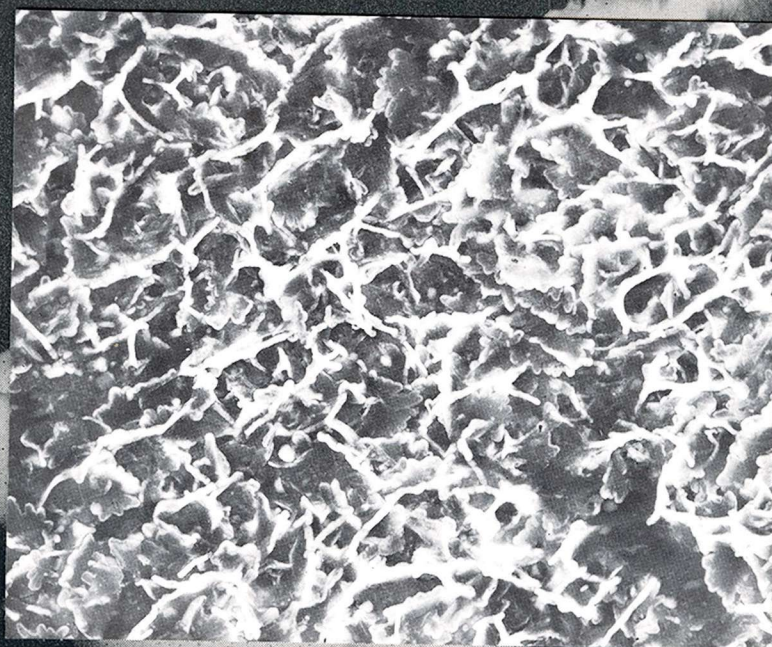


NUMBER 121

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GEIST

FACT + FICTION • NORTH of AMERICA



Bloom of Youth

Reduce, Reuse, Reincarnate
Marriage on the Download
Waiting for Language

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GEIST

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COVER IMAGE: *Reclined Yellow Petal*,
2020, collage by Sondra Meszaros,
courtesy Norberg Hall.



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FACT + FICTION

On Dek is a new comix series on the ongoings at *Geist* by our Associate Editor, Tanvi Bhatia. The new *Geist* team has become more and more entrenched in this weird and wonderful world of words, and as we discuss new ideas, projects and processes, our understanding of what is fact and fiction is becoming muddled—on the page, in our lives and even in our sleep. During our in-house retreat, the morning after a six-hour discussion on editorial direction, we discovered that *Geist* had infiltrated our dreams. —*The Geist Team*

IN MEMORIAM

This issue of *Geist* is dedicated in memoriam to Jo Cook, Steven Heighton and Norbert Ruebsaat. Their individual con-

tributions to *Geist* as friends, writers and correspondents will always be appreciated and remembered. “Waiting for Language,” a tribute to Norbert Ruebsaat, can be found on page 9.

NATIONAL ACCLAIM

Re: *Geist* in the Classroom

We use *Geist* almost every day. Many of my students are new immigrants so they love reading such diverse work!
—*Cathleen W., Vancouver, BC.*

Thank you for the lovely note, Cathleen! We're always happy to hear that Geist is useful in the classroom. For interested instructors, visit geist.com/gic to learn more. We'll send over a complimentary class set for you and your students post haste.
—*The Geist Team*

GEIST IN THE OUTBACK

No. 119 spotted in Broken Hill, Australia where the upcoming movie Mad Max: Furirosa was filmed. Photo taken at the Mad Max Museum. Thank you to our on-site correspondent Jen Thompson for bringing *Geist* along for the ride.



OVERHEARD BY GEIST

Our new obsession is eavesdropping. Send us the best one-liners you've overheard—on the street, in the park, in line at the grocery store—and you might see them in our next issue! geist.com/overheard



Comix by April Thompson.

WRITE TO GEIST

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

The Editor, *Geist*

letters@geist.com

Snailmail:

#210 – 111 West Hastings Street

Vancouver BC V6B 1H4

Letters may be edited for clarity, brevity and decorum.

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Funded by the Government of Canada



Eldred Allen is an Inuk photographer from Rigolet, Nunatsiavut, NL, who has garnered attention for his expansive and stunningly lit scenes of landscape and wildlife in his community. His photographs' composition and colouring elevate their everyday subject matter to the extraordinary. Find him on Instagram @The.SmallLens.

Eruoma Awashish is from the Atikamekw Nehirowisiw Nation and grew up in the Ojibwan community. Her artistic approach is to imprint with spirituality. She aims to create spaces of dialogue to allow for a better understanding of First Nations cultures. The decolonization of the sacred is at the heart of her practice. She is currently settled in Pekuakami (Lac St-Jean, QC) and her studio can be found in the Mashteuiatsh Innu community. Find her on Instagram @Eruoma_Awa_Rebel.

Nicola MacNeil is a mixed media collage artist. Her work is inspired by her love of ephemera and forgotten moments of the past. She is on an endless hunt for new material to use in her work. She lives in Vancouver, BC. Find her on Instagram @NicolaMacNeilArt.

Sondra Meszaros explores counternarratives of female sexuality in her work. Taking cues from feminist performance art and Dada, her work involves a constant archiving and re-presentation of collected reference materials. By using feminist and psychoanalytic lenses, she aims to disturb, renegotiate and reclaim the representation of women and the female figure in image-making. She has an MFA from the University of Windsor. She lives in Calgary, AB. Find her on Instagram @SMeszaros.

Brittany Nickerson (she/they) is a lens-based artist whose research and practice uses autoethnography to examine patri-

archal structures of archiving. Through a Queer perspective, Brittany aims to disrupt and reconfigure historical narratives in her family's archive. She has an MFA from Emily Carr University of Art & Design. She lives in Mohkinstsis (Calgary, AB). Find her at brittanynickerson.com.

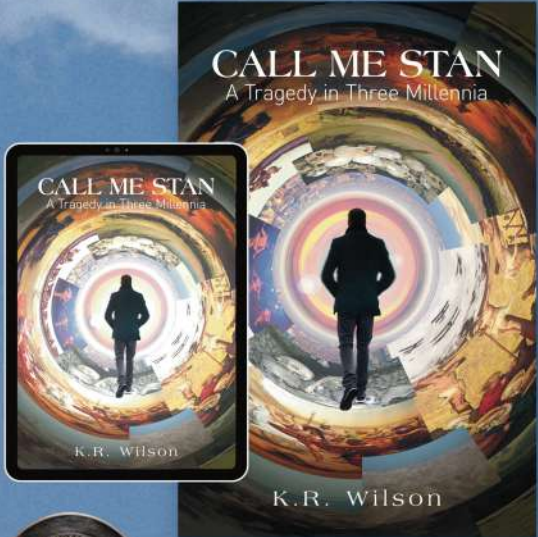
Debra Rooney is a retired graphic artist who lives in downtown Vancouver. Her cartoons and illustrations have appeared in *Kinesis*, *RadioWaves*, *Herizons*, *Xtra! West*, *The Peak*, *Out of Line*, *HEU Guardian*, *CUPE Public Employee*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Vancouver Fringe Festival*, *Wimmin's Comix* and the *Bay Guardian*. She enjoys poking fun at quite a few things.

Fariyah Aliyah Shah is a lens-based artist. Using photography, video and sound installation, her practice engages photographic history and explores iden-

tity formation. She is a member of the Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography and Women Photograph. She has been exhibited in Asia, Europe and North America. She has a BFA from the Ontario College of Art & Design University and a BHRM from York University. She lives in Bradford, ON (Treaty 18). Find her at fariyahshah.com.

Adrian Stimson is an interdisciplinary artist and member of the Siksika (Blackfoot) Nation in southern Alberta. He has won numerous awards, including the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media Arts in 2018, the REVEAL Indigenous Arts Award in 2017 and the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002. His work has been exhibited across Canada and the world. He has an MFA from the University of Saskatchewan. Find him at adrianstimson.com.


New from K.R. Wilson, author of award-winning debut *An Idea About My Dead Uncle*




CALL ME STAN
A Tragedy in Three Millennia
K.R. Wilson

Call Me Stan is a ludicrous epic and a tender-hearted romp—an easy-reading humanist adventure that feels as if Monty Python rewrote Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*.

—Sean Michaels, author of *The Wagers* and Giller Prize winner *Us Conductors*.



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Saint Joseph, Patron Saint of Bad Pronunciation

DEBORAH OSTROVSKY

Scrape every last bit of English out of your throat



Every second Thursday I walk to Outremont to see my orthophoniste. I like to think of my orthophoniste, a speech therapist, as a therapist in the psychological sense of the word. This is because I don't really have any diagnosable disorder of speech. What I have is an accent. My desire to change it seems to indicate another type of pathology—the desire to fit in—rather than a clinical need to correct difficulties with syntax or a motor speech dis-

order. (“She is bilingual,” states my official evaluation from the orthophoniste. “She wishes to reduce her anglophone accent to feel more at ease...”).

Initially I tried to see an orthophoniste on Rue Saint-Joseph, a four-lane boulevard near my apartment on the Plateau. Saint-Joseph is lined with the offices of real estate agents, psychologists, naturopaths, osteopaths, hypnotists, doctors and orthophonistes. It's not far from our local public

school, where I first spoke with the soft-spoken staff orthophoniste I met while volunteering at the library. *We all have accents*, she reassured me. Besides, sounding like a native franco-phone speaker is relative to your geographical position at a given moment in time, like being a Belgian in Dakar, or a Québécois in Toulouse, she explained. She was born in France, so she had an accent different than the one you'd hear in Rimouski. *Be easy on yourself*, she said.

Still, I started searching along Saint-Joseph. I'd be in good hands if I could improve my accent, I told myself, on a street named after the earthly father of Christ, a patron saint of a dizzying array of things, including families, Canada, the Universal Church, travellers, craftsmen, expectant mothers, engineers, immigrants and working people. I am a working person, married to an engineer, and the daughter of immigrants to Canada. I'm not Catholic, but it felt like the right street on which to do some healing.

Not a single orthophoniste on Saint-Joseph was available. I ended up a 40-minute walk away, in Outremont, at the office of a young orthophoniste with kind eyes, reciting five-syllable words, texts about the odour of apples, and “La Cigale et la Fourmi” from *Les fables de la fontaine*.

If I could witness what goes on during my appointments watching from above, perched on the ceiling looking down as I practice exercises in la phonétique corrective, sounding out vowels and shaping my mouth into an “o,” or the “u” in lutin, discussing the accent tonique, I might feel compassion for myself. Just as I would watching anyone whose hair is getting gray, thinning

around the crown, trying to change something that may never change, reading things like “De leur montrer avant sa mort/Que le travail est un trésor” out loud with the speed and deliberation of a seven-year-old.

Looking down from the ceiling, I might recall that years ago, I took an out-of-town friend to Saint Joseph’s Oratory on Mount Royal. We spent an entire afternoon in the Votive Chapel, circulating with the crowds in front of all the offerings of wooden canes, crutches and leg braces suspended between the columns and rows of candles, left by pilgrims who’d been healed. After visiting the chapel, we went to a busy restaurant near Métro Beaubien and were seated next to a long table, a delegation of artisan food purveyors from the Basque Country. The delegation suddenly burst into song, entreating us to come dance with them, shouting at us in French to sing our own folk songs. My friend and I looked at each other in stunned silence until my friend commenced a meek rendition of “Barrett’s Privateers.”

And what are your folk songs? a Basque woman in a red scarf and white blouse turned and looked at me, her voice competing with the ruckus and the clatter of cutlery.

I wanted to explain that my father had died a few months ago. We were estranged for over a decade. He never met my daughter. At his funeral, I discovered that my mother wasn’t sure what his mother tongue had been. *I thought it was Russian*, I told a relative. Da, the relative said. Russian was my father’s dominant language. But things had been chaotic during his childhood. My father’s younger siblings spoke Hebrew, the older ones Russian, which meant they spoke two different languages at home, if not more. Later, another relative explained that my father’s maternal grandmother had fled Russia in the 1920s. On a boat to Constantinople, now Istanbul, she

ripped up all her identity papers and changed her name, cutting ties to Russia and Ukraine. My father, born in Jerusalem amidst the violent clashes of the British Mandate of Palestine, emigrated to Canada and eventually changed his name to sound English (“It was the Cold War. You kids don’t understand what it was like,” yet another relative said when I told him, at the next family funeral, how I insisted on using our Russian family name). My father’s accent was British English, as I remember it, but he never quite mastered the silent “l” in salmon or almond. Meanwhile my maternal grandparents had sent my mother to elocution lessons in post-war Britain to banish her working-class accent, erasing their past in the name of BBC English.

Decades after my family changed names and accents, and cut ties with countries, languages, and often with one another, I spend my Thursdays scraping every last bit of English out of my throat with a determination bordering on obsession, to sound French, more Québécois, something I’ll never be—a foregone conclusion determined by the current political climate here, the type of nationalism we’re starting to see, but also because as you try to become someone else you become aware of who you are not: a person who can belt out folk songs at restaurants.

One evening, I described my dinner with the Basque artisan food purveyors to a neighbour from Bucharest, and she started singing a folk melody about a bride, a groom, and a dowry. Her voice wavered. The flood of memories was too strong. She stopped. She couldn’t sing and cry at the same time.

But there I was in a noisy restaurant at dusk, and none of these events—the Romanian dowry song, my sessions with the orthophoniste and reciting *Les fables de la fontaine*—had happened yet. Confronted by the

woman in the red scarf while eating my appetizer, I shrugged my shoulders. I got up to dance. We all danced, my out-of-town friend and I, the Basque delegation, the waiters and the chef. By midnight we spilled out onto the street, joined by the sound and lighting crew of a Belgian theatre troupe and an accordion player.

Soon after I started seeing an orthophoniste, a small tree outside our apartment lost all its leaves and died. My husband pulled up the tree. Its roots were withered. My daughter swirled the loosened earth with a shovel, creating piles of dirt in the hole where the tree had been. Something shimmered, a silvery object in the earth. My daughter picked at it with the shovel until its visible surface grew bigger. A shiny, metal figurine appeared, glinting silver in the sunlight, peeking out of one of the piles. It was a lead statuette, Jesus perhaps, about the length of an adult hand. We brought it to a local historical society where a volunteer took it, promising to consult with some elderly neighbours about its history when she could. It’s good luck, the volunteer explained on the phone a few weeks later. It was Saint Joseph, who is also the patron saint of house sellers and buyers. People bury little Saint Josephs outside their homes when they want to sell them, she said. The statuette was probably a hundred years old. The society wanted to keep it for their archives. Would we consider donating it?

Of course, I told the volunteer. *We’re not moving.*

Deborah Ostrovsky has written satire for McSweeney’s Internet Tendency and Points in Case. Her non-fiction has appeared in Tablet, Maisonneuve, the Montréal Gazette and Geist. She is currently writing about the Magdalen Islands and lives in Montréal with her family.

Waiting for Language

STEPHEN OSBORNE

Remembering Norbert Ruebsaat



When he was a young man in the 1970s, Norbert Ruebsaat began writing tiny unperformable dramas in acts of 3 or 4 lines and published a number of them in *3-Cent Pulp*, the zine published by Pulp Press Book Publishers (now Arsenal Pulp Press). One of these tiny works was called *A Hog Named Desire*, and another *Che Arrives in Canada to Lead the Struggle against Oppression*. You might say that he was reaching for limits to conventional and even unconventional drama beyond which it would be impossible to proceed. Borders and boundaries, limits, transitions and translation: these were elements of “cross-writing” that became central to his creative work.

In the nineties he taught ESL classes in which he introduced the concept of “cross-cultural listening”—a way of understanding how cultures learn to hear each other. Many of his students, he discovered, felt that second languages locate themselves in

different areas of their bodies and occupy space differently than first languages, so that Canadian language is experienced *acoustically* in a disparate dimension. (Inevitably the politics of *accents*, which are unheard in the first stages of language acquisition, further complicates the growth of fluency.) Some of his students pitched their voices higher when speaking English, they told him, in order to reflect a change in status between their original language and this new one—they felt themselves to be smaller in the new language, they said, and he was reminded of his early life as an immigrant six-year-old in grade 1 who spoke only German: he could hear the other students speaking a language that told him nothing at all. “It made me think I did not exist in this language and did not exist in this place, and this thought made me panic,” he wrote years later. He imagined that the Queen, whose picture was above

the blackboard, spoke the perfect English (which he often referred to as his “stepmother tongue”) that he must learn to imitate if he wanted to live in Canada: “I imagined her also to be the author of all the books we read, and of the alphabet that ran along the top of the blackboard. When I told my ESL students this they said they understood me perfectly.”

In 1990, his story “Nazis” won awards for both fiction and non-fiction. The single hinge between the two otherwise identical texts was the initial letter given to the narrator’s uncle, who as Uncle W in fiction transitions into Uncle N in non-fiction: in both versions he was a Nazi killed in the war in Russia “by a sniper’s bullet.” When the school showed newsreels of the Nazis and the war, Norbert could hear the German spoken in the soundtrack leaking through beneath the English voice of the announcer: they were never saying the same thing, as only Norbert could tell. Cross-cultural listening became Norbert’s working method in the essays, reviews and stories that he published widely in Canadian periodicals. He was a regular contributor to *Geist*. (His living room was the launch site for the prototype issue of *Geist*—“a magazine named in neither official language”—in 1990). He posted frequently on the literary website Dooney’s Café, and wrote many book reviews, features and articles for the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Globe and Mail*, and various literary journals. He also published *Ruebsaat’s*, an occasional newsletter which featured poetry and stories by himself and other Canadian writers. He produced documentaries on cross-cultural listening for Co-op Radio in Vancouver, where he worked for many years as a programmer, as well as CBC’s Ideas series. He was always writing, rewriting, translating, interrogating, interpreting... remembering. He wrote in the Rocky Mountains, the Kootenays, the Cariboo,

Haida Gwaii, Germany, France and elsewhere.

He produced numerous translations of German plays on commission from the (erstwhile) Toronto Free Theatre, The Other Theatre in Montréal, the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Goethe-Institut in Los Angeles. He published poetry widely in literary magazines and anthologies; his poetry book, *Cordillera*, was published by Arsenal Pulp Press, and he wrote numerous texts and librettos in collaboration with Canadian composers Barry Truax, Hildegard Westerkamp and Alcides Lanza, among others. In 2007 he contributed to Brian Howell's

photo study of people who impersonate celebrities, *Fame Us: Celebrity Impersonators and the Cult(ure) of Fame* (Arsenal Pulp). Examples of his work can be found at geist.com and dooneyscafe.com.

After teaching Communication and Media Studies for several years at SFU and Columbia College, Norbert moved to New Denver where he finished his memoir, *In Other Words: A German Canadian Story*—in which his childhood investigations are carried forward into the “grown-up” structures of memory and story that came before and then came later. In *In Other Words* we are

returned to the six-year-old immigrant boy sitting tongue-tied in a grade 1 classroom in Edmonton in 1951, waiting for the new language to arrive.

Norbert Ruebsaat died in March in New Denver, BC. He was seventy-six. One of his early works that I remember well is an unperformable play that presses on to even further limits; it is called *A Tape Recorder Knocks at the Gates of Heaven*.

Stephen Osborne is co-founder of Geist (with Mary Schendlinger) and he has been a frequent contributor to Geist since 1990. Read more of his work at geist.com.

i is another

JEREMY COLANGELO

*

*

everyone is made
of someone
who

my point is that
the shade
of anyone in
everyone the who
of them the them that
taries
such that all that
is is suspect

particle decay
of no one
someone
everyone
to anyone
weightiest of elements

radiation of the who in all

maps like particles present
the non of nonexistence
let the mountains graze your
fingers
and the river dry your hand
coordinate and
unity in flatness
shape that makes a world
my point is
linked to yours

a novel is a map where all roads lead
to ending
a poem
is a sketch
of lands picked
clean

that
being said i
wonder
specifically
i
question
topically
i
wander
stochastically
seek

my point that
i is but a : colon grown
too long

*Jeremy Colangelo is an author and academic from London, ON. His story collection, *Beneath the Statue*, was published in 2020, and his work has appeared in the *New Quarterly*, *EVENT*, *Carousel*, *the Puritan*, *the Dalhousie Review*, and elsewhere. He teaches at the University of Western Ontario, King's College.*

Reduce, Reuse, Reincarnate

GRANT BUDAY

Destroying books for the greater good



“There’s no money in books,” said Selma, who ran the book recycling program for British Columbia. “The program’s being cancelled. We’ll send a truck to pick up our bins.” A week later all eight bins that we had on site, each the size of a porta-potty, were gone. That was a couple of years ago.

Now when people bring books into the recycling depot here on Mayne Island, I say to take them to the thrift store or burn them in their wood-burning stoves at home. If that’s too *Fahrenheit 451* for people, I suggest tearing the books apart and peeling the glue from the spines and then we can assimilate them in the recycling stream. The problem, I explain, is the glue. People usually remark on the amount of time and effort involved in dismembering a book, to which I suggest they do it while watching Netflix. They study my face when I say that, not sure if I am being sincere or sarcastic. I assure them that’s what I do with books I intend to recycle.

It is an Orwellian experience to sit in front of the television and dismember a novel or a history text or any book for that matter. It’s only the mouldy, tattered and unreadable that undergo this procedure. Though admittedly the category “unreadable” is ambiguous, including books physically indecipherable and books that I deem dreck. I often dismember books while watching *Downton Abbey*. Some people rate it dreck, but I enjoy watching the plot unfold. The writer deals obstacles like cards to the characters, who must play their hands. I especially like the toff who survives the sinking of the *Titanic* and is taken to Montréal, but has amnesia. A good Son of Empire, he enlists to fight the Kaiser and then regains his memory due to the shock of a mortar blast. He returns to *Downton* with facial scarring so severe that nobody believes him when he identifies himself. In anguish, no longer in line to inherit *Downton* or wed the cool and aloof

Mary Crawley, he drags himself off to who knows what fate.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Amazon’s business has soared as people get things mailed to them rather than risk entering retail spaces. The volume of cardboard coming into the recycling depot has consequently also soared. Isolated, atomized, online and at home, we pulp even more trees to pack and protect our packages.

More packaging means more recycling. Mayne Island has a permanent population of about thirteen hundred consumers. The depot is open two days per week, and each day we bale some 450 kilos of paper and cardboard. Every second day we collect Styrofoam in a bag six feet in diameter, like an enormous snowball, easy to roll onto the truck, a parody of the stone Sisyphus is condemned to roll up a hill. For us at the depot, as for Sisyphus in Hades, the Styrofoam never ends.

One paper product in decline is newsprint. This is because more and more people prefer their daily dose of depression online. Still, newsprint retains one value—it is in demand as fire starter. Many people come into the depot with no other purpose than to ask for it.

Along with newsprint, books and corrugated cardboard, we get magazines: the *New Yorker*, *Harper’s*, the *London Review of Books*, the *Guardian*, the *Rolling Stone* and all manner of trade publication. Sometimes people bring in decades worth of *Life* magazine, which smell damp and cheesy. We often see boxes of *National Geographic* dating back to the 1950s or earlier. These have a different odour, a little more chemical, likely due to the type of stock and the nature of the ink. Or it’s a matter of how they were stored. This mass of printed material means we have plenty to peruse. Here is an article on the Rat Pack, with a smiling young Frank Sinatra, fedora tipped back, face tipped up, riding the

American Dream. The ads, free of guilt or irony, peddle the promise of the sophistication and satisfaction to be had through cruising about in convertibles, enjoying a refreshing cigarette, or stylishly sipping a martini.

There is a lot of martini sipping, wine drinking and beer guzzling on Mayne Island. I can tell by the volume of empties. They are one of our larger sources of revenue, therefore we encourage people to drink as much as possible, assuring them it is for a good

cause. The book collection program was for a good cause as well. The books went to orphanages, asylums and prisons.

Reducing, reusing and recycling are rated wise protocols. The paper collected at the depot goes to a processing facility where it is rendered into more paper. This means it is possible for a shoebox to be reborn as a book of poems, an artist's sketchbook or a novel that addresses elusive but persistent questions such as reincarnation, or the

fate of an amnesiac—like the character in *Downton Abbey*, who regained his memory but lost his future.

Grant Buday's most recent novel, Orphans of Empire, was shortlisted for the City of Victoria Book Award and the Roderick Haig-Brown Award. His short story "Marry Me" will be included in the anthology Fifty Years of Best Canadian Stories. He lives on Mayne Island, BC.

The muse hunt

DANIELLE HUBBARD

I reached a point in my early thirties when I had to acknowledge myself a washed-up poet so I placed a classified ad in the *Brandon Sun*

that read: Wanted, one muse. Verve and inspiration required. Ability to work obscure hours including weekends, pre-dawn.

The following resume arrived by fax: One ex-military man, 52, applying for duty. Credentials include

the capacity to sleep four hours a night. Physical stamina. Five years in the Airborne and a thumb tattoo

to prove it. Excellent libido, abdominals. Once jumped from a Huey helicopter at 2,000 feet over Helena, Montana

and landed on a cactus. Once jumped from a C130 Hercules in Baggotville, Quebec under red light in the middle of dark.

Once jumped with 300 pounds of radio kit and a twisted chute that only deployed 100 feet before impact. Once jumped

from a Lockheed C-141 Starlifter, great name. Once jumped from a helium blimp at 800 feet over England.

Once served four months in military prison in Edmonton as a result of an incident with a machete. Twice married

and twice divorced. Once tore a rotator cuff lifting a Christmas tree, still suffering the consequences. Enjoys Chardonnay. Inexperienced

with poetry but willing to learn. After a rigorous and long-drawn interview, I signed him up because how could I not?

Danielle Hubbard's poetry has appeared in several literary magazines, including the Malahat Review, the Fiddlehead and the Antigonish Review. When not writing, Danielle enjoys swimming, cycling, and exploring new places. She lives in Port Moody, where she works as the deputy director of the public library.

Marriage on the Download

CONNIE KUHNS

If marriage was a television show, it might look something like this



My friend Lori asked me one day if I had ever given my first husband a blow job. We were eating hot-dogs in Costco at the time. I told her, quite honestly, that I couldn't remember. It had been over fifty years. Too bad you can't call him up and ask, she said. But sex wasn't that deliberate

then. At least it wasn't that deliberate for me. Back then, it was stressful enough just to be naked.

What did come to mind, though, was that night in Yuma, Arizona, a few months after I met him. We had gone to visit his sister and she put us up in the same bedroom. That was

unheard of then, as we were not married. We had never been in a bed together alone for the entire night. The sheets were so cool against my legs. We toured the old territorial prison. The desert was burning up.

Jack had picked me up hitch-hiking, or rather he had picked up Lisa, my roommate. I was selling tickets at the Rivoli Theatre and she was a cashier in an office parking lot. We would meet every night after work in front of the post office on Long Beach Boulevard to hitchhike home. Jack and his friend Charlie had stopped for her. Their destroyer was dry-docked. They had just returned from a salvage mission off the coast of Vietnam. Jack told me they'd dropped explosives off the ship, day and night, to prevent the Vietcong from swimming out and blowing them up. They were stoned on mescaline and listening to Jimi Hendrix.

I slept with him right away and often. Lisa was a virgin and expected me to be one, too, so I pretended (to her) that I was. That meant that Jack and I had to go across the street and dodge helicopters patrolling the beach if we wanted to be alone. Ashamed yet determined. I lied to Jack, as well. I told him that he was only the second guy that I had ever slept with. He also wanted me to be a virgin.

During that summer, Jack got busted with a couple of lids of marijuana. He insisted to me that they belonged to somebody else until that moment in court when the judge asked him if the "contraband" was his. He said yes. He was sentenced to the LA county jail in Newhall where Charles Manson was walked through in shackles while being processed on his way to hell. I went to see Jack every weekend; there was a "jail bus" that left downtown on Sunday mornings. And when I couldn't afford a ticket there were always others

WEIRD JOBS

Who puts those little stickers on the apples in the grocery store?

(a person? a robot?)

Jute Winding

I actually had a night job once winding jute for macramé crafts. The air would get full of jute fluff. I'm sure I still have some in my lungs.

Weird contraption that would raw jute into skeins

CUTTING OPEN DOG POO BAGS.

THIS IS A REAL JOB*

Some poor person has to cut open all the dog poo bags and squeeze the poo out so it can be dumped into sewage treatment.

THIS IS A REAL JOB

*Look it up

Image: Weird Jobs by Debra Rooney

offering rides on the cheap. I once caught a ride with a woman who was also on her way to see her boyfriend. I couldn't take my eyes off her massive underarm hair. I had never seen such a thing. It was like a nest hanging from her branch-like arm. When I hitchhiked, I carried one of my grandmother's kitchen knives which I turned over each time the guards searched my purse. I talked to Jack over a phone, while sitting in a booth. We looked at each other through bullet-proof glass.

A year after meeting on that street corner, Jack and I got married. There was really no way out. Back home, all my high school friends were married. I was fast becoming an old maid. I was barely twenty years old and he was number four.

The morning after our wedding, when we awoke in my grandmother's bed, which she had lovingly given to us for our wedding night, I was a different person. The lights were on. The fog had lifted. *What have I done?* But I had made my bed, whatever that means.

Jack was jealous. He didn't like me

talking to his friends or attracting too much attention to myself. He found the journal that I kept that first summer I arrived in California and tore it up in front of me, saying it made me sound like a whore, which, at least in the context of this story, is a loss to the literary world.

If our marriage had been something like *Love American Style*, a popular television show at the time, it might have looked like this:

Episode One: *The Guest*. I invite the insurance man to our home. One

of Jack's ex-Navy buddies shows up stoned a few minutes before the insurance man arrives, and is sitting on the floor in the corner of the living room pretending to drum to the Doors. I just keep on talking about premiums, pretending Charlie isn't there.

Episode Two: *The Angry Wife*. We are supposed to leave for San Francisco when I get off work, but I can't find my unemployed husband. When I find him, he is on the beach tripping with Tina's husband Chuck, who offers me some acid. I get very, very mad and I make Jack drive to San Francisco anyway. I won't include the part about his difficulty "transitioning" from the military into civilian life because that wasn't a concept back then. The sunset is spectacular, apparently.

Episode Three: *The Movie Critic*. It's the rape scene in "Straw Dogs." I have never seen a movie like this before and I hate it. "See, I told you women liked it," Jack whispers to me. We are sitting in the Belmont Theatre and I suddenly feel sick.

Episode Four: *We've Only Just Begun*. We buy a season pass to Knott's Berry Farm and go there at least once a month for a year, thinking it to be one of the most magical places we have ever been. I think we are just like the young married couple in the Crocker Bank commercial who drive around listening to the Carpenters.

Episode Five: *Say What?* My husband asks me why I don't make him homemade soup for his lunch at work like this other guy's wife. I say I won't have his children because his brother-in-law is racist. His father calls me long distance and tells me to start letting Jack make the decisions. I yell out during a fight, "You think you were number two, well, you were number four!"

But Jack loved me. He made me spoon rings and once swiped some fire

hose nozzles for me to use as candlesticks when we couldn't afford the real ones at Cargo West. He made tortillas from scratch and dedicated special songs to me by Chicago and Seal and Crofts. His arms were smooth. His body was warm. He made sex normal. I learned how to steam pork chops, which in a way answers Lori's question. While our husbands did their thing, Cindy and I exchanged recipes and Tina and I decorated our tables with baby's breath in brown pottery; we were married couples like everybody else.

Our marriage started coming apart sometime after I bought the album *Tapestry*. I suppose I could blame Carole King for putting words to feelings not commonly spoken by women. I know I was a lot of work, especially for a guy who looked like George Harrison and just wanted to go home to Missouri. I suspect I was "transitioning" as well.

Season Finale (imaginary): *The Truth Is Always Beautiful*. A young wife starts a fire on the beach and burns her copies of *Be Here Now*, the *Kama Sutra*, *Open Marriage*, *Cosmopolitan* (although there were some good articles about the tricks husbands use to get out of doing housework), *The Art of Sensual Massage* for its horrible illustrations, any book about orgasms written by men, and the theatrical release of *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*. She's tired of everybody telling her who she is supposed to be. She keeps her three volumes of Carlos Castaneda.

Connie Kubns has a forty-year history as an essayist, photographer and music journalist. Her essay "Last Day in Cheyenne" (Geist No. 84) was named "Notable American Essay" in The Best American Essays series and nominated for a Western Magazine Award. She lives on Salt Spring Island, BC.



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Blue Portugal & Other Essays

THERESA KISHKAN

"[Kishkan] explores natural and human histories, the veins and rivers of then and now, with fierce and tender insight."

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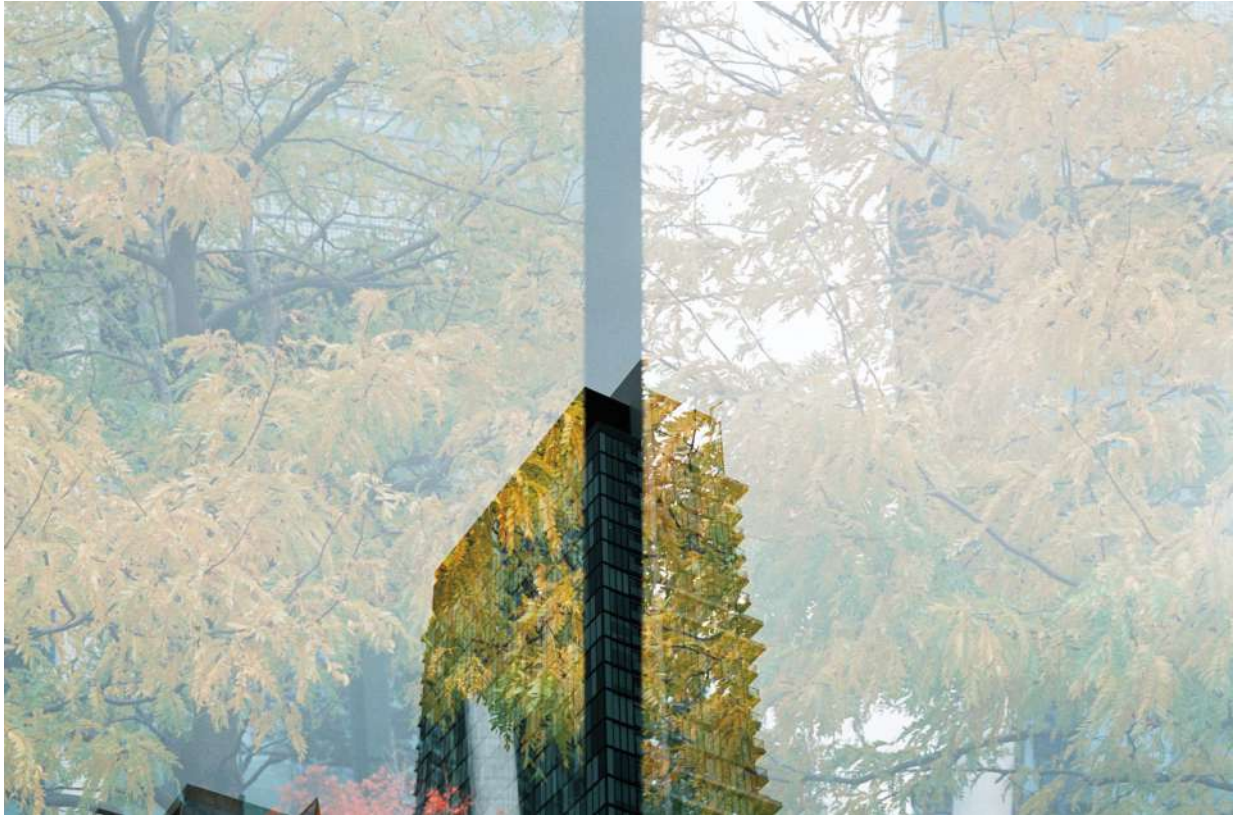
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FINDINGS



Untitled 1, 2015 and Untitled 7, 2015, 20" x 30," 35mm, Canon AE-1, from *Cityscape III* by Faribah Aliyah Shah. Shot double exposure on film, the series explores oscillations between man-made and natural elements

Collagen Matrix

THERESA KISHKAN

From Blue Portugal and Other Essays by Theresa Kishkan. Published by University of Alberta Press in 2022. Theresa Kishkan is the author of fifteen books of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. She lives in Sechelt, BC.

When our dog Lily died in 1996, we brought her body home from the vet and thought about where we'd bury her. She was a large Lab-Shepherd cross, with a little wolf in her past. You could see it in her body, in her face. And in her wild nature. She was happy to be part of our pack, but she wouldn't be trained in the usual way. If it made sense to her to come when we called, then she would. If she was

doing something else, something more important to her, then she wouldn't.

Anyway, she was big. The thought of digging a hole in rocky ground for her body was daunting. But John found a place in the woods, a deep hollow, with cedars all around. He cleared out a space for Lily's body, lined it with moss, and carried her there in the wheelbarrow. He covered her with a thick layer of moss. Then he cut branches of cedar, salal, and heaped them over the top.

A couple of years later, I went to the place and pushed the branches and moss aside. I could see a clean skeleton in the hollow. I reached in, removed a section of bone I quickly realized was Lily's pelvis, and brought it into the house. I soaked it for a few days in mild bleach solution and dried it off. I wanted something of her on my desk. In those years, my children were growing up



in daily life. The melding of images of Queen's Park and downtown Toronto expresses a desire to preserve nature in urbanization.

so quickly, and I knew they'd be leaving soon. In fact, the oldest had already gone away to school, and I missed him terribly. I knew our family was changing, and I wanted a physical anchor to the years when we camped in the summers, Lily with us, the nights sweet and star-filled.

Sometimes people would see the bone on my desk and wonder at it. When I explained what it was, I could tell that most of them thought it was macabre to keep a dog's pelvis at hand. But it was beautiful, the clean bone smooth as ivory. And how different is it to keep antlers or actual ivory? Both share a collagen matrix, though ivory has no system of blood vessels. Thirty-five thousand years ago, people were making representative figures from bone and ivory—Venuses, horses, reindeer—and also had shrines to the dead that included bird bones. I'm not making a case for fetishizing my

dog's pelvis. I just wanted to have something of her to look at every day. To remember her strong body, her high hips.

Perhaps eight years ago, I was in the kitchen and I heard a loud crash. It came from my study. We had no household animals at that time. Had a bird or some other creature come in through an open door and knocked something heavy to the floor? (Once, a weasel found its way in and raced around the house, running up a wall of books and along the top of a window, until we were able to shoo it out with a broom.) Investigating, I saw that a high shelf erected above the big window in my study, the width of the small room, had fallen, bringing its cargo of reference books (*Early Greek Myth*, *The Landmark Herodotus*, *Cruden's Concordance*, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*), an elk skull, and an old bean crock from my parents' house down onto my desk.

My little desk lamp was broken. A geode had cracked in half. And Lily's pelvis was broken too, fractured from the point of the ischiatic arch along the line of the symphysis pubis and ischii; the entire sacrum had broken away.

Crack. CRACK.

I thought about putting it back together with some sort of glue. Maybe hot glue? Or the kind of adhesive we used to install ceramic tiles on our counters. But I never did. Sometimes I'd take up the three parts and fit them as they'd been before their fracture.

It was interesting to run my finger along the hard compact bone on the outside edge; it resembled ivory. Within, the cancellous bone looked like fine dry sponge, containing what was left of the marrow. Lily's pelvis had cradled her bladder, some of her intestines, and, originally, her reproductive organs, before her ovaries and uterus were removed when she was young, before she came to us.

The desk lamp was repaired with duct tape. And now, more than twenty years after Lily's death, I am holding her pelvis in my hands, thinking about how long a life is, and how brief. What vanishes and what remains. 🍷

Balloon in a Suitcase

TAMAS DOBOZY

From Ghost Geographies by Tamas Dobozy. Published by New Star Books in 2021. Tamas Dobozy is the author of five books. His book Siege 13 (Thomas Allen/Milkweed) won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and was a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction. He lives in Kitchener, ON.

Huba kept a constantly packed suitcase with a full change of clothes inside. There were American dollars, too. There was a compass, street maps of Vienna, Paris, Madrid, and a black-market *Playboy*. Huba said he was ready for anything, including the loneliness of the West. Most importantly there was a newspaper article from the Neues Deutschland about a family that had built an air balloon back in '58 in an attempt to get to West Germany. The article included a facsimile of the plans drawn up on a bar napkin, placed strategically by the newspaper's editors beside a picture of the actual balloon, crashed and disintegrated around four splayed bodies, as a disincentive to anyone wanting to try it for himself. Whenever they got drunk the article would come out and Huba would talk about what a great idea it was. Not a successful one, but still. With his knowledge of aeronautics they could tweak the plans to make it work. But the next morning Huba would be sober and the article would go back into the suitcase and he wouldn't talk about it until the next time they started drinking again.

It occurred to Bánko, once he'd turned from Írén, that there would be none of that infamous alienation, rumoured to be the main flaw of the lifestyles of the West, if Huba and he went together.

He spent the rest of the morning trying to get to Huba's place without being followed. Leaping onto streetcars at the last second, then leaping off at the next stop, only to step onto another headed in the opposite direction. Climbing up and down the steps of buses. Going back and forth along the stations of the *kisföldalatti*. Doing whatever he could to throw off an invisible and for all he knew imaginary pursuit. Sometimes Bánko just stopped and stared at the sky, gripped by the realization of what he'd left behind. He was no longer a wrestler on the Hungarian national team. It felt exhilarating, like that uncertainty that always gripped him before a match, and which he'd always regarded as his true challenger, one he could never fully defeat, that he always needed to fight again, and was maybe even the reason he fought in the first place.

Huba was working under the table in those days as the unofficial superintendent of his building on Villányi út. Before that he'd been training as an air traffic controller, a job they'd suggested after his mandatory military service in the Hungarian air force (such as it was). His main problem, back then, was that he'd never joined the party. He hadn't been vocal, either for or against it. He'd just demurred. So he was suspect, passed over for promotion, though he knew as much about the job as anyone. Then, one day in 1953, Huba's father was taken away. They received no explanation, before or after. One day he simply didn't come home. Huba went with his mother to the police, who shrugged and said they'd make inquiries. At the National Railways office where his father worked one of the secretaries said he'd been "paid a visit" and left with three men. The way she said it, in that tone, suggested no one had

been surprised, and his wife and son shouldn't be either, as if his father's insurgency was common knowledge. Huba had had to race his mother out of there before she spat in the woman's face. When his father returned, arriving in time for dinner a few months later, he was in pieces. Both his hands were bandaged, and Huba had to send his mother from the room when he changed the dressings. Each finger looked as if it had been flattened with a hammer. The old man, and he was old now, having gone from fifty to eighty in those few months, shook his head when they asked where he'd gone, what had happened, as if what the ÁVO had wanted from him was not information but its opposite, interrogating him until he agreed to close his mouth forever. In the weeks that followed it became obvious to Huba and his mother that the old man could no longer stay away from high balconies, train tracks, the whirlpool of traffic around Moszkva tér, where one day he broke free of them and stepped in front of a streetcar. His mother's heart lasted for a few months after that. It was impossible for her to stop seeing it—the moment of impact. Huba found her body in the vestibule of her apartment one morning, fallen under an open umbrella.

His father's incarceration was the end of Huba's job at Ferihegy airport. You couldn't employ the offspring of a reactionary. All things considered he'd been lucky. They could have jailed him for life, brought in the torturer, made him disappear. Had Huba been a member of the party that's probably what would have happened, and when he laughed during that time, which wasn't often, it was at that—how he'd been saved from the regime by his reluctance to join it. Instead, all they did was deny Huba an income, leaving him to starve to death. Now he was unofficially unemployed, which, apart from the word "official," was the same as being officially unemployed. But some of the residents of his building came together and paid him piecemeal for fixing vents and pipes, stoves and fridges, hinges, parquet floors, cracked cement. The suitcase in his closet, first conceived when his father vanished, was less a plan than a shrine to the idea of escape, and every night he'd take it out and check to make sure everything was in place in the event that magic indeed existed and he suddenly found himself airlifted to the corner of Philharmoniker Straße and Kärtner Straße, hankering for a nice espresso. The truth is, Huba was terrified of escape, and that tiny suitcase, and the hope it signified, might have been enough of the west for the rest of his life. He could

have subsisted on that, up late, unpacking and repacking the suitcase in the light of the red star rising above the ministry building across the street.

But on that April afternoon Bánko burst in, rivulets of sweat running down his shirt. He let loose a torrent of gibberish: *wrestling*, *Zabrovsky*, *murder*, *Írén*, *escape*. It took Huba an hour to calm him down with brimming shots of *pálinka*, until the morning's events came out in logical sequence and attention turned to the suitcase. You can't be serious, Huba told him, but Bánko just got up nervously and paced from window to window. They're going to be coming for me. Huba went and peered out, unsure of what he should be looking for except maybe uniformed police. Seeing none, he went back to his seat by the table and slumped in it, resting his chin on his forearms. You can't be serious.

G IS FOR GASLIGHTING

From Hallelujah Time by Virginia Konchan. Published by Signal Editions, an imprint of Véhicule Press, in 2021. Virginia Konchan is the author of four poetry books, four chapbooks and a collection of short stories. She is the co-founder of Matter and lives in Halifax, NS.

G is for gaslighting, the spell under which you convince me I'm crazy for liking to live, term originating from a 1938 play titled same. G is for garlic, *allium sativum*, flowering plant praised for its curative, alimentary properties. G: gyroscopes, gastronomy, bathtub gin. Green is the color of the patina that grows on the surface of copper, brass, and bronze. Garth Brooks, golems, and gastric bypasses. Glamor, grammar, goodness, gavels, ghouls. Genesis' fifth day, when our Gnostic creator invented creatures of the sea, sky, and land: God's female, according to Ariana Grande. The final words of an auctioneer after the highest bid is offered: going, going, gone. Pablo Picasso's anti-war painting *Guernica*. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Gal Gadot in the role of Wonder Woman, who went back in time to save WWI: shapeshifter of flight and invisibility. G: glitter, glow, gleam. Intimations of a realm beyond this, immortality.

Bánko kept up his nervous pacing, but it didn't surprise Huba. Bánko was always like this, super-charged, whether he thought he'd just killed someone or not. He was the only guy Huba knew who'd come out for a walk with you and end up crossing the street to look at something, then cross back to walk beside you for ten or fifteen paces, then enter some building for fifteen minutes, come out the back way, and meet up with you two blocks later, then disappear once more into a public garden only to intercept you at the door of the bar you'd agreed upon. He had the motion, the energy, of ten men, and sometimes Írén teased him with the nickname, "Csapat." That was Bánko since as long as Huba could remember—stronger, braver, always with the best girl—and Huba would have felt jealous except there was no way any of Bánko's attributes could ever have belonged to him. It was outside the realm of possibility. He might as well have felt jealous of Buddha or Jesus or Elvis.

The American embassy, said Huba, sitting up. I'm sure they'd love to see you defect. You could join their Olympic team. But Bánko just shook his head, saying it was the first place they'd look for him. The two of them sat for so long in the silence that eventually Huba had to get up and turn on the lights. We have only one option, Bánko said. We have to build that balloon. Balloon? Bánko nodded. The one in your suitcase.

Oh, that balloon. Huba had looked over the design so many times he could recall the bar napkin stain by stain. Sheets of taffeta stitched together into an inflatable sphere, a gas burner, kerosene, what

could go wrong? We wouldn't have to fly far, Bánko said, if we take off from the southwest, say Nemesmedves or thereabouts. At night, up in the sky like that? Too high for searchlights? They wouldn't even know we were there. We'd only have to travel ten miles at the most and then we'd be in Austria.

We'd be over Austria, Huba said. Two hundred feet over it. During the next day, he put everything he had into dissuading Bánko, managing to keep up an argument against him for a whole hour before the wrestler's energy burned him out. It was only on day two that Huba thought he'd come up with a surefire objection: Okay, let's say we go through with it. Let's say we find a ride down there. We'll find a ride down there, answered Bánko. Right, continued Huba, so we have a ride. Let's say we find that gas burner, kerosene. Huba nodded after each word, authoritative as a teacher putting check marks along an assignment. Huba had expected all of his certainty, there was nothing but confidence with Bánko, but for the first time ever he felt as if he had the upper hand, that he was the one setting the trap. All this is fine, said Huba, albeit insane. But the big question is: Who's going to sew the sheets together for the balloon? You? Because I can certainly tell you it isn't going to be me. To prove his point he indicated the jagged and crooked curtains over the window—which looked as if they'd been hacked with a machete from a roll of fabric while it was still rolled up—held in place over the rod with a mixture of adhesive tape and bent paper clips jabbed through the fabric. Shit, said Bánko, you're right, his hand making stitching motions in the air, as if miming it like that was practice enough, as if it might give him the ability to master sewing right then and there. He stopped suddenly, thoughtful.

So that's that, said Huba. We can't do it. We'll have to figure out something else. Bánko screwed up an eye. It almost sounded as if he hadn't prepared what he was going to say next. Írén can sew, he whispered, and at those words Huba realized he'd been the one standing on the trapdoor the whole time, Bánko fingering the lever even as Huba believed he'd won the argument. Írén? I thought you wanted her left out of this. Bánko shrugged and said there was no other option, and Huba wondered at his friend. It was unlike Bánko to risk the lives of those he loved, no matter what the cost to himself. He would have died first. If the Soviet authority found out that Bánko had escaped, and Huba and Írén had helped him, they would be arrested, imprisoned, and worse. Had the incident with Zabrovsky frightened him that badly? 🍷

BALKAN ECONOMICS

for Goran Simic

From All I Have Learned Is Where I Have Been by Joe Fiorito. Published by Signal Editions, an imprint of Véhicule Press, in 2020. Joe Fiorito is the author of nine books. He lives in Toronto, ON.

The last time I saw sugar,
it was \$100 a kilo
during the war—

he said, stirring three spoons
into his double-shot
Americano.

305 Lost Buildings of Canada

RAYMOND BIESINGER & ALEX BOZIKOVIC

From 305 Lost Buildings of Canada by Raymond Biesinger and Alex Bozikovic. Published by Goose Lane Editions in 2022. Raymond Biesinger's illustrations have been published in the New Yorker, the Guardian and TIME. Alex Bozikovic is an architecture critic for the Globe and Mail and co-author of Toronto Architecture: A City Guide (McClelland and Stewart).

CHARLOTTETOWN, PE

PETER PAN DRIVE-IN 1958–2020



In the postwar years, the Peter Pan was beloved by locals for its milkshakes, burgers (served in a basket), and lobster burgers. There were few franchised fast-food restaurants at the time; this locally owned place in an A-frame building was a landmark. The restaurant closed in 2013 and was demolished, but carpenters from Holland College rescued its sign, featuring Peter Pan and lettering that seemed to have been created by a young child. 711 University Avenue; demolished.

SASKATOON, SK

COMMODORE RESTAURANT

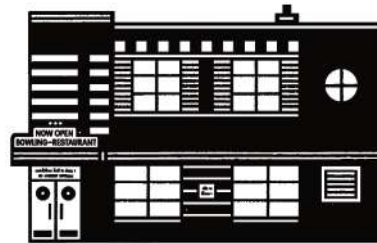
1947–2007



Steve Lealos left the Greek mainland as a boy of fourteen and wound up in Saskatoon; here he was one of a half-dozen countrymen to run restaurants in the downtown. This one Lealos called the New Commodore to distinguish it from its predecessor on 21st Street. It was a hangout for the cooler high school kids, including, apparently, a young Joni Mitchell. The restaurant's name also appeared on sports jerseys: in the 1950s owner Spero Lealos was general manager of the semi-pro Saskatoon Commodores baseball team. The building became a Chinese restaurant, Chau's Commodore, and was demolished after a fire in 2007. 108 2nd Avenue North; now a parking lot.

OSHAWA, ON

MAYFAIR BOWLING ALLEY 1930S–1957



In the 1920s and '30s, bowling was among the most popular sports in the country. (A Canadian, Thomas Ryan, had invented the five-pin version in his Toronto bowling alley.) Oshawa's Mayfair was a sharp deco building with porthole windows, glass block, and neon. In 1948, it scandalized a visiting Presbyterian minister by opening on Sunday. Less than a decade later, it burned and went down. 39 Celina Street; now a parking lot.

HALIFAX, NS

AFRICAN METHODIST

EPISCOPAL ZION

CHURCH 1846–1955

There has been a sizeable community of Black Haligonians since the late eighteenth century, yet they were long segregated into a few specific neighbourhoods. One was here, along Gottingen Street in the then prosperous North End. In the years around



1900 this church, part of a Black-led branch of Methodism brought to Nova Scotia by Black Loyalists, stood at the community's centre, running a school and charitable work. The church's congregation shrank as other Black churches grew, but after 1930 the church was restored with community help—and then vandalized. Suburbanization and urban renewal programs decimated the neighbourhood's buildings, and the church was demolished in the 1950s. 26 Gottingen Street and Falkland Street; now an empty lot.

My Money and My Daughter Go to Cornell

KELLEE NGAN

*From Good Mom On Paper, edited by Stacey May Fowles and Jen Sookfong Lee. Published by Book*bug Press in 2022. Excerpted from "What Have You Done Today?" by Kellee Ngan. Kellee Ngan is a writer of Chinese descent and Caribbean heritage. Her work has been published in Geist, Grain and Poetry is Dead. She lives on Bowen Island, BC.*

It was during a recent creative streak that I'd reported what I thought was a victory for myself and my novel-in-progress.

"I wrote five hundred words today," I'd said. There was an implied "*ta-da!*" as punctuation but everyone failed to pick up on it.

"Is that a lot?" the kindergartner asked. This is a kid who used to spend hours being charmed by mismatched Tupperware lids. Now that he's in school, he's got opinions and is far less easy to impress.

His sister interjected. A third grader, she is turbo-charged on reading and will burn through a novel in one sitting. She will gladly tell anyone who asks that she *gets* books. And math. I could see her doing the addition in her head, fingers tapping on the table to doublecheck the calculation.

"But aren't there, like, millions of words in a book?" she said. The upspeak at the end both the result of two missing front teeth and a desire to be at least a tiny bit diplomatic.

"It's more like tens of thousands," I said. But neither of them was particularly interested in the distinction. Five hundred out of any larger number equals not enough.

My kids are harsh but fair critics, something I attribute to their genetic heritage. My parents would react the exact same way, viewing the typing of five hundred words into a computer document as inconsequential until proven otherwise. It's not that they're unsupportive; it's that they have no time for flattery. Praise from my parents is delivered in the same matter-of-fact manner as a takeaway order. When I texted my mother to ask for her opinion on the episodic children's audio play I'd worked on, she replied: *Listened to two, so far, should be good for the kids.* Then she e-transferred Lunar New Year lucky

money with instructions to buy her grandchildren something they could use, like pants.

My mother and father arrived in Toronto in the late 1960s from Jamaica and Hong Kong, respectively. They met at the Chinese Catholic church they both attended and would go on to star in their own version of the immigrant success story in which their stoic work ethic led to a better life for themselves and their Canadian-born offspring.

When I was young, I recall that my parents worked a lot. They both had full-time jobs. My mother was a teacher at a community college, my father an electrician. For a period of time my father worked night shifts, his career path diverting from normal waking hours. His schedule rendered family dinners impossible some days, but there was always food on the table.

Their dedication to their work paid off. My father eventually switched his focus to real estate, another career with great time demands but better returns. By working hard—and never quitting until they were offered the golden handshake of early retirement—they were able to buy a house, put me and my older brother in a variety of activities, and neared the apex of Asian parenting by sending us both to university.

What I don't recall is them doing much for themselves. They'd chauffeur us to school and our extracurriculars, but they rarely bought new clothes or went on vacations as a couple. They take yoga and tai chi classes now as empty nesters, but I don't think they did anything like that before: No pickup soccer for old-timers, no wine night with friends. If they went to the rec centre, it was to take one of us kids to swimming or soccer or skating, and the nearest thing to a night out would be a family wedding—with the emphasis on family. In the rear-view mirror, the sense of duty and sacrifice flashes to the point of blinding.

Starting in pregnancy, mothers begin to lose parts of themselves.

In a 2018 *New York Times* article entitled "Reframing 'Mommy Brain,'" writer and doctor Alexandra Sacks refers to a study by pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott that explains the phenomenon known as primary maternal preoccupation. Dr. Winnicott found that mothers, out of necessity, must laser-focus on their helpless dependent in order to keep said dependent alive. Our grey matter shrinks, our brains altered to narrow our focus to our children.

While this psychological state of intense attentiveness is necessary to help the baby thrive, it can come at the detriment to the mother's psychological well-being. If the baby is her world, what happens to everything outside of that orbit? What becomes of those parts of that woman that existed before motherhood and are independent of her identity as a parent? Talk about a no-win situation, where tending to your own needs is seen as a dereliction of duty.

The culture of contemporary motherhood has tried to rally against this imperative. In recent years, the messaging has been that mothers can—and should demand to—have it all. “All,” in these instances, meant killing it at the mom game while climbing the corporate ladder. From the stories of working mothers “leaning in” à la Sheryl Sandberg, to the rise of mommy influencers who’ve parlayed parenting into a paid gig, examples of successful motherhood have remained centred on the reconfiguration and rebalancing of work and family.

The math seems faulty, or at least, incomplete. It supposes that it only takes two parts to make the whole mother: her career and her children. It supposes that our interior lives are less notable and in no need of nurturing. Why can’t mothers strive to have a fulfilling social, spiritual, or creative life, too? To not only care for loved ones, but for ourselves?

Of course, there are mothers whose creative practice is their work. And full-time art moms are my heroes. I applaud them, respect them, and not-so-secretly envy them. That’s the dream: to do what you love and get paid for it. That dream, however, is tempered by the reality that art is not often well compensated. According to a 2018 study by the Writers’ Union of Canada, more than 85 percent of writers earn an income from their writing that is below the poverty line. If the majority of working writers in this country can’t support themselves through writing alone, how can one hope to support a family?

A good mother provides security for her children—this is the tale I’ve been told. The moral of the immigrant success story makes it clear that I should focus on feeding my children food over poetry. Five hundred words a day will not keep them alive the way a steady paycheque will. Five hundred words a day won’t pay for opportunities.

I’ve been reminded of this advice often. After ferrying me to university for the first time, my parents went to the campus store to buy a tchotchke to mark the occasion. I thought they’d pick

FIRST LETTER

From After Villon by Roger Farr. Published by New Star Books in 2022. The poems in After Villon are based on the writings of the 15th century poet François Villon. Roger Farr is the author of four books of poetry. He lives in Vancouver, BC.

Villon,

Language is a game in which the rules are known only to the players.

When I translate one of your poems & come across a word I don’t understand, I bluff. Sometimes I win, sometimes you lose. I recognize only a few words of the language you wrote in. Some of them were counterfeits coined by you & never seen again. We both cheat.

It’s all very difficult. I want to decipher the form of life, the game, not the “objects.” I also seek some advice about *vice*. The problem is some of the codes may have been cracked by cops, & we both know better than to trust a poem in which the poet *sings*.

I’m getting weary of cheaters cheating cheats. Mash something up. Swap the dice. Pretend it’s new. Poets aren’t murderers. We’re *executioners*. Honour among thieves. This is what is meant by “the Tradition.”

Most of my contemporaries hate poetry. They get up early, write their poems in the dark, bear down on the meaning of every word, churn the words around in their mouths, gargle with different words, then spit it out in an email addressed to someone doing the exact same thing across town. Others find poems among the Wires. They have no control over their digits, don’t know how to stop. That’s the worst.

Villon, you’re not a straight talker—your words are queer. You use words to communicate ideas to certain people, while deceiving others. It’s as though you’re playing a Game: your poems are not the game, but rather the means for one. Your words are codes, or cards. I suspect the manner in which you deal them holds the secret.

That is what I must translate: an *arrangement*. It requires new methods. The odds aren’t good. But I might get lucky.

I repeat—we both cheat.

—RF

STRANGERS TO BATS TO LOVERS

A selection of fanfiction tags from Archive of Our Own, an open-source repository for fanworks. To help readers find the kinds of stories they're looking for, fanfic authors tag their works with keywords and phrases that are linked together in a complex meta-data taxonomy by AO3 volunteers. Find more at archiveofourown.org/tags. Compiled by Kelsea O'Connor.

Time-Travel Shenanigans
Dubiously Helpful Woodland Creatures
Female-Led Reimagining of Dwarven Civilization
Complete Lack of Olympics Knowledge
Probable misrepresentation of how airports work
Unrealistically Large Bathtub
Vintage gay sadness
Strangers to Bats to Lovers
Derelict motor vehicles
Author seeks own emotional catharsis
Jokes About Socks
Directly inspired by awful holiday movies
Geese
Science is explained badly
Advanced Cuddling
Gratuitous use of a Barenaked Ladies song
Rural canadian queers
CanCon
The Mortifying Ordeal of Being Known
Warning for cold oatmeal
Strangers who Met in a Field to Coworkers to Friends to Lovers
The Mortifying Ordeal Of Having A Podcast
Accidental Baby Acquisition
Pivotal cheesecake moments
cruelty to houseplants
Lunch As An Obstacle
Graphic descriptions of a terrible suit being destroyed
Behaving carelessly around expensive silk robes
Tooth-Rotting Fluff
Competitive Boyfriending
Goose-typical violence
horrific mangling of hockey facts
Based on a Taylor Swift Song
Historically Accurate Gay People
The seemingly restorative powers of the Northern Lights
Love language: reheated chicken
The Inherent Romanticism of a Joint Retirement Fund
Pastries as a love language
Minor Character Death - Lamp
Two-person love triangle
Space Wives

something with utility like a mug or a mouse pad. But they opted for a flimsy bumper sticker that looked like it had been printed from a glitchy dorm-room printer. It read: MY MONEY AND MY DAUGHTER GO TO CORNELL. I remember them having a good chuckle about it, saying, "It's funny because it's true."

They never put it on their car. Instead, it was tacked above the clothes dryer in the mudroom of our house where, when I returned on breaks, I'd be guaranteed to see it and be reminded of their sacrifice—and that the least I could do is help with the laundry.

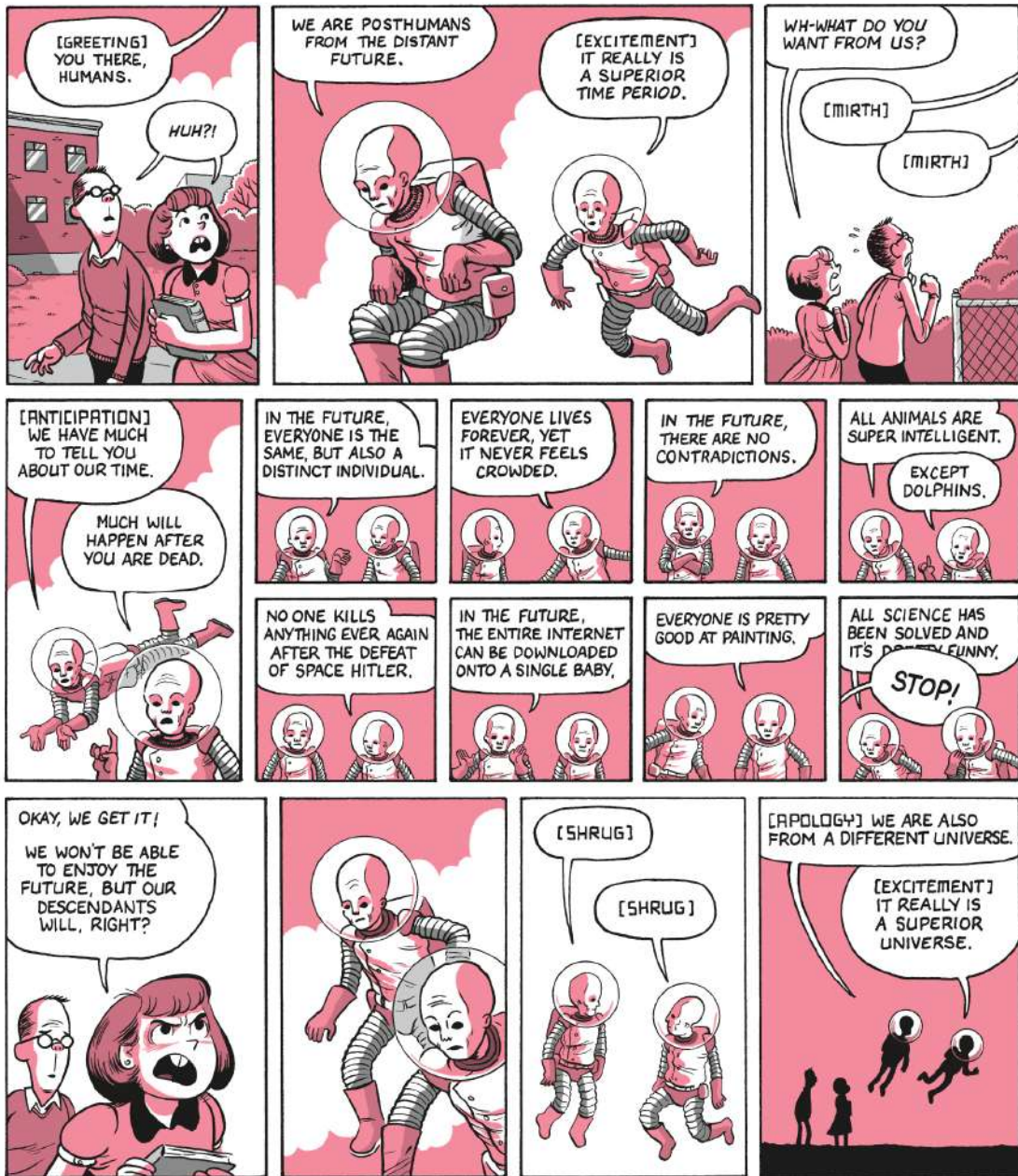
Before I had kids, I vowed that I wouldn't let motherhood change me. But the babies came along and they wreaked their havoc. Not just on my body, but my brain. Thanks to that change in grey matter, I now spend a disproportionate amount of time feeling bad about what I'm *not* doing.

This guilt occurs regularly, most often expressed in a stream of consciousness downward spiral that my husband refers to as my homage to Lucy Ellmann's *Ducks, Newburyport*: The fact that I can't be a good writer if I don't dedicate more time to it, the fact that I don't have time before my board meeting, the fact that the kids need to finish their Valentine's Day cards, the fact that no one will want to publish my book even if I finish it—I probably won't finish it; the fact that the roast won't defrost in time, the fact that I forgot take the roast out of the freezer, the fact that I don't have enough time to write, the fact that I can't write when I have time, and the clock in the kitchen has stopped.

"Why do I even bother?" is the standard coda. My husband waits for me to utter this closing line before he responds in his usual rational fashion: "You wouldn't feel so guilty about it if you didn't want to do it."

That much is true: the need to write persists, as does the desire to be a good mother. The solitary exercise of writing has always appealed to my introversion: the opportunity to be alone, but also in a world of my own making. It's a lot like tackling a jigsaw puzzle. Both can be an exercise in frustration, given the inevitable stalls in progress and hours spent staring at the holes in the scenes. But as a mother juggling a mental laundry list of tasks and the burden of emotional labour, there's no greater feeling than figuring out how all the pieces fit together. To know that my brain still has space to make sense of chaos and, for that moment, to control it.

POSTHUMANS



From *To Know You're Alive* by Dakota McFadzean. Published by Conundrum Press in 2020. Dakota McFadzean has been published in *MAD* magazine, the *New Yorker*, *The Best American Comics* and *Funny or Die*. He is the author of three graphic novels. He lives in Regina, SK.

Past, Present, Future

These pictographs are from the sculptural work Calgary & Alberta Past, Present, Future Count, created by Adrian Stimson for the Calgary Central Library. The project, which includes forty-one steel pictographs and three sculptures, reimagines the Blackfoot language of pictographs. Traditionally, it was up to the artist to determine the symbol that represented a single word or idea, and though depictions changed over time, there was often a recognition of previous artists' work. Through his work, Stimson aims to become part of that pictographic history, honour Blackfoot tradition, and bridge together past, present and future.



NATOSI

The Sun, the universe, the great mystery. The centre of all things, known and unknown.



NAPI

Old Man. Blackfoot creator and trickster character. His stories tell of Blackfoot creation, life and ways of Being.



GIPITAKI

Old Woman. Often accompanies Old Man in Blackfoot ways of being. She reflects balance to Napi's unpredictable ways.



OTTER

One of Napi's companions on the raft in the creation stories. Otter dove down and came back with nothing. Considered one of the Blackfoot animal totems.



BEAVER

One of Napi's companions on the raft in the creation stories. Beaver also dove down and came up with nothing. Considered one of the Blackfoot animal totems.



LOON

One of Napi's companions on the raft in the creation stories. Loon also dove down and came up with nothing. Considered one of the Blackfoot animal totems.



MUSKRAT

One of Napi's companions on the raft in the creation stories. Muskrat dove down and came up with clay with which Napi made the land. Considered one of the Blackfoot animal totems.



IINII

These four bison represent the time before European contact when bison were bountiful and filled their landscapes. For the Blackfoot they were central to all aspects of being. Shelter, clothing, tools, food, medicine and spiritual life.



HORSE CULTURE

Representing the introduction of the horse to North America, and the Blackfoot mastery of this relationship.



SKY BEINGS

Honouring and respecting the forces of nature. Specifically the forces of the sky: wind, thunder, rain, snow, stars, aurora borealis and more.



SIGNING OF THE TREATIES

Representing the signing of Treaty 7. The peace pipe crossing the tomahawk indicates peaceful coexistence, living together without conflict.



SIKSIKA NATION

Existing pictographic symbol for the Siksika Nation.



STONEY NAKOTA NATION

Existing symbol for the Stoney Nakota Nation.



KAINAI NATION

Existing symbol for the Kainai Nation.



TSUU T'INA NATION

Existing symbol for the Tsuu T'ina Nation.



PIIKANI NATION

Existing symbol for the Piikani Nation. Note: Missing breath in front of mouth.



THE ENGLISH

First contact, the cross represents the British Crown.



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Historically the Mounties were depicted with pointed or triangular shaped heads, referencing the pickelhaube on the top of their helmet.



METIS NATION

Artist interpretation of the Metis Nation, consistent with historic tribal identifiers.



THE RAILWAY

The National Dream, linking the colonies across 'Canada.'



RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

1870–1990s. 150,000 Indian, Inuit and Metis students attend across time.



CATTLE

The introduction of Agriculture and Cattle across the Great Plains.



HORSE

The introduction of Agriculture and Horses across the Great Plains.



AGRICULTURE AND FARMING

The replacement of natural prairie landscape with monocultural farming practices.



RESOURCE EXTRACTION

Referencing oil, gas, mineral and other resource extraction processes.



AUTOMOBILE

1901, the first automobile arrives in Alberta. Evolution of the Horse Culture, leading to pavement and road and transportation systems.



AIRPLANE

1911, the first aircraft arrives in Alberta.



CALGARY STAMPEDE

The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth! The beginnings, Blackfoot participation.



FIRST WORLD WAR, THE CRASH AND DEPRESSION, THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The effect of these events world wide and the Calgary and Alberta connections.



HUMANS IN OUTER SPACE

An arrow into the sky, the knowledge that humans have reached space. 1961.



THE HUSKY TOWER

Now known as the Calgary Tower, this symbol was once the tallest building in Calgary, Opened in 1968, I remember going to Calgary from the east, the first thing we would see was the Husky Tower, it was thrilling.



1988 OLYMPIC GAMES

An interpretation of the Calgary Olympic Games in 1988. The large tipi, the cauldron, the mountains, foothills and Olympic rings.



TWO SPIRIT PERSONS

A new interpretation of Two Spirited people, the bridge, the gender fluidity, the spirits, the heart.



THE WIDE WORLD WEB

We are caught in a web, a world wide web. What does it mean as we become further entangled? What does the binary code mean?



BLACK SNAKE

The Prairie Bull Snake can be mistaken for a rattle snake or look like a black shadow in the grass. The Lakota prophecy about the black snake refers to the pipelines snaking across the country. We are at a time of reflection, urgency and action.



CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Also known as Earth Emergency, the changing environment is upon us, we will either adapt or perish. Mother Earth speaks to us, are we listening? What does the future hold?



A NEW HOPE

Learn from the little ones; observe, learn, mimic, cooperate, defend and nurture. Nature will teach us ways of seeing the world around us. Our future depends on it.



THE EAGLE

A symbol of honour, power and hope into the future. The eagle holds the seven generations in its heart.



THE UNIVERSAL TIPI

From beneath the earth, to the land and water, foothills and mountains, the earth, cosmic waves, a part of the Universe, our sun hurtling through space, planets trailing into the Great Mystery. Pleiades and Big Dipper guiding the way. We are all one in the Great Mystery.



BISON BEING

The return of the Bison to the Great Plains, The Buffalo Treaty, as signers, we have the honour and privilege to bring back the bison to the Great Plains. The Bison is in all of us, make room for the Bison. What does the future hold?

STATEMENT 068

*From The Employees by Olga Ravn, translated from Danish by Martin Aitken. Published by Book*hug Press in 2022. The Employees was longlisted for the Dublin Literary Award in 2022 and shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2021. Olga Ravn is the author of five books and lives in Copenhagen, Denmark.*

Why should I work with someone I don't like? What good could possibly come from socializing with them? Why have you made them so human to look at? I completely forget sometimes that they're not like us. Standing in line in the canteen, I sometimes suddenly realize that I feel a kind of tenderness for Cadet 14. She's a redhead. Or maybe you developed them like that intentionally, so that we'd feel this sympathy for their bodies and the beings they are, if you can call them that, and make working with them easier. Yes. Only now you want me to, you want to change the nature of my assignment? So what you're asking me to do is supervise Cadet 14's movements about the ship, without her cottoning on? Because we share a bunk room together. Is it because she won't talk to you? I'm not very comfortable with it, obviously. What you're asking me to do is the same as surveillance, isn't it? I don't like her, but I still think about her all the time. So in that sense I suppose I'm the right person for the job. I try to understand her, who she is. She's not just an embodiment of the program. There's more to her than that. Is that

the kind of thing you want? In the report? Whether she speaks to any of the other humanoids, and what they say to her? All right, I'll keep an eye out. How would I characterize her? Cadet 14 is humanoid, fifth generation, female, a well-liked employee. Does her work impeccably. A rather meek and docile version, like many of the fifth generation. She's fond of the freckles on her nose. She looks at herself in the mirror in the bunk room before going to bed, and puts her finger to her freckles. *How human, she says. To think they gave me freckles. What more could someone like me wish for?* I think I love her.

I need to work that out of my system, obviously. No, you don't have to transfer her to another bunk, I've already told you, I'll keep an eye on her for you. Isn't that it? Isn't that what you want? If I'm to be perfectly honest, if that's where we're at, I can say she's a much better worker than me, we all know it's the truth. What have I got left other than a few recollections of a lost earth? I live in the past. I don't know what I'm doing on this ship. I carry out my work with complete apathy, sometimes even contempt. I'm not saying this to provoke you. Perhaps it's more of a cry for help. I know we won't get away from here in my lifetime. Cadet 14 hasn't got a lifetime, or rather hers spans such a gigantic stretch of time it's beyond my comprehension. She's got a future ahead of her. So now you're saying my job's changed? That now I'm to watch her? I think this might save my life.

What's It Like?

ELAINE MCCLUSKEY

Excerpt from Rafael Has Pretty Eyes copyright ©2022 by Elaine McCluskey. Reprinted by permission of Goose Lane Editions. Elaine McCluskey is the author of four short-story collections and two novels. She lives in Dartmouth, NS.

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Are you on your third marriage? What's it like? Pros?

Cons? Email our reporter Deidre Fairfield for a story:

Xavierd@globem.com

To: Xavierd@globem.com

From: gregmac@yahoo.com

Yes, I am on my third. What's it like? Think back to when you were a teenager and imagine that you were the only kid in your neighbourhood forced to attend summer school because you had flunked algebra. It's that same feeling of dread and shame when you awake each morning. And the sun may be shining and your friends may be heading to Chesterman Beach in a van, but you are trudging to summer school, a failure. It's like *that*. And you don't know why it happened. You tell yourself you were just lazy. People underestimate laziness. They mistakenly believe that under-

achieving children must be troubled, handicapped, or failed by their parents, when some are just lazy. You hope it is *that*.

But you fear it is something worse. You fear that you are so deficient that you may never be good at anything in life. Like summer school, a third marriage is your last chance—the one thing that stands between you and that dirt-road trailer with power lines running from someone else’s house, a plastic rainwater collector, and an angry dog chained outside.

The pros: Christmas or Easter are never boring. When you have an extended and estranged family large enough to stage a full production of *Come from Away*—someone is bound to go off, and they always do. And it makes you question every decision you have ever made in your life, every road taken and not taken. And self-examination is a good thing, isn’t it?

The cons: Think about it.

Robert

I would prefer that my real name not be used because—well, I am sure you know why.

Dear Robert,

Are you available for an interview about your worst Christmas? We could use your initials.

Cheers,

Deidre

From: MaeveandDonald@hotmail.com

Dear Miss Fairfield,

I struggled to find my path after many lost years during which I was distant from God. And then I was blessed when the elders instructed me to marry Donald, a good man whose wife died three months ago. I am grateful that I have the health to take care of Donald who is entering his ninetieth year, a blessing. Today was a wonderful day at the temple, where I did one endowment and Donald four. Next month, we are travelling to Utah, where Donald will do the sealing for his great-grandson. There I will meet the rest of his family before returning in time for my thirtieth birthday, which we will celebrate in our home.

Pros: The many blessings we share.

Cons: None.

Yours in God’s image, Maeve

BUCOLIC

From A History of Touch by Erin Emily Ann Vance. Published by Guernica Editions in 2021. Erin Emily Ann Vance is the author of the novel Advice for Taxidermists and Amateur Beekeepers (Stonehouse) and five poetry chapbooks.

Confession: I fell asleep by the fire last night.
It was cold and now my socks have small craters burnt into the toes.

Confession: I did not feed the goat
before I shut the barn door and went inside to read.

Confession: I often prod you to see if you are still stiff
with cold.

When the temperature shifts, I worry
that your skin will slough off.

Confession: I don’t bother with the walk to town most weeks.
Instead I eat the pickled onions and drink warm water
in which I’ve dropped egg whites.

Confession: I cross my fingers as the whites cloud in my glass
and wish for your child to leap into my womb.
The egg whites always reveal our barrenness.

Confession: I baked the following items into a cake: the left
lens from your spectacles; a molar—I can’t remember
whether it
fell from your mouth or mine; your wedding band; a quail’s
egg;
apple seeds.
The cake was large, but I ate every last bit. I swallowed
the egg whole.

After the wake, I peeled an apple in one long strip
and threw it over my shoulder. When I turned to see the
initial
of the man I would marry next, the peel was gone.

Confession: I didn’t throw it over my shoulder. I tucked it
under your head. I broke one of the church windows
and held a shard of glass under your nose to see
if there was any breath left in you.

There was not.

Dear Maeve,

Would you and your husband like to be in a photo?

Cheers,
Deidre

From: Mike@nili.ca

Dear Deidre,

I may be the only gay man in Canada with three legal marriages on the books. I think I was just so happy when we finally got our rights that I wanted in. And so I married a professor named Dennis—an expert in “the hierarchies of desirability via erotic capital in the value system of gay desire”—after two short months. What can I say about poor pedantic Dennis that has not been said before, that you cannot look up for yourself on RateMyProf, but I am not about to demonize Dennis. Not at all.

Dennis *was* a difficult person—and I say that with love—that person capable of making the most benign outing uncomfortable. I think of the time when we took his mother to dinner, and the waitress asked if we would like water, and Dennis replied with a resounding, “No!! I bring my own. I only drink well water.” And then, for the duration of the meal, never took a sip.

After Dennis and I divorced—he kept the Gatineau farmhouse—I met Arthur. At this point you may cue the schmaltzy music, you may roll out every cliché about true love and happy ever after, because it was like that. It was. Arthur was perfect. A firefighter, he could fix things like pipes and roofs. He could cook. When you saw six-foot-two Arthur arriving at a party with a Tupperware container of lemon squares, your nervous system relaxed. You felt happy. Arthur would make the roses in your garden more glorious, a walk on the beach more exotic. Arthur would give you his last bottle of homemade Pinot Grigio or his best orbital sander, and make you feel like *you* had done *him* a favour. And then he died.

When you lose the love of your life... well, you lose the love of your life. After that, you may find a lesser love, you may find companionship, you may find a lovely man named Scott who will travel with you and who understands why you light a candle on Arthur’s birthday and why you visit his mom at Christmas, why you collapse in a puddle of tears when a song comes on the radio. If you are lucky, you may...

Mike

Dear Mike,

Sorry for your loss. Is Scott okay with being in a story?

Cheers,
Deidre

From: hockeyfan10@hotmail.com

Dear Deidre,

Three times. Call me an optimist. When I got married at twenty-one, I built us a log house in Musquodoboit Harbour (NS). We were living the dream with two beautiful kids and a golden retriever named Rocket. If you ask me what went wrong, I will default to the oldest cliché in the books—*we were too young*—which means absolutely nothing. But I *will* tell you that my heart broke when that marriage ended. I loved that house as much as I loved Guy Lafleur.

On the rebound, I married Angie, the Kenny Linseman of spouses, master of the cheap dirty shot, which is all I will say about that. I was like a hitchhiker thumbing across the country, entering strange cars and strange towns with a sense of fearlessness that was, in hindsight, apathy. I didn’t care enough about myself to be worried. I didn’t care about my future. I was ready to take whatever life had aimed at me because, well, shag it.

Number three: I got it right this time. Gail is the sweetest woman you would ever meet. We live in Dartmouth, where we both grew up. Some goofs across the harbour call it Darkness and that’s supposed to be a slag, but that’s okay because Dartmouth has Joel Plaskett and Matt Mays who write songs about the town. Dartmouth has Sid the Kid and Nathan MacKinnon, while Halifax has the Rat. The Little Ball of Hate or whatever you want to call him, not that he cares. He’s got a \$49 million contract in Beantown where he is a hero, and that’s \$49 million more than you or I will ever see in our lives, so what the hell am I going on about anyway?

Pros: It’s a journey.

Cons: I don’t know what I am talking about half the time.

Greg

Dear Greg,

It sounds like you have found your perfect match. I may be in touch.

Best,
Deidre



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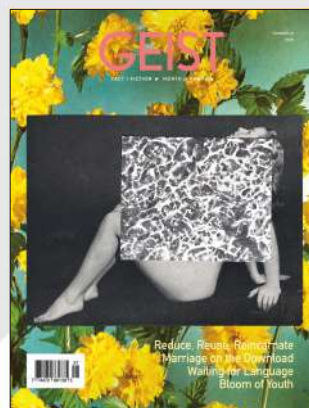
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Close Range

The Photography of Ronnie Tessler



Clown undresses, ca. 1976–1979. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia A.2019.005-1-3-L.27137.

Ronnie Tessler documented rodeos across western Canada and throughout the American Northwest from 1976–1979. Her photographs capture more than just the sport itself; they explore the moments before and after the main event, the community surrounding rodeo and the lifestyle that comes with it. These photographs were taken with short lenses at close range, allowing Tessler to capture the intimacy of small details: facial expressions, flashes of emotion, minute gestures. We’re right there with her as she watches a man get bucked off his horse or spots a cowboy in a quiet moment, stretching his legs before a ride.

In 2021, Sarah Genge produced a documentary about Tessler’s Rodeo Series in collaboration with the Jewish

Museum and Archives of BC, where this collection of photographs lives, titled *Crackin’ Out: The Ronnie Tessler Collection*. In *Crackin’ Out*, a camera zooms in on a selection of Tessler’s photographs, one by one, as they are placed in different locations—a shop, an empty stadium, a city—a filming technique which mimics the experience of approaching a photograph on the wall of a gallery. Genge interviews a selection of Tessler’s subjects alongside people with different connections to rodeo, creating an intersection of voices that mirrors the many angles of Tessler’s photojournalism. Genge aims to explore “the way in which a photograph evokes different stories and ideas to different people, just as much as it

depicts a particular moment in time.” One way that *Crackin’ Out* achieves this is in questioning who’s missing from these photographs, and from our cultural narrative about rodeo. The film touches briefly on queer and Indigenous histories of rodeo, bringing in the voices of Adrian Stimson, Celia Haig-Brown and Nicholas Villanueva, among others, to place Tessler’s photographs in a broader context.

What is unchanging about these images, despite the lens through which they’re perceived, is their undeniable energy. The full *Crackin’ Out* exhibit, which features a selection of Tessler’s photographs alongside the documentary, can be found at jewishmuseum.ca/exhibit/crackin-out. —*Tarvi Bhatia*



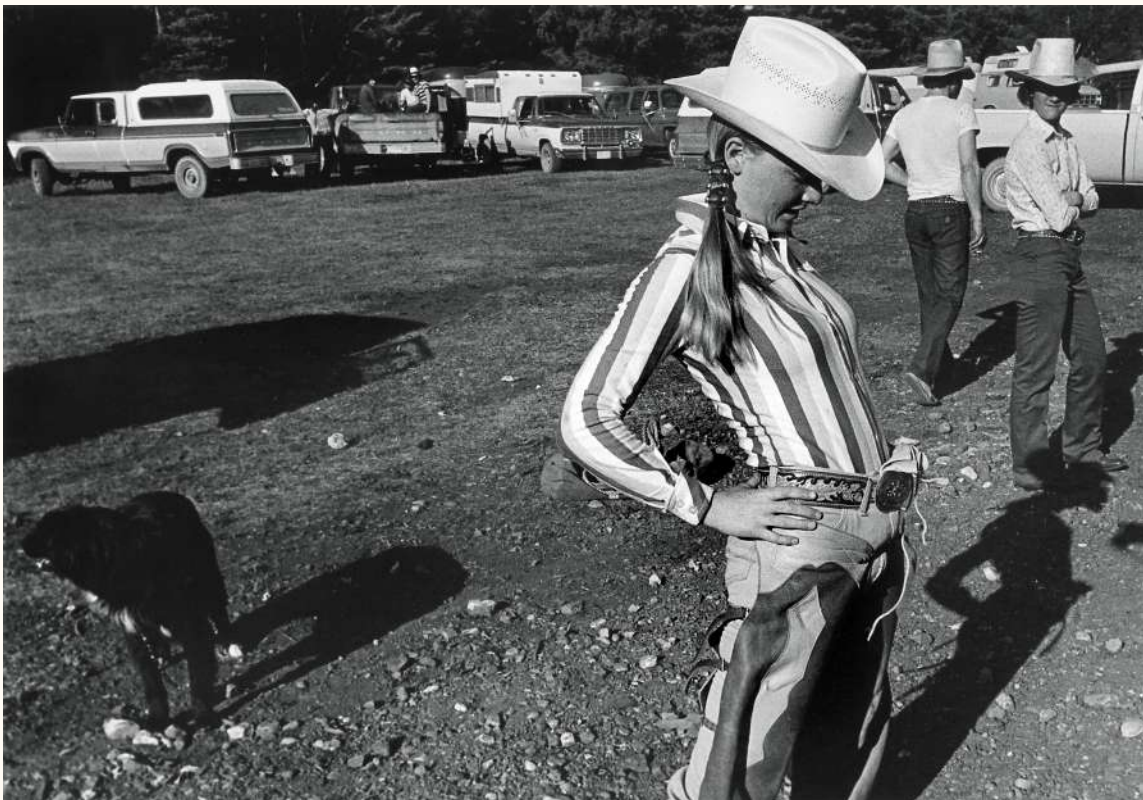
Ivan Daines stretching, ca. 1976-1979. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia
A.2019.005-1-3-L.27100.



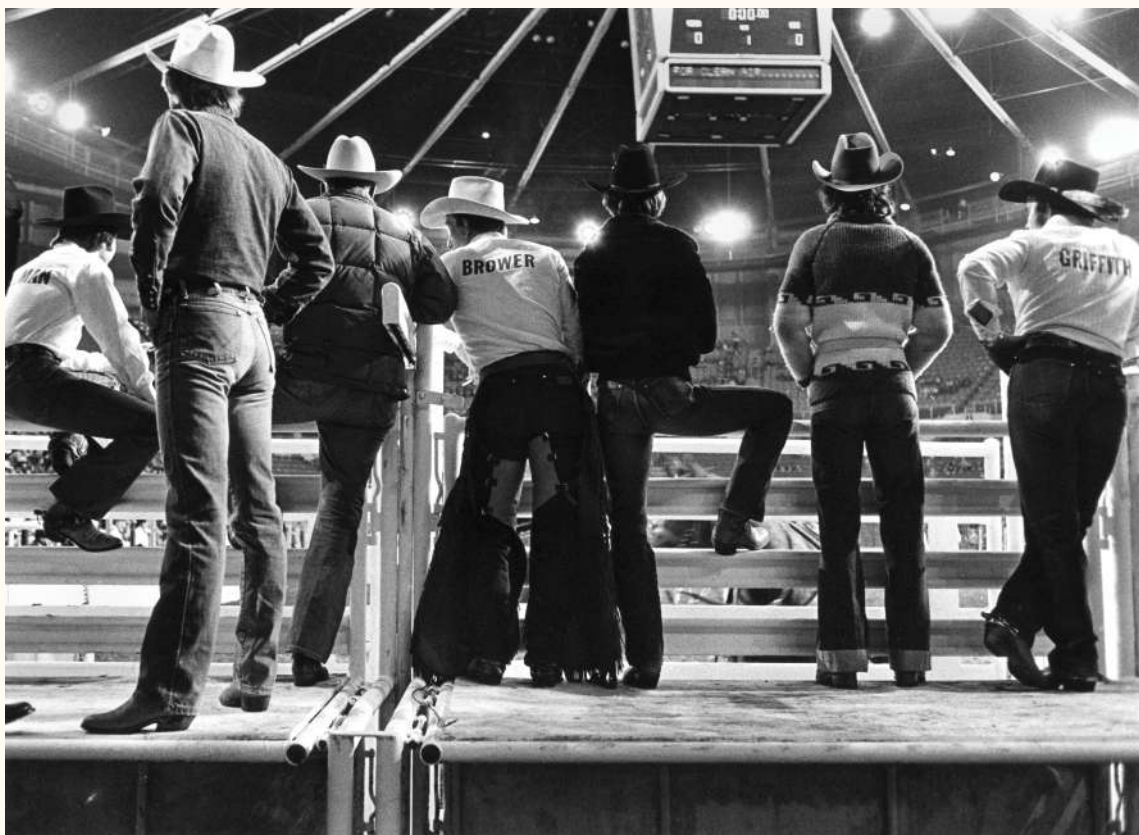
Horse bucking, Oklahoma City, OK, 1978. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia
A.2019.005-1-3-L.27013.



Steer rider, Edmonton, AB, 1979. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia
A.2019.005-1-3-L.26901.



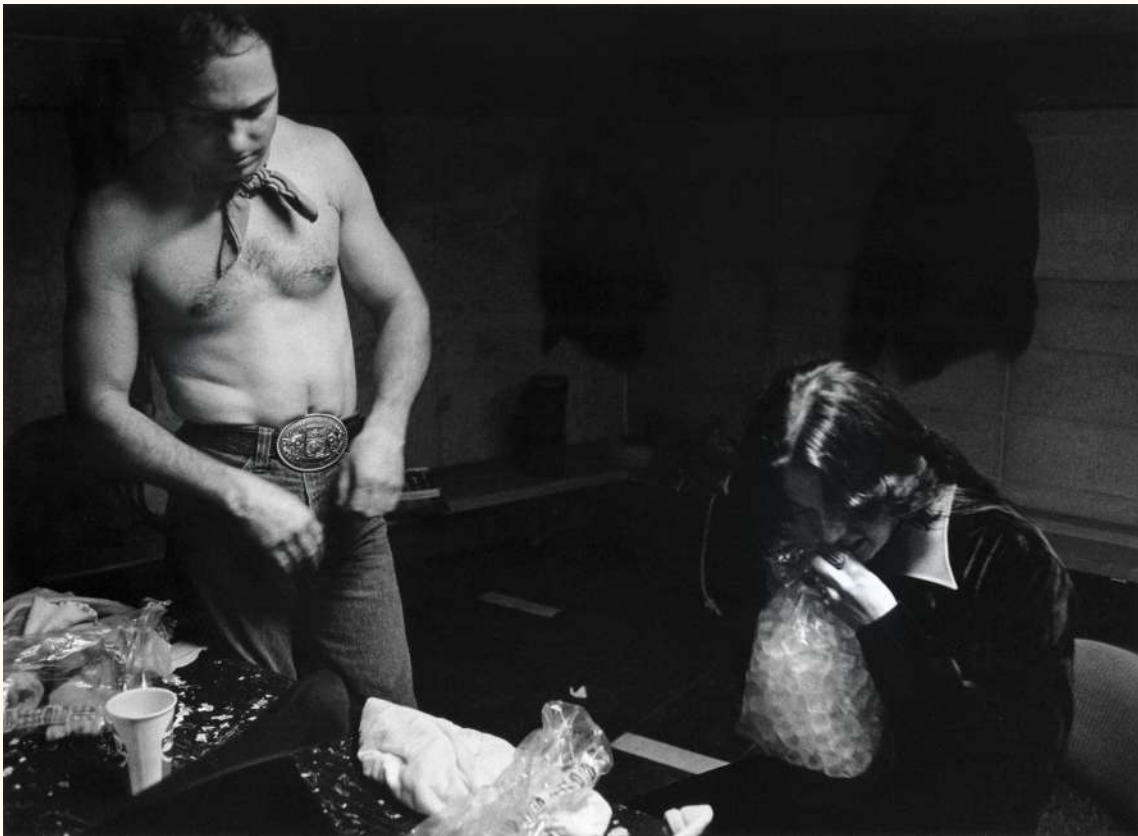
Cowgirl, ca. 1976-1979. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia
A.2019.005-1-3-L.27214.



Cowboys standing near the arena, Edmonton, AB, 1978. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia A.2019.005-1-3-L.27001.



Big Bird (Carl Gerwein) and others, Lillooet, BC, 1976. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia A.2019.005-1-3-L.26968.



Ivan Daines and his first wife Kay, preparing ice for him after his ride, Edmonton, AB, 1977. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia A.2019.005-1-3-L.27204.



Jim Solberg, Jay Williams and others getting ready for the rodeo, Kamloops, BC, 1979. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia A.2019.005-1-3-L.26904.



Johns Dodds and Jordie Thomson at the Canadian finals, ca. 1976-1979. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia A.2019.005-1-3-L.27097



Women on horses, Riske Creek, BC, 1978. Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia A.2019.005-1-3-L.27033.

Ronnie Tessler began her career as a documentary photographer in 1973. She worked on numerous photography projects, exhibiting her work in Canada and the United States through 1990. Her artwork resides in a number of public collections, including the National Archives of Canada, the Canada Council Art Bank, the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography and the Jewish Museum and Archives of BC.

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Bloom of Youth


SPENCER LUCAS OAKES

Jonesy's head injury had exposed a crack and revealed a void

Jonesy went from house party to four-way stop to emergency room to the waiting area of a hospital at capacity to a stairwell to a hallway where he waited for a radiologist. The others from the four-way stop were ahead in line, stiff and still, wrapped in white gowns and medical gauze. Lying flat on a gurney, Jonesy thought his bladder might pop in the busy corridor so a nurse gave him a bedpan and when he turned on his side, he made a mess. Eventually, the nurse noticed the dark sheets and shiny puddle beneath the bed. Jonesy felt like an idiot but more than that he felt distant, like his head belonged somewhere else, space, maybe.

He found out later that the SUV that transformed his sedan into a bright mess of glass and steam had come from the party he just left. A house in a quiet suburb only a few blocks away from the four-way stop; when Jonesy no longer recognized anyone at the party he decided to go and the other people must have done the same and even though they took different paths, the coiling streets led to the same place. Jonesy's friend Parko always said drunk driving wasn't the problem, other people were the problem.





On the hospital bed, Jonesy's foam neck-cone robbed him of his peripherals and his eardrums chirped on loop while his eyes watered under the hallway luminescence. He recalled the ambulance's lights arriving first, maybe not first, but technically first that day, because the ambulance appeared seconds after midnight, and, more specifically, Jonesy remembered Parko and Seb losing their minds over the time, how they kept yelling, Friday the 13th! Can you believe it? and laughing and had the accident occurred a few minutes earlier this detail would be no detail at all, yet Jonesy could still hear them, singing their song, a chorus filling the corridor while his nurse helped him into a new gown.

Next, Jonesy remembered getting to his feet before being pulled back to the ground. Summer's final warm moments had soaked into the pavement and Parko or Seb knelt over him, his eyes and cheeks wet, the sludge of tears running hot down his temples, cooling his skin, beads rolling into his hair. Seb, or maybe Parko, pushed them elsewhere, making sure no one saw and despite

the day-warmed cement, Jonesy's body shivered in the night. Try not to move, they said. I'm late for training, he said, as he struggled against the paramedics.

A few days later when Sasha visited Jonesy, as he laid in bed at home and performed little more than the small acts of watching TV or observing the ceiling, she told him that Parko and Seb weren't there. In the car, you mean, Jonesy said, but Sasha meant the party and the accident and the hospital and she seemed pretty sure Parko had been at home and she didn't know a Seb, she said, let alone anyone on the Bulldogs with that name.

A month passed in a blur for Jonesy as his last summer as a university student came to an end along with preseason training, while his ears continued to ring, reminding him of his car's horn.

Jonesy found himself standing in his room with the blinds hanging low; thin slits of sunlight illuminated the rocky covers on his bed. Sweatpants, a hoodie, cotton socks and spent underwear on the carpet like confetti. On top of Jonesy's dresser was the get-well-soon card his team had signed and given to him. Sasha found it on the floor, under his gym bag, and told him he should put it out. "Winners never quit," "Championship mentality," "Victory is a state of mind," they wrote. Someone else drew a penis. Above the chest of drawers, the white and black squares of a calendar had been pinned to the wall with the most important square highlighted in yellow, its text read HOME OPENER in a speech bubble sprouting from the head of a cartoon dog, a bulldog, and while, technically, the season began this weekend with the team away on the road, visiting St. Mary's College or Doncrest University, Jonesy didn't go because of his concussion, but, when they returned, and if Jonesy was cleared to play, it would be his final home opener, ever; he was a senior now, though his injury, his stupid head, had him seriously considering what it would mean if he couldn't play, if he had to spend his time on the bench, the sideline, like a nobody. He might never play again, might never win again. I'm not ready for the bench or a lifetime of sidelines, Jonesy thought, not ready to be relegated to nobody-dom; so he decided he would do whatever it took to make sure that didn't happen and if, no, *when* another chance to play came along, he wouldn't waste it.

The following week slid by like mist off the river. Jonesy tried to forget the accident and figured acting like everything was normal would serve him well and, in a sense, he found that putting on in this way felt no different from any other day of his life, so even when his concussion made him feel especially lost, which was most of the time, he still went to the gym. During lifts and curls and squats a scratchy haze made him feel like the walls were closing in on his sight. Jonesy pushed extra sets through the dimming light. Normally, his inhaled and exhaled were fluid and unthinking but now they felt scattered, ins catching outs, dogs chasing tails. When Jonesy's vision fully returned, evening had arrived and he found himself in bed, unsure how. He assumed he took the bus even though his wallet had disappeared in the crash. Jonesy drifted off again before a vibration caused his phone to glow to life. A social media notification directed him to a wall of posts where people commented on a string of pictures he'd been tagged in; grainy scans and digital photos of film photos of Sebastian Sisleski. Jonesy caught himself in some

of the images from when they were kids. In one picture he and Seb were kneeling in the front row of a team photo, round white faces and pink cheeks, bumpy clouds in the background; in the next picture, above a comment labeled “first day of school,” the two boys stood with their arms around each other, brush-cut heads, a soccer ball, thumbs up, squinting from the sunlight beaming off the driveway. Jonesy remembered that was the first time he’d shaved his head, an act of solidarity with his friend Seb, who died of cancer at the age of twelve. How could he have forgotten Seb’s anniversary? Jonesy wondered in the shadows of his room.

In the morning, Jonesy returned to the gym. He hadn’t slept, which ultimately seemed like a good thing. He saw Parko laid out on a bench on the far side of the fluorescent room, pressing dumbbells into the ceiling. Jonesy beeped a treadmill to life.

“Jonesy, you little fuck boy, you’re late as shit,” Parko said without interrupting his reps.

Jonesy jogged and said nothing, two things that never failed him. Looking over he could see chunks of light in Parko’s sweat when Parko dropped his weights to the black rubber mats that jigsawed the floor and said, “How’s the head? Still soft?”

Jonesy increased the treadmill’s speed. “Why aren’t you with the team?” Jonesy asked.

Parko looked down at the white tape wrapped and wound around the middle of his leg, his kneecap popping out like an egg’s yolk, and hobbled closer to Jonesy, exaggerating the limp, leaning on the treadmill’s rail.

“Sometimes I forget that you never had a lot going on up there to begin with,” Parko said, swiping a hand at Jonesy’s bobbing head. Jonesy liked the height difference the treadmill gave him. He also liked that he didn’t have to tape over his head.

“Is all that tape necessary?” asked Jonesy. Parko reached for the controls on Jonesy’s treadmill and increased the speed. Jonesy jogged, ran, then sprinted with *no problem*, and he said as much to himself, repeating the words no problem in his head, until Parko got bored.

“You seem fine to me,” Parko said, moving away from the treadmill.

Jonesy pushed himself to keep running until Parko left the gym, then rested his weight on the treadmill and heaved for air, widening his eyes as if to trigger feeling normal. Sometimes he couldn’t tell if he and Parko were friends. Jonesy lifted ropes and medicine balls. When he got dizzy he looked at his phone in a search for focus. More posts about Seb’s anniversary. Jonesy typed a comment then cut it. He didn’t know what to say, didn’t know how anyone ever knew what to say, and felt he didn’t want anyone else to see what he might write anyway. Seb you were my best friend lol, Jonesy deleted.

Among the polished concrete floors, rubber mats and steel apparatus, a mirror on the wall contained an image of a singular Jonesy. He looked like a lesser version, a blinking satellite copy. The last few weeks had revealed to him that it’s only when you’re made to be in isolation that you realize how alone you are. He found it hard to be away from the team and unable to express himself in the usual ways: through slide tackles, headers, laughs with the boys. Jonesy’s head injury had exposed a crack and revealed a void. He texted Sasha that the workout went well, his best one yet, and she replied with a smiley face. He asked for a ride.

In his bedroom, Sasha got on top, moving slow and gently, as Jonesy's stomach tensed; he told her he needed a minute, took a deep breath and peered over the side of the bed before sitting up, while the ringing inside of his head came on like a fire alarm.

"What's wrong?" Sasha asked as she moved to sit beside him.

"It's my head."

"Which one?" Sasha laughed but Jonesy stared past himself at the floor. They sat together on the edge of the bed. Jonesy leaned down and pulled up his shorts.

"I have an idea," Sasha said. "Stay right there."

Ten minutes later they were stretched out on the bed with their faces covered in a mint-green lather. Aloe and white tea, Sasha told Jonesy. The television glowed with sitcom reruns in the dark room. Eventually, Sasha gave Jonesy a hairbrush and sat between his legs. As Jonesy brushed Sasha's hair he sensed, for the first time in a month, part of the pain in his head cool under the cold layer of lotion and tender laugh tracks gushing from the TV.

Jonesy slept through a communications class and a lab. He couldn't remember why he'd registered in a lab. You're in the wrong room, someone said. Jonesy almost hit the guy. At lunch he went to buy textbooks but the bookstore eluded him, too hard to find. The campus pharmacy revealed itself and Jonesy asked if they had anything for dizziness. A pharmacist looked over, in the middle of preparing a flu shot for a young woman, and asked Jonesy if he was okay. Jonesy took a bottle of Pepto-Bismol and left. His pink drink seemed to work because he found himself at practice. The team was back from their match away and an evening sun sank flush with the earth's curve. Parko told Jonesy to just wear a helmet. Coach told him to go home and rest for Friday's game, everyone was talking about the home opener. Jonesy shagged balls behind the net until it became clear he wasn't needed. Eventually he caught a bus going in the direction of his house. Jonesy saw a baby-faced man who looked like Seb—same short hair, holding a soccer ball—get off at one of the stops and go poof in the dazzle of streetlights.

Friday arrived. On his way into the locker room, Jonesy could see the stands filling, people in jerseys and scarves, the smooth green field under towers of fluorescent light. A lot of blue and white. He heard public announcements, the small marching band, music filling the empty space. Jonesy finished another bottle of Pepto and then the trainer intercepted him so he followed the trainer into the clubhouse and lifted himself onto the medical table as his stomach knotted. Jonesy prepared for his life to be sidelined as the trainer's penlight devoured his whole world in a flash.

"Okay, you look good. You're all set."

"What?" Jonesy pushed to comprehend through the penlight's glare which superimposed the room.

"Yeah, you're all set. Good to go." The trainer wrote something down in a notepad. "All signs of head injury or concussion have dissipated. Completely."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, yeah. What's going on, Jonesy? Do you feel okay?"

"I feel fine," Jonesy said. "Completely."

In the locker room the rest of the team went out of their way to welcome Jonesy back with shoulder grabs, soft slaps to the head, handshakes and hugs. Baz asked

about Sasha. Soobz laughed hard. Coach called to him from the office but Jonesy didn't hear.

"Jonesy," Roddo said, "Coach is asking for you." Jonesy looked up at Roddo, one of the youngest players on the team, a new recruit who looked like a child, like he'd never been hurt. "You don't look great," Roddo said, "I mean, you look like a ghost."

Jonesy passed the trainer's office and saw Parko on the table, looking flat, knee wrapped in bags of ice. "Ice age!" Jonesy yelled but Parko didn't laugh, he just stared ahead and deflated on the table.

"How are you feeling?" Coach asked from behind his metal desk.
"I feel good." Jonesy wobbled and leaned on the door's frame. "I'm all set."
"You look fit," Coach said. "I heard you've been in the weight room."
"I was, yeah."

"That's what I want to hear. You're at centre-half tonight. If they want in, they go through you."

"Starting?" Jonesy asked.

Jonesy had started every match since first playing for the university three years ago. Coach laughed him off.

"Do some damage out there, Jones, we've missed you."

Jonesy's memories of the game were minimal; enduring a calf cramp, colliding with opposing players, streaks of colour: greens, blues and reds, the field on fire in parts, a car's horn honking whenever a player kicked the ball, like a cartoon, puddles of glass and steam swirling near sidelines, how he saw Seb's face on the opposing team. The crowd showed nothing but blank faces of other people, sometimes stop signs or high-beams, and during a moment in the second half, Jonesy found himself outside his body, but more like he had exited his pain, traded it for the flow of the game when an elbow angled off his cheek. He found himself in an automatic car wash, then someone else took over his controls, instantly he was very tall, too tall, his head a planet, in conversation with the moon, What should I do? he asked the moon. You can keep going, the moon said, if you want to. I don't think I feel fine, Jonesy said. You've transcended fine, my boy, said the moon. I want it to stop, said Jonesy to the moon, but the moon had vanished, leaving a black spot filled by a young Seb who gazed down at him as he shrank to the earth. Jonesy was on his back when his teammates lifted him from the grass and placed him in position for the next play.

The Bulldogs won their home opener and celebrated in the showers, in the locker room, by their cars in the parking lot. Everyone told Jonesy it was his best performance, they were glad to have him back. Jonesy puked. They cheered. They were going to a house party.

In his bedroom, Jonesy heard a ringing he thought signalled how permanently damaged he might be, but he didn't want to tell anyone. When he closed his eyes, he saw images of a crash test dummy's face get mashed while rubber and plastic ballooned in slow motion, like a TV commercial playing on a VHS tape, then he saw empty sidelines, unoccupied bleachers and nobodies. His high-pitched reminder cooled briefly when Sasha appeared, though he didn't notice her come in.

"My gentle giant," she said, and she put her hand on his shoulder. It looked like she'd been in the bed for some time. They kissed until they didn't. Again he

couldn't get hard. She ran her thumbs over his temples. A touch like feathers, like running water.

Sasha never spent the night, but she had fallen asleep. Jonesy listened to her breath and while not wanting to wake her, got up for a glass of water, thinking maybe he could flush the hurt. In the bathroom, he filled and emptied the glass, losing count. He'd stay up all night or wet himself trying. When he couldn't drink anymore, he went back to bed.

Sasha sat perched on the edge of the mattress, the moon illuminating her through the blinds. She had her clothes on, leather jacket, keys, phone, bag in hand.

"I fell asleep," she said.

"You should stay," he said and sat beside her.

"Maybe next time." She kissed his head in the most tender spot and white flashes filled the room. Jonesy didn't move.

"I'm sorry about, you know, whatever's going on." He looked at his lap.

"Don't worry, okay?"

Jonesy wanted to say that he wasn't going to be okay and Sasha seemed to be waiting for him to say as much. He thought about showing her the pictures of Seb and him as kids. They said goodnight.

Porn didn't do anything and he eventually turned it off for sports highlights which also didn't help find peace or sleep. The clock read 2:47. Lying in bed and looking into his phone's blinding screen, Jonesy scrolled up through time in his text conversation with Sasha and stopped at a photo she'd sent him. In it, she stood across from a mirror having just got out of the shower, with her phone in her hand and beads of hot water coating her body. Jonesy remained limp. He swiped to the next picture which was the selfie she took of the two of them with their faces coated in green; it wasn't like he felt nothing while staring at the photo, no, in fact, he felt twelve years old again. He typed erectile dysfunction into his phone's internet browser, but that just made him feel stupid and then the screen's glare began to press into him like an iron, and his stomach, with a mind of its own, made its way out and he stumbled into the bathroom before vomiting into the toilet and onto the floor. Jonesy drank more water which also found its way into the toilet bowl. He searched for relief amid bouts of puking and dizzy streaks but all he found in the toilet water was his distorted silhouette and a feeling of confusion and he knew then how often he had been confused, a lifetime spent in a daze, as if all this time his inner workings were falling short of what his programming intended him to be. You're always confused, he thought, don't know how to grieve, can't even love right. Jonesy felt cheated by the way he had lived his entire life. Winning was nothing but a debt owed to the inevitability of loss.

At practice tomorrow Jonesy would say he was not fine, he would tell his teammates about his friend Seb and finally open up to Sasha, but now the dim world dimmed and flickered and his dreams of change faded every time a head rush circled and landed like a drunk-driver sideswipe. He knelt before the toilet, fighting the spasms, face leaking into the porcelain. Jonesy squinted in the dark and made out the bits of himself orbiting the toilet bowl—who he used to be. This must be what losing looks like.

*Spencer Lucas Oakes is a writer from Saskatoon, SK, living in Vancouver, BC. His writing appears in *Maisonneuve* and *PRISM* international, and was recently shortlisted for the Fiddlehead's 2021 fiction contest. He has an MFA from the University of British Columbia's School of Creative Writing.*

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Walking in the Wound

JUDY LEBLANC

It is racism, not race, that is a risk factor for dying of COVID-19

The blurred outline of a lone fisherman emerges out of the morning fog along the shore. It's October 2021, and we're well into the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. I sit at my desk and through the window I watch the fisherman cast and cast again. I've spent the morning digging on the web, which has led me to the report now open on my computer screen. From the T̓silhqot'in Nation, it's titled *Dada Nentsen Gha Yatastig*; in English this means *I am going to tell you about a very bad disease*.

English ivy creeps from the neighbour's yard and embeds its tiny rootlets into the fence, concealing the boards behind a leafy curtain. We tear at it, but it persists. It's the same with the field bindweed that spreads even faster, draping the bank along the shore and twining around the barbed leaves of the native mahonia and the Nootka rose. A lover of disturbed sites, it occupies the space beneath and around the stairs to the beach below our house. Its leaves are the shape of arrowheads, and its vine—skinny as thread—is easy enough to snap with a flick of the thumbnail, but the roots crawl underground where they trace great networks impossible to dislodge. In this way, they record a history on the land.

Disease, too, writes a history. My great-aunt Stella was one of many children—roughly one in five at the time—who returned home from a Native American boarding school with tuberculosis, or TB, only to die shortly afterwards. TB, a bacterial infection primarily affecting the lungs, spread in Native American boarding schools during the last half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. The situation in Canada wasn't any better. Dr. Peter Bryce's report from 1907 states that tuberculosis was rampant in Indigenous residential schools, with twenty-four percent of students dying either at school or soon after leaving. David Dejong refers to TB as the *scourge* of Indian country.

I can trace my Coast Salish ancestors on my mother's side back to 1853 when a woman named ZICOT of the WSÁNEĆ Nation married a Scot named Peter Bartleman. Their daughter Rosalie married William Houston whose mother came from either the Suquamish tribe in Washington or the Tsleil-Waututh Nation from Burrard Inlet in British Columbia. Rosalie and William were my great-grandparents. Their oldest of eight children was my great-aunt Stella, and their youngest was my grandmother, who had six children including my mother. When I attempt to sketch a family tree, names and dates multiply, burgeon outward and lengthen into branches that cross over one another leaving gaps and blank spaces. This family tree, as if it were a live thing, fans into a filigree in which patterns repeat, then abruptly end, then start up again. A creeping rootstock.

The T̓silhqot̓in Nation report, dated March 2021, is about a twenty-first century scourge. A pull quote in the introduction reads: *This report is specific to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the message that emerges is that the emergency is not simply the pandemic. Rather, the underlying and ongoing emergency is the persistence of colonialism in Canada.*

Some days all I see are invasive species. I walk the dog at the base of the mountain on old logging roads overgrown with Himalayan blackberry, bracken, various thistles, and columns of Scotch broom. In 1850, Captain Walter Grant, a Scottish settler, brought Scotch broom back from Hawaii and planted it on his Sooke farm. Perhaps he was attracted by the prospect of hillsides lit up in springtime with the shrub's bright yellow flowers. As it turns out, these flowers are toxic to humans and animals, and broom displaces native and beneficial plants. The problem is so bad on Vancouver Island that a volunteer group named Broombusters sets out every spring

to clear roadsides, parks and properties of the infestation.

Up until the 1950s, "virgin soil" theory, which held that Indigenous people hadn't been exposed to the diseases of the white man, and therefore were more susceptible to illness, was the most widely accepted explanation for the higher rates of TB amongst the Indigenous population. This belief persisted despite mounting research implicating socio-economic conditions and evidence confirming the presence of TB antibodies and long-healed lesions in Indigenous people. In an article on the CBC website titled "Why have Indigenous communities been hit harder by the pandemic than the population at large?" Ainsley Hawthorn claims that the virgin soil theory absolved European settlers of "any moral responsibility for depopulation."

What responsibility do we have toward one another? According to Indigenous Services, as of December 2021 there were twice as many active cases of COVID-19 on First Nations' reserves than in the general Canadian population. The T̓silhqot̓in report outlines disparities in access to clean drinking water and health services between Indigenous and settler communities. Food insecurity, underemployment, poverty and insufficient data tracking the numbers and locations of infections increase the risk of contracting COVID-19. These conditions exist in First Nations' communities across Canada as well as across Native American communities, making them *vulnerable*, not *susceptible* to higher incidence of disease.

In 1870, a doctor who worked with the Winnebagoes said, "The prevailing disease is tuberculosis, which is slowly, but surely, solving the Indian problem."



The dog and I walk on the deserted logging road, and above us clear-cuts dot the mountainside like raw sores and the power line snakes upward until it disappears. Its transmission towers and cables link one to another, scoring an avenue through the forest and across the mountainsides in all directions. In the distance, the Island Highway hums with traffic heading north and south or to one of three ferry terminals where cars cross the water to meet the network of roads that trace an entire continent.

Great-Aunt Stella was of mixed race, and her Indigenous ancestors had lived

amongst white settlers and been exposed to their diseases for over a century. She contracted TB at age fourteen in 1905 while attending Chemawa Indian Boarding School near Salem, Oregon, with around six hundred other students. A document from the Seattle Archives lists 148 children in the school hospital when Great-Aunt Stella was admitted in January 1905, roughly 25 percent of the school's population. The Meriam Report released in 1928 delivered a scathing assessment of the conditions in Native American Boarding Schools. Poor nutrition, overcrowded dormitories, and unsanitary living conditions were ideal conditions for the spread of disease.

The 2021 T̓silhqot'in report states it is "racism, not race, that is a risk factor for dying of COVID-19."

Near the gravel pit off the logging road, a handful of bullet shells are scattered on the ground along with squished beer cans. A pie plate nailed to a tree shows evidence of target practice. I'm grateful there's no one around today. Gun blast puts me on edge, so too the thought of a cougar somewhere in the trees, waiting. But this is my familiar, the body never quite relaxed. I'm at home with the scruff and scramble, the struggle between old mountains, cedar and shifting sky—and a rude and invasive species. My ear attuned for guns and cougars, for signs of ruin.

My great-grandparents were not told that their daughter Stella was ill until just before Chemawa Indian Boarding School sent her home to die. After Stella returned home, her parents wrote to the school many times to ask that they send her brother Fred so he could be with his sister in her last days. These letters were met with silence.

When my dog and I walk alone on the mountain, I carry a stick carved from a laurel branch, another invasive that we've been unable to eradicate from our yard but do keep under control. The stick is of a dense, heavy wood that might one day protect me from a cougar. I don't know if there's a cougar nearby, but there's always the possibility: Vancouver Island has the highest concentration of them in North America.

Hypervigilance is considered a symptom of trauma. I think of family stories not told, my mother's mistrust of others, how my father said she was "slow to warm." I recall her quick intake of breath, widened eyes, the tension in her jaw at the first sign of trouble: an overlooked bill, a busy highway, a sick grandchild.

At the beginning of the first wave of the COVID pandemic, a Yellowhead Institute researcher, Courtney Skye from the Six Nations, said on CBC that withholding data about specific whereabouts of COVID-19 cases undermines Indigenous autonomy and puts Indigenous lives at risk. Knowing there exists a threat in one's environment without having any specific information or agency to act on it engenders what Skye calls a "vigilante mentality."

Sometimes I long for a freckle-less skin, my mother's smooth brown limbs. I feel—what is it? — shame that I pass so much more easily than she did, that she and I knew so little about our Coast Salish ancestry, that we knew nothing about Auntie Stella. I have a house on the beach on the traditional territory of the Pentlatch-speaking people whose numbers were significantly reduced by two smallpox epidemics, war with the Lekwiltok people from the north, and encroachment from settlers. Their children would have been sent to residential schools. This I've only learned recently, and the more I learn, the more it's as if the past merges with the present. I live in this high-ceilinged waterfront house on this land that thrums with history. My privilege is like a sentence, the cost of my grandmother's betrayal of her ancestry, my family's denial.

I write a brief article for the Fanny Bay flyer, an appeal to organize the community to rid the beach of its bindweed. I describe the proliferation of this invasive species on the bank and the potential destruction to the coastal vegetation above the shore. No one contacts me.

Knowledge doesn't lead to change though wisdom may. A strong sense of equity forms the foundation of wisdom and at its basis a recognition of the intercon-

nectedness of all living things, or *inter-being*, a phrase coined by the Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh. This echoes the expression “all my relations” used amongst many Indigenous communities to reflect a worldview that acknowledges an interdependence between all that exists in the universe. The shore is me and you are me. I am you. So, too, the native kinnikinnick and mahonia. We keep one another in balance: you, me and the mahonia, and therefore we are responsible for one another.

I want to know, but not in the way one knows after reading books on racism and attending talks on cultural sensitivity. I want to walk through a clear-cut and let the distant squeal of a saw and the echoing scream of a cougar fracture the silence; I want to yank and twist the Scotch broom away from the kinnikinnick so hard I get blisters on my hands, maybe even blood, to feel hopelessness, but I won't stop. I think what I mean is I want to know it in the body, to sit for uncomfortable hours and meditate on loss.

Although the term *soul wound* has been expropriated by pop culture, according to Eduardo Duran, Native American psychologist, it has long been an integral part of Indigenous knowledge used to describe the multigenerational debilitating distress that is the result of colonization. In the *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*, Duran et al. describe the symptoms of *acculturative stress* as “anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion.”

My mother telling me months before she died that she didn't know where she belonged. And years before when my father called to say she'd fallen, that it was hardly a fall, but she wouldn't get up

and she wouldn't let him near. He put her on the phone.

“He says there's no pain, it's all in my imagination.”

There was pain.

A clear-cut is a wound on the landscape. From the highway, these logged patches make the mountain appear scraped raw, and as you drive north on Vancouver Island past smaller and increasingly remote communities, the clear-cuts spread wider and are more frequent. The heavily populated south Island was logged, subdivided, and developed nearly two centuries ago. At its tip in Victoria, where I lived for most of my life, it was easy to forget. Unlike the Comox Valley, I wasn't confronted daily with the remains of a greener day, an immense forest from a time that is slipping away. I guess I was insulated from the past, but now I think I was missing something. When I walk in the wound on the mountain, I'm surrounded by life struggling to carry on. Awareness of this struggle comes more from a deep knowing than from seeing, a result of seeking.

The dog and I know places on the mountain: long-abandoned roads, animal trails beneath tall maples that dwarf the colonies of Scotch broom. Against a blue autumn sky, the maples' and the alders' brittle yellow leaves glitter. The air is woven with cedar-scent, and deeper in the third or fourth-growth forest, thick beds of moss are speckled with mushrooms. Sometimes the dog and I sit by the river, the rolling water murmuring like voices from the past.

Duran et al. delineate six phases in historical trauma specific to Indigenous communities. Under the “Boarding School Period” they say that “children were forced into a colonial lifeworld where the Native lifeworld was despised and thought of as inferior and evil.” Is this the echo that passed from Great-Grandmother Rosalie to my grandmother

Pearl who married altogether three white men, to my mother who married my white father, to freckled pale-skinned me raised as a white woman who sees her Indigenous ancestry dissolving into an elusive past?

In 1958 at a British conference on tuberculosis, South Africa's top TB expert, B.A. Dormer, said, "...if any nation with limited resources at its disposal, be they financial or human, were to put its money into good food for every citizen, proper housing for every citizen, clean safe water for all, proper disposal for sewage and waste for the whole community—it could safely ignore the ever increasing demand for the provision of expensive hospitals, clinics, physicians, chemicals, antibiotics and vaccines in the campaign against tuberculosis." More than sixty years later, TB persists in the poorer communities of the world, including Indigenous communities in Canada. In 2018, Canada's chief public health officer Theresa Tam presented a report titled "The Time is Now," a twenty-page appeal to finally eliminate tuberculosis in Canada where she noted that rates of TB were forty times higher in First Nations' communities and almost three hundred times higher amongst the Inuit.

COVID-19 enters the lungs in the same way as TB, though the former is viral, and the latter bacterial. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD, which isn't contagious unless manifesting as certain types of pneumonia, is a group of progressive lung diseases, most commonly emphysema and bronchitis. My mother, who was a grand smoker, ultimately died of COPD. Researchers are currently investigating a genetic disposition toward this disease. A number of years ago, I was diagnosed with mild "exercise-induced" asthma. I've never been a smoker, though I lived with smokers for the better part of my life. When the dog and I go up along the old roads toward the mountain's higher peaks, sometimes a spectral hand clasps my lungs and causes me to stop

to catch my breath. My limbs grow leaden, and I'm as numb as a clear-cut; I name it grief. I wish my mother were here. I think now we could talk. I'd tell her sometimes I feel as if I am the invasive species.

Colonialism spreads its tendrils into everything, from how we teach our children to how we care for the sick. But its tenacity is surface spread only, its substratum an illusion. There is no upending cultures whose roots have grown deep into this land for thousands of years. The T̓silhqot'in are one of many First Nations who've taken actions to protect their communities from COVID-19. These nations have sent petitions to the government in which they've asked for jurisdiction over their own data; they've erected roadblocks to limit their communities to residents only; they've arranged vaccinations for their members and isolation for those infected with the virus. They're managing the pandemic in their territories despite barriers at the bottom of which are persistent racist attitudes. These are not the actions of victims, but the enactment of resistance, of survivance.

By the afternoon the fog has lifted, and the fisherman gone from the shore. The sun slants through the tall firs and washes the open part of the yard beyond the window. It's one of those fine fall days I love. I've been too long at my desk, and sometimes this house is a trap. I need to get outside. On my way down the stairs to the shore my eyes scan for bindweed, looking past the dune grass, the wild roses, the thimbleberry bushes and mahonia as if they're not there. Satisfied that my husband and I got most of it in August when we staged our last assault, I drop to the beach and stretch my legs out on the gravel.

That day we'd torn at the flimsy weeds through the hot morning, our

arms scratched from rose thorns and our foreheads slimed with sweat. Our neighbor with his old dog at his side had stopped on his walk. Sinewy and tough, he was a former logger like my father.

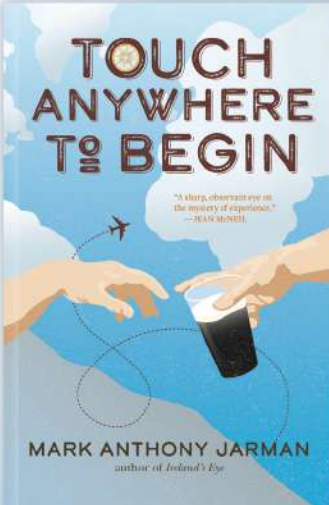
“You’ll never be rid of it,” he said. He shook his head, and we agreed. He gestured toward the spade in my hand. “You don’t need to dig it out. Soon as it appears above the soil, pluck the leaves. That’ll weaken its roots and slow it down. Just don’t give it the light.”

The sea is still, a brilliant blue, and the sun warms my back. I’m wondering what it is I give the light to. We’ve been talking about cutting down a fir to make room for an oak that has grown from a seedling to a twenty-foot tree in the ten years we’ve lived here. This would remove the oak from the fir’s shadow, allowing it more sun. The oak grows slowly, but its trunk and its limbs are

muscular and gracious at the same time. Ever-lengthening branches span outwards to trace leafy patterns. It’s a native tree that quietly insists on its presence, as do the histories of this land, as does the future which we can’t possibly know. We can lie in wait, steel ourselves for what may come: disease, climate disaster, deprivation—or we can grow what we have, strengthen our good roots. I close my eyes and lift my face to the sun. A breeze strokes my face, and I get to my feet.

Judy LeBlanc is a writer from Fanny Bay, located on the unceded traditional territory of the K’ómoks First Nation. Several of her stories and essays have been published in Canadian literary journals, and her collection of short stories, The Promise of Water, was published by Oolichan Books in 2017.

Capture the Experience

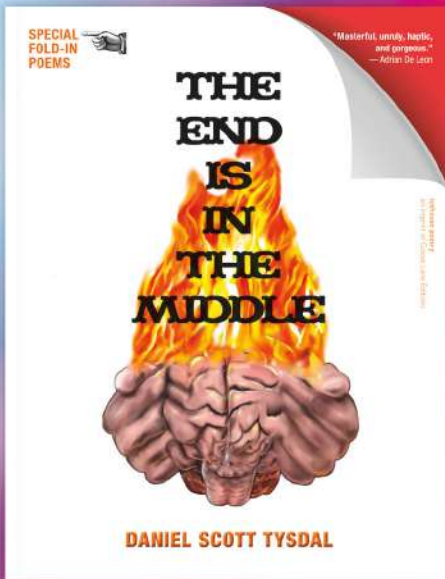


TOUCH ANYWHERE TO BEGIN

MARK ANTHONY JARMAN
author of Ireland's Eye

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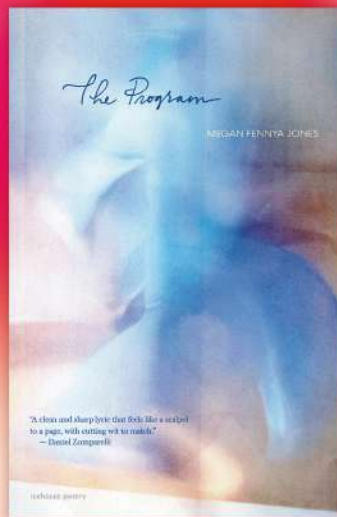


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Collateral Damage

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

When building a nation, cultural riches can be lost

A sixty-five-year-old woman who lives in my friend Fedir's apartment building in Kyiv went to work in the garden plot of her cottage on the edge of the city. Glancing up, she saw Russian soldiers approaching. She watched as young people came out to challenge the soldiers in Ukrainian and were shot dead in front of her. Speaking to the soldiers in Russian to give them the impression that she accepted Russian dominance, Fedir's neighbour retreated to her cottage's dirt-floored cellar. She lived there for two weeks, surviving on vegetables from her garden. By the time she was able to creep out at night and slip into the city centre, Russian soldiers had taken up residence in her cottage.

Fedir and I met twenty years ago, when we were roommates for a month while taking an advanced Romanian course in Baia Mare, Romania. We both became translators of the early twentieth-century writer Mihail Sebastian, I into English and Fedir into Ukrainian. For years we spoke of finding an excuse for Fedir to travel to Canada or me to travel to Kyiv. It never happened; our most recent in-person meeting, in 2018, took place in Romania. A single man in his fifties, Fedir belongs to a generation that grew up as Russian-speaking citizens of the Soviet Union. Though his late mother was a

nationalist poet who wrote verse in Ukrainian during the Soviet period, Fedir learned to be cautious in his assertions of Ukrainian identity. He applauded the young Ukrainians who fought for democracy and ties to the European Union during the crisis of 2014, when Russia occupied Crimea, started a war on Ukraine's eastern border and tried to install a puppet president in Kyiv. Yet, as much as he admired these young people, Fedir continued to distinguish between the Kremlin and the Russian language: between the colonizing apparatus and the cultural achievements of Russian writers and thinkers. His students, increasingly, did not. In 2019 Fedir wrote to me that when teaching the history of ancient Greece and Rome, he could no longer assign secondary reading by the Russian scholars from whom he had learned about the subject. Though Ukrainian and Russian are mutually comprehensible, his students now replied to the assignment of Russian-language reading with, "Sorry, I don't speak Russian."

Ukraine has accelerated its transition towards nationhood with a speed that has outraged Russian assumptions and bewildered some Ukrainians. Much is gained in building a nation; riches can also be lost. I first entered Ukraine on a July morning in 1994, one of a busload of ESL teachers

heading east. After a night driving through the Polish forest, we reached the Ukrainian border at 5 a.m. The border crossing took three and a half hours. The Soviet Union had ceased to exist two and a half years earlier, yet the scrappy paper forms we were obliged to fill in told us we were entering "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" and must present for inspection all "printed matter, manuscripts, films, sound recordings, postage stamps, graphics, etc." The use of residual Soviet forms and bureaucracy, invoking the censorship of the past, made Ukraine feel as though it lacked the apparatus of a nation. The transition from Poland was chastening. The fields were smaller and scrubbier, the roads were cluttered with loose fowl, old women in scarves, children without shirts or shoes. The city of Lviv was wreathed in whitish smog. The country did not have a formal currency, only the Karbovanet, popularly known as a coupon, which traded at 45,000 to the US dollar. Behind the desolation rose the grandiose lines of Habsburg architecture, attesting that western Ukraine shared a history with Prague or Budapest rather than Moscow, or even Kyiv.

I was reminded of this cultural diversity on a later visit to the western part of the country in 2008. In Suceava, in northern Romania, I

innocently boarded a bus that served as a vehicle for a smuggling run. The driver and the women lugging huge bags of contraband on board were astonished to see a foreigner appear and hand the driver a ticket. This time my entry to Ukraine was effortless as the border officials had been paid off. I was visiting Chernivtsi, which Romanians call Cernăuți. Due to the scrambling of borders in eastern Europe, this city—where Romania’s national poet, Mihai Eminescu, spent his childhood—is now inside Ukraine. The number of Romanians in Ukraine is disputed, with journalistic estimates running from 150,000 to 500,000 people, and staunch Romanian nationalists claiming that one million of their compatriots are marooned on the wrong side of the border. Though Romania has supported the Ukrainians during the Russian invasion, Ukraine’s curtailing of the rights of Romanian children to study in their own language remains a tense issue between the two countries. In 2017, confronted by evidence that high school graduates from ethnic minority groups often lacked proficiency in Ukrainian, the government in Kyiv tightened up access to schooling in languages other than Ukrainian. In July 2021, Ukrainian was declared the country’s “constitutional language,” in which all children must study. Schooling in Russian, Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian and other minority languages was terminated. This suppression of linguistic diversity is at the root of Hungarian president Viktor Orbán’s furtive support for Moscow. Orbán has boasted that Hungary’s reward for helping the Russians will be the restoration of Hungarian sovereignty to Ukraine’s Transcarpathia region, which contains an estimated 150,000 Hungarian speakers.

In Chernivtsi I found Viennese coffee houses, cobblestoned streets named after Jewish writers, Austro-Hungarian apartment blocks undergoing renovation.

Presiding over a tentative economic stability were the statues of the national poets of Romania and Ukraine: Eminescu and Taras Shevchenko. The fact that both bards were present felt like evidence of a toleration of cultural multiplicity. On the morning of my departure, late for my bus back to Romania, I flagged down a taxi, and tried to explain where I was going in my non-existent Ukrainian. The driver interrupted me in native Romanian: “Are you going to get the bus to Romania?” Yes, I told him, delighted to find someone I could speak to. I had been rescued by cultural diversity.

Fourteen years later, Fedir’s most recent email message describes watching four Russian rockets skim low over his apartment building to destroy the factory at the end of his street. “People,” he writes, “have been transformed into savage beasts.” The factory was gone, he told me, and so was the Russian language, recently eliminated from his university’s curriculum alongside three subjects he used to teach: Greek, Latin and Romanian. Even Ukrainian literature is being cut to focus on teaching the Ukrainian language. “I won’t fare well if the Russians come,” Fedir writes. Ukraine’s struggle for national sovereignty must be won. But the victorious forces cannot allow cultural diversity to become collateral damage.

Stephen Henighan’s most recent novel is The World of After. Over the winter of 2022–23, Monica Santizo’s Spanish translation of Stephen’s novel The Path of the Jaguar will be published in Guatemala, and Stephen’s English translation of the Guatemalan writer Rodrigo Rey Rosa’s novel The Country of Toó will be published in North America. Read more of his work at stephenhenighan.com and geist.com. Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenighan.



“Both raw and poetic ... about healing and continuance ... May more French Indigenous writing find its way into English.”

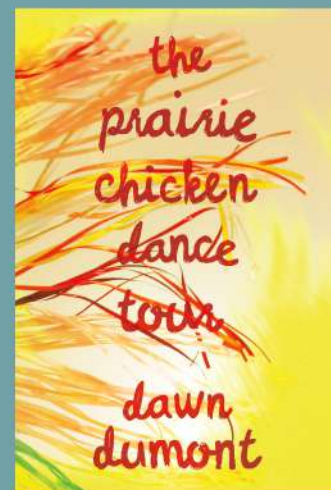
– *Globe and Mail*



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“Funny ... [with] moments of unapologetic Indigenous joy that Dumont writes lovingly and with such care.”

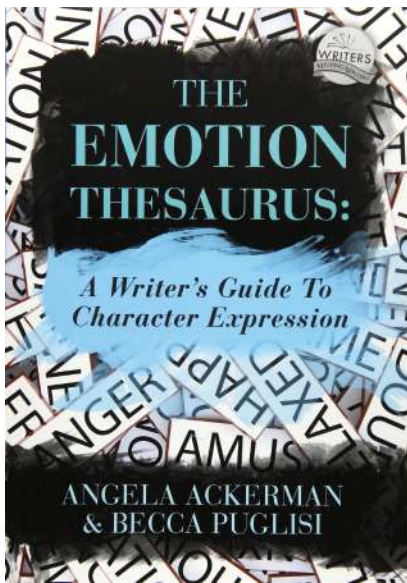
– *Quill & Quire*



ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

ARTICULATING THE INARTICULATE SPEECH OF THE HEART

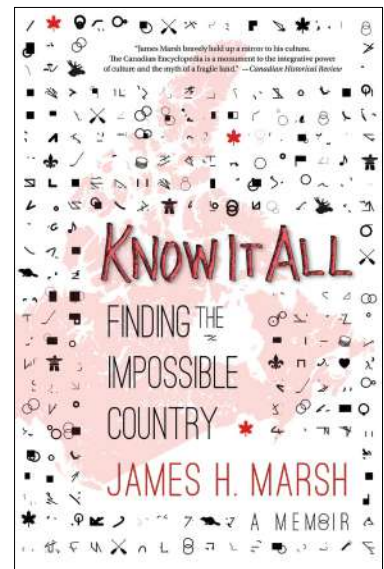


We *Geist* readers are a sophisticated bunch, no? We know the difference between Jane Austen and Bridgerton and between John Le Carré and David Baldacci (who's he?). When we're told that there are really only seven different plots we say, "More like seventy!" When Georges Polti wrote that there are just thirty-six different dramatic situations, we responded "Doesn't he mean 360?" Did you know that there are 130 emotions that can be evoked in fiction? So we learn in the second edition of the self-

published **The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Expression** by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi. The emotions range from the commonplace: anger, disappointment, grief and regret, to the more esoteric: connectedness, powerlessness and wanderlust. For each one there are suggestions to help writers signal the emotion in their characters. Regret, defined as "sorrow aroused by circumstances beyond one's ability to control or repair," can be evoked by a bent posture, wincing or grimacing or by losing the thread of conversations. It can produce internal sensations of a loss of appetite or dullness in the chest. Mentally, a character may have feelings of inadequacy or a desire to go unnoticed. Over the long term they may no longer find joy in hobbies or favorite pastimes, or they may get ulcers. Acting like the life of the party might show that a character is suppressing their regret. Regret can escalate into shame (described on page 240), frustration (134), depression (84), self-pity (238) or self-loathing (236). It may de-escalate into mere sadness (226) or embarrassment (118). It's easy to feel smug (246) about *The Emotion Thesaurus*. Or perhaps even feel disgust (102) with the whole endeavour. Surely our finer writers, the literary authors whom we lionize, would guffaw if they stumbled on this book. Or would they find it helpful? —*Thad McIlroy*

KNOWN IT ALL

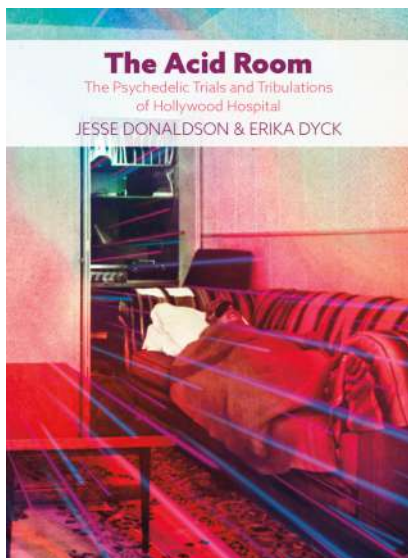
When James (Jim) H. Marsh was a youngster, his father got into an argument with his mother, picked up a shotgun and threatened to kill everyone in the house. Jim was preparing to escape out a back window when he heard the gun go off. His mother had convinced her enraged, drunken husband to fire a couple of rounds harmlessly in the basement. This was just one incident in the turbulent life of the Marsh family in Toronto's Junction neighbourhood during the 1950s. Jim (full disclosure: we have known each other for fifty years) will be familiar to some readers as the founding editorial director of *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, the hugely ambitious



and successful project published by Mel Hurtig in 1985. But long before the world of books there was the world of the Junction where Jim grew up the son of a vicious, resentful mother and a war-damaged, alcoholic father. He has now decided to reveal this early life in a memoir called **Know It All: Finding the Impossible Country** (Durville Books). It was a childhood of violence and terror. “Every night I lay sleepless in the dark, fearing my father’s footsteps on the stairs.” For her part, his mother cuffed him so much about the head that he developed permanent ringing in his ears. And when they weren’t beating him, they were beating each other. Thanks to his discovery of books and libraries, Jim escaped into the world of publishing and that story is part of the memoir as well. But like the proverbial train wreck from which you cannot look away, it is the account of his childhood that is both absorbing and horrifying, read through the fingers that you hold over your eyes. —*Daniel Francis*

THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION HAD TO CLOSE

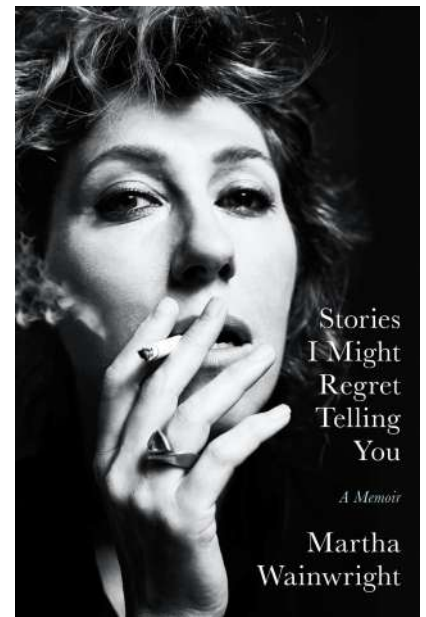
For some of us from New Westminster, Hollywood Hospital holds a place in living memory: the building began as a private mansion in 1892 and was sold and repur-



posed as a hospital shortly after World War I. Fortunately, the landscaped gardens, wrap-around porch, elaborate balcony and classic Victorian tower were retained. Beginning in 1957, experimental work in psychedelic therapy was conducted in the top of that tower, which came to be known as the Acid Room. Authors Jesse Donaldson and Erika Dyck, in **The Acid Room: The Psychedelic Trials and Tribulations of Hollywood Hospital** (Anvil Press), have provided a detailed history of the former hospital’s contributions to the field. Included are some profiles of patients who experienced successful outcomes from this treatment method, including an account of the local weightlifting champion and cult figure, Doug Hepburn: “Having heard about the experimental therapy being conducted inside its walls, Hepburn was intrigued by the promise that it could transform an individual’s self-image, reportedly accomplishing in an afternoon what traditional therapy couldn’t in years.” After a decade of seemingly hopeless alcoholism, Doug Hepburn managed a bodybuilding comeback that gained him almost legendary status. Hollywood Hospital closed in July 1975, due to lack of funding (and, more generally, lack of support), although its psychedelic therapy program had ceased by around 1968. Within weeks of the shutdown, a mysterious fire broke out and the building was finally demolished. The site is now a massive grey mall known as Westminster Centre. However, if you go around to the back, you’ll see a group of Douglas firs and a couple of maple trees that look as though they’re from the original landscape of Hollywood Hospital. That is pretty much all that remains, except the hope that positive, alternative treatments for mental health issues are beginning to resurface. —*Jill Mandrake*

NO REGRETS

I remember singing along with, and laughing at, the lyrics to “The Swim-



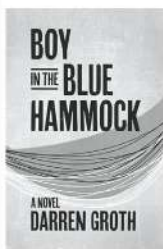
ming Song” from Kate and Anna McGarrigle’s eponymous 1976 album: “This summer I swam in a public place / And a reservoir to boot / At the latter I was informal / At the former I wore my suit / I wore my swimming suit.” That album, and the ones which followed, made me a loyal, long-term McGarrigles fan. I bought all their albums and I’d see them whenever they came to town, which was never often enough. What I did not know back then was that those witty lyrics had been penned by Loudon Wainwright III, Kate’s husband at the time. And although their marriage didn’t last, the musical partnership endured; you can hear the result on albums like *The McGarrigle Hour* from 1998, whose liner notes made me want to be adopted into that messy extended family. Kate and Loudon’s children, Rufus and Martha, have continued in the family business to great acclaim, and now their daughter Martha has written a memoir, **Stories I Might Regret Telling You** (Penguin Random House), which brings back McGarrigle and Wainwright’s memories—both delightful and sad (Martha’s account of her mother Kate’s death from cancer is particularly painful to relive). Among Martha’s own recordings is a live album of Edith Piaf covers, *Sans Fusils, Ni*

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a novel

DARREN GROTH



An epic tale of loss and loyalty, of dissent and destruction, of assumption and ableism. \$22.95

CUT TO FORTRESS

poems

TAWAHUM BIGE

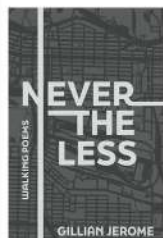
This collection considers the possibility of decolonization through a personal lens. \$19.95



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walking poems

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Gillian Jerome roams into ordinary places to find beings and states of being to sing about. \$19.95

HESITATING ONCE TO FEEL GLORY

poems

MALEE ACKER

These poems cajole and praise both the world and interior life with an erotic charge and enduring hope. \$19.95



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Souliers, à Paris, but it's harder than you think to live by Piaf's maxim to "ne regrette rien." *Stories I Might Regret Telling You* pulls no punches, but Martha is as hard on herself as she is on her famous but emotionally distant father, Loudon. The stories she tells are raw and unvarnished, but it all feels fair, and it's a refreshing change from the standard, self-serving, celebrity memoir.

—Michael Hayward

COMING UNRAVELLED

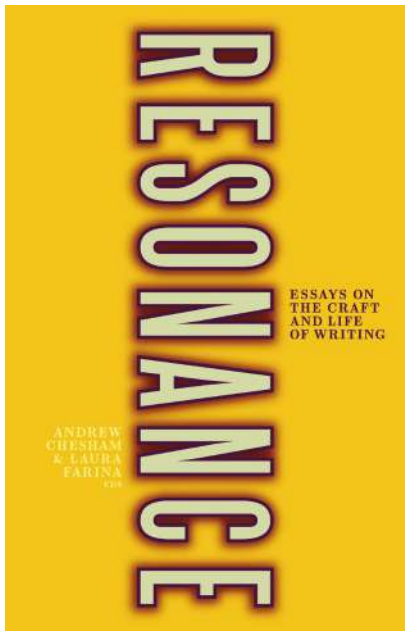
In 2015, Sylvia Olsen left her family's wool shop on Vancouver Island to begin a road trip across Canada with her husband, Tex. Visiting the nation's yarn shops, teaching workshops and collecting stories from the knitters she met, Olsen documented her journey in **Unravelling Canada: A Knitting Odyssey** (Douglas & McIntyre), a delightful record of how knitting spans Canada's history—and present—in many surprising ways. Coast Salish knitting, made famous by the Cowichan sweater, is the intersection of the innovation of indigenous knitters with tools and skills learned from European settlers. Olsen uses this as a basis for her book, looking at similar techniques used around the world and those passed on through decades of knitting culture in Canada. The Cowichan sweater allowed Coast Salish knitters a measure of financial independence and renown as the only knitting tradition established in Canada. On the road trip, Olsen searches for the oldest sweater in Canada, finding candidates she estimates being knit in the 1930s. Steeped in the Coast Salish knitting tradition, Olsen's own work has been influenced by the traditional geometric designs and naturally dyed wool—but her project for this road trip is to knit a dress with a maple leaf design. The dress never quite materializes as Olsen's ideas for the dress change the farther she gets along the road trip, a tidy metaphor for her growing under-

standing of Canada as a nation. Olsen muses about colonialism, cultural appropriation and questions of Canadian identity, sometimes in a way that feels like a light history lesson, as she travels east, meeting knitters of all ages, backgrounds and skill sets in a variety of colourful settings that certainly made me want to visit distant yarn shops and drive through the Maritimes. Olsen shows knitting as something that links the present to the past and joins communities together. I was interested to learn about NONIA, the government-backed knitting cottage industry in Newfoundland and Labrador that paid rural knitters to create knitwear to subsidize local healthcare. As a lifelong knitter myself, I was pleasantly surprised at the depths of knitting culture in Canada, something I had never spent much time wondering about, while the travel memoir aspect of this book scratched my pandemic-induced tourism itch.

—Kelsea O'Connor

CALL YOURSELF A WRITER

Reading **Resonance: Essays on the Craft and Life of Writing** (Anvil Press) felt like snooping around the desks of some of my favorite Canadian writers. What's in their notebooks? How do they organize their thoughts? What counts as writing? (Staring blankly at your keyboard and folding laundry, says Christina Myers.) Writing can be a lonely endeavour, but reading this book is like having coffee with a friend who is cheering you on. What makes it different from other writing books is that these writers aren't telling you how you *ought* to write, but rather sharing ideas, tips and tricks. Instead of assuming authority, they start from a place of believing you're as good a writer as them. The comforting message across these essays is that none of us writers really knows what we're doing. In this, there's immense freedom and plasticity—as Leanne Dunic suggests in her essay on



hybrid forms, “Dangerous Territories: On Writing and Risk.” The book, edited by Laura Farina and Andrew Chesham, is a testament to the unique community emanating from The Writer’s Studio continuing studies program at Simon Fraser University, where both editors work. This community owes much to Betsy Warland, who designed and directed the Writer’s Studio from 2001 to 2012, and her approach to writing—a process that begins with calling yourself a writer and believing it. This is a writing book built on the generosity of artists sharing ideas, methods and process. Because even though writing happens alone, it depends on us relating to each other through frequencies and feedback—indeed, writing is an act of resonance. —*April Thompson*

PART OF THE CROWD


Poetry books published in 2019 had the disadvantage of little or no promotion, as the COVID-19 lockdown soon followed. **Crowded Mirror** (Durga Press) is a case in point. Any of these fifty-one poems by Sheila Delany, medieval scholar and professor emerita of Simon Fraser University, would have generated

an amazing response at an in-person book launch. This collection is like fifty shades of near-boundless creativity. The longest, most intricate poems are “Doctor Jazz,” “Scenes from real life,” “Astraea in exile” and “Two heads.” A woman who voluntarily grew two heads is the narrator of the latter poem. One head resembles Janis Joplin, the other Sophia Loren. Halfway through the narrative, Sophia, trying to be helpful but coming off as patronizing, tells Janis that every woman needs three things: a good lawyer, a good therapist and a good hairdresser. Janis replies, “I got ’em all... and they all put the make on me.” The continuing banter resembles not only a crowded mirror, but also a crowded psyche. The shortest, most impactful poems are “Three,” “Birthday eve,” a character study called “Dianne” and a haiku that begins “This apple deserves.” The latter poem is reminiscent of William Carlos Williams’s “This Is Just to Say,” although the tree fruit’s delectability in Delany’s haiku is conveyed in fewer words. The poem with the most force may be the mid-length “Mistakes,” comprised of musings about a relationship’s final curtain; a series of one-liners delivered by a stand-up tragedian. These sad and wistful lines actually have an affirmative, if not happy, ending. The closing one reads, “He thought he’d never stop crying.” But this is a poem about mistakes, so there’s some relief in knowing that he was mistaken; he did stop crying.

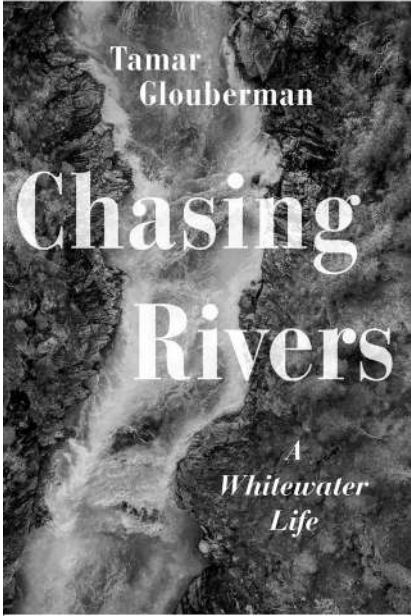
—*Jill Mandrake*

VANISHING CAREER PATHS

In high school I dreamed of becoming a seller of used books, a career path for which the guidance counsellor could offer no useful advice. Two recent memoirs have persuaded me that it was perhaps just as well that life took me down a different path. **The Last Bookseller: A Life in the Rare Book Trade** (University of Minnesota Press)



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Joseph Kakwinokanasum,
Writer's Studio 2018 graduate

describes Gary Goodman's years as a rare book dealer in Minnesota. In Goodman's view, the invention of the internet marked the beginning of the end for the rare book trade. Suddenly, buyers could search the shelves of thousands of bookstores simultaneously, and titles which were once thought to be scarce (and priced accordingly) could now be found online by the hundreds. Prices (and profits) plunged. *The Last Bookseller* is a mournful account of the glory days of a once-vibrant field, its pages populated with infamous book thieves and eccentric booksellers. **A Factotum in the Book Trade** (Biblioasis) is a collection of essays—digressive, opinionated and erudite—which take us through Marius Kociejowski's forty-plus-year career as an antiquarian bookseller in London, England. There are profiles of notable book collectors and of fellow booksellers (among them the late, and legendary, Vancouver bookseller Bill Hoffer). Kociejowski, who was raised in a farmhouse in rural Ontario, is also a poet and a respected travel writer; he is definitely the better writer of the two. So what lessons do we learn from this pair of memoirs? One: that you should support your local used bookstores while you can, because their days are numbered. Two: that those who are drawn to the bookselling trade are in the grip of something like an addiction. And three: if one of your offspring ever expresses a wish to become a bookseller, it might be best (though perhaps futile) for you to point out to them the many benefits of accountability, or the under-appreciated excitements of telemarketing.

—Michael Hayward

ARCHIPELAGO

Last year, I read **A Dream in Polar Fog** by Chukchi writer Yuri Rytkeu (translated by Ilona Yazhbin Chavasse) and **A Mind at Peace** by Turkish

writer Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (translated by Erdağ Göknar), two novels published by Archipelago Books. Rytkeu wrote in Russian during the Soviet era, and his works are set in his homeland in northeast Siberia, where the Chukchi people live on the edge of the Bering Strait—as far east as one can go on the Eurasian continent. Tanpınar was born just before the fall of the Ottoman Empire, on the cusp of the tumultuous transition to Ataturk's Turkish Republic. Like Rytkeu, he is also of two cultures, Oriental and Western, the old and the modern. *A Dream in Polar Fog* follows John MacLennan, an injured Canadian sailor stranded in a Chukchi village and forced to rely upon the locals when his arms are amputated. Rytkeu captures the stoic beauty of the Arctic, and manages to adapt his people's myths and his family's oral stories into modern prose. Ironically, *rytgv*, from which his name is derived, supposedly means "unremembered" in Chukchi. Like Arkady and Boris Strugatsky's *Roadside Picnic*—the basis of Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 film *Stalker*—the Canadian connection seems to be a way to connect the outside world with the insular USSR without making overt political claims. Everything about Canada, it seems, is mildly neutral and unoffending. *A Mind at Peace* chronicles the lives of a group of related people in Istanbul during the early years of republican Turkey. Tanpınar goes to great lengths to create imagery that captures the lively streetscapes of Istanbul and offers vivid descriptions of the Golden Horn, yet his sentences sag with nostalgia. You can almost breathe in Istanbul's melancholic climate—*hüzün*. It is not hard to see how the novelist Orhan Pamuk's flirtations with Ottoman aesthetics are indebted to Tanpınar. What is more difficult to understand is why Turkish literature takes up less space on readers' bookshelves than Russian works.

—Anson Ching

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The GEIST Cryptic Crossword

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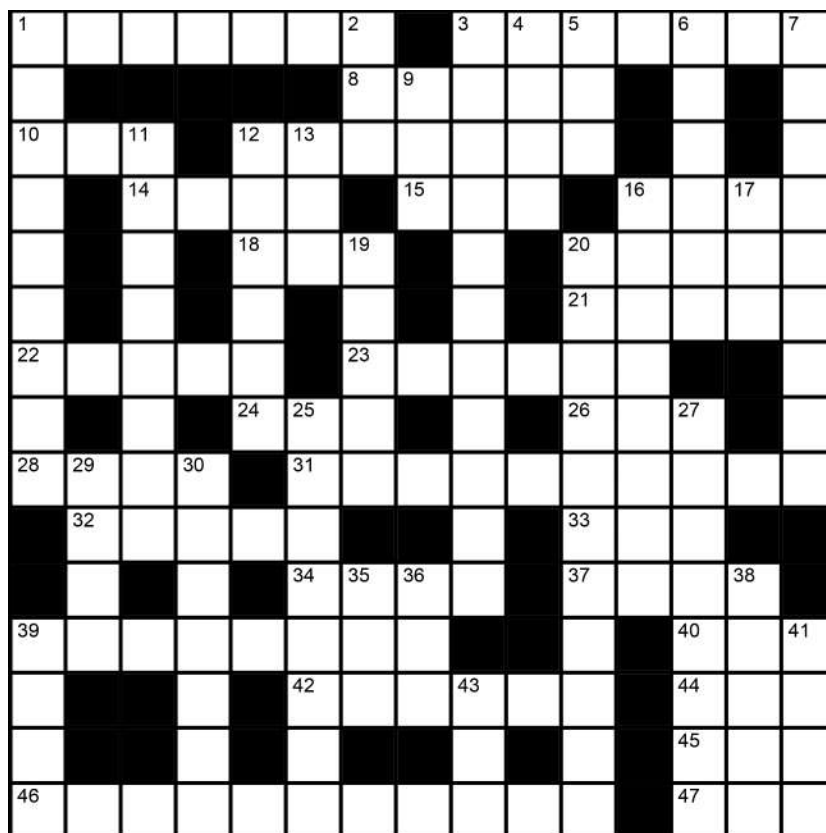
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A winner will be selected at random from correct solutions and will be awarded a one-year subscription to *Geist* or a *Geist* magnet.

ACROSS

- 1 Tony always brags about the weather in the Muskokas
- 3 It's extremely depressing to experience all those car fads
- 8 He didn't need bats in his belfry to be afraid of that bloody contagion
- 10 Sounds like Black Beauty may have originally been French
- 12 It covered everything that was over or under it!
- 14 We met in Rome in '92
- 15 Ted's been channeling tons of gigabits! (abbrev)
- 16 Please find a cure for all that beige
- 18 When the short woman mixes it up, she's electric! (abbrev)
- 20 Stop the boat, a vat's gone overboard!
- 21 Put the culture in those vials so we can study the forest
- 22 The conductor could lend a hand but that won't straighten out those twisted horns
- 23 Bless you, that suntan oil feels good!
- 24 Next time he's home, let's get Kenney to join our stretching group
- 26 Take it in before it makes me anxious!
- 28 Bill told his son to stay still
- 31 Was Ben the Bore absent when you got hit in the sternum?
- 32 Sadly, the Swede wore black when he smoked in the garden
- 33 She was not prepared to be under the weather
- 34 Oh, Beau loves the sound of the wind in the canes
- 37 Why must I be in this tiny room to make phone calls?
- 39 That drug lent an air of goodwill to the otherwise annoyed people
- 40 Can our gadget stash really help kids become fashionable? (abbrev)
- 42 Watch out! Those little hornets really scoot around!
- 44 How much of the lowest tariff did they choose to pay last year? (abbrev)



- 45 The problems originate in your made-up story
- 46 Which dish rewinds backwards?
- 47 It sounds like Bonnie was running away with a sheep!
- 25 Everyone in the bar loves to be forgiven by Desmond
- 27 When the bell sounds we will pray that we can pay (2)
- 29 In America you can win a sailing jug!
- 30 Give that lion enough space to sing
- 35 Honey, we need to finish that quilt before the Queen's visit
- 36 Sometimes it takes too much to keep the screen from wearing off (abbrev)
- 38 Folk wisdom says, never mail a letter to a vampire!
- 39 Mark's been wrestling with showing his exuberant feelings
- 41 These days we're trying to stop the flow of females away from basic units
- 43 That wrinkly creature will end up at Anne's place (abbrev)

DOWN

- 1 They control the food waste from that large mass
- 2 He had on a cute shirt before he got ready for the ball
- 3 How did that bootlace bum manage to put everything back in its place?
- 4 What's making you sick—something you drank?
- 5 At 3 I was already all the rage
- 6 For some reason those little guys really liked alfalfa sprouts
- 7 After close consideration, I can see why she wanted the bluest car
- 9 It's not the Diner's Club, but it has 3 layers! (abbrev)
- 11 It's great when a rebel ox can be moved simply by an earnest request
- 12 That's big and odd-shaped but I can still handle it
- 13 In church they always sing the loudest
- 16 Rather than abet evil, I think it is avoidable
- 17 I'd ask politely for your breathy reply but I've got something catchy (abbrev)
- 19 Tuck that merry fellow into the prayer house
- 20 For one sec, I miscast you as a follower of minimalist ideas

Solution to Puzzle 120





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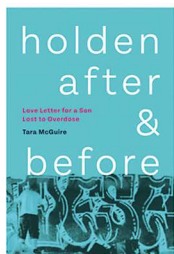
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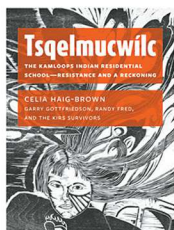
—Sami Schalk



HOLDEN AFTER AND BEFORE Tara McGuire

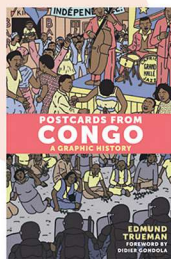
A mother’s deeply moving elegy to her son lost to overdose. “Brave, honest, unspeakably painful but simultaneously beautiful.”

—Lawrence Hill



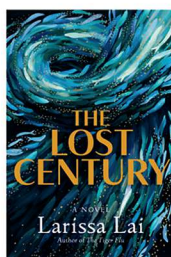
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