear her patients' stories. Narrative medicine also promotes reflective writing, writing to prompts, and, most importantly, sharing one's writing with others. Stories that remain untold and unheard fester. For the workshop, we had been instructed to bring a piece of medical writing. Now came the time to share it.



In our workshop group are eight health professionals, huddled around faux-pine laminated tables arranged in a circle in a classroom on a glorious October Saturday in New York City. Outside, the leaves on the lindens lining Broadway are beginning to change and the afternoon sun angles through the tall windows. Rita reviews the guidelines: the workshop is a safe place, confidentiality is key—nothing should be repeated or discussed outside the room without consent. Participants can pass on reading aloud. Read without preamble, explanations, or excuses. Read exactly what you have written. Participants can leave at any time without explanation.

My story has been eating at me for almost ten years. I tried sharing it in my first creative writing class three years earlier. The response from one classmate still hisses in my ear: "I hate this. I hate you for making me hear it."

But the participants in this workshop are doctors, nurses, social workers. They have come from around the world to learn how to improve clinical medicine. They have seen the misery of the human condition. In patients and in doctors.

"Who wants to read first?" Rita asks.

"Me," I say. I almost shoot my hand up like I used to in primary school.

I read.

I saw Savannah today. Yet another of my professional successes. A fifteen-pound grotesque of foreshortened limbs, crooked vertebrae and blown up skull. Not a single straight bone in her eight-year-old body. I have known her since before she was born, when the gray and black images coalesced to reveal a malformed spine, bowed arms and legs and bent ribs. My many attempts to paint a realistic and warning picture fell on

Photos: Vance Williams

deaf ears; her parents actually tell all that I am the only doctor who never gave up on her. Now, after almost a year in intensive care units, after many times spent in the hospital with a breathing tube and on ventilator support—her chest and lungs are too small, you see, she is still receiving oxygen by a hole in her throat—her mother tells me that she is learning to speak in sentences, very short ones because of the breathing problems, and she is learning to use a motorized wheelchair. She loves her eighteen-month-old brother, Jack, who is already bigger than she is. With squinty little eyes with cataracts and crooked yellowed teeth she looks like a miserable little gargoyle.

What have I done?

My cheeks and neck burn. I have read it out loud, all of it, even that awful word at the end of the second last sentence. I glance around. I met these seven strangers only the night before when we shared the innocent icebreaker of writing to the prompt, "Tell the story of your name." What do they think of me now? What I have just read is not the same as: "I changed my name from the Polish 'Małgorzata' when a Canadian teacher butchered it one time too many." They laughed at that. Now they are silent.

But the faces are not turning away in disgust or recoiling in horror. Nadia, a geriatrician and former ballerina, smiles and nods at me.

Rita holds the silence a while longer. Finally, "What did you hear?" she asks.

"How much she's hurting," a male internist from Long Island says. "How it's eating away at her."

"It's so dark, though," Nadia says.

"How can she make it better for herself?" Rita asks.

"She can't change the memory," Krisann, a social worker, says, "but she can change how she looks at it."

"What if…" Rita stops, thinks. "The name—Savannah. Is that her real name?"

"Yes," I say.

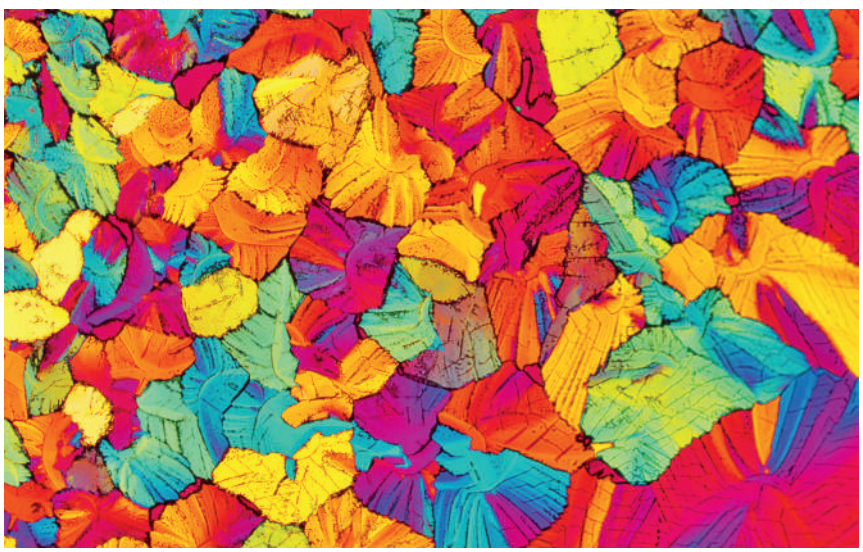
"How about instead of thinking of her being trapped in her body you play with the image of her name—big spaces, the openness of the African savannah. Free, boundless." She peers at me sideways, head tilted like a curious bird. "Hmmm?"

I nod, even though I am not convinced that this mind trick will change anything. I have always thought of Savannah as a ruined medieval castle. But something has already shifted inside me.

"It feels so, so great to have read it," I blurt out. "It makes such a difference that you all listened."

"See?" Rita says finally, her warm grey eyes on my face. "You made room for more."

A few months after my return from New York City, I receive a consult on a woman at thirty-three weeks of pregnancy: an ultrasound has detected "an abnormal profile" in her baby girl. In the radiology suite, the baby's ultrasound images show a bulging forehead and tiny nubbin of a nose and prominent lips but the heart, lungs, kidneys and brain all appear normal. When I enter the counselling room in which the mother has been waiting with her husband I have no idea what the baby may have.



The woman looks vaguely pugilistic: thick, crimson lips, a broad nose and a wide chin. Her face glows as if she has sat in the sun for too long and acne spots her forehead. When she says hello, her voice resonates almost as deep as her husband's baritone.

I explain the ultrasound images and admit that I don't know what is going on with the baby. "I don't think we'll know until she's born," I say. "You have thick lips, so maybe the baby comes by it honestly." Reassure, write your notes, I think; deal with the baby when she's born, it's too late to do anything at this late stage of pregnancy.

"This is not the way I normally look," the mother says.

I'd like to think that I would heed these words without the training in attentive listening, but "narrative medicine" flashes in my mind.

"What do you mean?" I ask.

"That's true," her husband says. "She's been telling her doctor and midwife but they keep saying it's just the pregnancy."

This is not the way she looks, I repeat in my mind. Whatever this means, nobody has paid attention to what she's been saying.

"Do you have a photo of yourself from before?" I ask.

Her husband pulls out his phone. Chiseled cheekbones, aquiline nose, skin as clear as porcelain. I look from the photo to the woman before me and back at the photo, mind whirring as her husband says, "April, just before she got pregnant."

The evidence before me "moves me to action," as Rita would say. After three weeks of blood tests and investigations, we find testosterone levels four times the upper normal limit in the woman's blood; the endocrinologist suspects that she has a tumour either in her ovary or her adrenal gland, a common cause of elevated androgens in a woman. But after the baby girl is born four weeks later with anomalies of her airway and skeleton—none of which were detectable on ultrasounds—I make the diagnosis of a rare biochemical condition that causes excess production of testosterone in the baby. It was so high, it spilled across the placenta into the mother's bloodstream and caused her to become virilized: over several months nobody noticed the changes in this young woman's body because nobody heard what she was saying. I almost made the same mistake when I first saw her.

Later that fall, I follow Rita's prescription to "reframe Savannah" and go to talk to her ICU physician, who for years managed her ventilator, and to her G-tube nurse, who has been following her regularly for surgical site care and for nutrition. I learn that at school she rules among a bevy of friends who fight for the privilege of pushing her wheelchair and that she arbitrates math—she always gets the answers first. Her younger brother Jack adores her. Everybody agrees: Savannah is happy; she loves her life. Savannah's life brings joy to her and to others around her, the ones who see beyond her appearance and disabilities. She is not suffering, as I have always feared. Slowly, disbelieving at first, I accept that. And that I have been wrong.

Margaret Nowaczyk is a pediatric clinical geneticist. She has published two books on genealogy and genetics in Poland. Her memoir about working in the medical profession is due out in 2021 with Wolsak and Wynn. She lives in Hamilton. Read more of her work at geist.com.

Last Laughs

JOE BONGIORNO

Greta, Justin and a fleet of street sweepers

Helicopters are flying in the blue sky above Montréal. The election campaign posters along De Bleury Street are defaced with drawings of horns, mustaches and penises. Almost 500,000 people have shown up for the climate march, clogging the arteries of downtown. Protesters in blue and green face paint march, banging wooden spoons on gallon water jugs, and climb onto traffic lights. Students, pensioners and mothers with baby strollers chant and shout. Children, filed in single row queues, guided by their teachers, brandish wax crayon pictures of weeping polar bears. A red-haired man in a kilt plays the bagpipes, and a troupe of dancing Hare Krishnas sways from side to side, playing bongos and singing gaily.

A breeze cuts through the heat; it's a balmy afternoon in late September. Despite the backdrop of impending doom and the extinction of our species, I find myself giggling at the makeshift cardboard signs on brooms and hockey sticks held up by the marchers: There Is No Planet B; Go Vegan; Fuck Maxime Bernier; The Earth Is Hotter Than My Tinder; Suck Dicks, Not Straws; Planet Over Profit; Don't Be Fossil Fools; Stop Having Children; No Planet, No Sex; Fuck Me, Not the Planet.

People shout from balconies in support, waving their own signs, taking selfies. A woman in a facemask and an Antifa sweatshirt climbs a statue of Queen Victoria and spray-paints a battle cry; onlooking police officers cross their arms. A man in a penguin costume marches forth and waves a Québec flag marked with the anarchist circle-A; he is followed by a woman waving a Palestinian flag, with "End Occupation!" written on it. Others are dressed as skeletons, bones painted onto their clothes. A group of twenty-somethings dressed in black carry a life-size cardboard coffin in silence. A man who resembles Jesus,

Photos: Brian Campbell

with a beard and long hair, wearing a white robe and sandals, stands holding a wooden staff, nodding. The silver crucifix around his neck glimmers in the sunlight.

When I reach the other side of Mount Royal, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau joins the march. He smiles and waves, shielded by an entourage of Members of Parliament, and RCMP officers in matching vests and checkered shirts. "*On avance pour la planète!*" chants Trudeau. Cheers are drowned out by jeers: "No more pipelines! Climate criminal!" Moments later, a protester armed with eggs lunges at the Prime Minister, but is immediately taken down by the RCMP security detail. Trudeau carries on without interruption, smiling and waving.

I wipe the sweat from my forehead and make my way to the stage where Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenage climate activist, is due to speak. The previous week at the UN she tearfully declared, "We are in the beginning of a mass extinction." The closer I get, the more signs I see portraying her as a Scandinavian warrior prophet. In a *Game of Thrones*-themed one she is Aria Stark, swinging her sword at Andrew Scheer, whose face is superimposed onto an image of the Night King, with the words "Winter Is Coming" written on it. Another sign features François Legault, the premier of Québec, as the Night King. Days before, President Trump mocked Greta on Twitter, and this morning the son of President Bolsonaro—currently setting the Amazon alight—tweeted that Thunberg was a George Soros pawn.

A green smoke bomb goes off. I make my way through the crowd, covering my mouth and coughing. People are cheering, "Greta! Greta!" as she takes the stage. Her face fills an enormous stadium-size screen. The microphone is adjusted to her height, and she begins to speak. Every sentence is punctuated by enthusiastic

cheers. She is Beyoncé and the Dalai Lama rolled into one.

"You have moose, and we have moose," she says. "You have cold winters and lots of snow and pine trees. We have cold winters and lots of snow and pine trees. You have the caribou, and we have the reindeer. You play ice hockey; we play ice hockey. You have maple syrup, and we have… well… forget about that one."

The crowd laughs.

"…They say, let children be children. We agree. Let us be children. Do your part. Communicate these kinds of numbers instead of leaving that responsibility to us. Then we can go back to being children." She carries on for fifteen minutes, and then brings it to a close: "The people have spoken, and we will continue to speak until our leaders listen and act. We are the change, and change is coming. Le changement arrive—si vous l'aimez ou non!"

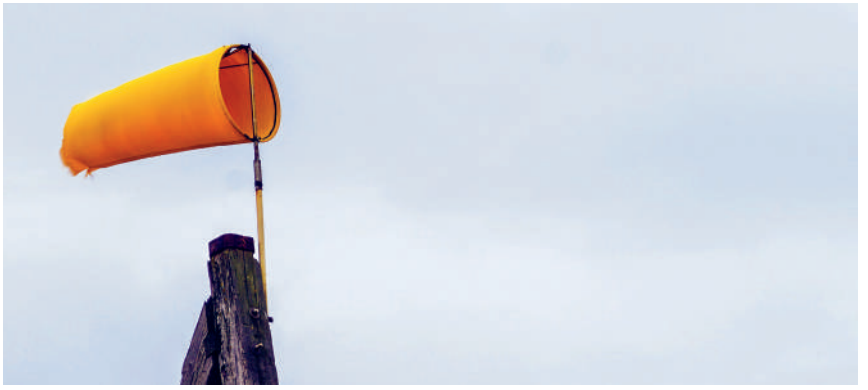
As the green smoke fades, the crowd slowly disperses. There is no more laughter. Police officers appear on their handsome trotting horses, and the road barriers are removed. A fleet of street sweeper trucks drive past at a tractor's pace, their spinning brushes flinging plumes of brown dust into the air. The smell of chlorine lingers long after the vehicles have passed. Suddenly, it's a quiet evening. The silence is uncomfortable, unnerving. Standing in the deserted street, I watch a lone protestor carry his sign up the street. It reads, "PANIC!"

Joe Bongiorno writes fiction and non-fiction. His writing has appeared in or is forthcoming in Canadian and American publications including Geist, Event, Freefall, Broken Pencil *and* Carte Blanche. *He was shortlisted for the 2018* Freefall *Prose and Poetry Contest and he won the* Event *2019 Speculative Writing Contest. Bongiorno is currently working on a novel and a short story collection. He lives in Montréal.*

Weekend with Dorian

LORNA MACKINNON

Storm prep for a category 2



On the first Friday in October, two days before Hurricane Dorian was set to unleash 130-kilometre-an-hour wind on Atlantic Canada, I began to prepare my home—a small bungalow on a treed lot facing the Bras d'Or Lakes on Cape Breton Island—for the incoming storm, category 2 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale.

Deciding where to put the deck furniture was my first task. It seemed a bit of a shame to put it all in the garage since I was still hopeful that once Dorian passed it would be used for a few more weeks of nice fall deck coffee. I stacked the eight chairs in the middle of the deck, where they would be protected by a heavy hand-made wooden bench. The barbecue sandwiched the chairs and fit snugly against the house. I slid the glass-topped metal table over and tied it to the barbeque. I gathered the small empty planters and deposited them inside the lawn trailer. I took down the wicker swing hanging by chain under the deck so that the clanging would not keep me awake (every little noise keeps me awake). I tipped over the swing and placed it upside down against the house. Once back inside I noticed that the yellow bucket used to carry branches from the woodpile in the backyard was not secured. Oh well, it can wait, I thought.

Living outside the city has a few drawbacks, one of which is not being on a main water or sewer line. In the city, when people lose their power they can still have a shower, albeit a cold one, and they can still flush—not where I live. I drew two five-gallon buckets of water for flushing, enough for a few days if the power went out. Some people fill their tubs but if the power does not go out then the water is wasted, and you have to wait for it to drain before taking a shower. In the kitchen I filled a camping bladder, three larger pots and a kettle with water for washing and tea. I added a few water-filled two-litre bottles to the freezer that I could put in the fridge if the power went out to help keep food from spoiling. My stove is gas, so I'd be able to cook no matter what.

I had purchased battery-powered LED lights that could be stuck on metal, so I stuck one on the fridge, one under the medicine cabinet and one on a metal candle holder in my living room. In my bedroom I hung an Energizer headlamp on the lamp by my bed. I placed two tea lights on the windowsill in the kitchen and another on the coffee table, to diffuse essential oil in my favourite tiny turtle-shaped burner. Lastly, I picked up shoes and my backpack, moved brooms and mops, so as not to trip over them if the lights went out.

Dorian hit my neck of the woods around noon on Saturday, first with gentle but steady wind coming from the back of the house. The lake seemed oddly calm at first; then the sky darkened, the birds were silent. By three o'clock whitecaps appeared on the lake. The trees surrounding the house began to bow to the winds and a couple of pears dropped off the tree.

While the wind was picking up intensity, I cooked a meal of fried haddock and oven-roasted vegetables. The electricity flickered four or five times during the course of cooking. The stove can be lit by match during a power outage, but the oven is rendered cold and useless. The power went out just as I was plating the food around 6 p.m. I ate dinner and listened to the gale tossing large raindrops and pieces of rain-soaked debris at the windows.

My cell phone was charged to 100% and after dinner I thought it was a good time to call my sister Diane, who lives close by, to see what plans she had for the dark evening ahead. It turned out that Diane's place did not lose power. I texted my daughter for a while, but the phone battery was draining quickly so I switched on the LED lights and curled up on the couch with a fuzzy blanket, my book and a cup of mint tea. By now it rained so hard that a couple of cars pulled over until the deluge passed.

Around 10 p.m. I turned in for the night. The house shook in the wind. I got up several times to check my dark surroundings with my flashlight in hand. All night there was an annoying glug, glug sound from the heat pump, produced by the fierce wind blowing rain into it.

On Sunday I woke around 6 a.m. and snuggled deeper in bed, reading for a couple of hours, which is a rare treat. Beyond the window in the morning light the branches of the smaller trees lay on the lawn. Most of the pears had detached themselves from the two trees and a good many leaves had been blown off. The lake

Photo: Dlanor S

had taken on a muddy brown hue instead of its normal blue gray. Nothing on the deck had moved. A lone shingle had been blown from the roof.

I found out the batteries in my smoke detector were working very well while making toast for breakfast using a cake rack set on the burner of the gas stove. It was easily silenced by opening a couple of windows for a few moments.

By 11 a.m. I was bored and decided to take a drive to Diane's to have a coffee and charge my phone. The roads were littered with debris and there were trees down all along my route. The wind continued for most of Sunday, strong enough that power crews could not begin to safely restore power until late in the afternoon. Several trucks patrolled the road. When lineworkers assessed the area, they identified thirteen separate causes from downed trees to tripped connections keeping our houses in darkness. According to the Nova Scotia Power outage map, the estimate for having power restored was Tuesday. Some 400,000 people in Nova Scotia had lost power.

Reading kept me reasonably occupied, along with a few phone chats along the way. I retired early that evening, the wind by that time gentle; it would be an early morning rise to have a shower at Diane's before heading to work for nine.

Ten minutes before my 6 a.m. alarm was set to go off on Monday morning, the power was restored. You are never quite sure what was left on when the electricity stops suddenly. And now, all at once, the pump cut in, the TV and lights came on, the fan above my head whirred into action.

Almost two weeks after Hurricane Dorian there was still no sign of the yellow bucket from the woodpile.

Lorna MacKinnon was born and raised on Cape Breton Island. This is her first publication.

Straight, No Chaser

LENORE ROWNTREE

We bundled the reels, tapes and cassettes into the minivan and headed for the dump

Ever since my father died, my mother occasionally calls to tell me about the Toronto musicians who used to come to the house to play at my father's music jams. Back in the 1950s and '60s Yonge Street in Toronto was lined with jazz and rock clubs, and live music was a big thing. But even then it was tough to get the budget for a big band to have a blow. So Dad took to hosting big band jams in our backyard—he called them "yard jams."

When I was visiting her this past summer, Mom said, "I don't think Moe Koffman ever came to the house." I thought Moe, best known for his hit "Swinging Shepherd Blues" and for appearing on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*, had come. So I pulled out some of the old slides taken at the early jams and scanned the rows of musicians assembled on the terrace of our backyard. I couldn't find Moe. But looking at the pictures brought back a lot more than I was expecting.

The day before a jam we'd take down the folding chairs, hose them off, haul out the bridge table chairs, the kitchen chairs, and still there would not be enough places to sit. Some of the earliest jam pictures taken in our backyard show a Union Jack planted at the top of the little hill we used for tobogganing in winter, a giveaway it was a holiday, probably Dominion Day. We lived in a suburb of mostly middle class families in red brick houses with white trim built after the war in the west end of Toronto. Ours was slightly off the pattern, a yellow brick split-level that the Brady Bunch could have lived in.

A week or two before a jam Dad would announce at the supper table, "I'm going to have a few of the guys over." He'd get on the phone, call the fellows—only one woman, a singer named Arlene, was in the band—and talk musician stuff: whose charts were legible, who'd been smashed at the last gig, and who'd been busted for playing under scale. The union—Toronto Musicians' Association—was strong then, so guys who played for the door were reprobates. Leaders who didn't pay sidemen time and a half after midnight were only slightly less shameful.

One of the musicians, Alehorse, always played for the door. But Al needed the work and was a good storyteller so nobody busted him. There is a photo of him at one of the Dominion Day jams; beside him his wife Mary puffs on a cigarette. Cancer was already growing in her breasts. No one knew then that she'd soon have a double mastectomy and several searing rounds of radiation. She looked like a walking ghost afterward.

But the day of a jam was festive. The guys arrived dressed for a casual gig carrying all manner of musical instruments. Electric keyboards were rare, so the pianist brought a flute. The drummer brought his kit and his newest African or West Indian drum. Sports jackets got cast aside as soon as the band began to play. But the women were '50s chic to the end. Their spiked heels sank into the lawn, their satin and rayon dresses swished when they walked. These were music widows, women who were mostly alone on Friday and Saturday nights, so they relished the chance to go out.

The husbands were all jazz musicians. Some were members of well-known bands, including The Boss Brass and Lighthouse. One, a sax player named Hart, had played in the opening band for the most famous jazz concert held in Toronto, the legendary night of May 15, 1953, when

Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Charles Mingus, Bud Powell and Max Roach played at Massey Hall. Or very nearly didn't play because Charlie missed his plane from New York and then once he finally did get to Toronto he kept going AWOL. But somehow, as Hart told it, Charlie miraculously arrived at the Hall at 8:30 p.m., the precise time stipulated in his contract.

Nearly all of them had day jobs, except for Dick, who in his lifelong quest for the "horn" left his "day gig" as an accountant to join show bands in Vegas and on the Sunset Strip in LA. But most stuck it out with various jobs, ranging from repo man for the music store Long & McQuade, to periodontist in Oakville, to vehicle licensing inspector in Mississauga. Several were music teachers, including Bob the clarinetist who was famous in my mind for discovering David Clayton-Thomas before the band Blood, Sweat & Tears did, and possibly in David's mind for being the hardass at Earl Haig Secondary who sincerely cared for his students' welfare. My father, Gid, worked as a dentist on Dundas Street until he was in his fifties. He wanted to see us through school before he had the nerve to quit and lead his swing band full-time.

Dad recorded almost every jam, gig and job he played. He used a tabletop magnetic tape machine at first, and later a cassette recorder. All the yard party tapes were stored in the basement, along with tapes from the gigs at the Yonge Street jazz clubs, and from jobs at the dance palaces, the hotels and the golf clubs. So many tapes and cassettes, enough to cover three walls floor to ceiling.

The last yard jam was on June 26, 1978. For three decades afterwards, the jams descended into our basement and only the men came, no wives. I remember the last yard jam for several reasons. Our mother, normally not too interested in these events, had been forced onto centre stage, it being her thirtieth wedding anniversary. So without Mom's expertise my sister Patricia and I worked

the kitchen, where we squared off at knifepoint over a pineapple—should it be cut into chunks or spears? The second trumpet player's wife, dressed in gauzy Indian cotton and platform sandals, spent the evening staring into my boyfriend's chest. And Alehorse was missing. He had succumbed to an early death, possibly hastened by an excess of good living. His stylish wife, Mary, was not there either. Not because of the cancer, but because, despite women's lib, real widows still didn't attend those sorts of events alone. But mostly I remember the last yard jam because the cops came.

I went with my father to the end of the driveway where the two cops had parked. The light crept slowly down the hill of our street in June. You could see the pinky-orange of the sun setting from where we stood. Dad wanted me with him because he thought that I, being a newly minted lawyer, was experienced with this sort of thing. The older officer shook Dad's hand, said he really liked hearing "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)" as he drove up the street. But one of the neighbours wasn't enjoying it much, so if the guys would play just one or two more tunes then shut it down, everything would be cool. Especially if one of the songs was Monk's "Straight, No Chaser."

After the last of the basement jams, when we'd begun to get used to the idea that Dad was gone and that we would never play all of his reels, tapes and cassettes, Patricia and I bundled them into Dad's minivan; Dad always owned big vehicles so he could get his stand-up bass and amplifiers into the back. Mom wanted to come with us to the dump, but we convinced her it wasn't a good idea. We felt terrible throwing away his work, his joy. We were erasing his life, but we didn't know what else to do. We couldn't just leave everything at the curb for the garbage truck. It was June again when we stood at the edge of the landfill with the stacks of cartons beside us. The sky was the same pinky-orange as the night of the last yard jam, only even more intense, with a streak of fiery red. For a moment we hesitated, maybe we should keep everything. But what were we going to do with it all? It had to come to an end somehow, so we started dumping.

Lenore Rowntree is an award-winning writer who was born and raised in Toronto. Her novel, Cluck *(Thistledown Press), was a finalist for the 2013 Great BC Novel Contest. She lives in Vancouver and Gibsons, BC. Read more of her work at geist.com.*

Field Training

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEN OSBORNE

December 2018. Brownsville, Texas.
Rusty Monsees sits in his shack on a piece of land that he inherited in Brownsville, a city of just over a million people on the US border with Mexico. In the past, Monsees has allowed members of volunteer militia groups to camp out on his property, to keep him "safe" while they patrolled the border.

Osborne says: "The thing that really shocked me is the genuine fear Rusty had for illegal crossers. He told me of violent events that he witnessed involving Mexican cartels at the border. He called me often late at night to advise me not to photograph at the border wall in the dark, which I was doing a few nights in a row."

Over the course of 2018 and 2019 Jen Osborne set out to photograph the training activities of US militia groups, whose members don combat regalia, arm themselves with weapons and practice combat in remote areas. In recent years the news has been filled with stories of the proliferation of militias and far-right groups, and Osborne was drawn to their image by the intersection of violent terror and spectacle. Some of these groups espouse hate ideology (racist, misogynist, anti-immigrant, among others), engage in violence and murder, and patrol the US border. Less extreme groups form around gun rights. Survivalist groups, generally considered the tamest, train to protect themselves and their communities against government or civilian threat.

The most difficult part of the project was gaining access to militia groups. To research the groups Osborne turned to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, a legal advocacy group whose website documents militia groups, and their mandates and methods. From there, Osborne contacted several survivalist groups, as it became apparent that the more extreme groups were too guarded, and possibly too dangerous to engage with. She contacted members through their Facebook profiles, seeking out access to photograph the groups; in several cases she flew out to be interviewed by group members with no guarantee that she would be allowed to make any photographs. The main concern each group had was who was funding her activities. Some of the groups that did agree to be photographed asked Osborne not to sell her photographs to *Vice* or CNN.

Osborne spent a week each with militia groups in Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Texas, Indiana and Washington State, as well as a few days with the California Minutemen, who are not a militia, but rather volunteer border patrollers. Osborne met with group leaders, discussed logistics, and then travelled out to the training camps, which started Friday night and lasted until Sunday morning. Members practiced shooting guns, hand-to-hand combat, how to enter and clear a building, military strategy and survival off the land. The camps were held in remote areas, so Osborne rented motel rooms, sometimes as far away as an hour by car. For the most part she asked few questions, fearing that delving too deep into politics would compromise her rapport with subjects.

During her time with the survivalist groups, Osborne heard little racially charged conversation. Few of the men considered their groups to have any race agenda. More often they thought of themselves as boys' clubs. To her, many of the men seemed like do-gooder conservatives, reminiscent of the working-class rural men she knew from small town Vancouver Island, not the angry, frustrated men she expected. Some of the men in the groups were army veterans and said they missed the camaraderie of being in the army; joining a militia group was the next best thing. Some joined because it was an inexpensive way of receiving weapons training; many leaders of militias are former military members. Many of the men seemed to see participation in a militia group as an opportunity to get out into the woods, be athletic and socialize. *—the editors*

Jen Osborne is a Canadian photojournalist whose work has appeared in national and international publications, including MacLean's, Mother Jones, Stern, Vice, Rolling Stone, GQ, Maisonneuve *and* Geist. *She was a 2019 winner of the Magenta Foundation Flash Forward award for emerging photographers. She lives in the Pacific Northwest.*

December 2018. Brownsville, Texas.
A man—a US citizen of Hispanic descent—in his twenties patrols the border wall with Mexico. He has belonged to several militia groups, including the 3 Percenters, often associated with far-right extremism. He now "works" as an independent. The man reported to Osborne that in the Hispanic community he is considered a racist.

September 2018.
Outside North Vernon, Indiana.
David Nantz, commander of the Indiana Volunteer Militia, and his wife eating squirrel that they caught during a field training exercise. The militia members asked Osborne to eat the squirrel. Despite being a vegetarian, she accepted so as not to be considered a liberal and jeopardize access to the training exercise.

September 2018.
Outside North Vernon, Indiana.
Members of Indiana Volunteer Militia engage in a room clearing exercise, led by commander David Nantz. Osborne was told that people often join militias because weapons training classes in the US cost thousands of dollars. Militias provide free weapons training, often by a qualified, experienced teacher.

September 2018.
Outside North Vernon, Indiana.
Members of the Indiana Volunteer Militia during a field training exercise at the home of David Nantz, the commander. David Nantz is a former Marine with nearly eleven years of experience. The Indiana Volunteer Militia maintains an active Facebook page (7,600 likes), posting photographs and descriptions of field training exercises.

From Slow Seconds: The Photography of George Thomas Taylor. *Curated by Ronald Rees and Joshua Green. Published by Goose Lane Editions in 2019. George Thomas Taylor photographed New Brunswick in the nineteenth-century. He died in 1913. Ronald Rees is the author of numerous books on Canadian history and geography, including* New Brunswick: An Illustrated History *and*

The Wasteful Canadians

ALEKSANDAR HEMON

From My Parents. *Published by Hamish Hamilton in 2019. Aleksandar Hemon is the author of six books of fiction and nonfiction, including* The Book of My Lives *and* The Lazarus Project. *He is a teacher of creative writing at Princeton University.*

When I write about my parents I'm compelled to claim that their displacement is the central event of their lives, what split everything into the before and the after. Everything after the rupture took place in a damaged, incomplete time—some of it was forever lost, and forever it shall so remain. Upon their arrival in Hamilton, they at first lived in a two-bedroom rental apartment on the fifteenth floor of a non-descript building, paid for by the Ontario government. Until they furnished the apartment with donated secondhand furniture, there was nothing in it. They took English classes with other refugees and immigrants, acquiring words for things they lost, didn't have, or couldn't understand. The very scarcity of possessions reminded them that they were foreigners living in someone else's space, relatively comfortable as it might have been, and that their home space was now in the before, forever beyond their reach.

Back in Bosnia, my family possessed property; we had spaces we called our own. Not only did we live in an apartment that was pretty big by the standards of socialist housing, but we also had the Jahorina cabins. My parents loved the mountain; nearly every weekend, they were there, with or without their children. They insisted it was nature (always good for you) that drew them to Jahorina, but the primary value of the cabins was that Mama and Tata could keep busy. They are the kind of people who are always doing something, ever in the middle of a number of short- and long-term projects, the kind of people who believe they'll die the day they have nothing to do. Thus Mama cleaned and organized the cabins,

New Brunswick Was His Country: The Life of William Francis Ganong. *Joshua Green is the photo archivist at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. He has published writing on musical anthropology and the history of early photography.*

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pickled vegetables, roasted peppers on an outdoor grill my father built, etc. Meanwhile, Tata had a workshop in the cabin basement; he'd build a nailless table; he'd restore an old chair, extending its life span indefinitely; he'd construct shelves for our Sarajevo apartment; he'd design and develop the who-knows-whats of handymen, which his unhandy son could never truly comprehend, let alone appreciate. Upon the return from Jahorina on Sunday, Mama would often complain that Tata was in the basement the whole time, except to eat and sleep. To Tata, that meant the weekend had been well spent.

Now I understand that on the mountain as well as in Sarajevo, they were perpetually invested in constructing their lives, in continuously defining and refining the space in which their lives unfolded. In a country marked by many generations of abysmal poverty, where socialism was the ideology of the day, there was little money to get the goodies; there were in fact few goodies to get. The quality of life had to be built from scratch—construction was more important than consumption. The vague, distant goal of my parents' lifetime project was to enjoy a modest retirement living on Jahorina, a theme park of their hard work, where everything around them would speak of their time in the world.

With their displacement, they lost all that. At the beginning of their life in Hamilton they had to find work and learn the basic ways of being in North America, with no family, friends, or neighbors, confronting the illogical vagaries of the English language, plus ubiquitous cars and malls, and long, dreary winters devoid of mountains.

After a while, though, things started to look up a bit. First, more family arrived: two of my father's brothers with their broods, some cousins, and even some friends. Now they could get together to reminisce about their previous life and pool their knowledge of and kvetch about the weird ways in which Canadians conducted their lives. Moreover, my parents got hired as superintendents in a forty-apartment building, which included a modest salary plus rent-free lodging. Mama cleaned, collected rent, kept

things in order, and chitchatted with tenants as she used to with her Sarajevo neighbors, her disassembled English notwithstanding, while Tata did repairs in the building and took care of the garbage, all the while working in a factory at a job well below his engineer qualifications but just above his English skills.

Most important, the vast basement of the building was big enough for my father to carve out some space and set up a workshop. He not only constructed hives and frames there, but also restored the pieces of furniture the wasteful Canadians commonly dumped in the garbage he was in charge of managing. He even experimented with drying meat in the basement: he hung some pork, lightly smoked elsewhere, near a window with a ventilator. It was edible, but far from impressive, or even enjoyable, although he insisted it was as good as any dried meat.

The meat-drying debacle, however, pointed to one of the crucial issues related to my family's displacement. They, as many immigrants do, identified themselves by way of the food they ate—food was one of the few conduits of continuity between the before and the after. Among my family in Canada and their friends, much time was spent debating dietary and other differences between "them" (Canadians) and "us" (people from Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia): "Their" bacon was soggy; "they" didn't know how to make sausage; "their" sour cream was not thick enough; "they" didn't eat things we ate; "they" were fat and incapable of truly enjoying life because "they" worried about getting fat all the time.

My father would occasionally return from a simple mission of fetching milk with a couple of lamb heads he discovered in the remote corners of the supermarket. He'd demand that my mother boil them, which she outright refused to do. Much of the lamb heads' beyond-dog-food-factory afterlife was spent in the fridge, their eyes bulging in morbid surprise whenever it was opened. Tata would finally deal with Mama's boycott by boiling the heads himself and then sit defiantly at the table to pick lamb brains with the tip of a knife. As my mother scoffed, he relished not only the alleged taste, but also the fact that lamb heads, given the pleasure they provided, were ridiculously cheap in Canada.

Because my parents had worked hard for everything that they would eventually lose, they were tormented by Canadian wastefulness. To them, and to Tata in particular, there were always so many uses for things nobody seemed to want. Once, the real estate company that employed them decided to replace a large number of old refrigerators in the building, their warranty life span ending. My father was thus instructed to remove the fridges from the apartments and leave them by the garbage shed, where they'd be picked up and taken away to a dump. He could not get over all those good, perfectly functioning fridges ending up in a scrap heap—to his

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One Way to Keep Track of Who is Talking

MARIE ANNHARTE BAKER

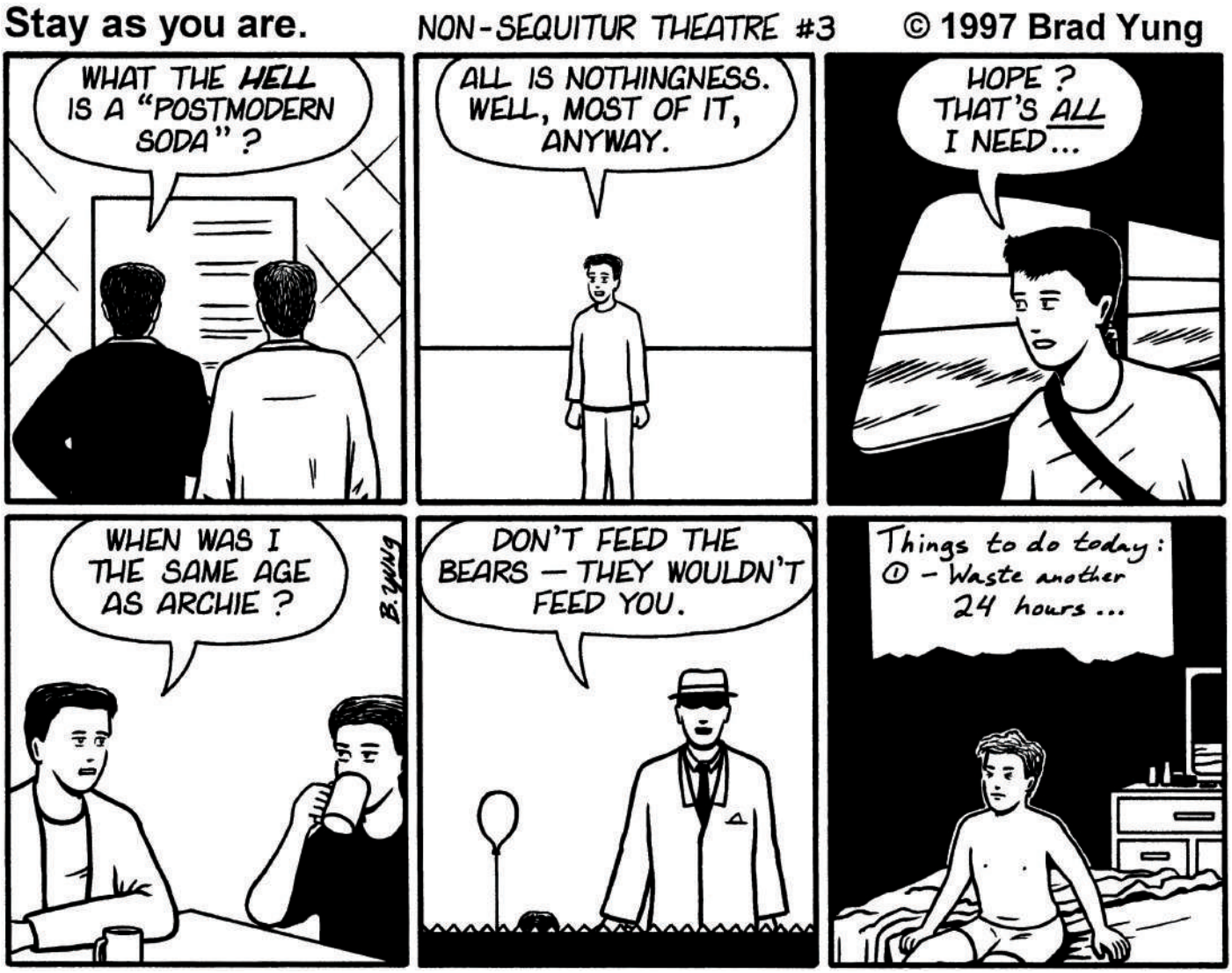
From Resisting Canada: An Anthology of Poetry, *edited by Nyla Matuk. Published by Véhicule Press in 2019. annharte is Anishinabe (Little Saskatchewan First Nation, Manitoba). She is the author of four books of poetry*, Indigena Awry *(2012)*, Being On the Moon *(1990)*, Coyote Columbus Café *(1994)*, *and* Exercises in Lip Pointing *(2003). She is an Anishinabe grandmother and writer. She lives on rez.*

If I change one word, I change history. What did I
say today? Do I even remember one word? Writing is
oral tradition. You have to practice the words on
someone before writing it down.

I do not intend to become the world's greatest Indian
orator. Maybe I might by accident. I might speak my
mind even when running off my mouth like I'm doing.
Language finds a tongue. Maybe it will be an Indian
accent.

Counting hostile Indians is made easier because they
don't talk much or very little. They look the part
—the part in the middle with braids. You never do
know if you are talking to an Indian.

Frozen Indians and frozen conversations predominate.
We mourn the ones at Wounded Knee. Our traditions
buried in one grave. Our frozen circles of silence
do no honour to them. We talk to keep our
conversations from getting too dead.



Non-Sequitur Theatre #3 from The Complete Stay as you are. *by Brad Yung. Published by Three Ocean Press in 2019.* Stay as you are. *appeared in* Geist, Adbusters, The WestEnder *and* Ricepaper Magazine *among many others. His latest book*, Lessons I'm Going to Teach my Kids Too Late, *was published in 2019 by Three Ocean Press. He lives in Nanaimo, BC.*

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poverty-conditioned mind the waste was unimaginable. He talked to everyone he knew in Hamilton, beginning with his family, to ask if they needed another fridge; he called me in Chicago, only to be disappointed that I had no need for extra refrigeration. Mama, a pathologically honest person, was beside herself over his trying to give away someone else's property. She begged me to interfere, but I couldn't help, as I was not, I hasten to admit, up to the task of dealing with the difficult ethical conundrum the situation presented: Does waste still rightfully belong to someone who wasted it?

The fridge overabundance, however, offered a possible solution to the smoked meat problem. At a family get-together, my father and his brothers spontaneously brainstormed: suppose they take two of those old fridges, rip out the plastic lining, put them on top of each other, drill a hole in between and another one on top, attach an improvised tin chimney, then stick the chimney out the basement window—thus they could smoke meat in the basement! My mother was desperate, and complained to me that their obsession with smoking meat blinded them to the laws and civilized customs of Canada. There was nothing I could do. Fortunately, the project was canceled when they discovered a farm outside Hamilton owned by a Slovenian, where they could personally select their animal before it was slaughtered and smoked.

Elevator Shoes

PRISCILA UPPAL

From the eighth CVC (Carter V. Cooper) Short Fiction Anthology Series. *Published by Exile Editions in 2019. Priscila Uppal was a poet, fiction writer, memoirist, essayist, playwright and a professor of English at York University. Her work has been published internationally and translated into eight languages. She died in 2018.*

Accidents are, by their definition, unpredictable affairs. But let's be honest, to a point. Funnily enough, Diana worried about the elevator in her own rundown building. She was on the 12th floor of a 26-storey building (in reality only 25 since there was no 13th floor), although of course there was also a basement and a parking garage that Diana wouldn't enter because there are no gates on her apartment building and people frequently sleep, have sex, and do drugs there. Isabel sometimes went to the parking garage for a cigarette—but most likely as a tempting of fate to see if someone might kill her and absolve her of the responsibility of doing it herself. The elevator was old and sometimes out-of-order and when the out-of-order sign was removed Diana was even more anxious because whenever the plumbing was fixed in her apartment it inevitably leaked, so she didn't have much faith in repairs in her building. Or repairs in general, if her family was any indication—her mother and her estranged father were broken people—they didn't deny it, in fact they flaunted it like shamelessness is flaunted during Carnival—a gigantic "Hey, we're all fucked up and we're all going to die too soon anyway so we might as well drink and dance and shake all our private parts in the name of Jesus—Christo—because life is a parade that brings you little bursts of magic every so often to seduce you into the daily suffering of your life."

This is why Brazilian women wear high heels, and why when the elevator snapped in the twelve-storey building of Diana's chiropractor she was wearing the very shoes that made her feel she'd attracted a little bit of magic into her otherwise suffering life.

In fact, when the elevator cables—both at once—snapped, Diana was momentarily suspended in the air—like an angel—her feet dangling below her, arms rising as if in a long feathered glorious motion of flight. A flash like celestial lightning appeared before her eyes (it was only afterwards that she understood this was an electrical surge which caused all the numbers on the console to light up at once and then burn out). Strangely enough, Diana thought about her father, Fernando—a man she tried to keep out of her mind as much as possible. He was a hopeless coward who had run away from their mother and started another family with an Amazon woman who spoke no Portuguese. He said it was so they could never argue. When Diana was a very small child, one and two, her father had tossed her like a volleyball into the wide blue endless Brazilian sky.

Up and down.
Up and down.
Like an elevator.
Until the cables of his mind snapped.

It was with a bit of disbelief that Diana—tinged with intense nostalgia confronting a situation that might have ended with her death—oh, how Isabel would have been supremely jealous—was surprised by the force of love hurtling inside her heart during those moments inside and then

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LXVIII

ERIK DIDRIKSEN

From Pop Sonnets. *Published by Quirk Books in 2019. Erik Didriksen is a software engineer, musician, sonneteer and trivia enthusiast. Didriksen started Pop Sonnets, Shakespearean sonnets based on contemporary pop songs, on his Tumblr (www.popsonnet.com).*

In bygone days, I purchas'd my first lute,
then strumm'd its strings until my fingers bled.
I form'd a modest troupe that ne'er took root,
for James bow'd out and Jody left once wed.
'Twas then I met thee too; each night would send
me to thy mother's porch, where we would swear
our promises of love without an end;
but youthful oats aren't often brought to bear.
Those summer days seem'd preternat'rally good
despite my digits' pain, our later strife;
if I could live them evermore, I would—
for those, in truth, were th' best days of my life.
—Yea time has marchèd on; now here I pluck
my instrument and rue my changèd luck.

Bryan Adams, "Summer of '69"

Love Galore

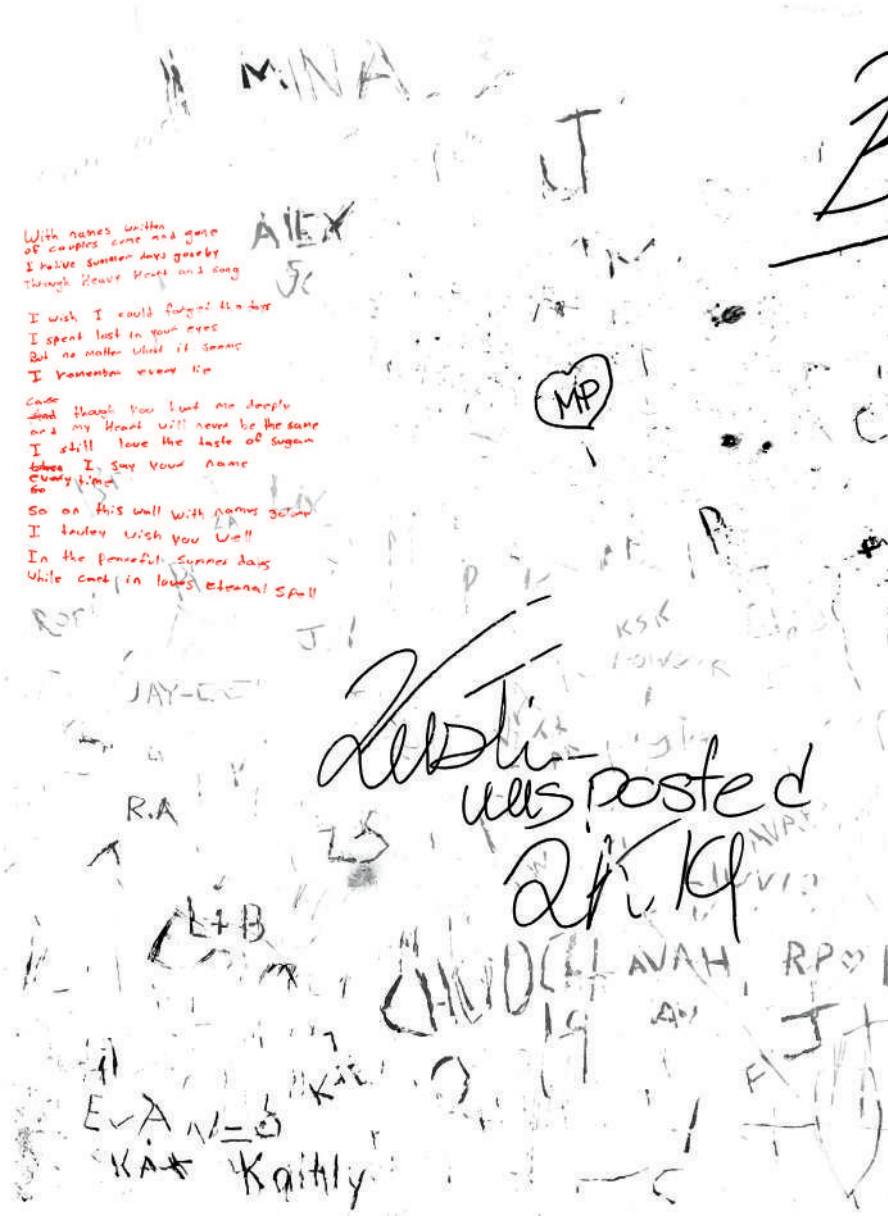
Geist *contributor Finn Wylie came across this poem in a bathroom stall at Sonny Boy Esso station in Chamberlain, Saskatchewan. Wylie studies writing at Vancouver Island University and works as a tree planter.*

With names written
of couples come and gone
I relive summer days gone by
Through Heavy Heart and song

I wish I could forget the days
I spent lost in your eyes
But no matter what it seems
I remember every lie

Cause though you hurt me deeply
and my Heart will never be the same
I still love the taste of sugar
every time I say your name

So on this wall with names galore
I truly wish you well
In the peaceful summer days
While cast in love's eternal spell



outside her father's arms. Which was better, she didn't know: leaving his arms to be caressed by the wind, to be for a moment an element safe and miraculous among the elements, or to be caught, warmly and securely from that illusion of eternal protection in the conscious and all-too-human hairy, sweaty, but sturdy arms of her father? She never doubted the sky.

A third floor is tricky in terms of elevators. A third floor is a decision-making floor—should you walk?—not if you are a Brazilian woman in your high-heeled shoes, and if you are a Brazilian woman you are definitely in high-heeled shoes. That is the distinction that absolves you of all responsibility when you decide to take an elevator to floor number 3.

Because there was a basement and two levels of parking garage, Diana's elevator hurtled down somewhere between four and five floors, crashing to a halt on the concrete of the lower parking garage.

I forgot to mention there were two other people in the elevator at the time: a happy accident for one and an unhappy accident for the other.

HAPPY ACCIDENT: ELEVATOR PASSENGER #1

was on his way to the 12th floor to surprise his girlfriend, who has a psychotherapy practice in the building. Passenger #1 found it exhilarating to date a psychotherapist because he felt she'd be comfortable talking about all kinds of sexual fetishes and desires without judgement. Passenger #1 didn't really have any perverse

desires—he liked to dole out a spanking now and then and he wouldn't say no to nipple clamps—but he liked the idea of talking to his psychotherapist girlfriend about sex play. In fact, he was on his way to surprise her with a cock ring he'd purchased in a sex store that was conveniently located across the street from her practice. "Every woman wants a man to give her a ring," the voluptuous dyed-blonde clerk joked as she punched in the price. He was already sporting a hard-on in the elevator when the cables snapped.

Happy Accident because his girlfriend was in the middle of an afternoon tryst with the other psychotherapist in the building—and this man was into being smacked around and whipped. His moans could be heard down the halls of the floor.

A month later, after Passenger #1 had completed the majority of his rehab for a broken hip, he asked his psychotherapist girlfriend to marry him. She agreed and he put a white gold and diamond ring on her finger. The accident had spurred the psychotherapist to take a good look at her life and even though she was an open-minded progressive psychotherapist who didn't mind whipping a man wearing a ball chain inside his mouth she thought God had given her a sign about the sum effect of promiscuity. Besides, she was pregnant, and she wasn't entirely sure who the father was but she knew she didn't want whipping boy involved in the raising of any child of hers. Two psychotherapists were not better than one.

(When they were finally rescued by paramedics, the cock ring—found in the corner of the elevator by Paramedic #2—elicited a steady supply of laughs and speculations for months to come from a group of people whose days needed a laugh because it mostly consisted of overdoses and projectile vomit and cardiac arrests.)

UNHAPPY ACCIDENT: ELEVATOR PASSENGER #2

an obese man, he happened to be holding onto the elevator railing when the cables snapped and so his hang time was considerably less than Passenger #1's and Cousin Diana's. He had acted as a kind of cushioning mattress to both—like the rubber corners on a pinball machine (which is ironic because he did enjoy playing pinball—a Beatles-themed pinball game at his local beer pub—the beer of course contributing to his obesity). In fact, when the cable snapped, he'd been humming "I Wanna Hold Your Hand," while thinking about the nachos he was going to order as a treat after seeing his dentist on the 8th floor. He'd been putting off coming in for months because the dentist had ordered a special set of X-rays and Passenger #2 did not want to know the results. The receptionist kept calling. She said they would charge him if he cancelled another appointment. Although the X-rays were clear of anything more serious than gingivitis, Passenger #2 felt the rug of the world getting pulled from under him.

His obesity gave him little balance and he belly-flopped forward making a star on the elevator floor.

Passenger #1 hit the ground two seconds before Cousin Diana and crushed Passenger #2's arm—breaking it in three places—and then he fell backwards onto Passenger #2's legs—breaking them, too, causing a blood clot that would eventually turn into a fatal hemothorax.

Cousin Diana landed on both feet, and for a split second she thought she'd performed the perfect gymnastics dismount—when both ankles snapped.

Diana fell on Passenger #2's spine, which, covered in fat, provided Diana with a cushion not unlike the blue gymnasium mats she remembered jumping onto as a child. Diana sometimes had dreams of her sister Isabel jumping off buildings and bridges—even though jumping was not Isabel's preferred suicidal ideation—to be saved by one such blue gym mat. Diana bounced back up and then back down on Passenger #2's spine.

(The cock ring had, at first, also landed on Passenger #2's spine, but Diana's bouncing caused it to roll over Passenger #2's shoulder and into a corner. To add insult to injury, the dentist would send Passenger #2 an invoice for his missed appointment while he was still an in-patient at the hospital.)

You hear about people, perfect strangers, who suddenly find themselves in a dangerous or traumatic or life-threatening situation—who end up bonding with each other, confessing secrets they've never shared, not even with a sibling or a psychotherapist—keeping in touch and sharing special psychic wounds for the rest of their lives.

You hear about it but then you don't really meet these people so you doubt it.

After the paramedics lifted Diana onto a stretcher—her Rainbow Open-Toed Ankle-Strapped Studded Accent High Heels miraculously intact with her ankles caved in the opposite direction—she never had another thought about Passenger #1 or Passenger #2—the female paramedic who gave her an IV—"we have to give everyone an IV out of principle"—had said, "those are the most fabulous shoes I've ever seen—where did you get them?"

Diana wasn't in the habit of lying. When your sister is openly suicidal and your father has abandoned your family, conversations about all kinds of things that other people would consider touchy or inappropriate don't faze you and Diana didn't need to lie to save face. Maybe it was the shock of it all. But Diana replied that a famous rapper had given them to her as a gift. "You know _____?" Diana nodded with flirtatious pride. "I work for him. He's a true gentleman. And has a great eye for shoes."

From Agnes, Murderess *by Sarah Leavitt. Published by Freehand Books in 2019. Leavitt is the author of the graphic memoir* Tangles: A Story About Alzheimer's, My Mother, and Me, *which was a finalist for the Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize in 2010 and is currently in development as a feature-length animation. Leavitt teaches comics classes at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.*

Slim and Trim

CHRISTY ANN CONLIN

From Watermark. *Published by House of Anansi Press in 2019. Reproduced with permission. Christy Ann Conlin is the author of two books,* Heave *and* The Memento. *Her work has been a finalist for the Amazon.ca First Novel Award, the Thomas H. Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award and the Dartmouth Book Award. She lives in Nova Scotia.*

The boat rocks gently all night long. I listen to Bob snore and pull the dirty sheets closer to me—there is a vague comfort in the smell of his stale sweat, the way he farts when he sleeps. He's very consistent in this way. I lie there all night, just in case the boat breaks free and starts floating down the river. I'll be able to get Bob up in time and rescue us. The perils of sailing are real, even when moored to a dock.

I lie there breathing in the mildew and thinking about the letter from Tara shoved in my backpack. Even though I haven't opened it, the familiar guilt gropes at me when I think about burning it with a lighter. Even when I think about putting it in the garbage I feel guilty. But that letter waits for me in the bottom of my sporty backpack like an envelope full of travelling manipulation and insecurity. Tara's probably bought a non-refundable ticket and is planning on moving to Vancouver and wants to stay with me. It's like she can't leave high school behind.

Then I think about when I was seventeen with pink cheeks standing there in a strapless bra and curled hair. Tara was helping me dress before Samuel came to get me in his father's car. I'd put on hot-pink lipstick to go with the big taffeta Cinderella prom dress and black patent-leather heels. I loved that dress. I remember thinking what a hot babe I was. Until Tara started talking.

"Back fat."

"What?"

"You've got back fat."

"What do you mean, back fat?"

"Fat."

"Where?"

"Idiot. On your back. You've got fat on your back."

"I do not."

"Yes, you do. Everyone in my family has it. All the girls. But we've got perky tits. Yours sag."

Tara hauled her sweatshirt up and they might as well have been growing off her collarbone. And she was covered in back fat. Like a walrus on a rock. But I didn't have back fat and I said, "I don't have back fat."

She smirked.

Occasional Poem

STUART ROSS

From Motel of the Opposable Thumbs. *Published by Anvil Press in 2019. Stuart Ross is a writer, editor, writing teacher and small press publisher. He is the author of twenty books of poetry, fiction and essays, including* A Sparrow Came Down Resplendent *(Wolsak and Wynn, 2016), and* Pockets *(ECW Press, 2017). He lives in Cobourg, ON.*

after Larry Fagin

Mark Laba and I took the Yonge
subway downtown because we wanted
to eat lunch in Chinatown. Mark
pretended to have a wooden leg to
make the woman beside us uncomfortable.
(I don't know if she was; maybe *she*
had a wooden leg.) At Bloor station,
people really poured on. It was so
crowded that we were squished against
each other. At Dundas we poured
out and Mark and I went to Kwong
Chow's where we had the 85-cent lunch
special: fried rice, chicken balls, chow
mein and consommée soup. We were 15
years old. After we read our fortune
cookies—Mark's said "You are a well-
respected man"—we went to Village Bookstore
where Marty sold us some poetry books
from New Directions. Back on the subway,
Mark said he liked to drink pickle juice
and when I saw him the next week
he did exactly that.

"Sure you do. And saggy tits."

I was seventeen, and even if they didn't grow out of my collarbone I know they weren't sagging because I was only seventeen.

Maidenform Sweet Nothings, Denim Red Bandana Black Lace Padded Push Up, Warner's Pure Electricity Underwire, Warner's The Real McCoy Sissy Fiberfill Pointy, Bustier by Lady Marlene, Bestform Satin Underwire, Wonderbra Hello Boys. She reeled them off like we were at a square dance. Something else I grew up doing—not that Tara would have ever been caught dead square dancing. Her father was an accountant. He had a *formal education*, she liked to tell me, not like my parents, who had *vocational* training. He would never let her go to the prom with someone like Samuel, someone who was a black guy. She wanted to know if he smelled different than a white guy. I knew she had never even kissed a boy before and she knew I knew her secret.

So then Tara added: "And get the girdle pants. For the back fat."

"Girdle pants?"

"Yeah. Slim and trim. Holds in back fat. No one will know unless they grab you really hard. My grandmother gave me her girdles. No one knows I wear them. Isn't that great?"

I hated her guts, but I didn't pout that time. She could keep waiting. This is the thing about a bully—you never know how long they'll keep waiting and plotting, when they'll reappear and trip you just when you think you've found your balance.

I grinned like I was in agreement about back fat and saggy tits and continued to smile and hate her guts all the way to the prom in the car with Samuel who asked what was bothering me. When I told him, he said I shouldn't waste even a minute of my life with anyone who didn't lift me up. Then he kissed me. He smelled like aftershave—vanilla and cedar. His skin was warm. I still think about that kiss. And my back fat.

Woman Meets Man

JOANN MCCAIG

From the table of contents of An Honest Woman. *Published by Thistledown Press in 2019. JoAnn McCaig is the author of a novel*, The Textbook of the Rose, *and of a critical study*, Reading In: Alice Munro's Archives. *She taught university English for many years and now is the co-owner of an independent bookstore in Calgary.*

A LUCID DREAM
In which JM meets a man in a bar, contemplates her romantic history, and finds herself engulfed in a conflagration of carnal desire and writerly ambition as her reproductive life draws to a close, inspiring her to write a novel called *A Happy Prisoner*.

A HAPPY PRISONER
In which Janet Mair, an English professor who is working on a novel called *Final Draft*, meets a man named Ray while she is spending a summer month near a lake with a houseful of kids, and she finds that the world of her daydreams intrudes rather alarmingly on her reality.

FINAL DRAFT
In which a Canadian woman writer named Jay McNair meets a very famous British writer named Leland Mackenzie at a literary festival, and they really, really hit it off, for a while at least.

A HAPPY PRISONER REVISITED
In which we return to Janet, who is now back in the city, and whose fantasies about Leland and Jay — and the novel she has written about them, and the real life rewards she hopes to attain from it — continue despite the fact that in real life her efforts to seduce an actual man, namely Ray, don't go well at all, and things get very confusing until finally an in-class discussion helps to bring her back to earth.

A LUCID DREAM REVISITED
In which JM confesses to various fictional machinations and misdemeanors (about which she may or may not be telling the truth) and also has an intimate encounter with the man she met at a bar.

POSTSCRIPTS: one for Jay, one for Janet, and one for JM.

APPENDIX 1: A PLACE AT THE TABLE
In which the author replies to her critics, with footnotes.

APPENDIX 2: EPILOGUE
In which the author finds a happy ending. Maybe. Or maybe not.

Broken Promises

DAVID A. NEEL

From The Way Home. *Published by On Point Press in 2019. David A. Neel is a carver, jeweller, painter, printmaker, writer and photographer. He is the author of* Our Chiefs and Elders: Words and Photographs of Native Leaders *(1992) and* The Great Canoes: Reviving a Northwest Coast Tradition *(1995). He is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw traditional art and culture.*

Serigraph on paper, 23.5 x 20 in. This print is a tribute to the Standing Rock Sioux in their struggle against the Dakota Access Pipeline being built on their traditional territory. It was the first time that Native American people used social media to bring international awareness and support to a political issue. The central photograph is of Chief Reid Red Cloud (Oglala Lakota), who led a successful campaign, now known as Red Cloud War, against US military in 1866–68.

Water Wings

LUCY ELLMANN

From Ducks, Newburyport. *Published by Biblioasis in 2019. Ellmann is an award-winning novelist whose work has appeared in the* New York Times, Times Literary Supplement, The Guardian, Herald Scottish Review, The Baffler *and many other publications.* Ducks, Newburyport *was shortlisted for the 2019 Booker Prize and won the 2019 Goldsmith's Prize, and is nominated for the 2020 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction. She lives in Scotland.*

…the fact that I found a wood pigeon's egg outside on the porch steps, short, tall, grande, venti, trenta, and wondered if I should try to incubate it in my bra, like Arabella in *Jude the Obscure*, but when I mentioned it to Leo he ordered me to put it back where I'd found it, in case I was coming between a mother wood pigeon and her egg, the fact that sometimes he lectures me like I'm one of his *students*, the fact that he made me feel so guilty about interfering with nature I did put the egg back on the porch as I'd found it, the fact that then, in the middle of the night, I started feeling guilty about that poor little egg left to languish out there and die of cold on the bare wood planks of the porch, the fact that by then I'd *invested* in the egg, I guess, or internalized it or something, the fact that its plight had impacted on me, the fact that I was attached to it anyway, and felt *responsible*, the fact that "responsible" is a funny word, the fact that so I got up in the middle of the night and put my coat on over my PJs and went out and retrieved the wood pigeon egg, the fact that this time I had a better idea, idear, and unlocked the coop so I could push the little egg under one of the chickens, the fact that I should have done that in the first place, though I was a little scared they might crush it, or reject it, and they may yet, the fact that it's not as small as a *wren's* egg but it's still pretty small, closer to a quail's egg, the fact that eggs are fascinating because they're so *perfect*, and mysterious, except when they go haywire because of some nutritional deficiency, or get old and weird, rotten egg smell, membranes, mucus, slime, slimes, tailings, viscous, viscosity, dry cleaning, the fact that I didn't really want to let that egg out of my sight, but it's probably in the best place it could be, the fact that I shouldn't worry really, the fact that the chickens'll usually sit on anything that even looks like an egg, like Jake's silly putty, that Milly dutifully incubated until it got all sort of melted and greasy and we had to put it in the fridge, before he could play with it again, the fact that Mommy called out "Ducky! Ducky!" to the ducks, and charged into the pond, but Abby saved her, the fact that Stacy jumped into the King's Ransome pool once without her water wings, and Abby almost had to save *her* too, the fact that Stacy and I were changing in the motel room, and she just ran out and jumped in the pool before I knew what was happening, the fact that she'd forgotten to put on her floaties, and sank much deeper than she expected, but she was fine, and managed to swim out by herself, no harm done, touch wood, count your blessings, rabbits' feet, the fact that she was already a pretty good swimmer luckily, but she still liked to wear her water wings, the fact that lots of children drown by slipping out of their water wings, and the parents don't notice, the fact that the parents think the kid's fine because they're wearing water wings, but they're *not*, the fact that Abby was no swimmer really, the fact that she just liked doing her arthritis exercises in the pool, or sitting in the hot tub, the fact that Stacy must have thought it was safe enough because Abby was already in the pool, but it wasn't really,

Water Mists and Sprays So Effective

VINCENT PAGÉ

From This is the Emergency Present. *Published by Coach House Books in 2019. Vincent Pagé has been published in* Prism, Geist, The Malahat Review, Metatron, Event, The Puritan, *and* Vallum, *among other journals. He was nominated for a National Magazine Award in 2015.*

Fog buries the hill
and I don't know how to mourn a cat

I'm quiet but dig
I know how to do that

with a pick and shovel
I dig deep for the dark

You cry for your cat and
I've never cried for a cat

Instead I put my hand on your back

Think of soil's nitrification
How raccoons will probably

dig her up
The fog buries us too

the fact that Stacy had to save *herself*, and she was only about four, the fact that puddle-jumpers are better, better than water wings, because they don't come off, the fact that they wrap around the whole chest, inner tube problems, chickens, wood pigeon egg, the fact that Leo and Sally's iguana laid a whole pile of eggs in their bathtub in Arizona, the fact that they were infertile though, the fact that they *couldn't* have been fertilized because she was the only iguana for miles around, the fact that even if a male iguana had swum fifty miles, and hiked up the mountain, he still couldn't have found his way into that condo, the fact that the vet told Leo it's perfectly normal for an iguana to lay a great big pile of eggs like that, and you can *eat* them, the fact that the vet thought iguana eggs make good omelets, the fact that you can make an omelet for four out of a single ostrich egg too, but who wants to, the fact that Leo and Sally didn't feel like eating their pet iguana's eggs, the fact that that was not why they had her, the fact that Leo has no *idea* why they had her, the fact that Sally brought the iguana, the fact that her eggs probably weren't in top-notch condition anyway, the iguana's, not Sally's, after they'd been sitting in that 80° bathroom for a week, the fact that they were in the mountains of Arizona, in *winter*, snowed-in car, bears, trash, Native American reservations, and they were trying to keep her warm and damp, the iguana, not Sally, the fact that they kept the bathroom at tropical temperatures, and the iguana somehow got the idea of laying eggs in the bathtub, the fact that I always wonder how Leo and Sally ever took a bath if the tub was full of eggs, the fact that, also, the iguana was always ready to pounce on you, apparently, and they have sharp claws, the fact that Leo says he was pretty scared of her, the iguana, not Sally, but maybe both, the fact that they both sound pretty bad, the fact that Leo was always having to get out of bed at 4:30 in the morning to clear snow off Sally's car so she could get to her teaching job on the Indian reservation, London Bridge, Mommy, tunnels, craters, funnel cake, the fact that Arizona's no place for an iguana, the fact that the iguana would have been a lot happier in Mexico, and Leo would have been happier in Ohio, with *me*, not hanging out with that cold Sally in Arizona, I ♥ U, the fact that "cold Sally" sounds like some kind of Confederate cocktail, like a mint julep, maybe bourbon on the rocks with a sprig of pine, a pickled iguana egg, and a dash of Ajax, topped with a stick of dynamite

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âcimowak / stories

MIKA LAFOND

From nipê wânîn. *Published by Thistledown Press in 2017. Mika Lafond is a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. She has worked in education for ten years, has written resources for teachers. She teaches at the University of Saskatchewan. This is her first book. She lives in Saskatoon.*

âcimowak
nisis micisonâtikoh sonêpiw
italy itwêw
êkotê kâkî nakata ocîcîs
notinikêw askiy
takotani namôya omamitonêhicikan
wanîtât
pahpîwikwêyiw

nisikos
pâhkwaham ocîciya
nahêkinam pâkwayâkanan
sikinam maskikiwapoy

nikâwiy itêham ominikwâcikan
kwâ mwâtan
têpiya kipêhtên nôhkom
ominikwâcikana
ê-sêwêtahamih

nohtâwiy pâhkwênêsiw wîkîkasosa
otêyani apisîs ahêw
namôya mâmâkwamêw
kôkosimihko wâwîkistam

nitawi wîcimêtawêm awâsisak
namôya kikway nohtê pahtinam

nisis nânâmiskwêyêw
kîhtwam mâci âcimow

stories
uncle sits at the table
italy—he says
that's where he left his finger
battlefields
lucky he didn't lose his mind
he chuckles

auntie checks the kettle
wipes her dry hands—folds a dish-
towel in a tight rectangle—pours
the tea

mom stirs her cup
quiet
except for the clink of metal
on kokom's shiny white china

dad breaks his cookie
places a piece on his tongue—doesn't
chew
savoring the taste of chocolate

"go and play with the kids"
"she doesn't want to miss anything"

uncle nods—begins his story again

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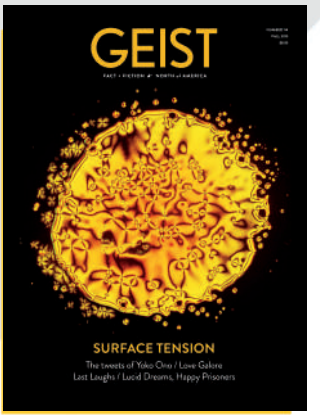

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GROUND ZERO

BARBARA BLACK

The bug slides
out from behind
the radio dial
where all winter
he lived eating music.

—*Bill Holm*, The Boxelder Bug

Bert always wanted a cigarette right when something interesting was happening. Like he could only accommodate change on his own terms. It irritated the hell out of Grace. "Look! Forked lightning!" she'd say. And then instead of looking he'd reach for his cigs, pop one out, light it, *then* look.

One June day, Bert climbed the ladder leading to the roof of the house. He had done it many times, thanks to the exhortations of his loving wife to, for god's sake, do something about the cracked windowpane, the Christmas lights, the leak, the loose shingle. Usually the supposed defect was a figment of her imagination, which saw decrepitude and disaster lurking in everything. In this case, it was a football-sized hornet nest hanging from the corner of the roof. He lined up the ladder underneath it and climbed to take a look. He liked to at least give the appearance he had done an inspection. The nest appeared inactive. He lit up a cigarette at the top of the ladder and took the opportunity to look into his neighbours' yards.

There was Mr. Gorman, whose first name and profession were a mystery to Bert and whose yard was soulless perfection. Manicured lawn, tightly clipped box hedge, expensive lounges arranged at right angles. It looked like a high-end miniature train set. All it needed was people. But Gorman never entertained anyone in his backyard, he only controlled its growth and staged its possibilities. On the other side was the perma-smile guy, Ed Thompson, who whistled in his garden—mostly vegetables—and was perennially cheerful, as if every day were a pleasant and welcome surprise. His yard was populated with water features, Buddha statues, tiki lights and grandchildren. In the summer his barbecue went nonstop, its primordial charred meat fumes billowing into Bert's domain. Bert was neither precise nor free form. He was the common man between these two extremes. "You're a good man, Bert, a regular good man," his wife always told him. And his yard was just a plain rectangle of grass.

Bert watched Gorman mowing his impeccable lawn back and forth, back and forth, first in double-wide stripes, then diagonally in a diamond pattern. It looked like something Bert would never achieve in his life. He sucked on his cigarette and exhaled a stream of smoke in the direction of the hornet nest. In the other yard, Ed was picking his tomatoes in that luxuriating Buddha-way of his, admiring each red globe as a miracle of nature, when his cell phone rang. Oddly, at the same time, Bert heard his wife's voice coming from the kitchen.

"Oh, I was up to my neck in blackberries! Pie, jam, you name it." When she laughed, Ed laughed, too. Bert thought it must have been a weird coincidence. He moved up to the ladder's platform with the label that said "Not a Step," trying to spot his wife through the narrow window. His head was now six inches from the nest. A sentry popped out of the entrance, its helmet-like black and white head swivelling to face Bert. It sent out the alarm. The last thing Bert remembered was lying on his back on the sidewalk and seeing a squadron of bald-faced hornets dive-bombing his forehead.

Since then, Bert had been in a so-called vegetative state. By all appearances he was inert, confined to a stark-white hospital room on the fifth floor of St. Francis of Assisi Medical Centre. But, in fact, due to a neural short-circuit in his visual

Illustration on page 33: Brandon Blommaert

HIS ATTEMPT TO ASSEMBLE HIS BODY INTO A MAYFLY DID NOT GO WELL: HE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO OPERATE HIS HIND WINGS AND KEPT CRASHING INTO THE LAKE

cortex, he was now an insect who roamed a microscopic world of his own creation, a landscape that sometimes resembled a magnified stucco wall, or a dried warped orange peel. Technically, he didn't operate as a "human self" anymore, but on the other hand, he was free from the constraints of the material world.

Nobody knew of Bert's interior state of being and had they known they wouldn't have understood how it came about. Maybe the part of his brain that stored the intense glut of entomological knowledge from seventh grade had suddenly been made accessible. That year, he spent so much time alone crawling around the forest floor and peering into dirt holes with a magnifying glass that his parents had feared for his sanity. But what he had found in his engagement with the world of earwigs, termites, weevils and stoneflies, cocoons, wasp nests, galls and moults, was, above all, kinship. Much of our world *is* constructed by our brain. Bert's had simply taken it to a whole new level.

Each day, as he lay in the hospital bed, a portal to a new world presented itself, not always pleasant. He didn't think in terms of "days" anymore. Instead, he operated in "intervals." As hospital visitors sat by him, downcast, Bert scuttled through the intervals, knee joints clicking, antennae quivering at odour molecules (passing meal carts), eyes at ground level in his world, which he thought of as "Domain." At first it simply unfolded itself before him, like an opium vision. Later he could actively create the topography and adjust his "attire." If he felt he needed new body parts he switched them in: sculpted elytra, armour, barbed tarsi, an ovipositor (his gender was flexible). Did he feel himself to be a human-sized arthropod or an actual-sized one? What did it matter? Only the law of dreams applied.

Driven by guilt and loneliness, Grace visited Bert regularly. The hospital, with all its modern angled glass, made her feel as if she was trapped inside a giant ice crystal. The large room skewed perspective, making Bert look even smaller. From her purse she took out his old black plastic comb and ran it through the limp strands on his head.

"Oh, and Tod insists on staying with me. He's already cleaned out the liquor cabinet. They were saying on TV that the Arctic's melting." Her church friend Johanna said global warming was natural, but Grace swore the ocean at the bottom of their street was breaching the high-tide mark already, and it worried her. "Do you think we should move, Bert?" The ventilator inhaled as if about to answer.

Tod, their bachelor son, traded hospital shifts with his mother. Transferring his bulk to the undersized chair, he would sit like a giant in kindergarten and read aloud from Bert's favourite book, *How Stuff Works*: "Water has a higher surface

tension than most other liquids…" "The tines of the baler intake pick up hay, feeding it into the rollers…" Whether Bert heard him, Tod didn't know, but he felt needed. He wondered why his father had never read to him when he was a kid.

Bert did hear him. In fact, Tod's reading fuelled Bert's excursions into "Domain." And Bert's visions became more detailed, more intense. They had a physiological dimension, too. Regions of his motor cortex and parahippocampal gyrus often flickered like distant lanterns. So distant that no one in the room ever detected them. Thinking, however, remained excruciatingly slow. It could take him two or three days to assemble his body, but his incarnations were not guaranteed successes. "Mayfly," for example, did not go well: he couldn't figure out how to operate his hind wings and kept crashing into the lake. "Water Strider," however, was an interval he revisited several times, revelling in the ideal geometry of his thread-thin legs and the feather-light tiptoe sensation of mastering surface tension. More recently he was learning to detect the pressure waves of objects in his spatial field, a special skill of the much-detested German cockroach. Outwardly, his face and body betrayed nothing of these experiments.

At first, people came with cheery voices and upbeat news, Ed Thompson among them. They crinkled candy wrappers and waved things over his face as if he was a scanner. Gradually, the visits lessened to a smaller circle of friends and family.

Pressure waves. Visitors again. His neighbours the Kilshaws and their two young boys.

"He's moving!"

"No, he's not."

"Yes, he is! Just a bit. His temples are twitching."

"I don't see it."

"You missed it. They were."

Meantime, Bert, during his sojourn as a dung beetle, had invented a machine for rolling dung, thereby revolutionizing life for the superfamily Scarabaeoidea. He had sensed it was time to ratchet up his invertebrate existence.

Summer unravelled. Grace and Tod dragged the patio chairs back to the shed. Bert's dormant rectangle of grass was revived by the autumn rains. Tod knocked down the old hornet nest with a broomstick, like hitting a human-head piñata. It disintegrated into small ash-like flakes.

As far as his daughter, Lisa, was concerned, Bert was as good as dead. She never visited him. She continued tap-tapping out client reports as she always did in her tiny paper-strewn office at WorkSafe. Her imagination was as feeble as Bert's had been before the accident.

Tod sat on his parents' couch drinking the remainder of his dad's Johnny Walker Red, watching the home movie labelled "Shawnigan Lake, 1974." Bert flickered briefly onscreen, waving a blackened pork chop from the barbecue, the lake glistening in the background. Tod had grown closer to Bert since his father had been in the coma, or experiencing "minimal consciousness," as the ICU doctor put it, as if describing a worm. Now Tod spent his days reimagining his childhood as a golden age of father-son ball games, model-making and fishing expeditions.

The phone rang.

"Mom! Phone's ringing." He rewound to the fishing sequence again so that, in reverse, Bert appeared to lower the cutthroat tail-first through a perfect ring of water and seamlessly guide it back into the depths of the lake. As the answering machine clicked on Tod shouted, still fixed on the TV, "Someone named Joanne." Grace flew down the stairs and lifted the receiver.

THE CLOSEST SHE EVER GOT TO RELIGION WAS WHEN SHE AND BERT MADE OUT IN SAINT LUKE'S CHURCHYARD

Two weeks after Bert's accident, Grace started attending the First Memorial Church of Faith, which Johanna had suggested the day she had touched Grace's hand so sympathetically and recommended that Grace read the Book of Job. Grace found its endless litany of disaster horrifying but was too polite to say so. Now when she visited Bert she keened prayers over him with evangelical fervour: "Oh Lord, fill this man with your divine spirit, raise him up to life to see once again the glory of Creation!" In the past, the closest she ever got to religion was when she and Bert first met in 1960 and made out in Saint Luke's churchyard, knocking over a small stone cross, which they hauled off as a souvenir, Grace shouting to the moon, "Forgive me, Mr. Jesus!" The cross still stands crookedly in the shade garden of their backyard, guarding the grave of their first dog, Ripley. She was beginning to think that what made you a certain kind of person depended largely on what kind of person the *other* person in your life thought you were.

More intervals passed. Without ongoing cues about his body, Bert's conception of himself as human began to waver. As Grace grew weary of her inert husband, he was enjoying the glory of his own creation. Mating paraphernalia and positions occupied him for hours and hours: the ideal spermatophore transfer method, or if he preferred to be in a higher order, length of the endophallus, tarsi to grip the smooth backs of females, grasping position, et cetera. Way back, while his schoolmates were ogling *Playboy* centrefolds, Bert the twelve-year-old was diving into the mechanics of invertebrate copulation, which were to him more erotic than the mechanics of human coitus.

Grace came. He felt the pressure wave. And maybe another thicker density beside her, he wasn't sure. She dragged the chair closer, making the rubber ends on the chair legs squeal, causing his landscape to temporarily collapse. "Bert, I've met someone. At church." He had no idea how many intervals it had been since his fall. "I thought I should tell you." If he'd been able to light up a cigarette, he would have. If he'd been able to smile he would have. Instead he spread his wings wide to listen.

"I just want you to know how much I still love you," she said, parting his hair with the black comb. "Even though…" her voice trailed off. She knew you could never really replace one love with another; you could only displace the original, push it to the back of the drawer where the old lingerie languishes. She stared at Bert, distressed that he looked so other-worldly, like an alien version of himself.

As that long-ago twelve-year-old, Bert imagined that the woman he would fall in love with would be as dainty as the green lacewing, his favourite nocturnal insect. *Chrysopa*—golden eyes. He had imagined the vibrations of his mating song travelling from his body down into the ground upon which she would stand before him.

Grace continued to pour forth reasons for abandoning him. But her voice started to feel prickly, different than it was in the past, like tiny barbs puncturing his abdomen. The longer she spoke, the less he could understand. Her words became sound-wave shapes, percussive vocalizations, swirling moans, like a floor polisher making its way down a long, narrowing hallway.

"Tod and Lisa and I will all be here with you in the room…" She whispered a fervent prayer, patted his hand and left.

Bert snapped his wings back smartly, groomed his antennae, and re-entered "Domain." On the other side of the white hills—no, he had changed them to ochre now—his new mate was waiting.

Barbara Black's poetry and fiction have appeared in Prairie Fire, The New Quarterly *and* CV2. *She's currently working on a microfiction manuscript. She lives in Victoria, BC, and at barbarablack.ca.*

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ARCTIC PASSAGE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOUIE PALU

Over the course of four years, the photographer Louie Palu made more than 150,000 photos in the high Arctic, first supported by a Guggenheim Fellowship then followed by an assignment for *National Geographic Magazine*. The project, which came to be called "Arctic Passage," considered the history of the Arctic and the changing geopolitics of the polar region in the face of climate change. As we stare down the very real possibility of a "blue Arctic"—one in which polar ice and snow melts to become traversable waterways—nations compete for influence as well as for real and imagined natural resources, and northern peoples living in a territory defined by ice must find new ways to cope with their changing landscape.

In March of 2019, Palu created an installation as part of the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in Texas in which some of the Arctic photographs that appear here were encased in massive blocks of ice that were then placed outdoors so that the ice would gradually melt, exposing the images. The work was then edited into an exhibition at the McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg, Ontario, and was shown during the 2019 CONTACT Photography Festival alongside a feature exhibition by artist Itee Pootoogook. Palu is currently working on a book of this work titled *Distant Early Warning*. This work was selected for the 2019 Arnold Newman Prize For New Directions In Portraiture.

The project was also supported by the Pulitzer Center.

—the editors

There Is a Wind That Never Dies

The life of Yoko Ono

CONNIE KUHNS

I follow Yoko Ono on Twitter. She is my daily devotion, my addiction. She reassures me that *Good things will come later* and she urges me to *Remember love*. Her words would go nicely on a refrigerator magnet. I was not quite a woman when she arrived uninvited, a grey mist over a blonde sea. But as I aged, she became my mystery to solve, my road less travelled.

Her early instructional writings tell me to imagine the clouds dripping, to send the smell of the moon (to someone), to see the sky between a woman's thighs. She once labelled polished beach stones and shards of glass as past and future mornings, to be sold at dawn from her roof top. She took a childhood game called "Telephone" and turned it into performance art. (When she introduced "Whisper Piece" at the Destruction in Art Symposium in London, in 1966, asking the audience to whisper the same word from ear to ear, many of the male artists asked that she be removed.)

Yoko is a woman with machismo, who was relentless in creating her own way through the exploratory art movements of the 1960s, straight into the heart of popular culture, celebrity, politics and feminism. She is a question mark and a contradiction. At almost eighty-seven years old, she still vibrates.

It has been fifty years since her marriage to the late John Lennon, a relationship that brought her into the public consciousness. It was a union that broke up two marriages, leaving two small children behind, and truthfully, helped bring about the end of the revolutionary Beatles. The couple's public behaviour and the legal battles that followed destroyed friendships and families. It's a saga of infidelity, drug busts and addiction; but also of transformation, collaboration and creation. Together they gave the world "Imagine," and this year, on the anniversary of their honeymoon performances, known as the *Bed-Ins for Peace*, their life together is celebrated.

When John and Yoko met in London in 1966, she was already an experienced entrepreneur and performance artist, and an early interpreter of what was known as Concept Art. Born in 1933, in Japan, a descendant of Samurai warriors, Yoko was an older woman.

From her loft in New York City, in 1960, she had organized a series of performances with her friend, the composer La Monte Young. In this environment artists were encouraged to move outside the boundaries of historical and conventional creation. Her first husband, the classical pianist and composer Toshi

Ichiyanagi, whom she married in 1957, had introduced her to the composer John Cage, the dancer Merce Cunningham and others, which placed her directly in the evolving art scene. From her associations, especially with the enterprising George Maciunas, the Fluxus art movement was identified and named. Simply put, art was no longer in the eye of the beholder to be passively viewed. It was art which would be created in the mind of the artist and completed only by participation. Art was anything. Art could be nothing. Her self-published book *Grapefruit: A Book of Instruction and Drawings*, in 1964, was Yoko's contribution to this mind game.

Her instruction poems, including the earlier reference to dripping clouds, ask the reader to *imagine*, to "Draw a map to get lost" (*Map Piece*), to "Put your shadows together until they become one" (*Shadow Piece*), or to "Stir inside of your brains with a penis. Mix well. Take a walk" (*Walk Piece*). She made five hundred copies. Re-issued in 1970 with an introduction by John Lennon, and again in subsequent years (most recently in 2000 and still very much in print), it is easy to see how her work at the time may have been misunderstood for its intangible nature. Not so now.

The sky never ceased to be there for us.

Twitter: April 22, 2019

In 2013, the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt presented the exhibition *Yoko Ono: Half-a-Wind Show*. She was eighty years old. This was the first major retrospective of her work in Europe, although at any given time, her art is being shown somewhere in the world. There are no fewer than thirty solo and group shows either in galleries now or scheduled to be presented by 2020. The Schirn retrospective featured more than two hundred objects, installations, photographs, drawings, and films, as well as a special room dedicated to her music. The exhibition traveled to Denmark and Austria before moving to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, in 2014.

The collected volume of her work, amassed in one place, as well as the documentation of her growth, her innovations and her contributions to the avant-garde art movements, as illustrated in the gallery's publication is (to use appropriate terminology) mind-blowing. Her brilliance is everywhere, wrapped in her humour, her boldness, her sexuality, and perhaps even her disrespect. It is often repeated that John Lennon referred to her as "the world's most famous unknown artist: everyone knows her name but no one actually knows what she does." In the 200-page catalogue for the *Half-a-Wind Show*, she is referred to as pioneering and "mythic."

Yoko was one of just a handful of women in the early 1960s who were expressing themselves outside acceptable boundaries. (Her sisters included the late Carolee Schneemann, who famously filmed herself and her husband having sex, partly from the point of view of their cat, and the late Shigeko Kubota, who was among the first artists to use video in her work. Kubota strapped a paint brush to her underwear and, squatting down, painted a picture resembling Japanese lettering, henceforth known as *Vagina Painting*.)

Yoko's early films, most co-produced with John Lennon, used nudity both to shock and to un-shock. *Bottoms* and *Up Your Legs Forever* were easy enough, as friends and strangers lined up to be filmed. But her film *Fly* was more difficult to orchestrate as it involved following a fly as it crawled over the body of a naked woman. Collecting flies from piles of garbage and restaurant kitchens around the Bowery and then gassing them with carbon dioxide eventually produced the desired results.

Freedom, a one-minute short of a woman trying to unhook the front clasp of her bra can send multiple messages. The film *Self-Portrait*, a 42-minute single shot of Lennon's penis getting an erection, is its own statement between lovers, as is a film of his smile. More controversial was her film *Rape*. Although meant as a condemnation of the paparazzi but interpreted years later as an exposé on "male visual lust," Yoko sent a two-person camera crew to follow a random woman around the streets of London for three days, filming her without her permission, and finally chasing her right into her home. The woman had been set up by her sister without her knowledge.

"Feminist" is a label that has been mostly applied by others. How else to explain her behaviour and her impact? Her performance of *Cut Piece*, first staged in Kyoto and Tokyo in 1964, and later at the Carnegie Recital Hall in 1965, featured Yoko sitting motionless on the stage, fully clothed, "wearing the best suit I had," with a pair of shears nearby. Audience members were invited to cut off a piece of her clothing until there was nothing left, or until Yoko decided she was finished. She restaged this piece in Paris in 2003, sitting on a chair, as she was at that point seventy years old and sitting on the floor was difficult. Her vulnerability and the potential for harm or humiliation make *Cut Piece* radical in any era.

During Cut Piece, I felt whole when I was sitting.

Twitter: February 14, 2019

Yoko's essay "The Feminization of Society," which was first included in the liner notes of her album "Approximately Infinite Universe" in 1971 and then published in the *New York Times*, certainly contributed to her status as a feminist seer. Yet for angry and dogmatic times, Yoko's analysis is very unstructured and free-flowing. She touches on the subject of child care, "We definitely need more positive participation by men in the care of our children," and lesbianism "as a means of expressing rebellion toward the existing society through sexual freedom," but asks "How about liberating ourselves from our various mind trips such as ignorance, greed, masochism, fear of God and social conventions?" and she suggests the reader harness "the patience and natural wisdom of a pregnant woman."

As if she were looking ahead, Yoko writes, "We can of course, aim to play the same game that men have played for centuries, and inch by inch, take over all the best jobs and eventually conquer the whole world, leaving an extremely bitter male stud-cum-slave class moaning and groaning underneath us. This is alright for an afternoon dream, but in reality, it would obviously be a drag."

Another version of this essay was published in 2018 on The Drop, the online music component of Refinery29, a young women's lifestyle website. It was in conjunction with an interview by Courtney E. Smith and a music video of Yoko's reworking of some of her earlier songs in the newly released collection "Warzone." In the interview, Ms. Smith asks Yoko, "What influence has watching the Women's March and seeing women get more involved in American politics, running in record numbers in 2018, had on your work or your hopefulness for a female revolution?"

Yoko answers, "I don't think that revolution is necessary, I prefer the word 'evolution.'" This response is consistent with her approach in interviews for decades. No matter how pointed the question, whether about politics or difficult and private events in her life, she always takes the less direct road, a pacifist's trip to understanding. Imagine no ideology.

Remember many feminists have followed the ways of men and hurt their health by drinking, smoking and pursuing more money and power by intense competition. Think of your health and think of being you, instead of having an intense competition.

Twitter: July 23, 2018

When John Lennon was murdered on December 8, 1980, Yoko released the album *Season of Glass* within six months of his death. The cover photograph was of John's bloodied glasses on a window ledge beside a glass of water, half empty and half full. Their son Sean, who was five years old at the time and whose voice can be heard telling a story on the recording, said decades later this act of his mother's showed him how to turn struggle into art. Yoko had never been a silent partner, nor was she a silent widow.

Yoko and John collaborated on ten albums during their twelve-year relationship. (Two more were released posthumously.) But their work can be bookmarked by two albums: *Unfinished Music No. 1: Two Virgins*, where they appeared naked on the cover, front and back, and *Double Fantasy*, released right before John's death. *Two Virgins* (recorded while on acid during their first night together, in the house John shared with his wife Cynthia and their son, Julian, while Cynthia was away) was immediately censored for its graphic photos and highly criticized for its content. There was nothing on the twenty-eight-minute album, condensed from over fourteen hours of tape recordings, that actually resembled music. But more than their nudity and their nerve, *Two Virgins* was a shocking redefinition of who John Lennon was becoming under her influence.

Their final album together, *Double Fantasy*, released on November 17, 1980, three weeks before his death, was their love song, or their swan song, depending on which account one wants to believe; they were each, allegedly, reconsidering their future together. In an interview with Chrissy Iley writing for the *Telegraph* in 2012, Yoko said, "I was very aware that we were ruining each other's careers and I was hated and John was hated because of me."

Double Fantasy is a conversation between long-time partners, alternating songs. It is highly autobiographical and details problems they've had during their years together. John sings "I'm Losing You." Yoko sings "I'm Moving On." They both sing about their love for their son. But Yoko's contributions were still jarring in contrast to John's traditional song structure. Their son, Sean, has remastered his mother's music as a gift to her. He has said that "the albums need to be understood within the context of the avant-garde world."

"*Double Fantasy* was a great joy for John and me," Yoko wrote in *Rolling Stone* in 2010. "John knew what I was up against and protected me to the end… But there was a strong feeling that this record should have been just John, and I was an extra thing that they had to put up with." *Double Fantasy* received the Grammy for Album of the Year in 1981.

It's significant that during these tumultuous years, John Lennon, in a very public way, acknowledged his jealousy and his violent temper. (Both his first wife, Cynthia Lennon, and his lover May Pang wrote of violent episodes in their respective memoirs.) According to a named source in a Lennon biography written by Albert Goldman in 1988, a beating may have contributed to the loss of John and Yoko's son, John Ono Lennon II, who died in 1969, in utero, at five months. Other sources attribute this loss to the stress of a recent drug bust. The couple immortalized his unrealized life on their album *Unfinished Music No. 2: Life with the Lions* by recording five minutes and thirty seconds of the baby's heartbeat, followed by two minutes of silence. John continued to speak openly in interviews and on talk shows about his treatment of women until the end of his life.

Don't fight against the monster, fight yourself, your ignorance.

Twitter: September 27, 2018

It was during Yoko's hospital stay that she sent her cameraman Nick Knowland to film *Rape*. Of this, Yoko wrote (in part) "Violence is a sad wind that, if channeled carefully, could bring seeds, chairs and all things pleasant to us… Nick is a gentleman who prefers eating clouds and floating pies to shooting *Rape*. Nevertheless, it was shot."

In 1972, John and Yoko wrote and recorded "Woman is…," released on their album *Some Time in New York City*. The full title (redacted here) was taken from a comment Yoko had made in an interview with *Nova* magazine in 1969. The song received very limited airplay as most radio stations refused to play it because of the use of the racial epithet. The couple was allowed to sing it on the *The Dick Cavett Show* only after Cavett was forced by the network (ABC) to make a pre-taped apology. However, the National Organization of Women awarded Yoko and John with a "Positive Image of Women" award in 1972 for the song and its flip side, Yoko's "Sisters, O Sisters."

Their most triumphant song was "Imagine," honored in 2017 by the National Music Publishers Association as Song of the Century. After decades of trying to get the songwriting credit that John Lennon said she deserved, Yoko was acknowledged as co-writer. John had been inspired by her 1964 book *Grapefruit* and had used her words and sentiments to write his lyrics. He blamed his chauvinism for not crediting her at the time. Their son, Sean, accepted with Yoko. Patti Smith stood at the podium and sang "Imagine," breaking down once, accompanied by her daughter on piano.

I love all words, even so-called bad ones, since they have been created by us, human beings for some emotional necessity. You can use the word YES negatively, too. Our word games are very complex.

Twitter: April 5, 2019

In the fall of 2018 Yoko curated a major tome, *ImagineJohnYoko*, documenting in detail the making of the album *Imagine* at their home in 1971. Included are photographs, postcards, video stills, handwritten notes and first-person accounts by everyone involved in this album who is still alive. Co-producer Phil Spector presumably wrote from prison. However, Yoko speaks for May Pang, who was their assistant on many films and recordings, and later, at Yoko's invitation according to Pang, John's lover and protector during one of their separations. The release of this book coincides with the documentary *Above Us Only Sky*, where Yoko is clearly regarded by all participants as muse, mentor, and now crone.

Yoko received the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in 2009, just *one* of several important and deserved acknowledgments of her oeuvre. But in the spring of 2019, Yoko Ono was honoured for something very specific. As part of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Fluxus Festival, more than 75 women, including a 14-piece music ensemble, a 25-person choir, 9 dancers, and 12 guest artists paid tribute to Yoko Ono and her *music*, at a sold-out event. With few exceptions, all stage crew, musicians and performers were women.

Breathewatchlistentouch: The Work and Music of Yoko Ono was produced by Girlschool, a group of women-identified artists founded by violinist Anna Bulbrook, from the LA band Airborne Toxic Event. It was an emotional night as performers as diverse as the lead singer of the band Garbage, Shirley Manson, Marisol Hernandez from the band La Santa Cecilia, the songwriter Miya Folick and the violinist Sudan Archives reimagined Yoko's music. Electronic music artist and activist Madame Gandhi read from Yoko's written works, and then under the musical direction of Shruti Kumar, she invited the audience to scream as part of Yoko's "Voice Piece for Soprano." The choreographer Nina McNeely prepared two dance pieces.

Yoko had been trained in her youth in opera—German lieder and French chanson—but her recordings and performances more often included screaming, wailing, high-pitched fluttering and deep guttural sounds, more in keeping with female throat singing, or a vocal interpretation of gagaku, a Japanese instrumental music known for its minimalism, both unfamiliar to most fans of rock music. It could be unlistenable and her message was often lost. When she released *Warzone* in 2018, at age eighty-five, she re-recorded many of her earlier works, but with stripped-down, cleaner production. It was now apparent, especially sung with her older woman's voice, weary and childlike, how mindful and passionate her songs actually were. Yoko had remained committed to her music, recording dozens of songs and continuing to perform decades after John's death, but it was a younger generation of musicians, influenced by club music, punk and noise, that finally understood her. Experimental musicians remixed her songs. She performed in a band with her son, Sean. At the age of eighty, she collaborated with Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth. Yoko's current catalogue lists at least forty singles and almost two dozen albums.

As part of the LA tribute, musicians were given permission to reinterpret Yoko's music, and they did so to much acclaim. Although it was not known if Yoko would be able to attend she was brought in, as the lights went down, in a wheelchair. The final performer of the night, the singer St. Vincent, led the house in singing "Imagine" to her.

"Who influenced John Lennon to be focused on peace?" the event programmer Anna Bulbrook asked the journalist Jessica Gelt in an interview with the *LA Times*. "Yoko Ono has literally changed the world, and she's had to do it from a position of being publicly overlooked and spurned." In the film *Above Us Only Sky*, assistant Dan Richter says, "I love John, but [Yoko] was speaking through him. I don't think the world's got that quite yet. The language that you see from the time they got together forward is Yoko's language. She taught him this language."

You must work on what you love to work on. In my case it was music and art. Work is sacred. It saves you from sad thoughts. I have been wronged by the whole world. But I'm still here. Lies, ultimately, cannot destroy you, unless you join the liars.

Twitter. June 25, 2018

As the city of Montreal marked the fiftieth anniversary of the *Bed-In for Peace*, which took place at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel on May 26, 1969, the Fondation Phi pour l'art contemporain in old Montreal opened **LIBERTÉ CONQUÉRANTE/GROWING FREEDOM:** *The instructions of Yoko Ono and the art of John and Yoko.* The exhibition filled two buildings, one focussing on Yoko's individual participation works, for example "Mend Piece," where attendees glue broken pottery back together in any shape (mending the world) while the other building highlighted her work with John, in particular the Montreal Bed-In.

The eight days they spent at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel launched a new public approach for the couple. Their message was so simple as to be naïve. *Imagine*

peace. Celebrities and politicians visited, including the prime minister of Canada. John and Yoko made endless telephone calls to world leaders and gave dozens of press interviews from their bed. They spoke to the leaders and participants of the People's Park protests in Berkeley, pleading for non-violent action, and it was from this room that they made their recording of "Give Peace a Chance." It was a spectacle. (There had been a previous Bed-in in Amsterdam right after their wedding, but they ended up at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal because John was denied entry to the US because of his drug arrests).

"Some people took us seriously and were attacking us," Yoko told Peter Watts in the April 2019 edition of *UnCut* magazine, "but actually, it was a big clown thing. And through clowning we communicated the idea of world peace as being very important." The Fondation Phi recorded the personal stories of many of the individuals who made it in to Room 1742.

Significantly, **GROWING FREEDOM** featured Yoko's exhibit *Arising* which records a different kind of story. "*Women of all ages, from all countries of the world: you are invited to send a testament of harm done to you for being a woman.*" Yoko asked that each woman write in her own language, sign only her first name, and include a photograph of her eyes. It is particularly sad that *Arising* was mounted in Montreal, as on December 6, 1989, at École Polytechnique, fourteen female engineering students were separated from their male classmates and killed. Fourteen other students—ten women and four men—were also shot, but survived.

In any gallery where *Arising* is staged, the walls are covered with the print-outs of women's testimonies, eyes and words. As the walls fill up, the older stories are archived. *Arising* premiered as part of the Venice Biennale in 2013, and has been shown around the world, including in Germany, England, Norway, Japan and Peru. Women continue to contribute. I submitted mine.

The year before *Arising* was seen for the first time, Yoko opened "Remember Us" as part of the exhibit *Our Beautiful Daughters* at the Vadehra Art Gallery in New Delhi, India. In coffin-like boxes filled with charcoal, she displayed headless, dismembered, naked female body parts made of silicone. At the far end of the room were bowls of ashes, a final nod to the horror of sati. Each evening Rajasthani women covered the bodies with shrouds, woven with their own hands in their tradition. On the walls, "I am Uncursed" and "Uncurse Yourself" were written in dozens of languages.

Use your skills to heal what was destroyed in the past.

Twitter: March 6, 2019

Concurrent with this remarkable life, Yoko's detractors still had much to work with. Even her biggest supporters had difficulty with how Julian Lennon, John's son with his first wife, was denied any inheritance and had to buy back at auction sites any personal items of his father's which were meant for him. And as Yoko is the first and last word regarding how John Lennon is to be memorialized, Cynthia Lennon was prevented from organizing her own tributes, including one at the Brandenburg Gates. Bad publicity also followed Yoko into the pages of the *New York Times* in 2006, when her chauffeur and bodyguard of ten years was charged with extortion and grand larceny. On the twenty-sixth anniversary of John's death, the chauffeur confronted Yoko with a letter detailing his demands, including $2 million to keep quiet about her personal affairs. He claimed to have photographs taken with hidden cameras and "thousands of hours of recordings." In his letter, he accused her of "sexual harassment" at the same time writing that he had been her lover. His plans included writing a tell-all book for release in his native Turkey, and on the internet in Iran. Even more disturbing, in conversations with Yoko's lawyers, he said he had people "on standby" to kill her and her son Sean if he didn't get the money. The matter was ended quickly when after sixty days in jail, he reached a plea agreement and was handed over to immigration. The *NYT* printed paragraphs from his salacious and demented letter, the publication of which only served to humiliate Yoko and compromise her privacy, even though she was the victim. In one story, the *NYT* referred to the case as a "melodrama." Yoko was seventy-three at the time. In 2017, dozens of items were recovered in Berlin that had been stolen by the chauffeur and an accomplice, including three of John's diaries.

Yoko will always remain Mrs. Lennon, even after taking a lover within months of John's death. (She and Sam Havadtoy lived together for twenty years.) The writer and performance artist Lisa Carver said it best when she wrote in 2012 in her book *Reaching Out with No Hands: Reconsidering Yoko Ono*, "Yoko does

not believe in arbitrary walls, or gates, or time frames for locking and unlocking, or any rules at all. Yoko's no hypocrite… Yoko's beliefs are in her body, and her body is in her beliefs." John's death brought about a reconciliation between Yoko and her long-lost daughter, now grown. Kyoko had been raised by her father, Yoko's second husband, Anthony Cox; their whereabouts were unknown for decades. That loss had been another price Yoko paid.

If you are still alive, you must have had the experience of surrendering.

Twitter: April 17, 2019

Yoko's belief in peace and unification between people has been her primary message for decades. She has supported initiatives to end hunger and spoken about autism. Her tweets often ask that women and men listen compassionately to each other. She stays away from labels, insisting that she is a "citizen of the world."

She established the Lennon-Ono Grant for Peace, and Yoko encourages others to participate by "imagining peace," her mantra, and by contributing artistically to her projects through her website imaginepeace.com. (She also sells merchandise.) Recipients of the Grant for Peace, who are given a substantial amount of money for their causes, are as diverse as the Russian punk band Pussy Riot, Doctors Without Borders, the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, *Rolling Stone* co-founder Jann Wenner and The Wounded Warrior Fund at Walter Reed National Military Center.

On what would have been John's birthday, October 9, 2007, she unveiled the Imagine Peace Tower on Viðey Island, outside Reykjavik Harbour in Iceland. The tower is lit between sunset and midnight, on days of special significance to the couple and during Winter Solstice. Anyone can send their "wishes" to be stored in capsules and buried surrounding the tower. More recently, she published two more volumes of instructions, and in October 2018 she designed "Sky," the mural at the newly reopened 72nd Street subway stop outside her home in New York City near Strawberry Fields in Central Park. Its theme: *imagine peace*.

In a tweet from May 2019, just months after her eighty-sixth birthday, she wrote, "*It's okay to have a rest from being creative*," but her force remains strong. Among her latest works is "Add Color Painting (Refugee Boat) (1960/2019)." In a room with just an empty boat, participants are asked to colour everything.

I'm always listening to the voice of my soul. Are you?

Twitter: October 7, 2018

A few years ago, I saw Yoko Ono in New York City. We were heading up Central Park East when she appeared. She was walking quickly while having an animated conversation with a friend. As she passed, I held my breath. I imagined a refraction of light bouncing off each one of us, shimmering and beautiful. The street life halted. As instructed, we began a game of Telephone, our own "Whisper Piece," as her name, "Yoko Ono," was whispered from ear to ear.

* *There is a Wind that Never Dies is a line taken from her essay: "To the Wesleyan People," January 23, 1966*

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*Connie Kuhns has a forty-year history as an essayist, journalist, photographer and broadcaster. Her essay "Strange Women" (*Geist *95), about women in Vancouver's early punk scene, was a finalist for a National Magazine Award; "Last Day in Cheyenne" (*Geist *84) was named a "Notable Essay of 2012" in the Best American Essay Series and a finalist for a Western Magazine Award; and other essays have been finalists in publications ranging from the* LA Review *to* Prism International *to the* New York Times *Modern Love column, and* the Southampton Review *Frank McCourt Memoir Prize. For fifteen years, Kuhns was the producer and host of the radio show* Rubymusic *on CFRO Radio, Vancouver. Her interviews and commentaries have been published/produced in* Geist, *the* Georgia Straight, Hot Wire, Fuse, Herizons, *CBC Television, CBC Radio, the* Vancouver Sun, *the* Province *and a host of other periodicals and anthologies. She is a recipient of the Dan MacArthur Award of Merit for Excellence in Radio News Broadcasting. For more information on Connie Kuhns, or to read more of her work, visit geist.com.*

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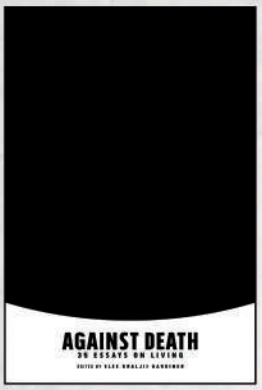

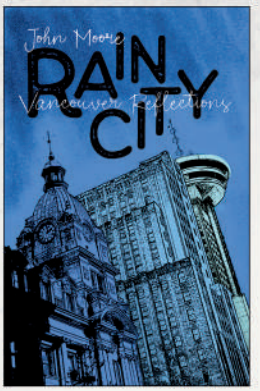

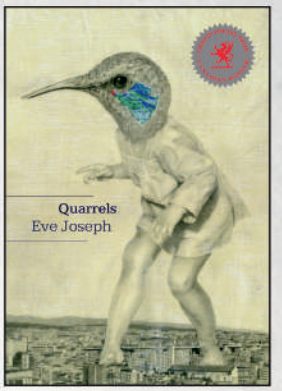

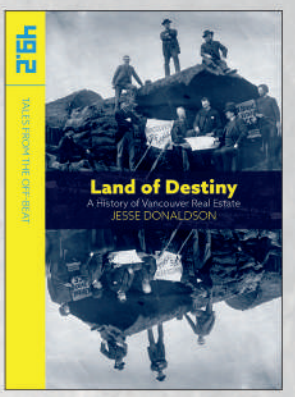

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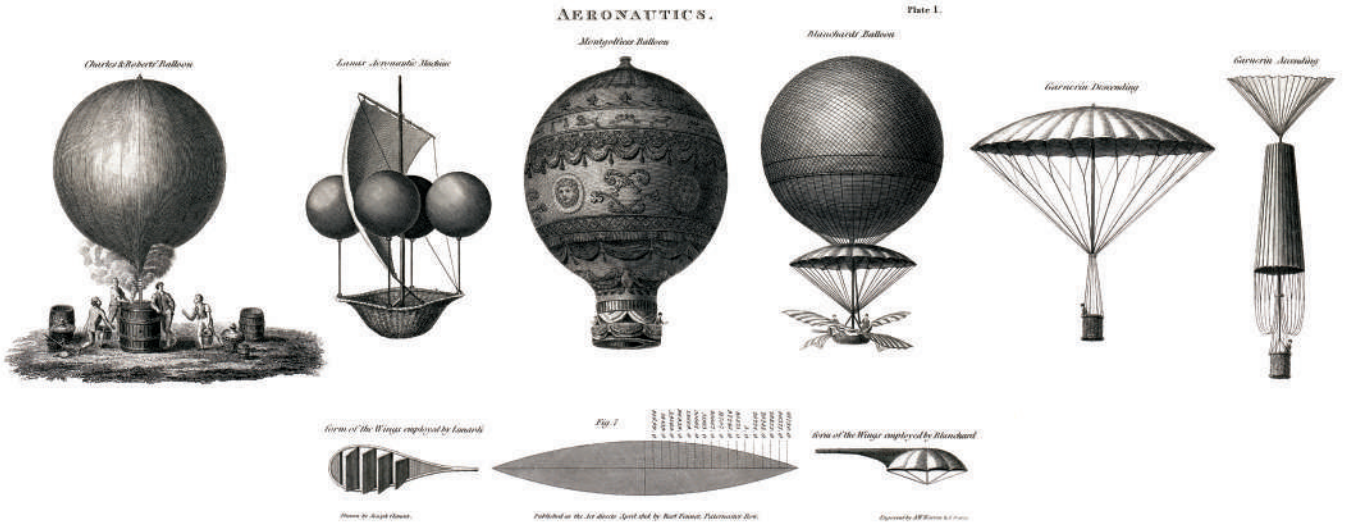
Flight Shame

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

Without air travel, family networks might have dissolved long ago



In 2013 I published a short book about climate change. Among my promotional events for the book was a visit to a graduate seminar at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. My book was emotional and impressionistic; the students knew far more than I did about climate science. At one point, I made an offhand remark about the unsustainable carbon cost of flying. Rather than the nods of agreement I had expected, my comment was met with silence. "I hope we can keep flying," one student said, "even if we have to give up other things."

The reaction my comment elicited in 2013 might be different today. A movement is building against flying. In North America, this trend is strongest in university circles. In particular, the carbon cost of academic conferences, where hundreds of professors and graduate students fly to a single destination to spend four or five days networking, gossiping, flirting and presenting their research, has come under fire. In May 2019, *Science* magazine reported on the "small but growing minority of academics who are cutting back on their air travel because of climate change." Most academics who limit their flying are well known in their fields and have secure careers; it is far more damaging, in professional terms, for a young person who is trying to break into academic life to skip a conference. Even so, the carbon cost of academics addicted to airports is coming under scrutiny. A 2018 study by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions found that in 2015–16 the emissions attributable to flights taken by academics and administrators at the University of British Columbia was "equivalent to 63%–73% of the total annual emissions from the operation of the UBC campus." Flying significantly enlarged the university's carbon footprint.

In Europe a grassroots movement against short-haul flights has altered travel patterns, swelling demand for long-distance train tickets. Some French parliamentarians have even called for laws to ban flights where the same journey can be made by train. Known in Sweden, where it originated, as *flygskam*, or "flight shame," the anti-flying movement takes credit for a 5% drop in passenger numbers at Swedish airports between the summers of 2018 and 2019. Flygskam's most salient representative is the young climate activist Greta Thunberg. In August 2019, refusing to fly to New York to speak at the United Nations, Thunberg spent two weeks making the transatlantic crossing by yacht.

Industry observers report that only 18% of the world's population has set foot in a plane. According to the Sierra Club, flying accounts for 2% of global greenhouse emissions. This relatively sanguine assessment contrasts with the brutal evaluation of the carbon cost of flying made by British science writer

Illustration: Aeronautics, published by Rest Fenner, Paternoster Row, April 1818

George Monbiot in his book *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning* (2006). Commenting on the expansion of air travel, Monbiot writes, "Unless something is done to stop this growth, aviation will overwhelm all the cuts we manage to make elsewhere." Monbiot believes that by 2050 flying could account for 50% of global emissions. His conclusion is that flying is one of the things we must give up. Yet to a North American reader, his presentation of the role of flying in our lives, and the possible alternatives, fails to address geographical and social realities. "No one in Europe ever thought of shopping in New York or visiting friends in Australia before planes allowed them to do so," Monbiot writes. Just as we once imagined this possibility, he suggests, we can now cease to imagine it.

The alternatives Monbiot assesses—rail, ferries—may be viable within the confined spaces of Europe, or, at a stretch, in the case of rail, to carry passengers from Europe to Africa or Asia; but the Americas, like Australia, are separated from the world's central land mass by oceans. Even within Europe, flygskam's potency varies with geography. *Forbes* magazine reports that, unlike their Swedish neighbours, Norwegians remain avid flyers. Norway's rugged coastline, where regional centres lie at the heads of long fjords, makes travel by land or sea between different areas of the country a process that can take many hours, or even days. In this context, the decision to fly is more than the indulgence of a shopaholic; it is a matter of national integration.

National integration is complemented by international ties. As the world's population concentrates in ever larger and more multicultural cities, family networks are transnational. The Chinese and Vietnamese refer to diasporic families as "astronaut families"; similar traditions of long plane trips to keep family networks intact are prominent in South Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and European cultures. The first plane trip of which I have a memory, taken at the age of nine, was for the purpose of visiting my grandmother in England, and spending three weeks being introduced to countless British relatives. Recently, I travelled by plane to Mexico City so that my daughter could meet her grandfather. Most of my plane travel isn't justifiable in terms of family unity, but without air travel, my family networks would have dissolved long ago.

Monbiot's analysis doesn't consider immigration and multiculturalism. Aside from a passing reference to "love miles," he overlooks the fact that it is much harder to persuade someone not to see their mother for the rest of their life than it is to wean them from New York shopping jaunts. Recent political events have made the paradoxes that surround flygskam more acute. The ethnic nationalist movements that have taken power in some countries, and threaten to do so in others, are not only hostile to multicultural urban spaces; they also tend to be led by climate-change deniers. Those who wish to reduce air traffic must depend for support on precisely the people for whom air travel is a pillar of family unity: downtown liberals, many of whom come from transnational families. This tension is likely to limit the spread of flight shame. Can we, as the students suggested, give up other indulgences—cars, for example, which become increasingly inefficient as cities get bigger—in order to keep flying? The carbon calculations remain uncertain, even as the greenhouse gas emissions attributable to flying continue to grow.

Stephen Henighan's most recent book of stories is Blue River and Red Earth. *Read more of his work at geist.com and stephenhenighan.com. Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenighan.*

The Defeat of Sherlock Holmes

ALBERTO MANGUEL

There's something not quite right about the grid on which the game is played

In the summer of 1980, the Sicilian novelist Leonardo Sciascia told the editors of the Italian magazine *L'Espresso* that Jorge Luis Borges was passing through Rome and that he was going to have lunch with him. The editors asked Sciascia to interview Borges for the magazine. Sciascia refused. "I don't know how to ask questions," he said. Fortunately, their dialogue was recorded and was published a month after Borges's death, in 1986.

The two men had, superficially, little in common except certain literary dislikes and a deeply rooted admiration for the methods of the classic detective story. Both were shy and hid their shyness behind aphoristic pronouncements, tempered by deliberate hesitations. Both had intransigent likes and dislikes in literature. Both enjoyed quiet conversations about books. Both were interested in metaphysics and the ethics of poetry. Both (during that lunch) condemned Croce for not understanding Dante. "Or Pirandello, or Manzoni, or Mallarmé," Sciascia added. "But I would spare Croce's style," Borges answered. "Croce's accent, Croce's teaching, Croce's tone and rhythm." To this, Sciascia did not respond.

The most obvious, the most attractive, the most deceptive of all aspects of both their works is the enigma, the illusion of a detective mystery, but a mystery seen as in a dream, blurred around the edges, subtly breaking all the rules that govern this literary version of a harmless crossword puzzle. "Ah," says the reader knowledgeable of Sherlock Holmes and his successors, picking up for the first time a Sciascia novel such as *Il cavaliere e la morte* or *Una storia semplice*, or a Borges story such as "Death and the Compass" or "Emma Zunz": "a crime, a criminal, a policeman; I know how to proceed." And confidently begins to turn the pages. But there's something not quite right about the grid on which the game is supposed to be played. A key element is missing. The plot tightens—but around what? The characters lie and cheat, and uncover hidden clues—but pointing to whom? And when the end comes, the reader discovers that nothing is resolved, nothing reduced to a solution. As the narrator of Sciascia's *Todo Modo* concludes: "You, me, the Inspector are potential suspects… The motive is what has to be found. The motive…" The detective stories of Borges and of Sciascia are told in such a way that the reader seeking to know *why* will always be disappointed.

It isn't that the mystery, the puzzle, is lacking. Something lies hidden at the core of a Sciascia novel or a Borges story—a guilty secret, an evil deed, hidden and visible at the same time. Chesterton famously suggested that the best way to conceal a leaf was in a forest and a body in a battlefield; Poe, even more famously, proposed hiding a letter in a letter rack. For Sciascia, as for Borges too, nothing

Image: Knight, Death and the Devil by Albrecht Dürer.

is more deceptive than what is evident, what suffers therefore of a certain vulgarity, exhibitionism or excess. A criminal death lies in the open, for inspection, like that of the diplomat in Sciascia's *Una storia semplice* (*A Simple Death*) who dies at his desk, leaving for all to see a single phrase ("*I have found*,") that allows both for the construction of an almost infinite-faceted reality to explain the crime, and for the invisible pinpoint of truth, buried in those words, that cannot be seen or said or understood. In Borges's "The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim," the visible quest of the anonymous law student is told in simple episodes; the implicit, infinitely delayed conclusion is in the hands of the reader in his imposed role as metaphysical detective. Honourable deaths, on the other hand, demand coyness, restraint, an off-stage act like that of the dogs in Sciascia's *Il Cavaliere e la morte* (*The Knight and Death*), which, the police deputy remembers, choose to go off and die in secret seclusion. In Borges's "Streetcorner Man" or "The Shape of the Sword," the almost neglected outcome is given in a final, laconic sentence.

Both writers found their key metaphor in a place that they mythologized: Borges in a legendary Buenos Aires of his invention, inhabited by hoodlums living in the low neighbourhoods of the South. For Sciascia, for whom power itself "is a criminal act," Sicily is the incarnation (as he declared in *La Sicilia come metafora*, *Sicily as Metaphor*) of a Manichean universe in which one side cannot exist without its contrary. For Borges, the city of Buenos Aires was "a map of my disappointments and failures." For Sciascia, Sicily was "the only autobiography I know." Borges had written: "Let Heaven exist, though my own place may be in Hell." Sciascia was more practical: "The Devil is necessary for holy water to be holy." The Sicilian world divided between the Mafia and the police seeks not conventional resolution but an ongoing and fragile tension to maintain its own reality. It is a combat that can have no winners, because the antagonists exist only in relation to one another, just as murderer and detective are ultimately one another's justification.

Emblematic of Sciascia's world, and of that of Borges, is Dürer's engraving "Knight, Death and the Devil," from which Sciascia drew the reduced title (mentioned above) of one of his last novels—a title that might however have served for almost any of his books. Borges wrote two poems describing the engraving, and the image accompanied him throughout his life, hanging prominently on the wall of his bedroom in Buenos Aires. Dürer's Knight rides between his two attending companions: Death, the immutable, the only certainty, the fixed point in time; and the Devil, the attachment to the world and to time, the constant reminder that our service on earth is one of delusion and betrayal. Death busies itself exclusively with the oxymoron of the present moment-to-be (the condition of our creation, according to Montaigne); the Devil relies on our memory to insist on all that is uncertain, on what we like to believe one day was and what may one day be.

In the second poem on the subject, Borges concludes that the Knight, "who exists not," will ride on eternally, while Borges, who indeed exists, "set off later," and will be the first to reach the point of encounter with Death and the Devil. Death (which, according to Sciascia, was an obligation, since it was set down in the penal code) competes with memory: one cannot survive the other. If Death demands a proof of allegiance, a gesture of elegance, then it must be at the cost of memory, of memory's feeble attempts to keep reconstructing the world destined to ruins. "Memory," meditates Sciascia's anonymous policeman investigating an assassination that may or may not be political, "was to be abolished, Memory—and consequently all those mnemonic exercises that render it pliable, subtle, prehensile." In a poem on Sherlock Holmes written in the year before his death, Borges noted that, until "a last day in which oblivion, that common goal, forget us absolutely," the Master Detective will continue to be nothing but an echo or a form of something that vanishes daily, a fate common to all creatures. Therefore, to preserve the essential mystery of things, both for Sciascia and for Borges, Sherlock Holmes must always be defeated.

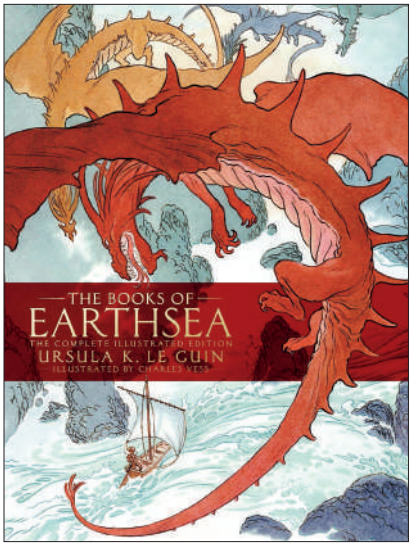
In the note appended to his short story collection, *Il mare colore del vino*, *The Wine-Coloured Sea*, Sciascia remarks that he had always carried on without looking to the right or the left ("and therefore looking both to the right and to the left"), with no hesitation, no doubts and no periods of crisis ("and therefore with much hesitation, many doubts and periods of profound crisis"). This ability to be in two seemingly contradictory states of mind and take two seemingly self-excluding paths, defines Sciascia's literature. No doubt such simultaneity is impossible in a documentary approach to the world (and to the word); the detective story, however, demands such a double state, in which the truth tells lies and every action entails also its opposite. Between what must end and what must begin, between the puzzle of what really happened and the scandal that it happened at all, between the only certainty and the imaginatively remembered life, Sciascia, in the telling, gives us both choices. Like Borges, like Montaigne, whom both Sciascia and Borges admired, he "recites" us.

Alberto Manguel is the award-winning author of hundreds of works, most recently (in English) Fabulous Monsters *(September 2019)*, Packing My Library: An Elegy and Ten Digressions, Curiosity *and* All Men Are Liars. *He lives in New York. Read more of his work at manguel.com and geist.com.*

ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

PRE-POTTER WIZARDRY



Well before Harry Potter waved a wand, there was a boy wizard known as Ged; before Hogwarts opened its doors, would-be wizards trained on the isle of Roke; and before anyone other than her closest friends had heard of J. K. Rowling, there was Ursula K. Le Guin, whose literate and lyrical tales of moral magic, of dragons, of good and evil held in balance, and of the true names of things, began a half-century ago, with the publication of the award winning YA novel *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968). I was a much younger reader when I read that first Earthsea novel, heavily into science fiction and fantasy, but it was obvious even then that Le Guin's writing was in a league all its own. The world of Earthsea made a deep impression on me, and, even after more-or-less abandoning science-fiction, I knew that I'd want to read the entire Earthsea cycle, "one day." That day arrived last year, when Saga Press published a gorgeous one-volume anthology of **The Books of Earthsea**, to mark the 50th anniversary of the first edition of *A Wizard of Earthsea*. It was fascinating to discover, through this rereading, how significantly Le Guin's thinking had evolved during the fifty years of her writing the Earthsea tales. In her introduction, and in brief essays which follow each of the books, Le Guin recalls the circumstances of each novel's composition. Why, she asks herself, had she chosen a boy wizard as the central figure, rather than a girl? Her answer: "because I was a reader who read, loved and learned from the books my culture provided me; and they were almost entirely about what men did." Le Guin was closely involved in the preparation of this anthology; she died in 2018 at the age of 88. One caution: at five pounds, *The Books of Earthsea* is massive; attempting to read it while recumbent, with the book held above your head, would be to risk concussion. —*Michael Hayward*

PASSING ON THE SPORT

I read **The Master of Go** (Vintage) by Yasunari Kawabata on the way back from visiting my grandma in Taipei. Kawabata won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1968, and *The Master of Go* is his semi-fictional account of a six-month match played between an aged Go master and a younger challenger. Hon'inbō Shūsai is a *meijin*, the last of the prestigious Hon'inbō school of Go. Shūsai's play is stylistic. He is skeptical of novelty. He takes his time. He makes small moves with a bigger picture in mind. His opponent, Kitani Minoru, is pragmatic. Kawabata explores the contrasting styles of play between the two men against the backdrop of mid-twentieth century Japan, where, much as in my grandma's Taiwan, old aesthetics have been buried by rapid industrialization and, later, by post-war reconstruction. After 237 moves, Kitani wins the match by five points, but not before Shūsai's constitution gives way. Shūsai's death, we learn in the opening chapter, occurs not more than a year after the completion of the match.

For those interested in learning more about the game of Go, there's a fascinating documentary on Netflix called **AlphaGo**. It chronicles a momentous series of matches between Lee Sedol, one of top Go players in the world at the time, and AlphaGo, an artificial intelligence program developed by Google DeepMind. The founders of DeepMind sought to develop a program with machine-learning algorithms sophisticated enough to play and win in Go at the professional level. Go is arguably the hardest board game to learn due to the number of possibilities a player can make in a single move. It is the ultimate challenge for artificial intelligence, magnitudes more difficult than chess. In a way, *AlphaGo* parallels *Master of Go*. Lee Sedol is stunningly defeated by the machine in the five matches. He gets more and more disoriented as, in match after match, he comes up short, while the machine gets smarter from playing him. And yet, unlike somber Kawabata, the

documentary ends with a dash of Silicon Valley optimism, showing how something fabricated can help push the human spirit further and chart new frontiers of creativity. After all, Lee Sedol does not get swept. He holds on to one victory, and that feels enough for us mortals. —*Anson Ching*

DROOL-WORTHY

Like many people I turn to podcasts to pass the time on my commute, and one that's kept me company for many hours now is **Gastropod**, an independent podcast that marries food, science and history in an entertaining and informative listen that inevitably makes me hungry. Written, produced and hosted by award-winning journalists and foodies Cynthia Graber and Nicola Twilley, each of their twice-monthly, hour-long instalments is thoroughly researched, tightly edited and humorously presented while not shying away from the social and political implications of our modern culture of eating. Not just limited to histories of various foodstuffs, the podcast also explores topics like what breakfast looks like around the world, how our modern diet has shaped the human overbite, what kind of metal cutlery makes food taste best and historical figures who travelled the world to collect and introduce new foods to North America. My favourite episodes are when Cynthia and Nicky get hands-on, such as when they tested their own home-grown kombucha in a lab to see its microbiome, baked spotted dicks with contestants from *The Great British Bake-Off*, and tasted mango varieties that I am still dreaming about. A recent episode explored foods that have undergone "culinary extinction," meaning that humans have eaten these foods out of existence, while another investigated how the restaurant menu manipulates diners. I nearly always end up craving whatever food is the topic of the latest episode, which has led to a personal rule of always allowing myself to indulge that craving, meaning that on more than one occasion I did not make it home from work, or even make it through the episode, without first stopping to see if my local grocer was carrying any unusual varieties of mango or purchasing a box of lime jello to make the second I get home. I'm not much of a foodie myself, so *Gastropod* has helped me better appreciate how food gets to my table and understand the cultural context of what I'm eating. —*Kelsea O'Connor*

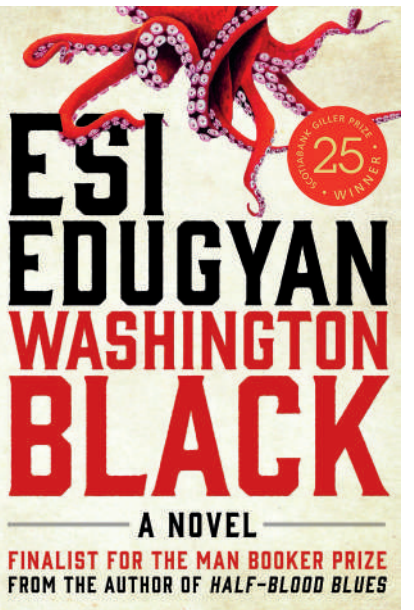
CANADIAN DYSTOPIA

On one of the longest days of the year, a mechanic working at a refinery in northern Alberta leaves work early

because of a power outage and then receives a confusing phone call from his aging father. After a restless night the mechanic sets out to drive to his father's village in northern Ontario. As the drive unfolds, it becomes clear that the country is experiencing a massive power outage; the only cars he sees are filled with people and their belongings and are travelling in the opposite direction. Fueled by white bread, sardines, beer and cigarettes, our narrator drives and drives, passing unattended gas stations, abandoned motels, broken-down vehicles and unofficial checkpoints manned by people who don't know what's going on. His thoughts about his life so far and his observations of the countryside and the road ahead and behind him—expressed in poetic but concise language—kept me interested, and his relentless driving pulled me through the story. Eventually he picks up a woman hitchhiker who, after he falls asleep at the wheel a few times, persuades him to take a break and let her drive. Then, just before they reach their destination, a man leaps out at them, they go off the road, the woman disappears, and the mechanic wakes up in a strange bed with his legs encased in blood-soaked bandages. An abrupt ending to **Running on Fumes** (Talonbooks) by Christian Guay-Poliquin (translated by Jacob Homel), but somehow it fit this great road story.

Then **The Weight of Snow** (Talonbooks, translated by Homel) appeared in the *Geist* mailbox and I was pulled back into the mechanic's mind. In this sequel, the injured mechanic is lying in a bed in one room of an abandoned house just outside the village where he grew up. The mechanic's legs had been crushed in the accident, there's still no electricity, and winter is coming so the mechanic's relatives have gone to their hunting camp. The mechanic is being cared for by an old man named Matthias who is a stranger to the village but who, in exchange for rations and firewood, has agreed to care for the injured man until spring when the roads will be clear and he can get back to his wife in the city. As the snow falls, Matthias does his exercises, tends to the woodstove, prepares food, forages in the rest of the house and in the nearby town for canned food and books, and dreams of the time when he can get back to his wife. The mechanic is stuck in bed waiting for his legs to heal so when he's not sleeping, he is observing Matthias or looking through a spyglass at the snow piling up outside the window and at the occasional snowmobile leaving or returning to the village. A few people come by (including the vet who is providing medical care) but otherwise it's just Matthias and the mechanic figuring out how to live together. At first the mechanic doesn't speak so Matthias tells him about his own father who refused to join the army during one of the World Wars and instead joined up with others who hunkered down in the woods for the winter and kept from going mad by telling stories to each other. Matthias must change the blood-soaked bandages, lift the mechanic (by hugging him around the chest) to transfer him to a chair in order to bathe him with a rag and a bowl of water, and then change his soiled sheets. Even with this intimate contact, the power dynamic keeps them from opening up to each other and acknowledging that they are in this together. At first Matthias is in charge, but his power diminishes as the mechanic gets stronger and I had to look closely for the small indications that they actually cared about each other. I don't often like dystopic fiction so I was surprised that I found both these books compelling and I'm still having trouble articulating why. Guay-Poliquin has somehow managed to turn descriptions of a long black highway through the prairies and a snow-filled landscape seen through a cabin window into an engrossing world where nothing monumental needs to happen in order to keep his readers—at least this one—hooked. —*Patty Osborne*

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS



Esi Edugyan is known for stitching up her stories with research plucked from the marginalia of history—jazz in 1930s Berlin, the bodily punishments slaves endured on plantations, marine biology in the Victorian era, the construction of early hot air balloons. In her latest novel, **Washington Black** (Penguin Random House), Edugyan's narrator is a man looking back on his life, tracing his tale of adventure as a fugitive slave. Initially, the voice of Washington rings with depth as he recalls his early years as a field slave in Barbados, then coming out of the fields and into a new way of understanding the world with the assistance of an abolitionist, Christopher "Titch" Wilde, who teaches him science and how to read. When the story shifts to Washington as an adult, though, the narration clunkily shifts gears. The voice clams shut. Perhaps that is the only kind of Victorian gentleman Edugyan

could mold from a freed slave. I was reminded of Stephen Best and Saidiya Hartman's concept of "fugitive justice." For Best and Hartman, freed slaves could never be given back their freedom, only a new condition, a new life, one haunted by loss. So instead of taking on the world from a fresh start, Washington dwells in an inward space between pain and justice even as he journeys to far-flung places. This is a powerful point to get across but the tone, unfortunately, reads like a coldly summarized autobiography. Perhaps this is the risk a writer takes in having all the work done by the narrator in their story. And yet, when the strategy works, you can also get something extraordinary. After all, Edugyan also conjured up an unforgettable narrator in *Halfblood Blues*: Sid Griffiths, whose flaws and baggage transfer onto paper with a richness that impacts and engrosses. Unique voices, then, seem to be the trademark of Edugyan's craft, and I will take the risk of reading whatever new historical fiction she uncovers in the marginalia. —*Anson Ching*

WALKING, WITH WRITERS

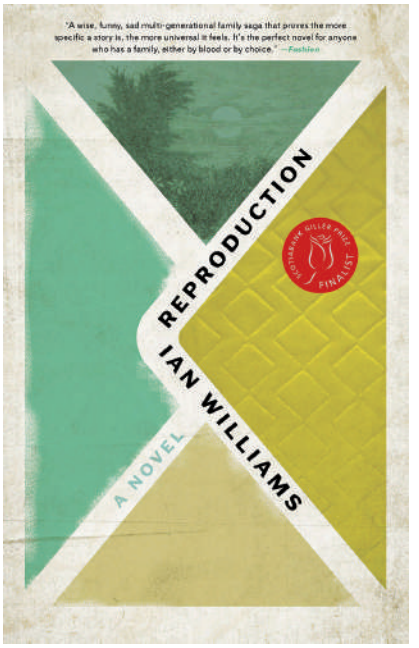
You might think that writing and reading, both of which are sedentary activities, are not naturally compatible with walking. Judging from a bunch of recent books, though, you'd be wrong. Franz Hessel's **Walking in Berlin: A Flaneur in the Capital** (MIT Press) was first published in German in 1929 and is now available for the first time in English, with an introductory essay by Walter Benjamin. The essays in *Walking in Berlin* can be seen as precursors to the material one might find nowadays in the various city magazines—*New York*; *Toronto Life*; *Vancouver Magazine*—articles that take readers on a guided tour through a particular corner of those cities. In this case, though, we get to explore the streets of Berlin as

they were during the Weimar era, a period in which National Socialism was just beginning to establish a foothold; in other words, we get a chance to take a trip through four dimensions: space *and* time.

Carl Seelig's **Walks with Walser** (New Directions) consists of notes made by Seelig following his regular walks with famed Swiss writer Robert Walser, during that period of time (1933 to 1956) when Walser was confined to an asylum following a nervous breakdown. Seelig records Walser's unique perspective on the world from which he had withdrawn ("He had written his books just as a farmer sows and mows, grafts, feeds the cattle and mucks their stalls. Out of a sense of duty, and in order to earn a little something to eat."), as well as the minutiae of their time together ("We reach Teufen in three hours and settle down in a butcher shop for veal in mushroom cream sauce, beans, and *Rösti* potatoes"). The result is a fascinating document that is both insightful and humane.

Hiking with Nietzsche: On Becoming Who You Are (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) interweaves two journeys undertaken by John Kaag in the footsteps of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. The first of these journeys, to "the Swiss peaks above Sils-Maria, where Nietzsche wrote his landmark work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*," took place when Kaag was just nineteen years of age, footloose, and still in the throes of an adolescent intoxication with Nietzsche's grandiose ideas. Kaag's second journey in search of Nietzsche is a much more deliberate one, undertaken as an adult academic on leave, accompanied by his second wife and their infant daughter. The adult Kaag lacks the fevered certainties of his youth, and the resulting book illustrates how the literary and philosophical enthusiasms of our younger years are revised and updated—for good and ill—by the more measured second readings of our older selves. —*Michael Hayward*

TEXT THAT BREAKS



Reproduction by Ian Williams (Penguin Random House Canada) is a beautiful, chaotic and restless novel. Its main characters, Felicia and Edgar, meet in a hospital room shared by their dying mothers. They have a child together, and Felicia struggles to keep their son, Armistice, from turning into his arrogant absentee father so she raises him in the same house as a divorced man named Oliver and his two children, Heather and Hendrix. The group bonds living under the same roof, but tensions arise—assault, disease, death and birth—and shape what becomes an unconventional family. Williams infuses the novel with diary entries, lists, text messages, letters and chapters of pure dialogue. There is a "sex talk" that spans decades interspersed throughout the novel and a script for an imaginary episode of *The Maury Povich Show*. The structure of the novel is meant to mimic reproduction: Part 1 is divided into 23 sections (the number of chromosome pairs found in DNA) and Parts 2 and 3 continue to "reproduce" or break down into smaller sections. In Part 4, the text is noticeably broken. The text then presents reproduction in a new way—through cancer—as disconnected phrases spring out of sentences like tumours in subscript and superscript. Although the novel is enthralling and entertaining, it becomes a bit exhausting trying to keep up. Reconciling multiple meanings within a sentence is a workout for the brain. However, Ian Williams shows stunning creativity with *Reproduction* and shows us that "family" shapes who we are—whether we like it or not. —*Kathleen Murdock*

CYCLING THE HIMALAYAS

A younger version of myself once cycled into the Himalayas in northwest India, starting from Jammu, the winter capital of that state, pedalling through the Jawahar Tunnel with a convoy of trucks on my heels, emerging into the Kashmir valley, and eventually arriving at the summer capital, Srinigar. After a few days recovering in a houseboat on Dal Lake, I pedalled onward, over three high mountain passes, eventually reaching Leh, capital of the territory of Ladakh. At that time the onward road connecting Leh to Manali was off-limits to foreigners due to border tensions between India and China. Nonetheless, I briefly imagined sneaking past the army checkpoints at night, a reckless plan that I eventually abandoned. That pragmatic decision perfectly illustrates a key difference between me and Kate Harris, author of the marvelous **Lands of Lost Borders: Out of Bounds on the Silk Road** (Knopf). Harris's absorbing account of her 2006 bicycle journey along sections of the ancient Silk Road opens as she and Mel, her fellow cycle-adventurer, a friend since elementary school in Ontario, decide to take the risk that

I had not, successfully making their way in the dead of night past an army checkpoint near Kudi in China's Xinjiang province. In her book Harris perfectly captures the elation and freedom of the long-distance cyclist, whose "sole responsibility on Earth […] is to breathe, pedal, breathe—and look around." A two-page map at the beginning of *Lands of Lost Borders* illustrates the full extent of Harris's amazing ride in and around the high mountains of central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the Tibetan plateau and Nepal, finishing—as my ride had—in northwest India, at Leh. By 2006 the political situation in northern India had changed somewhat, with border tensions between India and Pakistan dominating headlines, and restricting travel along roads leading onward from Leh. *Land of Lost Borders* ends with Kate and Mel standing in the Nubra Valley, at a barrier across the road, looking longingly toward the Siachen Glacier. There will always be forbidden roads like these, calling to the imagination. —*Michael Hayward*

THE CITY IN AN APARTMENT

Published not long before the Arab Spring, **The Yacoubian Building** (HarperCollins) by Alaa Al Aswany is a collection of interwoven short stories set in Cairo. The stories capture the Egypt of the early 2000s by following archetypal characters that happen to share the same apartment block, the Yacoubian Building. As in much of Cairo, the building was once grand, but has fallen on hard times. A sense of hopelessness and outrage saturates the text. Certain authors like to paint their homeland or cities with a general brush. Orhan Pamuk, for example, does this for Istanbul. Pamuk uses the Turkish word *hüzün* to describe a sense of shared melancholy that all Istanbullus seem to feel, attributing the mood to people reminded of a lost former glory by the ruins and dilapidated imperial landmarks of their city. To the people of Istanbul, as with the people of Cairo, history seems to have been twisted or folded, so that it can now be read in reverse. But Al Aswany's characters do not simply grieve; a sort of revolutionary pragmatism follows. Small acts of resistance and defiance occur, as housewives put clothes out to dry on a rooftop that seems to boast its own community, much like those in the alleyways and side streets in older parts of town. It seems that Al Aswany is not just attuned to the human struggles around him—distilling a microcosm out of his city and country—but plays a bigger role, by weaving into his text a sense of urgency that does more than simply bear witness. —*Anson Ching*

OFF THE SHELF

Hermann sends Marie to a cloister in Italy to give birth to their love child in *Little Fortress* (Buckrider Books) by **Laisha Rosnau**. A father stares at his daughter's big belly and says, "You're pregnant" in *Source Books for Our Drawings* (Gordon Hill Press) by **Danny Jacobs**. Michael gives a Star of David necklace to Sarah, who does not want to be identified as a Jew in *Rue des Rosiers* (Coteau Books) by **Rhea Tregebov**. Alex and Tamara sneak into a dead woman's room and watch the six o'clock news to find out who killed her in *Honouring the Strength of Indian Women* (University of Manitoba Press) by **Vera Manuel**. On the radio the presidential candidate jokes, "The good news is we've bombed the Russians," not realizing his microphone is on, in *Heroine* (Coach House Books) by **Gail Scott**. In Sunday school Elorine asks a group of people if they know how to spell "brought" and a woman replies, "That is big word" in *Free* (The University of the West Indies Press) by **Martin Mordecai**. Dorothy leaves "You stole my Handicapped Parking spot" notes on hundreds of cars as part of her five-year Passive-Aggressive Plan in *Falling for Myself: A Memoir* (Wolsak and Wynn) by **Dorothy Ellen Palmer**. **Montaha Hidefi** masters the art of dealing with gropers by running up to a man and punching him in the back in *Groping for Truth* (OC Publishing). On a date with a woman, a man jokes about his Tinder bio saying "I hate dancing and I hate women" in *Set-Point* (ARP Books) by **Fawn Parker**. Vladimir Pavlovich writes with a lot of ellipses instead of periods and recalls a time when he used a lot of dashes in *Three Books* (Exile Editions) by **Vladimir Azarov**. In *Daughters of Silence* (Goose Lane Editions) by **Rebecca Fisseha** a girl hides from the boy she has a crush on because of the ugly black hairs growing out of her skin. After years apart, a woman bumps into her husband's best friend and spends the night with him in *Season of Fury and Wonder* (Coteau Books) by **Sharon Butala**. Alice reminisces of the six times she's touched Adrien: twice on their way to church; once on the arm; once when he bumped into her; once when they sat next to each other; and once with his smile in *Autant* (Thistledown Press) by **Paulette Dubé**. In *Skin House* (Anvil Press) by **Michael Blouin** a man finds a finger hanging from a bush by the lake. A drug dealer named Tic-Tax stabs Luc for standing up to him in *The Furies* (Fly Pelican Press) by **Corey Croft**. Sex Addict 1 grabs Sex Addict 2's penis under the table at a bar in *Just Pervs* (Book*hug) by **Jess Taylor**. Black calls for Suddy at the front door to avoid walking around to the back door on account of the snow in *Shot Rock* (New Star Books) by **Michael Tregebov**. A blind man knocks a girl to the ground and his dog licks her in *Here I Am!* (Biblioasis) by **Pauline Holdstock**. In *Worry* (Harper Perennial) by **Jessica Westhead** a woman drinks in a bar where Polynesian jazz plays on the sound system and *Hawaii Five-O* plays on the TV. At the winter formal, a man follows his girlfriend around and avoids the break-up conversation in *Martin Peters* (Conundrum Press) by **Patrick Allaby**. Nicole and Honey marry in Las Vegas at the twenty-four-hour Love Me Tender wedding chapel in *Honey* (ECW Press) by **Brenda Brooks**. A piano teacher at Juilliard says to a student "we'll make a Glenn Gould of you yet" in *Dual Citizen* (House of Anansi) by **Alix Ohlin**.

NOTED ELSEWHERE

Gizem-in-Wonderland on *goodreads.com* writes that she is confused by the title of **Alberto Manguel**'s *Fabulous Monsters* (Yale University Press) because the literary characters mentioned in the book are neither fabulous nor monsters; on Twitter Margaret Atwood says it's an "entertaining romp through the World O Strange"; Helton on *amazon.ca* says its "length is a-okay"; and *whateveryoneelseisreading.com* says the character doodles that accompany the text add "a layer of charm." The comics artist Anna Haifisch says the drawings in *Agnes, Murderess* (Freehand Book) by **Sarah Leavitt** are "delicate, fragile and beautiful"; the author Brian Fies says the book "achieves the difficult goal of making historical fiction relatable"; and Laureen on *goodreads.com* says it's "rather disturbing!" *Quill & Quire* says *Watching You Without Me* by **Lynn Coady** has an "easy reading plot, and excellent pacing"; *The Toronto Star* says Coady "builds momentum like a whiz"; and christy.ann.conlin on Instagram says "You know ya'all wanna gobble this up!" *Pickle Me This* says *Watermark* by **Christy Ann Conlin** at times contains "too much expository dialogue"; the *Winnipeg Free Press* says it's "creepy"; *Kirkus Review* says it's "deliciously discomfiting"; and Ramona Jennex on *goodreads.com* says "it is a strong book." *Quill & Quire* says *Here I Am!* (Biblioasis) by **Pauline Holdstock** is "fairly straight forward narrative"; the *Vancouver Sun* says that its "delight in the possibilities of life is an effervescent tonic"; and the author Kathy Page says it's "a great armchair read." The *Calgary Herald* writes *I Am Herod!* (Goose Lane Editions) by **Richard Kelly Kemick** is "laugh-out-loud funny"; Jordan Kroeger says Kemick explores ethics and moral foundations in the book with "a unique writing style"; and Noah Kaulbach on the Goose Lane Editions customer review page says it "makes you feel like you're listening to a friend."

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Cary Fagan**, whose novel *The Student* was a finalist for the 2019 Governor General's Literary Awards for fiction; and to **Shannon Webb-Campbell**, whose book *I Am a Body of Land* was shortlisted for the A.M. Klein Prize for Poetry.

The GEIST Cryptic Crossword

Prepared by Meandricus

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

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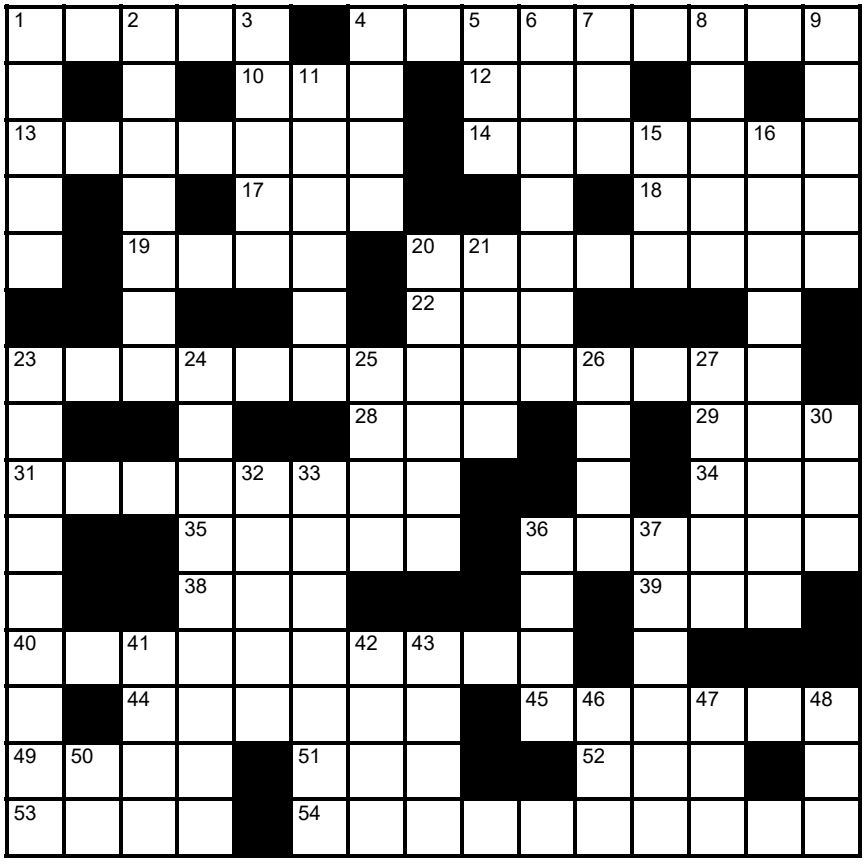
A winner will be selected at random from correct solutions and will be awarded a one-year subscription to *Geist* or—if already a subscriber—a *Geist* magnet.



ACROSS

1 When your eyes are sore, look behind you for better vision
4 Is he clapping or is that some rude papal response?
10 Officer, at any time, you'll find, in that pew, the most awful executive (abbrev)
12 When you're in the corner with a racist, don't give a thumbs up!
13 Do you mind taking time off to work in a London clothing store? (2)
14 Please return the pot to us when you get back from the Wild West
17 We won't have any trouble getting that object near the earth back (abbrev)
18 Sweetie, what was new about that classic beverage?
19 Don't waste your time rooting for that underground snake!
20 Words can't express the humour in that no-talking order (2)
22 Even though he's single, Pip's a real card
23 When Bill plays with humour it may not be as you like it so cry freedom or just laugh at his mistakes (3)
28 At what stage is the arrangement of everything? (abbrev)
29 When do you think you'll get here? (abbrev)
31 How does that cute British rodent keep track of its yoga gear? (2)
34 My sibling sounds like she's a birth match
35 Once she lost her startup pay, the rest took wing
36 That trick is a bit kitsch, no?
38 Singular disgust, when doubled it's funny
39 What fearless solvers use
40 We laughed when I inked Joe's tattoo but the others didn't get it (2)
44 She's definitely not empty of ineffectiveness!
45 In winter he twists his laces for hours on end
49 Cosy up to those tables while we get the machine guns
51 When you got hurt while working did you drink orange juice first? (abbrev)
52 John was always lonely in the unit
53 He alleges that but should we believe him?
54 Was that nun ragging on you or was she just repeating a joke? (2)

DOWN

1 You talked without interrupting us. Gee that's great!
2 We saw, at the ROM, a pug in the tower at the south entrance
3 Those little tweeps sure make a weak noise
4 Before you take off for the bar, can you fix its wing?
5 I'll have nothing against that convict if he plays for money
6 Boy, that guy in the bar is lazy
7 As my mom's sister pointed out, females are the real workers
8 God or his homie fixed the orange clock
9 Great, now I'm going to have to price those again
11 "Do pray," said Monty, but we knew he was making fun of us
15 What portion of pennies do you want? (abbrev)
16 It's hilarious when you strike those slats, but isn't it dangerous?
20 Yes, fat ones need refuge too
21 Look at the way she decorates that puck!
23 It's funny. You can come in sad but once you see them you'll be laughing out loud.
24 That's quite a sassy site for a bunch of literary composers
25 Why was that kid at The Bay for so long?
26 Phil lodged a complaint and then said goodbye in Columbus
27 Be sure to rinse everything after gluing things back together
30 Matthew says make a request, get it?
32 It's incomprehensible that he got away again!
33 At the ROM, fake art pieces can cause consternation (2)
36 Oh, no, we've got to cancel that change!
37 When the rhythm is off, it's not funny
41 At the bar she discussed chocolate and linking fundamental forces with her physics teacher
42 That gummy candy has magical powers
43 A Canadian lion and a longboard—a winning combination!
46 We started with noodle soup but we had to lose weight to come out on top
47 Sometimes Gen Xers get their colours reversed (abbrev)
48 This old thing? We've been puzzling over it for years.
50 Apologies to every one of the digital games because there are only 2 (abbrev)

There was no winner for Puzzle 113.

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

Bon Appétit

The National Map of Gourmand Locutions

by Adam Vajda

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freedom to read week

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