

GEIST

NUMBER 118

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FACT + FICTION 🌐 NORTH of AMERICA



LOST STEPS

Board games for the new normal / Transportation blues / Wash with like colours

How do you love me? / Resistance and relentlessness

JOHN WARE RECLAIMED

Written and Directed by **Cheryl Foggo**



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nfb.ca/johnware



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Latency



About twelve years ago while working in the CBC Vancouver media archives I came across a roll of Kodak Super-XX 120 medium format film in a box of unexposed film rolls, take-up reels and other odds and sods deemed superfluous and destined to be tossed. The film was wrapped in a piece of white paper with a note, “Ron Kelly Chinatown April 1956,” written on it. Peeking

under the paper cover, I noticed the film’s paper backing was still there, meaning the film had been shot but not processed.

Out of pure curiosity, I decided to rescue the roll. I took it home, stashed it in a safe, dark place, and promptly forgot about it for several years. I even moved house with it before I rediscovered it in 2018 and finally took a chance and had the film processed.

Instead of a single roll, it turned out there were five rolls of exposed film wound onto the single film spool. At twelve frames per roll, there were sixty views of Chinatown and False Creek in Vancouver, presumably captured in April 1956. I still don’t understand why multiple rolls of exposed film were wound around a single spool nor how none of it was fogged. A photochemical mystery for certain.



Ron Kelly, whose name appears on the film's paper wrapper, was a producer and director at CBC Vancouver in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1956 he produced and directed a CBC Vancouver TV programme called *Summer Afternoon*, a fantastic visual document of mid-century Chinatown in Vancouver. It was produced as a "mood piece," following two young boys as they wander in and around shops, streets and the industrial waterfront of False Creek; the images captured by our mystery photographer in April 1956 follow a similar visual narrative arc. Looking down back alleys and along the raw shores of False Creek,

the shots captured the daily life of this part of the city while exploring light, shadow, angles and reflections.

Comparing the visuals in the TV programme *Summer Afternoon* with the still photos, one can clearly see a similarity. It is possible these images were used in location scouting for *Summer Afternoon*. But for reasons we can only speculate on, they were never used as such or even processed. Why was this film abandoned and who actually shot these photos?

One image shows the photographer reflected in the window of a boat moored in False Creek. We can't see the face, but we can see his hairline and

that he is wearing a trench coat, neither of which are very distinctive. It looks like he is using a Leica-style folding medium format film camera. But even with this clue and my own subsequent investigations, the photographer of these images remains a mystery.

In analogue photography, the term "latent image" refers to the invisible image created on photographic film when it is exposed to light. The image only becomes visible once the exposed photographic film has been developed. My curiosity and photochemical processes succeeded in making the invisible visible—visible, yet not known.

—Christine Hagemoen

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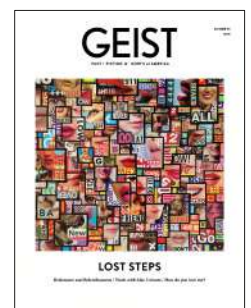
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Instagram: @ronaldmarkham



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SLOW COOKING

I get it, there's been a global pandemic. And I read somewhere that art takes time, that Monet grew his gardens before he painted them. So are you folks growing the forests that will eventually become paper, tending the vegetables that will eventually become the vegetable ink with which the magazine is printed?! There's no shortage of things to read, certainly, but I miss my *Geist*! What gives?

—*Stacy McTavish, Saskatoon SK*

Thanks for your patience, Stacy! Thanks, in fact, for everyone's patience. It's indeed been quite a while since our last issue—the vagaries of remote work and pandemic anxiety caught up with us. But intrepid Geisters are back on the case and are already working on Geist 119: stay tuned!

SOLACE

A friend recommended I check out “Solace” by Kristen den Hartog (No. 117) online. It's a beautiful story of connection, so meaningful for the writer, the subjects and for readers. I love when something unexpectedly connects me to the lives of others in a thoughtful and reflective way, and I was so very moved by den Hartog's telling of this story. —*Kim Winger*

GREAT DISAPPOINTER

In response to “Christopher Columbus on the Prairies” by Bertrand Bickersteth (No. 117), Mitchell J. Toews writes:

“By November, way too far north and with only poplar and tamarack left around the prairie's edge maintaining the mythical adornment, [Columbus] would have seen it for the false discovery it was and started his long walk back to Jamaica, scuffing his buckled shoes in disappointment and naming rivers, airports, body shops, and cities after himself as he went.

Then off to Japan on a day cruise.”

POSTCARD LIT

There's something about the constraints of the Literal Literary Postcard Content, a piece of writing less than 500 words correlated to an image, that led to fruitful discussions and results in the English and AP Literature classes I teach. As a kind of short short story or micro-story, it really gets you to economize language in the most effective way. I typically think of myself as a poet and haven't written short stories since undergraduate school, but the contest has jump-started a dormant writer inside of me that I didn't know needed to wake up. —*J. Garrett*

See the results of the 17th Annual Literal Literary Postcard Contest in the upcoming Geist 120.

ABCs

I enjoyed the pieces in No. 117 more than I expected, especially Hilary M.V. Leathem's “To Coronavirus, C: An Anthropological Abecedarly”—it was a keeper! I appreciate a magazine uncluttered with things I do not need nor want. —*Wayne Scott*

Leathem's abecedarly will also be appearing in the upcoming edition of Best Canadian Essays, published by Biblioasis later this year.

UNPUTDOWNABLE

Bless Patty Osborne for her review of *The Dutch Wife* (“Forgetting the Questions,” No. 117). I could not put the book down; it transported me to another world. —*Deirdre Phillips*

Check out Osborne's review of The Dutch Wife and many other works at geist.com.

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE

Dan Brault has exhibited in numerous venues including the Neutral Ground, the Centre des arts actuels skool and most recently, at Galerie 3 in Québec City. His art explores metaphysics, euphoria and fantasy, and invokes fleeting moments in suspended universes. He has an MA in Visual Arts from the Université Laval.

Gregory Betts is the author of seven books of poetry, most recently *Sweet Forme* (a data visualization of the sonic patterns in Shakespeare's sonnets). His next books include a collection of visual poems, *Foundry* (redfoxpress), and a new monograph, *Finding Nothing: Vancouver Avant-Garde Writing, 1959-1975* (University of Toronto Press). He is the curator of the bpNichol.ca digital archive and a professor at Brock University.

Christine Hagemoen is a Vancouver historical researcher, writer and photographer. She is the "You Should Know" columnist at *Scout Magazine* and has written for *Photo Life*. Hagemoen is currently working on a historical walking tour project of the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood of Vancouver, to be published in the fall of 2021.

Alex Hyner is a writer, producer and actor for film and television. He has a passion for photography and digital art. He lives in Los Angeles and can be found at alexhynerart.com and @alexhyner on Instagram.

Ronald Markham has a particular interest in ancient cultures and has travelled the world, studying the art and history of many places. He specializes in mixed media paintings and incorporates collage into his work. He has had five solo exhibitions at the Winchester Gallery. He lives in Victoria, BC.

Cédéric Michaud was on the Le Theatre de Nouvel-Ontario's board of directors for twenty-two years. The photo published alongside "All the Same CANO" by Stephen Henighan is included in an online gallery to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Le TNO. Visit letno.ca/cinquante to see more.

James Pollock is the author of *Sailing to Babylon* (Able Muse Press) and *You Are Here: Essays on the Art of Poetry in Canada* (The Porcupine's Quill). He has been a finalist for both the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Governor General's Literary Award for poetry. He lives in Madison, WI, and at jamespollock.org.

Ned Pratt's work has been exhibited at the former Art Gallery of NL, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and The Rooms. He was long listed for the Scotiabank Photography Award in 2021. He is represented by the Nicholas Metivier Gallery and the Christina Parker Gallery. He lives on the island of Newfoundland.

Bernice Wicks spends her days analyzing the structures of workplace documents and her nights drawing comics. She is currently engaged in a project to draw the small delights of each day on Instagram: @_berwickity. "Transportation Blues" on page 14 is her first publication. She lives in Victoria, BC.

WRITE TO GEIST

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Resistance and Renewal

RANDY FRED

After hearing survivors' stories, nothing can ever surprise me

R*esistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* by Celia Haig-Brown was published thirty-three years ago by Tillacum Library, an imprint of Arsenal Pulp Press, in Vancouver. It is about the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

The book was awarded the Roderick Haig-Brown BC Book Prize for BC history. There was no nepotism here as the book was well deserving. It is still in print today, and available from Arsenal Pulp Press.

I wrote the ten-page-long foreword for the book. I was the publisher for Tillacum Library and was unable to find anyone else to write it. Indian residential school experiences were almost never spoken about. I wasn't mentally prepared for the ordeal of writing about my nine-year experience in the Alberni Indian Residential School, which I began attending in 1955 at the age of five. Stephen Osborne, then the publisher for Arsenal Pulp Press, told me to write ten pages. I probably ended up with eighty pages.

In the school I learned how to hold back my tears. I bawled my eyes out as I was writing the foreword. Having

been in court for more than five years over abuses suffered in the residential school, I am able to talk about these experiences without getting choked up. This summer, hearing the news of the 215 unmarked children's graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, I was unable to hold back my tears.

The news reminded me of a story the late George Clutesi told me and my wife. When George worked at the Alberni Indian Residential School in the 1960s as a maintenance man, the principal told him to clean out the barn, which

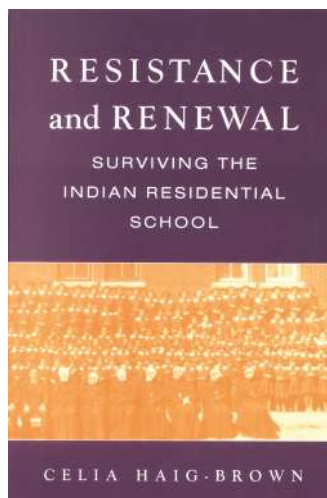
was beside the principal's residence. George said he did not know any details but he could not see a student surviving a whipping like that as there was so much flesh and blood.

Many stories are surfacing about First Nations children not returning home from residential schools.

In 1996 I travelled to Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal with my wife, our daughter who was then eleven, Melvin Good, who also survived the Alberni Indian Residential School, and his wife, Kathy. We were raising money for the lawyers' final arguments in the first part of the civil

action lawsuit that we were involved in against the United Church of Canada and the Government of Canada. The twenty-eight plaintiffs and their lawyers wanted the final arguments for vicarious liability to move to Prince Rupert from Nanaimo. Children were sent to Alberni Indian Residential School from all over the BC coast. Many of the plaintiffs were from around the Prince Rupert area. But there was no money to enable plaintiffs and supporters to travel to Prince Rupert. We were able to raise sufficient money to fly thirty people from Vancouver and then house and feed more than fifty people in Prince Rupert for a week. During our trip out east, we held a talking circle in each city. We heard horrific stories about Indian residential schools. Many people told their survival stories for the first time in their lives. After hearing those stories nothing can ever surprise me. Horrifying accounts continued during our stay in Prince Rupert. I am still unable to fathom how human beings can be so cruel to children.

The timing and need for *Resistance and Renewal* was perfect. Around the same time it was published the "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples" was also published. This was a massive project that documented much of the histories of Canada's Indigenous peoples and experiences in residential schools. Celia had written *Resistance and Renewal* as a thesis for her master's degree in education and she was more than willing to rewrite it for a general audience. It is gratifying to see, thirty-three years after *Resistance and Renewal* was published, that the Indian



residential school system in Canada is finally being acknowledged and recognized as the genocide it was intended to be. Celia's work contributed to this, and she was very courageous in having her work published.

Celia and I spent several months attempting to cross paths. I knew her brother, Allan, from Williams Lake School District, where he set up the first Native language teaching program in a BC public school system. I knew of her sister, Valerie, too. She was a busy editor. Their father, Roderick, was famous as a magistrate and defender of social justice, a conservationist and sports fisher. Cell phones were not yet a thing in the 1980s but Celia and I eventually did connect. I am so glad we did as she is such a lovely woman.

Another lovely woman connected to the old Kamloops Indian Residential School building was Chief Judy Wilson, now the Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. She worked for Theytus Books in Penticton when I was the publisher there.

Judy utilized the skills she learned at Theytus Books to set up a publishing program for the Secwépemc Cultural Centre. Her project was in the old Kamloops Indian Residential School. In the mid-1980s she invited Stephen Osborne and me to facilitate a publishing workshop there. Steve and I drove up there with Jeannette Armstrong and Jeff Smith, who were directors for the En'owkin Centre and oversaw the operations of Theytus Books. It was a long drive from Penticton to Kamloops in those days so the four of us had some stimulating conversation on that journey. We dreamed up "The New World Encyclopedia," which is still in development.

When we arrived, an unfortunate death in the community prevented people from attending the publishing workshop. The people who did come were Judy's staff, volunteers and curriculum developers, who wanted to

learn about the publishing process. It was a beautiful sunny day when Steve and I were there. I remember sitting on the fire escape of the building during break time. There were many similarities between the Kamloops and Alberni schools. When walking through the Kamloops school it seemed the same size as the Alberni one, which housed 150 boys and 150 girls. The hallways had that hollow echo you hear when walking down the hallway in Kent Maximum Security Prison. The large dining room in the basement where we had lunch had that same large resounding echo. Overall, the feeling I got in that building was creepy.

It was good, though, seeing Judy and others putting the school to good use.

Resistance as detailed in Celia's account is what enabled us to survive the deadly residential schools. Renewal

is what we are experiencing today. The documentation that will result from the physical investigations of the ground of all the former Indian residential school sites will generate much more insight into what took place at the residential schools across Canada and the North.

I am honoured to have met and worked with Celia Haig-Brown and I am proud of the impact we made with the publication of *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*.

Randy Fred is a Nuu-Chab-Nulth Elder. He is the founder of Theytus Books, the first Indigenous-owned and operated book publishing house in Canada. He has worked in publishing and communications for forty years. He lives in Nanaimo. Read more of his work at geist.com

Resistance and Relentlessness

CELIA HAIG-BROWN

The long road to decency and justice

In 1971, with my late ex-husband, I became the fourth wheel of Grasslands Rodeo Ltd. producing rodeos around BC. In 1976, I began work with UBC's Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) as coordinator of the Kamloops site. The program operated in various buildings of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS). At one point, it moved to what had been the senior girls' dorm.

Driving the tack trailer back from rodeos late on Sunday nights, with my friend Julie Antoine riding shotgun (that's the passenger seat in rodeo speak), we told stories. Hers delved deeper and deeper into her time as a

student in KIRS. I kept thinking, "If I don't know about these stories, how many others have never heard them?" Julie's stories became the inspiration for research that led to Arsenal Pulp Press's 1988 publication *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Thirteen former students from four different First Nations—my friends, the parents of my friends and even a relative—agreed to speak with me about what they had experienced and how they had resisted and survived the oppressive regime. We cried; we laughed: they conjured up images of their lives in the school, moving between their basic survival, the horrors and, most important, their creative acts

Clean Up

The way the forest sounds
sneak into the grocery store
the shopping cart creaks
like mountains
I have seen mountain goats
scale Campbell's soup cans
as if they were butter (aisle 12)

Through those aisles we move
in murmurations
enacting strange Pac-Man patterns
of consumption, holding coupons
up against the ghostly creep
the spilt cherries that
magically disappear, the floor unstained

The way the vitamin stacks whisper hypnotically
the freezers murmur anonymously
while these persistent birds overhead
click and chirp like cameras
only ever keep
one eye on you, the other eye
sees through the security guard
to the nightless blue sky of the neon sign

I think I will root for truffles tonight
I am no hero, I am skinny dipping
in a sea of potato chips
swaying like kelp past cookies and creosote cleaner
peanut butter tubs you could bathe in

When the elephants come back to Canada
we will hear their thunderous stomp
on the roofs of stores like these
stuff our shirts with water bottles
strap Quebecois cheeses to our thin chests
praise the lake waters come rushing in

Their trunks will come crashing through
grasping their ablation
collecting us or the shopping carts
or the salmonella that have miraculously
returned to these waters

The mountain goats, though, stay prophetically
dry climb or rather float
up those coarse highways
tablets returning to the mount
over drifting ice cream, soy milk bars,
and burning High Times
This is how we will all die,
knowing that only our vitamin dreams
will survive

—Gregory Betts

of resistance. I listened and I wrote and when I was done, I visited each person to show them their words in the context of mine and ask them for any changes minor or major they wanted. Without exception, they approved what I had written.

First it was a master's thesis written in a matter of months in Kamloops between working full time for NITEP and parenting three young children. Following her reading the night before the defence, my supervisor, Professor Jane Gaskell, said, "This reads like a book. You need to publish it."

My first stop was a university press: after all, I was becoming a scholar. I returned in trepidation to hear what

the acquisitions editor had to say after her reading. "No, we can't publish this," she said. "The work is too one-sided. My friend taught at one of the schools and she says it wasn't like that at all." Or words to that effect. As I found myself retreating from aspirations of being a published author, I remembered that same press had recently produced the diary of a colonizing explorer. One-sided, indeed?

Shortly thereafter, my sister and brother offered to drop the thesis off on their way downtown at one of our favourite popular presses, Pulp Press: good politics. And there was Randy Fred, a member of the Nuuchah-nulth Nation and a survivor of the Alberni

Residential School, now an esteemed editor in charge of Indigenous publications. He said an immediate yes, and the rest is some kind of history. We had some struggles over how much of the theoretical stuff to include and those parts moved to the appendices. My thesis title "Invasion and Resistance" became *Resistance and Renewal* in recognition of the incredible resilience of the Secwépemc people exemplified in the initiatives active throughout the former school buildings. It is not an overstatement to say Randy's acceptance has been a major contributor to my success as an academic.

Over the years, there have been so many responses to the work. One

memorable one was a book tour with Randy, both of us in an interview with a local radio station. A seemingly hostile and slightly bored interviewer. “And what school did you attend?” he said to me. “Oh, I’m white,” said I. “I didn’t go to residential school.” I swear the man’s demeanour transformed in front of our eyes. He straightened in his chair and focused on me. Outside as Randy and I debriefed, Randy quietly acknowledged such racist incidents were regular fare for him. There has also been the persisting question of who am I, a white woman, to do this work. The only response I can muster is that residential schools are products of colonization in which I am fully implicated.

A telling moment when I did feel affirmed came on a lonely, snowy night in a bookstore in Kamloops. Mary Lawrence in her book *My People, Myself* writes in the dedication, “And, to Celia Haig-Brown, author of *Resistance and Renewal*, for her book which stirred my memories of happenings at the Kamloops Indian Residential School as depicted by interviews with the survivors.”

Fifteen thousand copies and counting. Thirty-three years in print. One of the first books written with the words of residential school survivors telling their stories. Many people must have read and come to know those stories. Of course, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s reports have now shown Canadians that schools across the country contained similar stories and much more. And still, there are those who have refused to... what—read? listen? believe? The remains of 215 children buried in unmarked graves around the Kamloops Indian Residential School buildings have brought renewed interest in what the survivors have to say. How many more will it take?

The people in *Resistance and Renewal* and the people who brought their truths to the TRC are survivors; phenomenal and complex personal,

familial, and intergenerational relationships have allowed that survival.

I have a cabin in the woods near Kamloops where I go on a yearly basis to restore my spirit. On a weekly trip to town for groceries and to do laundry, I met Kathy Michel and Rob Matthew whose parents I had interviewed. We caught up a bit on each others’ lives and then they introduced me to their daughters, now fluent in Secwepemctsin. From that meeting, I was inspired to return to the children and grandchildren of many of the original participants in *Resistance and Renewal* to consider their relationship to education within and beyond schools. The resulting films, co-directed with my niece Helen Haig-Brown, *Pelq’ilc (Coming Home)* and *Cowboys, Indians and Education* tell the new stories: how the survivors and

their offspring are continuing to resist colonization and renew culture writ large. Never losing sight of the past, out of the present they are forging a future. This future requires that we all face the truths of how Canada has come to be and take up the work to be done on the long road to decency and justice.

Celia Haig-Brown is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at York University. She has held positions with the University of British Columbia in the Native Indian Teacher Education Program and with Simon Fraser University. She moved to Toronto in 1996 after living in various parts of British Columbia, including Campbell River and Kamloops. Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School won the 1989 Roderick Haig-Brown BC Book Prize.

Church on Queen

TIFFANY HSIEH

Here they are our people

Our people ran a church on Queen. Ba, Ma, my brother and I went there after we came here and met some of our people who went to our people’s church. In the beginning we didn’t know what kind of people we should be gathering with or where we should be gathering with them. We went to the church on Queen on Sundays when our people gathered. We gathered with them for potlucks, to buy a used car, to play softball, to sing. Some of our people prayed and we prayed with them. We bowed our heads, peeping. We opened the Bible, pretending. We listened to the sermon, slouching. We made friends with some of our people who

we sometimes gathered with on days other than Sundays and in places other than the church on Queen. Most of them we wouldn’t have been friends with back home but here they are our people and we are friends.

Tiffany Hsieh was born in Taiwan and moved to Canada at the age of fourteen with her parents. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in The Malahat Review, Poet Lore, Room, Salamander, The Shanghai Literary Review, Sonora Review, The /temz/ Review and other publications. She lives in southern Ontario with her husband and dog.

Wash With Like Colours

CARMEN TIAMPO

People have asked: What's it like? How's it been? Are you scared?



APRIL

As the novel coronavirus forced humanity into six-foot, six-person, hermetically sealed, socially distanced bubbles, I kissed and kissed the cheerful cheeks of my baby nephew as we sat in a park, the sun a yellow coin above us. After weeks of seeing noth-

ing else that breathed except on grocery runs, weeks of never touching another living being, I let the baby stick chunks of watermelon covered with drool in my mouth.

We began wearing masks, hiding smiles. But a baby reminded me what a smile felt like—giggling in my ear,

waving at everyone he passed, making a funny face while he ate his first apple, wiping chocolate pudding all over his clothes. Human touch vanished into memory, except when the baby used my body as a jungle gym. His pull on my arm, his whole weight on my legs as he climbed over me while I read to him.

Outside, a neighbourhood isolated from itself. Inside, the baby held on to my calf with one hand and reached up with his other, until I left behind my teacup in favour of carrying his warm body close to mine.

MAY

The day that George Floyd was murdered, less than two miles away I helped the baby learn to walk, his fat short fingers wrapped around mine as he waddled bow-legged in circles around the kitchen island, a tiny barefoot cowboy. A man lay dying under the knee of a cop, his breath spooling out onto asphalt. Meanwhile I was blowing cool air over hot rice for a baby who loves Indian food.

Another Black man, immobile. In my lap, a squirming child.

By the time we rolled the stroller onto the sidewalk the next morning, graffiti was scrawled across billboards and construction fences: *RIP George Floyd*, the *O* in *Floyd* struck through with a peace symbol. *ACAB. 1312*. The news reported riots and looters. Online, rumours were already circulating that the fire at an AutoZone had been set by a white supremacist agitator.

After the baby's bedtime, after curfew, we watched protestors march down the block, six feet between everyone, passing around hand sanitizer and masks. *Rest in power George. I can't breathe. Am I next? No justice, no peace. Justice for George. Black Lives Matter. Say their names.*

Enough.

Enough.

Enough.

Bernice Wick



There were more than enough National Guardsmen, big silent men who sat, faces uncovered, next to signs requesting customers wear masks to protect employees and one another from catching a disease.

We stored our *DEFUND MPD* signs in the baby's stroller and gave him every kiss we could. He'll grow up learning democracy is an action. He is already growing up acting democracy, although for now he can only ride in the stroller while we march.

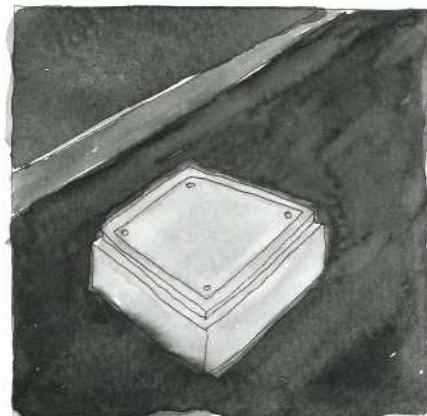
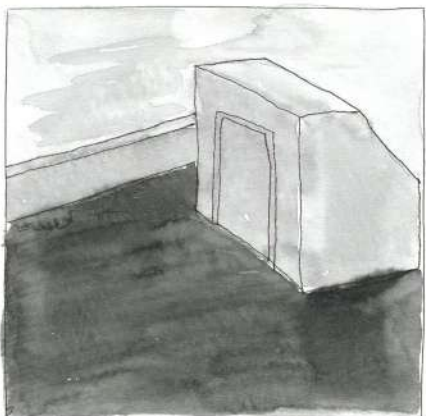
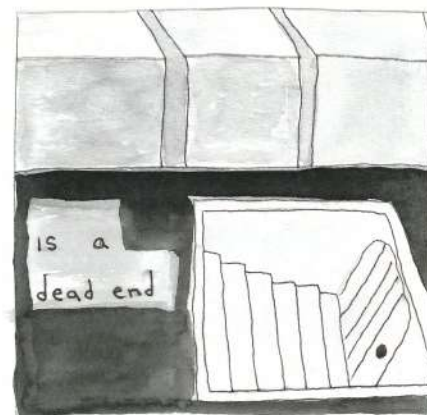
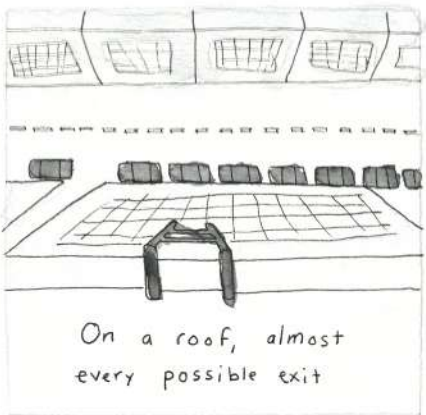
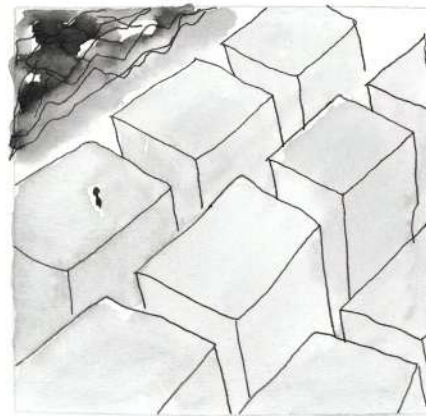
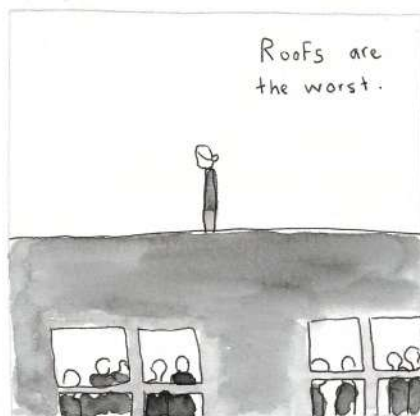
AUGUST

Returning to wildfire territory generated symptoms eerily similar to coronavirus. My head ached. My throat ached. My eyes ached. My anxiety ached. What scared me more? A fire burning me to ash, or a fever burning through my bones?

After a few days, a respite: settled close up at the foot of the Colorado Rockies, I watched the temperature tick down—thirty degrees, forty, fifty, this Labour Day setting records for

the earliest freeze in decades. My suitcase was full of shorts and flipflops; I stood by the window wrapped in a red cable-knit blanket and watched snow accumulate in wet white lumps on the trees outside. The borrowed yellow socks I wore puddled around my ankles and folded under my toes.

A sudden pause in the low hum of the electronics. The grey natural light through the snowfall, while we dug for candles.



There wasn't even the baby to keep me warm. He'd been reduced to a few inches on a phone screen, smearing food in his hair, practicing his walking, pausing every few minutes to grin up at the camera.

The power returned, then artificial heating, then, two days later, summer returned and evaporated the last of the snowmelt, and my flipflops touched the earth once more.

SEPTEMBER

The sky redder than fire trucks, our eyes burning, we drove through Oregon, through Washington. Reckless hours ticked by—fifteen, sixteen, seventeen—but stopping meant watching the glow of fire on the edge of the horizon, wondering how close it would come. A drive that should take three days was done in one and a half as we sped past the worst of September wildfires.

We woke headachy, thirsty, our hands cracking. Ash gathering in the

storm drains made it easier to explain away the symptoms that might otherwise have seemed like coronavirus. The quick-dwindling supply of alcohol-based hand sanitizer burned in our noses and in the splits in our dry hands.

The highway felt like how I imagine the apocalypse: just a few filthy cars traveling at speed, stopping only when we had to. The splatter of moth after moth after moth hitting the windshield lent a horror-

movie air to the quiet. Bandanas covering faces made every stranger into a threat.

But sometimes we'd get a phone call and in the background was the screech of a baby learning to talk.

NOVEMBER

For five days, anxiety drew my attention span into a glass thread. Red, blue, red, blue flashed across maps on a television that I couldn't watch and couldn't turn away from. Quarantined in my house on the north side of the Canadian border, my safety felt meaningless. My body would survive this. Could my brain?

For five days, they dressed the baby in blue, pasted BIDEN HARRIS stickers on his chest.

For five days, we held our breath, waiting to see if all of our efforts would bring that baby a safer future.

And then: relief felt like floating on a giant inflated pineapple on a green lake; like Four Seasons Total Landscaping; like the shrieking giggles of a child being swung weightless into the air, hands reaching up to snatch him from the sky, to pull him safe and close and squirming.

APRIL, AGAIN

Minneapolis is so eerily still on the verdict day for George Floyd's murderer. There are prayer circles outside of the courthouse and National Guardsmen parked in their armoured vehicles nearby. We hold our collective breath for hours, waiting for the announcement. The baby is oblivious, and we chase him back and forth in front of the television, unwilling to let him leave the room in case we miss anything following him to the kitchen.

The exhale, when it comes, is more like a sob. Derek Chauvin is guilty on all charges and tension winds from our shoulders. We clutch the baby close even though he wriggles. We paper the window with protest signs

SPRINKLER

Not a sun- but a rain-dial, it tells time rapidly, then untells it back again like a rotary phone or pantomime time machine. It pays to listen when

it stutters T-, T-, T-, T-, like a furious squirrel outraged you let your garden get so dry. Safer to stand back and watch it whirl its turret machine gun, firing at the sky.

UMBRELLA

In photography, liturgy, or martial arts, or architecture. Or else for throwing shade, to overshadow. The sum of its parts, from ferrule to handle, times how it's made:

pole, stretchers, ribs, and canopy. Courage to learn, like a character in a novella, when it rains or shines, to take, not umbrage, but cover, under a sombre umbrella.

—James Pollock

and art: *ASIANS FOR BLACK LIVES* and *YELLOW PERIL SUPPORTS BLACK POWER*.

That night, we invite over only our other Brown friends and each sit six feet from the firepit. For a few hours at least, we let ourselves stop thinking about race.

What's it like, people have asked me, how's it been? Are you scared?

Yes.

But listen, I still have to do laundry. I still have to go grocery shopping. Despite the fact that many of us are experiencing the worst things that we have ever had to experience, one on top of another, and that I have been at ground zero for many of these worst

things, there is a terrible mundanity to each day.

But then there isn't: there is laundry, but sometimes it is full of tiny t-shirts and baby socks. Among the grey days there can be a spot of yellow, a little wooden puzzle piece of it pressed into the palm of my hand, and the baby has learned to say it, too: *yub-yooOOohw*.

Carmen Tiampo is an immigrant and the daughter, granddaughter, great-granddaughter, and great-great-granddaughter of immigrants. She is a writer and editor living on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

New Normal Board Games

VÉRONIQUE DARWIN

Use the board games you unearthed during isolation to reinvent classic games for our times.

SHAKY LADDERS

The snakes are catastrophic weather events and the ladders, far-reaching promises from politicians. Best if these don't intersect. The board might look a little doomy gloomy, so use whimsical tokens with expendable lives.

#LIFE

Tree fort or bunker? Electric van-life or apocalypse jalopy? The middle class pursues their hopes and dreams, viewed through a "living *with* the climate crisis" filter. "Pay Day" might take on a different meaning each time you play. "What money?" some may say. "We can make money?" you might realize. Players move at their own pace and in their own direction. The spinner, rather than counting your steps forward, indicates air quality.

PANOPLY

Boardwalk is now the least expensive property. Consider alternatives to steam-powered locomotives. When you pass Go! don't take \$200. Rather, defund the police, and pay into a mutual-aid fund that is our only chance at continuing to do money, or anything. Rather than properties, invest in the future.

BATTLE GRAPH

Learn to read statistics! Sink each other's climate-change data by landing points on the hockey stick graph. It doesn't really matter what the graphs are about as we are all doomed.

GET A CLUE

Nine rooms on the world map projection: major corporations causing climate

change with weapons of the apocalypse. Whodunit? What did they do? Conspiracies will no doubt abound, but remember Occam is in the lounge, not the library, and he's holding a bunch of money (and a razor).

AGRICOL-UH

There will be no more agriculture, but this is still a great tool to learn how to do more with less. Lose a few pieces each time you play. Collect the meeple and sheeple figurines. Consider why baking bread has become so important in our new society.

MESS

The pawns are us. The knights are the four horsemen of the apocalypse. The other pieces are the elite: monarchs, religious leaders, commanders of the military industrial complex. Your goal is to save the pawns. And maybe the horses.

PREPPER OPERATION

Use janky tools you find around the house and this IKEA-style catalogue to learn real operations. Provided is a lifelike doll players can learn to sew back together. This game will be useful when you forget your first aid.

VIRUS TWISTER

Each colour is a different virus. We all know how viruses work now. The goal is to stand on one coloured circle and not touch anyone. Wear a mask. To get more realistic, use a Sharpie to draw in the spike proteins. If you get bored, merge this game with Prepper Operation and practise inoculating each other.

PERSONAL SHAME JENGA

Each block has a question about how players personally affect climate change: Are you willing...? Have you considered...? Do you even...? If you knock over the tower you can spend a few minutes rebuilding it and you don't have to say anything.

RISKY

Remove the borders and colours. Let's work together to attack Mars, which is in a different room, on a different board. Whoever goes to Mars doesn't come back.

CRABBLE

Create portmanteaus and compound words that best represent the hybrid crises of our time. Opponents get points if they understand what you're talking about, but who needs a common language anymore? Instead of joining words together, just put them anywhere around the room, or preferably on the internet.

HUMAN TRAP

Rube-Goldberg your living quarters using simple machines and renewable energy. No sun? Not enough wind? Move underground, where geothermal energy abounds. Or just hide the cheese somewhere and then try to find it.

A TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Collect these greying boxes from thrift stores while you still can. One day you'll read these cards around the fire and laugh at what we used to think was trivial. Will someone remember baseball? Was there really an ongoing competition for the tallest monument? What were we doing, and how were board games helping?

Veronique Darwin's stories have appeared in Geist and other publications. She lives in Toronto and is working on a novel and a screenplay.

FINDINGS



How do you love me 3

My DNA is the DNA of the oppressed and the oppressors. Me and other's like me embodied the carrefour of ethnicity. We are the path for reconciliation or distortion. We are embraced and rejected. Never pale or dark enough. We are desired and objectified. Black in the Western world and White on the African continent.

From How do you love me by Émilie Régnier, exhibited from April 2021 until March 2022 at the Capture Photography Festival. Émilie Régnier is a Canadian Haitian artist and photographer. Her work has been exhibited

Foot in Nose

NAOMI K. LEWIS

From Tiny Lights for Travellers by Naomi K. Lewis. Published by University of Alberta Press in 2019. Tiny Lights for Travellers has won numerous awards, including the Vine Award for Canadian Jewish Literature and the Pinsky Givon Prize for Non-fiction. Naomi K. Lewis is the author of Cricket in a Fist and I Know Who You Remind Me Of. She lives in Calgary.

The story I wrote about my nose job was first published in 2014, in the *Calgary Herald's* weekly magazine insert, *Swerve*. My editors titled the story—

unfortunately, we all came to realize—"A Bridge Too Far: The Story of My Big Jewish Nose." The magazine's cover featured a photo of me in profile, with dotted lines drawn on my face in black eyeliner, suggesting surgical incisions. The photograph hurt my pride a little; I wasn't wearing any other makeup and looked haggard, my face still too thin post-divorce. But I was happy to see the story in print, and received a flood of responses. Women, especially Jewish women, told me that my story was just like theirs. One Jewish woman told me her parents hadn't let her go through with the nose job she craved, and that she was grateful to them now, thanks to my article. Friends I hadn't heard from since high school wrote too, telling me they hadn't known about my surgery, or that they had known, and had found my decision baffling; now they



How do you love me 4

Be shameless tell me,
do you want me to be White or Black?

in cities across the world and has been published in numerous publications including Le Monde, Vogue and The New York Times. She lives in Montréal. See more at emilieregner.com.

understood. Other readers were simply surprised and interested in the history of the nose job, and of the Jewish nose job in particular. I'd never received so much feedback for an article; I'd certainly never received close to so much positive feedback for an article—usually people only wrote when I'd pissed them off—by disparaging detox diets, for instance, or by arguing that parents should be required to vaccinate their kids. But why (I thought) would anyone be pissed off about my nose job? At first, the most critical remark came from some guy who told me, pretty tamely, “Don't blame your parents, girl.”

But just a few days later, a full-page op-ed appeared in the newspaper: “Fixation on Noses Plays into Worst of Stereotypes.” Written by the local Conservative synagogue's rabbi, whom I'd never met.

“Against the genocidal backdrop of the twentieth century and recent outbreaks of racism and anti-Semitism,” Rabbi Rose wrote, the magazine “saw fit to re-introduce the much discredited and dangerous assertion that one can identify a person's religious or cultural affiliation by their physical attributes.” He claimed that none of his congregants had big noses, though some were Holocaust survivors—survivors who had suffered untold atrocities rationalized by stereotypes. “In all of her self-deprecating and neurotic musings about her nose job,” the rabbi wrote, “Lewis fails to see beyond her own face in the mirror that her article only serves to perpetuate such harmful stereotypes, thereby doing an incredible disservice to the Jewish community and the decent and moral citizens of our city.”

There was more. I was ignorant and badly educated, which explained why I thought Judaism was a race. The rabbi explained: “What truly defines a Jew is that person’s commitment to the values, wisdom, and moral vision that emerge from the Torah ... and the subsequent teachings of the rabbinic tradition.” And the final judgement: “Had Lewis seriously dealt with real issues concerning body image among teenage girls, sexist norms of beauty present in society, or minority assimilation into mainstream society, her inclusion of her own

story might have been both relevant and instructive. Instead, we were subjected to an embarrassing and self-indulgent personal story.”

Rabbi Rose seemed to accuse of me saying the very opposite of what I thought I’d said. I thought I’d written an article about Jewish identity, about my own slippery hold on that identity, which was surely not unique. I thought I’d addressed the deep entanglement, for Jews, of race and religion, partly because of the identities thrust upon us from the outside. I’d meant to write about embodiment, about my Jewish body, my female body, and about the violence history had inflicted on that body—“real issues concerning body image among teenage girls, sexist norms of beauty present in society, or minority assimilation into mainstream society”—yes, exactly.

My editor told me that another reader, a congregant of Rabbi Rose’s, had sent a similar letter. This reader was particularly offended that I’d included the “air is free” joke (why do Jews have big noses?), saying I’d caused him pain by putting such hateful words in print, as though I’d provided the joke to Jew-hating readers, for them to use as a weapon. My editor informed me that Rabbi Rose had devoted a whole Shabbat sermon to me and my anti-Semitism. The thought of a Jewish congregation shaking their heads in grief over the bigotry in their own city—over *me*, a traitor who’d provided anti-Semites with fodder, flooded me with nausea. And the way the rabbi alluded to me in his letter, not as a writer, not as a serious person, but as some *girl* who’d more or less sent her diary to a magazine editor, who misguidedly published it. Rabbi Rose’s whole letter was addressed to the magazine, not to me at all.

I was invited to talk about the story, and about the rabbi’s letter, on a national radio program. The show’s producer was a Jewish woman, and said half her friends, growing up, had nose jobs when they turned sixteen. She suggested, off the record, that perhaps the rabbi hadn’t noticed the phenomenon, or didn’t think it important, because it only affected girls and women. I jumped at the chance to explain myself on the radio, and after the interview I received more emails of support. And though everyone knows not to read the comments online, I did; one afternoon, I couldn’t resist. Most of them were on my side, but I was dismayed to see that some were on my side in a racist kind of way. They said things like, “That rabbi’s so typical. Those people think *everything* is anti-Semitic—they’re *obsessed*.” The rabbi’s letter had provided

PIGEON LORE

A selection of book titles from @vplgold, an anonymously-run Instagram account dedicated to “strange and unusual” titles available at the Vancouver Public Library.

Yes, I’m in Love with Lawn Bowling
All About Ontario Cupboards
Big Foot Stole My Wife!
General Relativity for Babies
All Dogs Have ADHD
101 Ways to Be a Long-Distance Super-Dad
Your Three-Year Old: Friend or Enemy
TEAM-dance: A Guide to Canine Freestyle
Old Bottles: How and Where to Find Them
Bread Sculpture: The Edible Art
Pigeon Lore
Holy Shit: Managing Manure to Save Mankind
Stuff Christians Like
Crafting with Cat Hair
Eat Bacon, Don’t Jog
Missed Periods and Other Grammar Scares
How to Raise Children at Home in Your Spare Time
“Why Do Only White People Get Abducted by Aliens?”
How to Teach Your Baby to Be Physically Superb
The Irish: Are They Real?
Airplane Yoga
Stories the Feet Have Told: Compression Massage
Foreskin’s Lament: A Memoir
Please God Let it Be Herpes
Biceps of Death
The Cat Who Sniffed Glue
Amish Hawaiian Adventures
The Lady Who Liked Clean Rest Rooms

fodder for anti-Semitism, just as he and his congregant had accused me of doing in my article. What a mess.

And of course I couldn't help but ask myself: was the rabbi right? The rabbi called my story, and by extension me, neurotic and self-indulgent. Fine. I could live with that. I had come by my neuroses honestly, and, yes, indulged a fascination with the self as an object of inquiry and art. I didn't think writing should avoid the personal or the embarrassing. I'd never questioned that the personal was political, and had often told my creative writing students that our most embarrassing memories, memories of losing our dignity, of accidentally transgressing unspoken edicts, often make for our most compelling and important material.

But worse, far worse, was I an anti-Semite? *Was I?* Growing up, I'd loved and admired Oma more than anyone. Oma, who once refused to attend a party at my cousin's house when she learned there would be observant Jews in attendance. And Opa—he and his brother Sam did not want to be Jewish, but it went deeper than that. They didn't *like* Jews. It wasn't that they believed Jews possessed essential ugly traits, though, Oma and Opa clarified. They believed that Judaism was a religion, not a race at all, and they didn't believe in organized religion, *period*. And they especially didn't like it when a group segregated itself, forbidding outside marriage and declaring itself special, chosen, even. It was all backwards, Oma and Opa insisted: observant Jews were racist against everyone else, which was why no one liked them.

At least there was no question that Dad was Jewish. I would have liked to show my father and his mother to Rabbi Rose and say, *see?* How can I be an anti-Semite with a father and a Mimi like these? Plus, I'd tried so hard, I'd married a Jew, and I'd worked to become a real Jew, and when people made cruel remarks about Jews, I felt like they were insulting *me*. Once I was at a bar and a man came over and told me, "I love Jewish women." And once I was at another bar, and a woman came over and said, "You think you're so smart, don't you? I know what you people are like." Then she said, "Do you know Dan Bernstein? I was supposed to go to my prom with him. If you see him, could you tell him I'm sorry I stood him up? And that it wasn't because he was a Jew?" No, none of this amounted to anything. People called Noam Chomsky an anti-Semite, and Sarah

Silverman, too, and Hannah Arendt, and every Jew who'd ever criticized the State of Israel. Jews who allegedly didn't like Jews were called self-hating Jews. Opa would have said he wasn't a self-hating Jew; he didn't hate himself; he wasn't a Jew. But according to Rabbi Gerry, a Jew is a Jew forever, so if say you're not a Jew, you're just a bad Jew, the wicked son from the Passover Seder, the one who says *they* were enslaved in Egypt, instead of *we*. Because whatever has happened to the Jewish people has happened to each of us, personally.

SHORT ESSAY ON THE TWEED CAP

From Dirty Words: Selected Poems 1997–2016 by Carmine Starnino. Published by Gaspereau Press in 2020. Carmine Starnino has published five collections of poetry and has received numerous awards, including the CAA Prize for Poetry, the A.M. Klein Prize for Poetry and the F.G. Bressani Prize. He lives in Montréal.

A snap-brim hat with a low, flat crown. It rides poor-postured on a head, but canting it dappishly across your brow

brings a look of light-footedness to your walk. You cock it back for the brag and bluff of conversation, or dirty jokes

with their not-in-front-of-the-children chuckles. Rain means you bring it to your eyes, head lowered as you dash

for cover. Men who wear caps are men who talk weather. Mio cappelluccio, my father called his, and used his first,

one summer dusk, to carry six yellow pears to woo my mother. It's supple enough to be crumpled into a coat pocket,

and lifted to your ear, it becomes the immigrant's conch, the sea still broadcasting from it. When the old-timers nap,

sitting, they hang it from a knee, a rim-mark in their hair. Awake, they rarely take it off, in love with how it forces a day

into declension, so that everything slows down—so slow you have an opportunity to savour the moment now braking

though your body as you pause, curbside, hands in pockets. Oh, and its surprisingly cool grip on a forehead when slipped on.

What have a lot of flat-footed peasants wandering through the desert to do with me? Opa had said.

Months passed, but people I hadn't seen in a while still looked a little too long at my nose, and sometimes a stranger, a member of Rabbi Rose's congregation, recognized me in a coffee shop, but couldn't say from where. I just played along, said, "No, I don't go to that gym or that synagogue, do you spend a lot of time at the library, yoga studios, are you from Ottawa, well I don't know then, but nice to meet you," never clarified, "I'm that anti-Semite from the newspaper." Then, during the Days of Awe, the week between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when Jews are meant to atone for all our (their?) sins of the previous year, I wrote to Rabbi Rose, expressing my regret that we'd never

spoken to each other, only addressed each other through the media. My apology was a little disingenuous; I really wanted to elicit a reciprocal apology from him. Instead, he invited me to visit him in his office at the synagogue.

Rabbi Rose was an enormous man, over six-and-a-half feet, and heavy. If he were a tree, he would have been a redwood. If he were an animal, he would have been a bear. In contrast, I felt like a chipmunk scuttling past him, as he ushered me through his door. We sat across from each other in comfortable chairs, in a tidy, spacious office that contrasted markedly with Rabbi Gerry's jam-packed space with its piles of books.

"I decided not to reread your article before you came," he told me, gesturing toward the computer on his desk, indicating where he could have read the article if he'd been so inclined. "Because," he said, "I didn't want to get into a debate about details. I thought it would be better for us just to chat."

Faced as I was with this imposing man, a rabbi, in his own office, I could only nod. Already, this wasn't going as I'd pictured. How could I defend my work if it wasn't fresh in his mind? How could I explain my position so rationally and intelligently, and with such grace, that he'd see his glaring error and apologize? I'd worn my most official-looking grown-up woman clothes to combat whatever it was about me that made strangers mistake me for a teenager. It hadn't worked. Our whole dynamic was learned gentleman versus ingenue before I'd even settled into my chair. I wanted to stop him, to clarify that I was in my late thirties, that I'd published several books, that I was a respected professional in my field, which was writing. Instead, I answered his questions about my upbringing, then nodded gravely as he explained that my Opa, and my father in turn, had tried to erase their own Jewishness by marrying outside the community and raising non-Jewish children. He told me, in a sympathetic avuncular tone, that my parents had managed to keep me from Judaism culturally and religiously, but that my appearance had seemed to undermine that effort. Changing my nose had been the last step required to create a wholly assimilated child. Only, he went on, it didn't work. By withholding contact with Judaism, my parents had only piqued my interest, drawing me back toward my roots and my history. Rabbi Rose said all this kindly, as though he wanted me to see that he understood my plight, and wanted to help

CLIMATE ANXIETY

By Trynne Delaney. From Watch Your Head, an anthology of writing in response to the climate crisis, edited by Kathryn Mockler with others. Published by Coach House Books in 2020. Delaney's work has been published in CV2, Carte Blanche, GUTS and These Lands: A Collection of Voices by Black Poets in Canada. They live in Tiobtià:ke (Montréal).

the grocery store is out of tofu
in calgary.
o town that runs on beef and crude oil,
understocked soy blocks a sign of hope
when the city's usually just coughing
its way out of smoke this time of year.
now, instead,
the amazon's burning for profit
and everyone's so scared of death
they forget some of us will survive
The End –
mass extinction doesn't happen in a day!
yap the dinosaur jaws compressing below us
and if climate change is getting you down
you can send a gif of jeff goldblum
through a server system
that will burn as much fuel
as the airline industry
by 2020.
it's all pretty bleak
but you know, uh,
life, uh, finds a way.

me, a lost lamb who'd wandered into his sanctuary. I noted only silently that he'd contradicted his own letter, the part where he'd claimed Judaism wasn't a race, that it was impossible to look Jewish.

Then, somehow, he was talking about my article after all, describing how hurt his congregants had felt when they saw the headline—"The Story of My Big Jewish Nose"—and the dismay I caused them by putting the dreaded joke in print. *Why do Jews have big noses?* Why would I do that? Why would I disseminate such hatred? As though the world didn't have enough ammunition already.

The joke, I tried to explain, I'd cited as a cultural artifact. To illustrate the stigma, the racialized body—to illustrate—I mean—wasn't it obvious?

"The problem," Rabbi Rose said, "is that you're not one of us. From the perspective of my

congregants, you're an outsider, criticizing us in public, when we've already been through so much as a people. Your mother's not Jewish, so you're not Jewish, but it's not just that. You weren't raised in a Jewish home and weren't taught about Judaism, so you don't understand what it's like to be persecuted over your identity. My congregation knows what persecution feels like, and when they saw your article, they felt persecuted again, *by you.*"

"I'll think about what you're saying," I told him. "That certainly wasn't my intention." I did not want to continue the conversation by arguing, and I really was trying to understand. I understood that Rabbi Rose was making a decision for me, a decision about my identity that I did not agree was his to make.

"I suppose people have been telling you that it was brave to write that story," he said, and sighed. 🌧️

SUBJECT VERB OBJECT

*From Word Problems by Ian Williams. Published by Coach House Books in 2020. Ian Williams is the author of five books. His novel, *Reproduction*, won the Scotiabank Giller Prize. His last poetry collection, *Personals*, was shortlisted for the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Robert Kroetsch Poetry Book Award. He's online at ianwilliams.ca and [@ianwillwrite](https://twitter.com/ianwillwrite).*

But the object would not say to the subject, *Object verb subject*. There was no fight. But subject went to sleep facing the unfinished PAX closet, turned off turned away, in other words, from the object's objective case pronoun. The object wanted to explain the construction *object verb subject* is a kind of grammatical impossibility. Also personal. Three-fifths personal. But subject's personal pronoun or inner child should not take it that way. Some phrases literally could not be said.

The syntactical problem could be traced to the object's possessive pronoun mother, another noun, whom the object suspects was unable to verb pronoun as more than an object. Object's maternal friend said, Another noun verbed pronoun as best as pronoun could though pronoun wanted to be verbed differently. And that *literally* and *figuratively* were embattled.

The object began to repeat the sentence in question to the reflexive pronoun in the PAX mirror. As a kind of question. Until wax dripped from the eyes. As a kind of statement, the subject floated into the room wearing an heirloom fur coat with red lining red silk lining I can tell you now that it's over because you may never otherwise touch the inside.

Familiar Terms

FOTIOS SARRIS

From A Foreign Country by Fotios Sarris. Published by Dumagrad Books in 2020. Fotios Sarris was born in Montréal. He currently lectures in the School of Professional Communication at Ryerson University. His work has appeared in Essays on Canadian Writing and Nineteenth-Century Literature.

“There’s so many. We all know *deemocracy* and *pheelosophy* and *theolodzy*, but there are some you can’t even tell. For example, do you know *khaidzeen*?”

“Say it again.”

“*Khaidzeen.*”

It was a Sunday evening, and apart from the droogs at the counter, there were few people in the place. I was seated by the cash register trying to read, but I was having trouble focusing.

“Ask our young scholar.”

I groaned inwardly.

“Aleko! Reh, Aleko!”

Grudgingly, I glanced up.

“Do you know *khaidzeen*?” asked Stavros Marangopoulos.

“What?”

“*Khaidzeen, khaidzeen.* Do you know this word?”

“I don’t know what you’re saying.”

“Do you mean *khaidzak*?” said Lazaros.

“No, no,” said Stavros. “That’s when you take over an airplane. I’m talking about *khaidzeen*.” He turned back to me. “Do you know this word, where it comes from? It means cleanliness, being clean.”

Light broke. “Hygiene.”

“*Khaidzeen,*” he repeated, as if correcting my pronunciation.

“What about it?”

“Do you know where it comes from?”

“No,” I said and went back to my book.

Having opened the restaurant in the morning, my father had left as soon as I’d arrived at 1:30. Now, nearing seven o’clock, the convention of droogs had been at the counter in one configuration or another all afternoon and I’d grown profoundly weary of them. I longed for peace.

“You don’t know where it comes from?”

I couldn’t suppress a sigh of exasperation.

“You’re the educated one, with all your books. You don’t know?”

“No,” I said without looking up.

“*Iyía,*” he declared confusingly.

Was he toasting himself in triumph? I glanced up to determine what was going on.

“It’s from the Greek,” Stavros said. “*Iyía.* Except in English it means clean or cleanliness rather than health.”

It took me a moment to put the pieces together. I didn’t show it, but I was impressed. I was also miffed I hadn’t known this. Stavros couldn’t always be trusted on such matters, but this one seemed credible.

“It’s amazing what they’ve taken from us,” said Stelios.

“I thought the word for clean was *clean,*” said Panayotis Toumbas.

“And not just us,” Stavros said. “Latin too.”

“English is not a real language,” said Stelios.

“Can I tell you something?” interjected Kostakis Orogas. Kostakis was once a sailor and sported an honest-to-goodness tattoo of a ship’s anchor on one arm, on the other a mermaid. These days he worked as a night cleaner.

“It’s a parasite,” said Stelios.

“It’s a language cobbled together from other languages,” said Stavros.

“Can I tell you something?” repeated Kostakis.

“It’s like the English themselves, filling their museums with the loot of other countries.”

“There’s more of the Parthenon in London than at the Acropolis.”

“I’ve seen photos. Have you seen photos of the British Museum?”

“Can I say something?” Kostakis said, raising his voice.

The others fell silent and turned to him.

“The English lifted themselves up on our books and wisdom. Enslaved for four hundred years, oppressed by ignorance and illiteracy, we had thrown out our books and learning, not knowing what we were doing.” Kostakis spoke with the grave and measured manner of a preacher. “We didn’t know these books even existed anymore. We wouldn’t have known what they were if you had shoved them in our faces. We didn’t know how to read anymore. Under the yoke of the oppressor, we had become ignorant and unlettered. So when the English came, they saw these books, they found them lying around, neglected, and they picked them up and read them. And they couldn’t

believe what they saw. They understood immediately what was in them. They recognized the wisdom and value in them. And they took them. They took these books away with them. *Our* books. It was not only our marbles they took, but also our knowledge and wisdom. And the Turks let them. Why? Because they *wanted* us ignorant. They *wanted* us unlettered. While the English built themselves up on our stolen heritage. It's on our foundation stones they've built their civilization, on our writers and philosophers and artists."

"When Shakespeare was inventing the English language," Stelios interjected, "he had to steal most of his words from Greek."

"You all know, of course, that in English the twelve planets are named after the gods of Olympus," said Panayotis.

"Greek is the language of medicine everywhere in the world," said Stavros. "Whatever the local language, the doctors of every nation in the world know Greek."

"It's the language of science."

"Do you know the original American constitution was written in Greek?"

"Can I say something?"

"This is why Greeks make such good doctors."

"The first doctor was a Greek."

"Hippocrates."

"But it's not just medicine."

"Can I tell you something?"

"That's why studying medicine is easy for Greeks."

"Doctors everywhere have to take the Hippocratic oath."

"Even in foreign universities they already know the terminology."

"All the first scientists were Greek, physics, geometry, astronomy."

"If you're German or French, it's like learning a new language, but for a Greek, they're all familiar terms. Do you realize most of us here already know more medicine than your average Canadian medical student?"

"Biology, chemistry, geometry—"

"We already said geometry."

"A Greek doesn't have to sit there and spend hours memorizing everything."

"Pythagoras and Euclid."

"This is why the Germans and French don't make good doctors."

"Can I say something?"

"They say the Italians are the worst."

"What about the Chinese?"

"Let me say something!" Kostakis rapped the counter with the palm of his hand, his wedding band clacking on the Formica. Everyone fell silent. "Why do you suppose the New Testament was written in Greek?" Everyone nodded solemnly. "Was it because Christ liked Greeks? It's because Greek is the language suited to the mind of God. It's the language closest to truth, to the divine. There was no other language the New Testament could have been written in. Alex. Alex, am I right?"

I glanced up. "I don't know, *Kýrieh* Kosta, you know more about these things than I do."

"I only recount what I've heard. Tell me if I'm wrong." 🍷

AMNESIAC

From Ghost Face by Greg Santos. Reprinted with permission of the publisher, DC Books. Greg Santos is the author of several collections, chapbooks and pamphlets of poetry. His work has appeared in The Walrus, McSweeney's Internet Tendency, World Literature Today and Geist. He is an adoptee of Cambodian, Spanish and Portuguese descent. He lives in Montréal and at gregsantos.me.

It all happened a long time ago.

Do you remember?

I think there was a nun, a war,

the phone call that changed everyone's lives.

No, how could you remember? You weren't even there.

But now that I think about it, neither was I.

That moment when you have something to say but forget what you've been saying mid-sentence,

I have that right now.

I've had that problem my entire life.

My history is made of tweezers

removing a splinter from a child's palm,

afternoon swims in the plastic turtle pool out back,

white bread salami sandwiches.

Thank goodness history isn't all goblets and tapestries.

Reaching a clearing in the woods,

I take a moment to consider my travels.

The villagers were right:

the view is, indeed, magnificent.

Gerryb'y

MORGAN MURRAY

From Dirty Birds. Published by Breakwater Books in 2020. Dirty Birds is Murray's first novel. It was longlisted for CBC Canada Reads in 2021. Murray was born and raised on a farm in Alberta and now lives in Cape Breton, NS, and at morganmurray.ca.

St. John's was much further from Montréal than Milton ever imagined.

The bus trip went fairly quickly through Québec, hugging the shore of the St. Lawrence as it grew wider and wider. Hundreds of farms, sliver-thin, stretching from the water, up the valley to God knows where. The opposite in every possible way from the massive flat squares of Saskatchewan.

New Brunswick isn't big, but the road winds through hills and bush and it seems like the dead of night even in the middle of the day, and it just goes on forever. The sun doesn't start shining again until Nova Scotia. Then rolling hills to Cape Breton—the distillation of quaint maritime charm—then the world ends.

North Sydney is the end of the line. But it's still 16 hours from St. John's.

It's further from Montréal to St. John's than it is from Regina to Montréal, which is across most of a continent.

Newfoundland is so far from everywhere it has its own time zone.

Newfoundland is its own planet.

Milton dug into his bag of drug money and bought a walk-on ticket for a massive ferry, which is about 100 times bigger and costs about 100 times more than the cable ferry across Lake Diefenbaker.

The MV Caribou sails for six hours through the night across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to a tiny fishing village called Port aux Basques, where Milton will endeavor to find another bus to take him to St. John's.

Milton tried to sleep on the floor of the ferry. But the gentle rise and fall of the ship through the night was just about more than his Prairie guts could stand. He turned a pale shade of corpse and fought nausea the entire crossing.

The second the ship docked, he was fine.

He walked off the ferry into a cloud of thick, cold fog.

It was Fall when he left Cape Breton, but the six-hour crossing was actually eight months into the past, into winter.

The thick, cold fog was like cement that pushed through his skin and meat and into his bones. When he looked down, he could barely see his own feet. At least, he thought they were his feet.

He made his way through a vast parking lot full of fog-hidden cars about to board for a return to Fall. Milton walked with his hands in front of him to avoid bumping too hard into anything that would sneak up on him in the fog. He made his way over to the ferry terminal and went inside to get a bus ticket.

The short, square woman at the counter—from what Milton could make out through her thick accent which sounded like Finnish without spaces between the words—explained, that:

“m'duckyissasin'boutdabussinb'notenoughtraficfor'ertokeepunnin'folkslikeflyin'thesedaysI'sposebutifyasneedtogettoTownm'loverGerrythere'llgiveyaalift.”

She pointed to a guy in a neon Ski-Doo jacket smoking a cigarette and drinking coffee out of a Styrofoam cup sitting directly below a no-smoking sign. Milton assumed that meant he was the bus driver.

Gerry wasn't the bus driver. There was no bus. Gerry was an entrepreneur.

When it wasn't fishing season he'd supplement his poge hauling lost tourists from Port aux Basques to “Town” in his 1997 Ford F-150 Extended Cab for \$100 cash, and bring back 50-pound bags of potatoes and five-gallon pails of pickles and 48 double rolls of toilet paper and 5x7 high-impact plastic baby barn garden sheds and anything else his neighbours would order from the only Costco on the entire giant, empty island.

“Sorrwym'sonshesfullerthanamummersgutontibbs ebeb'yift'weren'tsomaazyI'dtakeyainthepanbutyera pttofreezesomedayonclothesouttheresureby.”

“How much for a ride?”

“Nawm'songotsafullloadgottacallGerryb'yhe'll getyat'CornerBrook.”

Gerry pointed to a rotary phone on the wall under a handwritten sign that read “Gerry's Taxi – Dial 1.”

“Are you... Is that... Gerry... Taxi...?”

“Yesb'ydasrightgivesGerryacallan'he'llgetyatoa warmbedferdanight.”

“Gerry... Right...”

Milton, without taking his eyes off Gerry, walked backwards towards the phone and dialed 1 for Gerry.

The phone rang at the information counter, 15 feet away. Brenda picked up the phone.

“Gerry’s cab.”

Milton had no idea what was happening or who he was talking to.

“Uh... Hi... I need a bus to St. John’s. Please.”

“Nawm’duckydisisGerry’scabyawan’Gerry’sbus whichisn’tabusjustGerryjustluhissasinthere’snobus nomoresinbutdassittheworldischangin’.”

“Is this... Am I talking... to you?”

Milton pointed at Brenda across the corridor.

“Y’sdearwhatcanIdoforye?”

“St. John’s! Please!”

“Gerrysay’e’adnomoreroomin’istruckm’duck sinthatistooI’ll’avemeGerrycome’roundan’picky agetyatoawarmbedforthenightsure’e’llbe’eredaon cesittight.”

“Uhm...”

Gerry finished his coffee, dropped his cigarette butt in the cup, got up, threw the cup out, threw some words at Brenda, and made his way out to his waiting truck. Milton followed him out and watched him climb into his truck.

There were five other men in the truck already, all of them twice Milton’s size, with moustaches, ballcaps, and a mix of snowmobile-branded winter coats. They all turned and looked at Milton, half-nodded, and, in unison, took sips from giant travel coffee mugs. Gerry got in the cab and started the engine. Nodded to Milton and drove away. 🍷

TRANSATLANTIC | ZOMBIE | PASSAGES

From eat salt | gaze at the ocean by Junie Désil. Published by Talonbooks in 2020. Junie Désil is of Haitian ancestry, born of immigrant parents on the traditional territories of the Kanien’kehá:ka on the island known as Tiohtià:ke (Montréal), raised in Treaty 1 Territory (Winnipeg). Désil’s work has appeared in Room Magazine, PRISM International, the Capilano Review and CV2. She lives on qiqéyt (Qayqayt) Territory (New Westminster, BC).

my childhood bombarded with black-and-white images of “the poorest nation in the western hemisphere” i learn this bit of history from my parents long after they tell me to lie about where we are from or bend the truth a little *say we’re from France—remind them that you were born in Montréal* long before i came to know it as the place broken in two Tiohtià:ke long before i learn that the “pearl of the Antilles” the mountainous island we’re from is Ayiti-Kiskeya-Bohio.

this is what i learn—that on the eve of the new year, dissatisfied with his secretary’s initial draft of the Haitian Declaration of Independence, Boisrond-Tonnerre says, *nah, the statement does not capture what we revolutionaries have been through; it does not get to the heart of La liberté ou la mort!—Live Free or Die.*

*We require in fact for our declaration of independence:
the skin of a white man for parchment
his skull for an inkwell
his blood for ink
and a bayonet for a pen*

General Dessalines: **chef’s kiss* i entrust you to convey my sentiments regarding the above*

Community Legacy

CHRIS BOSE

From N'shaytkin. Published by battery opera books in 2019. Chris Bose is a writer, multi-disciplinary artist, musician, curator and filmmaker. He is Nlaka'pamux and Secwepemc, and currently spends his time in Kamloops, BC.

Oh, how he hated writing grants. The endless monotony of speaking a foreign language was one thing, but his Nlaka'pamuxstine tongue withered to dust while he tried to grasp, grunt, and speak the foreign language of grants. He thought

of it as Sophisticated Begging, because you needed to come up with the right programming, workshops, performances and exhibitions to channel the money toward you. Buzzwords like “artist development,” “community engagement,” “elder and youth” and “lasting community legacy” were things funding bodies liked to hear. But they would only last a year or two before new buzzwords would take over and he'd have to learn the language all over again.

He knew from the start that he could never make his so-called success last, because when he was riding that high wave as an artist, he was an idiot. He drank too much, celebrated a little harder and longer than most, and started becoming “that guy” at the function. The drunk no one wanted to be around. He was drowning in his own pain and loss, pushing everyone away because he was not sure how to deal with the success and the survivor's guilt from everything in his life thus far. That was okay at first, because he was starting to burn out anyway. The phoniness of the scene began to sicken him. The enablers too, feeding like parasites along for the ride until the next big thing blew in through the doors. But he didn't realize how big the toll would be on his so-called career.

What started out as actual fun and celebration, slowly spiraled into a rolling wave of disaster after disaster until he lost track of why he was doing it in the first place—getting out of that small town and onto the national stage.

It felt like unbelievable luck, and it was, at the beginning. It was amazing, and he noticed that everyone at that level partied because it was so fun to be able to make a living doing what you loved. Plus, deep down there was definitely some satisfaction at doing it on his own terms, despite being told for years he would go nowhere and only ever be good for nothing. But the price was being away from his family, his children.

An incredible run of fun events and adventures became a series of dark benders and blackouts. His girlfriend left him, took the kids and moved out while he was on tour in Ontario a week before Christmas. The phone that for years never seemed to stop ringing with good news and opportunities eventually fell silent, the flood of emails became a trickle.

He got out of the shower.

At that point in his life, off the road, out of opportunities and living in Kamloops, he felt stranded in the small town he thought he had escaped. What on earth could he do?

DESPERATE MEASURES

A selected list of materials used for Stalagmites, an evolving mixed-media installation created by Natalie Purschwitz, exhibited at the Helen Belkin Art Gallery at the University of British Columbia in 2020-21. Purschwitz's work has been exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Polygon Gallery and many other galleries.

wheatgrass, tissue paper stalagmite, hopeful enthusiasm
sprouted lentils, lichen, nostalgic fabulation
ceramic salt shaker, beets, dried disappointment
polyester fluff, wheatgrass, hydrocal, paint, sustained relief
birch plywood, metal table legs (hand-me-down)
stained towel (whitewashed with latex paint)
rag (whitewashed with latex paint)
dried garlic flower stalks, garlic bulbils
miniature garden potatoes (Purple Russian, Fingerling)
bucket, plywood, shredded paper (lists, recyclables), lost time
dirt, glue, rug fringe
dyed linen, cotton towel (made in Canada, hand-me down)
canvas, wood, paint, nylon stockings, stretched cynicism
soap scraps, sand, pacific residue
blooming cereus flower (*Epiphyllum oxypetalum*), plastic strip
plaster, paper, wheatgrass, accidental poem
wood, casters, canvas, blood (whitewashed with latex paint)
plants, plastic food wrappers, cans (evolving), dirt, gnats
shaped flask, pickled (fermented) miniature brussels sprouts
Shibori-dyed, handmade cotton gloves, onion induced tears
striped fabric (France), mini solo cup, wheatgrass, desperation

Seriously, what else could he do?

What was he good at besides art and creating things? After not having a real job in nearly ten years and the money running out, he started splashing around, throwing out one-page resumes like someone tossing chum into the ocean.

Someone surrounded by sharks. Except he was the chum, and the sharks wouldn't bite. Nothing. Finally, he snagged up against a rusty old hook drifting close to shore. He was reeled in for an interview.

It was for a job selling booze. He got it. Of course. 🍷

Uncle Ben and Aunt Jemima 2.0

CHERYL THOMPSON

From Uncle: Race, Nostalgia, and the Politics of Loyalty by Cheryl Thompson. Published by Coach House Books in 2021. Dr. Cheryl Thompson is the author of Beauty in a Box: Detangling the Roots of Canada's Black Beauty Culture (Wilfrid Laurier University Press). She has written for many outlets, including The Conversation, Toronto Star and Montreal Gazette. She lives in Toronto.

In March 2007, just a few weeks after Barack Obama, then an Illinois senator, announced his intention to seek the Democratic nomination for president, Mars Inc. launched a rebranding campaign to modernize the image of Uncle Ben, the advertising trademark for its Converted Rice brand. Mars gave Uncle Ben a new look as a business executive with a penchant for sharing what *The New York Times* reported as “his ‘grains of wisdom’ about rice and life.” This new Ben, dressed in a blue suit with bow tie and cufflinks, looked far removed from the plantation. In one crucial respect, however, Uncle Ben's biography remained the same: he was still just Ben, a pitchman without a last name.

Ben's rebranding paralleled a slightly earlier move by the Quaker Oats Company. In 1989, in celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the Aunt Jemima trademark, the company made extensive alterations to her face and body. Jemima's updated image did not include her familiar headband. Instead, she wore pearl earrings and a lace collar. Her hair was straightened, and she appeared visibly younger. Aunt Jemima had always been a heavy-set, dark-skinned, bandana-wearing Black woman with a broad, toothy smile. But, according to a company spokesperson, the updated version was “to make her look like a working mother, an image the company claimed was supported by test-marketing of the new logo among blacks and whites.”

Then in 1994, Quaker Oats announced that soul singer Gladys Knight had agreed to represent Aunt Jemima products in a series of television advertisements. Immediately, the singer faced accusations that she was perpetuating a derogatory image of Black women. At the time, however, Knight made a distinction: “I'm not Aunt Jemima. I'm only a spokesperson. What matters to me is what's inside the box.” Symbolically, a real Black woman with her grandchildren was speaking for an imaginary Black woman. As M.M. Manning, author of *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima*, observed, “If Aunt Jemima is recognized as anything more today than Gladys Knight is, then it must be owed more to Aunt Jemima's past than to her present—no one is buying the product because it is somehow connected with modern black working grandmothers, or Gladys Knight could do the job without Aunt Jemima.”

All Aunt Jemima products are still successful—even without their image—because of the nostalgic sentimentalism attached to the Black servant narrative. Aunt Jemima and Uncle Tom still haunt African Americans who have achieved celebrity; however, some folks did not see anything wrong with celebrities like Knight singing the praises of Aunt Jemima products. “Aunt Jemima's critics insult the hardworking women after whom its famous icon was modeled,” wrote Robert J. Brown, in an article for *AdAge* in 1994, adding, “I remember vividly the women in my community who put food on their tables by working long hours in other people's kitchens. My grandmother, who raised me, was one of them. I can still see her tying on an apron and

wrapping her head with a scarf as she prepared to cook. She was strong and wise, a magnificent woman who commanded respect.” That real Black women were being compared to a fictional Black woman spoke to the power of these images to blur the lines.

In an interview with *The New York Times*, Vincent Howell, president of the food division of the Masterfoods USA unit of Mars, said that because consumers described Uncle Ben as having “a timeless element to him, we didn’t want to significantly change him.” “What’s powerful to me is to show an African American icon in a position of prominence and authority,” Howell said. Ben was still elderly, and his outfit maintained the same colour palette, but the marketers’ decision to place him inside an executive office and add a wedding band, cufflinks, and a commanding posture meant that we are to read this *new* Ben not as a passive figure but as a “man in charge.” “As an African-American,” Howell remarked, “he makes me feel so proud.” At the time, market research showed that consumers felt a “positive emotional connection” with both the name “Uncle Ben” and the image, associating them with “quality, family, timelessness, and warmth.” “Because consumers from all walks of life echoed many times through the years that Uncle Ben stood for values similar to their own,” he added, “we decided to reinforce and build on that existing positive connection through the new campaign.”

Over the past fifty years, Uncle Ben, Aunt Jemima, and Rastus have all been redesigned. Now silent trademark characters, they no longer speak in advertisements and are reduced to headshots, staring mutely from packages. The new millennium has seen the emergence of a new generation of highly successful Black entrepreneurs, moguls, and politicians, such as Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, and in advertising, celebrity pitchmen like Dennis Haysbert and Samuel L. Jackson. In various ways, they all signal that the traditional Black consumer trademarks not only needed to be redesigned; they also had to enter the middle-upper class and the boardrooms of America.

All this rebranding, however, has been met with mixed reviews. Luke Visconti, a partner at New Jersey media firm Diversity Inc., told the *Times* that Mars was glossing over years of baggage: “This is an interesting idea, but for me it still has a

very high cringe factor.” Similarly, Marilyn Kern Foxworth, author of *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, applauded Mars for trying to update the trademark, but felt the decision to retain essential elements of the Uncle Ben portrait showed they were still trying to hold on to something that folks like her are trying so hard to shed. The ads are “asking us to make the leap from Uncle Ben being someone who looks like a butler to overnight being a chairman of the board,” Kern Foxworth said. “It does not work for me.” “Now that you are a big shot, Uncle Ben, you’re going to need your own private chef,” quipped Stephen Colbert, then host of Comedy Central’s *The Colbert Report*. “I recommend the Cream of Wheat guy.” Others were even harsher in their critiques. Carmen Van Kerckhove, co-founder of the firm New Demographic, wrote on her blog, racialicious.com: “This rebranding campaign is really the epitome of putting lipstick on a pig. Uncle Ben is still grinning and wearing a bow tie. There’s nothing Chairman of the Board-esque about that image. Uncle Ben still has no last name. When’s the last time you heard a powerful man referred to by his first name? No matter what fantasies you weave about him being the Chairman of the Board, his very name still comes from the culture of slavery.”

Despite these criticisms, the “new” Ben remained perched atop all Converted Rice products as of early 2020. Ben’s Original, without the image, appears in 2021. The irony of this new Ben is that nothing about the Uncle Tom trope is original. Even if his image is removed, Ben—a name now synonymous with service—is still a Tom.

In the digital age, Mars directly tracked consumer interest in the first Uncle Ben rebranding. The interest was undeniable: traffic to the Uncle Ben website soared during the summer of 2007. Unique visits ballooned from 191,000 in the third quarter of 2006 to 3.6 million in the same period of 2007, according to comScore. The image of a servile Black man continued to resonate on a global scale, especially in Britain, where, in 2016, the Uncle Ben’s brand claimed a 40 per cent share of the rice market, with sales of £89 million. The tracking results from the 2021 rebranding will be very telling about whether consumer appetites for centuries-long Black stereotypes have changed. 🍚

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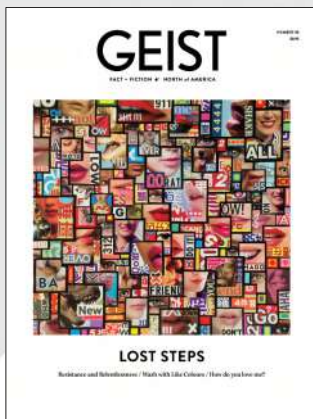
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Do You Know Who I Am B'y?

SUSIE TAYLOR

Go to bed. Lock the door. Don't open it for anyone.

I felt the car pull up beside me. I was walking down Water Street, looking out over the bay to Grace Harbour South. In Toronto, I would have ignored it, but I was home in Newfoundland and braced myself for a roadside inquisition: “Carly, you home for the wedding?” or “How’s things up in Canada? Ha. Ha. Ha.”

I kept walking but turned my head. A tiny hand levelled a gun at me and pulled the trigger. I watched the hand flip the gun up, cock, and shoot again and the same thing once more. It was by the second shot, when I wasn’t dead, that my brain picked up on the red plastic tip of the thing and I knew it was a toy. There wasn’t the crack of a real bullet, just the child’s voice saying, “Bang. Bang. Bang.” I never saw the face, I was busy staring down the gun, the practised flick of the hand and the small finger squeezing the trigger. As the car rounded the corner, the rear window rolled back up. I didn’t get the make of the car, only caught it was beige, old, nondescript—a calling card for rural poverty. It was a practice-perfect music video drive-by.

This was a record year for shootings in Toronto, and even St. John’s was having a spate of gun violence. I thought about the parents, one of them driving, probably laughing in the front seat. Probably mostly kids themselves, probably my brother’s customers.

There was no one else out on the street. No cars coming in either direction, no coffee shop to stumble into, no bus I could spontaneously board. No way to disappear fast out here except into the water or out to the woods. I felt like I’d felt as a kid, as a teenager: stuck. Stuck in the middle of fucking nowhere with no conceivable escape. “This is not your life,” I reminded myself, picturing my apartment in Cabbagetown, with its Ikea furniture and thrift-store finds; my office at the museum with my name on a plate by the door. I remembered my usual life was a flat white on the way to work, lectures on preservation techniques for ancient textiles, or the protocol for repatriating artifacts. I was working on a paper called, “The Dead Elephant in the Room: Does Taxidermy Still Have a Place in the Modern Museum?” I longed for the noise of the city, the streetcar, but all I heard was the waves rushing at the shore.

When I got back to Joseph’s place, I shut the door and leaned against it. I closed my eyes and saw the gun aimed at me. Shaking, I made myself a cup of tea with sugar in it, the taste of nostalgia. It just made me feel lonely.

Dad was away in Florida and I wasn’t talking to him anyway. We were on Christmas card and group-email communications only since he and Helen got together the year after Mom died. Helen was our neighbour. She yelled at us if we accidentally threw a Frisbee over the hedge and onto her lawn. She watched me and my friend, Luanne, coming and going when we were teenagers and used to go for long, aimless walks. “You’ve been gone a long time,” she’d yell out from her front room when I returned or, “Keep frowning like that, Carly Finn, and your face might get stuck.” Once, she accused me of picking her daffodils. I hadn’t, but Mom made me go over and apologize

anyways. “I know you didn’t do it, but it doesn’t matter because she thinks you did. Go on.” Later that day, I saw a bunch of yellow flowers in a Mason jar on Mom’s dresser.

Joseph’s house was a new build, a sprawling bungalow with big bay windows. He built it just after he and Luanne broke up. “A place for the kid to come,” he’d said. Inside there were lots of hard beige tiles and large pieces of brown furniture. All the appliances were stainless steel. The house backed onto the woods. Removed from the main part of town, it looked down over the harbour and houses and, although it was clean and modern, the yard was all Dukes of Hazzard: Joseph owned Finn Disposal and his garbage trucks got parked up there at night, along with his SUV and two pick-up trucks—one for hauling wood and the occasional load of trash when one of the compactors broke down, and the other his showpiece, an impractical white gas guzzler on oversized wheels. He kept Dumpsters up there too. There were two outbuildings with corrugated metal roofs and doors kept locked with heavy padlocks. And, of course, he had his toys: the ATV, the snowmobile, the motorbike shrouded in its body-bag-like cover, and the dirt bike Joseph bought for my nephew Joey. Joey hadn’t ridden since he fell off and broke his arm and Luanne threatened to go to the police since he was too young to be legally riding it. It was never exactly clear to me what they told the doctor at Emergency.

When Joseph came home, he brought Mary Brown’s for our supper. He didn’t notice I only ate the pickle off the top of my Big Mary and a couple of taters. We watched RuPaul’s Drag Race together for awhile, and guessed at who would win. Our one shared activity as teenagers had been TV-watching and we slipped into it comfortably, like in the old days when we shouted out answers to *Jeopardy* or tried to guess the next plot twist on *Murder She Wrote*.

I was home for Luanne’s second wedding. She was my childhood best friend, mother of my niece and nephew, and my ex-sister-in law. Joseph and I didn’t talk about the wedding. After RuPaul, I went to bed. I was sleeping in my nephew’s room, in a child’s bed the shape of a race car, low to the ground and red. I had to curl my legs up. The light fixture had cars on it too, and around the top of the wall was a border of fire engines, racing around the perimeter of the room in an infinite rush to an emergency they would never reach. Joey didn’t come stay the night anymore. Joseph

saw him every other weekend, at least for one meal, usually breakfast: a quick drive-through at the Tim Hortons for hot chocolate and donuts. But the room remained ready with clean sheets; Joseph wasn’t storing boxes of old tax receipts or his weight machine in it. I think he thought there might still be time for Joey to come stay though Joey was too old and tall for that bed by then.

I came out of the bathroom in the morning, with my hair curled and a party dress on. The dress was a rockabilly number, the kind of thing middle-aged women like me buy on the internet, trying to hold on to some vestige of cool without resorting to dying the grey streaks in our hair purple or navy blue. I was wearing it with Blundstones. Joseph said, “Nice shoes.” I ignored him. What did he expect, I’d be teetering on a pair of hooker heels like Luanne’s second marriage was a do-over of my high school grad?

The only jacket I had was a bright blue North Face raincoat, and when I pulled it on over the dress Joe said, “Wait, you look like a fucking retard in that!”

“Jesus, Joseph, you can’t be saying that.”

“Come on, Carly. People will think you’ve had a breakdown or you’ve turned into a lesbian or something.”

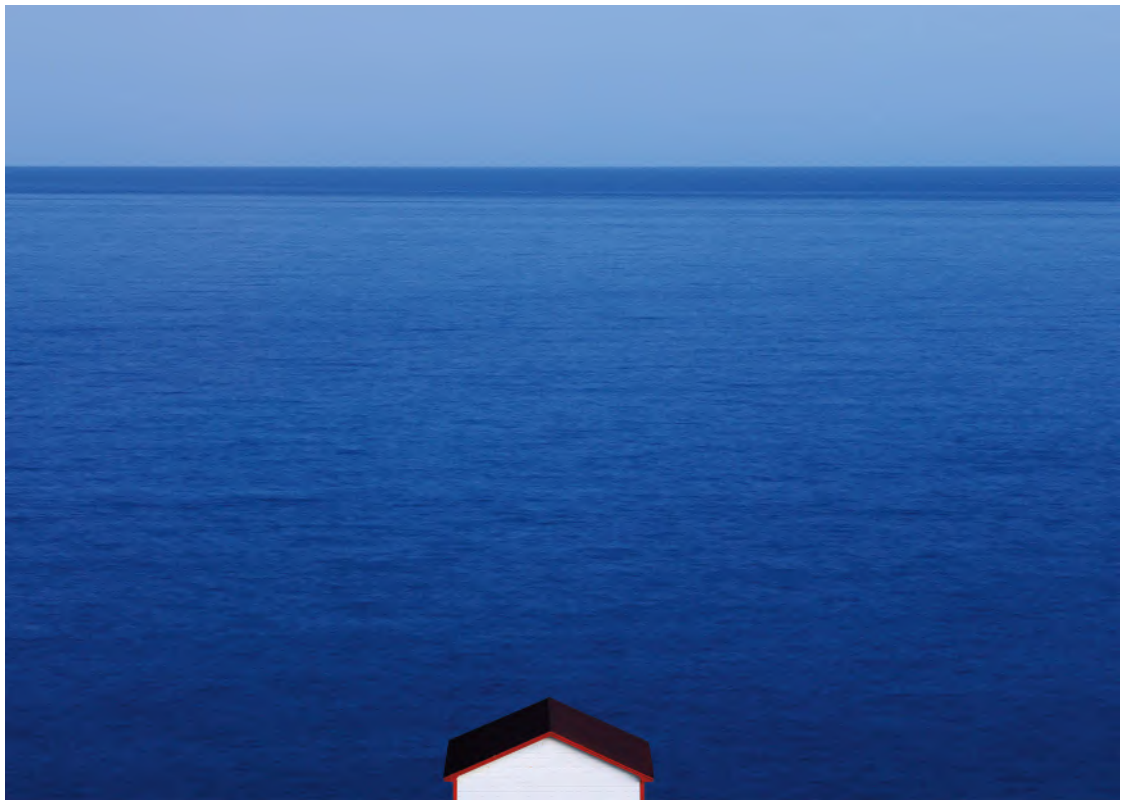
He rifled through the front hall closet and pulled out his old leather jacket. I’d always coveted that jacket; when I pulled it on it had that supple feeling and I felt like James Dean. I looked in the mirror.

“It’s a bit aging rock star,” I said.

“Better than looking like a re...”

I put up my hand. “I’ll wear it. Thanks.”

I grabbed the things I needed from the pocket of my raincoat and shoved them into Joseph’s jacket as I headed down the road: wallet, key, phone, lipstick, emergency tampon. As I shoved the tampon toward the bottom of the pocket, I touched something with my fingers and knew from the shape it was Joseph’s old pocket knife. Our grandfather gave it to him: bone handled, with a sexy curve to its blade. I was so jealous. All my presents got chosen by our Nan and usually involved teddy bears, or were homemade, like a purse of old jeans, or a crocheted dolly to cover up a spare toilet roll. The last time I’d seen the knife was in high school; we’d been at a bush party and Joseph had carved his and Luanne’s initials deep in a tree with it. I’d yelled at him, told him the tree would die and he’d told me to stop being such a



douchebag. I started angry crying and then ended up giving Dale Porter a hand job because he was nice to me.

It didn't take me long to walk downhill from Joseph's and hit Water Street. The wedding was at the United Church; they did divorcees. Every third car that drove by me honked. This time the greetings were friendly, most of the cars, like me, were headed to the wedding.

In the church, I looked around. Took in everyone's faces, three years older than the last time I had seen them.

The reception was at the Loyal Orange Lodge, the L.O.L., on one of the streets in the "historic" part of town. I didn't get that drunk at first. I was a good aunt—I danced with my nephew and embarrassed him. I participated in *The Locomotion*. After that there were so many people talking to me; emboldened by a few drinks they began asking me questions about my own life. I work at a museum, I'd say, and they'd smile, imagining I sold tickets at the entrance, or maybe dressed up in old-timey outfits and showed people around, and I didn't disabuse them of this idea. Mostly people wanted to tell me how many kids they had, about jobs they'd gotten, houses they'd bought,

parents in hospital, parents back from hospital, parents dead. There was gossip too: whose son was in jail, just back from jail, whose husband had left her, couldn't have a baby, miscarried, wasn't speaking to her sister, who was laid off, let down, lying low. There was a lot of diabetes and IVF going on amongst my peers. No one asked me about Joseph—they all knew how he was doing with his big house on the hill, his suits, and the rumours his money came not only from garbage disposal but from something else.

When Luanne and her new husband left the reception, Luanne threw her bouquet at me and I caught it on reflex. Of course I caught it. I switched from the champagne and got serious at the bar with Luanne's Uncle Mort (the gay one) and some whiskey. Mort was only a few years older than me, but I still called him Uncle Mort. He lived in Montreal and joked how, there, he insisted on being called Mortimer, as Mort does not go well on bilingual dating sites. Then Mort and I were the only ones left at the bar. There were a few drunk stragglers on the dance floor and the bartender was pointedly wiping down tables.

I hugged Mort goodbye. His mother lived just down the street and he stumbled out the front door to her house. I went for a last pee. The

whiskey hit me as I stood watching my swaying, red-faced reflection in the bathroom mirror and contemplated the walk uphill to the comfort of my nephew's car-shaped bed. The booze, the flight from Ontario, the general exhaustion of being in my hometown had caught up with me and I needed sleep. By the time I emerged from the bathroom, the last of the dancers were heading out the front door and I was the only guest left inside. There'd be a party continuing on somewhere, but no one had invited me.

The parking lot behind the L.O.L. was famous for a murder. I was related to the murdered girl, Mary Catherine Finn. On September 4, 1824, she'd been raped and killed in the back alley that used to be where the parking lot was now. Dad had told me this story with glee. Mary Catherine's death was famous, and he liked to crow about his connection to her, like her death was a sideshow act that made him look cool. He bragged about it the way the teenage boys I grew up with bragged about watching snuff films. There were ghost stories about Mary Catherine; Luanne and I had come here a few times at night looking for her, and once freaked ourselves out so much I'd peed my pants.

I could hear noise out in the parking lot. I thought I'd just go check. Maybe someone would be sober, or sober enough, to give me a ride home. I could check for an Uber, I thought to myself, and was laughing at this thought as I headed out the door. You still had to order cabs twenty-four hours ahead out here. I stumbled on the stairs as I was coming down them.

There was only one car in the parking lot, and about eight people, and when their faces turned to stare at me coming out of the building, I realized they were all young. In that odd space between teenager and adult. Maybe the oldest was twenty. Twenty years ago, Luanne and I would have been part of this crowd. They all looked familiar, I could have guessed at half of their last names, but I didn't know them, and they did not know me, and they were not welcoming of a stranger. They glared, the wide-eyed stare they used around here to stake territory, then they ignored me. I was an adult, but a lone one and female. The smell of teenagers assaulted me: smoke, cheap alcohol, skunky pot, male body spray. I was ready to go, preparing myself for the slow march back to Joseph's, the sobering cool air. One of the boats was in, and I could hear the thrum of its engine down by the cold storage. I was walking away when the fight

started. I heard the noise of anger and a cry of pain and I turned to look, despite myself.

He was one of those boys: gym-hard, whitening-strip teeth, drunk and something more, although I couldn't put my finger on it. He was crying, and it was like the small crowd was forgiving him his casual violence because of the tears pouring down his face. They were lit by the lights of the parking lot, and it was eerily theatrical.

"Tyra, you're a fucking whore," he shouted through his tears. His hand gripped the upper arm of a girl and was squeezing tight. Tyra was one of those girls without body fat. She was wearing a puffy winter jacket but it hung over a cropped white sweater and her pierced navel was exposed to the cold air. She was shrinking her head into her jacket trying to get warm even as she tried to pull away.

One of the other girls in the small group yelled, "Let go of her, Brad, you're hurting her."

"Mind your own business, Evie. This is between them," one of the onlooker boys said to her. Calm, not wanting the spectacle of violence interrupted.

"Fuck off, Cody," said another girl, her hand on Evie's shoulder.

"Fuck you, Maria."

Maria kept looking toward me, where I had turned at the edge of the lot, like she thought I could fix this, like it was a schoolyard, and I was expected to play teacher. Brad gave Tyra a vicious shake.

I avoided, whenever I could, being an authority figure. I had at least twenty years and two university degrees on top of this crowd. Maria looked at me again, waiting for me to act.

I started to walk over to Tyra and Brad. When I was about five feet away, the one called Cody stepped out. His jeans were dirty and his thin upper lip twitched slightly. He was giving me a fuck-off-outta-here stare. I was trying to remember if 911 worked in this part of Newfoundland yet. It never used to, I used to know the number for the volunteer fire department, I was trying to recall it. I wasn't entirely sure I had cell reception.

I ignored Cody and yelled "Let go of her" at Brad, the words sounding ineffectual as they left my mouth.

"Mind your own business, Missus," Cody said.

"Leave her, Cody," Maria called out. I heard Tyra whimper.

"He can't be shaking her like that," I said to Cody. As I went to walk past him, he pushed me

and I stumbled back and fell to my side. I caught myself on one hand—some instinct I left behind a long time ago came back and I sprang up fast.

Cody had turned away from me after I fell and part of me suspected he was ashamed. I grabbed him by the shoulder and swung him around. I looked him straight in the eye, put my face right up to his. My smoothed-out mainland accent went all Bay and any quiver that had been in my voice earlier was gone.

“Do know who I am b’y? Do you know who I am?” His hands were at his sides and I could see the hesitation, but he was thinking of raising them. I spit the last words at him, “I’m Joseph Finn’s fucking sister.”

I glanced over for just a moment. Brad had let go of Tyra and all eyes were on me and Cody, seeing if he had it in him, seeing if he was tough enough, bad enough to hit a woman, a woman who claimed she was Joseph’s sister. I reached in my pocket then, thought I’d pull out my phone and call the cops. Or at least try to. What came out was the knife, and without thinking I flicked it open.

“Shit.” I heard one of the previously silent bystanders exhale. I looked at the knife in my hand, vicious and sharp. I saw fear in Cody’s eyes. I felt the power I had, that I could hurt him if I wanted to. Then I glanced around in time to see Tyra, now free, turn and raise her skinny arm. She punched Brad square in the middle of his face. Blood and tears streamed down his nose.

“I’m calling the cops,” Evie said.

“I already did,” said Maria.

I was still holding the knife between me and Cody. I heard ragged breathing, like a sick animal—the breathing was coming from me.

“Come on, Brad,” I heard Tyra say, and she was guiding him, sobbing and holding his bleeding nose, to the car. Brad kept saying, “I’m sorry, baby. I’m so sorry.” A couple of other kids got in with them and the car doors were slamming, the engine starting up.

Cody backed away from me.

“Crazy bitch,” he said and started running. I heard the sirens.

I stood for a moment looking at the knife, looking around at the remaining kids staring at me and the car pulling out fast, until the Maria girl yelled at me, “Run. Fucking run.” And we all ran, me and these kids, heading down the lanes we knew the cop car could not go.

When I got to Joseph’s, he was sitting in a rocker, the rocker that Luanne bought from an

antique store in St. John’s when she was pregnant. He was dressed for a business meeting in a suit and tie, but he was rocking back and forth with a shotgun on his lap.

“Jesus Christ, Joseph!” I was thinking suicide, until he looked accusingly at me.

“How’d you get home?”

“I walked,” I said. But I’d run, and I was out of breath and knew I looked like I’d been fucking someone’s husband in the janitor’s closet of the hall.

“Go to bed out of it,” he said.

“Joseph? I’m an adult, remember? Don’t tell me what to do.”

“Go to bed and lock the bedroom door and don’t open it, no matter what happens. Don’t open it for anyone.”

I didn’t argue, and I allowed myself to notice that the lock on the bedroom door was a dead bolt and there were bars on the window. Of course, I’d seen them before, I’d just pretended to myself that things were different. Like Joseph didn’t have video surveillance cameras set up all over the place and a baseball bat stuck in an umbrella stand by the front door. No one in the family ever played baseball.

I took off my party dress and pulled on a T-shirt. I put the jacket back on, pulled it tight around me and lay in bed listening. Joseph had the TV on, too low for me to make out words. Eventually, the front door opened and shut again. It was past late and into the early morning by then. Far in the distance I heard a shotgun ringing out. Bang. Bang. Bang. The sun was coming up and I pulled the covers over my head. I woke up smelling bacon, hearing gunshots again.

I packed my suitcase, tucking Joseph’s jacket in the bottom and stashing the knife with it. When I came out of the bedroom, the table was set. A pitcher of orange juice, a glass already poured at my place. Joseph was frying breakfast and Joey was shooting people on the TV screen.

Susie Taylor is a queer writer. Her novel, Even Weirder Than Before, was published in 2019 by Breakwater Books. Her work has appeared in Geist, Prism International, The Fiddlehead, Room Magazine and elsewhere. She was the winner of the 2015 NLCU Fresh Fish Award and the 2018 Lawrence Jackson Writers' Award. She lives in Harbour Grace, Newfoundland and Labrador.

With a View

Photos by Michel Huneault

In September 2020 the photographer Michel Huneault was invited to do a six-week artist residency in Frelighsburg, Québec, to document the area of Canada and the United States along the forty-fifth parallel (the halfway point between the equator and the North Pole), between Lakes Champlain and Memphremagog, an area shared by Québec and the state of Vermont. As in Huneault's previous work (including a series on the European migrant crisis in 2015, which appeared in *Geist* 98, and another series in 2017 on the border at Roxham Road, New York, an entry point commonly used by asylum seekers from the US), he was once again attracted to the border: "not to the official ports of entries but more precisely where we don't really see it. I was curious to find its path, with the initial intent to document it in a typological and archival fashion for posterity."

Borders between the two countries have had a long history of being easy to cross and right into the late 1990s travellers could often make the journey with simply a smile and a wave to the border guards. But since 9/11 it has become increasingly difficult to make the crossing and the generally liberal and progressive Québécois living near the border described to Huneault an increasing wariness of the political climate south of the border. The near-complete closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic has also meant that asylum seekers trying to come into Canada have been turned away. Huneault writes: "Goods, businesspeople and hockey players are now allowed to cross in, but most refugee claimants still can't. Canada is setting a worrying precedent."

The exact location of the border in the area Huneault photographed is well known to locals—it lies in farmland, backyards and orchards—but Huneault himself had to proceed with caution. Were he to linger too long or venture too close to the border, authorities from both sides quickly arrived on the scene: "The border here is invisible, but filled with sensors and cameras." After making the photographs, Huneault says, "I had to quickly mark down the exact location of the border on the photos, with a black square, like a digital Post-It, [so] as to not forget where the other country began. This simple and precise addition—repetitive and clerical—accidentally transformed the document. The curtain had fallen, the vision was obstructed, the sanitary and political screen stood like a stoic monolith in the quiet and surreal landscape."







Langley

BILLEH NICKERSON

After Joe Brainard

I remember walking under the power lines near my house and how if it was raining and you held an umbrella you'd sometimes get a shock.

I remember trapping grasshoppers in ice cream pails and pickle jars, learning the hard way to poke holes in the lids.

I remember neighbourhood kids throwing their pennies into my Mr. Turtle Pool after I convinced them it doubled as a wishing well,

the U-pick strawberry patch that closed down as deer liked strawberries too

and thinking the first condom I saw on the nearby nature trails was a deflated balloon.

I remember my school was named after long-time Langley educator Alice Brown, though I wished it had been named after Laura Secord, like the one in Vancouver, as I believed students there received free chocolate.

I remember the school secretary, Mrs. Montgomery, would use the same structure for all her announcements—*Mr. Jones to the office, please, Mr. Jones*—and how we'd mimic her during recess and lunch—*Jason, what's in your lunch today, Jason?*

I remember Shane Stackhouse and all the other Jehovah's Witnesses in the hallway each morning during the Lord's Prayer and holiday craft sessions,

and that Mr. Shipley, my PE teacher, married Miss Ross, who taught me choir, during the summer, and her new name confused everyone when we returned in the fall.

I remember my school divided into house teams—Haida, Nootka, Salish, Bella Coola—though nobody ever taught us the names' true origins, so when I hear them I first think of my school.

I remember Jasvinder preferred to be called Vinder as he thought it sounded cool like Darth Vader. Every other Jasvinder I've met has preferred to go by Jas.

I remember finding out that the Great Wall Restaurant where my family ate buffet referred to the Great Wall of China and had nothing to do with the great wall of buffet items,

and buying Mexican jumping beans, smashing one with a hammer to reveal a small worm, then trying to replace that worm's home with a bottle cap of water and a clump of grass in a pickle jar.

I remember a lot of pickle jars though surprisingly few pickles.

I remember my dad refused to let my mom put coins in my birthday cake as he worried we'd get sued if one of my friends choked to death,

and thinking the yellow shell on the Shell oil sign was a giant piece of cheese, then marvelling that the giant piece of cheese was shaped like a shell.

I remember my parents ordering pizzas and having me sit by the front window to wait for the pizzas the very moment they were ordered, even though it would take at least 30 minutes for them to arrive—

and the time the pizza man forgot to put his car in park, so after he opened his door the car rolled backwards and the pizza boxes slipped from his hand onto the asphalt, where the tire rolled over them.

The pizza man ran over our pizzas! The pizza man ran over our pizzas! I screamed, but no one believed me until a meek teenager knocked on our door and said, *I'm sorry, sir, but I seem to have run over your pizzas.*

I remember my father calling the pizza place to tell them their driver ran over our pizzas, and they thought it was a prank call and hung up.

I remember my local MP, Bob Wenman, awarding me a Canadian flag pin at my school assembly after I was the only student in kindergarten who could name our prime minister, Pierre Trudeau—

and the immediate silence of the drunk teenagers in the back seat of the car driven by that same MP in the McDonald's drive-thru I later worked at when I said *Hey, aren't you Bob Wenman?*

I remember microwaving Cheez Whiz to make quick nachos, burning the roof of my mouth almost as badly as when I'd drink vending-machine hot chocolate.

I remember the Avon lady, who I called to buy my mom a Christmas present of snowman-shaped soaps, who referred to her husband as "the husband" and whose husband always referred to her as "the wife."

I remember when Scott and Danny's parents divorced.
I remember when Melanie and Kim's parents divorced.
I remember when Erin and Davy's parents divorced.
I remember when Darren and Adam's parents divorced.

I remember Mike Reno, the lead singer of Loverboy, visited my elementary school and signed one kid's arm with a felt pen and how that kid screamed *I'm never washing my arm again!* but he did eventually (I checked his arm each day).

I remember learning about menstruation from Brooke Shields in *The Blue Lagoon*

and how when my aunt Susan picked me up from school hours after learning she was pregnant, she repeated *Twins, twins! I'm pregnant with twins!* the entire drive home.

I remember being called a frog because I was in French immersion, a preppy because I wore dress shoes, and a faggot because that's what happened when pickup trucks with rolled-down windows drove past.

I remember my mom changed our rescue dog's name from Misty to Mitsy—it was easier to say with my lisp.

I remember finding out about my friend Karie's death from the front page of the *Langley Times*. I thought the prayer stools at her Catholic funeral were footrests.

I remember having to take off my shoes before eating at the Okinawa Garden restaurant and how my parents' drinks were served in small statues of geishas and warriors that could be taken home and used to hold pens or cut flowers.

I remember my mom's embarrassment at having to tell me it was Gladys Knight and the Pips, not Gladys Knight and the Pimps,

and renting violent movies from the Blockbuster Video where I worked to the husband I'd later learn beat my mom's friend.

I remember Mrs. Gray, the school librarian, reading Dennis Lee's *Garbage Delight*. I loved when Suzie grew a moustache and Polly grew a beard.

I remember *Ramona the Brave*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and Judy Blume's *Superfudge*.

I remember my friends Carmen Porter and Christie Brown loved only horses, and then they loved only horses and Shaun Cassidy, and then they loved only Shaun Cassidy.

I remember the birdhouse my dad hung high in the backyard cedar after a nest fell from the tree during a storm.

I remember my whole family standing around that nest, and the shock when I saw that the eggs inside were the same colour as the sky

*Billeh Nickerson is an author, editor and educator whose sixth book, Duct-Taped Roses, was recently published with Book*bug Press. He is Co-Chair of the Creative Writing department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, BC. He lives in East Vancouver.*

The Sum of Lost Steps

DANIEL CANTY



HEART OF THE SCIENCES

We are not living in the fair month of May that we had hoped for. I continue, for the sake of my psychical and physical health, to take long walks to the far ends of the city. As soon as I step out, I feel the need to invent for myself a destination, as if my sanity depended on it. The current crisis—and I find the expression a bit paradoxical, given its pacifying effects—has unpeopled the city’s streets, slowed down its rhythms. I meet the gazes of other stupefied walkers, shocked to be wandering through that day after that should never have come to pass. For most of us, the familiar fears of the Cold War had eventually come to seem like a bad dream. These fears have been revived, and transformed, by the power of the virus. Montreality, swayed by its shockwave, had sunk into relative unreality. On the city’s emptied sidewalks and in its almost carless streets, scattered citizens give each other a wide berth. They wander about with the haunted look and spectral gait of revenants, as scared of themselves as of their kind.

In the former era, before the inner spaces of the city closed around us like a shell, I had been commissioned by the FTA, a festival of contemporary dance and theatre, to deliver this text to a live audience in the agora of Le Cœur des sciences—The Heart of the Sciences—located just a few steps away from Le Quartier des spectacles. The performing arts fell, as we all have, upon hard times. I quickly resolved—I would like to say that it was on the very day that I was supposed to speak publicly—to go and see the space where I had been invited to perform if things had followed their foreordained course. When I first saw the white tarps of the downtown testing clinic, they seemed to me like counterparts of those the US Army planted at the foot of the extra-terrestrial vessel in *Arrival*, the Hollywood film of our fellow Québécois Denis

Villeneuve. I imagined technicians busying themselves inside, dressed in hazmat suits, handing anguish-laced testing swabs to their fellow citizens, in a daze at finding themselves in the midst of a disaster movie. And this in the very spot where they used to come and party, and to attend concerts.

The Place des Festivals had been transformed into the set of a lived science-fiction movie. I think that something, in the stories and images that we consume daily, had prepared us for the eventuality of the crisis. When, on a fine Thursday, the twelfth of March—le douze mars, Douzeday Doomsday—in Québec and on Earth, the authorities decided to alert the population to the threat floating in the air, we so quickly, and so docilely, adapted to the new order that it seemed as if we were merely accepting a truth that had been hidden in the back of our heads for ages. Fiction, as I like to say, is also part of reality, and it had prepared us, in part, to tumble into this *experiment*. My use of this term, which scientists of various persuasions hold dear, is far from innocent. The pandemic has propelled us, with urgency, into the hypothetical and we are adapting as much as we can to a novel form of solidarity, which might also pave the way for a deeper form of social control.

When I search the recent history of my city for comparable events—such a seizing of public space—I start thinking of the October Crisis in 1970, and of the ice storm in 1998, or of Le Printemps érable in 2012. Federal interference, the rigours of winter and popular emotion lived as an end in itself—defeat is, after all, one of the founding myths of Québec—are characteristic features of our culture. They also represent three distinct ways to block the city's arteries. The pandemic is a novel one.

The curve of contagion has settled like a bell jar over our heads and, in Montréal as elsewhere, the population has found itself trapped in the space of a scientific planetary tale. Long before detecting the exoplanet B that radio-astronomers have been hoping to find, Earth has been demoted into a B-movie planet. We are living in uncertain times, in a diagrammatic scenario, subject to the sway of statistical disquiet, to the naïve interpretation of the virus's dramatic arc. Statistics generate a multiplicity of ghosts. Their power—which we cannot doubt—is, properly speaking, supernatural. The story of our lives unfolds at another scale of being, in another world. There is something necessarily reductive—and immensely confusing—in quantified narratives, where numbers take pride of place over individuality. Science, or something like it, may very well have intruded—along with the health crisis—into the midst of the city, but the story remains ours to tell, and if there is one thing that is certain, it is that no calculations will exhaust the topic.

To the familiar question “What does History teach us?” I've always preferred the more fecund “What do stories teach us?” Every culture, every political regime, approaches the crisis in a peculiar style. What we are living through here in Montréal has, in many ways, very little to do with the global narrative (or even with the provincial scenario). And what each of us is experiencing, in our personal folds, will ultimately reveal the most fundamental lessons, and will show what and whom we hold dearest. It seems to me, in





any case, that we should avoid reducing our fellow human beings to the abstract “people” who haunt our conversations, and whose main defect consists in not being us. With the pandemic, fiction has laid claim to history. And history, now more than ever, needs human imagination. As long as we remember that we are living in Montréal, in our *Québec libre*, it remains up to us—who are, and are not, those “people” we refer to, or those spectral statistics that public discourse has brought to bear on reality—to redefine the terms of the telling.

I must admit to my natural inclination: every time I no longer know what to think, I turn to words, with the conviction that they know things about us that we ignore. I’d decided on the title of these musings, *The Sum of Lost Steps*, without quite knowing what I would be talking about; I only knew that I wanted to evoke the long walks through which I took, and still take, the measure of Montreality. And it does not seem like a trivial fact to me, considering the situation, that, if we had not found ourselves in this B-movie script, it would have been, yes, in the Heart of the Sciences that I would have uttered these words. Science—or something like it, which speaks in its name—has conquered the habitable space of the city, and the expression *heart of the sciences* seems a very fitting description of the manner in which we are currently inhabiting life.

May the above observations suffice for me to lay claim to the mutant powers of the telepath, as I lead you through the streets of Montréal, in search of its many-chambered heart.



THE SUM OF LOST STEPS

When I am asked to locate the true heart of Montréal, I cast about like a compass, tempted to leave in three directions at once. And then I settle.

Something inside myself tells me that it must be located somewhere in the waiting hall of Bonaventure train station. Our central station exerts an almost magnetic attraction upon me. Though I have full control over my schedule, and my steps, I returned there—in the former era when the city was still open—several



times a week, carried by the momentum of long walks which took me from the heights of the Plateau to the lowlands around the Canal. I could almost have provided you with a timetable. I did not even have a train to take, or some daily tedium to submit to, propelling me back downtown day after day. It was a quality of light that needled me back on my way. I must share some traits with those creatures—mostly birds and insects, but also some fish, even some humble plants, corals and bacteria—who are guided along invisible lines by a trace of ferrous oxide, lodged in their flighty little brains since prehistory. For me, this iron compound, which goes by the name of magnetite, conjures the image of a weightless stone, a black body floating in the mind, scattering thought-rays in all directions. Some credit this unconscious migratory pull to the presence in magneto-receptive entities of a protein known as *cryptochrome*. This “hidden colour,” sensitive to the ultraviolet spectrum and to sources of blue light—chief among them, moon-glow—is said to exert a regulating influence on the creatures’ circadian rhythms. These hypotheses, no matter their truth value, agree with my own states of mind. Magnetopaths are blue-hearted, and moon-footed.

As you can see, I don’t need scientific permission to abandon myself to the pull of a metaphor. I envision the volume of the train station like a gigantic, lucent egg, nestled in a darkened hollow at the foot of the shimmering glass facades of downtown, a kind of subterranean hangar for that orangey UFO which was seen floating, on the evening of November 7, 1990, above the concrete parapets of Place Bonaventure. It is indeed a luminous phenomenon which stirs my imagination and gives me impetus. I see myself pass, anonymously, on the terrazzo of the station’s waiting hall, with its cosmos of multi-coloured marble flecks; an immense geological slab, on which rests a volume of light. In French, this space is beautifully named “la salle des pas perdus”—the hall of lost steps—in perfect accord with these flecks, and the arbitrary nature of my walks.

At the two ends of the waiting room, just above the bas-relief pediment dedicated to the builders of the nation—figures taken from an allusive Canadian encyclopedia, carved in ecru stone on an azure background—frosted windows reveal backlit silhouettes:



workers on their breaks, gone for a smoke, engaging in small talk, coming and going. Those pale figures belong to the theatre of the former era. For me, they are the actors of a plot-less movie. I like to pause before one of the departure boards—one dedicated to the country and the province's faraway cities, the other to Laurentian suburbia—and consider their spectral assembly, suspended in another light.

I'd always believed that these milky windows opened onto an interior space that only the office workers could access. Just before the city closed in on itself, I took the risk of verifying, and discovered that what lies on the other side is a sort of covered parking area, an image so foreign to my preconceptions that I've already forgotten it. This might be because, when I project myself mentally inside the station, I never picture its exterior facade; it is as if it were a space without an outside, and that people, in order to exist there, have only one option: to meld with the light itself. I slipped behind the scenes. Where were the extra-terrestrials, the beings of light? These silhouettes belonged to people, ordinary people, equipped with their Tupperware or cigarettes, in thrall to their daily obligations, their breadwinning, or their life-wasting, who can tell?

Forgive them, for they know not what they do. I long ago labelled *L'heure des fous*—The Mad Hour—the interval between 4:26 and 6:12 or so, when the downtown towers empty out. Under the two departure boards, the floor of the waiting room is alive with white collars freshly freed from their daily obligations, in a hurry to return to the suburbs, or to journey further away in Québec or Canada, where they will become more nearly themselves. I like to walk into the throng, on my way to nowhere. Their lines of flight do not coincide with mine. But please do not think that I despise them: I love their teeming, their rumble, their dispersion—this possibility that they embody, of leaving in all directions at once. The waiting room is a Parliament of the Possible, more alive than any debate of the National Assembly.

I am, however, wary of the crowd's desires, the charms of hourly wages, and the attrition of souls sacrificed to job descriptions, and to management models. Maybe it is the contrast between my own freedom and the servitude of the waiting passengers which impels me: I return here precisely because I do not have a train to take. Because I want to rub up against the majority, to redirect my train of thought. REW/FFD. The cause is not magnetite or cryptochrome, but my own attraction to the impossible. I flee the Mad Hour, take over the calculation they feign to ignore, of which they are the beating heart: the sum of lost steps.

THE LINE OF WARMTH

Have you ever noticed how, when crossing through downtown Montréal on foot, the air temperature rises a notch between René-Lévesque Boulevard and Sherbrooke Street? Whatever the time of year, a difference of one, one and a half degrees, can be felt. I have baptized this thermal membrane *La Ligne de chaleur*—the Line of Warmth. For me, it demarcates the high and low parts of town, marks the turning point dividing my venturing out, and my coming back.

The glass towers, in this viral interval, are mostly deserted. The calorific phenomenon, however, continues with undiminished intensity. For a long time, I believed that it was due in large part to the hustle and bustle of street traffic, combined with the human warmth of crowds. In the absence of the labouring, shopping masses, its primary cause becomes much easier to pinpoint: whatever direction one approaches the Sainte-Catherine axis, the hum of heating systems becomes evident, the tinnitus-like sizzle of electric circuits, the effort of machinery labouring in the resting buildings. Their breathing is heavier, slower than usual. The deep, mechanical respiration of a world without us, in suspended animation.

Unreal cities. Where pestilence weighs upon us and silence is an appeasement. The threat is respiratory. It attacks the founts of our breath, which is also the heart of our stories. The snore of the skyscrapers has always felt as if it were muffling some secret almost-language. This impression is amplified by the unreal quiet into which the viral season has plunged the city. Buildings seem on the verge of speaking out. But remain speechless. Words hang on the tip of my tongue: the buildings are waiting for our return, the propitious moment to awake, lucid, from the nightmare of history, and to take up again, otherwise, the dream of cities.

APPLE CORE

For the ancient Greeks, the heart was the source of breath, and breath, the fuel of the soul. The main stage of the *Cœur des sciences*, the locus of our absence, is in the former boiler room of the university complex that surrounds it.

Some historical bearings: before acquiring its present scientific reputation, the building housed the School of Higher Business Studies and the Montréal Technical School. Eventually, both of these migrated to the University of Montréal, on the other side of Mount Royal. In those pre-university days, the two institutions supplied downtown businesses with hordes of employees. The present transitory population of white and blue collars, who busy themselves in the offices and engine rooms of Ville-Marie, are their direct descendants.

If we were to go a bit further back in time, say circa 1815, a rather more bucolic scene would greet us: we would find ourselves in the middle of a vast orchard. Its limits extended from Sainte-



Catherine to Sherbrooke Streets, and, from west to east, from Bleury Street to Saint-Laurent Boulevard. I have no idea which kinds of fruit were grown here. Maybe a variety of apple unique to Montréal, like the one the Sulpicians used to cultivate in the meadows where the Lachine Canal now flows? The annals contain no record of its complexion, its perfume, or its tang. The properties of that lost apple are as mysterious as those of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. It is its perfect substitute.

Which accidents, what turns of genetics, can cause one to lose an apple forever? I venture onto the asphalt incline that bisects the campus, from President Kennedy Avenue up to Sherbrooke Street, as if it were one of the tree-lined avenues of the orchard. On this slope, time winds backwards for me, back to the woods of prehistory. I am as happy as a hunter-gatherer: richer for all I know not, keen for all the mysteries of the world, revelling in the Abundance. I have learned this lesson well: the Heart of Sciences and the lost apple's core are one and the same.

NECROPOLIS

It is a spiritual crisis that we are facing, as much as a health emergency. On Holy Saturday I had decided to pay a visit to my grandmother Jeanne, and to my father René, who are buried, along with lesser-known (to me) members of my family, in the necropolis of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges—Our Lady of the Snows. Every time I visit, I align my steps with the tower of the University of Montréal, and proceed to get somewhat lost.

I came up against a padlocked gate. A laminated sheet, hanging from the iron bars, informed me that access to the cemetery was cut off until further notice. This government edict made short shrift of my directed wandering. On the other side of the fence, a man, dressed head to toe in sporty nylon, was approaching at a jog. Judging from his less than athletic profile, he must have, like so many citizens, very recently developed a taste for running. I watched him struggle over the fence. Once his feet were back on the ground, and his breathing had eased, he explained to me that he had entered in the same fashion.

It's no secret (that being said, please don't tell on me) that, nearby, behind the stable of the Montréal metropolitan police service, it is possible to slip through the fence, between two disjointed bars, and enter the vast reaches of the necropolis. The police, distracted by the pleasures of horse-riding, usually turn their back on this irregularity. Today, the equestrians were absent from the mountain, but the moment still seemed unpropitious. I had just seen, on the summit circle path, their pedestrian colleagues handing out tickets to a young couple whom they had just caught slipping under one of the numerous yellow security tapes, plastered with the very COVIDian formula, Danger—Closed for the Season.





The phrasing of the state edict hanging from the bars was less clear. I thought it indicated that this, and only this particular gate, was closed. So I decided to add a kilometre or two to my stroll, and to walk up to the main gate, on Côte-des-Neiges. I found there a duplicate of the official interdiction, identically laminated. Jeanne, René: I salute you from afar.

A few days later, a friend to whom I was relating this episode with some measure of outrage told me that she had crossed paths with an adventurous nun, on her way back from the necropolis, who had offered her passage to the other side. I must admit, dear representatives of the public authorities, that I strongly approve of these delicate acts of social disobedience, and ardently wish for their multiplication; may they continue, away from your administrative oversights, for as long as you are unable to adjust your practices to the realities of the human heart. Joggers, nuns and other ardent souls are seeking forms of contemplation—through running or prayer—whose profound kinship should be recognized.

If we claim to be fighting against death, it seems perilous to cultivate its oblivion. Attracted to the glorious abode of the living that is Mount Royal, we neglect the beauty—and the function—of the neighbouring necropolis. The proximity of a Park for the Living to a Park for the Dead seems to me a potent differential, generating an energy that courses through the whole city. Could the authorities be wrong about the lived nature of death? Funerals excepted, the living are never all that numerous on the labyrinthine paths of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges.

Allow me to offer a lesson: when there are only administrative reasons, there is no real reason. If there is a crowd at Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, it is a very quiet one, that of the deceased. Why fear their congregations as we once did? They are, in these hygienic days, weak vectors of contagion. However, the imaginary pressure they exert upon the present is essential to our well-being. Because of our dead, the future continues to exist, momentarily, before collapsing beneath the weight of the present. I'll let you ponder this philosophical fragment...

In the meantime, let's hope the authorities can come around to a more humane point of view, and at least admit that the cast iron gate of the cemetery is no more hermetic than a sieve: its bars can do nothing against the morning dew, the proliferation of fog, or the tendrils of ectoplasm. And, as long as the living are denied access to the dead's resting place, we can wish for our dearly departed to return to us. To take long walks, become part of the city air, and to make their way, with full immunity, to the hospices, the bedsides of the sick, where they can lend to the bedridden, waiting at death's door, a bit of their presence, and their breath.



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All in the Same CANO

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

For a brief period the band CANO gave shape to the dream of a bilingual Canadian culture



As a teenager, I listened to different music with different friends. In the Ottawa Valley in the late 1970s, only a few of my friends shared my enthusiasm for the Franco-Ontarian band CANO. It was the era of progressive rock: groups reliant on keyboards and synthesizers, and instrumental interludes that spun tunes out far beyond the format of the three-minute pop song. The vinyl album, rather than the single, was the currency of popular music. Lyrics were often cryptic, their correct interpretation the subject of debates that

continued late into the night. CANO showed us that progressive rock could illuminate debates about Canada.

Growing into adulthood along the Ontario-Québec border, I knew that I inhabited a country that was on the verge of rupture. The Parti Québécois government of Québec, elected in 1976, was committed to separating the province from Canada. The federal government promoted bilingualism and multiculturalism as bulwarks against both Québec separatism and US cultural domination. The rural borderlands where the country's two

largest provinces met included both francophiles and francophobes. The friends with whom I listened to CANO shared my francophilia. We parsed the group's lyrics for clues to our national dilemma. CANO stood for *Coopérative des artistes du Nouvel-Ontario*; the eleven members came from the tough mining town of Sudbury, Ontario. Made up of both francophones and anglophones, with a Ukrainian-Canadian violinist, CANO were heralded by the newspapers as the quintessential Canadian band. The fact that all of the members were white was not seen as an

obstacle to this designation. In 1961, less than one per cent of Canadians identified as “non-white”; in 1981, when the census introduced the “visible minority” category, 4.7 per cent of Canadians ticked this box. In a late 1970s Canada that was about 96 per cent white, CANO was able to speak for the nation. Though the group had no Indigenous members, it recognized the oppression of these cultures; one song decried how Indigenous symbols had been *étouffé* (strangled).

Debates over national identity swirled around CANO. “We were there for the music; the journalists were there for the story angle,” guitarist David Burt later recalled. Fixated on these national debates, my friends and I overlooked the extent to which CANO was the product of an arduous campaign to revive the culture of Ontario’s downtrodden francophone communities. The cooperative from which CANO took its name had been founded in 1971. Impelled by intellectuals such as Pierre Bélanger, and the protean figure of Robert Dickson, a southern Ontario anglophone who moved to Sudbury, adopted a francophone identity and eventually won the Governor General’s Literary Award for French poetry, the cultural revival’s activities included the founding of the Éditions Prise de Parole publishing house, and the Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario. One of Dickson’s students at bilingual Laurentian University, André Paiement, became the most dynamic creative force of his generation. A prolific playwright while still an undergraduate, Paiement soon became artistic director of the French-language theatre. In 1975 he conceived the idea of a rock band whose concerts would be of theatrical grandeur. With assistance from Dickson in writing lyrics, Paiement and Burt formed CANO. Rachel Paiement, André’s sister, was the lead singer; her intense brother and the rough-voiced transplanted Acadian Marcel Aymar acted as alternate vocalists.

Paiement’s audacity in giving expression to a minority culture through grandiose spectacles clashed with unforgiving realities. The group’s large size made touring expensive, the cooperative formula meant that stars earned the same as roadies. One of CANO’s lyricists, Suzie Beauchemin, died as they were recording their first album, *Tous dans l’même bateau* (All in the Same Boat). CANO had a conflicted relationship with Québec. They needed the Québec market, and were welcomed by Québécois listeners surprised that Franco-Ontarians could produce such sophisticated music; yet CANO were bound to oppose Québec nationalism which, if successful, would strand them in an English-speaking country. The twelve-minute song “*Mon pays*,” a riposte to Québécois folk singer Gilles Vigneault’s nationalist anthem of the same title, lamented that “*mon pays / ne vivra plus / plus tellement longtemps / Oui, mon pays désuni...*” (my country /will live no longer/ not much longer / Yes, my dis-united country...).

Vigneault’s *pays* was Québec; Paiement’s was Canada—and the world. In “*La première fois*,” (The First Time), one of his most impassioned compositions, Paiement praises cross-cultural connection and excoriates narrow nationalism: “*que je ne suis rien / que je ne puis rien sans toi / Et tout le monde parle de son pays / chacun son petit nombril...*” (I am nothing / I can do nothing, without you / And everyone talks about his country / Everyone his own little navel...)

For a brief period CANO held its contradictions in equilibrium, incarnating the dream of a bilingual Canadian culture. The group’s second album, *Au nord de notre vie* (In the North of our Lives), sold 50,000 copies, many of them purchased by anglophones. Then disaster struck. In January 1978, at the end of an exhausting concert tour, André Paiement, ill and run ragged by the contradictions of his position,

committed suicide. In 1981 violinist Wasył Kohut died of an aneurysm during a rehearsal. Record executives pushed for shorter songs, English lyrics, more conventional chord progressions. The albums that followed, though they yielded a couple of pop-radio hits that maintained CANO’s visibility, were unremarkable.

CANO thrived on the border between cultures, in spite of the perpetual risk of rejection by one linguistic culture or the other. In the late summer of 1979, as Québec prepared to hold a referendum on independence, I attended a CANO concert within steps of Parliament Hill. “*Mon pays*,” sung in Rachel Paiement’s soaring voice, had never felt more urgent. Yet the headbangers sitting beside me, impatient for the heavy metal group due to play next, drowned out this anthem of our divisions with shouts of, “*Sing in English! Rock and roll!*” The next summer I was in a youth hostel in Tadoussac, Québec, the only anglophone backpacker among young francophones who were commiserating with each other over the referendum’s failure to achieve Québec independence. CANO’s “*La première fois*” came on the radio. André Paiement’s caustic denunciation of ethnic nationalism stung the crowd into silence. “*Who could sing something like that?*” the woman next to me asked. Few Canadians today dream of the bilingual federalism the group embodied. CANO’s music is remembered mainly in francophone communities in northern Ontario, a source of local pride in a fractured national landscape where each region or ethnicity speaks for itself and no one else.

Stephen Henighan’s most recent books are the short story collection Blue River and Red Earth and the novel The World of After. Read more of his work at geist.com and stephenhenighan.com. Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenighan.

Achilles and the Lusitan Tortoise

ALBERTO MANGUEL

“Have patience” and “Tomorrow” are two inseparable locutions in the Portuguese tongue.

—*Princesa Maria Rattazzi, Le Portugal a vol d’oiseau*

Every time I settle in a new city (and they have been many) I try to understand what seem to me its particular qualities, those features that appear as immediate impressions during the first days or sometimes hours. The restlessness of New York, the staidness of Milan, the melancholy of Buenos Aires, the exuberance of Paris, the superciliousness of London, were a few of the aspects that struck me soon after setting foot on what were for me all places that I had only known in the pages of books. Gradually, these strident traits of my geographic caricatures faded, or became more nuanced, and were replaced by deeper, more complex imaginations. Something similar occurs when I meet a person for the first time, and my impressions of the tone of voice, the style of dress, the aesthetics of a face, shift to less capricious considerations of the person’s thoughts and emotions. Both sets coexist, of course, but one becomes the shadow of the other.

The Baroque assumed this coexistence of features—the obvious and the hidden ones—as an artistic device. In poetry, architecture, fine crafts, the equivocal richness of the visible universe was brought to the foreground, deliberately burying the core ideas around which the volutes and trimmings were woven. Duplicity became commonplace in all artistic representations. As an emblem of *vanitas*, or of the deceit inherent to things of the

world, including flesh and the devil, the double or perhaps multiple nature of everything allowed the artist or poet to look at and show several sides at once, as in those images carved into cathedral façades and depicted in everyday objects showing, for instance, a beautiful woman on one side and a rotting corpse on the other. The scholar Ana Hatherly, in a talk at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Paris in 1989, commenting on the iconographic tradition of the *vanitas* theme in Portugal, quoted a seventeenth-century poem by Eusebio de Matos in praise of a lady’s beauty as one side of the theme. Bernardo Vieira, his colleague, perhaps his friend, set up a mirror to Matos’s poem by following its lines but describing not the beauty of the living body but the corruption and decay attendant to all flesh. In 1651, Father António Vieira, brother of Bernardo, in a sermon had stated plainly: “the mirror is a silent demon.”

Following Father Vieira’s warning, I’ve learned to distrust the impressions granted by the “silent demon” of a city on a first visit, and to wait until other sights, other encounters, other incursions, allow me to see a different cartography of the place. Today, locked down in my apartment in the neighbourhood of Misericórdia in downtown Lisbon, it is not the physical city that offers itself for my exploration but another, less tangible one. The guides of Lisbon that I found long before my arrival depicted a city

that existed a time ago or should have existed: Antonio Tabucchi’s *Pereira Maintains*, Saramago’s *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis*, Miguel Barrero’s *The Poet and the Rhinoceros*, Leopoldo Brizuela’s *Lisboa: A Melodrama*, Cees Nooteboom’s *The Following Story* made up a jigsaw puzzle of instructive and illuminated pieces. But the city’s attendant traits, however credible on the pages that I eagerly turned, are no longer those of Lisbon today: my Lisbon drained now of tourists, shops shut, restaurants locked up, bars silent, streetcars almost empty. The Lisbon that stretches out like a yawning cat outside my window is not Saramago’s soggy city nor Tabucchi’s unquiet one. The mood is different.

And yet, some aspects remain unchanged. Pessoa, trying to define a significant trait of his fellow Portuguese, imagined it to be a certain provincialism. “If, by one of those comfortable devices by which we simplify reality in order to understand it, we wish to summarize the most noxious Portuguese quality in a syndrome,” he wrote in 1928, “we will say that this quality consists of provincialism. The fact is a sad one, but not peculiar to us. Many other countries suffer from the same disease, countries that consider themselves civilized proudly and erroneously.” However, he noted, an essential feature of the particular Portuguese provincialism is, “in the higher mental sphere, the incapacity for irony.”

This trait, selected by Pessoa almost a century ago, I find to be still true today. If the Portuguese were to cultivate the ironic eye, what rich material they would have in their bewildering and pervasive bureaucracy! What modest proposals would a Jonathan Swift produce concerning the plodders in the Customs Office! What *Candides* would a Voltaire compose about the apparent Portuguese inability to tend their many dishevelled public gardens! What unreachable castles would a Kafka build on the everlasting delays of the Portuguese postal services before reaching the intended destination! True, there are glints of irony in writers such as Eça de Queiros, in Saramago, in Gonçalo Tavares and in Teresa Veiga. But these are not enough to create a pervasive ironic atmosphere as a reader often encounters in English or French literature. Perhaps the delicate Portuguese courtesy, at least towards foreigners like myself, that insists on calling everybody “Excelentissimo” prevents the Portuguese from being ironically hurtful. Irony is

not kind. No Portuguese I’ve met sees the irony in the fact that the national dish bacalao, cod—prepared in 365 different ways, one for each day of the year—has to be imported from distant Newfoundland, only to be salted with salt from Aveiro in Northern Portugal. No Portuguese friend of mine perceives irony in the fact that, in Portugal’s avowedly egalitarian society, one can live at the corner of *Poço dos Negros* (Black Men’s Well) and *Travessa do Judeu* (Jew’s Impasse). No Portuguese writer I know would ever dare come up with advice like that of Dorothy Parker: “If you have any

young friends who aspire to become writers, the second greatest favour you can do them is to present them with copies of *The Elements of Style*; the first greatest, of course, is to shoot them now, while they’re happy.” When a Portuguese friend told me that, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Portugal was known as “the tortoise,” I remarked that she had missed the irony in the moniker, and reminded her that Achilles thought quite highly



of the tortoise after the celebrated race. *Pace Pessoa*, there’s something comforting in living in a society that avoids irony because, in doing this, it also avoids inflicting gratuitous pain. That, in these times of suffering, is a good thing.

Of course, there are several other traits that I gradually have come to discover in my newly adopted home, hidden traits that are deeply intertwined, like the roots of certain trees that seem to be standing separately on the ground’s surface but are connected by a tangle of underground webs. For instance, the Portuguese avoidance of

irony, which does not mean a lack of humour, lends their talk, in my experience, a certain earnestness, a certain respectful consideration that is conducive to reflective exchanges. The Portuguese don’t strive to best one another when exchanging opinions, as is most often the case among Argentinians or New Yorkers. There is a paused rhythm in the Portuguese language (I’m talking about the Portuguese of Portugal here, not that of

Brazil) that generously admits pause for thought in the speaker and allows for the development of ideas in the interlocutor. A conversation in Portuguese takes much longer than the same conversation would take in French or Italian, in which the flow proceeds from interruption to interruption. The Portuguese don’t jump in when someone else is talking: they wait politely for you to finish your sentence. I, who have the abominable habit of interrupting, recognize this as simple good manners.

This unhurried pace seeps into everything in Portugal. In a short text, Pessoa complains: “The slowness of our lives is so great that we don’t consider ourselves old at forty. The speed of vehicles has taken the speed out of our souls. We live too slowly and that is why we get bored so easily. Life has become a rural area for us. We don’t work enough and we pretend to work too much. We move too quickly from a point where nothing gets done to another point where there is nothing to do, and we call this the feverish rush of modern life. It is not the fever of haste, but the haste of fever. Modern life is a restless leisure, an escape from an orderly pace through restlessness.” What Pessoa

Image: Dan Brault, *Praedonum Evangelium*, 2014. Acrylique sur toile, 50 x 46 in. Courtesy the artist and La Galerie 3, Québec City, QC.

saw as negative, I think can be seen as positive. This slow flight, this feverish haste, which in so many countries is deemed a fault to be violently corrected, is by and large accepted in Portugal as salutary.

The impatient English imprecation, “Move on: I don’t have all day!,” the ironic riposte to “I’m coming!” given as “So is Christmas!,” the rude demand “I want this yesterday!,” have no easy translation into Portuguese. Even the pessimistic view of the future described by the philosopher Eduardo Lourenço as “a kind of slow apocalypse” tempers the final catastrophe with that very Portuguese adjective. In reference to the late integration of Portugal into contemporary Europe Lourenço said, “The poor arrive late at the rich man’s table. Compared, however, with other countries of similar traditions, we are sitting at the table of the rich, but perhaps at a corner of the table.” But is that a bad thing? This image, of being at the corner of the table, is one that keeps creeping into my conversations with Portuguese friends about Portugal. “Portugal is a pea compared to the apple of New York,” a friend told me. My answer, that if it was a pea it was the pea that the princess felt under one hundred mattresses, didn’t impress him. There is I think a certain modest pride in considering oneself as an active participant but, at the same time, small.

In our present period of confinement, during which Portugal has had the misfortune of being, statistically and for a couple of months, the country in Europe with the most COVID cases and deaths, citizens were ill served by the slowness in making clear political decisions, by unconscionable dithering in regards to practical procedures, inaction that glutted hospitals and delayed the distribution of the vaccines. From an existential viewpoint, however (if existence is still in the cards), we may be well served in our confinement by the modest, slow,

elegiac, reflective Portuguese quality that allows us to consider our existence in time while locked down in space. The English language lumps both conditions into one brief verb, “to be,” but in Portuguese, Hamlet’s conundrum has to be stated much more specifically. While the weeks drift by and the days of the week blend featureless one into the next, while the geography of our prison cells conjures up repetitive *voyages autour de ma chambre*, in Portugal at least we can consciously assume our condition of being (*ser*) in time, slowly existing, while constrained to be (*estar*) in a single space.

Slowness is an essential quality in the act of reading. And yet, the Portuguese, while boasting of a high literacy rate (95.48%), are not voracious readers. In 2019, the majority of over seven thousand surveyed students admitted to having read fewer than three books in the preceding twelve months; 21% said that, during this period, they had not read any books at all. And while most Portuguese will say that poetry is important to them, the sale of poetry books is dismally poor. Perhaps this is because poetry, in Portugal, is understood to be inherent to the national identity, not as a reading activity *per se* but as a state of mind. Maybe because every poem becomes in time an elegy, and elegies require a slow-moving cadence, the Portuguese often feel that this poetic quality fits their commonplace notion of *saudade*, melancholia, a notion that in turn becomes, according to Eduardo Lourenço, an “expression of the excess of love of all that deserves to be loved.” It is moving and revealing that the first words in a Galician tongue eerily close to modern Portuguese, preserved in a twelfth-century Latin chronicle, are the lamentations of Afonso VI, grandfather of the first king of Portugal, after losing his son at the battle of Uclés in 1108, “Oh my son! Oh my son, delight of my heart and light of my eyes, solace of my old age! Oh

mirror of mine in which I used to see myself and in which I took so great a pleasure! Oh my heir, now gone. Knights, where did you abandon him? Counts, give me back my son!” No irony there.

To forgo a sense of irony, to feel proudly small, to act with deliberate restraint, are rare and (for a foreigner) puzzling qualities. Bureaucracy, which in most countries is an excuse for kickbacks and privileges, is in Portugal nothing but an accepted obstacle race, a very slow race, more like a hobble than a sprint. Regulations, when one can understand and follow them, are set up to delay the course of any action, whether it is to obtain an official document, to get an artisan to build some promised shelves, or, God help you, to get a parcel out of Customs. And yet, things end up happening, I suspect because of an inherent sense of honour, of feeling obliged *sine die* to keep one’s word: after several months, after you’ve lost hope, without a word of apology but with a charming smile, a friendly person tells you that the document is finally ready, the shelves stand proudly on your wall, the parcel is either returned to the sender or, if the stars are kind, it reaches you, now older and perhaps wiser for the experience of waiting. For all this you require patience. (I suspect that Griselda was Portuguese.)

Patience is a virtue (if indeed it is a virtue) intertwined with the notion of time. Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça, the Vatican librarian and a superb poet, pointed out that we all live “under the dictatorship of chronological time”: that we are all literally devoured by Chronos, the Titan who ate his own children. In Portugal, Chronos chews with measured deliberation, meditating on each mouthful. This relaxed rhythm colours everyday life: preparing the *bacalao*, which W. H. Auden suggested when tough “tastes like toe-nails, and the softer kind like

the skin off the soles of one's feet," entails a two-day desalination labour before the actual cooking; crossing the city by tram is a delightful experience unless you are late for an appointment; climbing up or down the steep streets is excellent for your metabolism but cannot be speed-walked without risking a heart attack. And the pace of Portuguese history has this rhythm as well. In 1871 the Portuguese poet Antero de Quental noted that "the decadence of the peoples of the Peninsula in the last three centuries is one of the most incontrovertible, most evident facts of our history." Three centuries is a long time for a decay to set in: in Berlin and Paris, decadence happened in just a year or two, sometime in the mid-thirties; the decline of the American Empire spanned merely the four dark years of Donald Trump's regime. Quental complained that the inherent slowness of Portugal delayed the arrival of revolutionary cultural changes, and yet, a century later, it has proved beneficent in delaying the arrival of noxious tendencies as well. After the Second World War, various extreme right-wing movements became vociferous in France, Italy, and Hungary, and in several other European countries in the eighties and nineties; in Portugal, hardly anyone had heard of the right-wing politician André Ventura before the creation of the right-wing party Chega in 2019. The revisionist movement that led to the tearing down of monuments in memory of controversial historical figures achieved popularity in the United States at least as early as 2017 when statues of Christopher Columbus were vandalized in Baltimore and in New York; calls for the removal of monuments erected in memory of the seventeenth-century baroque sermonist Antonio Vieira for his lack of concern for African slaves (while at the same time defending the rights of Indigenous people in Brazil), were inaudible in Portugal until June of last year. And the North American academic

ensorship of university teaching that obliges literature professors to warn their students if anything in the text they will study is likely to offend them (such as the rape of Lucretia, the incest of Oedipus, the depictions of Africans in Luis de Camões and Joseph Conrad) has fortunately not yet reached Portuguese classrooms. Sometimes tardiness is a blessing.

Everywhere and at all times, we face not only a single devouring deity that cuts short our days and lengthens our nights. Cardinal Tolentino adds that "the non-conformist Greeks, in addition to Chronos, had another conception of time, a kind of vertiginous reckoning, an unalterable continuous line that traps us in its web." This dual identity of time is therefore experienced not only as Chronos the devourer—the time inscribed in ancient sundials as *omnes vulnerant, ultima necat*—but also as a productive, receptive time: "time of," "time for." And Tolentino reminds us that, in

these days of confinement and ever-gnawing time, Christ's parable about the lilies of the field is eminently applicable. The sluggish Portuguese time, creeping along the centuries from the mythical Odyssean foundation of Lisbon to now, might find during this pandemic an unsuspected virtue: that of reflection, the paused consideration of the miracle, in spite of everything, of being still alive. Neither we nor the lilies were promised immortality: merely the grace of existing for one extraordinary moment, from cradle to grave, until whenever the end might come.

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

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ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

LIFE IN THE VALLEY

The reading group supplement provided by the publisher of Anna Wiener's trenchant memoir, **Uncanny Valley** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) asks "What is it like for Wiener and other women working at mostly male tech companies? How do her employers respond when Wiener asks for higher pay and more equity? When she reports blatant sexual harassment?" Yep, good questions. What was it like: in many ways horrible. How do her employers respond? Badly. On the other hand, Wiener seems to acknowledge that complaining loudly while earning \$100,000, in her mid-20s, living in San Francisco, is a bit churlish. Wiener is a marvelous writer, sharp, hard-edged. She nails it. The men she describes are mostly awful, while often being perfectly pleasant, smart, witty. That, we realize, is the real danger. These men are slippery, frequently unaware of their circumlocution, as they weave tighter and tighter webs around their female employees, where the only escape is a full escape: get the hell out of the valley, Silicon Valley. One of the pleasures of the book is its quietly damning attacks on the mighty corporations that control the Valley, attacking by refusing to name them. Facebook is "a social network everyone said they hated but no one could stop logging in to," its anonymous grinning founder, upon going public on the stock market, signing the "death knell for affordable rent in San Francisco." Twitter is "a microblogging platform" that helps people "feel

close to celebrities and other strangers they'd loathe in real life." When her recent employer, "the open source startup" (GitHub), is purchased by the "highly litigious Seattle-based conglomerate" (Microsoft), for seven and a half billion dollars, she's able to run for the hills with an extra two hundred thousand dollars in her bank account. "We were aware we had blind spots," she writes. "They were still blind spots." That, in a nutshell, was the problem, and still is.

—Thad McLroy

EVERYTHING ON EARTH

Cicely Belle Blain's debut collection of poetry, **Burning Sugar** (Arsenal Pulp Press), is a deeply personal exploration of racism, resilience, rage, and joy. In three parts, "Place," "Art" and "Child," Blain reflects on displacement and belonging, art and activism, and experiencing queerness and anti-Black racism as a child. In "Place," Blain titles poems by location: Dallas, London, Banjul, and Chilliwack ("Chilliwack," a one-line poem states: "It's just a Walmart"). In "North Carolina," Blain sees a whipping post and is "almost disappointed by how dull it is," after expecting to feel a "haunting chill." "Instead it stands there / in all its regularity and reticence / with no stories to share / as if all the violence of white supremacy / would simply fade with time." In "Art," Blain craves Black joy but often finds Black pain in art and activism, noticing the overwhelming whiteness of art spaces (also spotted: kale snacks,

man buns, chinos and Birkenstocks). "Child" covers Blain's first queer memory and how white supremacy, organized religion, heteronormative narratives and other institutions impacted coming out. "It is not anything specific that silenced my queer truth. / It's everything on Earth." Blain's vulnerability is a superpower that makes *Burning Sugar* sweet, painful, and powerful. I won't spoil anything else; read the haunting collection to spend more time in Blain's beautiful mind. —Kathleen Murdock

FINE ART IN LOCKDOWN

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has forced museums and art galleries everywhere to close their doors for months on end, leaving vast troves of art hanging, unseen, in empty galleries. Major exhibitions that took years of planning and preparation, with works of art on loan from institutions around the world, were abruptly shuttered or postponed. One of the exhibits affected by these closures was **Félix Fénéon: The Artist and the Avant-Garde**, a major retrospective originally scheduled to run from March 22 through July 22, 2020, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Fénéon was a fascinating figure from the demimonde of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Paris. An anarchist, art critic, and influential art dealer, Fénéon also wrote *faits divers* for *Le Matin*. These brief summaries of recent accidents, crimes and scandals read like plot summaries for noir novels (they were

later collected and published by New York Review Books as *Novels in Three Lines*, reviewed in *Geist* 69). MoMA's Fénéon exhibition re-opened in late August of 2020 with sharply limited attendance, but travel restrictions made it inaccessible to all but a few lucky New Yorkers. Fortunately, the exhibition catalogue, a weighty and lavishly illustrated coffee table book, makes a pretty decent substitute. With reproductions from Fénéon's personal art collection, and essays on "Fénéon's Art Criticism" and on his relationships with artists such as Matisse, Seurat and Signac, the catalogue's most absorbing section is the one exploring Fénéon's involvement with the anarchist movement. In 1894 Fénéon was one of thirty suspects arrested in connection with an anarchist bombing of the restaurant at the Hôtel Foyot. "At the trial, Fénéon famously and successfully pitted his wit against the prosecutor, brilliantly deploying logic while avoiding a discussion of the charges. His exchanges with the court were reported in the press. [...] Despite the fact that detonators were found in his possession, the court acquitted Fénéon."

—Michael Hayward

ORDINARY FILIPINOS VS THE NORMAL IRISH

After dozing through the CBC series *Normal People*, I noticed that Netflix was offering the Filipino movie **Ordinary People** (directed by Eduardo W. Roy Jr.)—which made me wonder how a movie about ordinary Filipinos might compare to a series about normal Irish people. The ordinary Filipinos are Jane and Aries, two homeless teenagers who have just had a baby. Like teenagers everywhere, they take selfies, they argue, they fight, they make up and they make love. They also shoplift, pick pockets, and do whatever else they have to do in order to survive, which means that

they are always on the go, either running from the authorities or moving around the streets of Manila, looking for opportunities. We watch them amidst the noisy, chaotic activity of the city until, as they commit a petty crime, the sound suddenly stops, and we are watching silent, black and white CCTV footage. Via CCTV footage we also watch as their baby is stolen by someone who has offered to hold him while Jane pays a cashier—and then we're back in the movie, with Jane crying and desperately looking for her child. Instead of helping, the police sexually assault Jane; other "helpers" are only interested in making money or getting Internet clicks. As Jane and Aries persevere, their quest takes them to a gated community with fences to climb and houses to break into, and we see them begin to consider their future instead of just their moment-to-moment needs. The movie's frantic pace, broken only by quick shifts to silent CCTV footage, precluded any dozing, and seeing Jane and Aries realize that they have choices helped to elevate *Ordinary People* above the level of "poverty porn." The film's English title should have been "The Ordinary Family" which would have been truer to the original Tagalog title (*Pamilya ordinaryo*) as well as recognizing that these teens are a family—but in that case I might never have watched this excellent movie. —Patty Osborne

WANTING

Wanting Everything (Talonbooks, 2020; edited by Deanna Fong and Karis Shearer) is the collected works (457 pages!) of the Vancouver writer, teacher and editor Gladys Maria Hindmarch, a central figure in the *TISH* community of poets—along with George Bowering, Fred Wah, Daphne Marlatt and others—and a participant in significant events like the Vancouver Poetry Conference

(1963), the Berkeley Poetry Conference (1965) and Women & Words (1983). *Wanting Everything* presents Hindmarch's longer prose works from the 1970s and '80s, along with a mix of previously published and unpublished interviews, correspondence, criticism, short prose, journal entries and more recent memoir work.

I first encountered Gladys Maria Hindmarch when I worked as an archivist at the Vancouver artist-run centre the Western Front, digitizing audiovisual recordings of literary readings at the Front in the 1970s and '80s. These readings were boisterous, popular events, with a committed audience for poets and writers connected to the West Coast counterculture scene and supported by publishers like *blewointment* and the *Capilano Review*. Hindmarch's reading of her prose work *The Peter Stories* for this series was one of the highlights of the project for me. The intimate voice of Mary Contrary, a protagonist of *The Peter Stories*, and Hindmarch's comments about her writing practice at the end of her presentation, stayed with me long after the tape finished.

In this book, it is immensely satisfying to follow Hindmarch's writing over several decades; her rhythm and approach changes, but her dedication and connection to her community does not: her more recent work is written for friends and colleagues, including the BC literary figures Sharon Thesen, Warren Tallman and George Woodcock. *Wanting Everything* culminates in a compelling personal account of Hindmarch's encounters with the medical system leading up to and following a diagnosis of Stage 3 breast cancer.

Wanting Everything is an ambitious and much-appreciated contribution to the literary landscape of BC; Hindmarch's decades-long contributions to Vancouver's literary culture shine throughout the book. —Shyla Seller

DIRTY DIRTY GETS DOWN TO THE NITTY GRITTY

Mississippi Live & the Dirty Dirty, a four-piece Southern rock band based in East Vancouver, display plenty of variety and talent on their 2016 CD **Going Down**. The high-powered “Trouble” opens the set, with underlying, rumbling percussion like an unstoppable thunderstorm. In the foreground is a “Wild Horses”-infused slide guitar—I don’t know whether the maestro is Robert Connelly Farr or Ben Yardley, since both are listed under guitar and vocal credits. Next up is the title track, “Going Down,” with a vintage Farfisa organ in the background, right out of Country Joe & the Fish. The master hand is organist Jon Wood, who also produced the album. “It’s So Easy” is classic folk rock, with lyrics about how a downward spiral is entirely effortless (“I don’t have any answers / I barely have a plan”). “Hurtin’,” the only song written by drummer Jay Johnson, features a wah-

wah pedal that sounds just as at home in this contemporary song as it might in 1969. In both “Hurtin’” and its follow-up, “Bad Bad Feeling,” the vocals seem to emerge from the pain-wracked shadows of one final weekend bender. “Mexico,” a hot climate travelogue (pre-COVID, of course) contains the most rollicking electric guitar solo. “Dead & Gone” is driven by a pounding floor tom, much like Todd Rundgren’s timeless “I Saw the Light.” “Country Boy” could be interpreted as the autobiography of the lead singer, and its pizzicato guitar is the most polished of this band’s guitar styles. The CD’s closeout track is “The Girl Who Never Was,” and you know it won’t end well when the song’s first line is “She said ‘I want out.’” From there the song meanders like a roots ballad from Van Morrison’s *Veedon Fleece* days. Like all worthwhile songs, the tracks on *Going Down* get down to the actualities of life—because who has time for nonessentials? —*Jill Mandrake*

IN SEARCH OF TIME AND PLACE

Michael Christie’s novel, **Greenwood** (McClelland & Stewart), examines the legacies of five generations of the Greenwood family in their respective contexts (one being the appropriately-named Greenwood Island), as environmental depletion and desecration is being ratcheted to new levels. Christie uses the image of concentric tree rings to show the layering of past actions and memories; he also suggests that the generations in a family are like forests, since, though seemingly isolated from each other, they can bridge space and time, just as trees in a forest can “talk” to one another via microscopic mycelium woven into root systems in the soil. *Greenwood* is dominated by exposition, not just through textbook explanations of forest ecology, but also through a generous use of character backstory, bluntly incorporated into the text. Unfortunately, Christie’s writing falls a bit short in the details. Early in the novel, Christie takes a poke at colonialism by having a lawyerly fellow mention in passing that, prior to European settlement, Greenwood Island belonged to both the Penelakut Tribe and the Haida Nation. But the Penelakut are a Coast Salish people from the southern Gulf Islands, while the Haida hold their traditional territories hundreds of kilometres away, in Haida Gwaii and southern Alaska. Later, Christie mentions that Greenwood Island is said to have had an older name, Qanekelak, a reference to Heiltsuk mythology. But Christie situates his fictional Greenwood Island near Port Alberni, while the Heiltsuk people’s traditional territories are on BC’s central coast, just north of Vancouver Island. Occasionally, Christie slips into stereotypes, like perpetuating Vancouver’s Chinatown as an opium ghetto. There’s also this absurdity: “With the rags wrapped over the child’s face, Jake can’t accurately discern its gender or ethnicity. Indonesian

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perhaps, maybe Pakistani. The child's exposed forehead is the same faint brown as her own." I know it's fiction, but seriously: what the heck?

—Anson Ching

MANIFESTO

Small, Broke, and Kind of Dirty (Book*hug) by Hana Shafi is a collection of illustrations and short essays based on her observations, childhood stories and daily interactions—all set in and around Toronto. The relatable essays are full of humour and honesty, and often read like journal entries. For example, Shafi unabashedly writes about being “shit sisters for life” with her IBS suffering pal. In another piece, she writes about her “quintessentially Canadian” family trip to Niagara Falls, complete with a cheesy haunted house and a man dressed up like an alien. Her stories are sprinkled with references to 2000s nostalgia including: Regina George, Destiny's Child, the urban legend of “Bloody Mary” and on-the-sly viewings of *Mad tv*—all bits and pieces that were a part of my own childhood and adolescent experience. On a more serious note, Shafi recalls doing a public reading of her poem “Vanilla,” which explores her fascination with white Canadian men and their fear of brown girls like herself. After the reading, a middle-aged white man approached her to say “Y’know, I like all kinds of girls.” This comment made Shafi uncomfortable, but instead of voicing this discontent, she responded with a nervous laugh and even considered saying “Thank you” because doing otherwise would have resulted at best in social alienation from someone in the literary community and at worst, in violence. Though many of her stories are light-hearted, they are also contextualized through the wider lens of societal issues such as misogyny, gender equity and capitalism. Though I wish there were a bit

more depth to her stories, the book reads like a millennial manifesto on how to understand, navigate and be in the world—and I felt right at home. Shafi writes: “Be kind, be empathetic, but take no shit,” and as a proud millennial myself, I say damn right.

—Sylvia Tran

ROADS TO NOWHERE

Wondering how to sate your travel urges during COVID? Answer: crack open an armchair travelogue or two. One option: Mother Tongue Publishing on Salt Spring Island has an eclectic collection of travel pieces from Trevor Carolan, a BC-based poet and educator. **Road Trips: Journeys in the Unspoiled World** gathers nineteen pieces recounting trips taken by Carolan over the years, often accompanied by his equally intrepid wife, Kwan-shik, to almost everywhere “on the dharma trail.” The wanderings stretch in time

from 1968 (a trip taken as a teenaged reporter to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district during its flower power peak) to the present day (a visit to Laos, where “the Mekong chugged along unrelentingly down the way”), and around the globe from Marrakesh to West Bengal to Nepal. Along the way are side trips to pay homage (as Patti Smith also likes to do) to various literary role models and influences: to Hemingway's corner table in Cojimar, Cuba; to the grave of Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuściński; and to the former Beat Hotel in Paris, home (at one time) to Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso and William S. Burroughs. Another option: why not try to make your way across Russia to the Ukraine in the chaotic aftermath of the Russian Revolution? To do so: check out Teffi's **Memories: From Moscow to the Black Sea** (NYRB), and wonder (as I did) just how she managed to maintain her sense of humour and sangfroid while travelling through a lawless landscape, “down the

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map, down the huge green map across which, slantwise, was written The Russian Empire,” always subject to the whims of capricious bureaucrats, and gun-toting desperadoes encountered along the way. Another fun adventure to experience vicariously is described in **Blue Sky Kingdom** (Douglas & McIntyre), Bruce Kirkby’s absorbing account of the three months he, his wife Christine, and their two young boys (ages seven and three), spent in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the isolated Himalayan valley of Zanskar, in north-west India. Who needs a travel agent when you’ve got a good travel book in hand?

—Michael Hayward

B FOR BEATRICE

In early April, my seven-year-old granddaughter, Effie, called me on FaceTime to ask if she could read to

me. Effie’s mother was burning out from supervising online school for Effie and her younger sister and this was the one school requirement that I could help with. Effie is still reading to me almost every day, and she has changed from a reluctant reader to an animated storyteller, largely because of an outspoken and passionate little person named Junie B. Jones, a creation of author Barbara Park. Junie B. introduces herself by saying “My name is Junie B. Jones. The B stands for Beatrice. Except I don’t like Beatrice. I just like B and that’s all.” The twenty-eight **Junie B. Jones books** (Penguin Random House) follow Junie B. through kindergarten and grade 1, and include challenges like having to sit beside a tattletale, getting caught copying her neighbour’s homework, getting snubbed by her best friend, getting herself into trouble because of her “big fat mouth,” and ending up in the “bad kid’s chair”

in the principal’s office. As Junie B. says, “Punishment takes the friendly right out of you.” For the most part the adults in Junie B.’s life remain calm in the midst of Junie B.’s passion and stubbornness but she notices that they sometimes “do a big breath” or “roll their eyes way up to the ceiling” and her mother sometimes rubs the sides of her forehead with her fingers because she gets “mybrain headaches.” My granddaughter is not at all like Junie B., but like any good storyteller, as soon as she starts reading she takes on a Junie B. persona that makes both of us laugh out loud. If you aren’t already sold on the Junie B. Jones books, you should know that the series has been challenged (which Junie B. might explain as meaning “almost banned by some adults”) because of poor grammar and punctuation and an often-disrespectful attitude. Another reason to love that kid!
—Patty Osborne



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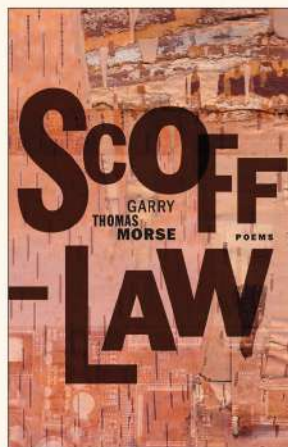
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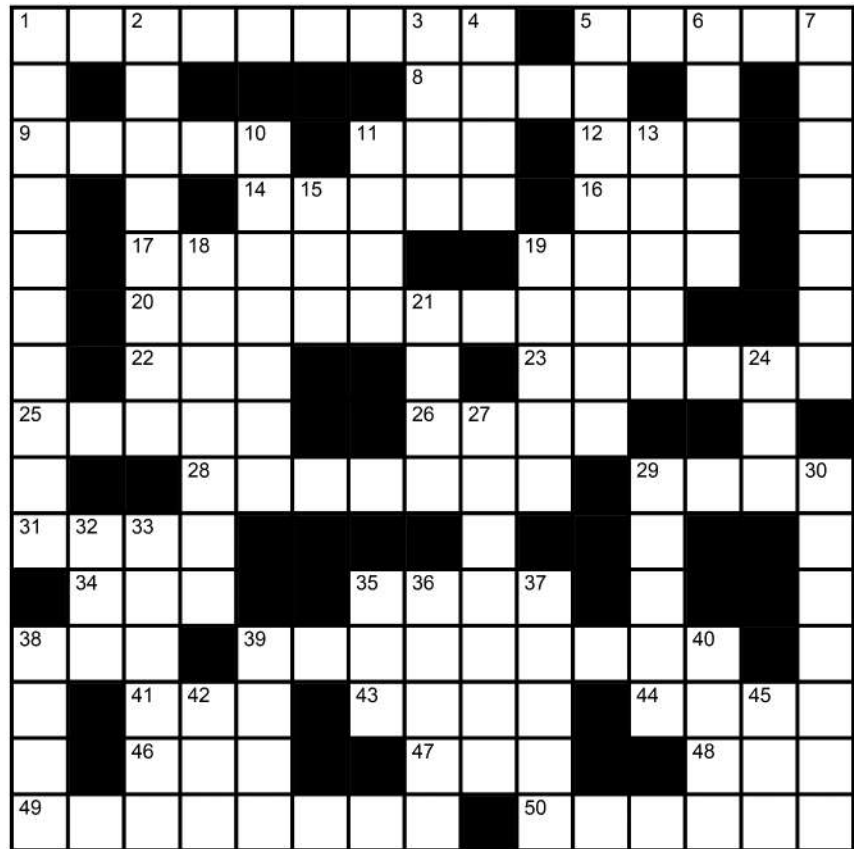
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- 9 Why did the old fashioned spinster perform badly?
- 11 What in the world is between their toes?
- 12 I'm always lazy about landing there
- 14 What's in those little bottles, it sounds disgusting
- 16 It'll be marvelous to see him acting like a Kung Fu master
- 17 Gordon said you were a century before your time
- 19 Wheel the allium to the chair on the boat
- 20 Put vegetable soup in that flower box in the garden
- 22 Overall, I like that it began in Wisconsin, by gosh!
- 23 Holy cow, that kid looks like a homey!
- 25 The trunk roots without limbs
- 26 Auntie stops us from playing guitars in space (abbrev)
- 28 After we have turkey, can you put your foot up so I can see your moon tat?
- 29 Stir the sour soup vigorously before adding cream
- 31 She's preparing for a future use of the commander's company (abbrev)
- 34 Will that Christian ever write about a veggie?
- 35 What's inside his pants is all relative, right?
- 38 I'm not telling a fib when I say the singer was naked
- 39 Before I disrobed, a man put the dishes in the buffet next to the wagon
- 41 With those curls he's going back to the '70s
- 43 Let's roam around Paris because I like it so much
- 44 Don't you think that teeny bit was partly drab?
- 46 I hear that her wig fell in the canal and caused quite a flap
- 47 Let's just kill the file before it starts the program (abbrev)



- 48 What will you do with your out-of-control hair (2)
- 49 Where did the Czar need to put his dishes?
- 50 When you're short at 30 your chest is smaller too

DOWN

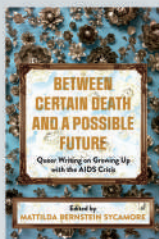
- 1 My wartime bud served patiently but did not speak
- 2 Gawd, he's acting like he's a superior force! (2)
- 3 Are those Scots fishing for dancing partners again?
- 4 Bill pushes the line over when he opened his beers
- 5 Is all Crete on side for holding the bottles?
- 6 Don't stir things up—it's too confusing (2)
- 7 That lazy boy lays around all day
- 10 I have to hover because I'm just too sexy
- 11 Those gamers trek in an African valley
- 13 If you try for the mare, I will direct you
- 15 At 11, there was an abnormal function that she couldn't stop looking at (abbrev)
- 18 You've had a shock so say your prayers and put your feet up
- 19 OMG, I'm so white I'll have to rent that bed again
- 21 Sounds like that wise guy in the garden is legendary
- 24 Wait a second, you have to start by counting a hippopotamus
- 27 There should be a slob tax on that Himalayan house

- 29 Funny that the TV chef had no face fungus
- 30 Toby, all your clothes are up high in your chest
- 32 Luke's mentor started out doing magic in Africa
- 33 When you tee off, don't forget your MacIntosh and your snack
- 35 Good lord! That poet's kid was a computer geek!
- 36 There was a mixup with my enema at those other games
- 37 That young buck often gets the boot
- 38 Even at 91, Lucien held a street party
- 39 Are you angry because of your cold?
- 40 Brad is a little dull, isn't he?
- 42 Back in '72, that cool unit was deadly
- 45 What's the international language for?

The winner for Puzzle 117 was Jason Taniguchi.

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

BOOKS FOR A POSSIBLE FUTURE.

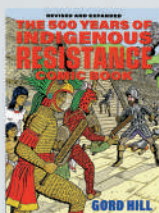


BETWEEN CERTAIN DEATH AND A POSSIBLE FUTURE

Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, ed.

An enthralling and incisive anthology of personal essays on the persistent impact of the AIDS crisis in queer lives. “An exciting and important collection.”

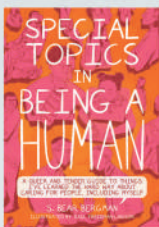
—Sarah Schulman (Oct)



THE 500 YEARS OF INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE COMIC BOOK

Gord Hill

A revised and expanded version of Hill’s extraordinary graphic history book, in colour for the first time. Includes a foreword by Pamela Palmater. (Oct)

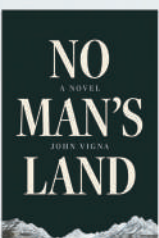


SPECIAL TOPICS IN BEING A HUMAN

S. Bear Bergman & Saul Freedman-Lawson

Celebrated trans author Bergman’s guide (illustrated by Lawson) to practical advice for the modern age, filtered through a queer lens. “Sweet, soulful, and deeply humane.”

—Alison Bechdel (Oct)



NO MAN'S LAND

John Vigna

A sprawling novel set in the BC wilderness of the late 19th century, about a teenaged gunslinger, a charismatic fraudster, and the unbearable weight of fate. (Sep)



A DREAM OF A WOMAN

Casey Plett

Award-winning novelist Casey Plett (*Little Fish*) returns with a poignant suite of stories that centre transgender women. (Sep)



NOWADAYS AND LONELIER

Carmella Gray-Cosgrove

A vibrant story collection about loneliness and love, privilege and poverty, largely set in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. “A dazzling collection of stories.”

—Zoe Whittall (Sep)



FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY, DRINK MINT TEA

Alex Wood

A Robin’s Egg Book: Toronto comedian Alex Wood’s wildly disarming memoir on how he overcame his multiple addictions through boxing and herbal tea.

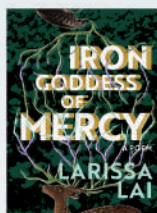


GREEN GLASS GHOSTS

Rae Spoon & Gem Hall

A rollicking yet introspective YA novel about screwing up, finding yourself, and forging on a new life on your own. “Tender, haunting and raw ... a book to hold in our hearts.”

—Kama La Mackerel



IRON GODDESS OF MERCY

Larissa Lai

A long poem full of rage, love, and despair seeking justice, roots, and a “po-ethics” by which to live. “A work of fierce, mad genius.”

—Kai Cheng Thom



NEDÍ NEZU (GOOD MEDICINE)

Tenille K. Campbell

A celebratory, bluntly honest poetry collection on sex and romance in NDN country. “Campbell shows us yet again why Indigeneity is wholly and irrevocably erotic by nature.”

—Joshua Whitehead



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