



GEIST

NUMBER 108

SPRING 2018

\$8.95

FACT + FICTION  NORTH of AMERICA



BECOMING FUGITIVE

Found Polaroid Project • Entropy in Archives

49 Days to the Afterlife • Leaving Thunder Bay • Weather Channel Music

Kissing with Vigour • Pharmaloot Fixer • Parker 51 Vacumatic

Erasure Contest Winners

40 YEARS OF PUBLISHED 3-DAY NOVELISTS

international
**3-day
NOVEL
CONTEST**

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION ENDS

JULY 31ST, 2018

**WINNING NOVEL GETS PUBLISHED
CASH PRIZES FOR 2ND AND 3RD PLACE**

SEPTEMBER 1-3, 2018

\$35

SURVIVAL GUIDE AND VETERAN TESTIMONIALS AT

WWW.3DAYNOVEL.COM

Dear Geist...



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

—Teetering, Gimli MB



Which is correct, 4:00, four o'clock or 1600 h?

—Floria, Windsor ON

Dear Geist,

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



—Dave, Red Deer AB



Advice for the Lit Lorn

Are you a writer?

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

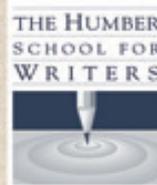
Geist offers free professional advice to writers of fiction, non-fiction and everything in between, straight from Mary Schendlinger (Senior Editor of *Geist* for 25 years) and *Geist* editorial staff.

Send your question to advice@geist.com.

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

geist.com/lit-lorn

Sponsored by:



GEIST

Volume 27 • Number 108 • Spring 2018



FEATURES

FIFTY YEARS IN REVIEW

Connie Kuhns

*The unusual tunings, fame and
heartbreak of Joni Mitchell*

39

ERASURE POETRY

Winners of the Occasional Geist

Erasure Poetry Contest

46

FUGITIVES

Trudi Lynn Smith & Kate Hennessy

*Things break down and
become new things*

48

GEIST

Don't laugh, you've got them too.

NOTES & DISPATCHES

Mary Schendlinger
World's Most Wanted
6

M.A.C. Farrant
Stories from a West Coast Town
9

Jennesia Pedri
T-Bay Notes
11

Taylor Brown-Evans
Cerro Ballena
12

Gale Smallwood-Jones
Working Life for a Girl in the 1960s
14

Jocelyn Kuang
49 Days to the Afterlife
16

Duncan Mercredi,
Małgorzata Nowaczyk,
Randy Fred, Steven Heighton
Contact No Contact
18

FINDINGS

20

Cutting Ice
English for Foreigners
My Sisters and I
First Contact
Hate: A Comprehensive Guide
The Gene Sweepstake Betting Book
Wash and Ready



Rooms to Let in Bohemia
Found Polaroids
Culture Clash
Shelf Life
The Old G
and more...

COLUMNS

BIRD'S EYE VIEW
Smashing Identity Algorithms, Yes Please
Lisa Bird-Wilson
57

AFTERLIFE OF CULTURE
Residential Roots
Stephen Henighan
60

CITY OF WORDS
The Devil
Alberto Manguel
62

DEPARTMENTS

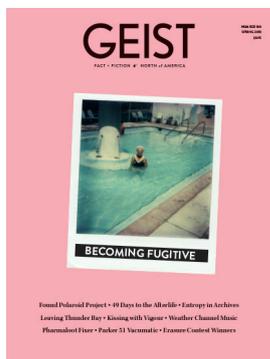
MISCELLANY
4

ENDNOTES
64

**OFF THE SHELF,
NOTED ELSEWHERE**
70

PUZZLE
71

CAUGHT MAPPING
72



COVER: *The image on the cover is from the Found Polaroids Project by Kyler Zeleny. See more of the polaroids on page 32.*

GEIST

PUBLISHED BY
The Geist Foundation

PUBLISHER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
AnnMarie MacKinnon

OPERATIONS MANAGER
Jocelyn Kuang

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Michał Kozłowski

ADMINISTRATION
Intern: Gabriel Scorgie
Volunteers: Anson Ching, Lauren Dembicky, Jill Mandrake, Patty Osborne, Jennessia Pedri, Julia Perroni

BRAIN TRUST
Stephen Osborne, Mary Schendlinger
Co-founders, Consulting Publishers

EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE
Shannon Webb-Campbell

DESIGNER
Syd Danger

PROOFREADER
Helen Godolphin

ACCOUNTANT
Mindy Abramowitz CGA

CIRCULATION
Larry Wyatt

WEB ARCHITECTS
Metro Publisher

DISTRIBUTION
Magazines Canada

MANAGING EDITOR EMERITUS
Barbara Zatyko

FIRST SUBSCRIBER
Jane Springer

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Jordan Abel, Bartosz Barczak, Kevin Barefoot, Kathy Battye, Trevor Battye, andrea bennett, Jill Boettger, Jesmine Cham, C.E. Coughlan, Brad Cran, Melissa Edwards, Robert Everett-Green, Daniel Francis, Randy Fred, Lily Gontard, Michael Hayward, Gillian Jerome, Brian Lam, Jill Mandrake, Thad McIlroy, Billeh Nickerson, Christine Novosel, Patty Osborne, Eric Peterson, Dan Post, Debby Reis, Kris Rothstein, Norbert Ruebsaat, Jane Silcott, Roni Simunovic, Paul Tough, Eric Uhlich, Michelle van der Merwe

SUPPORT THE GEIST WRITERS AND ARTISTS FUND:
GEIST.COM/WAFUND

WWW.GEIST.COM

MISCELLANY

SUPERPOSITION

For those astute readers who have noticed that our spring issue is coming out in what is, calendrically speaking, summer, perhaps this photo will excuse our tardiness in some small way. You see, the Geist office is reached by pushing the glowing green button (pictured at right) and travelling by elevator to the 2nd Floor/Alternate Floor as indicated by the sign just beneath the buttons. Now, despite the fact that Geist has been produced in the very same office on this 2nd Floor/Alternate Floor for nigh on eight years, and despite the fact that signage has been posted regarding the location in space of the Geist office, presumably for our entire tenancy, it obviously was not specific enough. None of us had noticed or realized that we may have been working on the Alternate Floor—as opposed to just the plain old 2nd Floor—the whole time. To date, none of us truly understands where this Alternate Floor is. Or perhaps it's the location of the 2nd Floor that's unclear, who's to say? Either way, you can imagine how jarring that must have been to discover. As anyone familiar with a relativistic conception of the universe doubtless knows, complicated things happen when the three dimensions of space and one dimension of time (that we know of, and which, according to some quantum theory, may or may not be adequate in scope or even “real” as we commonly understand the word) are amalgamated into a single four-dimensional continuum. Trust us, it's heavy. If one is not entirely sure where one is, can one possibly know when one is? In any case, Geist 108 is here, now.



—The Editors

PAVING THE ROAD AHEAD

I found Lisa Bird-Wilson's piece, "Once and Future Prairie," (*Geist* 107) to be insightful, sensitive and timely. I was pleased to read the book on which it was based, *Towards a Prairie Atonement* by Trevor Herriot, because it provides us with an important piece of our history that I and many others have been woefully unaware of. The first step toward any reconciliation is awareness. Another step is to pay attention to the nuances and subtleties of language and good intentions. What may seem like subtle differences are not so to those who have been affected or harmed. I cringe when I think of my own stumblings over the years—done with good intentions. I'm a fan of Herriot's writing and was surprised by the "Afterword by Norman Fleury" written on the cover. Surely Fleury could have been given more credit, as Bird-Wilson suggests in her thoughtful writing. One word can make a difference. Yes, we still have more to learn and a long way to go.

—Catherine Fenwick
Regina, SK



BUT THEN WHAT HAPPENS?
Speaking of puzzling elevator signage...

PHOTO: Mandelbrot

EVERYTHING RHYMES WITH DEGOW BA RONK

Thank you for publishing the excerpt of Norbert Ruebsaat’s memoir (“Loud, Unpleasant Noises,” No. 107) in which he recounts his experience as a child immigrant from Germany, hearing the strange sounds of English in elementary school. It reminded me of my own experience coming to Canada from Eastern Europe as a child. The landscape was a bit different here, the cars and houses certainly much bigger, the people dressed in brighter colours, but what really jumped out at me were the sounds of the new language I was supposed to learn. In those first few months in Canada, to me and my little sister, English sounded completely twangy, every word ended with a sound that rhymed with honk or brow; a sentence went something like: *brow jebow rabow degow ba ronk de bonk fronk*. When we came home from school we would speak this way to each other, laughing, mocking. And then, slowly, those sounds formed into English words, which formed into sentences, and before long we were speaking our adopted language more fluently than our native one.

—MK, cyberspace



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Carol Sawyer for winning the 2018 Duke and Duchess of York Prize in Photography, awarded by the Canada Council to photographers for personal creative work or professional development. Sawyer’s photography—documenting the art and life of Natalie Brettschneider, a fictional modernist artist working in Canada and Europe from the 1920s to the 1970s—was featured in *Geist* 106.

Geist is published four times a year.

Contents copyright © 2018 The Geist Foundation. All rights reserved.

Subscriptions: in Canada: \$25 (1 year); in the United States and elsewhere: \$27. Visa and MasterCard accepted.

Correspondence and inquiries:
 subs@geist.com, advertising@geist.com,
 letters@geist.com, editor@geist.com.

Include SASE with Canadian postage or IRC with all submissions and queries.
 #210 – 111 West Hastings Street
 Vancouver BC Canada V6B 1H4

Submission guidelines are available at
 geist.com.
 ISSN 1181-6554.

Geist swaps its subscriber list with other cultural magazines for one-time mailings. Please contact us if you prefer not to receive these mailings.

Publications Mail Agreement 40069678

Registration No. 07582

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
 Circulation Department,
 #210 – 111 West Hastings Street
 Vancouver BC Canada V6B 1H4
 Email: geist@geist.com
 Tel: (604) 681-9161, 1-888-GEIST-EH;
 Fax: (604) 677-6319; Web: geist.com

Geist is a member of Magazines Canada and the Magazine Association of BC. Indexed in the *Canadian Literary Periodicals Index* and available on microfilm from University Microfilms Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

The Geist Foundation receives assistance from private donors, the Canada Council, the BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver and the Cultural Human Resources Council. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) of the Department of Canadian Heritage.



PRINTED BY
LoweMartin



Funded by the
 Government
 of Canada

Canada

Something wonderful happens
WHEN YOU GIVE A Parker

What a joy to open as gay gift-wrappings fly . . . a Parker set in all its gleaming beauty! And what a superb reminder of you . . . to be shown with pride . . . used every day of the year! Choose a sure-to-please-gift from these new and exclusive Parker sets. Each has the quality and distinction that makes a Parker "the world's most wanted pen." All have advanced features found in no other pen. Whatever price you plan to pay, there is a Parker you will be proud to give. *See them early at the pen counter.*

(A) PARKER 45—With 14-K gold nib and biggest ink cartridge. As illustrated, Pen \$10.00, Pencil \$6.75. Also in Lustraloy, Pen \$5.95, Pencil \$4.00.
 (B) PARKER 61—Superb gift. Gold-filled cap, Pen \$7.50, Pencil \$12.50; Lustraloy, Pen \$17.50, Pencil \$7.50.
 (C) PARKER "51" CHALLENGER—Outstanding among all pens. Brightly polished cap. Now at new low price, Pen \$10.95, Pencil \$6.00.
 (D) PARKER IMPERIAL PARDNERS—T-Ball Jotter Pen & Mechanical pencil. As illustrated, Pen \$4.98, Pencil \$4.98, Set \$9.95.
 (E) PARKER PARDNERS—T-Ball Jotter pen and mechanical pencil, stainless steel caps, Pen \$1.98, Pencil \$1.98, Set \$3.95.
 (F) PARKER DESK SET MODEL K.M.—Distinctive black and gold marble base. Choice of fountain pen or ball point pen. \$20.00.
 (G) PARKER SUPER "21". Lustraloy cap, Pen \$5.95, Pencil \$4.00.

All prices listed suggested retail.

PARKER PEN CO., LTD.—BOSTON, MASS.—NEW YORK, N.Y.—MILWAUKEE, WIS.—CHICAGO, ILL.—TORONTO, CAN.

"that's a Parker 51!" She drew it from its nest with reverence, noted the wonky nib, thought for a moment and said, "I'll take it out back and see what I can do." On her way she showed the pen to another colleague, who ooh'ed and aah'ed and touched the brushed-silver cap—"Sterling! And in such good shape." By the time Rose emerged from out back, word had got around and a couple of customers were waiting to get a look at my dad's pen.

Rose had coaxed the nib a bit closer to where it belonged. She said she could nudge it a little more, but it might snap. Should we take the chance? On a bit of test paper I wrote "Dad's pen with wonky nib" and drew some curlicues, which worked well enough that I decided she should stop there. Off she went to do a bit of cleanup on the pen, but not before showing it to one more worker—a young man, who had never before seen a Parker 51 "in person," and who I'm pretty sure had tears in his eyes.

The pen had been a gift to my dad from the Chicago Cubs. He worked for the Cubs as a statistician from the early 1930s to the mid-'40s (with two years of military service overseas during World War II), and they gave him the pen, with his signature and CHICAGO CUBS inscribed very subtly on the deep-blue barrel. The details of the occasion are lost now: perhaps the pen was presented to mark some accomplishment or milestone, or given to him as an essential tool, since his job consisted mainly of attending ball games, at home and away, and writing down everything the players did and didn't do, along with the attending circumstances. All my life, from when I was a kid growing up in the late '40s and early '50s to when I went to university in the mid-'60s, that pen is the only one I ever saw in his hand.

World's Most Wanted

MARY SCHENDLINGER

Who knew my dad's old pen was a famous Parker 51 Vacumatic?

One day last November, I dropped my dad's fountain pen on the floor. Actually it's been my fountain pen since my dad died half a century ago, but I still think of it as my dad's pen. Right away I could see that the nib had gone a bit wonky. No good could come of messing with a pen I loved and that was at least seventy-five years old. So the next morning I wrapped it up like a baby and took the bus to my favourite notebook-and-pen

store and asked about fixing an ancient fountain pen. It was a busy morning, but a young woman at the counter, who perhaps recognized me as a profligate shopper in the store, went off to fetch Rose, the one who knew about repairs, while I lifted my dad's pen from its swaddling clothes. When Rose came over, she was smiling but already shaking her head: "I'm sorry, I'm not really doing repairs any more, so . . . oh my gosh, is that," she said,

But until I dropped it, I certainly did not know that my dad's pen was a Parker 51, one of the best fountain pens ever made—and part of an early batch, which Rose could ascertain by examining the barrel just under the cap clutch ring—a thin metal band separating barrel from nib—and finding a small inscription, subtle to the point of invisibility: PARKER “51” (the quotes were part of the official model name) and, just below that, MADE IN U.S.A. I had never noticed that bit in fifty years of writing and drawing with my dad's pen. But why would I look for it? To me it was a smooth, comfortable, trouble-free pen that I had inherited from my dad.

Now I know more. The 51 was conceived sometime in the mid-1930s, when Kenneth Parker, an executive in the family-owned Parker Pen Company, got the urge to design and market a luxury fountain pen. It was elegant and beautiful and tough. Its name was a number, commemorating Parker Pen's 51st year in business, and neatly sidestepping the need for name translations in the international market. It required a newly invented ink—trade name “51” Ink—that was absorbed by paper rather than slowly evaporating on the surface as standard inks did. But the ink must only be fast-drying on paper, not on the nib, which was therefore redesigned with the addition of a wee hood and a touch of ruthenium, a rare metal inert to most chemicals. And because “51” Ink was more corrosive than the ordinary stuff, the body of the pen was made of Lucite, a light, durable plastic patented in the 1930s. (Quink, a standard fountain pen ink to this day, was a separate Parker Pen product; by the time I was old enough to notice and remember, my dad filled his pen exclusively with Quink.) The first generation of Parker 51s, including my dad's pen, were Vacuumatics, so-called

because ink was delivered by working a small plunger tucked into the blind cap—a screw-on tip at the bottom of the barrel. (The Aeromatic, with a flexible plastic ink sac to be squeezed and released, came later.) The clip on the pen is a slim, intricate art-deco-flavoured arrow, with a “Blue Diamond”: a diamond-shaped bit of blue glass the size of a sesame seed, which signified Parker's lifetime warranty on the pen. So if Parker Pen hadn't shut down in 2011, I'd have been able to get that nib sorted out by showing them my dad's Blue Diamond.

After years in development, the first Parker 51s became available for retail sale in 1941, and they were an instant success. Kenneth Parker was just hitting his stride in marketing the next, larger batch of pens a few months later, when Pearl Harbor was bombed and the US went to war. All factory materials and apparatus were needed immediately for the war effort, so the unique marketing challenge for Parker Pen was to sell a gazillion luxury pens that they were forbidden to manufacture. And that's just what they did. You couldn't have a Parker 51, but you could *want* one, and the 51 became “*The world's most wanted pen.*” This was wartime: the Parkers proudly reminded future buyers that both the Parker 51 and some models of US warplanes were manufactured with Lucite and ruthenium. Parker Pen also made the most of a fighter plane unrelated to any pen but serendipitously called the P-51 Mustang, whose sleek cigar shape was not unlike that of the Parker 51: “*Two P-51's! ... both with brilliant war records!*” In 1945, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur signed the instruments of surrender, ending World War II, with Parker 51s.

By war's end, people were feverish with desire for the Parker 51, and as soon as production resumed, the pen became a status symbol. Ballpoint pens—much cheaper and more convenient than any fountain pen—had hit the retail market in 1945 and

enjoyed wild success from the get-go, yet twenty million Parker 51 fountain pens were sold between 1941 and 1972 (when production stopped), at a price equivalent to at least \$200 US today. In 2002, there was still enough 51 love—or at least nostalgia—around that the company released the Parker 51 Limited Edition—not the 51, but a pen that dreamily called it to mind. That was Parker's last swing at the 51, but more recent knock-offs have emerged, such as the Hero 616 Green, and the Hero Extra Light, which sells for \$5 US and got a respectful nod on BoingBoing.net in 2014.

The rich subculture of the Parker 51 includes hundreds of pens for sale online, ranging in price from \$10 to \$1,750 US, through scores of vendors. With the help of their displays and annotations, I can identify my dad's pen as one of the early 51s, and to pinpoint the colour of the barrel: Midnight Blue, just a titch cooler than Cedar Blue or Plum, but warmer than Black and India Black. The combined wares of these pen lovers comprise a fine summary of the evolution of the Parker 51 over its thirty-year life, and a whiff of some bygone marketing apparatus: a gold 51 pocket charm; a tiny coupon for a free trial of the 51 (“not transferable”); a “Ladies Pen” complete with a ribbon or chain so the lady could wear the pen like a necklace; a special-issue Vacuumatic “First Year” Double Jewel Club 51 Award Pen. One collector, whose eyes are the colour of the Teal Blue Parker 51 barrel, happily describes his constant combing of antique shops, flea markets, boot sales and online auction websites for old pens. He has worked out a scale of ratings to guide shoppers at his site: Mint, Near Mint, Excellent and Very Good. Another aficionado offers tips on owning a Parker 51:

Q: I'm having trouble lending my expensive pen, but I don't want to seem rude.

A: Always have a cheap Bic with you for lending.



Q: What shall I do if they want to try my fountain pen?

A: Hold on to the cap, then they won't walk away with it.

And it all comes with the irresistible insider jargon that flourishes in any specialty: the many parts of a nib, including the *times*, *shoulders* and *vent holes*; and esoterica such as *roller clip*, *manifold nib*, *snorkel filler*, *reverse oblique*...

When my mom and dad got going on their family, my dad went to work as a contract manager at an appraisal company. He took the pen to work with him every day and signed contracts with it and wrote memos and notes, then brought the pen home every night and weekend. At home he paid bills with the pen, balanced the chequebook, wrote lists and reminders. Whenever he and my mom gave any of us kids a book, he inscribed it with his pen. In high school they gave me *The Reader's Encyclopedia* (2nd edition), in which he wrote: "If you can't find it here, don't bother with it. Love,

Mom & Dad." Later, in the *Larousse English-French, French-English Dictionary*, he wrote: "Ooh la la! Happy comp lit. Love, Mom & Dad." Once there was a birthday card with a bit of cash tucked inside, along with a message: "Don't spend this on any five-horse parlays. Love, Mom & Dad." And when he left a note for us to read when we came home late, he wrote it with his pen—"The library says you have an overdue book, or perhaps an overdone book," or "We have gone to bed. Put out lights and cat"—then laid the note in the middle of the living room rug and set a book or an ashtray on it to hold it down. When the ink grew faint on the page, he unscrewed the blind cap at the end of the barrel and filled the pen by holding it vertically, nib down in the bottle of Quink, and gently pressing and releasing the Vacumatic plunger exactly nine times, as directed on the miniature brochure that had come with the pen.

My dad must have known that his

pen was expensive—and, to use one of his terms, *fancy*—but we kids didn't know, because he never mentioned it. The prestige of the Parker 51 would not elevate the pen in his esteem, or cause him to handle it more carefully, or to show it off, or even to mention it. It was a sturdy, nice-looking, non-skipping pen that felt good in his hand and always worked.

My dad died of lymphoma fifty years ago, in hospital. When we had said goodbye to him, the nurses handed us a small, soft packet containing his personal effects: his watch, his glasses, his wallet, his handkerchief and his Parker "51" pen.

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

P(ORT)ENT: *Portal's* Creative Non-fiction Contest
A Harbinger of New Talent

2000 words • \$25 entry fee includes one issue • \$500 Prize • Deadline Sept 1, 2018

Details at:
portalmagazine.ca



Stories from a West Coast Town

M.A.C. FARRANT

Very quietly, very slowly, happiness can take over a person's life

POSITIVE IMPACT

On Saturday, July 9, 2016, Buddhist monks from the Great Enlightenment Buddhist Institute in Little Sands, Prince Edward Island, bought six hundred pounds of live lobsters from several establishments around the island and returned them to the ocean, thus saving the lobsters' lives. It was, the monks said, an act of compassion.

When she heard this, a woman from the West Coast was inspired to rescue the last Atlantic lobster from her town's Save-On-Foods, where it had been languishing for several days at the bottom of a display tank. She'd noticed it while shopping and worried about its future. Now she had a plan. She purchased the lobster and carried it home in a pail half-filled with water from the tank. The next day she

shipped the lobster via Purolator, and at a personal cost of \$245, to her friend in Prince Edward Island with the instruction that, like the Buddhist's lobsters, hers would be returned to the ocean.

"It's a spiritual thing," she explained to the local TV station when the news broke. "Sometimes spirituality gets so structured it doesn't even feel like you're living."

It was a Purolator agent who tipped off the TV station. He told them the story "just translated" for him and that he found it "real and soulful."

"It's an example of being a little better than you are," he said.

THE WEATHER CHANNEL

"I won't lie to you," the woman was telling her daughter. "There have been train wrecks. I've lived in suspended

adolescence for much of my life. But then, when I turned sixty, things started to calm down and a low-grade happiness took over. I'm not sure why. Getting older maybe. Getting that big pay-out from your dad."

"Don't talk about Dad," said the daughter.

They were having drinks in the Dockside Pub after the daughter's shift at Starbucks.

"Okay, but this is important," her mother continued. "It's something you need to know. Very quietly, very slowly, happiness can take over a person's life. It's happened to me. Not a big kind of happiness with streamers and balloons, more of a background happiness, like the music you hear on the Weather Channel.

"Seriously," said the daughter.

"When I hear that music," the mother said, "I think: This perfectly

describes the way my happiness feels. Light and kind of spacey.”

“The Weather Channel.”

“Yes. And now when I notice other people, older ones like myself, walking down the street, going about their business, and having these little smiles on their faces, I know they’re plugged into the Weather Channel too. Everyone enjoying the same kind of quiet happiness that I am.”

“Well, *be’s* not happy,” the daughter said.

“Who?”

“Dad. All he ever does is come home from work, crack a beer and complain about the government.”

Hearing this caused the woman to feel slightly more happy than she usually felt.

But in fairness to the girl’s father and feeling a little guilty because she enjoyed hearing about her ex’s misery, she said, “Nevertheless, a happy woman like me can still find things to be unhappy about.”

“Like what?”

“Well, I’m very wary that I won’t last forever.”

“Mother!”

“Just kidding.”

WAITING ROOM

The young man wearing a black suit, white shirt and black scarf sat beside his grandfather in Dr. Burns’s waiting room. Dr. Burns was one of our town’s few doctors.

“I’ve brought my own undertaker,” the old man told the waiting patients.

The fat girl with the pink hair laughed. She was wearing a net skirt and silver shoes.

“I used to play the accordion at weddings,” the man said loudly. “But the ones who care about the polka are old and not dancing anymore. I was playing to empty floors.”

“Granddad.”

“What? It’s the truth!”

The grandson looked away.

“Furthermore,” the old man said, “the world is run by thugs. It would be

nice for a change if they saved people instead of killing them.”

“Granddad.”

“I’ll bet you’d like to know how I dye my hair,” the pink-haired girl said to the old man. She didn’t wait for a reply.

“It’s trial and error to get the correct shade. It’s somewhere between baby pink and hot pink. You couldn’t buy this shade in a bottle. You have to play with the mixes yourself. Not everyone can achieve these results.”

“What?” said the old man.

The girl raised her voice. “I said, not everyone gets the results I get. My friend, Amber,” she continued, “dyes one half of her hair pink and the other blue, which looks all right when she wears pigtails but not so good otherwise.”

She went on to say that her social work practicum was going to be at the food bank for homeless people. She was proud that she’d received the placement looking the way she did but concluded that one look at her would cause people to be happy and that can’t be a bad thing, can it?

By now many of the waiting patients were smiling. But not the old man.

He turned to his grandson. “I’m too old for this,” he said. “Who do I have to sleep with to get out of here?”

M.A.C. Farrant is the author of fifteen works of fiction, non-fiction and memoir, and two plays. The Great Happiness, a volume of miniature fiction, will be released by Talonbooks in spring 2019.

Spring 2018

NIGHTWOOD EDITIONS

Listening to the Bees
Mark L. Winston & Renée Sarojini Saklikar
ESSAYS & POETRY
\$24.95 HC

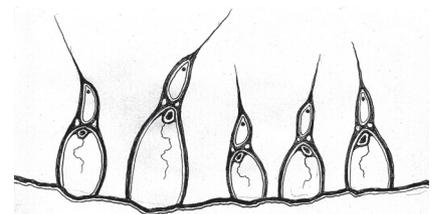
Army of the Brave and Accidental
Alex Boyd
FICTION
\$19.95 PB

After the Hatching Oven
David Alexander
POETRY
\$18.95 PB

LITTLE WILD
Curtis LeBlanc
POETRY
\$18.95 PB

Our Familiar Hunger
Laisha Rosnau
POETRY
\$18.95 PB

WWW.NIGHTWOODEDITIONS.COM | @NIGHTWOODED | #READNIGHTWOOD



T-Bay Notes

JENNESIA PEDRI

Leaving Thunder Bay isn't one of the things that gets easier with practice

ARRIVALS

To get to Thunder Bay—where I was born and raised and where my maternal and paternal grandparents settled in the early twentieth century—you have to travel back in time. One way to do this is on a WestJet Bombardier Q400 Turboprop aircraft that travels daily, nonstop from Winnipeg to Thunder Bay, once in the morning and once at night. I now only make the trip from my home in Vancouver to Winnipeg to Thunder Bay once a year, preferably during summer months when the mosquitoes are bad but the temperature is warm enough to make you want to be outside.

When I arrived at my parents' house—the house I grew up in—it was after dark and I carried my luggage directly to my bedroom. I found it nearly the same as it always is—drawers filled and shelves lined with the past: a stuffed animal I called Tigger, an original Nintendo Game Boy, a MuchDance 2000 CD, every diary I kept from 1995 to 2004, a rock collection, a Smucker's raspberry jam jar containing remnants of an old stash, and a random assortment of books I read between late childhood and early adolescence. Each year it looks more like a set from a film about girls coming of age. Long after my parents had gone to sleep I lay awake in the next room, slightly jet-lagged from my travels, playing Super Mario Land on my Game Boy, wondering who I'd run into tomorrow and whether they'd recognize me from the future.

SOW-NA

In northwestern Ontario a camp is what the rest of Canada calls a cottage.

Like cottages, camps are usually modest, cozy dwellings in rural or semi-rural settings outfitted with items deemed too ratty for home but too good for the dump, resulting in an eclectic mix of dishes, light fixtures, towels, linens, furniture and other miscellaneous decor. One thing nearly all camps around Thunder Bay have in common is a sauna. And since Thunder Bay has the highest concentration of Finnish-Canadian people per capita in the country, you'll likely hear it pronounced *sow-na*, not *saw-na*. In the late 1950s my Finnish grandparents purchased the land where our family camp is located, on One Island Lake, just twenty minutes northeast of Thunder Bay, for five hundred dollars. The story is that the bush and trees on the property were so thick that you couldn't see the water but could hear it from the dirt road. After clearing the waterfront, the first thing they built was a proper *sow-na*. Along with the purchase of lumber came an illustrated eight-step guide to bathing in a Finnish *sow-na* that now hangs on the wall of the dressing room.

The process starts with a light shower or rinse. Bathing proper begins by lying in a 112–130°F *sow-na* for fifteen minutes followed by a period of cooling off in a shower, lake or sometimes, in winter, a snowbank. The bather returns to the *sow-na*; water is added to the hot rocks to produce a steam. An advanced bather may beat herself with leafy birch twigs soaked in water to intensify the heat, which, despite being half Finn, I've never done. Steps three and four may then be repeated several times before washing, after which the bather returns to the *sow-na* one last time, followed by a final rinse and a thorough towel dry,

taking care not to catch a cold. After sixty years we're still stoking our *sow-na* fire with the cedar my grandpa and grandma cleared from the land.

STRANGER THINGS

Thunder Bay formed on January 1, 1970, when the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William were merged by an act issued by the province of Ontario. A referendum was held on what to call the new town; the three options were Thunder Bay, Lakehead and The Lakehead. According to the official Thunder Bay website, several failed plebiscites on merging the towns had been held over the years, and many names had been proposed for the merged city, including: Port Edward, Williamsport, Westport, Westgate, Port Thurwilliam, Fort Artwill and Port Fort.

The demonym for a person from Thunder Bay is Thunder Bayer.

On a quiet Friday night, I was leaving a restaurant in downtown Port Arthur when the pay phone rang at the southeast corner of Cumberland Street and Red River Road. It was a retro, lumpy brown plastic box and had the faded word TELEPHONE printed above it in all caps. (I'd once read that, before there were cell-phones, a robust subculture of pay phone number collectors would dial pay phones at random just to talk to strangers, a practice apparently popularized in the 90s by David Letterman, who dedicated a segment of his show to calling up strangers passing by the pay phone in Times Square). I answered "Hello?" into the cold, brown plastic receiver. But after a few discouraging moments of silence, the caller just hung up.

SQUEAKY WHEEL GETS THE GREASE

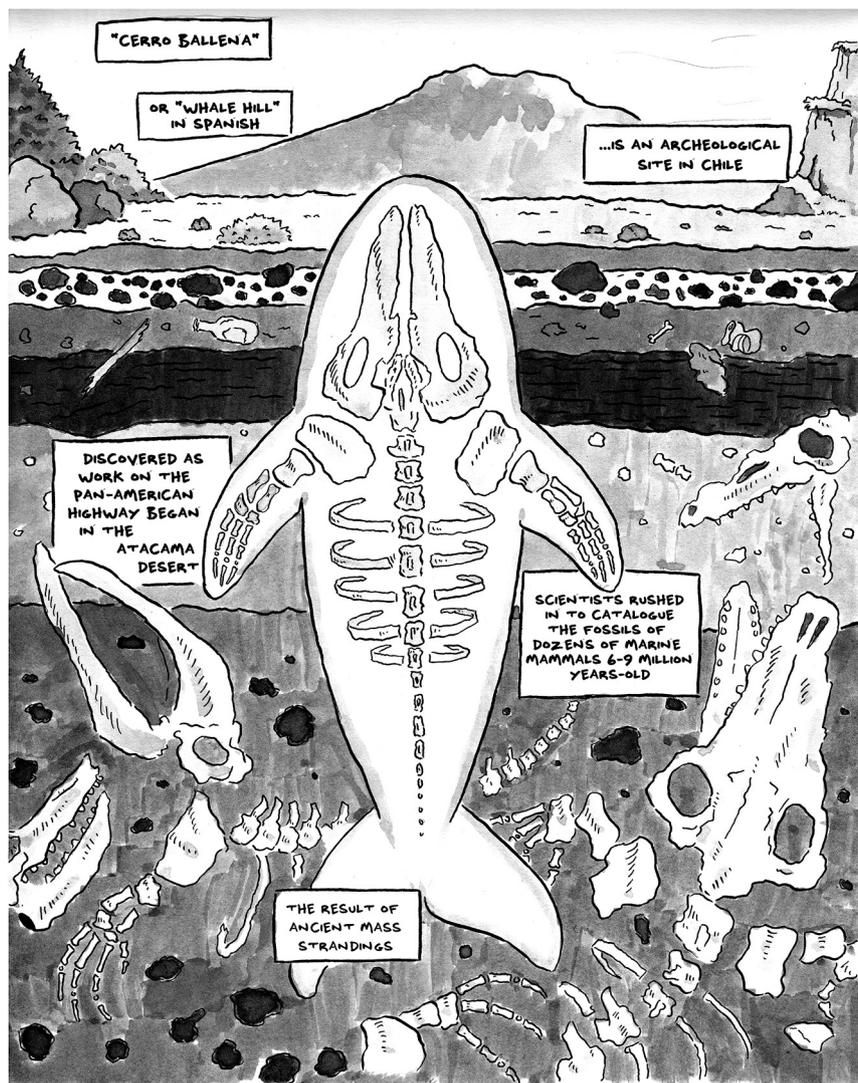
Finally, following months of public outrage, the Hoito restaurant, a Finnish diner famous for its pancakes, returned crinkle cut fries to their menu. Some things shouldn't change.

ROMANCING THE PAST

Along the Kaministiquia River in Thunder Bay is Fort William Historical Park, a 97-hectare reconstruction of the Fort William fur trading post, devoted to recreating the days of the North West Company and the Canadian fur trade. On elementary school trips to the old fort we learned that Fort William was once the largest fur trading post in Canada and lost its stature shortly after the North West Company was forced to merge with the Hudson's Bay Company in the early nineteenth century, after a decades-long bloody rivalry between the two companies.

By the time I'd entered high school, we no longer studied the old fort in our Canadian history courses; instead I knew it as a place where some of my classmates got summer jobs dressing up for tourists as William McGillivray (chief director of the North West Company), Lord Selkirk, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, or, if you were a girl, a milkmaid or "country wife."

Today, the old fort is one of Thunder Bay's hottest wedding venues. Last year I attended two weddings at the old fort. Both weddings included an open bar, a speech made by a groomsman with references to high school, underage drinking and playing hockey on an outdoor rink, and a photo shoot with an early nineteenth-century replica of an Anishinaabe birch bark canoe used by voyageurs to transport fur pelts from Fort William to Montreal. At one of the weddings a Hudson's Bay-themed wedding cake was served,



From Songs for a Lost Pod, a comic book-album collaboration between Taylor Brown Evans and Leah Abramson.

Taylor Brown-Evans is a writer, illustrator and cartoonist living in Vancouver. His work has appeared previously in Geist, Matrix, Poetry Is Dead, the Feathertale Review

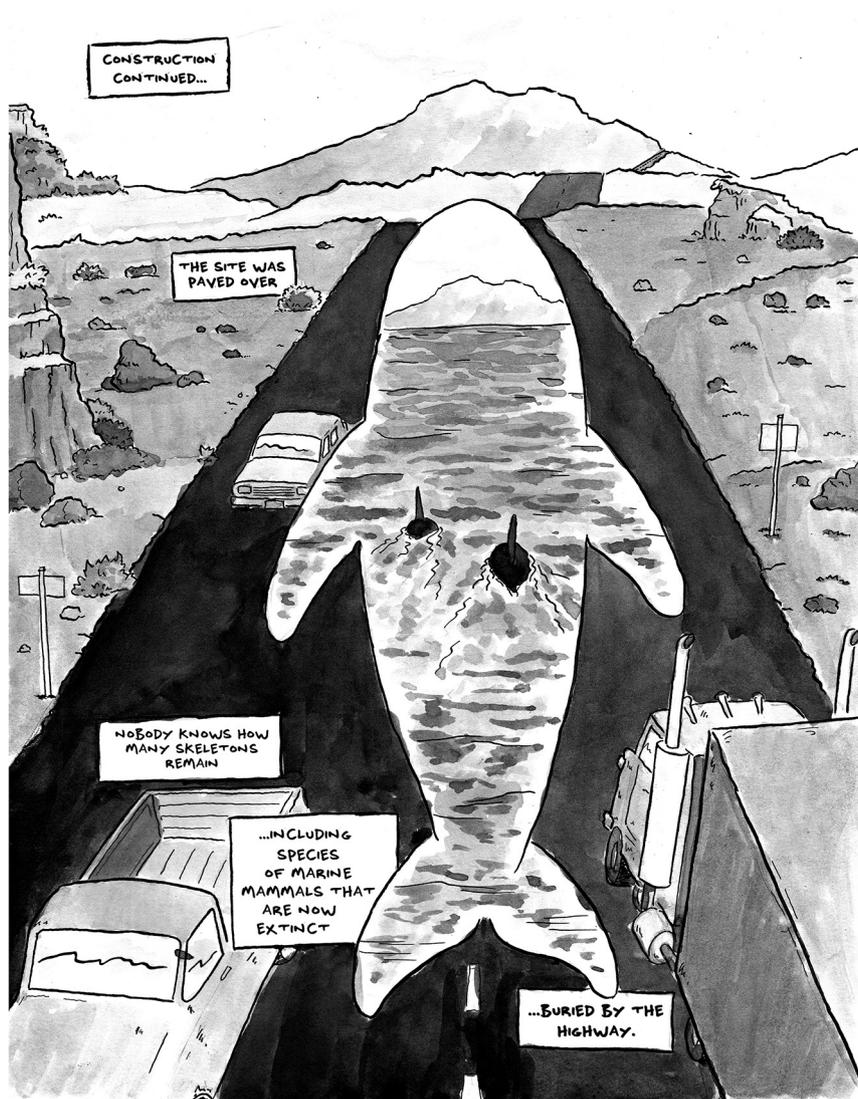
decorated with red, blue, green and yellow striped icing.

PRAYER WORDS

My nonna was a serious Catholic. Until I was around thirteen years old I would stay at her house on weekends and during summer holidays. Every night before bed she would remind me to "Say a prayer for baby Jesus" (which I did, along with a long list of more practical people I thought I should pray for) and she

would regularly paraphrase sayings from God like, "God said, you can do whatever you want but not for as long as you want."

On Saturday mornings we would take a taxi downtown to the Eaton's department store where my nonna would have her hair done and I would wait. Afterwards we would walk across the street to the drug-store for the weekly *Soap Opera Digest* and to catch the Hudson 7 bus back to her house. On Sunday mornings we would go to mass at St. Anthony's



and many other publications. He lives in Vancouver.

Leah Abramson is a singer, songwriter, composer and multi-instrumentalist. Songs For a Lost Pod is her fourth album of original songs and her first comic book collaboration. She lives in Vancouver and at leahabramson.com.

Church. Sometimes the priest would be invited over to my nonna's house for dinner and my aunts and uncles would come.

This winter my nonna passed away and I was worried about making it back in time to say a eulogy before her funeral mass. In the fifteen years I've been travelling to and from Thunder Bay, I've learned the probability of being delayed by ice or snow storm is high (once, in the winter of 2009, I was delayed in Toronto for seven days and seven nights without my luggage

because of snow). But all of our praying must have gained some purchase because, although the Air Canada flight was still delayed, not a single snowflake fell in the five days between my arrival and departure.

BREAKING NEWS

Hope for spring's arrival came on March 19, when the US Coast Guard's *Alder* reached Thunder Bay as part of the annual ice-breaking operation on Lake Superior. Local papers reported

that the vessel had been expected earlier, on March 13, but was delayed due to heavy ice near Duluth, Minnesota. I was in Thunder Bay at that time. "Look." My aunt passed the binoculars. "Is the icebreaker still out there?" Looking out at Lake Superior from her kitchen window I saw in the distance that it was and as far as I could tell, it had a long way to go. But Thunder Bayers no longer have to wait for spring to see an icebreaker in their harbour. *Alexander Henry*, the retired icebreaker named after the Canadian fur trader, has returned to Port Arthur, where it was built in 1958, and may soon be open to the public. The city of Thunder Bay purchased *Alexander Henry* for either \$1 or \$2 from the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes in Kingston, Ontario, where the vessel had been moored from 1986, serving as a bed and breakfast and museum, advertised to "boat buffs" who for \$35 could "eat, breathe and sleep their passion aboard the 210-foot breaker." The Canadian Coast Guard currently has fifteen icebreakers in operation: *Louis S. St-Laurent*, *Terry Fox*, *Pierre Radisson*, *Amundsen*, *Des Groseilliers*, *Henry Larsen*, *Ann Harvey*, *Edward Cornwallis*, *Georges R. Pearkes*, *Griffon*, *Martha L. Black*, *Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, *Sir William Alexander*, *Earl Grey* and *Samuel Risley*. A sixteenth ship, the *John G. Dieffenbaker*, is scheduled to join the fleet sometime in the early 2020s.

A MATTER OF DEGREES

My nonna told me many times the story of when she immigrated to Thunder Bay from northern Italy with her seven children. She suffered two weeks by sea and another week by rail and when they got to Thunder Bay, in August 1957, it snowed. This was her way of reminding me that the winter I knew growing up could be worse. I looked up the Government of Canada's monthly data report for 1957. It didn't snow until October of that year, but the extreme minimum

temperature in August dropped to a low of 1.1 degrees Celsius. So it turns out her story wasn't that far off.

DEPARTURES

I was seventeen years old the first time I left Thunder Bay, for university in Ottawa. The second time I left I was twenty-four and it was for Vancouver or, as my father phrased it, for “some guy.” When he took me to the airport I promised him I wouldn't marry “the guy.” Then five years later we were married in Thunder Bay in Waverley Park, where my mother and father first met in 1971 when my mom was just fifteen and my dad sixteen. “Go west, young man” was a common expression among their generation, used to describe those leaving Ontario for the West Coast in search of work. In her mid-twenties my mom applied to be a flight attendant but realized after the interview that she wouldn't be able to live in a city as big as Toronto: the biggest city they had ever been to back then was Duluth, Minnesota, with a population of 100,000. Leaving home isn't one of the things that gets easier with practice, something that my nonna might have known because in the sixty-one years that she lived in Thunder Bay, she only went back to see her family in Italy once. It's always hard to leave your first home even if it's been fifteen years and even if it's winter and not just because you might be snowed in.

Jennesia Pedri is a contributing editor to Geist. She recently wrote and directed the short film The Alderson Murder, released in the fall of 2018. She lives in Coquitlam, BC. Read her book reviews at geist.com.

Working Life for a Girl in the 1960s

GALE SMALLWOOD-JONES

We got paid once a week in cash—it made you feel special the first few times

In 1966 I was a typist at Eaton's College Street in Toronto. My sister Stella did payroll at their downtown location. In those days, if there was no chance of getting a higher education, a girl was told she could be a teacher, a nurse or a typist. We chose the fastest road to a paycheque.

We worked a forty-hour week. It was heads down with little chit-chat among employees. We clocked in and out, lunch and breaks, with a punch card that determined your pay. If you were late to work twice you were fired. Short skirts or tight sweaters and you got sent home to change and then come straight back.

I scrolled through microfiche when customers claimed a return but had no receipt. People tried to shaft the company so I had to find those bills. My eyes burned out on this machine. We got paid once a week, cash in a small brown envelope. The envelope was always crisp and clean, just like the dough inside. It made you feel special the first few times you held it.

We cleared \$38 a week, after tax. Stella and I lived in a tiny room with single beds that sagged badly. There was the smell of bug repellent but we never pinned the source. This was in a rooming house on St. George Street, sharing a kitchen and bath with seven guys who stole our food and toothpaste, so after a while we kept that stuff in our room. The men

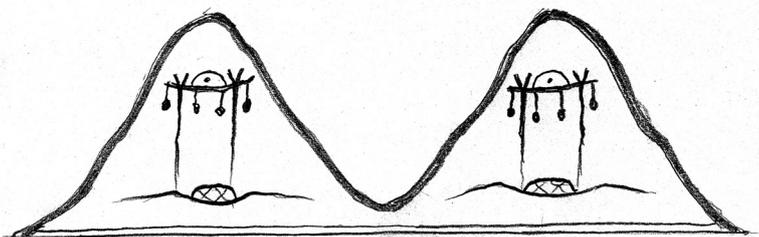
were ghosts who drifted, apparently without work.

Our landlord was well-worn and had a trick eye; he didn't trust single girls and told us, “I don't have no truck with any Villagers, so don't even think about it.” We didn't know what he meant by that but his tone was ominous so we held our tongues.

We paid \$12.50 a week each for the rent so this left \$25.50 for everything else: food, makeup, streetcar tickets, clothes, medicines, birthdays, Bell telephone and entertainment. We never had the dollar cover to get into the clubs in Yorkville but the doorman accepted kisses at Chez Monique, so we were able to catch John Kay and the Sparrow and David Clayton Thomas and Rick James fronting the Mynah Birds. Between sets we'd hang out front of El Patio, catching riffs from the Paupers or near the Purple Onion to hear Luke and the Apostles pound out their tunes.

We stared at the clothes in Eaton's and dreamt of the day we could afford store-bought dresses. Instead, we took patterns plus three-yards-for-a-dollar cotton home to Mom on weekends. She continued to sew our clothing until we married a few years later. We also bought old men's pants from the Salvation Army and cut and stitched them to fit us; the boys in the bands would ask us where we got them when we copied styles from Carnaby Street we had found in magazines.

A huge bran muffin cost fifteen cents at the Woman's Bakery. For supper we would clean out a can of sardines. Bread pretty well got us by for a number of years as it was cheap and easy. We bought Red River cereal and milk. We only knew how to fry eggs and ate Gay Lee yogurt when



word came down the pike that it contained vitamins.

On weekends we hiked the mile down Spadina Avenue to Kensington Market, then still known as the Jewish Market, and bought giant butter tarts from Lottman's Bakery from the half-price tray. At Moishe's Delicatessen you could get a large bowl of borscht for a dollar and it came with two slices of fresh rye bread. One time we were so hungry that I went to the Scott Mission just below College Street. (Stella didn't want to be seen with the homeless but I didn't know the meaning of the word pride.) I can still recall what my bag was filled with—a frozen fish with a broken tail covered in ice, a box of Tang, plus dented cans of broad beans. The bag I brought home for Stella had horse meat but it was rotten.

One day I asked my boss why girls were paid such a pittance and he said, with a surprised look, "Women don't need to earn money; they have husbands. That is why we only pay them pin money." Pin money. I was too embarrassed to ask him what he meant.

Google says: "Originally a small allowance given to a woman in order to purchase clothes etc. for herself. More recently it is used to describe any small amount of money which might be earned by children or the low-paid for some service."

"Lay-by" was what we knew if you needed a coat, bed, lamp or chair. When Stella and I moved into the brownstone on Avenue Road we rented our furniture by the month. Winter clothing was an expensive necessity; you worried yourself sick that you would not have enough cash for the birth control pills. You wore your shoes 'til the soles were flapping.

After work we hung out and listened to great thumping live rock, soul, and rhythm and blues filling the air from club doors up and down Cumberland, Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue.

When Stella and I switched to working at Bell Telephone our salary skyrocketed to \$80 a week. We could have rented a small apartment. But I wanted to travel to England and find the Rolling Stones (which I later did, just down the road from my rooming house in Chelsea) so I saved every dollar, making weekly payments for the one-way ticket by ship to England in the spring of 1967.

In London, I worked at Harrod's Department store and was told to enter "underground, at the back, through the horse stables" so the customers would not see me. The pay in London was a shock; seven pounds a week and it also came in a brown envelope. My shared room cost three pounds and I had Tube fares and food to buy. I was back on the treadmill only this time going faster than before. Workers got luncheon vouchers which kept us alive. For my year in London I lived on bread and rice. A man bought me a lager at the Six Bells pub and I felt like a queen.

I went to Biba Boutique on Kensington High Street and ogled the wonderful clothes, mesmerized by the sight of young people with money parading up and down in trendy gear. It remained a mystery to me as to how they could buy this stuff. The pop stars walked around Chelsea and nobody molested them. Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones would pull up to the Chelsea Potter pub in his Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud and order a hamburger through the window and everyone pretended not to notice. I ran into him one day at the Battersea Fun Fair dressed in his Satanic Majesties costume and he seemed like a ghost of a man.

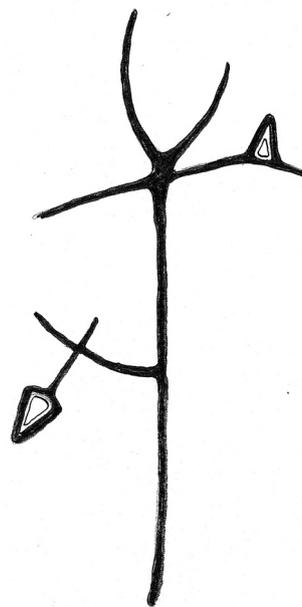
I grabbed the chance for a free trip to Spain to work at the first all-inclusive resort for the English. The boss sized us up and chose the seven girls with the strongest legs. We were paid seven dollars a week plus room and meals to work sixteen-hour days, seven days a week. We watched the

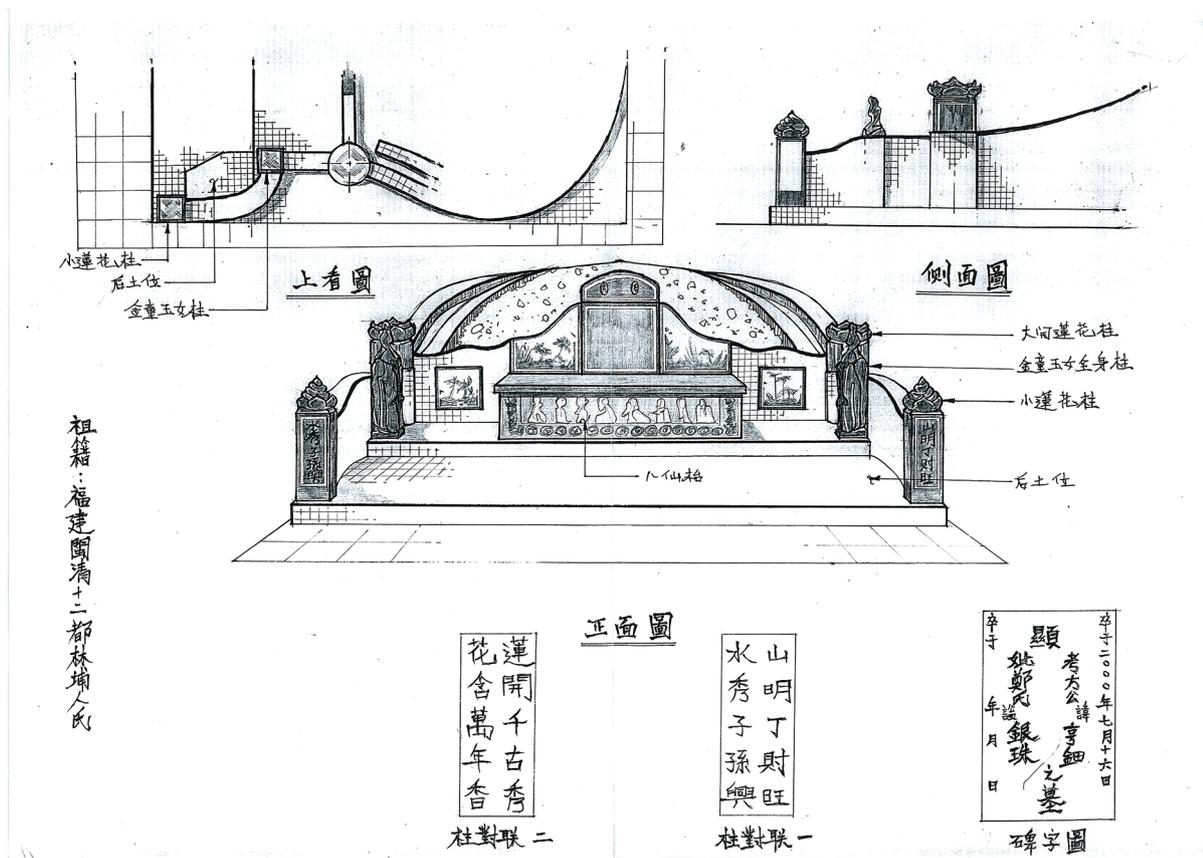
English working class practise free love and drink 'til they vomited. We heard the Guardia Civil would beat you for holding a boy's hand in public.

We ended each night in bars soaking up rum and erupting into existential chatter. My co-worker hid and fed her Spanish boyfriend. He derided the young, wasted English boys and they in turn denounced his culture. Then they would slug back more Cuba Libres, slap each other on the back and debate 'til the small hours which was superior: American blues or English rock? It cannot be over-emphasized how much the music of those times was our passion, our focus and obsession.

We thought that life could never get any better than this.

Gale Smallwood-Jones has written for the Toronto Telegram, Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, Toronto Sun, National Post, NOW and various international magazines. She has edited many books, including The Sixpenny Soldier, winner of the Best Book of the Year in Australia in 1990. She lives in Toronto.





49 Days to the Afterlife

JOCELYN KUANG

Rice, tea and a trillion dollars of spirit money

A few months ago my close friend Brandyn invited me to his father's funeral service. I had never attended a North American funeral and had no idea what to expect or what was customary. I wasn't sure if I should take flowers or food, as I had seen done on television. The only funeral I had ever attended was my paternal granddad's, when I was eleven years old. Our family had travelled to the coastal town of Kuala Belait, Brunei, where my dad grew up; the funeral was Chinese—because that side of the family originally came from Fuzhou, in China—and Buddhist—because that's what my granddad had asked for before he died.

My aunts and uncles in Brunei had started the funeral preparations as soon as my granddad passed away. The casket was kept in a big open

area on the ground floor under my grandparents' home, which rested on pilings. The casket was open and was covered by a glass panel to protect the body from animals. A cup of tea was placed near the casket, as well as a bowl of rice with chopsticks stuck vertically in the rice. (When I was a little kid I had been scolded for doing the same thing with my chopsticks, and now I understood why—it signified the death of someone in the family.) A bowl of rice with chopsticks placed upright is offered to nourish the deceased through their journey to the afterlife, which starts as soon as the person dies and lasts forty-nine days, in seven stages of seven days. During these forty-nine days, there are to be no bright colours or flowers near the grieving family.

My aunts and uncles cut holes

in the pockets of all my granddad's pants and shirts to prevent him from taking his money to the afterlife so his fortune would be left in the living world for his family. Then they began to burn joss paper, sheets of paper known as "ghost" or "spirit" money. Joss paper is burned in order to provide money to the deceased in the afterlife—the more paper burned, the more money my granddad would receive. He would use the money to buy food and goods and to exist comfortably in the afterlife by making a good impression among other ghosts, and to ensure a smooth journey, "like paying tolls," my dad told me.

Joss paper comes in various forms. Traditional joss paper is made of bamboo, decorated with a gold or silver foil square. Fancier versions are available, branded as "Hell Bank

Notes” from the “Bank of Heaven and Earth,” in denominations of 50,000,000 dollars. Some versions are designed to resemble currency from this world, such as Chinese yuan and US dollars, and denominations range from 10,000 to 1,000,000,000 dollars. The only way to move objects from the living world to the afterlife is to burn them. Nowadays it’s become popular to make houses, cars and mobile phones out of joss paper to burn so the deceased will have these goods in the afterlife.

My uncle built a fire in a large tin cylinder near the casket, and the family gathered and started burning the joss paper. The fire had to burn continuously until my granddad’s burial. Two days after my aunts and uncles started burning joss paper, the last of their siblings arrived. Only when all close family members were present could we call the cemetery to make arrangements for burial.

After two more days of burning joss paper, we put out the fire because it was time to head to the cemetery. Six men from the local funeral committee showed up at the house and carried the casket out into the back of a stake truck (a truck with a fence around the open bed). Then my father and his siblings climbed up into the truck bed and sat down around the casket; the custom is to kneel, but for safety reasons they sat. The in-laws climbed into the truck next. The rest of us got into a car. (No immediate family members older than the deceased are allowed to attend the burial.) The truck with my granddad’s body left first, as was customary. We drove his body around town one last time, then headed to the cemetery.

At the burial, no tombstone is placed and no decorations are allowed at the gravesite to let the deceased rest in peace; it is customary to wait one hundred days before building a permanent, well-decorated tomb. My granddad’s tomb was designed by my dad during our visit and built later

that fall. It was decorated with images of the classic Chinese Eight Immortals, for protection; two children, a boy and a girl, for innocence; the ground god, who allows for the building of tombstones on the ground; and lotus flowers, because my dad thought they would look nice.

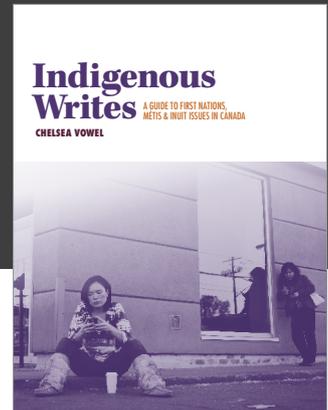
The cemetery is where bad spirits hang around and the fear is that they might hitch a ride out of the cemetery with mourners or visitors and follow them home. So after the burial, to keep the bad spirits from entering our relatives’ home, we lit a small fire in a tin at the gate of the house and one by one we jumped over the fire onto the grounds of the home. Once inside, we soaked pomelo leaves in a washtub full of water and then took turns pouring the pomelo water over our bodies, one at a time, cleansing our souls and bodies. First went the elders, then my dad and his siblings, then family members with the surname of my granddad and, finally, other family members.

Once the body was buried, the first stage of the journey was complete. My dad, mom, sisters and I flew back to Canada, while my aunts and uncles continued to help my granddad through the six remaining stages in his journey to the afterlife. Every seven days, starting from the day my granddad passed away, they bought and burned more joss paper at the house.

Brandyn’s dad’s funeral service, which was non-religious, was held in a room at a golf club in Surrey. Family and friends talked into a microphone, sharing their memories of his dad’s life. At one point a slide show was played. Before going to the service, I had asked my housemate if it was customary to take anything along. She told me it wasn’t, so I just showed up.

Jocelyn Kuang is the operations manager at Geist. She lives in Vancouver. Read more of her work at geist.com.

National Bestseller



Indigenous Writes A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada

By Chelsea Vowel

978-1-55379-680-0

This is medicine.

—Shelagh Rogers

*A must read
for engaging
with reconciliation.*

—Tracey Lindberg

**HIGHWATER
PRESS**

www.highwaterpress.com

Contact No Contact

The term “contact” is used to describe initial encounters between Indigenous peoples and European explorers, and it carries a special charge in accounts of North American history.

The stories here are a selection from the project Contact No Contact, a gathering of personal narratives by Indigenous and settler contributors describing significant first contacts that brought new insights. These stories are a living (and growing) record that enhances our understanding of the experience and impact of “contact.”

For more stories and information about the project visit contact-nocontact.ca

When I Was a Child, Everyone I Knew Spoke Cree

DUNCAN MERCREDI

I grew up in Misipawistik (Grand Rapids, Manitoba), an Inninew village of about four hundred people. The village was divided in two by the Saskatchewan River, the reserve was on the south bank and the Métis community was on the north side. But at that time, we never identified as status, non-status or Métis. We were Inninew, Cree-speaking people. Our language identified us.

In all the time I spent with my nookum (grandmother), I never once heard her say a word in English. People who dropped in to see her spoke to her in Cree. She would not acknowledge a visitor if the person didn't speak Cree to her. That was how she was: her home, her terms, her language.

There were two families in our village that were Caucasian: the store owners. In those families there were three boys, blond as blond could be, and they spent as much time with us as they did at home. They all spoke Inninew, Cree, with us. To us, their friends, they were just a whiter shade of Inninew.

We never knew that outside of our isolated village we were different, until Manitoba Hydro arrived to build the Grand Rapids Generating

Station. Manitoba Hydro created a tiered system in which they were on top, the workers they brought in were second, the Métis third and at the bottom were status and non-status people. The dam flooded more than 200,000 hectares of our land. Worst of all, we nearly lost our identity, our language.

Two Solitudes

MAŁGORZATA NOWACZYK

Soon after I moved from Poland to Canada, I was sent to the Sioux Lookout Zone Hospital as part of my pediatrics training. In the bare white examining room I explained to an Indigenous couple that we needed to catheterize their daughter's bladder. She had had several infections and just finished a long course of antibiotics. “We need urine straight from her bladder to make sure that all the bacteria are killed in there,” I said. The father left the room after I had finished describing the procedure; I assumed that he meant to give his daughter privacy. His wife stayed behind and, as I retrieved the sterile medical tray from the cupboard, she stroked the girl's long hair. I covered the girl with a white linen sheet. Her brown eyes stared up at me. “It doesn't hurt,” I said and patted her leg. I washed her hairless perineum with a brown iodine solution and spread a blue sterile paper towel over her

lower belly. I scrubbed my hands and just as I was to insert the lubricated catheter into the tiny pink shell of her urethra, the door slammed open and the husband barged through.

“Did I tell you that you could do it?” he snapped.

He hadn't. But he didn't tell me that I couldn't either.

“This is my little girl,” he said, pulling up her panties and yanking down her skirt. He scooped her into his arms. “You violated her. Who do you think you are?”

I thought I was a doctor. I was performing a medically necessary procedure indicated under the circumstances. But something seemed to have gone wrong and she now was not going to get it.

Neither before nor during my rotation did anybody teach me how to talk and listen to First Nations peoples. I was an immigrant to Canada, figuring out the vocabulary of body language and in-jokes and the social niceties in which Canadians engaged as part of their verbal exchanges, my own attempts at banter flailing and failing.

It was 1994 and I had no idea about the abuse that Indigenous children had suffered at the hands of government doctors and nurses for generations. As a medical student and resident in downtown Toronto hospitals, I had met homeless and indigent First Nations patients, but

knew nothing about the root causes. In medical school, an Asian professor had delivered a lecture on Chinese folk medicines, but the only teaching on Canadian First Nations was given in passing: Indigenous people were taciturn and had a high level of tolerance for physical pain, make sure to account for that during physical examinations.

Later that day, my supervisor warned me against interpreting silence as assent, to always obtain verbal acknowledgement for any procedures. “They don’t talk unless you ask a direct question,” he said. As I was leaving, contrite and chastised, he attributed the father’s behaviour to “troubles with the band council,” and advised me to take it easy.

Social Studies

RANDY FRED

My first contact with white kids was in grade seven, when kids from the residential school were bussed into town so we could go to a “public” school. We didn’t want to be there, and it was pretty clear that the white kids didn’t want us to be there either. Social studies was the worst class, because Indians were sometimes the subject. I didn’t know who the Iroquois were, or who the Hurons were (no other Indians were mentioned in those classes), but I knew they were Indians, and so was I.

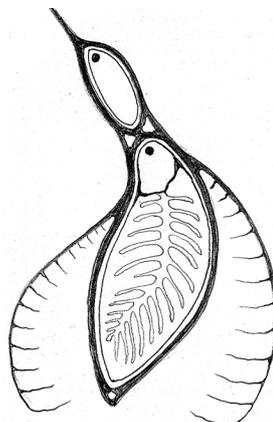
Snapshot

STEVEN HEIGHTON

Ironically, I owe the moment of contact and the memory of it to ethnic intolerance. That’s what drove my Greek mother to flee her community, elope with my non-Greek father and hide out in a small mining town in the heart of Ojibwe country—northwestern Ontario. There my father found an entry-level job as a teacher. He also got to know the Ojibwe artist Norval

Morrisseau, who at the time was painting huge canvases on butcher paper in brooding, dark colours.

So my father’s “first contact” story, featuring a difficult, brilliant, aesthetically germinal figure, is surely more interesting than mine. My story is a mere snapshot—though unlike most old photos it’s not faded and discoloured. It’s brilliantly lit up by what must be a spring sun, May or June, the day warm and windy. I’m five years old. Kindergarten has let out. A girl and I are walking along holding hands. Her hand is brown. The memory includes the knowledge—possibly layered onto it after the fact—that the town has fallen behind us and I’m in an unfamiliar place, approaching a red tarpaper bungalow among birch trees. Quivering leaves cast dense, animate shadows. A lake shimmers behind the house. The girl’s mother is hanging white sheets (maybe shirts?) on a line that runs from the side of the house to a tree. She’s smiling broadly as we approach. And that’s it. The whole memory. I struggle to let more light into the moment—to push the recall both backward and forward. A meeting in the schoolyard before we walk to her house? Playing by the lake afterward, or having a snack in the kitchen? Later days when we did the same things? I’m left not with a story but a fragment, which for some reason I’ve retained, vividly, while forgetting almost every other moment I experienced up north.



Images on preceding pages from Pictographs by James Simon Mishbinijima. Published by The Porcupine’s Quill in 2017. Mishbinijima has created a unique body of work over the past four decades and established a loyal following in North America and overseas.

FINDINGS



Composition (Mother and Child), 2006. From *Annie Pootoogook: Cutting Ice* by Nancy Campbell. Published by Goose Lane in 2018. Annie Pootoogook was an Inuk artist known for her pen and coloured pencil drawings. She won the Sobey Art Award in 2006. Nancy Campbell is a curator of contemporary Inuit art. She has a doctorate from York University.

English for Foreigners

NORMAN LEVINE

From *I Don't Want to Know Anyone Too Well*. Published by Biblioasis in 2017. Norman Levine is the author of eight short story collections, two novels and a memoir. He was raised in Ottawa, served overseas in RCAF during World War II and attended McGill University. He died in 2005.

The classrooms were above an optician, by a seedy restaurant, overlooking a large, bare cathedral. When I started, at the beginning of May, the season had not begun. I had eight pupils, the intermediates. If anyone could carry on a few sentences

in broken English he left the beginners—which was crowded—and stayed in the intermediates until there was room for him in the senior class. Each class consisted of a small room with tables pushed together in the shape of a horseshoe. I sat behind a

desk, at the open end of the horseshoe, by a portable blackboard. The windows had to be closed because of the traffic noise. On a warm or a rainy day, the room was stifling.

On the first day I wondered whether my Canadian accent would matter. “Ladies and gentlemen. I’m your new teacher. I’m a Canadian. And the kind of English I speak is not the kind that Englishmen speak. So if you have any trouble understanding what I say—” But I was interrupted by an Italian girl who beamed and said how clear my diction was. And they all said they understood me and complimented me on



Watching Hunting Shows, 2004

how clearly I spoke. I was getting to feel quite good. But I found out, on the second day, that the Englishman I replaced had a speech impediment. He left without saying goodbye. That was one of the occupational hazards. One was hired without references and left the same way.

Teaching consisted mainly in giving them new words, correcting their pronunciation, dictating to them small pieces of anything I happened to see while looking out of the window. And reading excerpts from Conrad. Or else we played games. I would borrow one of their watches with a sweep second-hand and say: “Miss Laroque. You are walking in Brighton from the Steine to the West Pier. Tell me, in one minute, all the words beginning with the letter “M” that you would see. *Now.*”

“Mouse . . . Mutton . . . Murder . . . Mister . . . Missus . . . Miss . . .”

“Sir. That’s not fair.”

“Six, Miss Laroque,” I said. “Twenty-five seconds to go.”

“Mimosa . . . Macaroni . . . Man . . .”

They were mainly young girls. Some were there for business reasons: to be a receptionist in their father’s hotel; another was going to be an air-hostess;

another to work in an export office. But the majority were there for a holiday.

I had been there three weeks when Mrs. Siemens came in. The age of the students didn’t vary a great deal; they were in their teens or early twenties. But Mrs. Siemens, a handsome-looking woman, with grey hair combed neatly back in a bun, and very light-blue eyes, was in her seventies. The immediate reaction to her presence was to subdue everyone. And we got a lot more done. She sat halfway up the left of the horseshoe, listening to what I was saying. Sometimes she took out a handkerchief and wiped her eyes. I took it that she had some allergy. When it was her turn to read, she read softly and very slow, and apologized at the end for not doing better.

At eleven we had a ten-minute break. The teachers would go into the office and have coffee. The students would either go to a small cafe nearby or stay in the room, open the windows, lean out, and smoke. One morning I came back early and a new student, a Mexican, offered me a cigarette.

“Sir. You like Turkish?”

I said I did.

Two weeks later, on a Friday, Mrs.

Siemens came up to me.

“Thank you very much,” she said graciously. “This morning was my last lesson. I enjoyed myself very much. I have a small present for you.”

We shook hands. And I went down the stairs holding my books and this package carefully wrapped in white paper with a neat red ribbon.

In the office I unwrapped it. It was a large package of Turkish cigarettes. I was deeply touched. None of the others had bothered to say more than “good-bye.” Perhaps, I thought, it’s just old age that feels it has to pay for even the briefest encounter.

I asked the secretary in the office about Mrs. Siemens. She said that Mrs. Siemens was a widow. That she was part of *the* Siemens, in Germany. They were extremely wealthy. Her son had died and the doctors advised her to get away and do something to take her mind off things.

And as the secretary was talking I remembered that the words I introduced to the class during her stay—the passages I chose to read or dictate—for some reason kept harping on some aspect of death: on cemeteries, grave-stones, funerals, coffins.

But this was Friday and there was little food in the house and I knew that I would have to walk back the three miles. If I had breakfast that morning, I didn’t mind the walk. After Preston Circus it was very pleasant. There were the small gardens, each one with the name of an English city and with a single stalk of corn growing incongruously in their middles.

I went into a large tobacconist and told the girl behind the counter that I had bought this package of Turkish cigarettes for a friend as a gift, and I found out that he doesn’t smoke. The girl examined the box closely. Finally gave me fourteen shillings.

I went out and bought half a dozen eggs, a tin of luncheon meat, a loaf of bread, some sugar, tea, cheese, a newspaper, and took the bus back.

But that afternoon—though I watched my wife and children eat—I felt I had betrayed something. ☹

Detroit Zoo Bathroom 1977

MICHELINE MAYLOR

From Little Wildheart. Published by University of Alberta Press in 2017.

Micheline Maylor is Calgary's Poet Laureate and a professor at Mount Royal University. She has written for the Literary Review of Canada and Quill & Quire. She lives in Calgary.

"Hey Nigger, Where'd you get that kid?"

Pale as an anaemic and holding hands with a goddess,
I learned the word racist in the grip of my grandmother.
Bronzed Queen of the Huron, mixed-breed, multi-lingual,
lady of St. Clair lake, she tanned dark as curses.
Me, bleached to blend in Prairie snow, white as a winter hare,
hadn't yet moulted into my golden summer skin. Photoperiodism
not yet complete. Call it too much Anglo-breeding
with fair-haired men. Call it what you will,
call it nights in my teenage years
asking my brown eyes and black hair: why?
Only one Mattel Barbie coloured like me, unglamorously named Skipper.
Skip her. Where is my blonde hair, my Sun-In, my glacial eyes?
I check the box on the government forms: Caucasian. No box
for colonized, for the 1/16th bred. Just the double helix of my DNA,
my ability to sun-brown, and my own green-eyed children
of the voyageur, river visions still caught in their irises.
We're born out of a long ago season.
Everyone is sure of place and race. Blood and semen
mixed in dirt and cervix, convex and enchanted by muskrat's eerie smile,
dark truth furred and matted, stroked by a river paddle.
Let that long tooth bite now in the land of the race riots,
negro, and redskin, the underground railroad,
and the Indian village.
Let the name Pontiac take new form and hit the road,
the righteous mile where judgement and boundary blurs,
especially on matters of composition
blood, bone, and relations. 🐾

OVERUSED WORD ALERT ►

"Problematic"

THE PROBLEM WITH 'PROBLEMATIC': The blanket word is problematic: such and such a character or situation is problematic. BTC GOLD LAUNCH IS ERRATIC & PROBLEMATIC, LEAVES COMMUNITY FRUSTRATED: Bitcoin

My Sisters and I

NORMA DUNNING

From Annie Muktuk and Other Stories. Published by the University of Alberta Press. Norma Dunning is an Inuit writer, scholar and researcher. She lives in Edmonton.

I never get to see the rest of that day. It happened. I remember it still as I sit here in this place. This place filled with rules. The white people call it a school. My father said we had to come here. All three of us. Why? That's the part I never understand, why he sent us away from him. This place is different. We sleep off the ground. We have all been given strange names. Names that make no sense. Names that make me feel different. I don't know who I am anymore.

They speak French and English here. I don't know what French is. I only nod when I am asked something. Puhuliak is now called Suzanne. Hikwa is Margarite. I am Therese. Once we were, Puhuliak, Hikwa and Angavidiak. Now we are these other girls.

The women here wear long robes

made of light cloth. Qallunaaqtaq. They make us wear the same thing, only our robes are short. They put cold, hard coverings on our feet and tell us they are "shoes." We drink water from under the ground, filled in a brown wooden circle. We sit at a table, in chairs that hurt my back. The food is white like these people. It's like filling your mouth with clouds. Swallowing quickly means I can leave the table sooner.

What is hardest is that I can't talk to my sisters unless I speak in French or English. If the long robes hear me speak to them the way I always did, they beat me with a strip of hide. Papa did that to the dogs when they were bad. Hitting them with tigaut, the hardest part of any whip. Sometimes they will reach into our mouths

and pull hard on our tongues. It is their way of telling us not to talk our language.

That hurts. Everything here hurts. We have to live our days the way they want us to. We don't go outside. I watch the world from inside at my school desk and remember what it was like to live with my mothers and father. I remember the smell of air that was a part of my every breath. I remember eating when I was hungry not when a clock told me to. I remember playing the string game with my sisters whenever I wanted to. No one ever told me that a round, black dial was my avasirngulik. My elder would not act like that thing.

That's a new word for me, "time." In this place everyone is on time. At home the sky told us what to do and when. I nod and try to do what they say. Sometimes they smile but most times they frown. I talk with my eyes. They talk with their lips.

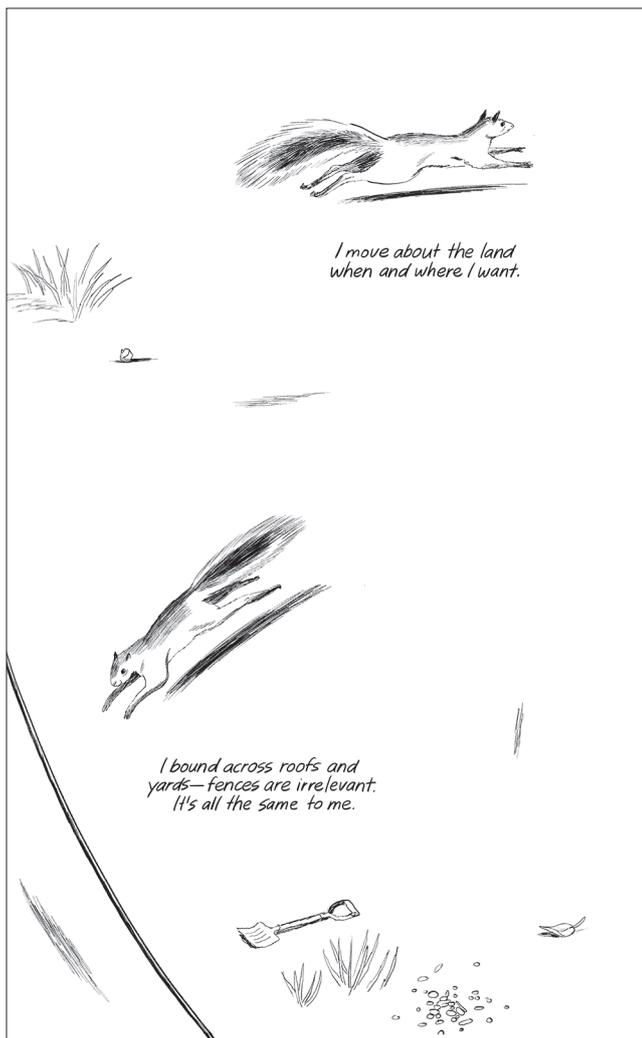
I am not allowed to sleep by my sisters. We have to stay off the ground on separate wooden frames. None of this makes sense in my head. I look forward to each night to dream of what I miss. Dreaming of what I knew best, of what was only mine. I smell the caribou and feel its soft skin around my shoulders. I see my mothers smiling at me at night. I long for them. Their crinkling eyes. Their fingertips tenderly tickling on my shoulders. I even long for him. My father. The man who sent us to this place.

Suzanne whispers to me often that if we are good we will leave. We will go home. Every day she tells me these same words, "Be good. Nod your head. We will go home. Upaluaqpuq, obey well." Every day it doesn't happen but I do what Suzanne says. She's the oldest. She knows best. Margarite is different. She doesn't nod her head. She sticks out her tongue when the long robes aren't watching. She makes her eyes wide and points her finger pretending



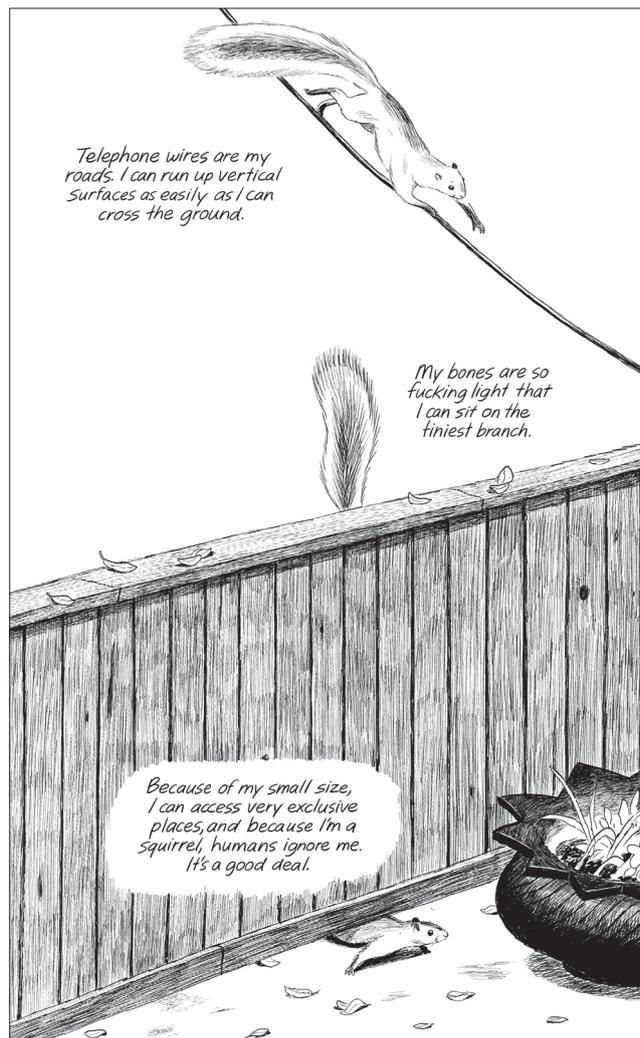
Ritz Crackers, 2004

Gold has been a very controversial project from day one. THE PROBLEMATIC DELI AND 'HIDDEN' BAR OF SEATTLE'S NEW BY THE POUND: Capitol Hill's new By the Pound is a deli that's also getting in on the very long tail end (if it's even still there) of the "speakeasy" trend. THE RETURN OF DR. DISRESPECT IS JOYOUS FOR SOME BUT



*I move about the land
when and where I want.*

*I bound across roofs and
yards—fences are irrelevant.
It's all the same to me.*



*Telephone wires are my
roads. I can run up vertical
surfaces as easily as I can
cross the ground.*

*My bones are so
fucking light that
I can sit on the
tiniest branch.*

*Because of my small size,
I can access very exclusive
places, and because I'm a
squirrel, humans ignore me.
It's a good deal.*

From Boundless. Published by Drawn & Quarterly in 2017. Jillian Tamaki is a cartoonist and illustrator. She is the co-creator, with Mariko Tamaki, of the graphic novel, This One Summer, which won a Governor General's Award and a Caldecott Medal. She lives in Toronto, ON.

to be like them. She folds her hands together and looks to the ground while she walks behind them. Wiggling her behind in wide, long circles.

I am the one who gets caught. I am the one who gets the strip of hard hide across my hands when I laugh at what my sister is doing. I get put into a bare room. It's cold and dark and smells like rotten willows. I have to stay there for a long time some days. I can hear the food people when I am there. I can hear the banging of pots and pans. I tap my fingers to their beat and whisper a throat song, "Aii, Aii, Aii, yah,

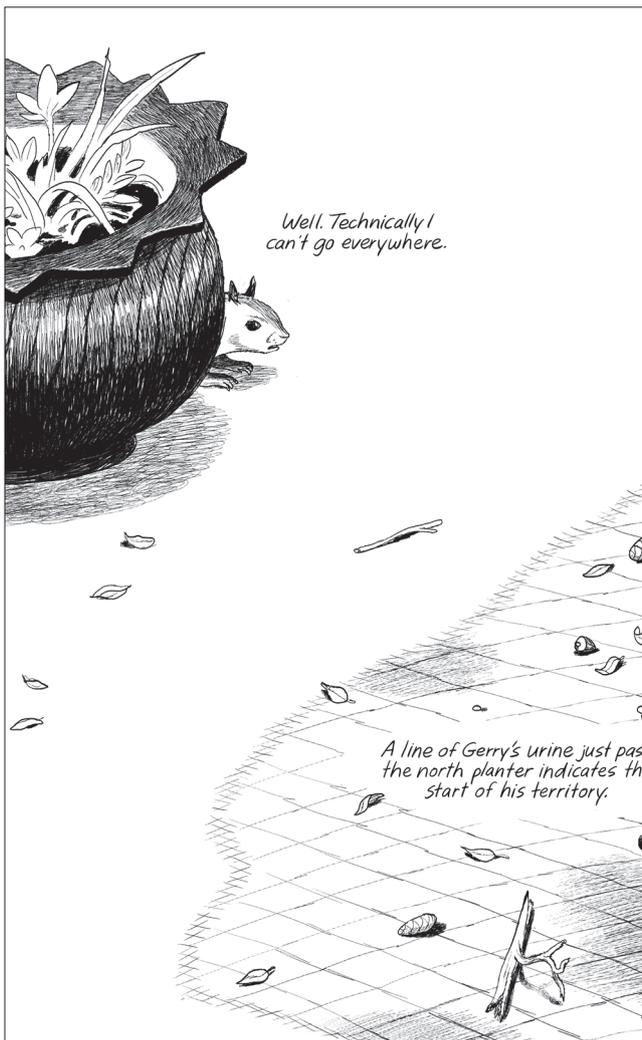
yah, yah..." It brings me to home for a short time. Margarite has been put into this dark room too, she likes it though. She says she sees home. She talks like Igjugarjuk, the angakkug who sees visions. When we can sneak our time together she tells me she saw what our mothers and father were doing. She tells me their conversations and how they miss us too.

One day Margarite and I hide under some stairs at the back of the school and she tells me everything she sees. She makes me remember what we were and tells me what we will be.

She says that soon we will fly home. She says that we are like the sisters of Kadlu, the three of us. We will get home. Our parents really didn't lock us out like Kadlu's parents did. Margarite is like Tootega for me. She is wisest and I believe she can walk on the water. I am in the middle of the sisters. I have to listen to both of them. I try my best to be what the robes want us to be too. It's hard. Very hard.

There are many robes here. Some are men and some are women. We never see the hair of the women. I would like to know what is underneath

PROBLEMATIC FOR OTHERS: Dr. Disrespect infamously admitted to being unfaithful to his wife, live on streaming, during a broadcast on December 14th, 2017. 11 SIGNS THESE FAMOUS MEN WERE PROBLEMATIC BEFORE #METOO: When someone shows you who they are, believe them. PROBLEMATIC WOMEN: SHOULD GUN RIGHTS



what the clock wants. She tells me that the clock is really their God. She makes funny sounds, mixing tick-tock noises with the songs our mothers taught us. It makes me giggle and Margarite even makes this clock song when we are in the classroom.

Then the robes pull her hair tightly and she kicks and laughs as they lift her from her desk with one fist full of the hair from the top of her head. Margarite calls them names we would never speak out loud at home. Holding her up above the floor they spin her around. Her hair twists and twists but she never screams. Her red face sings our throat songs from home while they curse her for breaking their white taboo. They tell her that she is going to go to the place of fire. They take her from the classroom and put her into the room stinking of dead willows. I get jealous. She is going home again for today. I have to stay in this room and learn to write with a wooden twig. I have to learn about numbers and small words. I want to go home with Margarite. She will fly away from the stinky room. She will see and hear what I can't. I wish I was with her just for today.

Suzanne is the opposite. She sits straight. She learns how to move the twig across the yellow empty paper. The robes like her best. They tell her that she is going to go far in this place. But where is there to go? There are three floors. There is nowhere else to go to. Suzanne doesn't understand. She says if we do as we are told we will get to go home. I keep my head down, my eyes to the floor and I remember the day of Margarite and I hearing the geese fly to us. It makes me feel good. I never look at the robes unless they pull my chin up towards them. I don't want to see them with their clear round glass shaped eyes. I don't want to know about them. 🍄

their coverings. They each wear long beads with a cross on their necks. Their leader wears the biggest cross. Some of them have round see-through circles in front of their eyes. Their eyes make me think of Issitoq, the flying giant eye who has the right to punish me. I fear those man robes more than the others. They are the ones who will punish me most. The men in robes all have beards. They talk in quiet, deep voices and ask about us three. It is as if we are too different from the rest. We are never supposed to be together. We are never supposed

to sit together for meals or sleep near each other. The robes say this is for the best. This is the way we will learn to be something that will make us better than what we started out being. They tell us about this God and how he is watching over us. They tell us if we don't behave we will be covered in fire. Their stories make me tremble. Suzanne tells me that we have to respect their stories. We have to listen to what they tell us. She is oldest and wisest. I try to obey her.

Margarite laughs at their stories. She thinks they are funny and tells me that they are only trying to make us do

First Contact

MUNIRAH MACLEAN

From The Muslimah Who Fell to Earth. Published by Mawenzi House in 2016. Munirah Maclean studied comparative religion, philosophy and education in London, England. She moved to Canada in 1985. She runs a daycare and conducts mindfulness workshops.

This story begins at Mirabel Airport, a lofty, light-filled white albatross of a place in the middle of snowy, white fields not too far from Montreal.

I arrive. I get to Customs; I'm a small white British girl wearing a grey duffle coat with a Turkish kerchief on her head. My passport is stamped

full: Europe, Turkey, Cyprus, India, Syria, Greece, and Bulgaria but (oops) I don't have a visa for Canada. I didn't have enough time on my last visit to England to get one. So I make duas. I learned the fatiha and several of the short surahs from the wife of Sheikh Nazim, Hajja Amina Hatun (May Allah sanctify her). I have been a Muslim

for six months, I took Shahada and a pledge of allegiance to my sheikh of the Naqshbandi tariqat and got married all on the same day. I don't have a marriage certificate because I had a Turkish Sufi wedding in a mosque in Nicosia, Cyprus which wasn't even recognized as a state at that time.

"Hmm," says the official. "Bonjour," I say with a bright smile, then more duas and fatihas under my breath. I have come in on a one-way ticket. Naïvely, I tell him the truth. My Canadian-born husband of three months is on the other side of the gate waiting for me. The official sighs. "I'm not going to stamp your passport, you have to go to the British Consulate downtown right away." Alhumdu-lillah! Thank you Allah! I have never heard of anyone getting through international customs without a passport stamp before or since.

I'm through! Welcome to Canada! Big Sky! Ibrahim is gorgeous! He is wearing a big fur hat and has a bushy Naqshbandi beard and warm brown eyes. He looks like a teddy bear. And on the subject of bears... yes, there is snow but I don't see any polar bears out of the car window on the drive to Parc Extension. I meet Davy, my new father-in-law who has come along to collect his son's newest bride. His car has a hole in the floor, but I don't find that unusual because in Margaret Thatcher's Britain, where I have come from, you are rich if you have a car at all. "All the other Jews have Cadillacs," he tells me earnestly, "but I was just a cutter so I worked for the money." Davy is gentle and humble but confused about his eldest son, who went to Jerusalem and returned a Sufi. After we arrive at the family duplex I meet Sylvia, my mother-in-law. She is wearing a coral pink velvet jogging suit and has come home from her second job. She doesn't like to sit still,

HATE: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

The table of contents from The Opposite of Hate by Sally Kohn. Published by Algonquin Books in 2018.

INTRODUCTION

What Is Hate | *The Bully*

ONE

Why We Hate | *The Trolls*

TWO

How We Hate | *The Former Terrorist*

THREE

Hating Is Belonging | *The Ex-White Supremacist*

FOUR

Unconscious Hate | *The Trump Supporter*

FIVE

When Hate Becomes Pandemic | *The Genocide*

SIX

Systems Hate | *The Big Picture*

CONCLUSION

The Journey Forward 🌱

that sexist men feel threatened by women no matter how much they deny it. MCWILLIAMS: IN LITERATURE, IT IS PROBLEMATIC TO HAVE SEXUALITY AS A MAIN IDENTITY: In 2007, JK Rowling revealed that Albus Dumbledore, Harry's mentor, was gay and was in love with the new franchise villain Grindelwald. A FEMINIST'S GUIDE TO

she thinks it's lazy. She is, I realize, a clever woman with strong opinions about almost everything. She confides, "I liked the first one, her father had a shopping mall, the second one was a Quebecker, she only liked her own people." She is reserving judgment on me, the third wife in five years, the new one. I keep my thoughts to myself. With Allah's grace a miracle takes place, we become friends and my husband's family becomes my Canadian family for which I am forever grateful. Disparate elements, different worlds, but through the wisdom of the heart we come together. SubhanAllah (God is Glorious).

As a new wife, I knew that statistics were not on the side of a long-term marriage, but I decided this one was going to be different. I also knew about the reality of polygamy, having encountered two rather strange German-born women who were travelling together and were married to the same man. They were both recent converts to Islam, and had lived in a vegan commune previously. "Oh it's fine," they assured me, "we share the housework and we share Hussein, it's very convenient for all of us." They politely took turns having babies each year. I didn't want that! I wasn't putting up with that! True to my ideology, I made it a stipulation in my marriage contract that my husband could not take a second wife while he was married to me unless I agreed.

My first visit to the Islamic Centre of Quebec for Jumaah prayer was during a blizzard. New to winter in Quebec I didn't have an understanding of terms like "more snow," "less snow," "freezing rain," etc. To me it was all fun, a wonderful contrast to damp and dark London. So I took the bus. I figured out the change but when I waved my Montreal map with a large X marked on Grenet Street in Ville St

GENE SWEEPSTAKE 2000-2003

http://www.gensemb1.org/genesweep.html

- ① Costs \$1 2000, \$5 2001, \$20 2002 and ~~\$4 2003~~ to bet.
- ② Bets are for one number, winner takes all
- ③ A gene is a set of connected exons by transcription/wRNA splicing + protein coding method
- ④ Assessment of Gene number, will occur via agreement on 2002 CSHL meeting
- ⑤ Actual assessment of Gene number will occur on the 2003 CSHL Genome meeting (or equivalent)
- ⑥ Write your email, number, + payment in the book
- ⑦ One bet per person, per year
- ⑧ No pencil bets
- ⑨ Stay at CSHL. Contact David Stewart

✉ Stewart@csHL.org

α cos in repetitive regions are not counted even if expressed.
 γ Autosomal + X+Y chromosomes from the reference genome. ^{no mitochondrial genome.}
 * At least one transcript must encode a protein.
 β 1/2 ~ 1 cell genes are only one gene per loci.
 † 7 transcribing exons, each trans splice is a separate gene

The gene sweepstake betting book

Ewan Birney opened a betting book at a meeting of the Human Genome Project in 2000. For a dollar a bet, he asked the world's top geneticists to predict how many genes a human has. The prize for the nearest guess was the pot and a bottle of Scotch. The winning bet, by Lee Rowen, was 25,294. The real number is around 20,000.

Image courtesy of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. From A Brief History of Everyone Who Ever Lived: The Human Story Retold Through Our Genes by Adam Rutherford. Published by The Experiment in 2017. Adam Rutherford is a science writer and broadcaster. He has written for the Guardian and presented award-winning series and programs for the BBC. His first book, Creation, was published in 2013 and shortlisted for the Wellcome Trust Prize.

Laurent at the driver, I think I startled him.

At that time terrorists were Irish, but Montreal's bus drivers were uniquely Quebecois and their multicultural awareness was limited. Despite

my smart shalwar qameez and my tuque turban—I even spoke French: "Excusez-moi est-ce cet autobus va à la mosque?"—he was very unfriendly, and told me angrily to get to the back of the bus. Fortunately a kind-hearted

woman told me when my stop was approaching.

In that incarnation, the Islamic Centre of Quebec, ICQ as it is still known, was a long, low building with a homemade minaret on top that looked like a dented crocus bulb. As women were not allowed through the front door—"AstaghfirAllah (Seek Forgiveness of Allah) sister"—I trudged through a snow bank to get round the back to a fire exit which had a "Ladies" decal on it. Someone had thoughtfully wedged a rubber slipper in it so we could get in.

Once inside, the familiar feel of wet carpeting under dry sock and a waft of curry and synthetic jasmine perfume assured me that I was in the right place. The few Muslim sisters that were there were mostly unresponsive to my enthusiastic Salaams and affectionate hand-clasping, kissing, etc. which I had learnt elsewhere. I thought I heard mumbled things about "Britishers," although one did ask "Where you are from?" I realize now that my Turkish Neo Naqshbandi hybrid and their Learned-back-home Islam were diametrically opposed. For many of the women who had bravely come to this cold distant country, Islam was marriage, children, and martyrdom, with a bit of tajweed (reciting the Quran), and samosas on special occasions. Many of them stayed home not by choice but because they simply had no idea about the way this society functioned and had no contact with the people around them. If they spoke English, they did not speak French; they had no independent income and lived in apartment buildings in dangerous areas where you had better avoid your neighbours in case you got robbed. 🌟

Ethelbert: Ten Days in May

MICHELLE ELRICK

From Then/Again. Published by Nightwood Editions in 2017. Michelle Elrick is the author of To Speak. Her poetry has appeared in Poetry Is Dead and on CBC television. She was a finalist in the CBC Poetry Prize in 2015. She lives in Halifax.

day two

the clock ticks, but I can't see the time. the breeze from the window causes sheets to bow and billow. light filters through textiles all around. I am hiding out. I am hiding in. I am hiding.

day three

we used twine and tacks and safety pins. some corners tied knots. four of us built the fort in about an hour, now it's only me. time passes differently when you are alone.

day four

I sleep in the great room where the walls hang from the rafters. morning sun: green leaves flicker on stems outside. I watch the window. no one approaches.

day five

the fort starts to age: seams split, walls drift, new passageways appear, cracks in the roof. last night I was cold in my sleep. I pulled a green wall down and wrapped myself in it. now there is another way out to the kitchen.

day six

soon I will take it down (the couch a spring-dented hull: crumbs, pennies where the cushions belong) I don't know yet how. the fort is a good place to think.

day eight

inside, there are questions but no answers. peaks and parted openings make an acceptable form, a temporary space, unresolved/deteriorating resolve. the questions are patient. we wait together, me and them.

day nine

something has changed: the fort is just a fort. I am not hid after all. besides, who is searching? 🌟

PROBLEMATIC, BUT LET'S NOT BEAT A DEAD HORSE: Instead of fixating on all the ways old shows and movies don't hold up to current social standard, focus your attention on the here and now. WHY THREE BILLBOARDS IS A PROBLEMATIC, FAUX PROGRESSIVE MESS: It can be seen as a movie more concerned with humanizing white supremacists

Wash and Ready

JAMIE FITZPATRICK

From The End of Music. Published by Breakwater Books in 2017. Jamie Fitzpatrick is a host and producer at CBC Radio. His first novel, You Could Believe in Nothing, won the Fresh Fish Award for Emerging Writers in Newfoundland and Labrador. He lives in St. John's.

The telephone rings, and Sam responds, singing nonsense words from his perch at the kitchen nook. He's ignoring his toast, though it's been cut into shapes, the way he likes it. Another ring.

"I have to pee," says Sam. He scrambles to the floor and strips off his pyjamas. Sprints up the stairs using hands and feet. At the top of the stairs he shouts, "Daddy! Answer the phone!"

It's Howley Park. What if they want to shift Joyce to the place down by the lake? He can't blame his mother for fearing the prospect of diapers and spoon-fed tapioca and bodies slumped like dead infantry in the TV room.

The third and final ring. Carter watches through the window as a car hits the dip in the street and creaks like an enormous mattress. He can imagine the stream of invective from the driver. Locals know to slow down when they approach 19 Vickers Street, with its nasty hollow. The subdivision is barely a decade old, but its roads are sinking in spots where they weren't properly graded.

Upstairs, he finds Sam in his favourite underwear. Nautical blue, patterned with whitecaps and orange fish.

"Sam, where did you get those?"

"Where's Mom?"

"She had to go to work early. Tell me where you found those underwear, please."

"In my room."

"In your laundry basket. What have we told you about taking clothes from your laundry?"

Sam turtles, face down and rear end raised, the curve of his white back shielding the unsteady heart. The fish on the underpants swim front to back, around the side and across the cheeks.

"Sammy, you wore those underwear yesterday. They have to be washed."

Squirring and sliding, the boy dangles his head over the side of the bed. "My other underwear are fake."

"Fake how?"

"Fake on my bum."

"Come on, Sammy. You know better."

"I don't!"

They're calling it his defiant phase. Though Isabelle suggests it might not be a phase at all. Maybe it's the real Sam. "It's gone on so long now," she said. "It could be part of his personality coming to life. A contrarian streak." How might they explain this in the child development books? *When your boy acts like an asshole, the parent might assume it's a passing phase. But we should consider the possibility that maybe he's just an asshole.*

"Time to go see Miss Kristen."

"I have to pee!"

"You just went."

Any mention of Kristen sends him dashing to the toilet. He has loved her unconditionally since his first day in the three-year-old room. It was never this way with Miss Tricia, though he adored her as well. When he switched rooms, the shift in his affection was quick and absolute, and went straight to his bladder.

Carter leaves him to the bathroom and returns to the kitchen.

A message on the phone.

"Herbert? Could I speak to Herbert please?" His mother's voice begins loud, then softens. The swish and rustle of a hand against the mouthpiece. "This is Joyce Carter and Herbert Carter is my son. He was raised on Alcock Street. My husband Arthur is passed away. There are no other children."

Someone interrupts her. A man nearby. "What?" says Joyce, her voice drifting. "Talk right into the phone, my love," says the man.

A delay. Then she speaks slowly, measuring her words. "Can I speak to Herbert, please?"

"Daddy!" shouts Sam. "Daddy!"

Muffled voices. A tumbling hang-up, his mother struggling to match receiver to cradle.

Carter saves the message. Sam crashes into him, face to crotch. Tugs at the zipper of his jacket. "I can't. I can't."

Carter fixes the snag. The zipper runs smooth up to Sam's throat, prompting Sam's first smile of the day.

"Who you talking to, Dad?"

"Nobody."

"Was it Mommy?"

"No. Where's your knapsack? You still need pants, Sam."

When Carter leans in to buckle the car seat, Sam exudes a mild stale-water scent. Not only has he escaped the house in his orange-fish underpants, he's pulled his entire wardrobe from the laundry basket.

"You're dirty," says Carter.

"You're dirty," says Sam. "We didn't brush teeth." 🦷

Rooms to Let in Bohemia

MARC PLOURDE

From Borrowed Days. Published by Cormorant Books in 2016. Marc Plourde is a translator and teacher. He has published collections of poetry and short stories.

Through the winter months, the last months I shared
with family, I was swayed by the spell of old places:
old houses with gingerbread on Prince Arthur;
the Milton Street laundry's sign, white board
with Chinese lettering over the door; Pine's
Duckpin Lanes above the pizzeria at Park and Pine
by the underpass; from the 80 bus window
I could see the bowlers slide and throw
as I headed south, into the past.

I remember the students of that distant time
as a tide of ghosts flooding McGill's grounds
and the McGill ghetto streets; the tide rushed past me,
and whatever thing the students dreamt
of reaching, they would reach fast, while my dream
happened two blocks down
in slow motion.

The Penelope, long gone,
was a haunt for blues and folk; flat-broke students
were left out on ice-grey pavement
stamping their numb feet before a marquee
without neon or flash—it said: Butterfield Blues
Tonight, Tim Hardin Next Week.

I looked three floors up
at a To Let sign wedged in a dormer window
in a row of windows. I looked at red brick
and the evening's snow
falling through winding fire escapes,
falling from floor to floor
through the iron grille,
and the window glowed down
in the drifting snow
like a magic lantern projecting a life
I could occupy: a room with a ceiling bulb
and a string.

I pulled the string
and the light went off and went
on in this life
I'd found three floors up from Bohemia
on Sherbrooke and Aylmer; elated
and solitary,
unable to afford a ticket,
I swayed to the music
of Butterfield, the music of Hardin. 🍷

company is serious about preventing abuse and that its investments in keeping "problematic content" off its social network will affect its profitability. MONTREAL CONFERENCE ADDRESSES PROBLEMATIC ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ISSUES: Artificial intelligence has the power to eliminate mundane jobs and create tremendous wealth, but it could

- we can show you what we know about this thing we know about.
- we know how to make you into someone who knows something about something
- we know who knows something about something
- We know something about something
- we know how to know something about that something
- we know when someone knows something about something
- we know how to check who knows something about something

Keywords

A COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY

A selection of terms common in academic life from Keywords; For Further Consideration and Particularly Relevant to Academic Life, especially as it concerns Disciplines, Inter-Disciplinary Endeavor, and Modes of Resistance to the Same. Published by Princeton University Press in 2018. A Community of Inquiry is a group of ten students and faculty associated with the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in the Humanities at Princeton University.

ART

Most generally, the ability, manner, or “knack” essential to the realization of some task or goal, especially when tricky or specialized; i.e., “the art of losing isn’t hard to master.” Also, a large class of objects and/or nonmaterial phenomena privileged for their

putative ability to occasion unpredictable but significant responses (particularly aesthetic, but sometimes sentimental or political) in individuals and groups. A term substantially defined by resistance to definition. Hence, difficult to define satisfactorily, if also satisfactory to define difficultly.

CANON

A sacred weapon within academic departments, fired ritually upon the uninitiated or wayward. Injuries suffered may generate the scars requisite for entry into the relevant sodalities and/or encampments.

CRITIQUE

As distinct from criticism, with which it ought not be confused. Criticism is the (often negative) appraisal of ART; critique is the (always negative) appraisal of criticism.

DIALECTIC

A style of thought poised at such a remove from the objects of its analysis that all difference turns out, upon sufficient reflection, not to exist. With the obvious exception of the difference between dialectic and everything else.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

The means to and/or end of academic life (see IRONY).

METAPHYSICS

The questions without answers to which inquiry cannot begin, or perhaps conclude. In terms of difficulty, it is advanced; in terms of order, fundamental. To illustrate: “What is metaphysics?”; better, “What is metaphysics?”; better still, “What is metaphysics?”

PROGRESS

The gymnastics of moving forward, understood as advancement or improvement, although possible without any propulsive motion, as in the case of stationary bikes.

SYMPOSIUM

An assembly of individuals contingently—or, in exceptional cases, essentially—persuaded that their conversation is more interesting and important than the thing they are in conversation about. 🌟

also lead to widespread unemployment and reinforce existing inequalities. ALEXA'S NEW TEXT MESSAGING FEATURE HAS ONE PROBLEMATIC ISSUE: Once you've dictated a message, Alexa doesn't bother to read it back to you before sending. GOOGLE REMOVED 700,000 PROBLEMATIC APPS FROM ITS ANDROID PLAY STORE IN 2017: The

Found Polaroids

KYLER ZELENY

From Found Polaroids, stories from the Found Polaroid Project, a collection of Polaroid photographs paired with short stories. Published by Aint-Bad in 2017. Kyler Zeleny is a Canadian photographer-researcher and creator of the Found Polaroids Project. He is a doctoral candidate in the joint Communication and Culture program at Ryerson and York University. He lives in Toronto.

POLAROID #62

I don't buy jewelry for my wife. My wife wants me to photograph her. She likes when I photograph her in water. My wife, when we went to Morocco, she said it was one of the best holidays we'd had together. And I agreed—it was sunny and it was lovely. My wife bought a velvetish swimsuit in Morocco, with patterns of butterflies, blue and green. She said it was one of her favourite swimsuits when we got back. As we were unpacking she said I really like that photograph you took of me in the water. I nodded, it was a lovely photograph. Later I gave it to her and I wrote a note on the back of it. My wife, she's happy. When we got back from Morocco she bought tagines and spices. She said she wanted to cook new things. She said, "do you like lamb? I'd like to cook some lamb for you." So I said I like lamb and I don't really know that I do. My wife, she bought a little cookbook with recipes in it, it's got some really nice oriental patterns on it. She sits on the sofa and she puts her glasses on. They're scaled in hues of green and blue. She sits by the lamp. My wife, she places the book between her thighs, and religiously licks her finger before she flicks each page. And when she's picked one she likes she slips the photograph in as a bookmark. "This way I see it all the time," she said.



sheer number of bad apps and bad people uploading them should serve as a warning to all Android users who have not yet done so to install security software. LETTER: RURAL SNOW CLEARING PROBLEMATIC: As a resident of Blind Bay, I have never seen such shoddy snow clearing as this year. PROBLEMATIC FAVES: FROM DUSK TILL DAWN:



POLAROID #124

So obviously the chemistry homework was never gonna get done. I certainly knew that from the get-go, and I think Sarah probably did too because all she brought over with her was a pencil and paper, no textbook or notes or anything. And no one could do one of Mr. Hanford's problem sets without the textbook.

Before we'd even sat down she said "why don't you put on some music?" and I knew she meant this as a test to see if I liked good music, so I put on Rumours, which I hoped was my coolest record. "OooooOOooh," she cooed as "Second Hand News" started, but I sat down at my bedroom desk beside her without saying anything—with cool people like Sarah, you can't let them know you care about their approval. We had gotten nowhere on the homework by the time "Go Your Own Way" came on, and when it did Sarah totally came alive, she started kinda squirming in her seat, like half-dancing, and then I knew she also knew why she was here, and that it was ok, better than ok, it was great. She got more into it as the song went on, even doing the part where Lindsey Buckingham echoes "Go Your Ooooooown Waaaaaay" by himself, and then we were both dancing around my room.

I looked at her and she looked back at me, but I looked for too long, so I picked up my camera from my dresser and took a picture of her dancing, but then she took the camera out of my hands and put it on the desk and looked right at me and put her hands on my cheeks and kissed me, and wow was she a good kisser, way better than any of the boys I'd kissed. We kissed until the record needed to be flipped over; she needed to go, she had to pick her brother up from baseball practice. We kind of smiled at each other and kissed once more, just a quick peck, and then she opened the bedroom door and left.

POLAROID #27

The first ring, I remove my faded blue t-shirt. The second ring, I take off my brand new Nike shoes. The third ring, I remove my dirty socks. The fourth ring, I unbutton and wiggle out of my dark wash Levi's jeans. The fifth ring, I jump onto my bed wearing only a red speedo. The sixth ring, I pick up the phone and sit in a seductive pose.

"Hello," I say in a deep and confident yet mysterious voice.

"Hello," the person on the other side responds shyly. "I've never done this before."

"Tell me whatever you want," I say very slowly.

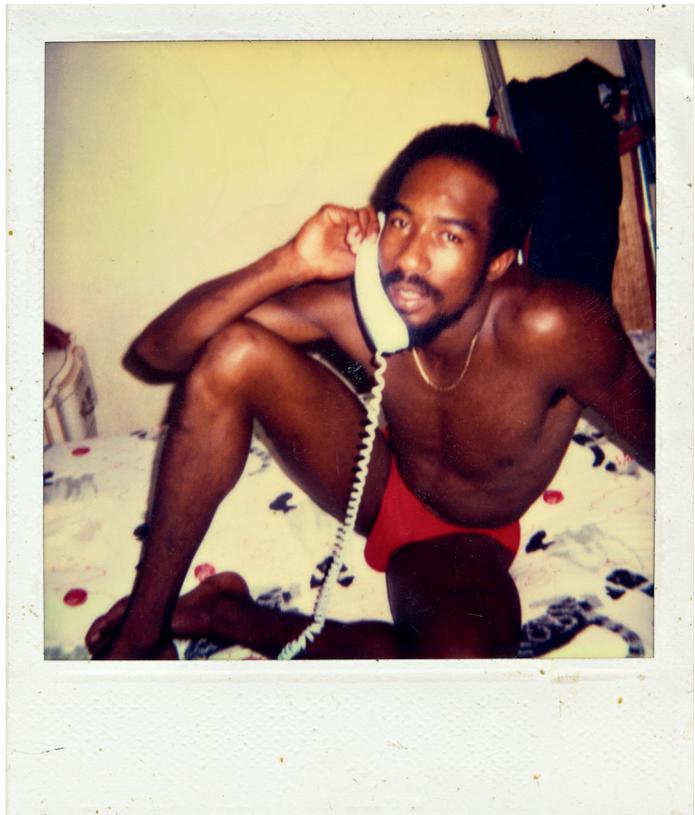
The conversation begins innocently, but quickly heats up. While the dialogue starts to get steamy, I find myself feeling a bit cold. I look down at my arm and notice goose bumps. I touch my nipples and feel them begin to harden. I look down at my red speedo and draw the waistband from my body, only to notice my bulge is shrinking. It is getting uncomfortably cold.

"Are you still there?"

"I wouldn't leave you in the middle of this arousing story," I say.

I look on the floor, where my t-shirt and Levi's lay. I wish I could put them on. I sit in my speedo to feel the part. If the person on the phone asks "what are you wearing?" I don't want to lie and create a false image in their mind that they cherish on those lonely nights.

Sometimes you need to suck it up and do your job. It's how the bills get paid, the fridge gets restocked and how a roof stays over your head. These are the struggles of a phone sex operator. 🍆



comment to the platform as potentially problematic. AS A BLACK WOMAN, EVERYTHING I LOVE IS PROBLEMATIC: British period pieces are one of my many problematic weaknesses. PADMAN, PERIODS AND HOLLYWOOD'S PROBLEMATIC STEREOTYPING OF MENSTRUATING WOMEN: With Twinkle Khanna-produced Padman hitting

Culture Clash

EDDY WEETALTUK

From From the Tundra to the Trenches. Published by University of Manitoba Press in 2017. Eddy Weetaltuk was born in James Bay in 1932. He enlisted in the Canadian Army and served in Korea, Japan and Germany. From the Tundra to the Trenches is the story of one of the first Canadian Inuit who decided to go to war. Weetaltuk died in 2005.

We landed in Kure late in the evening and were loaded into trucks. When we arrived, we were told that we could stay at the camp for free unless we preferred to rent a room in one of the hotels downtown. Of course, staying at the camp was not an option for most of us, at least as long as we still had enough money to party. We all picked up our passes; we had fourteen days' permission leave. It sounded like forever. I could hardly imagine I was ever going back to the front. Racette and I took a taxi to Kure. We had much fun going from bars to bordellos but I am not going to waste your time with more stories of that kind. However, I remember quite a funny episode from that leave. One day when we were too drunk to look for a hotel by ourselves, we were going to take a cab and ask the driver to find one for us, like we used to do in such circumstances. But that night Racette decided to take a rickshaw instead. I was not sure but he insisted:

—Come on, Eddy. Let's try it, at least once. You cannot go back to Canada without experiencing such a ride.

I let him convince me and each of us took a rickshaw. We told our drivers to take us to the nearest hotel. When I sat in the rickshaw, the man pulling it gave me a whip and told me to use it on him if he didn't go fast enough. I laughed and found it ridiculous. But as I was in quite a good mood, I shouted at him in Inuktitut as if I were mushing a dog team. After a while, I really

felt like I was on a sled, mushing my dogs, and I began whipping on his handrail yelling:

—Oweet! Oweet! Arra! Arra! Aowk! Aowk!

I was laughing and having fun like when I was a kid travelling with my dad on the ice floe. It was a unique moment. Of course, the rickshaw driver could not understand that the ride was bringing back feelings from my childhood. Now that I recall the events I am sure he must have been quite scared. After all, I was a soldier, I was drunk, and I was using the whip like a pro. Since he could not understand my language, he ran faster and faster, trying to satisfy his furious customer. The faster he ran, the more fun I had and the more I was using my whip. Behind us, Racette was laughing his head off, wondering what I was saying and why we were moving so fast. His rickshaw driver was doing his best to keep up behind us but could hardly follow our pace. Finally, we stopped in front of a small hotel called Senesin. The drivers were exhausted. I was impressed by the strength and the endurance of my driver. The more I got to know the Japanese people, the more my respect for them grew, though I was not sure about the idea of asking to be whipped by a customer. I was thinking to myself that these people were a bit like my people, ready to work hard to survive. And, somehow, running and pulling a rickshaw was very

similar to running behind a dogsled with someone on it. I gave five dollars to my driver to ease my conscience for having treated him the way I did.

Unfortunately, my conscience did not stay awake long enough and that same night I was going to mistreat another member of those proud and highly friendly people. Now that I recall that time I am pretty ashamed, but I can only explain my situation by the fact that everyone in the army was acting with little respect for the people they were supposed to protect. When we got into the hotel, we asked for a girl to spend the night with, as we were used to doing. Racette got lucky and he had a very nice-looking girl; mine was pretty well-built but her face was not interesting. It looked like someone had kicked her face. At first I thought about refusing to take her, but I changed my mind thinking that I was not going to make love to a face but to a body.

After all, I could still ask her to hide her face, like we used to say in the army: "Just pull down the hood and all the girls are alike."

During the night the girl did everything to please me. I was bastard enough to ask her if she was that good because she wanted to be forgiven for her ugliness. Now I realize that we were actually treating Japanese women as if they were meat in a meat market and not human beings with feelings. The war was turning us into predators, trained to kill men and to chase women, always looking for the youngest and the prettiest. That's what war was turning me into.

When I woke up the next morning, it was nearly eleven o'clock. I was completely naked. I looked all over for my clothes and I could not find them. I immediately accused the girl of stealing my clothes:

—You cypsy, cypsy my clothes.

the theatres next week, the dialogue around menstruation has seemingly become more open with the #PadmanChallenge taking over social media. KATY PERRY ADMITS 'I KISSED A GIRL' LYRICS ARE PROBLEMATIC: Katy Perry has said that she would rewrite her breakthrough hit 'I Kissed A Girl' if she could, admitting that the lyrics contain "a

“Cypsy” meant stealing. In Japan, accusing someone of stealing is a very serious accusation. I knew it, but still I was yelling at her. She put on her kimono and rushed out and came back immediately with all my clothes and my wallet. My boots had been nicely polished, my uniform pressed and my money was still all there. I was feeling so cheap. I didn’t know which way to turn. I finally chose to kiss her. A real kiss.

At that point Racette came into my room. He, too, was naked like a worm. He had heard my screaming and was coming to rescue me. When he saw me kissing the girl, he was a bit surprised:

—What are you doing, Eddy? I came in a hurry; I thought somebody was beating you up. You screamed like a pig being killed. What happened?

—Sorry, Racette, if I scared you, but don’t worry, I am fine. It was a misunderstanding. I thought I had been robbed but in fact it was the

contrary. Now I laugh because I am so happy. These girls are so nice to us.

At that moment, his cute girl came in bringing his clothes. He too was amazed by the treatment.

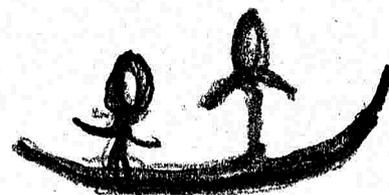
To show my gratitude I decided to stay a few more days. When the time came to go back to the camp, my girl told me it was too risky to walk in plain view because the hotel was located outside of the bounds and that day there were lots of military police patrolling the sector. She offered to help me get back to the camp and gave me a kimono and a pair of sandals to hide my identity. I accepted her offer without resisting. Since I started misleading people about my identity, I no longer really had any misgivings about passing for someone else.

While I was getting dressed, I heard some kind of radio static and looked out. There was a military jeep right in front of the hotel. I was able to hear them radioing to their base,

reporting that they were at an out-of-bounds hotel. They were coming in to check if any soldiers were inside. The girl had anticipated their move, so she put a towel over my head to hide my army haircut and we left the house as if we were ordinary customers. While passing by the jeep, she kept talking to me in Japanese and I replied to her in Inuktitut. I remember telling her:

—Emaha! Emaha!

Emaha means, “hoping so far.” Apparently, my disguise was very good and my Inuktitut sounded Japanese enough, since we made it out without being stopped. ●



ANOT. 2.01

KAIE KELLOUGH

From Accordéon. Published by ARP Books in 2016. Kaie Kellough is the author of two books of poetry, Lettricity and Maple Leaf Rag. He lives in Montreal.

Any person might be an undercover operative: the security guard in the Concordia University lobby, the disaffected art student with an asymmetrical haircut smoking outside Café Myriade. That bus driver, steering the 24 down Sherbrooke street, with her teased bangs, drinking a Cott grape soda, she could be observing the culture and reporting back. That homeless man asking for change inside McGill metro, insulting the students as they hurry to class, nursing a can of Pabst at nine in the morning, he

could be undercover. General Montcalm might well have been one of the earliest operatives, clandestine even to himself. You, turning slowly down Union street and passing The People’s Church, getting into your Volkswagen and driving out to the suburbs, you could be reporting on what you hear at PTA meetings, on what your children learn at school, on who they play with and what video games their friends enjoy.

Undercovers operate in the blind zone of their own consciousness. Every

six months they are picked up while walking alone down a quiet street, or exiting the McCord museum, where they saw a boring exhibit titled *Sublime Cities*. They are taken to Ministry headquarters, located inside the mountain that rises from the centre of the city. They are questioned, secretly administered an amnesiac, and finally they are returned to the exact location from which they were picked up.

I could be a Ministry operative without knowing it, but I know that I am not, I am certain that I am not. I am certain because I have been taken up in the flying canoe, and no Ministry operative has ever been taken up in the flying canoe. It is not possible for a person to be a member of the Ministry and to be a passenger in the canoe. It is not possible. ●

couple of stereotypes.” GOOD FOOD AND THE PROBLEMATIC SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY: How many times have you eaten at the Olive Garden and not thought twice about their menu offering “authentic Italian food” or visited Agra Indian Restaurant in Tarzana, whose website offers “Authentic Indian Cuisine as Seen on Keeping up with

SHELF LIFE

Ways of arranging one's books, as brainstormed by students in a discussion for the course Social History of the Media (CMNS 210), taught by Ian Chunn at Columbia College, Vancouver, in spring 2018.

By topic

By language

By author

By date

By size

By number of pages

By orientation (landscape vs. portrait)

By popularity

By binding (cloth vs. paper)

By colour

By edition

By frequency of use 📍

The Old G

ERÍN MOURÉ

From Sitting Shiva on Minto Avenue, by Toots. Published by New Star Books in 2017. Erín Mouré is a poet and translator. She holds two honorary doctorates, from Brandon University (2008) and Universidad de Vigo in Spain (2016), for her contribution to poetry.

It's New Year's Day, 2016. I've decided to keep writing for the full seven days of shiva, which will take me until January 3. Never mind that January 1 is a holiday. When I go to bed on January 3, I'll set my alarm for the early hours of morning on January 4, maybe 4:30 a.m. here in Montréal, which is 1:30 a.m. Vancouver time. I'll get up and light a candle for the little man, to mark the passage of one month since his death in the hospital in Vancouver.

I still see him as warm and comfortable and safe there. His heart was about to give out. He had difficulty breathing but maybe they had him on antibiotics for the pneumonia already, and had him on a mask so he could breathe more oxygen. The oxygen makes a funny quiet burble as it runs through the tubes from the wall or canister into the mask; it's right against your face and touches you,

curiously a source of calm.

Probably the night shift started at 11 p.m. and the nursing staff went around at 11:30 p.m. to do the bed checks of all their patients. Paul would have been alive then. But when they went two hours later to do a check (probably they did one in between, too), Paul's vital signs were all at zero.

I don't like the word "flat-lining" though I know that that is what the monitor screen would have looked like. He had gone quietly. I think he knew he was being taken care of.

Of course I have no proof.

I can't possibly imagine the last time he might have thought of me. I did think of him in Calgary though, where I was helping B. with her struggles, and I had mailed him his Christmas card from there, very probably on the day he died.

The card wished him a year of good health and happiness in 2016.

And called him an Old Goat, my old nickname for him.

Empire, York Street was dedicated in part to The Old G.

When coming home today on the bus from bringing B., still frail, to the Montréal airport for her return to Calgary after the holidays, I was thinking of Paul's teeth and of how often, because I have trouble with my own teeth (a bad occlusion), I have thought of those teeth of the little man. They were so worn in front. He grated his teeth at night so loudly that at times I could hear the noise of it. And the teeth were visibly wearing down.

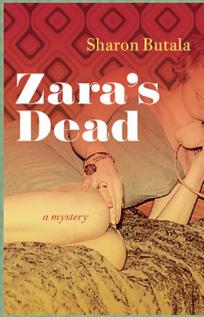
I wonder how in his last years he managed to take care of his teeth.

I thought of another thing. When he lived in the basement suite at Tom's house, every year Paul would raise his own rent.

We'd walk to another restaurant as well, on Main at West 18th Avenue, in a little strip mall on the west side of the street. It was owned by a quiet couple who had infinite patience with Paul, and when he'd walk out without paying, they knew quietly that he'd be back the next day to settle his bill. They even learned to tell him they were out of Grand Marnier. I mean, I think they stopped stocking it forever so that he wouldn't stay and keep drinking after dinner. Yet Grand Marnier didn't even matter to him; I don't know why he was so fixated on it at that restaurant. I think it was called Mimi's. Maybe it was called Mimi's; I can't find any reference to it at all now on the Internet.

Finally he brought the owners a bottle of Grand Marnier as a sort of gift. I think they were horrified, as here was the Grand Marnier again. 📍

the Kardashians?" **PROBLEMATIC PRONOUN POLICIES PRESSURE STUDENTS TO DEFINE GENDER IDENTITY:** Within the last decade, colleges across the nation have instituted various practices and policies on campus to accommodate transgender, non-binary, and genderfluid students. 📍



A new mystery from GG-nominated Sharon Butala.

COTEAU BOOKS
Mystery | \$24.95
May 2018



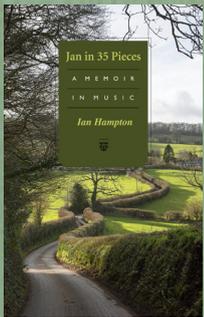
Eric Dupont's *La Fiancée américaine*, at last available in English.

BARAKA BOOKS
Fiction | \$27.95
July 2018



A woman uncovers the truth of a past trauma.

LATITUDE 46
Fiction | \$22.95
May 2018



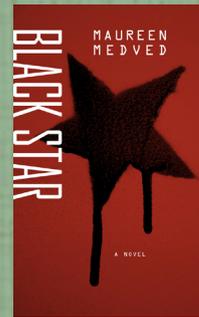
Jan in 35 Pieces — A charming tale of a life in music.

PORCUPINE'S QUILL
Memoir | \$24.95
May 2018



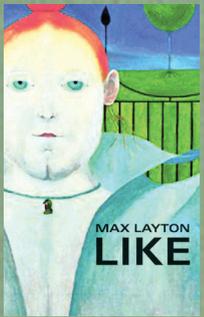
"A love song to East Vancouver."
—Carleigh Baker

BOOK*HUG
Non-Fiction | \$20.00
March 2018



A bitingly funny and transgressive novel.

ANVIL PRESS
Fiction | \$20.00
March 2018



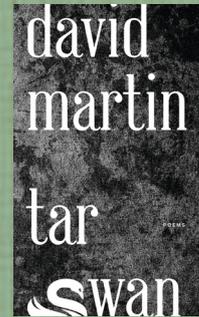
Likes and dislikes: of verbs, similes, and underlying unity.

GUERNICA EDITIONS
Poetry | \$20.00
March 2018



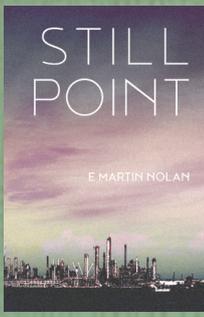
A 15-year-old discovers adults rarely tell the truth.

BLUE MOON PUBLISHERS
Fiction | \$19.99
Available Now



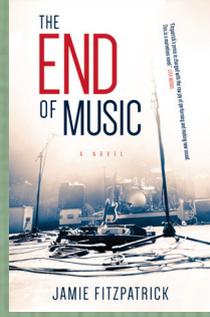
An allegorical reckoning of the wounds inflicted by the oil sands.

NEWEST PRESS
Poetry | \$18.95
April 2018



Examining North America as unified whole and disrupted centre.

INVISIBLE PUBLISHING
Poetry | \$16.95
Available Now



A novel about women, men and reckoning with the past.

BREAKWATER BOOKS
Fiction | \$19.95
Available Now



An author's psychotic break makes fiction reality.

NOW OR NEVER
Fiction | \$19.95
April 2018

BOOKS OF A FEATHER, FLOCK TOGETHER.



READ INDEPENDENTLY-PUBLISHED CANADIAN BOOKS FROM THE LITERARY PRESS GROUP | ALLLITUP.CA



Fifty Years in Review

CONNIE KUHNS

*A new anthology of reviews, interviews and commentary on
Joni Mitchell's music reveals the star-making machinery*



Just months before she was found unconscious in her home in California, in the spring of 2015, Joni Mitchell was the new face of an Yves Saint Laurent clothing campaign called the Music Project. In photographs taken by creative director Hedi Slimane, Joni is wearing an embroidered tunic and wide-brimmed hat from Saint Laurent's "Folk Collection" and holding her guitar. At seventy-one years of age, she is regal.

It was an image to hold on to, as confusing reports circulated regarding her condition. Eventually it was revealed that she had suffered a brain aneurysm. Almost two years passed before there was some public evidence of a slow recovery when she attended a Chick Corea concert in Los Angeles.

For those of us who came of age, grew up and grew old listening to her music,

Joni Mitchell gave women a more serious understanding of themselves. She made women visible to the outside world. She was a romantic and a lover, and a woman who was constantly moving forward. She rebelled against categorization and often suffered the consequences. For Joni, who started out as a painter and took to heart the creative sacrifices her grandmothers were forced to make, there was no question that her art came first.

After dropping out of art school in Alberta, and drifting east in the mid-'60s toward a heightened folk scene in Toronto, Detroit and New York, Joni rose to fame quickly. She got immediate attention for her beauty, but soon enough for her songwriting and unconventional phrasing. Her tunings were unusual, too, an accommodation she made for her left hand, weakened by polio when she was nine. Decades passed before her "chords of inquiry," as she called them, could be broken down and translated into songbooks for novices.

From the beginning of her recording career in 1968, Joni Mitchell expected and received full artistic control, a right rarely given to a new artist and never to a woman. She refused to work with producers (her friend David Crosby, who produced her first album, *Song to a Seagull*, was more of a gatekeeper), and she selected, directed and replaced musicians on her recordings until she got the sound she wanted. In a very short time, she went from accompanying herself on piano and guitar to working with jazz musicians, as she found they were the only players who could follow her inside her head. She recorded and produced nineteen studio albums, thirteen of them and the live album *Miles of Aisles* with her faithful engineer Henry Lewy, a legendary sound engineer who became a close friend. "She's the only true genius I've ever met," he said. Joni also released another live album, nine compilations and four video albums. She was prolific, profound and articulate. She was feted and maligned.

Since her near-fatal brain injury, her contribution to modern music has undergone re-evaluation. She is in the top ten of *Rolling Stone's* 100 Greatest Songwriters of All Time, and on NPR's list of the top 150 albums by women, with her 1971 release *Blue* in the number one spot. Essays have appeared in the *Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *Ringer* and other publications. In the UK, an international symposium called *Court and Spark* was held at the University of Lincoln, with dozens of international speakers exploring "the

images of freedom, travel and liberation within Joni's work." A book of scholarly essays from this conference will be published in 2019.

Meanwhile, in the realm of music journalism, Barney Hoskyns, co-founder of the online music library Rock's Backpages, and author of the books *Hotel California* and *Small Town Talk* as well as other significant works, compiled a comprehensive selection of album and concert reviews, interviews and commentary covering almost fifty years of Joni Mitchell's career. Released in the UK in 2016 with the title *Reckless Daughter: A Joni Mitchell Anthology* (I found my copy last spring at Blackwell's Music Shop in Oxford), the book was published in North America in the fall of 2017, under the title *Joni: The Anthology*, so as not to be confused with another fall book, a biography of Joni Mitchell by David Yaffe titled *Reckless Daughter*.

The forty-eight career contributors to Hoskyns's anthology represent more than a hundred magazines, newspapers, radio broadcasts and other media in the US, UK and Europe. Most are influential writers in their field, and the Contributors page is its own historical document.

With the exception of an introduction by Hoskyns, individual pieces in the anthology are presented without commentary or explanation. For the most part they are chronological, which makes the book even more illuminating, as the writings naturally reflect the attitudes of the times in which Joni worked. The late Paul Williams, founder of *Crawdaddy!*, one of the first magazines of rock criticism, shows his hand when reviewing *Song to a Seagull*—which he *liked*—when he writes: "A great many ladies have their heads so full of all they've read and heard and seen about why a man loves a woman that they can think of little save how lovable they are. But Joni even knows that a woman can have a will without being unfeminine or unyielding herself."

In the transcribed interviews, Joni is candid and intelligent. She stands out for being reflective and uncensored. *Rolling Stone's* Larry LeBlanc talks with Joni backstage at the 1971 Mariposa Folk Festival, where she tells him about her time in the caves of Matala. Kristine McKenna ("I was pleasantly surprised to find a warm and open woman of impressive intelligence") questions her in 1982 for NME, about fame and Joni's sometimes combative relationship with the press. Writing for MOJO in 1998, Dave DiMartino has an expansive conversation with Joni about her life

as a painter and about an industry slow to recognize her immense contributions. Robin Eggar, reporting for the German edition of *Rolling Stone*, is with her in 2007 at the premiere of her ballet *Fiddle and the Drum* with the Alberta Ballet.

In the reviews of her early albums and concerts, much is made of Joni's tunings, her "confessional" style of songwriting and the way women are drawn to her. But there is wonderment in some of the writing as the critics, most of them male, sense there is something here that is not like the other.

**"JONI MITCHELL IS PROLIFIC,
PROFOUND AND ARTICULATE.
SHE IS FETED AND MALIGNED"**

Geoffrey Cannon, in reviewing a concert in London for the *Guardian* in 1970, writes: "I believe that Joni Mitchell is better able to describe, and celebrate, what it means, and should mean, to be alive today, than any other singer. She tells us what we already know, but have felt obliged through life's circumstances, to forget: that we are free. That we have love. And she does this by scrupulous observation and thought only of what she herself has heard and seen and felt."

That same year, Jacoba Atlas writes in *Melody Maker*: "Her ability to understand and transform has made her almost a legend in the United States. Critics and listeners alike rhapsodize over her songs and her psyche. She is fulfilling something of a 'goddess' need in American rock, a woman who is more than a woman; a poet who expresses a full range of emotions without embarrassment. . . she is virtually without competition. . . she is without comparison. Her work, for now, goes almost totally without question, without debate."

However, the negative criticism of her work, and of her personally, is dismissive, brittle and ugly.

Richard Williams, in 1972, in a review for *Melody Maker* of Joni's fourth album, *For the Roses*, writes: "More songs of transient euphoria and stabbing loss, played out against an ambiguous background of relentless fatalism and constant hope, mingled in approximately equal proportions,

from the poorest little rich girl in Laurel Canyon."

In fact, those very first albums were filled with grief.

In 1990, Joni was blindsided by Trevor Dunn on GLR (Greater London Radio), in the middle of an interview about her exhibition of paintings in London, with a question about a child she had given up for adoption when she was twenty-one years old. It was a thoughtless and cruel act and she struggled to answer, stumbling between shock and defensiveness.

She had shared this heartbreak privately with

husbands and lovers, and even looked for her daughter in the crowds. But it was still a shameful secret. In a time when young, unmarried women and girls were forced to give up their children, Joni had given birth in the charity ward of a Toronto hospital. Not even her family knew. This experience shaped the rest of her life.

Completely alone and devastated, she began to write songs and sing as a way to support herself and find her way through. She had written more than twenty songs before she stepped into a recording studio for the first time. "Little Green," a song to her daughter, was among them.

While reviewing a concert in Long Island, New York, in 1976, Michael Gross writes in *Swank*: "Where are all the world's beautiful, ripe fourteen-year-old-girls? Where are all those Lolitas we've all heard so much about, with their pert tits, hard bums, yadda, yadda, yadda? The answer? They're home listening to Joni Mitchell albums, of course." He concludes: "By the time of her third album, Joni had grown, if not to complete womanhood, to at least an inkling of her own self-sufficiency, couched as it was in the counter-cultural garbage of making cookies in the canyon."

In the late '70s, in what was considered in all camps a very controversial move at the time, Joni accepted an invitation to collaborate with the

legendary jazz composer and bassist Charles Mingus. He had been impressed with her album *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* (on the cover of which she had appeared dressed and made up as a black man). Mingus was said to have been “intrigued by the audacity of that act.” He was dying and he wanted his last project to be with her.

Joni had been working with Tom Scott's jazz group L.A. Express since *Court and Spark*, and she had experimented with world music—before it had a name—on *The Hissing of Summer Lawns*. She was already moving away from what was seen as her “traditional” place. *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* was truly reckless, particularly as it included “The Tenth World,” a dynamic conga jam with Don Alias, Manolo Badrena, Alejandro (Alex) Acuna, Airto Moreira and Jaco Pastorius. Among the background vocalists was Chaka Khan.

In a conversation with Ben Sidran, the *Roll-*

liner notes reveal how much Joni held Mingus to be some kind of mystical black saint figure, the typical dizzy white people's view of black people, the stupid idea that they're privy to some inner secrets that us poor honkies will never understand.”

Quite a contrast with the remarks offered by the actor Lawrence Fishburne two decades later, in 2000, during the Joni Mitchell All-Star Tribute in New York, as he introduced a visual tribute to her work with Mingus, followed by Cassandra Wilson's interpretation of one of the songs from the album. Joni Mitchell had responded to Mingus with an enthusiastic, open heart, honouring him but also being true to herself. It's all context. (“The reviews were mixed,” she told Kristine McKenna.)

Joni received a Grammy award in 1969, and another in 1974, but more than twenty years passed before the industry acknowledged her again. When the awards started coming in 1996,

**“MUSIC WAS A HOBBY FOR ME
AT ART SCHOOL, AND ART
WAS SERIOUS. ART WAS
ALWAYS WHAT I WAS
GOING TO DO; I WAS
GOING TO BE AN ARTIST.”**

ing Stone writer whose essay in *Joni: The Anthology* explains how these two artists' lives converged, Joni recalls the moment when Mingus asked her to write some lyrics that would suggest “the things I'm going to miss.”

“We all have some things in common experientially,” she said. “And there are things in common musically. We both have a broad range of feeling. And there's literariness to his writing. And within his idiom he's an eccentric; some of his eccentricities are parallel to mine.” Mingus wrote six melodies for her, each named and numbered *Joni I–VI*. He died before the album was completed.

In a review of the album *Mingus*, released in 1979, Sandy Robertson writes in *Sounds*: “The

she won two Grammys, including Album of the Year (for *Turbulent Indigo*), followed by the US National Academy of Songwriters Lifetime Achievement Award, the inaugural Billboard Century Award, Sweden's Polar Music Prize and a Grammy for Lifetime Achievement. (In 2016 she received a Grammy for Best Album Notes, bringing her total to nine.)

In Canada, she was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame in 1981, but she did not receive a Juno award until 2001, and it was for Best Vocal Jazz Album. In time, she received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement, and a star on Canada's Walk of Fame. She was also appointed

a Companion of the Order of Canada, Canada's highest civilian honour. In 2007, she was inducted into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame, and she was featured on a postage stamp.

In 1999, Joni was finally included in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, after the New York Times writer Stephen Holden accused the organization of an anti-woman bias. Joni agreed, and didn't show up to accept. In the interview with Dave DiMartino in the anthology, she explains her position: "Unfortunately, I don't have a good attitude about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and you can say this. It was a dubious honour in that they held me out conspicuously for three years. To go, Oh, thank you, thank you, I mean having conspicuously ostracized me for a few projects, how can I be gracious, really. And the other complaint I had is that it was gonna cost about twenty grand to take my family."

That year, she had begun a very public search for her daughter. "Little Green" had started looking five years earlier. Her name was Kilauren Gibb. She was living in Toronto and pregnant with her first child when she learned she was adopted, and she wanted to find her birth mother.

It is a dramatic story of closed files and waiting lists, unanswered emails, and someone remembering someone they once knew. Finally, Kilauren had a lead. She received a registered letter from the Children's Aid Society with this piece of non-identifying information: "Your mother was from a small town in Saskatchewan and left for the US to pursue her career as a folksinger." By the time they met, Kilauren had given birth and Joni was a grandmother.

Perhaps reflecting on that time decades ago, when she had left art school, pregnant and without possibilities, and her life had come full circle, Joni told Dave DiMartino in the *MOJO* interview—after a production where her paintings hung in a circle around the stage—"I'm really a painter at heart, and I can say this now, since, you know, Kilauren has come along. Music was a hobby for me at art school, and art was serious. Art was always what I was going to do; I was going to be an artist."

She had taken intermittent breaks over the years, but in 2002 Joni Mitchell walked away from the music business. "I'm quitting because the business made itself so repugnant to me," she told Dave Simpson, writing for the *Guardian*. "Record companies are not looking for talent. They're looking for a look and a willingness

to cooperate." Simpson writes that Joni's sales have never matched her influence and critical standing. Despite her landmark deals for artistic control, she fought a thirty-year battle with record companies.

In her interview with Dave DiMartino, she says: "You only get about five or six years before they're sick of you in the business generally and they let you ride. They don't put any money or effort or interest into you, really. They just let you sit there like manure in the pasture, as a procurer of young artists at the label. For the last 20 years, I've had no record company support, no radio support.

"My predicament wasn't one in which effort worked anyway. I was just *shut out*, period, after the Mingus album."

She tells Robin Eggar, writing for the German *Rolling Stone*: "You are supposed to stay neatly in your decade and then die. From my 6th album on [critics] were dismissive while I knew I was still growing. It was an extraordinary rejection of good work. Everything was compared unfavorably to *Court and Spark*."

This could also be said of her fans, many of whom were unable to make the trip from her powerful early writing through her experimental years. In recalling a tour she did with Van Morrison and Bob Dylan in 1998, she says of the Vancouver concert: "It was a difficult show for me because I'm not used to playing big sports arenas and there was a lot of milling, a lot of going for beer and a lot of talking really loud through all of the shows. It seemed to me that that crowd had come for the beer and the event itself, not to listen. And I thought that was a shame." I was in the audience that night and I can confirm that the auditorium was on the move, particularly during Joni's set. They really had come for *Court and Spark*.

"I came to hate music and only listened to talk shows," she told Paul Sexton when he visited her home in 2007, on assignment for the *Guardian*.

True to her word, Joni stayed away for ten years.

In the 2003 American Masters documentary *Joni Mitchell: Woman of Heart and Mind* (produced by Susan Lacey), Bill Flanagan, author and editorial director of MTV Network, sums up Joni's power when he describes "the really potent popular image of the California girl, the Beach Boys' girl, the beautiful golden girl with the long blonde hair parted in the middle. And Joni not only *was* the girl, but she was also the Bob Dylan, the Paul Simon, the Lennon and McCartney. *Writing it*.

She was the whole package. She was the subject and she was the painter.”

In *Joni: The Anthology*, Barney Hoskyns adds the names Brian Wilson and Stevie Wonder to Joni’s list of peers when he refers to her “masterful albums” and describes her songs as “great art.” He writes, “She’s struggled to bear the weight of her talent and intelligence in an arena better disposed to the crass and the facile.” Referring to his own interview, included in the book, he writes:

decorations. Up until her injury, she had been promoting *Love Has Many Faces: A Quartet, A Ballet, Waiting to be Danced*, a 4-CD boxed set released in 2014.

Joni: The Anthology reveals the work of the real star-making machinery—the critics, whose opinions can encourage exploration or cause chaos. It also has a valuable story to tell, especially as it rests on a larger truth.

Joni would have been a successful musician and

“FOR THOSE OF US WHO CAME OF AGE, GREW UP AND GREW OLD LISTENING TO HER MUSIC, JONI MITCHELL GAVE WOMEN A MORE SERIOUS UNDERSTANDING OF THEMSELVES.”

“I’ve always felt privileged to have met this genius of North American music.”

Joni Mitchell’s last CD of original music was released in 2007 by Starbucks *Hear This!* (Hoskyns reviews it in the anthology.) *Shine* was her first attempt at writing since 1998 and she describes the CD to Robin Eggar as “a late birth.” The songs were written at her home on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, the same place where she wrote *For the Roses* in 1972.

“All around the house the wild roses were blooming,” she writes in the liner notes. “The air smelled sweet and salty and loud with crows and bees. My house was clean. I had food in the fridge for a week. I sat outside ’til the sun went down.

“That night the piano beckoned for the first time in ten years. My fingers found these patterns which express what words could not. This sound poured out while a brown bear rummaged through my garbage cans.”

The CD is dedicated to her grandchildren, Marlin and Daisy.

Having come fully out of retirement, she had two other major creations that year, the ballet *The Fiddle and the Drum*, a collaboration with the choreographer Jean Grande-Mâitre of the Alberta Ballet, and a major art show (L.A., New York, Toronto, Dublin) featuring sixty-four of her paintings, which had also been used as set

songwriter under any circumstances. But it was the pain of bearing and then giving up her child—a uniquely female experience—that took her work into unknown territory and unlocked a talent so infinite and raw, she was propelled beyond the expectations and limitations of her womanhood, into a pure, undefined form of musicianship. No one else could have done this. Joni Mitchell is brilliant and brave. She lives.

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

NEW FICTION



978-1-77214-112-2
\$20 | 232 pp.

BLACK STAR

a novel by Maureen Medved

"an often funny but finally harrowing look at a dystopia that's come to reside in each of our souls."

– Charles D'Ambrosio, author of *Loitering*

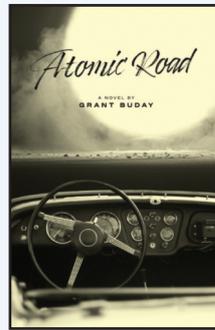
"Suspenseful and beautifully written."

– Zoe Whittall, author of *The Best Kind of People*

"At once black comedy, social critique, Kantian nightmare, and psychological thriller, this novel scarred me.

And I am better for it."

– Chris Hutchinson,
author of *Jonas in Frames*



ATOMIC ROAD

a novel by Grant Buday

Atomic Road is a comic road novel set at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

"*Atomic Road* is compelling fiction. With its loose basis in historical fact, the story carefully spirals in and out of absurdity without losing the core of the journey. ... sure to stick in the mind like an insightful LSD trip."

– FOREWORD REVIEWS (5-Star Review)

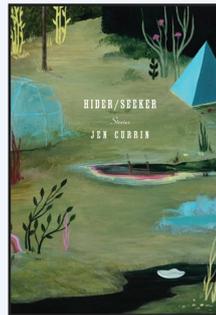
978-1-77214-113-9 | \$20 | 176 pp.

**anvil
press
publishers**



visit us @ anvilpress.com

Represented by Publishers Group Canada • Distributed by Raincoast



HIDER/SEEKER

stories by Jen Currin

"I can't stop thinking about Jen Currin's book. ... Currin writes with precision, beauty, and tenderness about the politics of imperfect relationships and people struggling to find wholeness."

– Kevin Chong, author of *The Plague*

"Jen Currin writes into difficult places with delicacy, humour and meditative grace..."

– Shaena Lambert, author of *Oh, My Darling*

978-1-77214-117-7 | \$18 | 160 pp.

subTerrain



STRONG WORDS FOR A POLITE NATION

**6 ISSUES
FOR ONLY
\$25**



SUBTERRAIN 79: BYE-BYE VANCOUVER

Featuring essays and commentary by **Peter Babiak, Charles Campbell, David Spaner, Natasha Sanders-Kay and Aaron Chapman;** fiction from **Zsuzsi Gartner, Martin West,** and **Chelene Knight;** photography by **Greg Girard** AND MORE!

ON NEWSSTANDS NOW!

Subscribe now at www.subterrain.ca

Erasure Contest Winners

Winners of the 2017 Occasional Geist Erasure Contest

1ST PRIZE

TINDER BIO

I'm great.

I'd rather not
die alone.

I'm slow to improve.
I don't party.

I have a rat
and two cacti.
All are named
Don.

I don't get high
and I floss nightly
so don't worry
about that.

I can count to eleven
in Portuguese
FYI.

I kiss with vigour.
Sex is cool.

If you want to grab a drink
I'm down ;)

Cara Schacter lives and tinders in Toronto. Her poem "Please Play Again" was published in Geist 106, and her postcard story "Hummus" was long-listed for the 12th Annual Geist Literal Literary Postcard Story Contest.

2ND PRIZE

UNDERCOVER REPORT ON THE FIXER AT PHARMALOOT

Sir—

He, from report alone
was not slow
and with characteristics
which led him to qualify
secretly.

According to him
the original fails,
they ship *something blue*
instead, throw over
in secret
direct and subsequent blame.

The main impressions
chart as passion,
capacity's force
tinged by choices
in secret.

He tows in wealth, nine-
teen times out of twenty
a mass of material
substantial indeed
in secret serious harm.

Rose Maloukis is a poet and visual artist. Her poetry was shortlisted for the 2015 Montreal International Poetry Prize and two poems were recently published in Issue #105 of Matrix. She lives in Montreal.

3RD PRIZE

ANTHROPOCENE I

Knowledge is the silken object
we adore. When, however, we lose
sight of the original, we lament,
dear, that the world should leave so
dispassionately! It is then that nature
feels empty; and we follow,
ashamed—divested of this earth,
mere creatures look back with regret
to that real beauty.

Sue Sinclair's most recent collection of poetry, Heaven's Thieves (Brick Books), won the 2017 Pat Lowther Award. She teaches creative writing at the University of New Brunswick.

RESIDUE

Fugitives

TRUDI LYNN SMITH AND KATE HENNESSY

Fugitives in archives reveal the generative power of disorder



Fugitives in the British Columbia Provincial Archives
(detail). Colour Photograph. Dimensions variable. 2017.



“No one can win against kipple,” [Isadore] said, “except temporarily and maybe in one spot, like in my apartment I’ve sort of created a stasis between the pressure of kipple and nonkipple, for the time being. But eventually I’ll die or go away, and then the kipple will take over. It’s a universal principle operating throughout the universe; the entire universe is moving toward a final state of total, absolute kippleization.”

—Philip K. Dick, 1968, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (pp. 65–66)

In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Philip K. Dick's novel set in a dystopian near-future, the world has become animated by the entropic force of kipple. Dick uses the word kipple to describe useless objects "like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers" as examples of the virulent deterioration of all things.

The novel follows the bounty hunter Deckard as he tracks fugitive androids. The humanoid androids evade capture as they race against time because kipple—the unstoppable force of entropy—threatens to claim them and the world that each inhabits. The best one can do, as Dick's character Isidore explains, is to temporarily create a kind of stasis between entropy and order, while understanding that the "First Law of Kipple" is that "kipple drives out nonkipple." In the novel, entropy is resisted while relentlessly reminding the reader of what it is to be human—that is, to live and eventually die.

While we are aware that human life is temporary, we imagine our memory institutions—libraries, archives and museums—as sterile bastions of permanence and preservation. To the contrary, entropy, the tendency of matter to degrade to a state of disorder, thrives in contemporary memory institutions, where human stewards of collected objects work to maintain a temporary stasis between order and entropy. In analog and digital archives alike, issues of material loss and corruption are conventionally met with tools of resistance, from simple freezers aimed at halting the progression of deterioration, to fire-resistant bunkers built to contain explosive chemical reactions, to complex robotic

systems designed to detect and recreate files gone bad¹. We draw attention in our project, *Fugitives*, to what we call anarchival materiality, or the generative force of entropy, of things breaking down and becoming new things, in archives.

For example, some of the earliest and most important documents are written on materials that were made from the skins of calf and sheep. Conservators we spoke to told stories of working to keep the document pages from curling, seemingly back toward the bodies they came from. These practices of care might be considered acts of shepherding materials through constant states of change, revealing a tension between the task of preservation and acknowledgement of the fugitive nature of all things. From this perspective, archives run alongside and in relationship with living beings and are ripe with the disruptive force of fugitive materials: anarchival materiality.

Anarchival materiality has a shape and smell: It is a stack of orphan wallets; a live bullet; nitrate negatives that have transformed into gooey interleaving between other photographic objects. The anarchival force of molecular transformation, chemical reactions, rot and other human and non-human interactions render archival objects into what are known in archival worlds as fugitives, objects that, like Dick's androids, elude preservation. Using the photographs of fugitive objects that we created as expressions of our research, we suggest that fleshing out relationships between the materiality of things and their human caregivers can provide a better understanding of uncertainty and precarity as vital forces in archives.

FUGITIVES

This project began for us while working in the Chicago Field Museum in 2013. The trace of a pastel drawing imprinted on the inside of a manila folder inspired us to look for active materials in archives closer to home. In 2017 we began working at the British Columbia Provincial Archive in Victoria, BC. There, Ann ten Cate, an archivist, and Ember Lundgren, a preservation specialist, walked us through the stacks, leading us to compelling objects and telling their stories. Ann referred to these objects as fugitives, which quickly became the foundation of our project. We gathered these fugitives and brought them to a makeshift photography studio we created adjacent to the public archival research room.

We found that like Dick's androids, things in archives become fugitive in multiple ways. They may be (1) deemed to exist outside of the logic of the archive, exiled, without provenance or documentation, or (2) an anomaly with provenance or material composition that poses a threat to the archive or to archivists themselves. An item can become fugitive if (3) the archivist determines that it is no longer of value, and therefore anarchival, and by the same turn can be made archival again if new value is attached to it. It can also (4) become fugitive by nature of its inevitable material transformation, so that it literally cannot be preserved. Fugitivity is a form of anarchival materiality that helps us to explore alternate organizations within—and understandings of—archives. *Fugitives* make the state of change in archives visible.

WALLETS I:

A pile of wallets collected over many decades sat, disorderly, on a shelf at one end of the archive. Most fugitives do not linger in the archive—they are identified, deaccessioned and destroyed. However, some things hang around. Orphaned from their associated files, the wallets, ten Cate told us, were “...the last possessions of someone who died in British Columbia, intestate, no will, no relatives, nothing, so the government took over administration of these items, and so we have these sad little collections.” The wallets still hold the shape of the bodies that they were carried on, transformed through physical interactions. “They’re like last remains to me in a way... the physical body has long gone, but what you’re left with are very personal and intimate notes, photographs of their relatives” (ten Cate, 2017). Disconnected from archival documentation, they are rendered fugitive both by their anarchival status, and by the will of archivists to keep them as powerful and intimate reminders of life and death.

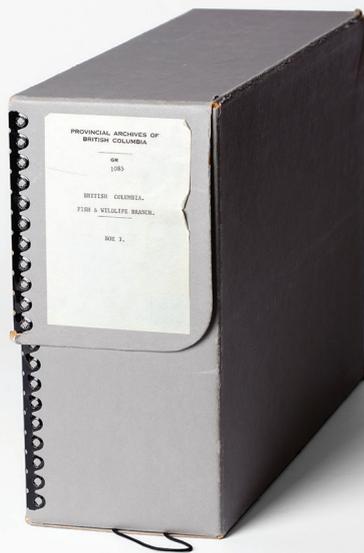


SIMON GUNANOOT'S BULLETS:

Bullet I and Bullet II are fugitive anomalies in the files associated with the infamous story and court case of Simon Gunanoot. Gunanoot was born in 1874. His mother was a Gitksan chief of the Fireweed Clan, and his father a hereditary chief of the Frog Clan. He was a prosperous merchant with a store in Kispiox, BC, until he himself became a fugitive. He—along with his brother-in-law—became entangled in a fight at a tavern in Hazelton, BC. When the two non-Indigenous men with whom Gunanoot had fought were later found shot dead, a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Simon Gunanoot's file contains forensic evidence: two bullets in an envelope labelled in neat cursive handwriting. The photograph “Bullet I” shows fragments of bullets that were fired and presumably extracted from the dead men's bodies. “Bullet II” is a photograph of a bullet cartridge that was never fired, possibly remaining live, and now a potential threat to the physical integrity of the archive.

The bullets are fugitives because they are unstable, in-between; first, existing as fragments outside of the order of the colonial archive; and second, as problematic to preserve in the context of its history. The live bullet, in particular, represents the latent possibility of violence in the archive, a notion amplified by its historical significance as material evidence of colonial conflict.



TRAPLINE RECORDS:

The mutable nature of fugitives in archives can be discerned in their potential for reversal. Trapline Records I shows a box containing files held in the collection of the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the provincial government in Prince George, BC. It contains correspondence between what was then known as an Indian Agent and the Canadian government arguing that Haida trappers had long-established trapping rights in their territory, and that these territories should not be given over to settlers. In the story we heard from Ann ten Cate, these records had been for an unknown reason deemed archival. They lay on a loading dock ready to be sent to the dump when an observant individual walked by and retrieved them, recognizing their importance. The trapline records regain value and significance in ongoing, unresolved Aboriginal land and treaty rights in British Columbia.

NITRATE NEGATIVES I:

Fugitive by nature of inevitable material transformation, nitrate negatives provide spectacular evidence of the vibrant changing force of one thing becoming another in archives. Like Simon Gunanoot's bullet, nitrate film in archives represents violent potential in entropy. Developed in the 1880s as a flexible film support for photographic materials by Eastman Kodak, cellulose nitrate was widely used through the early 1950s. It is a notorious material in film and urban history for starting fires in the projection rooms of movie houses. Similar in chemical makeup to guncotton, nitrate is extremely volatile, and decomposes into a flammable gas to eventually become dust.

Nitrate Negatives I shows a stack of fused glass plates and nitrate negatives showing plastic negatives curving and arching against glass plate negatives. The negatives are not only fused to one another, but are fusing with the detritus of the archive: thread, hair and paper fragments. No longer a stack of individual, photo-based indexes of the past, the block is a reminder that photography is lively, and photographs, like memories they intend to imprint, are malleable.





NITRATE NEGATIVES II

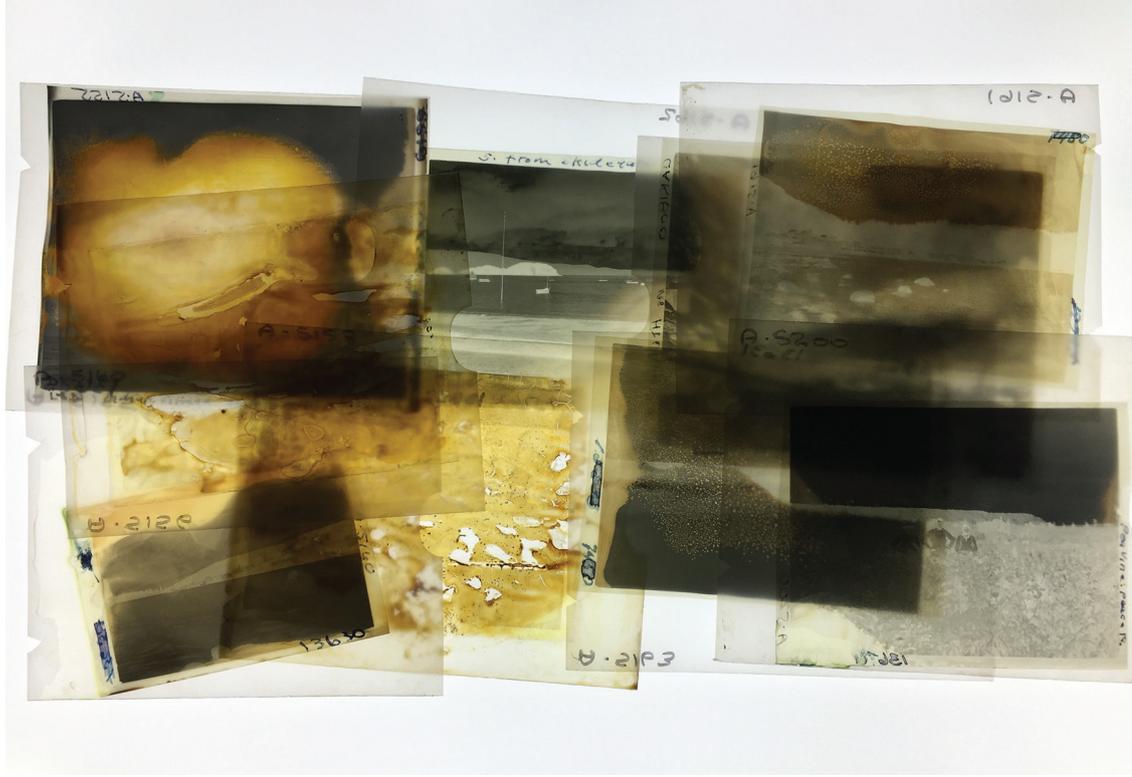
Photographs are vigorous changelings within archival collections. Ember Lundgren demonstrated for us the unstable nature of nitrate and acetate decomposition by carefully lifting the edge of a flake of negative. As we watched it slowly curl back into place, the negatives—images of people, places and events—transform. They are gooey, fused and flaky.

Nitrate Negatives II is an example of what happens when materials elude preservation measures storage in freezers. The autocatalytic nature of cellulose nitrate and acetate means that once the process of deterioration has begun, new properties are generated by the degradation, and these new properties create further degradation². The process is unpredictable, and attests to the entropic force of the archive.

NEGATIVE CURL I

The curl of these tightly scrolled negatives arises when the photographic emulsions and their supports change at different rates. These movements form blisters and buckles, revealing the entropic force that drives things to suddenly cross a threshold to become something new.





VINEGAR SYNDROME

The tangy smell of vinegar in the archive is usually the first indicator of vinegar syndrome, a chemical breakdown of cellulose acetate that produces acetic acid. For conservators, the scent signals the fugitive nature of photographic archives. As we walked the stacks Lundgren was on alert for contamination through her sense of smell. Photographing the materials, we could smell the acid and felt a sting in the back of our throats, an unexpected way to sense an archives.

KIPPLE DRIVES NONKIPPLE

To the literary critic N. Katherine Hayles³, Dick's androids make visible "the unstable boundaries between self and world" (1999:160). Boundaries are made unstable by the force of kipple driving out nonkipple. We can think of anarchival materiality in this way as well: as the archivists and conservators try to hold decay at bay, it is always within a context of frustration and an inability to truly do so.

Unstable boundaries are made visible by following fugitive objects and their human caregivers in the archive. Our photographs reveal our interest in archival uncertainty over certainty, and deterioration over preservation. Anarchival materialities are these deteriorating forces of matter—the force of things curling, catching fire, melting or escaping. While it is commonly understood that the intent of archives is to preserve documents deemed of value, it is the anarchival properties of archives—a set of relationships and processes—that shapes them. Fugitives are powerful reminders of the generative force of entropy in archives.

1 Marty Perlmutter, "The Lost Picture Show: Hollywood Archivists Can't Outpace Obsolescence," *IEEE Spectrum*, <http://spectrum.ieee.org/computing/it/the-lost-picture-show-hollywood-archivists-cant-outpace-obsolescence> spectrum.ieee.org.

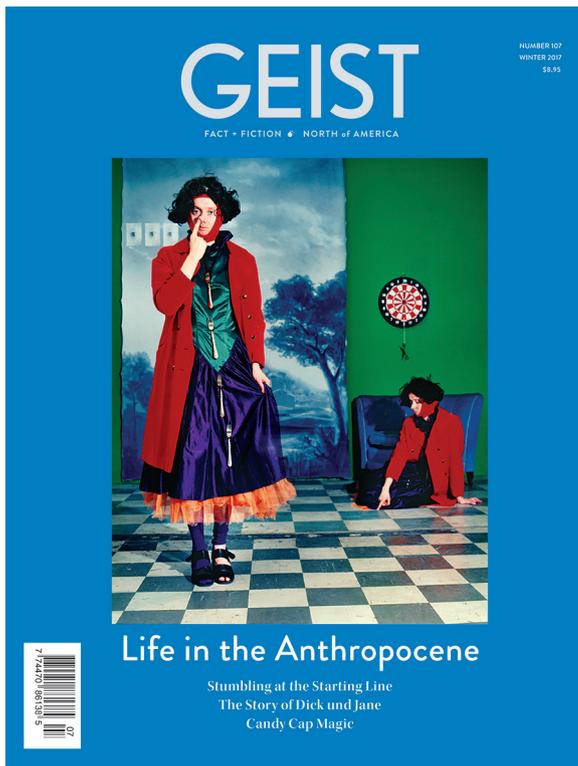
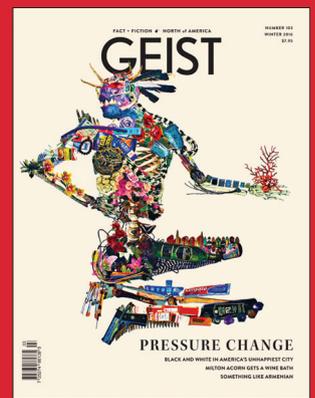
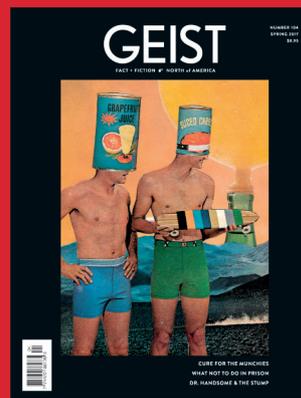
2 Monique Fischer, "A Short Guide to Film Base Photographic Materials: Identification, Care and Duplication," *Photographs 5.1*, Northeast Document Conservation Centre, 2012, nedcc.org.

3 N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman*. 1999.

Kate Hennessy is an associate professor specializing in media at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University.

Trudi Lynn Smith is artist-in-residence at the Making Culture Lab at Simon Fraser University and teaches visual ecology in the School of Environmental Studies at University of Victoria.

GIVE GEIST. GET LOVE.



Take advantage of the *Geist* Gift Offer: give your loved ones the year-long gift of *Geist*—that's four issues of the Canadian magazine of ideas and culture, delivered right to their door.

Order today using the handy form on the other side of this page.

Geist Gift Offer

NEXT PAGE



YOUR INFO...

I HAVE ENCLOSED \$_____ for _____ subscriptions.

Cheque enclosed OR please charge my Visa MC

Credit Card # _____

Expiry _____ Signature _____

GIFT FROM

Address _____

City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

PLEASE START my own subscription

RENEW my own subscription

GIFT CARD instructions

Send gift cards to me by mail

Sign cards...

From _____

and mail directly to recipient(s)

GIFT TO:

Address _____

City _____

Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

NEW GIFT

RENEWAL GIFT

GIFT TO:

Address _____

City _____

Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

NEW GIFT

RENEWAL GIFT

GIFT TO:

Address _____

City _____

Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

NEW GIFT

RENEWAL GIFT

GIFT TO:

Address _____

City _____

Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

NEW GIFT

RENEWAL GIFT

US & International: add \$6US/sub for postage

Geist does not share phone numbers and email addresses but we sometimes share snail mail lists with other like-minded organizations. Check here if you do not wish us to share your address.

G186



FILL OUT THIS FORM

and

give your reading friends the Gift of Geist

Geist Gift Offer

ONE SUBSCRIPTION

\$21

TWO SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$16 each

THREE OR MORE SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$14 each

Your own or a gift

4 easy ways to give Geist



Mail this form to:

**GEIST #210, 111 West Hastings St.
Vancouver BC V6B 1H4**



geist.com



1-888-434-7834



subscribe@geist.com

Note: gift rates apply to one-year subscriptions only. Postage and tax included.

GEIST

FACT + FICTION • NORTH of AMERICA



Smashing Identity Algorithms, Yes Please

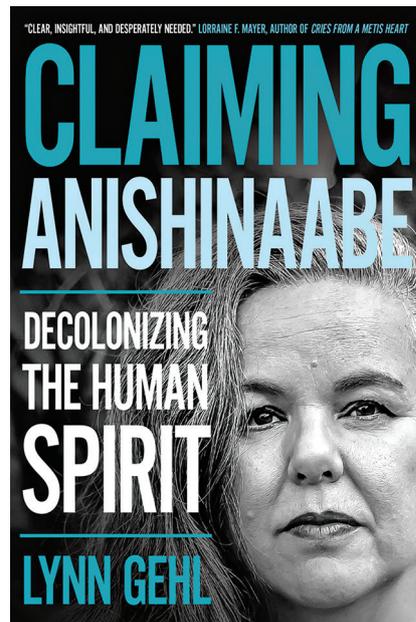
LISA BIRD-WILSON

While status registration under the Indian Act is a construct, claiming status identity is an important factor in Indigenous identity and cultural transmission

The Joseph Boyden Indigenous identity debacle that started late 2016 and really hit its high notes by 2017 underscores not only the importance of knowing and claiming your heritage accurately, but also of receiving acceptance from your community. Most readers will remember that Boyden, one of Canada's most commercially successful "Indigenous" authors, was the subject of investigative journalism by Jorge Barrera (APTN) exposing Boyden's Indigenous identity claims as unfounded. *It's not only about who you claim to be. It's about who claims you, too.* This mantra dominated discussions about Boyden's claims of Indigenous heritage. Granted, Boyden made some epic fuck-ups, including changing his claims about which Indigenous nation he is from. Boyden's inability to publicly identify his link and lineage to an Indigenous community, and then his failure to admit his shortcomings, led to widespread rejection of him as an Indigenous writer and legitimate Indigenous voice.

Boyden's was an unpleasant fall to watch, and many of us did so quietly from our own positions of insecure identity. I am an adopted Indigenous person, raised outside my family of origin, cheated by both harmful government policy and poor record keeping that often failed to transfer Indigenous identity rights to the child in adoption; the question who claims you is fraught with anxiety for me. The discussion about Boyden leaves many of us wondering about

standards of identity and if we measure up. Regardless of the ability to be registered as a "status Indian," or as a member of the Métis Nation, many of us question how we fit into the more subtle identity categories.



Lynn Gehl's new book, *Claiming Anishinaabe: Decolonizing the Human Spirit* (University of Regina Press, 2017), is titled partially in response to the Boyden controversy and fallout. The notion of being claimed by a nation or community can be dicey for some Indigenous people who have been separated from their communities of origin through forced adoption, removal of children, alienation, sexist legislation of the Indian Act or a combination of these violent

acts of colonialism. In Gehl's case, the violence of colonial acts committed by Canada meant her ability to become a registered member of her family's community and receive benefits under the Indian Act was rejected based on an unknown paternal grandfather who is assumed by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada policy to be a non-Indian person. Gehl took the federal government to court over a sneaky 1985 amendment to the Indian Act that denies full status to children in cases of unknown or unacknowledged paternity, making it difficult for women in such circumstances to pass their status on to future generations. This amendment fails to recognize the realities of sexual violence and domestic abuse faced by Indigenous women. The legacy of historical colonial violence, in the form of residential schools, forced assimilation policies, criminalization of Indigenous cultural practices and so on, has left First Nations women vulnerable.

Gehl is clear about her claim to Indigenous identity, stating that despite the fact that Canada denies her registration as a status Indian, and as a result her First Nation denies her band membership, "I myself claim I am Anishinaabe." Gehl writes, "I do this even though my Indigenous nation is unable to claim me as a citizen or member. I am decolonizing my spirit and claiming myself Anishinaabe."

Current legislation includes complicated rules for registering under the Indian Act. For instance, people registered under section 6 of the Indian

Act are divided into subsections 6(1) and 6(2) and are treated differently in regard to their ability to pass status on to children. As Chelsea Vowel notes in *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Issues in Canada* (Highwater Press, 2016), “This might be a good time to get a coffee, because this next bit is always confusing for people.”

Below is a breakdown, as shown in Chelsea Vowel’s *Indigenous Writes*. I feel it important to add that talking about people in this manner is absolutely dehumanizing, dispiriting, and the epitome of colonial oppression. The legislation, summed up in the diagrams, reveals a cold and complicated formula for human identity.

Eligibility for registration, or the denial of such eligibility, is fundamentally linked to cultural retention and identity, as Senator Lillian Dyck, a member of George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan, points out. She notes the sex-based discrimination in the Indian Act “has alienated hundreds of thousands of people like myself where we don’t have connections to our communities that we should have had...it’s a forced assimilation...it’s another method of cultural genocide.” Legislation that relies on such formulaic approaches impacts the human spirit, dignity and self-worth. It reinforces the myth of the vanishing Indian and threatens the freedom to live

and love by choice rather than according to programmed measures necessary to preserve cultural identity. It’s reductive in a slippery way that diminishes people to categories and numbers and imposes hierarchies of worth. For instance, a person who is registered as a 6(1) has a greater “status” and ability to pass their lineage to a child than the person registered as a 6(2). Simply discussing human beings in this manner is dehumanizing and soul-crushing.

Recently the Senate of Canada forced the federal government to amend a new piece of legislation, Bill S-3, to address female gender discrimination in the Indian Act once and for all and bring it into compliance

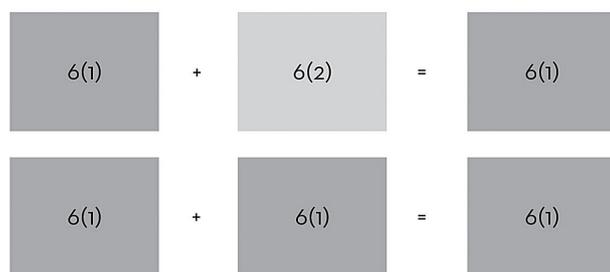


FIGURE 3.1. A 6(1) Indian who marries a 6(1) or a 6(2) Indian will have 6(1) children. Everyone in this equation is a full-status Indian.



FIGURE 3.2. If two 6(2) Indians marry, their children will have 6(1) status.

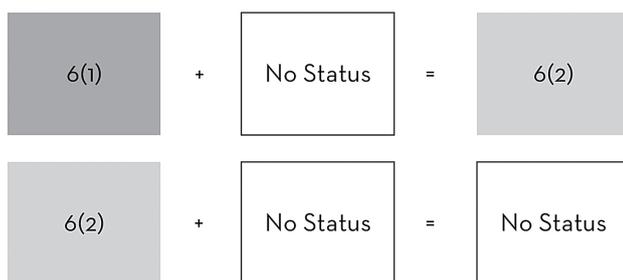


FIGURE 3.3. A 6(1) Indian who marries anyone without status (whether that person is Aboriginal or not) will have children who have 6(2) status. A 6(2) Indian who marries anyone without status (whether that person is Aboriginal or not) will have children with no legal Indian status.

with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Originally Bill S-3 proposed to address gender discrimination only from 1951 onward. The senators were able to have the legislation changed to address the sex-based discrimination, which affects Indigenous women who married non-status men, all the way back to 1876 when the Indian Act came into effect. Senator Dyck stated, “Finally Indian women will be recognized in law as having equal rights as Indian men to transmit status as registered Indians and all that goes with it—your language, your culture, your connection to your family, your connection to your community.”

The lack of a deadline for consultations and implementation for Bill S-3 leaves many people skeptical because—let’s face it—broken promises are the norm for federal government actions toward Indigenous people. As Senator Dyck states, “We should not trust the government. We don’t trust the government.” And if we heed Lynn Gehl’s words that “the purpose [of Indian Act legislation] was, and remains, Canada’s need to eliminate its treaty responsibilities,” we will see more of the many ways and many times Canada has tried to eliminate registered Indians—largely through Indigenous women and their babies.

Regarding the sex-based discrimination in the Indian Act, Senator Murray Sinclair makes the valid point that the problem was not created by Indigenous people: “[Government] created this problem, not First Nations people and not Indigenous women... The government has to solve this.” First Nations did not cause the problem of gender discrimination, but through processes of colonization and the introduction of legislatively supported patriarchal violence and marginalization of women in our communities, First Nations, led mostly by male chiefs and councils populated by men, and not necessarily acting in the best interests of women and children, began to implement the Indian Act regulations to exclude Indigenous

women from their communities. It bears repeating: in asking the question and demanding redress, Indigenous women are not responsible for knowing the solution. It’s the responsibility of the government to find ways to solve it.

Another current conversation, this one about eliminating the Indian Act altogether, which Gehl notes is extremely complicated, includes discussions about self-governance and fee-simple land settlements—led, again, by mostly male First Nation governance structures and not necessarily in the best interests of Indigenous women and children. While it is true that status registration under the Indian Act is a government and colonial construct, the concept of claiming status identity has clearly become an important factor in Indigenous identity and cultural transmission. With so much at stake, there can be no simple pen-stroke abolishment of the Indian Act in the name of decolonizing.

Gehl’s work, as she notes herself, can be “a bit of a cognitive wrestle,” but offers a current and critical discussion of Indigenous identity. In the process of decolonizing and locating ourselves as contemporary Indigenous people in the Canadian social, cultural and legal context, such discussions are necessary and timely. As Gehl says, “paradigm shifting requires mental activity and conceptual thinking.” To which I say, fewer Indian Act algorithms and more of what she says, please.

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

GEIST

FACT + FICTION 6th NORTH of AMERICA



Subscribe to Geist!

Go to geist.com or call 1-888-434-7834

Residential Roots

STEPHEN HENIGHAN

The hemispheric context reveals the roots of the residential school system



From the early 1880s until 1996 Indigenous children in Canada were taken away from their parents and interned in residential schools. The children were prohibited from speaking their languages, trained to despise their culture, fed a poor diet, taught an impoverished curriculum, forced to perform manual labour and catechized with the Christian religion. In nearly all of these schools, as documented by the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, children were physically and sexually abused by their teachers.

These experiences left many residential school survivors unfit for adult life. In addition to the annihilation of cultures and languages, the system's legacies include family breakdown, unemployment, mental illness and substance abuse.

No adult Canadian today was taught this history in school. When we asked our teachers about social problems among Indigenous people, the more liberal ones gave answers such as, "They're trying to preserve a stone-age culture." Less enlightened

teachers eschewed condescension for flat-out racist stereotyping. Our ignorance of the residential school system lent apparent credence to racist explanations for the social problems suffered by Indigenous people. Books such as Richard Wagamese's novel *Indian Horse* (2012) or Joseph Auguste Merasty's memoir *The Education of Augie Merasty* (2015) hadn't yet been written. To learn about racism, we were given Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me* (1961)—books

that taught us that racism happened in the USA, not Canada, and in the past, not the present.

It is impossible to imagine what Canada would be like today had the residential school system never existed: would we have a country in which two million people, rather than the current 200,000, speak Indigenous languages? Would social problems among Indigenous people be no more widespread than among other sectors of the population? Such speculation overlooks the fact that the residential school system was part of a complex of colonial policies, including reservations, disdain for treaties and the targeted importation of European settlers. The schools did not exist in isolation. Indigenous intellectuals urge the use of the term “colonial” to contextualize the residential schools. Some politicians have adopted this usage. In his apology to former students of the residential schools of Newfoundland and Labrador, delivered in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on November 24, 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recognized that “we know today that this colonial way of thinking led to practices that caused deep harm.”

The Canada that implemented the residential school network in the 1880s as official policy (scattered residential schools operated in earlier generations) was only fifteen years past Confederation. Colonial assumptions were a potent everyday reality. Yet to interpret the roots of residential schools purely in terms of colonialism is to decontextualize them. The conquest of Indigenous America by Europeans is a hemispheric phenomenon that extended from the southern tip of Chile to Ellesmere Island. This history passed through recognizable stages, often characterized by parallel developments in different regions.

The initial impact of European settlement in the Americas, in the sixteenth century, was the death of approximately ninety percent of the

Indigenous population from European diseases, abetted by forced labour and bouts of outright slaughter. By the late seventeenth century, though, the Indigenous population began to grow again. In much of the Americas, including many regions of Canada, Indigenous cultures maintained their worldviews, languages and customs (Virginia Pésémapéo Bordeleau’s novel *L’amant du Lac* [2013] portrays this pre-residential schools Indigenous society in its northwest Quebec variant). It is risky to claim that European racism was less virulent in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries than it later became, yet there is reason to believe that this is the case. Certain governments in the Americas, such as the dictatorship of Dr. Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (1814–40) in Paraguay, or the presidency of Rafael Carrera (1844–48, 1851–65) in Guatemala, became well known for defending Indigenous communities and their languages.

The adoption of positivism by elites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries destroyed this recovery. Based on the French philosopher Auguste Comte’s application of scientific method to the perception of reality, positivism in its Western hemisphere form morphed into prescriptive social policy animated by a pseudo-scientific dogma of white racial superiority. The two countries most invested in neo-European identity, Argentina and the United States, started genocidal wars against their Indigenous populations, known respectively as the Conquest of the Desert (1875–84) and the Indian Wars (1860–late 1890s). In 1881 Chile launched renewed campaigns to subdue the Mapuche people, who had never submitted to government control. Two Brazilian followers of Comte, Miguel Lemos and Raimundo Teixeira Mendes, made his doctrines so popular in their homeland that in 1889 the Comtean motto “Order and Progress” was added to Brazil’s flag. In Mexico and Central America,

anticlerical, free-market liberalism took power, in a movement known as La Reforma, and passed legislation depriving Indigenous communities of their lands. La Reforma represented white elites though it was not always led by them: the first Mexican president associated with this movement, Benito Juárez (1858–72), was a native speaker of Zapotec; the second, Porfirio Díaz (1876–1910), was a mestizo who wore make-up to lighten his skin.

The hemispheric context reveals the roots of the residential school system. In mid-nineteenth-century Canada, the influential philosopher W.D. LeSueur fused Comtean positivism with a passionate idealism. Though Christians did not approve of LeSueur’s materialism, and the authors of the notorious Indian Advancement Act of 1884, which deprived Indigenous people of their autonomy, did not quote him, LeSueur’s thought, a recognizably Canadian variant on the positivism sweeping the hemisphere, is expressive of the intellectual foundations of the residential school project. Destroying Indigenous cultures, along with tightening control over the national territory through the extension of railways and telegraph lines, was a positivist policy from Patagonia to Dawson City. Residential schools may have reflected colonialist convictions of white superiority, but these convictions were nourished by an ideology that was hemispheric. The residential school system, its goals and consequences, cannot be understood without an awareness of the common positivist outlook of governing classes throughout the Western hemisphere.

Stephen Henighan’s most recent books are the short story collection Blue River and Red Earth and his translation of the Angolan writer Ondjaki’s novel Transparent City. Read more of his work at geist.com and stephenhenighan.com. Follow him on Twitter @StephenHenighan.

The Devil

ALBERTO MANGUEL

We say, we insist The Devil whispers horrible things in our ear and inspires our worst deeds



Whether what we call consciousness was born from what we refer to as imagination or whether it was the other way round, at the beginning of the human age we began telling stories to attempt to explain our existence, and we dreamt up a divine being, a magic word, a dragon, a tortoise, a collision of matter and anti-matter to be our “once upon a time.” Pascal described this as the “little shove” kindly provided by a primordial creator; after that, stories could unfold on their own.

The stories we tell have their shadow:

beginnings have endings like day has night and conscious life has sleep. Every plot has at least two readings, and every character is at least twofold. Above one of the doors of a small church in northern Quebec is the statue of a woman: if seen from the front, her appearance is comely, from the back can be seen a mass of worms and maggots crawling through her exposed innards and ribs. Everything we conceive has an underbelly.

The scandal effected by Judaism of reducing the many ancient gods to a single omnipresent and omniscient

divinity must have felt too lopsided for a humanity accustomed to a Pythagorean binary universe. Very soon a second character was brought onto the scriptural stage. He too was omniscient and omnipresent, even if ultimately subject to the divine will, and yet sufficiently crafty to tempt even the Almighty, as in the cautionary tales of Job and Abraham. He was darkness to God’s light, a destructive force opposed to His creative energy, an alternative truth to the Truth. He was given many names, among them Satan, Lucifer, Mephistopheles,

Beelzebub, Mastema (in early rabbinical texts), Iblis (in the Quran) or simply the Devil (from the Greek *diabolos* meaning “slanderer”). In the *Book of Jubilees* (part of the *Apocrypha*) it is told that when Yehovah decided to expel the rebel angels after the flood and release humankind from temptation, the Devil persuaded God to allow him to retain ten percent of the punished flock in order to continue to test the faith of humans. Because of the Devil’s ability to deceive, Jesus called him “the Father of Lies,” (which is also the definition of a novelist).

Not content with this absolute division between the Supreme Good and the Supreme Bad, the Sufi poet Al-Ghazali imagined an alibi for the Devil and wrote that when the angels, at the bidding of God, prostrated themselves in front of the newly created Adam, only the Devil refused, saying that God’s command was a test, because “Heaven forbid that anyone worship anyone except the One Almighty.” Al-Ghazali doesn’t say how God rewarded his faithful servant, but in other religions, the Devil continues to be the unrelenting enemy of humankind.

Augustine saw him as deliberately setting a bad example and argued that “when man lives according to man, not according to God, he is like the Devil.” Earlier, in the second century, Apelles said that the Devil was a demiurge who had inspired the Old Testament prophets. Dante wisely placed the Devil right in the centre of the Earth, where the most beautiful of angels fell after his rebellion, causing the lands of the Southern hemisphere to retreat in horror, leaving an aquatic world *senza gente*. Luther (like St. Anthony before him) saw the Devil as a tempting nuisance and famously threw an inkwell at him, leaving a stain on the wall of the study in Wartburg Castle that could still be seen a century

ago. Milton imagined the Devil as a sort of Moëbius strip (“Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell”). Goethe, with a pinch of compassion, suggested that the Devil tempts humans because he is miserable and *solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris* (“misery seeks companions”).

No doubt the Devil is still among us. Up to this day, in Austria, Bavaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and parts of



LUCIFER INTERVIEWS THE MAYOR.

Northern Italy, the Devil (known in these regions as the Krampus) accompanies Father Christmas on his rounds, looking to shove naughty children into a sack and thrash them with bundles of birch. The Krampus-Devil is an ugly horned creature that predates Christianity, and carries chains to show that now he is bound to the will of the Church. On other occasions the Devil has taken on the appearance of a poodle, a snake, a dragon or even a gentleman.

Dante (again) argued that everything in the universe is the fruit of God’s love, including sin. Following this idea, the Devil can be seen as the perverter or diverter of this divine projection, causing humans to love in excess (lust or avarice), or not enough

(pride, envy, sloth and anger), or to direct their love toward inappropriate objects (covetousness and gluttony).

Saint Bonaventure wrote that our bewilderment when confronted with inexplicable suffering merely shows our lack of faith in the perfect justice of God, and stems from us not being aware of the whole story. We resort to the Devil to try to understand the infamous events that plague us daily, now and always. The Devil (we say) whispers horrible things in our ear and inspires our worst deeds. It is the Devil (we insist) who is responsible for disease, war, famine; for the rise to power of Caligula, Stalin, Hitler; for torture, murder and the abuse of children. The Devil is the hazy excuse for our nightmares and nightmarish actions, but unfortunately the argument for his responsibility is not ultimately convincing.

If the work of the Devil can be seen as the dark side of the labours of God, the all-pervading misery of the world might be understood as a certain dearth of divine energy, as the inconceivable exhaustion of the Almighty. The Hasidim tell the following story. In an obscure village in central Poland, there was a small synagogue. One night, when making his rounds, the Rabbi entered and saw God sitting in a dark corner. He fell upon his face and cried out: “Lord God, what art Thou doing here?” God answered him neither in thunder nor out of a whirlwind, but with a small voice: “I am tired, Rabbi, I am tired unto death.”

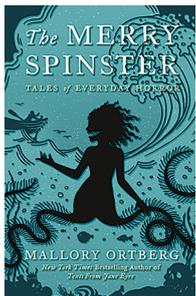
Alberto Manguel is the award-winning author of hundreds of works, most recently (in English) Packing My Library: An Elegy and Ten Digressions, All Men Are Liars and A History of Reading. He lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he serves as director of the National Library. Read more of his work at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

ENDNOTES

REVIEWS, COMMENTS, CURIOSA

NEW SPINSTERS SMASH THE PATRIARCHY

In *The Merry Spinster* (Henry Holt), a collection of feminist short stories, Mallory Ortberg exposes the dark underbelly of familiar fairy tales. An extension of “Children’s Stories Made Horrific,” Ortberg’s column on the-toast.net (a website of humour and feminist writing, now inactive), *The Merry Spinster* twists folk tales, Biblical stories and favourite children’s books alike, into stories that subvert plot lines, gender and cultural norms. No happy endings here, only an uncomfortable recognition that villainous men are also found outside of fairy tales: a Beast (here, just a man) tries to guilt a servile Beauty into marrying him, her captor; a mermaid kills her cheating husband in order to restore her voice; a frog worms his way into the Princess’s bed without clear consent.



This is why I found “The Six Coffins,” a retelling of the Brothers Grimm stories “The Six Swans” and “The Twelve Brothers,” to be the most satisfying of Ortberg’s stories. In it, the daughter triumphs over a tyrannical father in a sharp commentary on patriarchal society and women’s reproductive rights. “The Rabbit” was perhaps the most sinister story: in this retelling of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the rabbit strategizes how best to “take someone else’s Real” and keep it for himself, with unfortunate implications for his human owner. Above all, Ortberg’s humour and keen observations challenged my expectations in each story. I could not read more than one at a time, not simply because I didn’t want

to rush through the book, but also because the stories were too unsettling to binge on. *The Merry Spinster* stands in good company with Emily Carroll’s *Through the Woods* and Isabel Greenberg’s *The One Hundred Nights of Hero*, which together form a new tradition of feminist fairy tales that aim to smash the patriarchy.

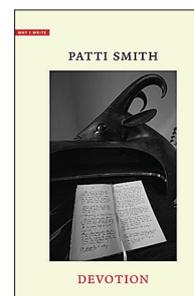
—Kelsea O’Connor

THE HOW AND WHY OF IT

For advice on the “how” of writing, you can’t go far wrong by consulting John McPhee. McPhee, now eighty-seven, a Pulitzer Prize winner and author of thirty books or so, has a new book out, *Draft No. 4: On the Writing Process* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), compiled from eight pieces that first appeared in the *New Yorker*. The piece that gives the book its title is about writers’ block—among other things. “You are blocked, frustrated, in despair. You are nowhere, and that’s where you’ve been getting.” McPhee’s advice? Perseverance; drawing boxes around words; consulting thesauruses; going for a walk. His writing rambles too. McPhee is chattier than I’d remembered, and—magpie-like—he can’t resist a sparkling word, or an opportunity for wordplay. Which may explain in part how he can make even esoteric topics—oranges! bark canoes! a pine forest in New Jersey!—so fascinating. If forced to pick a highlight from this latest book, I’d go with his essay on structure, copiously illustrated with annotated diagrams. “A compelling structure in non-fiction can have an attracting element effect analogous to a story line in fiction.” McPhee’s essays and books are all structurally sound: rock-solid, with

each element in its proper place—and the effort that went into making them so is invisible.

The late James Salter wrote impeccable prose, sharply observed details expressed in brief sentences that occasionally let loose, aggregating into passages that perfectly express “emotion recollected in tranquility.” For my money Salter’s best work was in *Light Years* (1975), a “beautiful, luminous novel [...] about the disintegration of a dream” (to quote the front flap). “How does one *make* prose impeccable?” you might well ask. In search of answers you could look for helpful hints in Salter’s posthumously published *The Art of Fiction* (University of Virginia Press), a slim volume, of which one third is introduction (by John Casey). The rest of the book consists of transcriptions of three talks given by Salter during his tenure as Distinguished Writer in Residence at the University of Virginia, in 2014, only months before his death at ninety. “Le mot juste” might be one takeaway from these talks: “There are thousands of ordinary words that make up a book, just as in an army there are many ordinary soldiers and occasional heroes. But there should not be wrong words or words that degrade the sentence or page.” And this worthwhile goal: “Sentences that go together as if that



were their only purpose but are not there for their own sake.” As for his reasons for writing, Salter admits to these: “to be admired by others, to be loved by them, to be praised, to be known”;

but then adds: “None of those reasons give the strength of the desire.”

Devotion is a pocket-sized volume by Patti Smith, the first in a new series titled *Why I Write*, from Yale University Press. Smith, known to many as the “punk poet laureate,” was awarded the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 2010 for *Just Kids*, her memoir about New York City in the 1970s. *Devotion* is divided into three sections, the opening and closing pieces being mini-memoirs, which sandwich a somewhat fanciful, and fictional, “tale of obsession” about an ice skater and a collector. The mini-memoirs offer insights into the inspirations for the tale itself, inspirations that include a visit to Paris, and the courtyard garden of Gallimard, her French publisher; to Sète, and the grave of poet Paul Valéry; to the Provençal town of Lourmarin, where Camus lived, died and is buried. Why do we write? “Because we cannot simply live.”

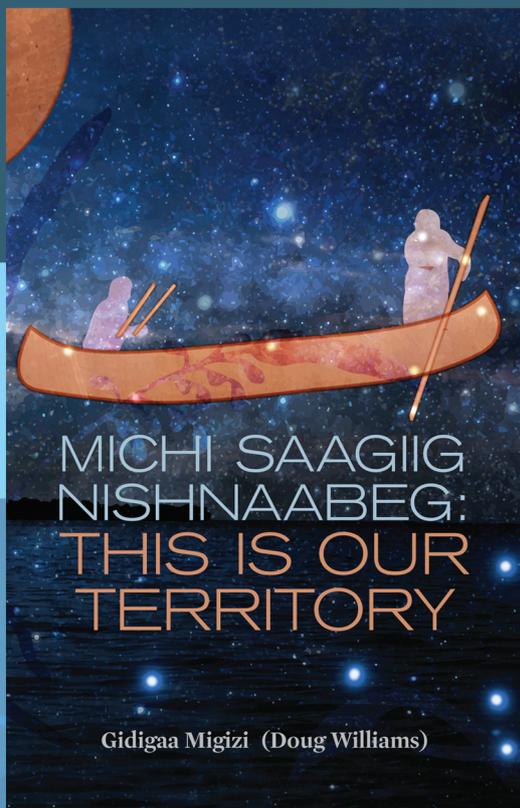
—Michael Hayward

PUTTING AWAY BAGUA



I was squeezed into a space defined by two walls and two desks, my computer on one of the desks, facing one of the walls, where I had been spending more and more time writing fewer and fewer words. I moved the monitor and the keyboard to the other desk, so that I faced across the room and toward the door and felt immediately at ease; I began to breathe. Then I began threading and rethreading the maze of wireage: i.e., the monitor cord, printer cord, external drive cords, speaker cords, second monitor cord, power cords, power bar cords, lamp cords, mouse and keyboard cords, and several connective cords without any connections, which were simply there to be disentangled and then further

entangled as I pressed on rearranging the desk and my life. In the end I discovered that the short cord to the second monitor provided a defining limit of any “ideal” arrangement: more adjustment was required, and then more adjustment after that, and more. Working within a constraint is good for the character and for postmodernism too, as we all know, so I turned to the internet for constraint advice and found a list of feng shui sites, each promising a particular reward for good desktop feng shui; i.e., success, money, happiness, love, etc., but, significantly, no promises for writing rewards of any kind. But for feng shui success in any area, I quickly learned, I would need to know my lucky feng shui positions, available through another website, where I had first to follow another link to learn my *kua* number, which turned out to be 8. And then back to the first link, which told me my lucky directions and the rewards to be found at each one (mine are: SW=\$; NW=health;



“These stories are more than just a chronicle of oral history. They document Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg as provocateurs, strategists, connectors, agitators and intellectuals. They show that resistance and resurgence have always been part of us.”

—Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

“Storytelling is... the weaving together of history, philosophy, culture and humour frequently highlighting a culture's perspective on the world. Doug Williams has been doing this as long as I can remember. He lives the culture, not just talks about it.”

—Drew Hayden Taylor

“This book is [Doug’s] gift to the Michi Saagiig and to all Anishinaabek. It is also a gift to Canadians who want to help decolonize this country.”

—Armand Garnet Ruffo

arpbooks.org

ARP

POLITICS | CULTURE | ACTIVISM

W=love; NE=spirit); all other directions will bring only bad luck, each in its own (unspecified) category. With those directions now clear to me, it remained to put things on my desk in their proper places on the compass rose. My lamp, for example, was to go in the upper left corner of my *bagua*, where it is of no use to me; the family photos were to be displayed in the northeast along with lucky charms, etc. Already the desk was getting crowded again; there were plenty more spots to fill. I scrolled through a list of feng shui desktop sites looking for one that showed a computer with two monitors (even the Feng Shui Your Computer into a Money Magnet site only showed a tiny laptop) when I came to the end of the list and stopped at a blog post called “Put That Bagua Map Down! And Step Away Slowly.” This was the advice that I needed. I connected the keyboard and began, as advised, to type away, slowly.

—Stephen Osborne

IN THE WEE, SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING...

From time to time this reviewer comes across a new poetry collection that stands out amongst the others. In



recent months, that collection has been Kevin Shaw's **Smaller Hours** (Goose Lane).

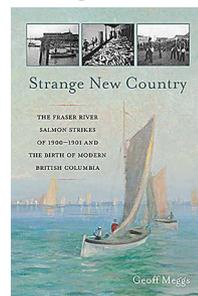
The author had me hooked with the very first poem, “Clocked,” in which he manages in eight lines to convey a child's grief over the untimely loss of two grandfathers. The finale is a pair of ghostly lines: “I believed watches had faces to remind us of corpses. / I confused grandfather clocks for the men in their caskets.” This slim volume contains forty-two poems, and not one is a throwaway. Shaw's style of poetry can best be described in a quote about minimalist

writing by the late master, Raymond Carver: “Get in, get out. Don't linger. Get on.” There is a sense of urgency in the majority of these poems, and also a cozy sense of place: Shaw speaks of his hometown, London, Ontario, with impassioned touches. If you've ever stayed in London, you'll immediately recognize the settings of “After Hours in Eldon House,” “Victoria Park” and “After Jack Chambers's 401 Towards London No. 1.” One of the few longer poems in *Smaller Hours*, and one of the best, is “Discretion.” It's written as though you're touring through the empty feelings associated with personal ads or casual encounters. Such feelings are presented in a series of one-liners that cleverly hang together. I felt as though this poem could have been written by one of our better one-liner comedians—Steven Wright, or Jonathan Katz—but if Wright or Katz chose poetry over stand-up comedy.

—Jill Mandrake

MURDER, HE WROTE

Among the unsolved murders in Van-



couver's history, who killed Frank Rogers is one of the most mysterious. The well-known labour radical, one of the leaders of the 1900-01 Fraser

River salmon strike, was gunned down on a Gastown street in the middle of the night in April 1903 while strolling home from dinner with friends. Railway workers were on strike against the Canadian Pacific Railway, the CPR had brought in scabs and the waterfront was bubbling with unrest. Was Rogers assassinated by a CPR hit man? Was it a case of mistaken identity, or just a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time? In his new book on the fishermen's strike, **Strange New Country: The Fraser River Salmon Strikes of 1900-1901 and the**

Birth of Modern British Columbia (Harbour Publishing), Geoff Meggs reviews the evidence but, in the end, has to leave the crime unsolved. The headstone on Rogers's grave reads “murdered by a scab” but the evidence remains inconclusive. Actually the shooting is a footnote to Meggs's larger story: the fishermen's strike and its impact on the province. Meggs, a historian of the fishing industry as well as a former Vancouver city councillor, argues that the strike was the first time that the labour movement organized across racial lines and directly confronted the province's small industrial/political elite. We'll probably never know who killed Frank Rogers, but at least Meggs has brought him back to life in the pages of this book, along with the other labour firebrands who took on big business in one of the bitterest strikes in the province's history.

—Daniel Francis

BASKETS CASE

Nearly 500 scripted TV series aired in the U.S. and Canada last year, everything from *The Big Bang Theory* and *Modern Family* to the recently cancelled *Downward Dog*, in which “a lonely dog navigates the complexity of 21st century relationships.” Given this rich cornucopia, why would I tell you that you must watch **Baskets** (FX)? It's clearly not one of the best shows on TV right now,



nowhere close. There's really only one reason to watch it. And it's a good one. Named Christine. The show itself has a bare-bones premise. Zach Galifianakis, in his late 40s, plays Chip Baskets, an aspiring clown who has taken up the profession a little late in life. He studied clowning at the “prestigious clown academy” in Paris but had trouble with the lessons as

he didn't speak French. Returning home to nowheresville, a.k.a. Bakersfield, California, he befriends Martha, an insurance adjuster at Costco, reconnects with his twin brother Dale (get it? Chip & Dale) and the adopted twins, the DJs Cody and Logan. And he moves back in with his mother, Christine. Their relationship is fraught, but not without its tender moments. During Easter Day brunch at the local casino, Chip turns to Christine. "My life's in disarray right now, Momma," he says. "Whose isn't? Whose isn't?" she replies. The revelation is that veteran comedian Louis Anderson plays Christine, the Baskets family matriarch (her husband, Nathaniel died some years before, having "accidentally fallen off a bridge while admiring the river"). How do you get a well-known veteran comedian, weighing some 350 pounds, and turn him into a woman you can't take your eyes off of? And do it without turning him into a drag grotesquerie? That's why you should see *Baskets*. It isn't perfect. But when it's good it is sublime.

—Thad McIlroy

HAUNTS

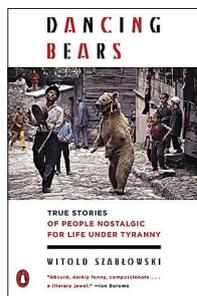
How are we haunted by the past? And how do we break free? These are the questions posed by Amber Dawn in her marvellous ghost story *Sodom Road Exit* (Arsenal Pulp Press). Set in Ontario's lakeside Crystal Beach in 1990, the novel follows twenty-year-old Starla Mia Martin as she returns home after a disastrous stint at university in Toronto. She moves back in with her mother and takes up with Tamara, a young woman she went to high school with. Starla is haunted by her past, as is Tamara. And so is Crystal Beach, literally. It was once home to a famous amusement park and the "most dangerous roller coaster in the world." The amusement park has been razed, but bits of signage have become collectibles and Starla unwittingly hangs a

sign for the "Laugh in the Dark Ride" over her bed. The sign is possessed by Etta, a queer, young grifter who met her death at the fairground fifty years earlier. And Etta moves quickly from possession of the old piece of wood to possession of Starla. Once possessed, Starla gains powers from Etta; the haunting is visceral and releases psychic energy. People come from miles away to hear Starla speak and tell them their past and their future. But Etta is feeding off Starla, turning her into a wraith, killing her. This all happens at a trailer park where Starla gets a job as the night manager. As Etta consumes Starla, it's up to Tamara and the community of outcasts who live in the trailer park to find a way to exorcise Etta and the past.

—Peggy Thompson

BARELY BEARABLE

Who knew that a book about bears in Bulgaria would be a laugh-out-loud delight? Witold Szablowski's *Dancing Bears: True Stories of People Nostalgic for Life Under Tyranny* (Penguin), translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones tells the story of Bulgarian gypsies and the move to democracy in Eastern Europe (and elsewhere). For generations the gypsies have been raising bears and teaching them to dance and perform tricks. By most accounts the training was far more stick than carrot: a hot-metal ring was inserted in the young bear's nose, and the bear was then often beaten, and its teeth removed as a precaution. The bears were fed mostly bread and candies and



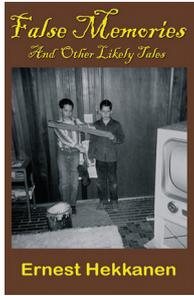
enough beer and hard liquor that some became alcoholics. After the "liberation" of Eastern Europe, the charity Four Paws (with support from Brigitte Bardot) began to move for an end to private citizens keeping bears, and by 2007 the last of the bears were confiscated from their owners. Four Paws established a park in the small Bulgarian town of Belitsa to house the bears. By all accounts the bears' treatment in Belitsa is cushy, far easier than in nature, and certainly a great improvement over their lives before. The tragicomedy begins as we learn what it takes to wrestle a bear from its keeper; part of Szablowski's achievement with this book is that we sympathize with the gypsies alongside the bears. Szablowski does a masterful job of contrasting the new freedoms in former Communist countries with the new freedoms of the Belitsa bears. How do we get them to stop dancing, fearing a punishment that's no longer administered? Or perhaps, just perhaps, do they long to return to the old days, when at least they knew where they stood?

—Thad McIlroy

RECALL, RETENTION, RECOGNITION

I'm inclined to refer to *False Memories and Other Likely Tales* (New Orphic Publishers) as a Baby Boom biography. With chapter titles like "Remedial Reading," "Gravel Pit" and "American Model," there may be no other way to describe Ernest Hekkanen's compelling non-fiction narrative. Some may appreciate this memoir because Hekkanen suggests in his preface a lively, interactive game that can be played with each of the chapters. And many of his insights have stood the test of time. In "Remedial Reading," for example, the author's first-hand take on dyslexia can be helpful for today's special needs educators. When his tutor asks Mike (the narrator) why he turns his

head from side to side when trying to read, Mike replies: “Because I need a running start to get over the gap in



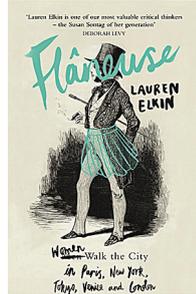
the middle of the page.” Mike then discloses how he cured his learning disability; a convoluted cure involving a trip to the garbage dump. I won’t go into details and spoil the mystery. Speaking of mystery, all Hekkanen’s chapters include solving a mystery; in some cases, a grisly one. In “Gravel Pit,” the narrator’s mother confronts him about prying into a neighbour’s shady business: “Marg told me the police were questioning her at the bowling alley. Apparently, some kid around your age showed them a copy of *The Bowling News*, and they were checking to see if the Alley Cats had anything to do with Mrs. Rimple’s death.” The narrator’s reply gets him grounded for two weeks, although he does manage to track down a killer. If you string together all the chapters of *False Memories*, they’re very much like watching a Hardy Boys serial, but only if the serial were directed by David Lynch (as in “a town where nothing is as it seems, and everyone has something to hide.”) Don’t miss it.

—Jill Mandrake

WOMEN TAKING BACK THE STREETS

At one time the life of a *flâneur* seemed to me to be a noble goal, and the purest possible expression of personal freedom. Plus: there were all those cafés to be encountered en route, where one could pause to savour an espresso, while contemplating the many other pleasures of *la vie bohème*: poverty, drunkenness, insanity, literary fame. Laura Elkin felt much the same, but found opportunities in that particular career path to be limited by her gender, the *flâneur* usually

seen as “a figure of masculine privilege and leisure, with time and money and no immediate responsibilities to claim his attention.” Hence *Flâneuse* (Chatto and Windus): the end result of Elkin’s frustration at this unfortunate state of affairs. *Flâneuse* is a contemporary, feminist take on themes explored by Walter Benjamin in his classic *Arcades Project*—and in other works of that ilk by writers like Ian Sinclair (*London Orbital; Edge of the Orison*), Will Self (*Psychogeography*)



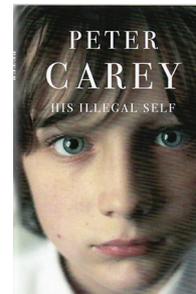
and Julien Gracq (*The Shape of a City*), as well as in films by directors such as Terence Davies (*Of Time and the City*) and Patrick Keiller (*London; Robinson in Space*). All of them men, you’ll note; the ones who (as Elkin puts it) “you read about in the *Observer* on weekends, ... writing about each other’s work, creating a reified canon of masculine writer-walkers. As if a penis were a requisite walking appendage, like a cane.” In *Flâneuse*, Elkin interleaves autobiographical material—her own urban experiences and encounters in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London—with reconsiderations of the lives of other, more celebrated women in whose footsteps she treads: novelist Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin (aka George Sand), artist Sophie Calle, war correspondent Martha Gellhorn and filmmaker Agnès Varda. Students of *flâneuserie* take note: there is an extensive bibliography, and copious notes, but (alas) no index.

—Michael Hayward

FREELY INDIRECT AND ILLEGALLY SELFISH

This spring, in the March 2008 issue of the *New Yorker* (which I picked up at the Denman Island Free Store), I came across one of the best book reviews I have ever read. In 2008, reviewer James

Wood wrote of Peter Carey’s novel, *His Illegal Self* (Random House), that “the world bulges out of the sentences,” and the phrases that Wood gives as examples are inspiring in their sparse but brilliant descriptions. Wood goes on to analyze one of the strengths of Carey’s writing, something called “free Indirect style”—which Wood describes as “the bending of third-person narrative around the viewpoint of the character who is being described,” and Wood shows that this is essential to our viewing the world through the eyes of Carey’s main character, an eight-year-old boy. By this point, Wood’s piece was feeling less like a book review and more like an important lesson on how to write well, so when I got back to town I took Carey’s *His Illegal Self* out of the library and dove in. The novel moves at break-neck speed from the moment that an eight-year-old boy is scooped up from his grandmother’s care by his mother, who is in hiding because she is part of a radical protest group. The boy is sure that, just as he has imagined, his mother (whom he has not seen since he was two) is taking him to meet his father (whom



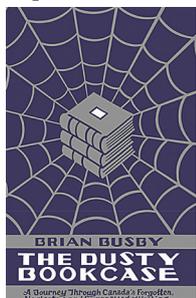
he has never seen). Arrangements go awry and no explanations are given to the boy or to the reader as he and the woman (who may or may not be his mother and who does not seem to have a plan) travel to various US cities and end up in a foundering hippie commune in the Australian bush. We get brief respites from the boy’s uncertain and sometimes terrifying world when Carey doubles back on the story to fill in details that the boy does not know. This, plus a tiny bit of foreshadowing of the boy’s adult life, make this frenetic journey bearable enough to keep reading. Wood

was right, this is a beautiful novel, and the writing is worth studying and emulating.

—Patty Osborne

GATHERING DUST

The pleasure of Brian Busby's **The Dusty Bookcase** (Biblioasis) is in the dipping. And the double dipping. At random I open the book to page 302 and learn of the 1954 novel *Murder without Regret*, by E. Louise Cushing, a mystery set in Montreal featuring Inspector MacKay of the "Montreal Police Service" and a young female protagonist not much interested in men. On page 53 is a review of André Langevin's *Orphan Street*, which Busby consid-



ers just about the greatest Canadian novel he's ever read. Page 257 leads with Ken McLeod's "light... fun... and a bit of a ribald read," *A Body for a Blonde*. McLeod was a pseudonym for my father, Kimball McLroy; this review was my entrée into *The Dusty Bookcase's* treasures. The book is filled with "Canada's forgotten, neglected and suppressed writing." The collection is, Busby writes, "a plea to look beyond the canon, the latest award winners, and the grotesque gong show that is 'Canada Reads.'" There was a time, we discover in these pages, before CanLit became so self-consciously Can and Lit, when many Canadian authors just wrote novels. The book is an outgrowth of Busby's blog of the same title and features just over 100 of the nearly 300 reviews that have appeared on the blog, each one "revisited and revised." Busby has a fluid style—the writing feels more like a fireside chat. He's a part of the story, sharing his own bibliophilic background with snippets of most authors' bios, accounts of how their book was first received and clear guidance of what to look for in each find. A vexing

problem with the book is the absence of an index. The book encourages repeat visits to certain authors and their remarkable work. But try finding same in a 364-page book loosely organized into chapters with names like "Bigots & Businessmen" and "Pop & Pulp." It's a major annoyance in what's otherwise a gem of a collection.

—Thad McLroy

RECURSIVE VOYEURISM

The Manhattan Project (Sylph Editions), described as a "literary diary," is a slim hardcover in which the Hungarian novelist László Krasznahorkai (author of *Sátántangó*, and frequent collaborator with the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr) "chronicles his attempts to fathom the life of Herman Melville." During the period covered by *The Manhattan Project* Krasznahorkai was on a fellowship at New York Public Library's Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers, ostensibly "working on a novel about Melville after the publication of *Moby Dick*." Krasznahorkai's attempts at research are regularly side-tracked by the ghosts of those who have walked earlier versions of the same Manhattan streets: the poet Allen Ginsberg, the visionary architect Lebbeus



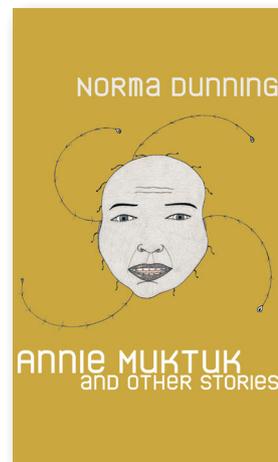
Woods, and the author Malcolm Lowry, who lived in Manhattan for a while during the 1930s, and who was also obsessed with Melville's time in that city (Lowry's Manhattan experiences later formed the basis for his novella *Lunar Caustic*). *The Manhattan Project* is illustrated with black and white photographs by Ornan Rotem, who observes in an afterword that "Every place you've ever been, someone else has been before you." Reading *The Manhattan Project* makes you feel a bit like a voyeur, or the latest in a long, recursive sequence of noir literary detectives, each following the faint traces of their predecessors.

—Michael Hayward



THE UNIVERSITY
of ALBERTA PRESS

Fifteen Inuit stories portray the unvarnished realities of northern life via strong and gritty characters.



Annie Muktuk and Other Stories

NORMA DUNNING

198 pages

Robert Kroetsch Series

978-1-77212-297-8 • \$19.95 paper

Inuit Literature / Short Stories /
Canadian Literature

ORDERS 1-800-565-9523

INFO ccrooks@ualberta.ca

uap.ualberta.ca

OFF THE SHELF

A skateboarder rides off a cliff in **Leslie Stein's** *Present* (Drawn & Quarterly). In **Karen Smythe's** *This Side of Sad* (Goose Lane Editions), Maslen writes "the boob diaries," documenting her experience losing her nipples to breast cancer. **Brian Busby** tells us where to find the best Dicks & Drugs in Canadian literature in *The Dusty Bookcase* (Biblioasis). Members of a nursing home's book club consider hiring an assassin in *The Last Chance Ladies' Book Club* (Signature Editions) by **Marlis Wesseler**. A failed musician ends up a high school teacher and his best friend becomes a rock star in *To Me You Seem Giant* (NeWest Press) by **Greg Rhyno**. **Melanie Mühl & Diana von Kopp** explain why we impulsively buy cake in *How We Eat with Our Eyes and Think with Our Stomach* (The Experiment). **Alicia Eler** discusses the best poses to make when taking a selfie at a funeral in *The Selfie Generation* (Skyhorse Publishing). Daniel Wolfe employs Delia Buckley—who he abandoned while she was pregnant twenty-two years before—to nurse him through his terminal illness in *Left Unsaid* (Signature Editions), by **Joan B. Flood**. Detective Kevin Beldon has to deal with a dead wife, a disappointing son and a serial killer in *Omphalos* (Signature Editions) by **Gerald Lynch**. A transgender woman is told that her dead grandpa may also have been transgender in *Little Fish* (Arsenal Pulp Press) by **Casey Plett**. Karen goes to college and parties at the Gang Bang Central fraternity house in *The Red Word* (Grove Press) by **Sarah Henstra**. "Everything you want to know about the penis and other bits..." can be found in *Happy Down Below* (Greystone Books) by **Dr. Oliver Gralla**. Ichiro and Sachiko spend their time drinking, smoking

and sleeping, sometimes with each other, in *Red Colored Elegy* (Drawn & Quarterly) by **Seiichi Hayashi**. In *The Cat Among Us* (Signature Editions) by **Louise Carson**, Gerry Coneybear inherits her aunt's waterfront property and the dozens of cats living there. A little girl with a beard searches for a home in *Little Beast* (Coach House Books) by **Julie Demers**. **Edward Riche** explains how a government can most efficiently mismanage prosperity in *Bag of Hammers* (Breakwater Books). Vadim is more interested in casinos than leading a country, which causes a revolution in *The Bleeds* (Véhicule Press) by **Dimitri Nasrallah**. In *Woman at 1,000 Degrees* (Algonquin Books) by **Hallgrímur Helgason**, Herra Björnsson lives alone in a garage with a laptop computer and an old hand grenade. In *The Dictionary of Animal Languages* (Hamish Hamilton) by **Heidi Sopinka**, Ivory Frame's love affair with a Russian is interrupted by the start of World War II. In *Spirit of a Hundred Thousand Dead Animals* (Signature Editions) by **Jim Nason**, Skye Rayburn writes a diary to help her grandson understand why his father is homeless and his mother isn't coming home after the car crash. In *Zolitude* (Biblioasis) by **Paige Cooper**, a nine-year old builds a time machine. **Pat Ardley** and her husband turn a piece of remote BC wilderness into a popular fishing lodge in *Grizzlies, Gales and Giant Salmon* (Harbour Publishing).

NOTED ELSEWHERE

The *Globe and Mail* says *The Change Room* by **Karen Connelly** (Penguin Random House) "opens up definitions and breaks boundaries, depicting ordinary lives that turn utterly erotic." The *Toronto Star* says that the book is "as steamy as the shower scene that gets things going." Kim Trusty on

goodreads.com says "I actually rage-foamed while reading. Sometimes you just have to lay it down. #SayNoGo" Nicole Beaudry on *goodreads.com* says she might be in love with **Alberto Manguel** after reading *Packing My Library* (Yale University Press) and Mugren Ohaly on *goodreads.com* says "I don't think it's natural for a single person to own 35,000 books." Slumming Angel on *amazon.com* "bought it thinking Manguel would describe the selection process of books to pack and books to keep close," instead he found that Manguel "skirts the issue like a geisha avoiding a kiss." Of *The Year of No Summer* (Biblioasis) by **Rachel Lebowitz** *Kirkus Review* writes "Disparate musings cohere into a lyrical meditation on violence, disaster, and humanity's yearning for solace." Kevin on *goodreads.com* says "in its current form, the book is gobbledygook." The poet Eduardo C. Corral says **Curtis LeBlanc's** *Little Wild* (Nightwood Editions) investigates "the myths of masculinity, which instruct men to 'forget each other and be alone.'" The poet Kayla Czaga says these poems "firmly plant LeBlanc among other tender masters of the everyday."

CONGRATULATIONS

To **Leanne Betasamosake Simpson** for being a finalist in the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for her short story collection, *This Accident of Being Lost* (House of Anansi Press); to **Ivan Coyote** for being a finalist in the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust of Canada Prize for Nonfiction for *Tomboy Survival Guide* (Arsenal Pulp Press); to **Lily Gontard** and **Mark Kelly** for winning the silver medal at the 2018 IPPY AWARDS for *Beyond Mile Zero* (Harbour Publishing).

The GEIST Cryptic Crossword

Prepared by Meandricus

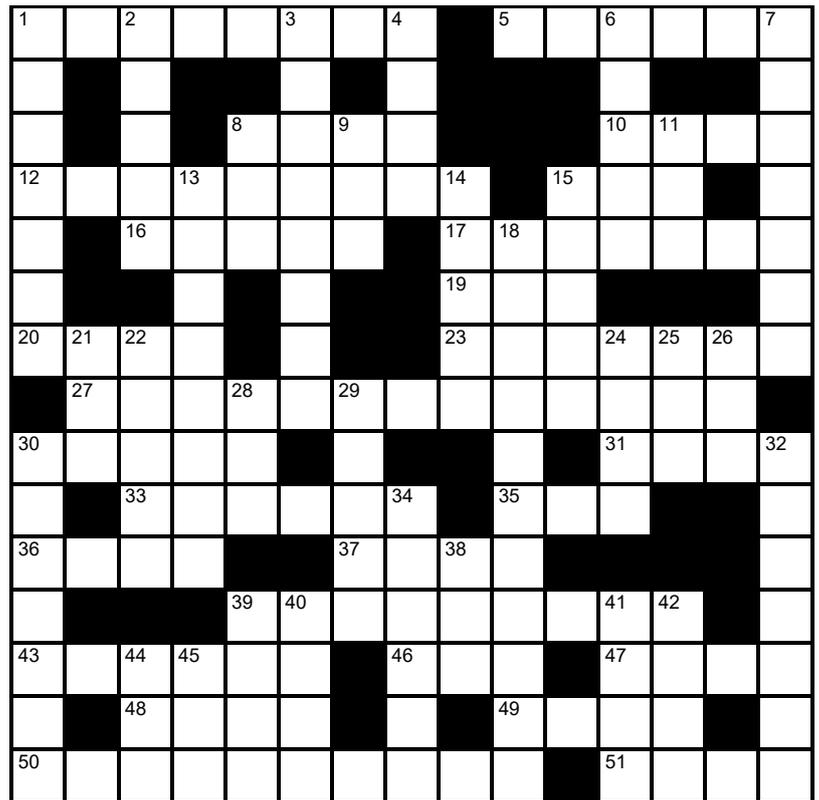
Send a copy of your completed puzzle,
along with your name and address, to:

Puzzle #108 GEIST
210-111 West Hastings St.
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1H4
Fax 604-677-6319

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

ACROSS

- 1 On Asian NBC they talked softly about recreational activities
- 5 Hey man, that tube is a cool way to pipe water
- 8 Doc started it by blowing things up until his dog got silly
- 10 Why does he always complain that he's out of water?
- 12 This operation needs red and blue to mature with less weight (2)
- 15 My smoker friends drink American style
- 16 It's so cool that he ate no Cheerios
- 17 Did Hawkeye drink rope tea before he made the cut?
- 19 It's a groovy situation. Do you get it?
- 20 Those giant Mongolians just don't shut up!
- 23 Take these by mouth or else bid on the smokes
- 27 The redeemer's fans went crazy over a refrigerated container!
- 30 The conductor told me to jump when I saw that fancy "S"
- 31 When we go home, Lenny's boy sings
- 33 Was Dropsy the dwarf who collected fluids?
- 35 According to my only friend, the doors finally pointed to this
- 36 What rules for moving records? (abbrev)
- 37 Wrap that sacred plant in paper—it's good for your joints
- 39 An ethic scam might draw the system down
- 43 Sounds like we should spread that semi-legal extract on bread
- 46 Hey, don't hog all the sunflower seeds!
- 47 In Libya, it can be hard to tell a sheep from a goat
- 48 The graph started with several side-by-side sentences
- 49 Mary always gets a big gang together for the redemption
- 50 Were there any spiders in the drugstore?
- 51 The bell rang at 5



DOWN

- 1 In July, everyone rushes headlong to town, and that's no bull
- 2 He said he wasn't a crook but Gerald said "Pardon?"
- 3 Stan was bonier at the lower range
- 4 Do you suspire when you are defeated by life?
- 6 Did it pop into your head or did it really happen?
- 7 Can you dash to the store and pick up some joining compound?
- 8 Anne used to play to full houses but now she's retired (abbrev)
- 9 I got my selfie a long time earlier so I'm not waiting in line now! (abbrev)
- 11 Initially, it was an alternative cursed letter collection (abbrev)
- 13 I heard that an Ethiopian took some days off to smoke Ken's weed
- 14 She toed a fern down under
- 15 Could you get that Israeli to start a binge?
- 18 The paddeways are a waste of time (2)
- 21 Do they exist?
- 22 In Trois Rivières there are lots of letters for college (abbrev)
- 24 Take aim when you sweat like that
- 25 It bugs me that they sang about that precious delusional girl in the air (abbrev)
- 26 That group is still up in the air about the Euro (abbrev)
- 28 How can your enemy be pals with our planet?
- 29 We thought we saw a nocturnal crawler at the end of smoke break
- 30 The flowers were secretly planted in the couch (2)
- 32 She's always catching rodents with her pointer
- 34 At southern sites, a nap is recommended
- 38 If you inherited an altered system, maybe you shouldn't eat that (abbrev)
- 39 A futurist could rearrange dried flowers
- 40 Who knew that herring could fill the space of a full-grown poet!
- 41 Like Sam, the doctor added a letter and got a rhymical unit
- 42 Start by preserving the cold people
- 44 Those guys get forced out all the time
- 45 That fisher has a light touch with the putty

The winner for Puzzle 107 was
Elizabeth D'Anjon, Picton ON



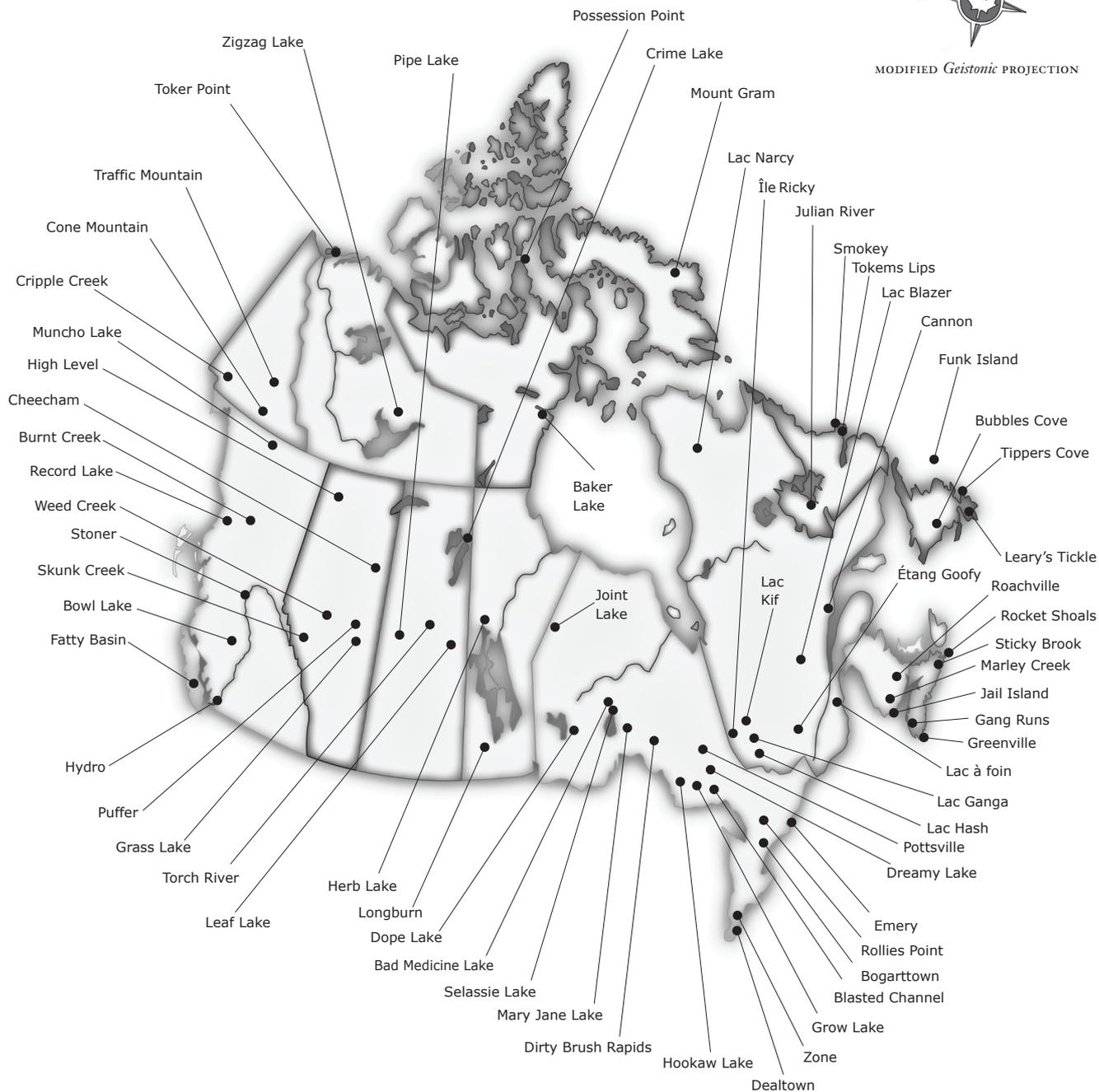
High Country

The Marijuana Map of Canada

by Melissa Edwards



MODIFIED *Geistonic* PROJECTION



For more *Geist* maps and to purchase the *Geist Atlas of Canada*, visit geist.com.

TALON BOOKS SUMMER

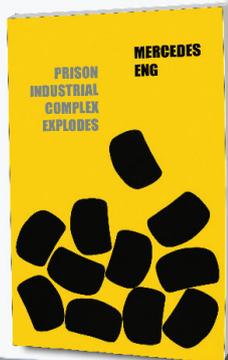
**SAME
DIFF**
Finalist
Donato
Mancini

**SAME
DIFF**

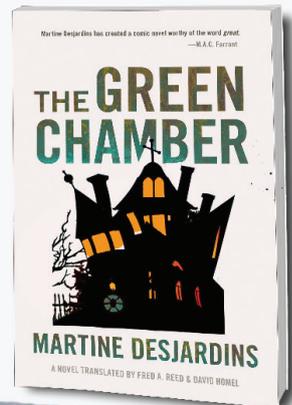
**AN HONEST
WOMAN**
Award Finalist
Jónína Kirtón



**PRISON INDUSTRIAL
COMPLEX EXPLODES**
BC Book Prize Finalist
Mercedes Eng



**THE GREEN
CHAMBER**
new novel by
Martine Desjardins





DOXA

DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

MAY 3-13 2018

DOXAFESTIVAL.CA

   #DOXA2018