



THE TRINITY REVIEW W 132 | SPRING JOURNAL

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***SPRING JOURNAL***

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**WEBMASTER** Vincent Pham

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Trinity College, University of Toronto  
 6 Hoskin Avenue  
 Toronto, Ontario M5S 1H8

The Trinity Review is crafted and published on the traditional lands of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River; we are immensely grateful for the opportunity to operate on a land that has been under the care of First Nations for thousands of years. As part of a larger cultural, political, and academic movement for decolonization, we commit ourselves to upholding and supporting principles of truth and reconciliation within literary spaces on campus and at our College.



In our age of infinite scrolling we find ourselves sunk in a well of content and knowledge, both brimming and empty in an unbounded volume. Because of this, and because of so many other matters, we are exhausted, hyper-stimulated, under-stimulated. And because we are everything at once, because we do not know how to feel, we find ourselves in the flatness of a disappeared horizon.

There are so many ways in which books are a relief, and one such way is its finiteness. The material book holds—contains—our attention, and thus allows a spiritual consciousness to germinate. In flipping through this book I am given a tangible beginning and ending, and thus I can pace myself, I can be at ease knowing there is something that prevents me from wandering forever. This is a relief that can also be experienced from the screen, which I am sure is where many of you are reading these bounded words from.

I would like to offer my heart of gratitude to our contributors, our editorial team, and our readers for making The Trinity Review—an ever-changing entity nurtured by inexperience rather than experience, feeling rather than reason—the Review it is today. May The Trinity Review continue to be fruitful in its endeavours, to provide voices for the poets, writers and artists of the ages, to create books that can hold the life of our little, limited lives.

*Grace Ma*

## Overhang

Mahaila Smith

My bedroom collapsed into the dining room  
and I became breakfast.  
Balancing on an egg cup  
I excuse myself from the table,  
spill the teapot  
on my sweat-heavy sheets.  
I'll help you bring the plates outside,  
set your place  
across from mine.  
Steeped peppermint poured into two cups:  
add honey and stir.  
Your sparrow flew face first  
into the sugar bowl.  
Your crumbled shortbread sits alone.  
You comfort me:  
at least the landing was soft.  
I paint your portrait with my mouse whisker brush  
and tape it to the sky above us.

## The Creative Journey of a Pickle

David Novak

A pickle has a lot on its mind:  
Shave in the morning, don't skip breakfast,  
Revolution in Hong Kong, a meeting at 12:30,  
Recycle the bag, avoid another panic attack,  
Call Grandma, smoke less, go to bed early.

A pickle never complains about the weather,  
Or gas prices.  
A pickle is never expected to show up on time,  
Yet a pickle is never late.

When a pickle starts working on a project,  
There is nothing else on its mind,  
Flow.

## Fragmenting: A Sonnet in Infinitives

Changming Yuan

*To be* a matter when there's no question  
*Or not to be* a question when nothing really matters

To sing with a frog squatting straight  
On a lotus leaf in the Honghu Lake near Jingzhou

To recollect all the pasts, and mix them  
Together like a glass cocktail

To build a nest of meaning  
Between two broken branches on Yggdrasil

To strive for deity  
Longevity and  
Even happiness

To come on and off line every other while

To compress consciousness into a file, and upload it  
Onto a nanochip. To be daying, to die

## A Four Dollar and Fifty Cents Girl [excerpt]

Joyce Yue Zhu

Fan left home in pursuit of a girl when he was seventeen. This was a cover-up of course, for the comparably more abominable truth that he'd left in pursuit of a guy. And even this was a lie: he had left for no one but himself, and a tune he could not stop humming. Whenever he hummed this little tune, his leg would bounce to the beat of a bass, and his fingers would tap away on a surface—most likely this was the ledge of a window on a moving bus, as he watched the low fields rush by. These fields belonged to a family that he knew. But in less than sixty years they would not.

This tune was novel, that he was sure of, and very pretty, well beyond any girl he had ever laid eyes on. He hummed his way to the capital. Off the train, he breathed in a breath of dust vapours and exhaust, and sour mildew, and hair grease. While he walked, he sweat, and as he sweat, he conjured in his mind the girl (not ugly but not prettier than the tune) who had been his excuse, and then the guy who was the excuse for that excuse. The girl, he imagined to have curly hair, because he liked that on the actresses in the old movies, and along with it he threw in the bright lipstick, thin nose. She would be older than him, he decided. She would have a vivacious personality and would order him around especially to cook and clean. Fan did not know how to cook nor clean, but he would have to learn while in this city. The guy was a little more difficult—Fan tried to keep a straight face. Muscles, he thought hard, biceps and quads, erotic. He would be studying abroad on a semester abroad (this would be a double-abroad—double negative, which brings him right back home). This guy would speak his mother language like a first-grade student, mixing up quantifiers, saying a pack of cows and a congregation of horses, shit like that, it was so funny. And as a passe-time they would sit together on a park bench in the dark and make pseudo-vows while passersby mistook them for a pair of astronomy loonies gazing at a sky which had long forfeited its stars for the burning of ancient sand.

\*

That sandy quality, the man said, Is in style right now. I got a tune, Fan said, But it's incomplete. Real pretty. I trust that. Let me tell you a story. Fan moved closer. My brother enlisted in the military, because he didn't do well in school. And he had a girlfriend. I thought they were good together. Then off he goes to the military, and she tells him she'll wait until he's had enough of rotations. But within the second week she was at another guy's house, I saw them there. My brother is still in the military. He comes home for Mom's birthday. Then the tune came to me. I must show you the tune. Fan showed him the tune. And Fan said, While I was walking around the neighbourhood one night, Elder Sky gave me language for the tune. I will show you both in conjunction. I haven't given it a title yet, but maybe I'll call it the Four Dollar and Fifty Cents Girl.

\*

A few weeks later, he was back on the train. Low fields lost depth; the drumming of the uneven tracks was sufficient. Elder Sky reached into the folds of his sleeve. Fan didn't readily accept, because last time the fruits fell short, but accepted out of respect for Elder Sky. Once home, he found his brother's ex-girl and told her about his brother's life in the military, how imposing his sunburnt neck and how deep his furrowed brow. In the middle of the night he returned to his room and gazed outside the window. There were stars where he was looking, a cleared patch. Clearly the doing of Elder Sky.



## Demographic Transition Stage III

Joyce Yue Zhu

there is a topic I cannot breach  
by the pier; near olympia's village  
there was a group of late middle-aged  
men and women performing  
a derivative of house dance

my mother swayed by the stage  
she said that she too wished  
to participate  
and that the coming summer she will  
for this summer has come to pass

after a half-mile trek  
both halves overcome with fatigue  
car ride back I fantasize  
sex positions in my mind  
while my mother sleeps  
with her seat pushed back

\*

in the text writes waveform  
collapse or m-theory; these  
border metaphysics. never mind them

to be truly alone is the conundrum  
should they generate a calabi-yau manifold  
of six dimensions—in which of these  
can I arrest mortality?

the fundamental problem exists  
that we do not know

we cannot fathom  
the matter that is missing  
or the supersymmetry which orbits an axis  
but most of all we cannot fathom  
why we can only visit in time

once that time arises  
the home is a husk  
the kitchen is serene  
the television is switched off

and my mother dances facing herself.

## Islam<sup>1</sup>

Bänoo Zan

My idol  
My ruin

I have pilgrimaged  
to your dust  
whirling in the wind

I have worshipped  
the god  
you don't believe in

and believed in prophets  
who told of your coming

down the winding road  
of words

to the outgoing rivers  
of blood

and the furious froth  
on the lips of memory

The flowers  
divided into factions

The gates raised their arms  
in surrender

The bridge turned its head  
in awe

when the moon  
split<sup>2</sup>

A seer was born  
when I saw you

I am your next  
of kin  
the wine and the reveller

My desert  
My spring

You who saw me  
and didn't turn away

---

<sup>1</sup>The word "Islam" means "surrender" in Arabic

<sup>2</sup>Splitting of the moon: miracle attributed to the prophet Mohammad

# Greyhounds

Louis Sanger

The Greyhound costs more but, he says, of course, there's something nice about dogs and surely on a ride this long we could use something nice. Bus rides, I say (however) are far more fishy than canine: the streetlights swim—not run—through the bus. All the world here seems to me an ocean floor where thoughts move slowly bubbling up through muck. This time of night lends itself to useless (fruitless) thoughts that roll back on themselves: a dog, perhaps, chasing its tail.

*dogs, of course, are born  
hardly able to stand but  
(I've read) they can swim.*

*asleep, he begs to  
differ, saying an aunt had  
spot, who never did.*

These dogs, though, surely swim (crawl) along the ocean floor, catching bubbles as they emerge, a slow motion pursuit across this watery continent catching bubbles, they pop them between their teeth. When the sun rises, it dries this ocean and, safely, the bus climbs ashore as I shake him awake.

Observations and Aftercare I Jordan Clarke

## Congratulations Katie & Robert

Lana Glozic

Two cloth banners were pinned, wrinkled, on the living room wall. One read ‘CONGRATULATIONS KATIE & ROBERT – 10.21’, and the other ‘HAPPY 18th KATIE’. Some deflated pink balloons were scattered beneath them on the floor. Katie’s mother, since the days were so close, left them both hanging.

“I can’t believe my father sometimes,” Katie said. “He made us nothing. He’s a bastard. He’s a carpenter—a goddamned carpenter—and he didn’t make us anything.”

She scowled, arms folded over her bump, staring at the banners listlessly. If she stared long enough, her eyes would blur. She could pretend they were spots in her vision that lacked any meaning. Robert was leaning against the couch behind her. He would nod and give an “Mm-hmm” whenever she paused, his tone unchanging.

“Maybe, he’s, uh, taking extra time,” Robert said. “He likes me, right?”

Katie pursed her lips. She breathed heavily, but she could only give weak, false assent.

“Yeah, maybe,” she said.

This was how much her father “liked” Robert: at Aunt Cassie’s wedding, he presented her with a wood bench; at her cousin Janet’s, a rocking chair; and for every single relation, he produced for them a fine piece of woodwork. He was talented, and it took him little time. But for the wedding of his own daughter, the ceremony was small, hushed, with few guests aside from immediate family—Robert’s side did not attend.

“We needed a crib, and he made nothing,” Katie said. “He’s disappointed in me.”

“Why would he be?” he asked, clueless.

“Let me think,” she said. She counted on her fingers. “I didn’t go to college. I didn’t do anything he thought I would—”

“But we’re together,” he interrupted her, smiling.

Katie feigned a smile herself and leaned by the windowsill. She nervously fidgeted with a pull cord for the blinds. The smell of wood-shavings was particularly strong that day. Robert stood from across the room and watched her intently. She could tell that he wasn’t looking at her face. With her arms crossed, she turned away. Apparently, that was what it took to snap him out of it, and Robert’s eyes lit up.

“Oh, here, I forgot,” Robert said.

“What is it?” she asked.

“It’s your present,” he answered, rushing to the couch. The gift bag crumpled as he pulled it up from behind.

Katie was taken with a sudden flutter in her chest. He had been working extra shifts at the plant recently—could this be the reason? She pictured her bare ring-finger, finally with a diamond, no matter how small. As he brought it over to her, she tilted her head slightly and doted.

What Robert grabbed out of the bag wasn’t a wedding ring, but a black rectangular box.

“What is that?” she said.

“I’ll show you.”

She smoothed her hair with her fingers. They were caught in a bundle of knotted split ends, and wincing in pain, she forced them through.

He flipped the latch and opened the box. Everything she thought it could be—the diamond, anything shiny, a symbol that he cared—withered away as this happened.

Inside sat a pistol.

Her last birthday present from him, in senior year, was a pack of cigarettes. She smoked the entire pack within a few hours, letting the cigarette butts drop around her feet. She smoked even when she started vomiting in first period every day.

“You...got me a gun?” Katie gasped. “Um...thank you, it’s nice,” she said, gritting her teeth.

“Gotta stay protected, y’know?” he said.

“Couldn’t you have told me that before all of this happened?” she snapped.

Robert's eyes widened, shaking his head. "Don't smart-mouth me, Katie," he said. "You keep using your mouth like that. I don't like it."

"It's a nice present, Robert, don't...overreact," she said. She limply embraced him.

Suddenly, he broke away to take off his shirt, and began unbuttoning hers. In exasperation, she shoved him away.

"Now is not the time or place."

"But your parents won't be home for another hour," Robert complained.

"They said they'd be back by three, not four," she said. "You didn't listen."

He frowned and hobbled back to the couch in the living room, then out to the patio, like a child who didn't get what he wanted.

Katie heard keys jingling. The front door opened and slammed shut. Her parents came home. She motioned to Robert, who quickly threw his shirt on. There was a brief rustle of coats being hanged, and the crinkle of grocery bags. Soon enough, her parents walked into the living room. Her mother hugged her immediately. Her father, on the other hand, stood in place. He saw the open gun-case and, while this would have provoked him months earlier, Robert's actions failed to surprise him. He returned to his prime objective—not wishing his daughter happy birthday but loading groceries into the fridge.

"The birthday girl! There she is—it's the birthday girl!" Her mother exclaimed, planting an embarrassing number of kisses on her forehead.

"Yes," Katie answered plainly. "It sure is my birthday."

"I'm proud of her," Robert said. Her mother just smiled at him, a bit confused. Katie tried to rub away the migraine in her temple. She saw static.

Katie decided to act then. She stepped back. "Um, Mom, Dad, I've gotta ask you something."

She propped herself up, with as straight a posture as a pregnant woman could manage. She tried to be calm and assertive,

sure of herself when she wasn't at all. Everyone in the room gave her their attention. She fingered her blouse, and realized she buttoned it back up unevenly.

"Mom, Dad, since it's my birthday and all..." She paused hesitantly. "I...would like Robert and me, uh...Robert and I...to move into the house."

Both men in the room tensed up; her father stopped loading groceries, and Robert clenched his fist.

Robert vetoed it immediately, furious.

"Our apartment is fine. I like our apartment. We're not moving."

"Is his job not paying enough? Because if it's money you need, I can give it," her father finally spoke.

"My job pays just fine, fuck off," Robert spat.

"Robert, stop," Katie called out.

Her father mocked him. "Sure it does."

Before the situation could escalate, as it often did, her mother stepped in.

"Okay, it's Katie's birthday, can we not fight today? Can we try to get along? Please?" she begged, standing between them, holding her hands up like a crossing guard.

"Katie, why do you want to move in with us? Why don't you explain that to them?" her mother said gently, moderating the discussion.

"I don't want him anywhere near our house."

"It's...it's just that Bobby works, and I don't. I'm pregnant. I don't want to be alone while I'm carrying a baby. I'm alone all day."

"We're not moving," Robert repeated, "That's final. I'm gonna go take a nap, so see you later."

He left for the guest bedroom. Her father went down to his workshop, where he usually stayed for hours. Katie's mother eyed her sympathetically, touching her face.

"I'll be doing laundry for a bit before I make dinner," she said. "You can help if you want to."

Katie blinked back tears. "I will."

In the laundry room, they folded clothes to the hum of washers and dryers. Otherwise they remained silent, except when

her mother gave directions, and Katie terse affirmations.

“Here, empty the powder in the drum. Set it to warm and heavy.”

“Sure.” And Katie emptied some cleaning powder into the machine’s drum, dialing the necessary settings.

“Start folding the colors, they’ve finished drying.”

“Okay.” Katie grabbed the bundle of clothes from the dryer, and folded.

“Honey—why him?” Her mother blurted out suddenly. “You were so bright, and so happy.”

“I wasn’t, Mom.”

“You were, though! You were! You were on the honor roll until the eleventh grade!” Her mother almost pleaded.

Katie held a folded sweater against her chest, not that it brought any comfort, but she needed to cling to something soft. She mulled over her words and rehearsed them silently.

“I’m weird. I’m quiet. I don’t get along with other people. I cried at night, and you just didn’t hear me. I don’t think I even wanted you to.”

“Katie?”

“Suddenly, I met this guy, we had the same English class, and he was...I think someone sculpted him out of marble. And he was like me! He didn’t have friends either. Most people didn’t like him. We skipped classes together, and he wrote me letters with a lot of spelling mistakes, but I didn’t mind.”

“Katie, why won’t you say anything?”

“I don’t...I don’t have to live my life with him. When I’m scared, he can hold me. He’s like a beacon, and nothing bothers him, and he holds me.”

“Katie!”

“Oh.” Katie snapped into focus. The words that eventually did sputter out were stilted, near-catatonic:

“He provides for me.”

Her mother could not respond. She gave her a disapproving look, one that said—at least, what Katie assumed it said—“You know this isn’t healthy.”

“I’m gonna go outside, maybe breathe a little,” Katie

announced, taking her leave.

“Don’t smoke,” her mother said.

Soon, she stepped out into the backyard, carrying her birthday present in its box. When she bounded down the patio stairs, Katie shook. She breathed out with a long huff and, sitting in the grass, opened the gun case. The pistol came with a few magazines and a case of cartridges. She held it by its rough grip. She stood and loaded the magazine. She racked the slide in a jerking motion. Her eyes wandered about the yard in a daze. She craved cigarettes. Katie looked for a target, until she settled on a bird perched on the fence. The bird twittered and sang. The noise was harsh, her ears ringing, each sound striking her with the force of a hammered nail.

She took aim, but before she could pull the trigger, the sliding door opened. Out came Robert, who woke up from his long, avoidant nap. She turned, her trigger finger resting on the gun’s dimple.

“What’re you up to?” Robert called. “Trying it out?”

Katie pointed the gun at him instead.

“Careful where you point that thing,” Robert said. He was coming closer, down the patio steps.

Katie tried to move her finger off the dimple, onto the trigger. She heard blood. She wanted to smoke. Her finger went numb when she tried to move it, as if glued to the dimple. She wished he had gotten her a wedding ring. What were they married for? What now? Why was he still walking toward her? He was in her direct line of fire, and he didn’t care. He looked her in the eye, and she tremored.

Robert rushed behind her. “Here, I’ll help you.”

He took hold of her forearms and gripped them tightly.

“What do you want to shoot?”

“It’s not loaded,” Katie stuttered.

“What do you want to shoot, Katie?”

“Nothing,” Katie bawled. “I’m so tired.”

“You do seem tired,” Robert said, taking the pistol.

“Yeah, it’s...just the baby,” Katie said, a lump in her throat rising. “It’s just the baby.”



Burning Down The House



The Very Words Juliet Di Carlo

## John Brennan and the Quilt

Kate Rogers

### I

*They had two rooms—  
tenement, Fredrick Lane  
behind a Georgian House.*  
That is more truth than story.  
I piece together the tale  
of the quilt covering the shared bed  
of the Brennan children—  
a pattern we now call  
“Irish chain.”  
Half the Brennans stayed  
in Ireland. Like the quilt.  
I wish I could  
rub its coarse cloth  
between my palms.

1881—John materializes  
in the Dublin building registry  
in a flourish of tight cursive.  
*Not his own,*  
the genealogist tells me.  
*John likely couldn't write.*  
*Wife, Mary-Anne. Son: Charles.*  
*John Brennan. Wicklow County—*  
my great, great grandfather.

1887—six children  
so far. Born in Dublin.  
Sleeping toe to nose.  
The links in the quilt  
scraps cut by Mary-Anne  
from her faded red flannel petticoat,

John's charcoal wool frieze  
trousers with the worn seat.

### II

Fourteen neighbours.  
I can see John grunt hello  
in the tight stairwell.  
On the street,  
Mount Joy, Paradise Place,  
caps in hand  
they bob their chins  
at their betters.  
John steps into the gutter  
to make room for gentlemen.

The family myth about John  
and the lady of the house  
is threadbare. I stitch  
a narrative of coachman John, whip-  
flicking the flanks of the horse  
so it gallops.  
The mistress gasps and giggles.

I stand on Fredrick Street  
across from the sky blue door,  
the glass fan light  
arced over the entrance,  
slice of moon.

I improvise John.  
And John's mistress.  
Look, they stroll  
in her walled garden.  
Fruit trees stick to brick  
like ivy, John circles her tiny waist  
his large hands



lifting her  
to reach an apple.

### III

John, at 45, is demoted  
to groom. Three kids  
still at home,  
lucky to work.  
He shovels shit-sweet straw  
from horse stalls,  
driving nowhere.  
At night John climbs the stairs  
of the tenement at Fredrick Lane,  
clenching, unclenching.

He opens the door.  
Mary-Anne wiping the floor  
with rags—scraps  
from the quilt pieced  
from their old clothes.

When John stepped out  
to buy beer, I'd knock—  
the cousin from away,  
looking for a bed.  
I'd sit beside Mary-Anne,  
put my hand on her shoulder,  
ask if she'd teach me  
how to make something useful  
from family pain.

### “Reason Says!”

Rachel DeGasperis

I woke up late again today. I must walk, quickly, down the street,  
with that thick stuff smeared across my face, shoes clacking, head  
down. Bright day! An echo of a voice tells me to stop. Stop walking?  
So silly, why would a person stop walking? For how long would I  
stop? How many people would see me stop? “Strange girl,” they  
would think. But I want it so badly to stop. I envision my feet  
glued to one spot, sticky sidewalk, stupid sidewalk, it is pushing  
me forward. Is the pavement moving? Otherwise, I surely would  
have stopped by now. There's no reason for my feet to keep moving,  
nothing to do, nowhere to go. But there's so much to do, and so  
many places to go, quickly! I am addicted to being pretty. Quick  
and pretty. I have stolen my mother's lipstick since the age of three,  
and now I can never leave the house without it. I have a pink face,  
everyone tells me so. Am I pretty when I'm flushed? Flustered  
baby. Maybe today I will stop. Let the colour drain from my cheeks.  
Maybe today I will stop. Stop moving my legs, stop moving those  
feet that pick up and down, up and down. Maybe my arms should  
stop swinging. There's too much movement, you see! Too much  
nonsensical motion! No explanation, really. Dragon's breath—stop  
floating in front of my face! So unnecessary. Too visible. Oh just go  
away! Silly. It's all just really silly. No reason to stop walking. Maybe  
I'll just keep walking.

## Black Rock Bingo

K.R. Byggdin

I hate living here in the winter when the shops are shuttered and the wind howls at our dilapidated doors. We become a ghost town on the cliff's edge, grasping frosty rocks with thin fingers to keep from blowing into the sea. It's hard to remember the good times when everyone's on EI, huddled up to the woodstove eating macaroni and beans.

Of course, winter doesn't last forever. If we make it through the cold we get our reward in the spring. Because when the snow melts, the whole world comes to us. It's not that we're anything special—sure we've got a nice view of the ocean, but plenty of places around here have that. Grandad insists it's the fairies that bewitch passersby and pull them into town. He keeps a straight face when he says this, like he's dead serious, but there's always a twinkle in his eye. Grandad's mother was from Newfoundland, so he can get away with talking about things like fairies without his Bluenoser neighbours thinking he's totally off his rocker.

The real reason the tourists come year after year isn't nearly so magical. The truth is we used to be a poor fishing village that fell behind the times. Didn't have the money to fix up our houses or buy new boats, so we got really good at mending and patching. This place is stuck in the past like a Norman Rockwell painting, idyllic in a cliché kind of way. You would have thought that would make us forgettable, but instead it made us famous.

Some years after the War, or so the story goes, an American journalist was on vacation, driving from Halifax to catch the Yarmouth ferry. His car broke down just outside of our town and he had to spend the night here. He took some photographs that ended up in a magazine article extoling the “folksy charms” of Nova Scotia's South Shore. It was like sharks to bloody water after that, the tourists coming from all over to see the place for themselves.

Now the government pays us in cultural grants and tax deductions to keep the town looking all outdated and beat up. Even though nobody here fishes anymore, we still build wooden lobster pots every now and again, heaping them in the ditches to bleach

and rot. People say it gives the road into town an “authentic” feel. Grandad laughs every time he sees someone stop their car to take a photo. He laughs too when he hears people ordering lobster rolls at the tearoom in town. “Used to bawl my eyes out on the way to school with lobster in my lunch pail!” he hoots. “They called it poor man's food, eh? Nobody wanted it then. Not even convicts. But these days every Tom, Dick, and Harry'll gladly pay twenty bucks for half a bite of mayo and a bit of knuckle meat slapped onto a stale bun!”

The lighthouse is our main attraction. It's perched on the edge of the cliffs, so you have to drive past the tearoom and the inn and the gift shop to get there. It's not much to look at really. Doesn't even work anymore. But that doesn't keep the tourists from driving down for a look.

You can spot a come-from-away a mile off when they turn into town. See, if you live here, you either drive an ancient pickup truck or a rusted-out sedan. But CFAs are ferried in from the airport on giant gleaming tour buses, given barely enough time for a photo of the lighthouse before they're whisked back to Halifax. Or they pile out of minivans with plates from Ontario and Florida, families at their wits' end, already dreading the long drive home.

There are plenty of folks who come down from the city too. They double park their convertibles and SUVs along our narrow streets, priding themselves on their ability to proffer friends and family the kind of guided tour that only a native Nova Scotian can. We don't consider them real locals, of course. Bunch of big city boosters who think they own the place just because they visit once a year with a carload of gawking guests.

You can always tell if someone's a CFA by how they treat a local. We're on a first name basis with all of our neighbours here, but the tourists flag us down with “hey, you” or a snap of their fingers. They want to be waited on hand and foot. Expect us to be grateful for their intrusions while they complain about the weather or the food or the view. “I came all the way out here for this?” they'll often ask, incredulous, before stomping back to their vehicles, tossing crumpled maps and food wrappers out their windows as they peel out of town.

Pisses the hell out of us, though we'd never badmouth anyone to their face. After all, tourism is the only reason we aren't a

ghost town year-round. Grandad calls it symbiosis, like those shrimp that clean eels' teeth. We perform for the CFAs with that folksy East Coast charm they've come to expect, and in return they pay our bills half the year.

Of course, the government isn't too happy about bankrolling the other half. In fact, a few years ago the feds tried to save some money by cutting us all off EI. They said we'd have to start driving into Halifax for work in the winter, but backed off right quick when someone sent an anonymous letter to the Minister of Canadian Heritage threatening to burn down the lighthouse. See, we're right up there with maple syrup and the beaver. When people think Canada they think us, and nobody wants to mess with a national symbol.

Tourism is the only trade we know anymore. Everyone in town serves the summer crowds in some way or another. Me, I work the till at the gift shop selling knickknacks made in Taiwan and Mexico to people from Taiwan and Mexico. Grandad works the lobby at the inn, spinning yarns and singing to keep the CFAs entertained. He's like Santa Claus to these people. Makes them believe in magic. Wears a cable-knit sweater and a battered Sou'wester even though he hasn't worked on the water a day in his life. But he looks the part, and that's all that matters.

Whenever a tourist wanders by, Grandad warms up his "squeezebox" and warbles off Stan Rogers lyrics, claiming them all as ancient folk songs passed down from his grandfather's grandfather. His favourite one is The Cliffs of Baccalieu, about a ship that narrowly escapes being dashed to pieces in a storm. He likes to play it on the days someone ventures too far out on the black rocks.

A lot of people, people who aren't from around here I mean, are surprised by how dangerous the cliffs at the edge of town can be. They think a world-class attraction like ours must be safe and supervised like Disneyland. It's true we did build a little boardwalk a while back to make the trek easier, but most people still prefer to scramble over the rocks and explore the area on their own. It's fine to do that close to the lighthouse, where the rocks are smooth and solid and dry, but the closer you get to the ocean's edge the trickier things become. Especially if you're wearing flip-flops and staring into your phone.

There's a bunch of signs telling people to "Beware the Black Rocks," the ones made wet by sea spray and slime, but most CFAs ignore the warnings. Every year someone goes out too far and gets swept out to sea. We have an orange life preserver inside a glass case near the lighthouse to rescue people with, but to be honest it's just there for show. Grandad told me once he can count all the people who have ever survived the waves on one hand.

The locals play a game in the summertime called Black Rock Bingo. We all chip in some cash and write our names down on a couple of dates in a calendar they keep behind the front desk at the inn. If a tourist gets swept away on your day, you win the prize money. Some might call this morbid, but to us it's just a way to pass the time. It's not like we encourage anyone to get too close to the edge. It just keeps happening, year after year, like clockwork. A ritual as old as time itself, or at least that's what it feels like the way Grandad tells it. "The fairies don't work for free," he says.

This morning I won for the first time. They fished a kid out of the surf about an hour after he went under, blue-faced and eyes bulging. His family had come to see the lighthouse from someplace far away. They didn't speak English, but no one needed a translator to understand what his mother was saying when they brought her the body.

I tried to feel sorry for him, the little boy, I really did. But my mind kept wandering back to the bingo. Five hundred bucks is nothing to sneeze at. That's more than I make in a week. When I told Grandad what happened he clapped me on the shoulder. "What odds," he sighed, before offering to drive me up to the city so I could buy myself something nice.

See, it's like he says. You can't accept responsibility for this kind of thing. The tourists take their toll on us, and the sea takes its toll on them. It's just symbiosis.

So if you ever find yourself in these parts for a school trip or honeymoon or family vacation, Granddad and I will smile and wave like old friends when you arrive. We'll gladly offer you directions, take your picture, serve you a "homestyle" meal. As you head out onto the rocks, we'll even remind you to stick close to the lighthouse, though if you're feeling adventurous or looking to avoid the crowds you may find yourself inching closer and closer to the sea. Don't worry, you're sure to be safe. Until you're not. Doesn't matter to us locals. Either way, we still get paid.

## Venture Capital Wells, B.C.

Giovanna Riccio

The blackest crow rends morning dew,  
raucous inkwells surge, slur words;

how is it robins shit on the tiger lily's redhead roar,  
that the teacher's thunderclap dumbfounds innocents?

Russet hawkweed stifles our lilies—wither  
and rust—the house, dog-hungry;

all night, Goldcorp lays with the stone-broke river,  
each yes man pans a harlequin whore, soft-shoes

over tailings, trips'n splits his lip,  
open pit and cyanide heap—already the mourning dove.

18 karat dust haloes the bride, 'till death do us part;  
stark, the silver birch against sentinel conifers.

When poets buzz in people's ears they're dinged  
and flattened—characters scoring a fresh page.

## Beatitude Bestiary

Giovanna Riccio

Blessed be chickens coming home to roost  
for they shall sunder biblical pyramids.

Blessed be sparrows, starlings and swallows  
for birdbrains shall read fortunes, augur the end.

Blessed be dead horses beaten over and again  
for they shall be exhumed from ice in our hearts.

Blessed be hogs headed for New York bistros  
for highfaluting foodies shall be caged in their smiles.

Blessed be African elephants, long time annalists  
for they shall carve karma with bone-handled knives.

Blessed be twin robins killed with one stone  
for they shall raise hell and liquidate spring.

Blessed be naive foxes fingered as sly  
for they shall lock eyes and buy up the news.

Blessed be chimps, cross-examining lab coats  
for they shall unmask God's human face.



Return to Sender Michaela Yarmol-Matusiak

Day In, Day Out



## We can sit on a park bench together and watch the world move,

Eunice Ryu

paint each other's faces with a bucket of blackberry lemonade, lie down in the middle of the subway train and scream, play [with] Time on the phonograph, make snow angels in our favorite corner of June, build a house for wildflowers, take the shells off our skins and throw them in a riverbank, listen to mud grow, eat a dinner of dandelion leaves and afternoon perfume.

Sleep in late.

And one Saturday,  
you can go to the market  
and make me a sun  
out of the carnations you will find tucked  
behind another person's smile.

You can lie down next to me and breathe,  
and that's all we have to do.

## Mother and Son

Kate Marshall Flaherty

It was at that moment, on the outdoor stage  
encircled in pines, that my angel Gabriel  
breathed in green applause for their peace play

and leaned into an older child, smiling. His forehead  
rested on her hip, his arms lifting to encircle her  
as vines twisted round old growth in the valley.

I sat in the stands, shaded by leafy canopies, watching  
as sun struck high noon; I was still, as my child  
found solace in a female belly. Diana sang

a song about standing—  
peace over and under and above us, within.  
The trees breathed, and my son rested on breath.

I recall reading that eight is the age  
of altruism, when a child separates from mother to find self  
and stand tall beside her, strong sapling to her mighty oak,

peaceful and parallel. My firstborn son sang and signed ASL  
in a circle of sound emanating from the round.  
Somewhere deeper, hidden willow roots dug deep

and found water. Gabe rang out sounds from his heart,  
and the forest received this leave-taking,  
no tree drawing too much sun as to leave another in shade.

## Lavender

Haya Sardar

essential oil, essence, scents, lotion, tea, i drink tea from teapots, pour over more water it's too strong, soft, 1 pound is \$28.99 on Amazon, but \$28.99 is 16.87 pounds, what a steal, syrup, maple or sugar, London fogs, they must measure those in pounds, bath bombs, purple, pain, heather, the weather was gloomy, it was raining, jam & jelly, the blood pooled like jelly, buds, leaves, green, pain, body wash, loofah, shampoo, i got shampoo in my eyes, it smelled dazzling, it takes me 1 hour to finish a teacup, 1 hour until it is both in and on top of my body, honey, candle, chamomile, bouquet from a lover long dissolved, roll on, relaaax, incense, leda and the swan, he was a libra, sachets, sashay away, chocolate, sanitizer, nothing too clinical, we are trying to mask the scent of chemicals, bath bomb, moisturizer, pillow spray, i'm feeling sleepy...

## “No Cream”

Lucas Ratigan

*‘It was a good visit. I hope it might happen again when some good weather droves.’*

In the dead middle was a Louise, having nothing but her own body and an opaque white cocktail.

Hovered against the pull of its base, some half-thick grey pulp drifted into her mouth and came back a cemented front, and she lapped at it once, traversing the arena where a man might be nearby watching. It made it much more suspect that, from all her years, she still hadn't learned how to sip across time, and, though she did take real care to appear an individual, she'd also become entangled with friends before who would stare soberly into their drink as they gulped it through a straw (as if to make sure it was really coming up), bringing them into an empirical life-theory of hers, that men were frugal with the sort of women who couldn't make anything a limb by performance alone, with their bright eyes cast neatly upward.

Encroaching the five main social spaces of the bar were octochrome subway tiles named after French communists, and beside them everyone looked like busts, tethered to grey-green militant tops and flies that married denim columns well above all-too spotless navels. They proportionately wanted each other and plotted against themselves, called each other picaresque, proselytized the boundless nature of self-reliance, all while forming a sort of microwave demography, with cold edges and a strange heat emanating from the middle.

Louise toured a red jumpsuit from the front door, past a bouncer muttering *‘oll korrekt’*, and she felt a warmth on all sides as she sensed the bar wasn't really wood-pastoral like it was wood-overture, but rather a dry, *soil*-pastoral.

The isled bar-rims were made up of steel tubes welded into a dark wood, with a rusted yellow but highly touchable wax frame, and discernible gold under the light fixtures that hung above

apexed, dim enough that any missed eye contact might stay missed.

Adjacent to Louise's temple a steady hump came to, sang mainly by a talismanic upright bass, lending its dusty corner into the pervasive air of the bar. She could smell the oil of it, the bassist's fingers ruining the neck of his instrument like a sparrow hatched three days before. It made some sense to her, as there were all kinds of bare motherlessness in the way the trio played.

They had begun their next hymn, pulling a safe quilt over her feet, and she smiled at the crowded mass in front of the stage that was all uncontaminated, so beautifully made-up that even the older men of it shone.

'She is just *discordant*, like they all get once they grow up,' said an especially coiffed, bulging one of a group.

'Four months, and it's like, right back in,' said a proximal male colleague. 'No matter how we knew him when he had been here.'

'Bureaucunt,' said an older female.

'Cheers, family!' said someone who bought rounds on credit.

'I mean well for her,' said an astrobiologist.

'Whoever learned to grieve?'

'When my stepbrother died we had nothing being done properly.'

'We can't even grieve properly, as an office.'

'If you guys had been there to see Flynn's eyebrows fall when I spoke with him, sky forbid that I feel anything.'

'Nothing in place for their own — the place that it happened.'

They all came in these sets straight from work, not having changed, while Louise made the full two stops once her last seminar had finished, and was even brought down by a sturdy yet timeworn tree branch some inlaid blocks from her mother's house. It had mercifully only landed on a firm shallow of scalp behind her left earlobe, and turned out to be one of those ambiguous wounds that only had to be checked whenever your hands were naturally gesturing around the spot, and she did from time to time, just for

color and volume.

Her back was half concealed by the cut of her jumpsuit and resembled a blunted axe head, in a shade as close as she could find to *sang-rouge*, but at the very least she was a wildflower, courteously drinking, checking... By then, she'd faced herself to the band again, who kept pushing in three pieces— bass, key, and a trumpet muted slightly by a rubber insert that squawked— the whole ensemble named *Manitoba* by a paper taped to the wall.

She figured that she liked the scruff of bottles around the feet of the musicians, all postured for when the song finished, and the dead air inflated to the point where they started again.

'So that's it, then.'

'It's all pensioned the same by half.'

'Half.'

'We think they're going for half?'

'If we have equity behind us it's a sittleak.'

'I really miss him, you guys, I really.'

'I'll text Flynn for the time on this.'

'Cheers, family!'

'In the morning, baby, just for a day...'

'*I'll come and get you and take you away...!*'

Louise took a bar napkin between two of her objectively slimmest fingers and dropped her head into the same fist, eventually losing them in the psycho-parity, the artificial pasture at No Cream, and she continued to dry-drink at their pace, as if she were of their party.

Catching some eyes in a hung painting she began to feel drowsier, reading the credit inscribed at the foot of the boy in the frame—'*Limpstone Fairytail*'—the dim asymmetry of his face autobiographed in her mind, spread-legged on a gridded pink rug, his frame traced by the earthy cob wall of an adobe, he leaned against a table-top dressed in pink-green gridded cloth, messy ridges caked today in history, and his leftish fingertips settled nervously on the masthead of a model ship, where some deep red grapes could have sat and gave some ounces of fertility to the inarterial still, the hairline combed and tinted in wax.



Like her old Jeremy, he stood so long in his place that he began to fester in the room and stank to her like the retroaction of a strepthroat breath—‘in sickness and in health’—and she remembered they used to have the kind of sardonic sex that only geniuses have.

‘Cut me,’ she said, retreating her glass to the bartender.

‘Colatonic, half a try of a turmeric flyte, skimneat-sweeten.’

With that her glass was gone, and would come back full again by the policy that held together the warm conditions of the barloft, chartering static people like a human friend in the proto-phases of allowing and keeping-out, distanced by a network of faces paid to stand upright. A man, older by some years, with back-slicked hair and tinted glasses, louder than most of the groups, appeared, with a gravel-smoked voice that commanded the cautions of drinkers who kept him behind their eyes and kept on, knowing he’d been recently itinerated or expelled, yet was no cause to interrupt the night and acknowledge him, because he was clearly in some trouble with himself, and Louise could see that he had very long fingers, with nail-ridges full of dirt when he scratched the dark hairs of his neck.

Everything he cried was certainly genuine, only plagiarized from some deep cave where he kept memories of acquaintanceships and past friends, people who used to talk to him generally about themselves, a subject that never particularly absorbed him but might interest others now.

Her first mistake had been looking, but she smiled.



## The Myth of Venus

Duncan Morrison

I: 1990

I remember the first time I saw the Iron Curtain. It was a plane ride in the late summer of 1990. The air was crisp with a hint of approaching cold. From my window I could see the line that had partitioned our continent in two for the previous three quarters of a century. From the air it seemed like a chasm. We made our way towards London.

I was returning from a trip to newly former East Berlin with the rest of the Prime Minister's advisors. We had been attending a seemingly unending conference on German reunification. Thatcher was seated two rows ahead of me, chatting quietly with a cabinet member while the rest of us reclined in our seats. Uneasy triumph hung with smoke in the air as we passed over a Europe that seemed illegible to all of us. We were familiar with Germany, we knew West Germans, many of us spoke German and most had visited the country, but we concluded that the East was beyond our comprehension. A reunified Germany would be allowed to return to Europe (against our politely stated objections) and its neighbours could possibly follow it, but I felt then that there would always be an unfathomable rift of miscommunication between us, that we could never truly speak the same language or understand each other. As the plane crossed the channel my fellow travelers' thoughts passed the Cold War and turned to a discussion of the new election, and the realities of that which comes after.

I was a former Cambridge academic, an environmentalist, a philosopher, an amateur enthusiast of Eastern Religion and decidedly alone among my business-fixated colleagues in the Thatcher camp. My official role was to work on communications, editing press releases and official statements in conformity with official policy. The gap between my coworkers and I was often as physical as it was mental. Meetings would be scheduled in a way

to preclude my attendance or knowledge of the proceedings. I was cordial with the Prime Minister herself, but it was always clear to me in her interactions she saw me as a public relations instrument to get some journalists off her back.

We debarked from the plane at Heathrow. The Prime Minister's coterie made their goodbyes and spread out.

The Thatcher camp would spend the rest of the year in a near-civil war about election strategy. Her more conventional advisers were pushing her to campaign on her past achievements and promise a weary nation that with only a few more years of hardship, deliverance would come. They would present her with storyboards of advertisements featuring happy British families, with cheerful milkmen driving up and down sunny, well-lit streets. The thought of it alone sickened me. Most of us were preparing for the inevitable result of a Tory defeat and a Labour government. The signs of decay in our ranks were accumulating. Our actions had lost the freshness of our youth and major rejuvenation was required. A small camp had formed itself around me, mostly lower-level advisors, high ranking civil servants, cultural figures, rich dilettantes. These were the people that were traditionally cast aside once power was achieved. Political thinkers with little consideration for practical matters, slight paranoia and a taste for the dramatic. To them, I would act as a sort of scribe, recording and refining their political beliefs and putting them before our leader for consideration.

Thatcher's economic policies were based on the principle that the signals provided by the market, like frequencies from God, were always easier to read and understand than any human system, riddled as it would be with logical flaws and gaps in legibility. I would often ask skeptics to imagine someone buying a bar of soap at the local grocer. In a planned world, she would use the soap, her purchase of the soap would be recorded, and this information would be transferred to the central computer which would process this and use it for further planning purposes. But what could a row of text on a spreadsheet tell one about someone's feeling towards the soap? How could they explain the intimate feelings belonging

to the house of that which can be felt but never named? One cannot put human experience into a matrix, square it, take the sum and put the result into a plan. The United Kingdom had come dangerously close to this sort of calculus tyranny and a renewed Thatcher was necessary to cement her reforms and prevent the nation from ever being tempted again.

The media campaign would be a theatrical masterwork. We needed to take our admittedly abstract ideas about the inadequacy of signaling and transform them into easily digestible messages. In one planned advertisement, a nighttime street would be filled with men and women wearing blindfolds and speaking in gibberish, completely unable to hear or see anyone or anything around them. Suddenly Margaret herself would arrive at the top of the street, carrying a lantern so that her people, her beloved people, could see each other better through their blindfolds, as through a cloth darkly is the only way that people can truly see each other. The imagery of our campaigns would be reduced from realism to a form of surreal primitivism that would more directly speak to the common man. A series of proposed campaign images featured a young couple tortured in horrific fashion as they made their way through an inhuman bureaucracy to acquire a permit to plan a new garden for their newborn. The colours were neon and bright, almost demanding attention from passersby while the viscera and gore would show them incontrovertible proof of the foolishness of planning.

The most elaborate advertisement, the central movement in our politico-philosophical symphony was nearly ten minutes long. This obviously violated several regulations on television advertising, but the content of our work rather than its length proved to be its most controversial feature.

Thatcher emerges from a trap door at the end of a soundstage. She is covered in the detritus of a thousand years. Her hair is matted and grey. She is prone, Nebuchadnezzarine on the ground, baying, pawing wildly at the “grass” in front of her on the empty stage. She is approached from stage left by a man wearing the plain clothing of a shepherd. Biblical images and allegory

were testing well around this time. The shepherd would approach Thatcher, get down on his knees and wipe the dust from her eyes. She would then stand, face the audience and speak in a voice barely above a whisper,

“I am the Widow Thatcher, author of the Aeneid and the Odyssey and the Epistles of Paul and the poems of Rumi and the Song of Roland. From my pasture I have seen the whole of history. I have been alive for nearly a thousand years. I am every prophet resplendent in gold robes and in peasant smocks from the Steppes to the Alpine River valleys. I am Jerusalem and the Temple and the Dome of the Rock and the Nativity Church in Bethlehem...”

And her voice would trail off as the advertisement continued until it was over, and regular programming resumed.

II: 2020

I had been blessed in later years with children, two daughters, Matilda and Anne. They live with me here in the forest. I have trouble finding them most days. They tend to wander, and I can go days without seeing or hearing them. When I find them again it is always at a distance. We wave politely to each other and continue. We have harvested independence from the forest. Our bounty is our aloneness, only occasionally erring to see another soul.

The vines have grown through the bricks of my house. They are pouring out of its foundations, devouring. I watch from the edge of the clearing and marvel in the destruction.



Mother Orange Vanessa Marshall

## The War Scroll—XII

George Elliott Clarke

1. Stride forth, O Hero,  
and drag thy whimpering captives into *Slavery*:  
To suffer the smashing of their infants,  
the crashing down of their idols!
2. Yours, always, is *Triumph*,  
plus the *Treasury* of the despoiled!
3. Thy Hand hurls—by their necks—  
Thy enemies into mud-baths  
of churned dust and blood.  
Thy Feet caper upon carpets of corpses.
4. Smite foes to smithereens!  
Let Thy sword guttle bellies  
and rebut genitals.
5. *Sovereignty* belongs to God,  
and *Dominion* to His people.
6. Thus, our enemies scour our feet, dusty,  
employing their avid tongues,  
enacting *fellatio* upon our toes  
(sucking hard)  
and *cunnilingus* between our toes  
and on our soles  
(licking hard).
7. Dogs lap, chew, gnaw, crack,  
our enemies' bones.

[Ottawa (Ontario) 1 juillet mmxvii]

## Gospel of Peter III

George Elliott Clarke

Too far, too long, hath X odyssey'd, ambled—  
like an ever-tumbling stone—  
like a hoodlum on the lam—  
like a Gypsy (Egyptian as Moses, really)—

and tugged us dozen down the dusty track,  
the mule-course,  
seldom the Via Aurélia,  
to progress us to Heaven, to lead on

eventual pilgrims, eh?  
He's a-goin from the dark, dank manger  
(Bethlehem)—  
out His presumably mortal Mama—

*en route* to a point of tear-damp hymns  
(Gethsemane).

Oh, it's dismal, is His—our—*Destiny*.  
I'd pray if I weren't so tired

from His hectorin lectures and sack (wine)  
that sacks us, and His sad-sack self—  
those whimpering words and gut-bucket *Prophecy*—  
made us too depressed, too tired,

to do more than drink-n-drowse,  
booze-n-snooze....  
But then the poet showed up:  
Let's dub im Amos Oz.

He brought an alien (Mississippi) “harp”  
(banjo), and a Big Bopper—whopper of a—voice  
to serenade X who speaketh  
with such dire *Rapture*.

Damn it! I wanna say to Im, “Fond X,  
sweet X, doncha be weary of *Rescue*!  
You say that *Salvation* be a hoodoo hex,  
More pricy than Inland Revenue.\*

But how else t'uplift the *Race*?”

Geez, I know it's mundane *Custom*  
and *Harmony*, to compile wardrobe, pantry,  
cobbler, carpenter, and concubine /  
wife. We've all got all, but the last!

Yes, our palate ain't unhappy,  
but we lack harpies for each palette—  
those tossed-down mattresses,  
where lad-*et*-lady toss a salad!

X pledges our deathless *Refreshment*!  
But His wine is bloody dew,  
and His bread is gilt flesh—  
like a bbq chicken's, flaky to the sifting fork—

or flaky like fingertip-turned pages  
of brittle, yellow'd news.

[La Linea de la Concepción (Spain)  
8 *décembre* mmxii]

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\* Consider the tax grabs.

## St. James Crematorium

Bruce Meyer

1)

With his sister and his brothers,  
he shared a family fear of candles.

His brother had been an Air Force doctor  
on a training base in Saskatchewan  
and watched a lad about his age  
burn to death in a Gypsy Moth crash.

As for centerpieces at special meals,  
lighting a candle was forbidden,  
a terror carried to votive wicks  
on a precious taper of terror.

I tried to explain a candle's glow  
was a means of carrying a wish to heaven,  
the gift of thoughts to a higher place,

so it must have been a painful choice  
when my father announced he'd be cremated.

A barbecue could elicit tears.  
A grate fire was a thing of horror.  
On birthdays they only cut their cakes.  
The element of fire  
was the threat of hell.

2)

Agreeing the March air was raw,  
we stood with him one last time,  
the groundsmen returning to the basement doors,  
their shovels slung atop their shoulders  
as if miners rising from their pit  
with mud from someone's dark forever  
still sucking at their workboot toes.

His best blue, double-breasted suit,  
the one he'd worn on his wedding day,  
outgrown, and then diminished to fit again  
as his body shrank to become his shadow

would soon be offered to the flames  
as a final statement of his life.

We went our separate ways,  
the funeral director saying he'd return tomorrow  
to collect the casket for another's use,  
each one of us just wanting to be alone,  
the cold rain fell.

The morning after that rainy night,  
a yellow sun-haze on the city's east,  
the day asking was it time for spring  
but not yet ready for a second life,

my taxi in traffic halted outside St. James  
and looking up I watched a skein of smoke  
rise and try to follow me,  
asking where it was I was off to  
so early on that clear spring day,  
and if I needed a ride to get me there.

## Toboggan

Bruce Meyer

John hit a tree and died.  
His face, they said, needed

to be fixed. His mother,  
too grief-stricken, said no.

She had grown up in wartime,  
her village on the far side

of somewhere she never named,  
smelled of woodsmoke, gasolene,

and the cries of tank wheels,  
worse than John's schoolmates

who wept like ice at his funeral  
then forgot what his final name had been,

pointing to him in one class photo  
where he won't look into the camera

because he feels the wind on his face  
as it flies toward him hard.

## Sweets for the Starving Sparrow

Vera Nekrasovsky

A sparrow, bird soft-souled and brown,  
Came flying from the treetop down  
While trailing rosy rivulets—  
Which in the winter one forgets—  
From the bright cherry in his beak.

Across the cobblestone he hops  
In till at last the sparrow stops  
Upon the matted grass to sit  
And pick the flesh part from the pit.

## The House in the Middle of the Street

Mitchell Casado

For the first week or so, two firetrucks and an ambulance, and sometimes even a police cruiser, would arrive at a man's house. One by one they would file in and form a semi-circle around where he sat crying uncontrollably at the kitchen table, next to a glass case where he kept military medals. After the first week they stopped coming; but he continued to cry, reliably ending up wailing and convulsing in a ball on his front steps each day, until, eventually, one of the neighbours came by and hugged him until he went quiet. The neighbours knew what it was like to feel as the man did and were instantly embarrassed that when they did feel as he did, too many people, too quickly, were there to hide them. Because of this, they didn't want the man to stop; and were glad when he didn't.



## **Visual Art**

*In order of appearance*

### **Dispersion**

Jessica Jiang

Watercolour

31" x 20"

### **The Changed Climate**

Jessica Jiang

Watercolour

5.5" x 4"

### **Observations and Aftercare 1**

Jordan Clarke

Archival Pigment Print, Jasmine Rice, Forbidden Rice

48" x 60"

My work contains unique systems. It consists of repeated patterns that mimic the tentative development of a human relationship. Control and precision are my materials, I use them to create work which resembles dynamics within families, friendships, and between partners. I use rice due to every grain's uniqueness. I constantly sort through the grains, only using the ones that I see fit for the piece I am creating. My work is a highly controlled practice that can be disrupted with the slightest of movements. This fragility is what makes the outcome of my work almost impossible to sustain. The work only exists for moments, and then it is gone forever. As my work grows and the control increases, my work becomes more human. The outcome of the work continues to surprise me and those I surround myself with. Rice has taught me to be more vulnerable and honest with myself. It has allowed me to grow. Through the repetition of a pattern, it contains codes and secrets for its own progression in time. Each relationship is an estimation of its potential and like those formed between humans, it is capable of growth.

### **Burning Down the House**

Juliet Di Carlo

Installation

Because of social norms, most humans spend their time on routine and unremarkable activities. We don't often acknowledge the exceptional things that we can do. The destruction that we are capable of is truly disturbing. "Burning Down the House" aims to display everything that we are afraid to cause, or to become.

### **The Very Words**

Juliet Di Carlo

Installation

"The Very Words" is a representation of what you once were. There are parts of us that no longer exist, but made us who we are today. Although you are no longer that what you used to be glimpses of the original self can be uncovered.

### **Return to Sender; Day In, Day Out**

Michaela Yarmol-Matusiak

Photography

"Return to Sender" was photographed while I was lost, wandering the back streets of the small town Tomar in central Portugal. Enamoured by the poetic banality, I could not resist the urge to capture the details of the scene I had stumbled upon. "Day In, Day Out" was taken behind a workshed on a vineyard in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. I chose to capture this scene for the symmetry, balance, and symbolism of the displayed items, for they, like all other mundane tools, contain a life and purpose separate from their mere existence. I shoot in an immersive, analogue-style; by ceasing to examine or observe what I have shot I am able to answer the call to document.

### **It's Never Been So Difficult To Get Calcium**

Juliet Di Carlo

Video Still

The messy outcome of losing control over what nourishes you. "It's Never Been So Difficult To Get Calcium" asks the question, 'If you don't have control over that which is essential, how can you survive?'

### **Mother Orange**

Vanessa Marshall

Acrylic Paint Markers on Canvas

48"x60"

"Mother Orange," consists of multiple layers of orange patterns that dance, weave and welcome the eye across the canvas. This is a nod to the way in which my mom has pushed me to be the best. Although she understands and empathizes with me almost better than I do, I can no longer ignore the fact that I walk on eggshells to hide my faults around her. The title "Mother Orange," is a shade name that I coined to describe this fiery expectancy. It is embodied in the gracefulness of the cascading designs in contrast to the intensity of the base colour. I ultimately know that this fear is irrational, but creating this piece helped me to come to terms with our connection, and properly focus on striving for the best.

## Contributors

**Bānoo Zan** is a poet, librettist, translator, teacher, editor and poetry curator, with more than 200 published poems and poetry-related pieces as well as three books. *Song of Phoenix: Life and Works of Sylvia Plath*, was reprinted in Iran in 2010. *Songs of Exile*, her first poetry collection, was released in 2016 in Canada by Guernica Editions. It was shortlisted for Gerald Lampert Memorial Award by the League of Canadian Poets in 2017. *Letters to My Father*, her second poetry book, was published in 2017 by Piquant Press in Canada. She is the founder of Shab-e She'r (Poetry Night), Toronto's most diverse poetry reading and open mic series (inception: 2012). It is a brave space that bridges the gap between communities of poets from different ethnicities, nationalities, religions (or lack thereof), ages, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, poetic styles, voices and visions.

**Bruce Meyer** is author or editor of 64 books of poetry, short fiction, flash fiction, non-fiction, and literary journalism. He lives in Barrie, Ontario.

Puzzling things together is **David Novak's** full-time occupation. He gets excited every time he sees old furniture on the side of the street, when dogs carry their own treats or just when the sun is out. There is never a boring day for David, there is always something that can be fixed, a poem to be written or a photo to be taken, just don't expect it to work every time.

**Duncan Morrison** is a Trinity College graduate and a former editor of the Trinity Review. You can find him among the ether.

**Eunice Ryu** is an artist, a businesswoman, and an undergraduate student studying English and Commerce at the University of Toronto. Her favorite pastimes include borrowing books at the library, returning them once she realizes that she's overestimated her reading ability, and promptly forgetting this fact and starting the whole cycle all over again. This is her second poetry publication.

**George Elliott Clarke** hails from Africadia (African Nova-Scotia), is Afro-Metis, has published 24 poetry works (incl. novels, plays, libretti), with some books translated into Chinese, Italian, and Romanian, has won Canadian, U.S., and Romanian poetry prizes, and teaches Afro Can Lit at the University of Toronto.

**Giovanna Riccio** is a graduate of the University of Toronto where she majored in philosophy. She is the author of *Vittorio* (Lyricalmyrical Press, 2010) *Strong Bread* (Quattro Books, 2011), and *Plastic's Republic* (Guernica Editions, 2019). Her poems have appeared in many national and international publications and in numerous anthologies and have been translated into Italian, French, Spanish, and Romanian. Visit her website at [giovannariccio.com](http://giovannariccio.com)

**Haya Sardar** is a student at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. She is a wild card. Between poetry, law, economics, philosophy, astronomy, and the arts, she finds herself immersed in every field she enters. Accordingly, her poetry is experimental both in content and in form.

**Jessica Jiang** is currently attending the Contemporary Art program at Etobicoke School of the Arts in Toronto, Canada. She works in a variety of mediums, including photography, acrylics, graphite, and watercolour. In her work, she blends the boundaries between reality and imagination with ethereal landscapes and surreal imagery.

**Jordan Clarke** is a practising artist in Toronto, who attends Etobicoke School of the Arts for Contemporary Arts. Clarke's work primarily focuses in photography, sculpture and textile.

**Joyce Yue Zhu** is a second year undergraduate studying Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology at the University of Toronto.

**Juliet Di Carlo** is an artist currently attending Etobicoke School of the Arts. She works in a variety of different mediums including film and installation, exploring object permanence and relational aesthetics. Di Carlo has shown in Toronto, New York City, Buffalo, Alberta and London.

**Kate Marshall Flaherty's** latest book of poetry, *Radiant*, was published by Iannna Press, 2019. She was shortlisted for Arc's Poem of the Year 2019, and the Gwendolyn MacEwen Poetry Prize 2018. She helped get "Poetry in Union" off the ground in Union Station on Valentine's Day 2019. She inaugurated "Poetry and Healing," a poetic fundraiser for Sick Kids, held on April 5, 2020.

**Kate Rogers'** poetry is forthcoming in the Sad Girl Review: Muse, Heroine and Fangirl and the two anthologies: *The Beauty of Being Elsewhere* and *Looking Back at Hong Kong* (Chinese University of Hong Kong) and recently appeared in the Quarantine Review. Her work has also appeared in Poetry Pause (League of Canadian Poets); Understorey Magazine; World Literature Today; Cha: An Asian Literary Journal; Algebra of Owls; Juniper; The Guardian; Asia Literary Review; Voice & Verse; Kyoto Journal and the Montreal International Poetry Prize Anthology, among other publications. Kate's latest poetry collection is *Out of Place*, Aeolus House (Quattro Books), 2017. She recently repatriated to Canada after teaching college level language-through-literature for more than 20 years in Hong Kong.

**K.R. Byggdin** is an alum of the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia's Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program and the Banff Centre's Emerging Writers Intensive. Their writing has appeared in *Grain*, *The Antigoniish Review*, *The Quilliad*, and elsewhere. Born and raised on the Prairies, they now live in Kijipuktuk (Halifax).

**Lana Glozic** is a student of Classics and Philosophy at the University of Toronto. Her work has appeared in *Goose Fiction* and *Montreal Writes*.

**Louis Sanger** is a graduate of McGill University, where he studied English Literature and Hispanic Studies. He lives in Toronto.

**Lucas Ratigan** is an undergraduate student pursuing a double-major in English and Political Science at the University of Toronto, with affiliation at Trinity College. As a dual-citizen having grown up in New York, Lucas has had the distinct pleasure of experiencing urbanity in two national contexts. His biggest influences include Evelyn Waugh, Robert Munsch, and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

**Mahaila Smith** is a young writer from Ottawa, studying to dig. Her first chapbook, *Claw Machine* was printed by Anstruther Press. Her poems can be found in the Hart House Review, the UC Review, Acta Victoriana and elsewhere.

**Michaela Yarmol-Matusiak** is a Toronto-based artist. Her work consists primarily of large-scale, free-form drawings, photography, writing, and collections of curiosities. Through highly process-based drawings and immersive photographic practices, Yarmol-Matusiak exercises the act of being present. She makes work in order to commit to a single moment in time as the only viable reality, every experience within it a piece of information which clarifies existence.

**Mitchell Casado** lives with his wife in Toronto, and is a former Canadian Armed Forces combat soldier and commercial airline pilot. He is currently a fourth-year English and Art History student at UTSG.

**Rachel DeGasperis** is a third year student at the University of Toronto. She is known for being a daydreamer and for having her head lost in the clouds (which may work to her advantage or disadvantage). She studies Political Science, English, and Philosophy. Although, sometimes, she wonders if she should have been a carpenter, for no particular reason at all.

**Vanessa Marshall** is a Toronto-based artist who through painting, fashion, drawing and digital work utilises a coordinated composition of vibrant colors, clean lines, various textures and layered patterns to manifest different aspects of herself. She works toward self-understanding and an understanding of individuals around her by reflecting through art.

**Vera Nekrasovsky** was born in Israel and grew up in Canada. She is currently attending the University of Toronto, where she majors in English and in History.

**Yuan Changming** published monographs on translation before leaving China. With a Canadian PhD in English, Yuan currently edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Qing Yuan in Vancouver. Credits include ten Pushcart nominations, eight chapbooks & publications in *Best of the Best Canadian Poetry (2008-17)* & *BestNewPoemsOnline*, among 1639 others worldwide.

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All the best in luck and success to  
*EDITORS OF 133 & BEYOND*

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